

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE  
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

# BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0071

Venerdì 09.02.2007

## INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 45MA SESSIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE PER LO SVILUPPO SOCIALE DEL CONSIGLIO ECONOMICO E SOCIALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE

### INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 45MA SESSIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE PER LO SVILUPPO SOCIALE DEL CONSIGLIO ECONOMICO E SOCIALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento pronunciato ieri dall'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, alla 45ma Sessione della Commissione per lo Sviluppo Sociale del Consiglio Economico e Sociale delle Nazioni Unite sul punto 3(a):  
*"Priority theme: promoting full employment and decent work for all"*:

#### ● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS.CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. Chairman,

Since work is the essential key to the whole social question, and is the condition not only for social development but for the cultural and moral development of all of us, the theme of full employment and decent work has a perennial importance for the Commission for Social Development. It is one which is rightly reviewed regularly, in order to judge progress towards its achievement and to consider further means for its promotion.

My delegation is pleased to support much of what has been suggested in the Secretary-General's report regarding the ongoing challenges in this field. A constant policy goal at national and international levels must surely be the creation of a balance between economic development on the one hand and social justice on the other, enshrined in law, which protects workers and promotes their rights, especially those who earn very little for their labour or those whose work is potentially unsafe or humanly unrewarding. In that sense, full respect for the principles and rights contained in the 1998 ILO Declaration is still the cornerstone for creating such a balance. Recent years have witnessed a steady globalization and interconnection of markets with a growing fluidity in trade and in the sourcing of production in countries far from where goods are consumed. Often motivated principally by the pressure for higher profits, this latter aspect of globalization has nevertheless brought work to many in the south while leading to inevitable readjustments in the north, often towards other sectors of employment. Now it falls to the international community and governments to ensure both an enabling economic environment and the availability of work which is decent and properly remunerated.

A very great number of workers would benefit from a fair outcome in the negotiations of the WTO's Doha Round. This chance currently risks being squandered, but a farsighted breakthrough could still be made, in particular regarding agricultural trade rules, to the benefit of many millions of the world's 1.1 billion agricultural workers, 60% of whom are in workforces with little or no social safety nets. The evident consequences of such a shift for northern economies would in turn have to be mitigated by the deployment of that region's much greater resources to assist those affected and to address legitimate concerns for the way of life in the countryside.

Nowadays, equal pay for equal work seems obvious, but women are still too often overlooked or undervalued in this regard, leading to discrimination against them in both rich and poor countries. The equality of women and men should be evident also in their treatment in the workplace, in salaries and in the acquisition of pensions. The presence of women throughout the workplace can only help to improve it, revealing and overcoming the contradictions present in many societies, including those organized principally according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity. Equality will be seen immediately through equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers and fairness in career advancement.

Working parents, both women and men, should be assisted, if necessary by law, to bring their own unique and irreplaceable contribution to the upbringing of their children, to the evident benefit of the whole of society. It is also important that men and women with families receive adequate and fair wages that are sufficient to meet ordinary family needs, especially in view of their responsibilities towards their children. A just wage will also eliminate the necessity, sometimes forced upon the very poor, to require their children to work, to the detriment of children's education, their childhood and their growth into well-adjusted adults. Beyond all other considerations, child labour exploitation is a moral question: it is a violation of the dignity with which every person, no matter how small or seemingly unimportant, is endowed.

Another category that deserves the special attention of the Commission is that of the very poor, present in every country without exception. There is no government, of however modest means, that should tolerate extreme poverty in today's world. Excluded from their right to work, shunned by those with work, the extreme poor should in fact be the particular concern of every government and every civilized society. The world is far too rich to let the scandal of extreme poverty continue due to lack of imagination or politics of neglect. Access to decent, safe and fulfilling work for the extreme poor is fundamental to the achievement of social development.

Given the dramatic shift in the population pyramid in many countries, governments would also do well to find ways to encourage older people to remain in the job market. There should be greater flexibility in pension systems and job markets so as to encourage the aged to contribute what they can to society for as long as they are willing and able. Younger workers should also be educated to appreciate, work with and respect the talents and experience that only older people can bring to their work.

On a topic now related to that of ageing, migrants have become an important source of labour. They not only earn a salary for themselves and their families but, if allowed to do so by legislators and their electorates, they will also become an important source of wealth for their host countries by maintaining standards of living through their contribution to the host economy. Migrants are often motivated by the simple wish to work in order to support their families. They too deserve equal pay and equal protection under the law, not least because the jobs they do are often the ones that no one else wants. Legal arrangements should be made to allow families to reunite, not only for the sanity of family life, but also to the social and moral benefit of the communities around them. Too often a lack of normal family life leads to evils such as human trafficking and prostitution on the margins of migrant communities. The market for such modern slavery could be undermined by allowing families to live together in the receiving country.

Work itself should be decent. The Holy See understands decent work as that which is both properly remunerated and worthy of the human person. Work is a right but it is also the duty of all people to contribute to the good of their society and the whole human family. Work is dignified by the people who do it; but it must also be dignified in itself.

Full employment and decent work cannot include work that is not as safe as possible, justly remunerated or

worthy of the human person. If work is an essential part of our human vocation, only decent work in this sense can ever be suitable for the promotion of human dignity and the achievement of social development.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

[00190-02.01] [Original text: English]

---