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LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: DANIMARCA, UGANDA, SUDAN, KENYA, KAZAKHSTAN, BANGLADESH, FINLANDIA, LETTONIA

Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI riceve in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Danimarca, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Kazakistan, Bangladesh, Finlandia e Lettonia.

Di seguito pubblichiamo i discorsi consegnati dal Papa agli Ambasciatori degli Stati sopra elencati, nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di ciascuno:

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI DANIMARCA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR HANS KLINGENBERG

Your Excellency,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Holy See. I thank you for the kind greetings which you bring from Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, and I would ask you to convey to Her Majesty, to the Government, and to the people of your country my gratitude for their good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the spiritual well-being of the nation.

The Church's diplomatic relations form a part of her mission of service to the international community. This engagement with civil society is shaped by her conviction that in an increasingly globalized world efforts to promote integral human development and a sustainable economic order must consider the fundamental relationship between God, creation and his creatures. Within this perspective, tendencies towards social fragmentation and piecemeal development initiatives can be overcome by the recognition of the unifying moral dimension constitutive of every human being, and the moral consequence pertaining to every economic decision (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 37). Indeed, contemporary scepticism in the face of political rhetoric, and a growing uneasiness with the lack of ethical points of reference governing technological advances and commercial markets all indicate the imperfections and limitations found within both individuals and society and the need for a rediscovery of fundamental values and a profound cultural renewal in harmony with God's design for the world (cf. *ibid.*, 21).

Your Excellency, the world's attention is currently drawn towards Denmark as it hosts the United Nations summit on climate change. The political and diplomatic deliberations at play in addressing the demands of such a complex matter test the resolve of stakeholders to forgo nationalistic or short-term alleged advantages in favour of longer-term benefits for the entire international human family. While some consensus can undoubtedly be reached through the elaboration of shared aspirations matched with policies and targets, fundamental change in any form of human behaviour – individual or collective – requires conversion of heart. Courage and sacrifice, fruits of an ethical awakening, enable us to envisage a better world and embolden us to pursue with hope all that is necessary to ensure that future generations are bequeathed the whole of creation in such a condition that they too can call it home. When the "moral tenor of society" (*ibid.*, 51) declines, however, the challenges facing today's leaders can only increase.

This urgent need to emphasize the moral duty to distinguish between good and evil in all human action in order to rediscover and nurture the bond of communion that unites the human person and creation was a central theme of my recent address to FAO. On that occasion the international community considered the pressing issue of food security. Again, I stated that, important as they may be, development plans, investments and legislation are not enough. Rather, individuals and communities must change their behaviour and their perception of need. For States themselves this includes a redefining of the concepts and principles that have hitherto governed international relations to include the principle of altruism and the resolve to seek out new parameters - ethical as well as juridical and economic - capable of building relationships of greater fairness and balance between developing and developed countries (cf. *Address to FAO*, 16 November 2009).

Within this framework a holistic understanding of the health of society can emerge in which our duties towards the environment are never detached from our duties towards the human person and in which a moral critique of the cultural norms shaping human coexistence, with particular concern for the young, is considered central to the well-being of society. Too often efforts to promote an integral understanding of the environment have had to sit alongside a reductionist understanding of the person. Typically the latter is lacking in respect for the spiritual dimension of individuals and at times is hostile towards the family, pitting spouses against each other through a distorted portrayal of the complementarity of men and women, and pitting mother and unborn child against each other through a misconstrued portrayal of "reproductive health". Responsibility in relationships, including the responsibility of careful parenting (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 44; *Familiaris Consortio*, 35), can never be truly nurtured without profound respect for the unity of family life according to the loving design of our Creator.

Denmark's assistance to humanitarian causes is widespread and multi-faceted. The Kingdom's commitment to supporting peace-keeping operations and development projects together with its growing commitment to the continent of Africa are readily recognized by the Holy See for their generosity and professionalism. Among the principles we share in regard to development is the conviction that any form of corruption is always an affront to the dignity of the human person and will always be a severe impediment to the just and equitable progress of peoples. Denmark's domestic record in this regard is commendable and your foreign financial aid policies rightly insist upon accountability and transparency on the part of receiver nations.

Mr Ambassador, the members of the Catholic Church in your country will continue to pray and work for the spiritual, social and cultural development of all the Danish people. In ecumenical fellowship with other Christians they are attentive to the needs of the migrant communities present in your land as well as other groups that are vulnerable in various ways. Additionally the Church's schools, pupils from which I regularly welcome to my weekly General Audience, serve the nation as they seek to bear witness to the love and truth of Christ.

Your Excellency, during your term as Denmark's representative to the Holy See the various departments of the Roman Curia will do all they can to assist you in the discharge of your duties. I offer my best wishes for the success of your endeavours to strengthen the cordial relations already existing between us. Upon you, your family and all your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Hans Klingenberg
Ambasciatore di Danimarca presso la Santa Sede

S.E. il Signor Hans Klingenberg, nuovo ambasciatore di Danimarca presso la Santa Sede, è nato l'11 gennaio

1946. È sposato e ha quattro figli.

