



BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA TERZA COMMISSIONE DELLA 60a SESSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U SUL PUNTO 39: "REPORT OF THE UNHCR"

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato ieri, 9 novembre, a New York nel corso della Terza Commissione della 60a Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. sul punto 39: "*Report of the UNHCR*":

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr Chairman,

Having read the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions, my delegation salutes the work of the UNHCR, especially that undertaken in the most dangerous and difficult of circumstances.

Since the movement of peoples was acknowledged in the last century, serious attempts have been made at the international level to find solutions to the problems associated with this important humanitarian question.

Although there has been a recent decline in refugees specifically, the number of people of direct concern to UNHCR has increased worldwide to some 19 million, including asylum-seekers, returnees, IDPs and others at risk in the world. The scale alone of this human phenomenon merits every international attention.

The High Commissioner for Refugees has recently underscored the UNHCR's role as a protection agency, whose actions must be protection-minded and judged by their protection implications. Given that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, this concept, as reflected in the World Summit Outcome document, has rightly gained acceptance for humanitarian reasons. Protection of those in distress and assistance to them go hand in hand with lucid analysis and public awareness of the causes of humanitarian crises; but crises by their very nature demand swift action and predictable funding.

In terms of the UNHCR mandate, the concept of protection has long-term consequences, especially in the case of the vast majority of refugees who are living in protracted refugee situations. Protection, not just defence from outside hostile forces, touches the whole spectrum of human rights of those forced to flee. Such rights remain constant during all phases of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Protection firstly includes safeguarding the people's physical security and the full enjoyment of their rights. Secondly, it includes creating a safe environment, especially for women, children, the elderly and the disabled. The design and implementation of all prevention and response measures need to ensure in particular the protection of women and children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Thirdly, protection means assuring adequate nutrition, a perennial problem in refugee situations. Facing the nutritional challenge also involves States granting refugees the necessary freedom of movement and residence and the right to a livelihood.

The question of sustained voluntary repatriation deserves re-examination. This involves not just return in safety and dignity, but also social and economic aspects of post-conflict reconstruction by establishing in particular an effective link between humanitarian relief and sustainable development. Concretely, that means the restoration of infrastructure, health, education, agriculture, employment and priority access to food.

The inability to address internal displacement is now considered the single biggest failure in the humanitarian action of the international community. Protection needs are not related to whether borders are crossed or not. A reliable system, embedded in an appropriate institutional framework, could play an effective role in responding to the security and protection needs of the internally displaced and in helping the concerned local authorities fulfil their responsibility towards the displaced.

Finally, as the concept of Peacebuilding is being fleshed out, it would be well to include in it a focus on returnees. Their repatriation should always take place with adequate funding, for the sake of the returnees themselves, but also in order to maintain the standards set by the UNHCR itself.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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