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STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE AT THE 64th SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITEM 53: PROMOTION OF NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE AT THE 64th SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITEM 53: PROMOTION OF NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY *Here below the statement delivered by H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore Apostolic Nuncio Permanent Observer of the Holy See, on 3 November 2009, at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly before the Second Committee on item 53: Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy:*

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset my Delegation joins others in congratulating you on your election and leadership of this Committee and thanks the bureau for its valued collaboration.

The question of energy, both renewable and non-renewable, has become a key issue facing the international community and calls for identifying a durable and comprehensive energy strategy. This energy strategy should be able to meet such needs in the short and long term, ensuring energy security, protecting health and environment and establishing concrete commitments to address the problems of climate change. It should also be capable of launching a peaceful transition towards a more efficient global economy which seeks to lower energy consumption and use of fossil fuels.

The promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, besides being central to this strategy, is of great importance to guarantee a long-term comprehensive development, capable of extending to different areas of the planet.

In this regard, my delegation would like to highlight three issues.

First, progress in the field of renewable energy is extremely important for poverty eradication. The many benefits of the application and dissemination of new and renewable sources of energy can be used for development of related objectives. Similarly, energy cooperation should ultimately be oriented towards poverty alleviation and be adjusted to economic and fiscal instruments, as well as to regional and international cooperation, information sharing, transfer of technology and best practices in this field.

When addressing the various renewable energy technologies, solar, hydro, and bio, we note that the developing countries as a group have more than 40% of installed renewable power capacity, more than 70% of existing solar hot water capacity and 45% of bio-fuel production power capacity. But often low-carbon technologies, like solar technologies, including photovoltaic, concentrating solar power and solar thermal, incur very high initial expenses. Access by poorer people to this innovation is essential for allowing developing countries to meet their growing demand for energy and fostering sustainable development.

Availability of and access to energy has a profound positive impact on health, education, nutrition and income opportunities. Improving access to energy requires better infrastructure, ensured by appropriate legal and institutional "frameworks". This inevitably needs the involvement of local institutions, which can more easily identify the type of energy, including the forms of financing and marketing most appropriate for the complex realities of the zone. Where this access is denied to the poor or delayed due to various reasons, more efficient and sustainable use of traditional energy resources should be promoted, existing energy efficiency improved and conservation by relying on a mix of available technologies encouraged.

Second, Mr. Chairman, every discussion on identifying reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources should take into account the human and environmental long-term costs. Environmental exploitation, without regard to environmental or long-term concerns, may provide a short-term economic growth but such growth comes at a great price. The costs today are being born primarily by developing countries, the poor and those who do not have the ability to protect themselves from challenges of climate change.

The field of renewable energy presents a challenge and an opportunity for Governments and all other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society and international organizations, to work together to address this pressing challenge. The common initiatives of renewable energy should also be based on "intergenerational justice" since the energy consumption pattern of today impacts future generations. We should not burden future generations with our overstated energy consumption. Therefore a change of lifestyle is imperative in this regard. In this way, renewable energy programmes will ensure an "intergenerational solidarity" beyond national and economic boundaries.

Finally, for successful renewable energy programmes, proper energy consciousness education and ongoing energy learning is vital. In this regard, civil society and faith-based organizations can contribute a great deal to raising awareness about and advocating for the use of renewable energy sources at the grass-roots level.

In developing strategies and policies for new and renewable energy, there is no "one size fits all" formula. Instead it will require multidimensional cooperation, which places responsible human stewardship of the earth at the center of international, national and individual efforts to address the causes and consequences of climate change. While this challenge presents a number of scientific and economic challenges, through firmness of purpose and compassion for our neighbor, we will be able to foster a planet where desire to care for the earth is not a consequence of fear but a precursor to long-term economic and personal development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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