Laureato in Legge (*Aarhus University*, 1971), ha svolto attività di docente presso l'Università di Copenaghen (1971-1973) ed ha frequentato la *Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs* presso la *Princeton University* (Stati Uniti d'America, 1973-1974). Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri dal 1971, ha ricoperto successivamente i seguenti incarichi: capo sezione presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1974-1975); primo segretario di Ambasciata in Iran (1975-1977); capo sezione presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1977-1981); consigliere di Ambasciata in Irlanda (1981-1985); capo sezione presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1985-1990); vice rappresentante permanente, con rango di ministro, presso la missione permanente della Danimarca alle Nazioni Unite a New York (1990-1994); direttore di dipartimento (per il diritto internazionale e i diritti umani), presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1994-1998); capo del servizio legale e agente del Governo, con rango di ambasciatore, presso la Corte europea dei diritti umani a Strasburgo (1998-2004); ambasciatore in Arabia Saudita (2004-2009).

Attualmente è ambasciatore in Svizzera e in Lichtenstein. Risiede a Berna.

Parla le altre lingue scandinave e l'inglese e conosce il tedesco e il francese.

[01884-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI UGANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR FRANCIS K. BUTAGIRA

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican as you present the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda to the Holy See. I am grateful for the courteous greetings and good wishes which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. I willingly reciprocate and I ask you kindly to convey to His Excellency and to the people of Uganda the assurance of my prayers for their well-being.

Diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Uganda continue to offer many opportunities for mutual assistance and cooperation for the spiritual good and welfare of the people of your nation. Likewise the climate of freedom and respect in your nation towards the Catholic Church has allowed her to be faithful to her proper mission. The fruits of cooperation between the Church and the State, especially in areas related to development, education and healthcare, are widely recognized. Indeed, such a solid foundation should promote personal integrity, justice and fairness in local communities and hope for the whole nation, both among those who govern and among the general population, and should be an important factor in stability and growth.

Mr Ambassador, in your address you mentioned the steady economic growth of the nation. The progress made to counter the causes of underdevelopment is certainly encouraging. Initiatives to promote more productive forms of agriculture, the proper use of the country's resources and the implementation of concrete policies of regional cooperation are also very welcome. These and other efforts in various spheres, such as the provision of clean drinking water for all, the protection of the environment, the promotion of a sound, universal education and the struggle against corruption in its various forms, are part of an ambitious programme which will require good governance.

The campaign of violence in the north of the country has devastated large areas. The tragedy for the local populations is clear for all to see. Some have had their childhood shattered and have been forced to commit deplorable crimes; there has been extensive destruction of property; widows and orphans are living in dire poverty; and many displaced persons are still unable or afraid to return to their villages and fields. It is understood that this situation has improved to some extent and I hope that the lack of security will finally be replaced by a stable peace and prosperity for the sorely tried people of the area. As the world looks for concrete results from the meeting held recently in Uganda on the plight of displaced persons, refugees and returnees, I pray that the Kampala Declaration may lead those in positions of responsibility in your nation and beyond to give due support and assistance to all who, through no fault of their own, have been forced to flee their homes.

In this context, I would like to recall that reconciliation and peace were the principal themes of the recent Special

Synod for Africa held here in the Vatican just a few months ago. The experience of the Church on your continent has shown that the mere absence of conflict does not constitute peace. It is only through the establishment of justice, reconciliation and solidarity that true and lasting peace and stability can be achieved. I assure Your Excellency that Ugandan Catholics, in living the values of the Gospel, wish to serve their fellow men and women in the promotion of deep-rooted reconciliation and peace. The Church will also continue to work for justice for all, accompanied by the fervent prayer that such a precious gift may become a reality for all citizens, without regard for ethnicity, region or creed.

Your Excellency, I am sure that your time as Ambassador will help to strengthen the cordial relations which already exist between the Holy See and Uganda. The various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you and, as you begin your high mission, I am pleased to assure you of my prayers. I invoke Almighty God's abundant blessings upon you, your family, and upon all the people of Uganda.

**S.E. il Signor Francis K. Butagira
Ambasciatore di Uganda presso la Santa Sede**

S.E. il Signor Francis K. Butagira, nuovo ambasciatore di Uganda presso la Santa Sede, è nato a Bugamba, in Mbarara District, il 22 novembre 1942. È sposato e ha sette figli.

