HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE
BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0517

Mercoledì 18.10.2006

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA SECONDA COMMISSIONE DELLA 61a ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. SU "MACROECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT"

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA SECONDA COMMISSIONE DELLA 61a ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. SU "*MACROECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT*"

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato ieri davanti alla Seconda Commissione della 61a Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. su: "Macroeconomic policy questions: International trade and development":

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Madam Chair,

Today, the international community would do well to reflect on the reasons why it has not been able to reach the goal that it set for itself in 2001 at the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the WTO. In the last five years, while several military initiatives and operations of vast proportions have been undertaken, no substantial progress has been made in the reform of political finances and international trade which continues to weigh upon developing States, especially Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS).

It would seem that the interests of some sectors of the more developed countries have prevailed over the common good, increasing the already worrisome discrepancy that separates these countries from other regions of the developing world and underlines the failure to make progress on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).

Trade is not simply a complement to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and debt relief. Trade is rather a priority for the general and sustainable growth of the economies of many developing countries. This is one reason why there is little hope of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The current world situation presents inequalities which demand urgent reflection. It has been observed many times that rich countries' support for their own agricultural sector, which comprises a very small percentage of

their populations, amounts to $280 billion per year. This amount is ten times greater than the total amount of aid destined annually to Africa and is equivalent to the total income of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, a fundamental part of this support is the direct or indirect subsidies for agricultural exports, which end up undermining the agriculture of the poorest countries.

The achievement of greater justice through fair trade continues to be a major concern of the Holy See. 'Freedom of trade is fair only if it is subject to the demands of social justice' (Paul VI, *Populorum progressio*, n.59). For the security and development of all peoples, but especially the poor, it would be well for all parties to make greater efforts to overcome the stalemate in multilateral negotiations and to respect the spirit and commitments of Doha regarding the relations between trade, development, responsibility based on solidarity and the overthrow of poverty.

There are no easy answers to these questions and we have all seen how it is not enough for developing countries simply to open markets to trade and investments in order to foster development. That is why the promotion of development must inevitably involve for a time the special consideration of poorer countries. Governments of such countries need to be able to maintain substantial margins of flexibility on the ways and the times to open their markets to foreign competition, to the means necessary for harmoniously developing their industrial and agricultural productions, and to the adequate protection of the weakest economic sectors, found for example in small family agriculture. For their part, the more developed countries must finally honour the commitment to open their markets and to end the dumping of agricultural surpluses fuelled by subsidies.

The urgent need for agreement is clear when one considers that the effects of trade relations have serious consequences for some of the most vulnerable people in the world and ultimately for their dignity. This is a moral imperative that cannot be delayed. If it is not taken seriously, grave consequences could result: uncontrolled movements of populations, irreparable environmental damage, even the spread of terrorism and armed conflict. Country groups, meeting recently in Rio de Janeiro, issued a joint communiqué in which some common criteria were established for resuming the discussions and bringing to completion the DDA. It is to be hoped that this initiative will spur fresh, original thinking that will lead to the resumption of negotiations to the benefit of all concerned.

Some criticism has been aimed at the WTO for its shortcomings in concluding negotiations that would bring additional benefits to developing countries, but it is still able to combine multilateralism with a disciplinary framework. Its rules cannot be ignored by any member country, large or small. Regional agreements, while expedient, are hardly a replacement for a comprehensive settlement of trade issues within the WTO.

For this reason, the first commitment of the international community in the face of the current crisis must be that of preserving and, where possible, bettering the institution. The crisis in the Doha Development Round (DDR) also hints at a possible slide towards the fragmentation of the current international system. The work begun by the 2005 World Summit must continue if the UN is to establish effective operating connections between the General Assembly, UNCTAD and the WTO.

With the resumption of activities in Geneva coinciding with our work here, the Holy See hopes that States will return to the table ready to make a fresh start. Trade negotiations can make a substantial contribution to the cause of peace and stability in the world if all States are prepared o make the sacrifices necessary for the establishment of more just trade relations.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01470-02.02] [Original text: English]