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BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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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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Il 28 ottobre scorso, nel corso della LXIII 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: Protection of global environment for present and future generations of mankind*".

Riportiamo qui di seguito il testo dell'intervento:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr Chairman,

My delegation is pleased to join this debate on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind, and wishes to express at the very outset its appreciation for the effective approach to this particular item of the General Assembly.

It is often said that we have to defend the environment. The term "defense" could mislead us to see a conflict between the environment and the human being. In this forum, we speak of "protection" or "safeguarding". Indeed, in this case, protection encompasses more than defense. It implies a positive vision of the human being, meaning that the person is considered not a nuisance or a threat to the environment, but as its steward. In this sense, not only is there no opposition between the human being and the environment, but there is an established and inseparable alliance, in which the environment essentially conditions the human being's existence and development, while the latter perfects and ennobles the environment by his creative activity.

The use of appropriate language is important when we speak of protecting the environment and climate change, so vital for the whole of humanity today.

Ever since international law began to embrace global commons and shared ecosystems, new concepts have

taken shape with a view to rethinking the legal basis of the appropriation, use, safeguard, protection and equitable sharing of natural resources as well as ecosystems. Notwithstanding some divergence of opinion regarding their meaning and normative status, the principles of "common heritage of mankind", "state responsibility", "common but differentiated responsibilities", "inter-generational and intra-generational equity", have provided valuable perspectives and guidance for addressing the interrelations of environment, economic development and ultimately human rights.

In the same vein, the principle of "responsibility to protect", though it may not have been able to generate precise juridical norms in itself, has been invoked by some as an essential aspect of the exercise of sovereignty at the national and international levels.

Applying this principle to environmental issues and associating it with the protection of the global climate, actually gives the international community an opportunity to reflect on different aspects that can help promote an authentic human development.

The responsibility to protect the climate requires us to further deepen the interactions between food security and climate change, focusing on the centrality of the human person, in particular on the most vulnerable populations, often located in rural areas of developing countries. The strategies to confront the challenges of food security and climate change, through synergic actions of adaptation and mitigation, must take into account the centrality of these populations, respecting their culture and traditional customs.

Secondly, the responsibility to protect the climate should be based on the alliance between the principles of subsidiarity and global solidarity. In a world so interconnected as today, we are witnessing the rapid expansion of a series of challenges in many areas of human life, from food crisis to financial turmoil. Such crises have revealed the limited national resources and capacities to deal with them adequately, and the increasing need for collective action by the international community. The current negotiations on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change are a good example of how responsibility to protect, subsidiarity and global solidarity are strongly intertwined with each other, a fact that we ought to take into account as we consider the protection of the global climate for present and future generations.

Thirdly, it should be borne in mind that the environmental question cannot be considered separately from other issues, like energy and economy, peace and justice, national interests and international solidarity. It is not difficult to perceive how issues of environmental protection, models of development, social equity and shared responsibility to care for the environment are inextricably linked.

Today's society cannot respond adequately to the duty connected with the responsibility to protect the environment if it does not seriously review its lifestyle, its patterns of consumption and production. There is, therefore, an urgent need to educate in ecological responsibility, based on the fact that many ethical values, fundamental for developing a peaceful society, have a direct relationship to the environmental question. Conversely, the interdependence of the many challenges that the world faces today confirms the need for coordinated solutions based on a coherent moral vision of the world.

Such education cannot simply rest on political or ideological reasons, nor its purpose aim at the rejection of the modern world. It entails a genuine conversion and change in patterns of thinking and behavior and should be based on the value and dignity of the human person.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

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