Diplomato in *African Studies* (*London University, School of Oriental & African Studies*, 1965), si è laureato in diritto (*Dar es Salaam University*, 1967) e ha ottenuto un master in legge (*Harvard University*, 1971). Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: procuratore generale presso il ministero della Giustizia d'Uganda (1967); lettore in legge presso la Scuola di diritto di Nsamizi (1968); capo del dipartimento di giurisprudenza del *Law Development Centre* (1969-1970); giudice dei Tribunali di Buganda (1973) e di Mbarara (1974) e presso la Corte Suprema (1974-1979); membro del Consiglio nazionale consultativo (Parlamento interino) (1979-1989) e presidente del medesimo (1980); membro del Parlamento, del Distretto occidentale di Mbarara, e speaker dell'Assemblea nazionale (1980-1985); presidente dell'Assemblea mista Eec/Acp della Missione per l'inchiesta dei Paesi dell'Africa meridionale sotto il regime dell'*apartheid* (1981-1983); membro del Consiglio della resistenza nazionale (Parlamento), rappresentante degli Elettori di Rwampara e presidente del Comitato per gli affari legali e per la sicurezza del medesimo Consiglio (1989-1996); *legal practitioner* della Società di avvocati di *Kirenga and Butagira* a Kampala (1996-1997); ambasciatore di Uganda in Etiopia e rappresentante permanente presso l'Oau (1998); alto commissario a Nairobi e rappresentante permanente presso il Programma per lo sviluppo e presso le Nazioni Unite (Unep e Habitat) (1999); mediatore nei colloqui per la pace del Sudan presso l'Igad (2000-2003); rappresentante permanente di Uganda presso le Nazioni Unite a New York (2003); presidente del terzo Comitato dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite - 60ª sessione - e vice presidente generale durante la 61ª sessione nonché rappresentante di Uganda presso il Consiglio di sicurezza delle Nazioni Unite (2009); presidente dell'Organizzazione per la conferenza islamica (Oic) presso le Nazioni Unite a New York (2008-2009).

Attualmente è ambasciatore a Berlino, ove risiede.

Parla l'inglese.

[01885-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL SUDAN PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR SULIEMAN MOHAMED MUSTAFA

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican today and to receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Sudan to the Holy See. I am grateful for the greetings you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency Omar al-Bashir, President of the Republic, and I ask you kindly to convey my good wishes to all your beloved fellow citizens.

The Holy See willingly establishes diplomatic relations with different countries as a vehicle for fostering dialogue and cooperation worldwide. This dialogue can assist greatly in overcoming tensions, misrepresentations and misunderstandings, especially when these endanger the cause of peace and development. In the case of Sudan, the Holy See was profoundly gratified at the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement four years

ago which ended a tragic period of immense suffering, loss of life and destruction. The expectations generated by this agreement, contracted by important parties within the country and with the support of the international community, must be kept alive. The positive results, based on a genuine search for just solutions to tensions and on multi-party cooperation, should inspire further improvements in the process of implementation. Likewise in this delicate period, the good work being undertaken by international peacekeepers in sensitive areas and by humanitarian agencies deserves the support and due assistance of all national and regional authorities.

Mr Ambassador, the country you represent has the resources and the population to become an important actor on the African Continent. It will prosper when the nation's citizens live in a land where harmony and goodwill prevail, on the basis of the just resolution of existing conflicts acceptable to all parties. Violence "puts the brake on authentic development and impedes the evolution of people towards greater socio-economic and spiritual well-being" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 29); peace and development, two essential elements for the well-being of any nation, cannot exist without the safeguarding of human rights for all citizens without exception.

In this context, it must be noted that the people of Darfur continue to suffer greatly. Negotiated agreements between armed groups have been slow and faltering and are in urgent need of support from all sides. Respect for civilian populations and their basic human rights, and responsibilities in relation to national and regional stability clearly require renewed attempts to seek lasting agreements. It is my heartfelt hope that all parties may pursue every opportunity for settlement through dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This is the only way that will lead to stability - underpinned by truth, justice and reconciliation - for the Darfur region and for the rest of the country.

Mr Ambassador, the Catholic Church in your country is committed to the spiritual and human well-being of her members and indeed of all the citizens of the nation, especially through education, healthcare and development projects and by fostering a spirit of tolerance, peace and respect for others through dialogue and cooperation. Catholics seek only that freedom, recognition and respect proper to the Church's identity and mission. Sudan, like many countries is faced with the challenge of seeking a true and just balance between conserving cultural values that mark the identity of the majority of the population while respecting the rights and freedom of minorities. Public authorities need to ensure that the fundamental human right of religious freedom be truly enjoyed by people of all faiths. Likewise, families of a religious minority living where schools have educational programmes suitable for the religious majority, rightly look for the recognition of their parental rights to determine the education of their children without hindrance from the law. Both Muslim and Christian parents share the same affection and concern for their children and their welfare, especially regarding their religious upbringing.

Your Excellency, I invite you to avail yourself of the willing cooperation of the Departments of the Roman Curia as I wish you every success in your mission to further the cordial relations existing between the Sudan and the Holy See. May the Almighty bestow his blessings upon Your Excellency, your family and the nation you represent.

S.E. il Sig. Sulieman Mohamed Mustafa
Ambasciatore del Sudan presso la Santa Sede

S.E. il Signor Sulieman Mohamed Mustafa, nuovo ambasciatore del Sudan presso la Santa Sede, è nato il 1° gennaio 1952. È sposato e ha due figli.

