

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE  
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL

# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0159

Mercoledì 27.03.2002

## **INTERVENTO DELL'OSSERVATORE PERMANENTE DELLA SANTA SEDE PRESSO L'UFFICIO DELLE NAZIONI UNITE A GINEVRA ALLA 58a SESSIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE DEI DIRITTI UMANI**

INTERVENTO DELL'OSSERVATORE PERMANENTE DELLA SANTA SEDE PRESSO L'UFFICIO DELLE  
NAZIONI UNITE A GINEVRA ALLA 58a SESSIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE DEI DIRITTI UMANI

In occasione del dibattito sul diritto allo sviluppo alla 58a Sessione della Commissione dei Diritti umani delle Nazioni Unite, che si svolge a Ginevra dal 18 marzo al 26 aprile, S.E. Mons. Diarmuid Martin, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, ha pronunciato il 25 marzo 2002 l'intervento che pubblichiamo qui di seguito:

### **• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. DIARMUID MARTIN**

Mr Chairman,

Just ten years ago, the important series of International Conferences on social and developmental themes, which have significantly shaped international development policy, began in Rio de Janeiro, with the World Conference on the Environment and Development. The very first principle of the "Rio Declaration", adopted on that occasion, notes the "human beings are the centre of concerns for sustainable development".

The social and economic evolution which we have witnessed in these past ten years, with the move towards a knowledge-based, globalized economy has proven just how correct that affirmation of principle was. It is human persons who are the focal point of a knowledge-based economy. It is their initiative and creative ability that are the driving and innovative force of a modern economy. Pope John Paul II had, earlier, in his Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* noted that "whereas at one time the decisive factor of production was the land, and later capital – understood as a total complex of the instruments of production – today the decisive factor is increasingly man himself, that is his knowledge".<sup>1</sup>

The sad fact, however, as the Pope commented later in the same document, is that "many people, perhaps the majority today, do not have the means which would enable them to take their place in an effective and humanly dignified way within a productive system in which work is truly essential. They have no possibility of acquiring the basic knowledge which would enable them to express their creativity and develop their potential".<sup>2</sup>

Poverty today must be defined not simply in terms of a lack of economic income, but more in terms of an inability to realise fully that God-given human potential, with which each person, man or woman, is endowed. Fighting poverty, which has now been recognized as an essential overarching dimension of all developmental policy, must therefore be about enabling people to realise their God-given potential. It is about enhancing human potential.

These reflections about the nature of a modern economy show that, more than in the past, it may be possible today to forge a new synergy between economic reflection and human rights reflection. The very nature of a modern economy offers a possible basis for a renewed human rights approach to globalization, centred on the capacities of human beings and on the right of people to be able to realise their capacities fully. Seen in this light, the right to development should no longer appear, as it did to some, as being in contrast with market-driven economic policy. The attainment of this right is not just an understandable human aspiration. It is a prerequisite for the development of a strong modern economy. The more human potential is realised, the stronger the economy of a country will be.

Likewise, the right to development will not be seen as being opposed to "good governance". Democracy and good governance are not just about administration from above. They are essentially about structures that permit and facilitate the participation of citizens from below, in decisions that affect their lives. Governance can be said to be functioning well, when human potential is truly channelled towards creative participation in the economy and in society. The right to development is linked to the very *raison d'être* of government, in its fullest sense: to ensure the security and the participation of the people. On the international plane, in turn, a just system of governance requires that all states, including the poorest, have rightful access to the decision-making procedures of the organizations which affect their future.

It is a paradox to have to speak in the same breath of globalisation and marginalization and exclusion. Global should mean inclusive. A global economic system that leaves large sectors of society on its margins is not what it claims to be: global.

The Holy See expresses the hope that, within the new spirit of international cooperation concerning development, it will be possible for the open-ended working group on the Right to Development, chaired by Ambassador Dembry, to move forward with a constructive consensus around the definition and realisation of the right to development.

I began, Mr Chairman, by speaking of the first in the series of recent International Conferences, that of Rio. As we deliberate, the community of nations has just adopted in Monterrey a strategy for financing development. Once again, the success of that strategy will depend on how it places human persons at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, on how it directs the use of financing, traditional and additional, to ensure that people can realise their potential, and fully exercise the rights as the protagonists of sustainable development.

---

1 Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, n.33.

2 *ibid.*, n.34.[00485-02.01] [Original text: English]

---