



BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 76MA SEDUTA PLENARIA DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'ONU SULLA QUESTIONE DEI DIRITTI UMANI E LE LIBERTÀ FONDAMENTALI

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 76MA SEDUTA PLENARIA DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'ONU SULLA QUESTIONE DEI DIRITTI UMANI E LE LIBERTÀ FONDAMENTALI

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, l'Arcivescovo Celestino Migliore, Nunzio Apostolico, ha pronunciato ieri a New York, davanti alla 76ma Seduta Plenaria dell'Assemblea Generale dell'ONU, sul punto 67(b): "*Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms: note by the Secretary-General transmitting the final report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (A/61/611): draft resolution (para. 7)*".

● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Madam President,

On the occasion of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, my delegation would like to convey its appreciation to Ambassadors L. Gallegos and D. McKay for their dedicated leadership over these long negotiations.

Protecting the rights, dignity and worth of persons with disabilities remains a major concern for the Holy See. The Holy See has consistently called for disabled individuals to be completely and compassionately integrated into society, convinced that they possess full and inalienable human rights. Therefore, from the very beginning, my delegation has been a constructive and active partner in these negotiations.

While there are many helpful articles in the Convention, including those that address education and the very important role of the home and the family, surely the living heart of this document lies in its reaffirmation of the right to life. For far too long, and by far too many, the lives of people with disabilities have been undervalued or thought to be of a diminished dignity and worth. My delegation worked assiduously to make the text a basis upon which to reverse that assumption and to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights by people with disabilities.

This is why I would like now to put on record the Holy See's position on certain provisions of the Convention.

With regard to article 18, concerning liberty of movement and nationality, and article 23 on respect for home and the family, the Holy See interprets these in a way which safeguards the primary and inalienable rights of parents.

Further, my delegation interprets all the terms and phrases regarding family planning services, regulation of fertility and marriage in article 23, as well as the word "gender", as it did in its reservations and statements of interpretation at the Cairo and Beijing International Conferences.

Finally, and most importantly, regarding article 25 on health, and specifically the reference to sexual and reproductive health, the Holy See understands access to reproductive health as being a holistic concept that does not consider abortion or access to abortion as a dimension of those terms. Moreover, we agree with the broad consensus that has been voiced in this chamber and the *travaux préparatoires* that this article does not create any new international rights and is merely intended to ensure that a person's disability is not used as a basis for denying a health service.

However, even with this understanding, we opposed the inclusion of such a phrase in this article, because in some countries reproductive health services include abortion, thus denying the inherent right to life of every human being, affirmed by article 10 of the Convention. It is surely tragic that, wherever fetal defect is a precondition for offering or employing abortion, the same Convention created to protect persons with disabilities from all discrimination in the exercise of their rights, may be used to deny the very basic right to life of disabled unborn persons.

For this reason, and despite the many helpful articles this Convention contains, the Holy See is unable to sign it.

In conclusion, my delegation considers that the positive potential of this Convention will only be realized when national legal provisions and implementation by all parties fully comply with article 10 on the right to life for disabled persons.

I ask that this statement be included in the report of this meeting.

Thank you, Madam President.

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