Baccalaureato in lingue straniere (Università di Khartoum), si è specializzato in lettere presso l'Università della Sorbona (Parigi, 1987) e ha conseguito un dottorato in storia presso la medesima Università (1991). Intrapresa la carriera diplomatica nel 1977, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: terzo segretario presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1977); vice capo Missione a Gibuti (1977-1980); consigliere di Ambasciata a Washington (1980-1984); vice direttore di dipartimento presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1984); vice direttore del Gabinetto del presidente della Repubblica (1984-1985); vice direttore dell'ufficio esecutivo presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1985-1987; 1992; 1996-1999); vice delegato della Delegazione permanente del Sudan presso l'Unesco a Parigi (1987-1991); direttore di dipartimento *ad interim* presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1991); consigliere di Ambasciata a Londra (1992-1994); console generale negli Stati Uniti d'America e vice rappresentante permanente della Delegazione sudanese presso le Nazioni Unite a New York (1994-1996); vice direttore generale di dipartimento politico del Gabinetto del presidente della Repubblica (1999-2001); ambasciatore a Bangui (2001-2005); direttore del Gabinetto del ministro degli Affari esteri (2005-2008); ambasciatore a Jakarta

(2007-2008).

Dal mese di agosto 2008 è ambasciatore a Parigi, ove risiede.

Parla l'arabo, l'inglese e il francese.

[01886-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL KENYA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ELKANAH ODEMBO

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kenya to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings which you bring from your President, His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, and I ask you to convey my respectful gratitude to him and to assure him of my continuing prayers for the well-being of all your people.

As you know, the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was held in Rome in October of this year, and some six months earlier I made my first Apostolic Visit to Africa. These are signs of the continuing commitment of the Holy See to maintain and strengthen its cordial relations with the peoples and nations of your continent, and to ensure that the African dimension of the pressing concerns you mention – religious freedom, interreligious dialogue, international peace and justice and all areas of human development – will remain firmly on the agenda of the international community. As I said on my arrival last March, Africa has suffered disproportionately at a time of global food shortages, financial turmoil and disturbing patterns of climate change (*Address at Welcome Ceremony, 17 March 2009*), and it is essential that attempts to resolve these problems take due account of the needs and rights of the peoples of Africa.

You have spoken of the dark period experienced by Kenya about two years ago, in the aftermath of disputed election results. Let me seize this occasion to assure you again of my heartfelt compassion for all those who suffered injury or bereavement in the course of the violence, and my earnest hope that the reform agenda on which your Government has embarked may succeed in restoring the peace and stability for which Kenya was justly renowned for many years. Dialogue and popular consent, matched by accountability and transparency, are the hallmarks of a sound and stable democratic government. In pursuing these objectives, the Kenyan authorities will be laying the foundations of a just and peaceful society for a long time to come.

In view of the abundant human and natural resources with which Kenya is blessed, the goal of prosperity for all her citizens ought to lie within her grasp. Naturally, the global economic downturn of the past twelve months has taken its toll, and the Holy See will continue to urge the "pressing moral need for renewed solidarity" between countries at different stages of development (*Caritas in Veritate, 49*), in the interests of economic justice. Yet the responsibility for striving to overcome poverty must also be shouldered by the societies concerned, which need to give priority to the fight against corruption and the effort to distribute wealth more equitably. By correcting the malfunctions that cause divisions between and within peoples, it should be possible to harness the positive potential of the process of globalization so as to ensure a redistribution of wealth and thereby to "steer the globalization of humanity in relational terms, in terms of communion and the sharing of goods" (*ibid., 42*).

This is where the local Church offers a most valuable contribution, highlighting the ethical dimension of the issues that present themselves in the life of the nation. I thank you for the appreciation you have expressed of the work of the Catholic community in Kenya in the areas of healthcare, education and human rights, and particularly in promoting initiatives for peace and reconciliation at the time of the post-election crisis. I can assure you that Catholics in Kenya are eager to continue this mission of service to the wider community, especially in the light of the renewed commitment to reconciliation, justice and peace that was the particular focus of the recent Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. That solemn event was a summons to the Church in Africa to proclaim with joy the good news of her life-giving faith, so as to bring hope to the hearts of all the people of the continent.

Your Excellency, I am confident that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will consolidate the good

relations that exist between the Holy See and the Republic of Kenya. In offering you my best wishes for the years ahead, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are always glad to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you, your family and all the people of Kenya I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

S.E. il Sig. Elkanah Odembo

Ambasciatore del Kenya presso la Santa Sede

S.E. il Signor Elkanah Odembo, nuovo ambasciatore del Kenya presso la Santa Sede, è nato a Nairobi nel 1957. È sposato e ha due figli.

Laureato in Biologia (Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, Stati Uniti d'America, 1980), ha ottenuto un master in sanità pubblica, con specializzazione in epidemiologia e risorse sociali nei Paesi sottosviluppati (Università del Texas, Stati Uniti d'America, 1983). Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: docente alla *High School Science, St. Mary' School* di Nairobi (1980); assistente presso l'Università del Texas, *Health Science Centre* in Houston (1982-1983); ricercatore e *training officer* presso l'*African Medical and Research Foundation* (Amref) di Nairobi (1983-1988); country coordinator presso la *World Neighbours* del Kenya (1988-1990); rappresentante dell'Africa dell'Est presso la *World Neighbours* (1990-1998); consulente della *Ford Foundation* (1998-2000); consulente del *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (Prsp) per lo sviluppo in Kenya (2000); direttore esecutivo della *Ufadhili Trust* (2000-2008).

