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Press Conference for the Presentation of the Message for the 55th World Peace Day

At 11.30 this morning, a press conference was livestreamed from the Holy See Press Office, to present the Message for the 55th World Peace Day, on the theme “Dialogue between generations, education and work: tools for building lasting peace”, to be held on 1 January 2022.

The speakers were His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; the Reverend Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, F.M.A., interim secretary for the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; the Reverend Fr. Fabio Baggio, C.S., under-secretary for the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; and Dr. Aboubakar Soumahoro, president of the *Lega Braccianti* and spokesperson for *Invisibili in Movimento*.

The following are their interventions:

Abstract of His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

Education, Work and Dialogue between Generations: Tools for Building Peace

In the introductory verse, Isaiah is captivated by the beauty of the feet of the peace-bearer: a captivation that reveals a great yearning for peace which God’s people have nourished within itself during a protracted period of experience of hardship and disaster which had befallen it. This is the experience of the exile and its consequences which the Book of Baruch captures as:

- Lack of conversion/change
- Rejection of path to peace
- Alienation

- Exposure to hostility
- Inactivity/lack of productive existence (*languishing*)
- Experience of death/threats to life

These characteristics which are emblematic of Israel's life in exile and which undergird and explain Israel's great yearning for peace are verifiable in our world today:

§The lack of moral/ethical fibre and political will to embrace and commit to life-saving measure in the face of life-threatening climate crises, pandemics and economic inequalities.

§Short term gains and profits which becloud our vision of long term benefits and advantages.

§The resultant crises of volumes of displaced peoples: migration and refugee crises.

§Real life and real time experience of fear (angst), hostility and insecurity.

§Privation of global civilization and human culture of a working capital.

§General experience of disasters and growing threats to human culture and existence.

Against this background of the *Message of Peace 2022* begins with some characterizations of *Peace* derived from the teaching of Pope Francis:

Negotiation often becomes necessary for shaping concrete paths to peace. Yet the processes of change that lead to lasting peace are crafted above all by peoples; each individual can act as an effective leaven by the way he or she lives each day..... This means that "everyone has a fundamental role to play in a single great creative project: to write a new page of history, a page full of hope, peace and reconciliation. There is an "architecture" of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an "art" of peace that involves us all. From the various peace processes that have taken place in different parts of the world, "we have learned that these ways of making peace, of placing reason above revenge, of the delicate harmony between politics and law, cannot ignore the involvement of ordinary people. Peace is not achieved by normative frameworks and institutional arrangements between well-meaning political or economic groups... It is always helpful to incorporate into our peace processes the experience of those sectors that have often been overlooked, so that communities themselves can influence the development of a collective memory". _And this means that

Despite obstacles, differences and varying perspectives on the way to achieve peaceful coexistence, this task summons us to persevere in the struggle to promote a 'culture of encounter'. This requires us to place at the centre of all political, social and economic activity the human person, who enjoys the highest dignity, and respect for the common good.

(*Fratelli tutti*, 231-2)

- As a **Gift of God**.
- As **Work of the human person and fruit of Culture of dialogue & encounter**.
- Having an **Architecture** of its own multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and multi-actors (rooted in encounter and dialogue).

- Resulting as a **Work of Art (*Art of Peace*)**.
- Enhancing the realization of **Human dignity** and respects **Common good**.
- Baptized by Pope Paul VI as **Development, Peace** corresponds to the vocation of the human person to transform creation with the fruit of his labour..... **WORK**

These various characteristics and attributes of peace will be illustrated by our co-panelists!

Intervention of Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, F.M.A.

The phrase from Isaiah chosen by Pope Francis for this 55th World Peace Day is taken from one of the chapters of the verses of the Suffering Servant of YHWH: "As many were astonished at him – his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men" (52: 14). That messenger of peace is a messenger of a peace that is difficult because it is true, not of an easy or romantic peace. It is the announcement of a prophet who knows that the search for and building of peace coexists with the suffering of many, too many, men and women "marred" in their appearance and in their dignity. We continue, along with Isaiah, to proclaim peace, but we do not forget the pain of those who suffer wars and the lack of peace in this world. Which, as the Holy Father says in this message, are not only the wars waged with weapons; they are also the war that humans have for a long time waged against nature, against mother earth, and against other living species. The young, who are the first protagonists of this message, the young who are always at the centre of Pope Francis' teaching, are by now well aware that they find themselves in this conflict between us and the earth. They did not ask for it, they would not want it, but they know they are fighting to save the planet, and human beings themselves, from this absurd conflict that our economic system has declared on the natural environment. And the Pope is with them. He has repeated many times, and he repeats it once again: the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are the same cry; in the cry of the earth we hear that of the poor, and in that of the poor we hear the cry of the earth. Young people know, as do the young people of Economy of Francesco, whom Pope Francis convoked two and a half years ago, and who are now responding to that cry throughout the world. And they do so by seeking dialogue with adults: they are proposing an alliance. Furthermore, as the Pope recalls in his message, employment, with this grave Covid crisis, is increasingly at the centre of the social question. There is no justice without just employment, without work for all, without decent and respectful work for all. Work is far more than a way of earning a living: work is an expression of our identity and dignity, of our social and relational vocation, of our protection and cultivation of the land, with God and with others. For this reason, as a Dicastery, through the Covid-19 Commission and in collaboration with other Dicasteries, we are initiating a project entitled "Work for all": it will be a great task of listening to all those who in various places are looking for creative solutions to the problems of work. Listening, discernment, and sharing, creating the conditions for something new to happen. To build peace through decent working conditions for all.

