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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 59a ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUL PUNTO 35: "CULTURE OF PEACE"

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, il Nunzio Apostolico S.E Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato il 26 ottobre scorso davanti alla 59a Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite sul punto 35: "*Culture of Peace*":

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. President,

For many decades now, the need to promote an effective culture of peace has been widely acknowledged and, since 1967, the Popes too have played their part, sending a Message on the first day of January every year to all people of good will, each time proposing a fresh theme concerning peace and how to achieve it. These Messages have already started to build up a mosaic of topics and experiences for the realization of a culture of peace in the sense under discussion today.

It is very clear that the world needs peace now as much as ever. My delegation is pleased to seize this occasion to reiterate its confidence in the United Nations as one of the key institutions at mankind's disposal for the spread of a culture of peace.

As the Secretary-General mentioned in his recent report on the work of the Organization, we need only consider the increase in UN peacekeeping operations during the past year. Similarly, this year has also seen the creation of a Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, in the struggle to uphold and protect human rights and the rule of law. With the necessary cooperation from all its members, the UN can truly be an effective instrument of the political will of the world's nations.

In spite of these successes - and initiatives such as the goals of globalization within this International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World - the usually more dominant culture appears sometimes to trigger cultural reactions against true peace and create suspicions about it. Similarly, globalization

seems unable to prevent threats to peace because cultural revivalism tends to create walls that separate people from one another. Cynicism emerges from misunderstanding among peoples that are the results of unnecessary barriers. The concept of security itself has come to create a continuing tension between national, international and global security interests.

To address the problems of security at any cost, all labors toward authentic peace must be nurtured unceasingly, balancing threat-based with cooperative security interests. The defense of peace, so often a fragile entity, must be reinforced. This can be achieved by cultivating in the minds of all people of good will the imperative to become in some way agents of peace. They are its architects, its builders and even its bridges. Making peace a reality is possible, through the education of consciences that an openness and respect for others can produce.

Mr. President,

The 58th session of the GA considered resolutions on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, on the University of Peace, and on Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony and Cooperation. All three are vital elements of building peace in the world, but this last item warrants special attention today. We agreed in last year's resolution that "acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious intolerance are on the increase in many parts of the world and threaten the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (A/RES/58/128).

Nonetheless, we have to acknowledge that there is already a foundation to build upon in the area of interreligious cooperation; for example, the various meetings organized by UNESCO in Central Asia, the Mediterranean region, both North and West Africa and the Asian-Pacific region. These discussions covered areas such as terrorism, conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS, the role of religious leaders in easing tensions, in counteracting the hijacking of religious values for use as a pretext to justify violence and in supporting disarmament and non-proliferation.

The devastating effects of conflict usually last generations, making reconciliation and any semblance of normal life extremely difficult if not impossible. Although there has been much focus on weapons of mass destruction, we cannot ignore the many other forms of weapons used in conflicts around the world. Here, in this discussion, the Holy See raises this point in order to call for a more energetic commitment to underline the deep linkages between the promotion of the culture of peace and the strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation process.

Mr. President,

While it is true that the other name of peace is authentic development for all peoples, my delegation also believes that an important engine for this peace is political will. Harnessing it will greatly assist this Assembly to move forward from the imputed perception of being a mere forum for analysis or a resolution-making machine into a real locus for the cultivation of transparency and building up of confidence. With political will, the untapped moral resources of nations can emerge to transform civilizations so that, finally, they learn to treasure life and promote peace.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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