Attualmente è ambasciatore a Parigi, ove risiede.

Parla inglese, kiswahili e francese.

[01887-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL KAZAKHSTAN PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR MUKHTAR B. TILEUBERDI

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Holy See. On this occasion I would ask you to convey my greetings to His Excellency President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who recently visited me here in the Vatican, and my good wishes to all the people of the Republic. Kindly assure the President of my prayers for his well-being and that of all the nation's citizens, and convey to him my gratitude for the good wishes which you have just expressed on his behalf.

As you will recall, my venerable predecessor, the late Pope John Paul II, visited Kazakhstan in September 2001. He gave witness, amid worldwide uncertainty and sadness at the time, that the Church, in fidelity to Christ's teachings, supports peace and understanding among peoples and strives to promote authentic human progress.

The Holy See encourages nations to respect the human person in his or her totality, acknowledging the spiritual as well as the material needs of all. Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 25). Thus, the Church works as leaven within every society to highlight the dignity of man, to give him the strength necessary to generate a clearer vision of himself and to muster new energy in the service of authentic human development.

Mr Ambassador, although the Christians of Kazakhstan are a small percentage of the total population, they can trace their roots there back through the centuries. They therefore represent an important part of the rich diversity of religions and traditions of which your nation is comprised. The circumstance of these various groups living side by side in your country, together with your being a geographical link between Europe and Asia and between countries with large Christian and Muslim populations respectively, provides a precious opportunity to promote exchange and fraternity. Cooperation for development also offers a wonderful opportunity for a meeting between cultures and peoples (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 59). For this encounter genuinely to occur, there needs to be a continuing commitment on the part of States to respect basic human rights, not the least of which is freedom of religion. Religions have much to offer to development, especially when God's place is recognized in the public realm, specifically with regard to its cultural, social, economic, and particularly its political dimensions (cf. *ibid.*,

56).

For its part, the Holy See, along with the Catholic community in Kazakhstan, supports those initiatives which foster peace and authentic friendship between peoples, founded on a mutual recognition of legitimate differences but above all on a commitment to the common good. The Agreement signed between the Holy See and Kazakhstan in 1998, the first of its kind in your region, is an accord based on mutual trust and respect. The juridical guarantee of rights and responsibilities in the Agreement provides a means for increased cooperation and goodwill. I can assure you that the Catholic community in your country wishes to contribute to the strengthening of good relations and mutual understanding between the Christian and Islamic worlds, to the benefit of all. May this cooperation and goodwill be abundantly blessed day by day!

Your Excellency, as Kazakhstan assumes the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on 1 January 2010, I am pleased to offer you my good wishes for your country's period in office. The international community recently recalled the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this light, your nation's chairmanship of the OSCE represents an eloquent testimony of how far the world has developed and matured. The celebration of this anniversary also provides impetus for the strengthening of those democratic gains with a view to the stable future of the region and indeed the whole world. The Holy See is committed to consolidating the political freedoms won twenty years ago in Europe, whose external expression can only flourish when the divine gift of inner freedom is respected and fostered.

Mr Ambassador, in offering you my best wishes for the success of your mission, I assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. It is the Church's desire to develop and deepen the harmonious relations that exist between the Holy See and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Upon Your Excellency, your family and all the people of the Republic, I cordially invoke abundant divine blessings.

S.E. il Sig. Mukhtar B. Tileuberdi

Ambasciatore del Kazakhstan presso la Santa Sede

S.E. il Signor Mukhtar B. Tileuberdi, nuovo ambasciatore di Kazakhstan presso la Santa Sede, è nato il 30 giugno 1968. È sposato e ha tre figli.

Si è laureato in filosofia (*Kazakh State University*, Almaty, 1990). Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: ricercatore presso il dipartimento di storia della filosofia, *Kazakh State University* (1990-1992); assistente presso il dipartimento di filologia cinese, *Kazakh State University* (1992-1993); addetto e, successivamente, terzo segretario presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1993-1996); secondo segretario di Ambasciata nella Repubblica di Corea (1996-1999); primo segretario e capo della Divisione per l'Asia e l'Africa presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1999-2000); *adviser* del segretario di Stato della Repubblica del Kazakhstan (2000-2001); consigliere di Ambasciata in Israele (2001-2003); vice ministro degli Affari esteri (2003-2004); Ambasciatore in Malesia (2004-2009).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Svizzera e rappresentante permanente presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite e Istituzioni Specializzate a Ginevra, ove risiede.

Parla l'inglese, il coreano e il giapponese.

[01888-02.01] [Origina text: English]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL BANGLADESH PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE.

S.E. IL SIGNOR ABDUL HANNAN

Mr Ambassador,

It is my pleasure to welcome you today as you present the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Holy See. I am grateful for the greetings which you have brought to me from His Excellency President Zillur Rahman, and I would ask you to convey to him in turn my own prayerful good wishes for his continued well-being and that of the Bangladeshi people. The recent visit to the Vatican of the Prime Minister, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina Wajed, provided a welcome opportunity to renew our common commitment to enhancing the spirit of cooperation which has characterized the cordial

relations between the Holy See and Bangladesh for over thirty years.

