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INTERVENTO DEL CAPO DELLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA SEDUTA PLENARIA DELLA 62ma SESSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE

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Il 19 ottobre scorso, S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso le Nazioni Unite e Capo Delegazione alla 62a sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'ONU, è intervenuto in merito all'attuazione del Partenariato per lo sviluppo dell'Africa (*New Partnership for Africa's Development - NEPAD*), nel suo settimo anno di esistenza.

Questo il testo del discorso pronunciato dall'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso le Nazioni Unite:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr President,

Resolutions 61/229 and 61/230 highlight many positive signs of the commitment of the peoples and governments of Africa to act as protagonists in the promotion of peace and of their own economic and social development. They also express the international community's responsibilities towards Africa.

Figures showing accelerated economic growth in Africa as a whole during the past years are particularly encouraging. This was best exemplified by last year's growth rate which was the highest in the last thirty years.

It is therefore with pleasure that I salute the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in its seventh year of existence. This Africa-owned and Africa-led vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal has contributed in no small measure to this growth. Moreover, although designed to address the challenges facing the Continent through closer cooperation among the African countries, NEPAD also opens and prepares Africa to greater international cooperation. Indeed, one of its primary objectives is to halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy. Africa has started to reap the fruit of this wise decision, like the aforementioned highest growth rate, which was in part due to favourable international economic conditions.

Nevertheless, these positive signs stand in stark contrast with situations of conflict and the reality of extreme forms of poverty difficult to uproot. Africa still lags behind most of the regions of the world. Thus the international community's support remains decisive, to assist Africa respond to daunting challenges and to consolidate recent gains.

In the area of peace and security, the Holy See wishes to renew its support for a global approach to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Efforts in these areas should be guided by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, assisted by the Panel of the Wise and the African Standby Force. Initiatives such as the Continental Early Warning System and the regional conflict warning systems deserve the international community's generous support, so that the Continent's increasing assumption of its share of responsibility in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding may be consolidated further.

In the socio-economic field, there would be no need to look far and wide for ways and means to support Africa: resolution 61/229 operative paragraphs 19 to 25 enumerate a number of them. To address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, Africa would need a comprehensive solution to the unsustainable debt burdens of some countries, fairer access to world market through equitable integration into the international trading system, the timely disbursement by the developed countries of the agreed 0.7% of GNP as ODA, better harmonization between international support and the NEPAD priorities, greater and long-term investments in Africa's public and private sector, transfer of technology, better educational and health systems, just to cite some.

Africa's integration into the international trading system should help it build its capacity to compete without reducing its ability to safeguard their citizens from the undesirable consequences of structural adjustments and trade liberalization. The international community is called to assist African countries develop policies that promote a culture of solidarity, so that their economic development may go hand in hand with integral human development. On the other hand, good governance and institution-building efforts, correct use of aid and anti-corruption measures are primary responsibilities of the recipient countries and are essential if international aid is to bear fruit.

At the end of the day, any new trade development – particularly the new north-south regional agreements - must improve on what is already in place and must avoid putting conditions to the detriment of Africans. One sector that is vital to Africa's capacity both to ensure its food security and to compete in the global economy would be the sensitive issue of agricultural subsidies in developed countries. An equitable solution to the imbalances in international agricultural trade is urgently needed, as well as an approach to the subsidies on exports from developed countries which is consistent with and satisfactory for African agriculture.

Mr President,

Education must be at the heart of NEPAD's objectives and priorities, not only as a goal in itself but also as a means in achieving the other objectives. Strategic partnerships in education and skills formation between institutions in Africa and in the developed world will no doubt accelerate progress in all sectors.

These partnerships should extend to the movement of skilled labour. Africa, in fact, is suffering from brain drain, as many of its educated, talented and skilled human capital - especially in the health sector - leave the Continent for better economic opportunities in rich countries. There is real risk that the hard-earned investments in African higher education would yield less and less returns to Africa, even if it would benefit countries where African skilled labour is being employed.

Persistent wars in Africa and their deleterious effects in terms of the displaced and refugees, and of the heinous crimes of child soldiers and violence against women, should remind us that peace and collective security are inseparable from human development.

Thank you, Mr President.

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