Finally, care. Work can no longer be separated from care. In a global society that, thank God, will live longer and longer, care, the supply and demand for care, will be the great challenge of the human and spiritual sustainability of our way of life. If we leave it all to the market, the number of those who are rejected will increase, and they will be excluded from income and care; we must put care back at the centre of the social pact, knowing that there is a need for care that remains and becomes gift and gratuity, an expression of the principle of fraternity (FT).

"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams" (Joel). Pope Francis continues to dream dreams, so that young people will make prophecies.

Intervention of Fr. Fabio Baggio, C.S.

The Holy Father's Message for the 55th World Peace Day, entitled "Dialogue between generations, education and work: tools for building lasting peace", departs slightly from the traditional opposition between peace and war. It insists on the idea of peace as the goal of a journey which, as Saint Paul VI taught us, is defined as integral human development.

Today's world is positively interconnected thanks to a global flow of ideas and technological innovations that aim to enhance the common good. But it is also interdependent in a negative sense, especially if we consider the effects of the climate crisis and disease that cannot be contained within national borders.

The world is our common home, the only possible home for our common family. And both the common family and the common home always lose out when wars occur within them. Rulers who think they can solve problems through armed conflict belong to the past, not to the future.

Peace throughout the common home and family is a necessary condition for avoiding catastrophe and promoting the common good of all. However, if it is to be lasting, it must be built according to an architecture adapted to contemporary challenges, ensuring its breadth and solidity.

To this end, the message highlights three essential tools: dialogue between generations, education and work.

The first tool is sincere, fruitful and generative communication between the old and new generations. The wisdom of those with more experience must serve to moderate the facile enthusiasms of those with less, just as the boldness of the younger generation must serve as a spur to those who tend to stop at "it has always been done this way". Knowledge of history and processes is an essential element of discernment, but it must never be an obstacle to growth, creativity and innovation.

The dynamics studied in the field of migration show that some substantial changes are often the work of the second and third generations, whose capacity for intercultural dialogue becomes the driving force behind processes of true and effective integration.

The second tool is education, understood as teaching that generates culture and ensures freedom and responsibility. From this perspective, the message particularly insists on education towards a culture of "care", understood as care for the common home and the common family. Every human being is called to care for creation and for his or her brothers and sisters, as a personal vocation, and for this he or she must be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills.

And here too we cannot fail to refer to the migratory context, increasingly populated by workers employed in the care sector, silent and humble examples of dedication and sacrifice.

The last tool is work, another central theme of Pope Francis' teaching. Considering the commitments of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development for 2022, I am sure we will have the opportunity to explore this tool from different angles in the coming months. I would just like to mention its centrality in understanding the phenomenon of migration.

Dialogue between generations, education and work are not the only tools for building lasting peace, but they are undoubtedly excellent equipment for the journey that still lies ahead.

Thank you.

Intervention of Dr. Aboubakar Soumahoro

Let me first of all thank you for the invitation.

It is an honour to be here, especially on this World Peace Day.

In a world that lies in evil and where all the foundations of the earth are shaken by the god of this century who has blinded people's minds, PEACE has become an indispensable value.

However, the PEACE we need is not the one the world gives, but the perfect peace that gives our souls and spirits rest, courage and strength to face any challenge.

Today, one of the main challenges we are called to face is the “cry of the poor and the earth”, as the Holy Father, Pope Francis, said in his solemn message on the occasion of this World Peace Day.

Today, there are nearly 100 million more people (according to the World Bank) worldwide living in a state of impoverishment because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Certainly, the pandemic will have exacerbated the state of impoverishment, but it was a pre-existing condition. We are talking about people who are unable to meet their own vital needs and those of their families because of growing material inequalities.

Today, the whole of creation (subjected to the precariousness caused by the climate crisis) is impatiently waiting to be freed from the bondage of the corruption of the spirit of greed.

In addition to the “cry of the poor and the earth”, there is also an urgent need to address the spiritual bewilderment that creates, among other things, a void of meaning that affects everyone (intergenerationally) and that generates both selfishness and individualism in this society of ours ruled by the god of money.

In order to face these three challenges, we need to have the courage to initiate a SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION capable of entering into the dynamics of real life, also to rebuild the sense of belonging to the same human community.

Achieving this goal requires listening, generosity and sacrifice, but it can only be done by focusing on the “three ways of building lasting peace”. as the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has indicated. That is, First of all, dialogue between generations, as the basis for the realisation of shared projects. Secondly, education, as a factor of freedom, responsibility and development. Finally, employment for the full realisation of human dignity.

Therefore, we have the responsibility to put ourselves at the service of our human community in order to construct the architecture of a peace anchored in social justice in harmony with nature and within an economic perspective at the service of the person. All this requires the idea of social and political action that is popular and not populist. A policy capable of restoring hope and not exasperating suffering, by uniting and federating people who are different but who share common needs and dreams.

Thank you for your kind attention.