Your Excellency, while your country still faces many economic, social and environmental challenges, the significant strides in development made in recent times have raised the hopes of its citizens and attracted the attention of the entire global community. Although few in number, Bangladesh's Catholics too share the expectation that the collaborative efforts which have made these gains possible will continue to animate the nation as its citizens set new goals for the future and devise fresh ways of achieving them.

One such goal has been the reduction of poverty. Its alleviation is inextricably tied to the extension of gainful employment. Work gives expression to human dignity, allowing men and women to realize their talents, develop their skills, and strengthen the bonds of solidarity with one another. This solidarity, in turn, also has a spiritual dimension, for by sharing the fruits of their labour with one another – and most especially with those in need – people everywhere bear witness to the goodness of the Almighty and his concern for the poorest and the weakest.

In this context, one cannot but note the successes of your country's initiatives in micro-credit and micro-finance which are gradually bringing a new level of prosperity to your people. Moreover, these practices show signs of protecting the more vulnerable sectors of society from the risks and abuses of usury (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 65). May a fair and prudent application of innovative lending strategies support rural infrastructures, stimulate markets, and advance the development and dissemination of agricultural technology that will make the best use of the valuable human, natural and socio-economic resources of your land.

Improving standards of living also depends heavily on the commitment to the education of the young, both boys and girls. This has rightly been a priority for Bangladesh in recent decades, and achievements in this area give hope for the future. In the era of globalization, it is increasingly clear that greater access to education is essential for development at every level. Above all, it is essential for teachers to understand the nature of the human person and to cherish each and every student as a unique and precious individual, providing nourishment for the soul as well as the mind. The local Catholic Church is playing its part in this area through its widespread network of schools and other educational institutions. In this regard, the newly established Teachers' Training College is intended to provide suitably qualified teachers so as to ensure that standards will further improve and that the commitment to education will continue on a sound footing into the future. The recent positive meetings with the Ministry of Education and the establishment of a formal liaison between the Ministry and the Bishops to discuss matters of common interest should lead to enhanced cooperation in the field of education and make possible the speedy and amicable resolution of whatever issues may arise from time to time.

Your Excellency, I pray that Muslims, Hindus, Christians and all people of goodwill in your country will bear untiring witness to the peaceful coexistence that remains the vocation of the entire human race. To this end, all citizens – and particularly leaders – share in the responsibility of upholding the principles that underpin a just democratic system of governance. Intimidation and violence erode the very basis of social harmony and must be decried as offensive to human life and freedom. Showing a preferential love for the poor and the ailing, embracing the weak as precious in the sight of God: these are the ways by which society is infused with the breath of divine goodness that sustains the life of every creature.

Mr Ambassador, at the outset of your mission, I cordially extend to you my good wishes for its success, and I assure you of my prayers and the support of the various offices of the Holy See which stand ready to assist you. Upon you, the members of your family and all the citizens of Bangladesh I willingly invoke abundant divine blessings.

S.E. il Signor Abdul Hannan
Ambasciatore del Bangladesh presso la Santa Sede

S.E il Signor Md. Abdul Hannan, nuovo ambasciatore del Bangladesh presso la Santa Sede, è nato nel mese di ottobre del 1956. È sposato e ha due figli.
 Laureato in economia (Università di Chittagong, Bangladesh, 1977), ha ottenuto un master in diplomazia

(Università di Lancaster, Regno Unito, 1989). Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: funzionario del ministero del Lavoro e degli Affari sociali (1980-1981); membro dell'amministrazione per il Servizio civile del Bangladesh (1982-1984); funzionario del ministero degli Affari esteri (1985-1990); primo segretario di Ambasciata a Mosca (1991-1994); consigliere di Ambasciata in India (1995-1996); direttore di dipartimento presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (1997-1998); direttore presso l'ufficio del primo Ministro (1998-1999); ministro di Ambasciata in Ottawa (2000-2002); direttore generale presso il ministero degli Affari esteri e vice presidente del *Foreign Service Academy* (2002-2004); *deputy high commissioner* in Pakistan (2004-2006); Ambasciatore in Oman (2006-2009).

Attualmente è rappresentante permanente presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite e Istituzioni specializzate a Ginevra e Vienna. Risiede a Ginevra.

[01889-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI FINLANDIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ALPO RUSI

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Finland to the Holy See. I thank you for your gracious words and for the greetings that you bring from your President, Her Excellency Ms Tarja Halonen. Please convey to her my own good wishes and assure her of my continuing prayers for the well-being and prosperity of all the citizens of your land.

For over sixty years, as you have observed, the Holy See has enjoyed cordial diplomatic relations with Finland, and indeed there are many common objectives in international affairs on which we can continue to work together. Your nation has shown a commitment to building up harmonious relations within Europe, particularly among the Member States of the European Union. Finland's border with Russia enables it to act as a bridge to that country, and its proximity to the Baltic States means that it is well placed to foster cooperation and mutual exchange between them and the Nordic lands. The Holy See is eager to lend support to initiatives that encourage fraternity between nations while recognizing that, of themselves, the technical aspects of cooperation and stable coexistence are not enough to create lasting friendship between peoples or to overcome every division. It depends, rather, on charity, a divine gift which both presupposes and transcends justice in human relations (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 19, 34). This is where the voice of the Church has an essential contribution to make to international affairs, as nations like your own have recognized, ever since diplomatic relations were established between us during the dark days of the Second World War.

