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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL SECONDO COMITATO DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUL TEMA DELLO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE

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NAZIONI UNITE SUL TEMA DELLO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE

Il 29 ottobre 2007, nel corso della LXII Sessione Ordinaria dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U., S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'O.N.U., ha preso la parola dinanzi al II Comitato sul tema: "Sustainable Development".

Pubblichiamo qui di seguito il testo dell'intervento di S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Madam Chairperson,

The Plan of Implementation adopted at the conclusion of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg reaffirms that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for sustainable development. It repeatedly reasserts that the three components of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — are interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars.

My delegation believes that protecting the environment means more than defending it. Protecting the environment implies a more positive vision of the human being, in the sense that the person is not considered a nuisance or a threat to the environment, but one who holds oneself responsible for the care and management of the environment. In this sense, not only is there no opposition between the human being and the environment, there is established an inseparable alliance, in which the environment essentially conditions man's life and development, while the human being perfects and ennobles the environment by his or her creative activity.

Beyond all the studies on environment and development, the primary concern of my delegation is the importance of grasping the underlying moral imperative that all, without exception, have a grave responsibility to protect the environment. While the duty to protect the environment should not be considered in opposition to development, it

must not be sacrificed on the altar of economic development. My delegation believes that, at its core, the environmental crisis is a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth and what we pass on to future generations. It exhorts us to live in harmony with our environment. Thus the ever-expanding powers of the human being over nature must be accompanied by an equally expanding responsibility towards the environment.

The issue of the environment is directly related to other basic questions, making holistic solutions ever harder to find. Environment is inseparable from questions such as energy and economics, peace and justice, national interests and international solidarity. It is not hard to see how issues of environmental protection, models of development, social equity and each one's share of the responsibility to care for the environment are inextricably intertwined.

For instance, while we seek to find the best way to protect the environment and attain sustainable development, we must also work for justice within societies and among nations. We must consider how in most countries today, it is the poor and the powerless who most directly bear the brunt of environmental degradation. Unable to do otherwise, they live in polluted lands, near toxic waste dumps, or squat in public lands and other people's properties without any access to basic services. Subsistence farmers clear woodlands and forests in order to survive. Their efforts to eke out a bare existence perpetuate a vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation. Indeed, extreme want is not only the worst of all pollutions; it is also a great polluter.

However, all is not gloom. Encouraging signs of greater public awareness of the interrelatedness of the challenges we face have been emerging. The unease created by predictions of disastrous consequences of climate change has awakened individuals and countries to the urgency of caring for the environment. Environmental degradation caused by certain models of economic development makes many realize that development is not achieved through a mere quantitative increase of production, but through a balanced approach to production, respect for the rights and dignity of workers, and environmental protection.

My delegation earnestly hopes that these positive signs can lead to the consolidation of a vision of human progress that is consistent with respect for nature, and to a greater international solidarity in which the responsibility for environmental care is equitably and proportionally shared between the developed and the developing countries, between the rich and the poor. It is incumbent upon authorities to ensure that these promising signs translate into public policies capable of arresting, reversing and preventing environmental decay, while pursuing the goal of sustainable development for all.

Laws are not enough to alter behaviour. Behavioural change requires personal commitment and the ethical conviction of the value of solidarity. It demands a more equitable relationship between rich and poor countries, placing special obligations on large-scale industrial structures, both in developed and developing nations, to seriously take measures for environmental protection. A more caring attitude towards nature can be attained and maintained with education and a persevering awareness campaign. The more people know about the various aspects of the environmental challenges they face, the better they can respond.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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