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Here below the Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations at the 69th Session of the General Assembly Second Committee, Agenda Item 23 (a-c): *Eradication of poverty* (New York, 23 October 2014)

## **Statement H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza**

Mr. Chair,

As we come closer to the completion of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), my delegation believes that bold commitments like the Millennium Development Goals, the new Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda are important tools to shape development strategies, marshal resources, coordinate efforts, monitor implementation and measure results.

My delegation believes that countries should develop evidence-based policies and strategies to combat extreme poverty, rather than relying on pre-conceived one-size-fits-all solutions. Analyses and suggested solutions need to be based on on-the-ground expertise and lived experience, rather than on imposed ready-made solutions from the outside, which are not always devoid of ideological colorings.

In other words, my delegation believes that our fight to eradicate extreme poverty should be inspired and guided by ground-based policies rather than ideology, by inclusion rather than exclusion, by solidarity rather than survival of the fittest. We have to question economic models that heighten exclusion and inequality, in particular those that cause an exponentially growing gap between the haves and the have-nots, those that exclude and marginalize masses of people without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape from poverty (cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* n.53).

Mr. Chair,

My delegation believes that sustainable development requires the participation of all in the life of families, communities, organizations and societies. Participation is the antidote to exclusion, be it economic, social, political or cultural. Structures and practices that exclude and leave behind members of the human family will always be barriers to full human development. The ever-increasing economic inequality excludes and leaves behind large segments of populations, because the affluent become more affluent by gaining most of the development benefits. Concrete cases of poverty, especially extreme poverty, tell us that the rising tide does not always lift all boats; often it only lifts the yachts, keeps a few boats afloat, sweeps away many and sinks the rest. This cannot be the path to a life of dignity for all. This is not the future we want.

Another barrier to sustainable development is the exclusion of women from equal and active participation in the development of their communities. Excluding women and girls from education and subjecting them to violence and discrimination violate their inherent dignity and fundamental human rights. Reports show that, in many parts of the world, women and children form the majority of the poor and are affected by the burden of poverty in very specific ways. Poverty often compounds an already unacceptable gap between men and women, between boys and girls in terms of access to basic services and education and in terms of the exercise of basic human rights. The Holy See commends those countries where significant progress has been achieved in these areas, and respectfully invites those where this problem is not yet effectively addressed to do so as a matter of urgency.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation wishes to highlight that poverty is not mere exclusion from economic development; it is as multifaceted and multidimensional as the human person himself or herself. Other than its more obvious economic expression, poverty also manifests itself in the educational, social, political, cultural and spiritual dimensions of life. Individuals and communities experience these dimensions of poverty when they are excluded from or deprived of the social, cultural, political and spiritual benefits that should be accessible to all. While economic exclusion underpins in a large measure these other forms of exclusion and poverty, we cannot equate poverty with economic poverty alone, lest we fail to grasp the complexity of the realities of poverty and human development. We must thus resist the temptation to reduce poverty eradication to merely increasing the amount of money a day a person lives on. Development is more than the sum total of resources invested into development projects and their measurable material results; it includes as well those elements that, though at times intangible and imperceptible, also truly contribute to life-transforming and greater human flourishing.

In our efforts to eradicate poverty, we must always return to the foundational principle of our efforts, namely to promote the authentic development of the whole person and of all peoples. Each of us needs to contribute. Each of us can benefit. This is solidarity.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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