For many years Finland has been at the forefront of international diplomatic activity in defence of peace and human rights. Indeed the very name of your capital, Helsinki, is associated with this worthy goal in the minds of countless people. Your nation has contributed actively to peace-keeping operations and has recently held with distinction the Presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, an agency that owes its origin in 1975 to the Helsinki Final Act, another fruit of your country's active presence on the international stage. In this connection, the Holy See particularly appreciates the initiatives that your Government has taken recently to strengthen its links with African nations. I spoke last October at the launch of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops about the great spiritual contribution that the peoples of that continent can make to a world which in so many ways is undergoing a crisis of faith and hope (cf. *Homily*, 4 October 2009). While on the one hand economic aid and technology transfer should be granted in justice to the African people, they, with their great vitality and love of life, have much to teach the rest of the world. In this context, your country's commitment to development sets an example of how to "steer the globalization of humanity in relational terms, in terms of communion and the sharing of goods" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 42).

The Finns have a distinguished track record in humanitarian aid, and their support for peoples less fortunate than themselves is likewise manifested in the welcome extended to immigrants. This is an area where the Church is able to assist, since the harmonious integration of foreigners into their host countries is greatly facilitated if they can find a spiritual home there, and Catholic communities, especially when small in number, are

always very conscious of their communion with fellow Catholics throughout the world. The happy occasion last September of the ordination of a native Finn as Catholic Bishop of Helsinki is a sign both of the ancient roots of the Finnish Catholic Church and of its growth in recent years. In this context, I am also pleased to note the increasing cooperation and dialogue between the different Christian communities in Finland. I thank Your Excellency for the greetings that you bring from the Lutheran and Orthodox Archbishops, and I ask you kindly to reciprocate. These signs of growing fraternity among the followers of Christ augur well for the development of mutual understanding and respect between newly arrived immigrants of various religions and their Finnish hosts.

A vital contribution that all religious groups can offer in your country, as elsewhere in Europe, is to draw attention to certain values that are in danger of being eroded through the process of secularization. I understand the pressures that governments face when presented with insistent demands from some quarters, in the name of tolerance, for acceptance of an ever wider range of viewpoints and lifestyles, but, as I have often pointed out, the virtue of tolerance is not served by the sacrifice of truth, particularly the truth concerning the dignity of the human person. I urge your Government to continue to take note of the ethical perspectives based upon the natural law indelibly inscribed in our common humanity – those authentically human values to which you have just referred – so that Finland's long-standing esteem for the family and respect for life may shape its response to delicate social issues with long-term implications for the health of any human society.

In offering my best wishes for the success of your mission, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon Your Excellency and all the people of Finland I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

**S.E. il Signor Alpo Rusi
Ambasciatore di Finlandia presso la Santa Sede**

S.E il Signor Alpo Rusi, nuovo ambasciatore di Finlandia presso la Santa Sede, è nato a Jyväskylä il 17 agosto 1949. È sposato e ha tre figli.

Intrapresa la carriera diplomatica nel 1972, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: vice-console ad Amburgo (1975-1977); segretario di Ambasciata a Copenaghen (1977-1979) e presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (Mae) (1979-1983); segretario della Rappresentanza permanente presso l'Onu a New York (1983-1986); consigliere presso il Mae (1986-1988); *resident fellow* presso l'*EastWest Institute* a New York (1988-1989); consigliere presso il Mae (1989-1991); direttore di Dipartimento presso il Mae (1991-1992); inviato all'Ambasciata a Bonn (1992-1993); consigliere del presidente della Repubblica e vice capo della Cancelleria (1994-1999); vice coordinatore per il patto di stabilità dell'Europa del Sud-Ovest, Bruxelles (1999-2000); docente universitario a Rovaniemi e ad Amburgo (2000-2003); Ambasciatore presso il Mae, responsabile per il processo di pace nei Balcani (2003-2004); ambasciatore itinerante presso il Mae, responsabile per la Bosnia ed Erzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro ed Albania (2004-2007); ambasciatore e consigliere speciale dei presidenti della 62^a e della 63^a sessione dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite a New York (2007-2009).

Attualmente è ambasciatore a Berna, ove risiede.

Oltre al finlandese, parla inglese, tedesco e svedese e conosce il francese.

[01890-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI LETTONIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR EINARS SEMANIS

Mr Ambassador,

In welcoming you to the Vatican and accepting the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to the Holy See, I am pleased to express my satisfaction at the cordial relations which we continue to enjoy. I am grateful to Your Excellency for transmitting the courteous greeting of your President, Mr Valdis Zatlers, and I would ask you kindly to reciprocate and to convey my own good wishes to him and to all the people of the Republic.

