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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 16a SESSIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE SULLO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE DELL'ECOSOC

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, S.E. Mons. l'Arcivescovo Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato il 16 maggio scorso a New York, davanti alla 16a Sessione della Commissione sullo Sviluppo Sostenibile dell'ECOSOC sul punto: "The way forward":

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset my delegation joins previous speakers in expressing its condolences and solidarity to those affected by the recent tragedies in Myanmar and China. These disasters and their impact on human lives and sustainable development remind us of our important responsibility as governmental leaders to point the way forward to addressing the many issues of sustainable development and to find the means for building a better future.

The world is currently facing a challenge of meeting this very goal in the form of a global food crisis. This crisis reveals the delicate and interlinking nature of agriculture, rural development, land reform, drought and desertification and presents a daunting yet important and urgent task to policy makers and civil society.

Many question the real causes, the consequences in the medium and long term of the food crisis and its fundamental tendencies. The UN, in all its components and in particular this Commission on Sustainable Development, has a precise responsibility and also an interest of credibility in providing appropriate responses in view of effective solutions, because at stake is the ability of humanity to provide food.

Indeed, this food crisis should not be measured merely by the rise in costs throughout the international food markets, but also by the physical, mental and spiritual cost of those who are unable to provide for themselves and their families.

Investing in long-term and sustainable agriculture programs at the local and international levels remains central to the development prospects of so many. This investment must be done in a way that addresses the prices of food commodities as well as the distribution and production of food around the world, in particular in Africa. Programs that allow farmers to produce food commodities at the local levels should continue to be supported and greater efforts must be made to mitigate the negative aspects of changing environmental and financial realities.

Agriculture policies need to rediscover the path of reason and reality in order to balance the need for food production with the need to be good stewards of the earth. Care must be taken in order to meet the fundamental needs of persons and to avoid reducing the dialogue to self-interested and ideologically driven economic and environmental extremes.

Seventy percent of the world's poor live in the same rural areas where widespread chronic malnourishment continues to persist. Clearly, this illustrates that in addressing sustainable development we must continue to focus not merely upon those who consume food commodities but also upon those who produce it. Greater investment in small-holder farmers which enables them to increase production in a sustainable manner would provide an important element to addressing the continued presence of chronic hunger and malnourishment in certain regions.

While the current food crisis presents an immediate threat to development, society must continue to address persisting and imminent challenges such as climate change, harmful agricultural subsidies, fair trade, environmental degradation and land reform. Through greater international solidarity and increased concern for the most vulnerable within our societies, we can address the immediate challenges while still working to ensure that the progress of today becomes the cornerstone for a more just and secure tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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