From its unique position on the Baltic shores, Latvia has played an important role in the commercial and cultural

evolution of Europe. This influence has not waned even when its people were deprived, for long and difficult periods, of their status as a sovereign nation. Now that its national identity is no longer under question, and its people again enjoy their freedom, Latvia can offer much to the international community. You mentioned, Mr Ambassador, the twentieth anniversary of the emergence of the "Baltic Way" according to which Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia expressed the wish to return fully to Europe. This historic gesture was an act of trust in the essential values of freedom, truth, justice and solidarity which, based on a Christian tradition and outlook, built up European culture and shaped its most important institutions. Having become a member of the European Union in 2004, Latvia too is now called to share in the continent's task of finding the means towards greater international collaboration to consolidate the freedom, peace and prosperity of its peoples.

Mr Ambassador, you also highlighted the important moments and the fruits of the Christian history of your country, which was named *Terra Mariana* by Pope Innocent III in the year 1205. I pray that Latvia, inspired by such an affectionate and powerful appellation, may remain faithful to the principles and values that the first Christian witnesses brought to your country, including Saint Meinhard and the other wise and zealous pastors who evangelized your nation. Christians of all the Churches and Ecclesial Communities in Latvia are called to contribute to the political and cultural life of the nation as well as to work for the visible unity of Christ's Mystical Body. My predecessor, the late Pope John Paul II, on his historic visit to your land in 1993, supported the quest for greater Christian unity as a buttress to national unity and as a priority for renewal (cf. *Address at Marian Shrine of Aglona*, 9 September 1993). It is greatly to be hoped that such a renewal take place soon for the good of the nation as a whole.

The Latvian people, who are known to cherish their land, and are careful to protect it from environmental degradation, also draw inspiration from their own folklore and culture as a solid basis for their concern for the land in all its aspects. By employing their ingenuity and by cultivating the resources God has given them, by extolling human dignity and respecting human life, and by promoting man's vocation to build up a humanism open to spiritual and transcendent values (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 18), Latvia will surely become a model of development that protects the dignity of the human person while being sensitive to the requirements of a sustainable economy.

The recent global economic downturn has had serious effects on the nation's economy, generating poverty and unemployment in some areas and leaving no little uncertainty about the future. It is my sincere hope that the Latvian people may take heart as they and their leaders seek effective ways to weather this crisis and to rebuild Latvia's economic strength. Such times demand courage and resolve. Your compatriots, Mr Ambassador, are aware that some radical measures may be necessary to uphold the common good even at the cost of restrictions, renunciation and sacrifice. On the other hand, such an exercise can only succeed – and be socially acceptable – when it is completed in a spirit of genuine justice and equity and with special attention to those who are most vulnerable. I pray that the resilient spirit of the Latvian people may continue to sustain them.

Finally, Your Excellency, I am confident that the cordial relations between the Holy See and Latvia, re-established sixteen years ago after a long breach desired by neither party, will help to promote fraternity, respect and dialogue. In offering my good wishes at the beginning of your mission as Ambassador to the Holy See, I assure you of the readiness of the Roman Curia to assist you in your important task. May Almighty God bestow his abundant blessings upon you and upon all the people of Latvia.

S.E. il Signor Einars Semanis
Ambasciatore di Lettonia presso la Santa Sede

S.E. il Signor Einars Semanis, nuovo ambasciatore di Lettonia presso la Santa Sede, è nato a Alūksne il 9 novembre 1957. È sposato e ha due figli.

Laureato in filosofia della storia e in sociologia (Università di Lettonia, 1980), ha ottenuto un dottorato in filosofia (Università di Mosca, 1984). Ha compiuto inoltre studi di post-gradò in scienze politiche (Università di Oslo, 1992), sui parlamenti britannici (*London School of Economics and Political Science*, 1992), sulla politica americana moderna (seminario di Salisburgo, 1993) e in sinologia (Università di Lettonia, 1999). Ha svolto la seguente attività di docente: lettore del dipartimento di filosofia dell'Università di Lettonia (1980-1982); ricercatore presso la facoltà di filosofia dell'Università di Mosca (1984-1985); consultore di filosofia presso la

House of Political Education (1985-1987); capo del dipartimento di scienze politiche dell'Università di Lettonia (1987-1993).

Intrapresa la carriera diplomatica nel 1993, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: capo della divisione per l'America e l'Australia presso il ministero degli Affari esteri (Mae) (1993-1994); sotto-segretario per gli Affari occidentali presso il Mae (1994); direttore di dipartimento presso il Mae (1994-1995); vice capo missione e consigliere presso l'Ambasciata negli Stati Uniti d'America (1995-1999); consigliere di Ambasciata nella Repubblica Popolare di Cina (1999); ambasciatore nella Repubblica Popolare di Cina (2000-2004); sotto-segretario di Stato presso il Mae (2004-2005); ambasciatore con incarichi speciali presso il Mae (2005); ambasciatore in Finlandia (2005-2009); rappresentante per l'Asia della Fondazione europea per il *Board of Governors* (Asef) (2007-2009). Attualmente è ambasciatore in Polonia.

Oltre al lettone, parla inglese, russo e cinese.

[01891-02.01] [Original text: English]
