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OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE  
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLs

# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0380

Martedì 13.06.2000

## **INTERVENTO DELLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA XXIII SESSIONE SPECIALE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'ONU**

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Si è svolta a New York dal 5 al 10 giugno scorso la XXIII Sessione Speciale dell'Assemblea Generale dell'ONU, "Women 2000: Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century", generalmente conosciuta come "Beijing+5", con riferimento al tema della riunione, che era dedicata ad una valutazione della messa in opera della Conferenza di Beijing sulle donne.

La Delegazione della Santa Sede, guidata dall'Arcivescovo Renato R. Martino, Osservatore Permanente presso l'ONU, è intervenuta in Plenaria nel pomeriggio del 9 giugno ed ha presentato, al termine dei lavori, una Dichiarazione interpretativa circa il documento finale della Sessione.

Pubblichiamo qui di seguito l'intervento pronunciato il 9 giugno dalla Sig.ra Kathryn H. Hoomkwap, Membro della Delegazione:

Mr. President,

The Holy See delegation has participated actively in the negotiations leading to this Plenary of the Special Session of the General Assembly which has raised issues of critical importance to the lives of millions of women worldwide, and which have evaluated the progress that has been made since the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The "living heart" of the initiatives called for in the Beijing Platform for Action correspond to the multiplicity of services the Catholic Church has historically provided to women, demonstrating in action, as well as in words, its belief in the importance of educating girls and women, on access for women to education, and the basic social services which they need to pursue their own life and family goals. The Platforms' sections on the needs of women in poverty, on ending violence against women, on education, employment, land, capital and technology coincide with the Church's own mission since they begin to speak of the hope which Pope John Paul II has eloquently summed up in his exhortation to "Be not afraid."

But, Mr. Chairman, the truth is, I am afraid, as are many of my sisters throughout the world. As a wife and mother, I, and my Delegation fear for the health and well being of children in Africa where the continued prevalence of diseases like malaria, guinea worm disease, schistosomiasis, - along with the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic fells so many of our children. We worry about the number of people, especially the children, who suffer from malnutrition in a world with so much food. The Holy See is extremely concerned about the growing conflicts and the people who find themselves torn from their homes and families by war and senseless turmoil. As a mother of children, I, and my Delegation, are greatly worried about those who cannot read and write and who continue to be enslaved by ignorance and a lack of knowledge in a world that seems to thrive on technology and information.

For these reasons, Mr. President, my delegation strongly supports the document's provisions condemning all forms of violence against women, upholding women's rights to economic and political empowerment, its measures against poverty, and its references - brief though they are - to high mortality rates among girls and women due both to chronic illness and to widespread infections, including tropical diseases. My delegation is particularly pleased to see in the final document a clear acknowledgement of the need of all women for access to basic social services including education, clean water, adequate nutrition, and safe sanitation.

However, Mr. President, in the end, the "Women 2000" document, like the Beijing Platform, would emphasize seemingly endlessly, one issue - sexual and reproductive health - to the detriment of an holistic view of the health of women and their families which is so desperately needed to alleviate women's fears.

Mr. President, this Special Session has given us an opportunity, not only to evaluate the past, but also to plan for the future; and I and my Delegation must ask if we have accomplished all that we set out to do. We live in a changing world in which many people are afraid and in which many people have lost hope. The international community must work intensely to calm those fears through the effective actions of the United Nations.

For all of us to cease to be afraid, we must proceed with full and complete human development--not only social, economic, but also spiritual. The Holy See renews its pledge to help find an end to hunger, to find a way toward educational opportunities for all, toward remedy and comfort for the suffering caused by sickness and disease, and through these means to continually seek to extinguish the fear that keeps us from celebrating life as the gift that it is.

"Be not afraid" is not an empty phrase; it is a message that needs to be concretized by doing all that we can to lead every woman and her family to the threshold of hope.

In closing, Mr. President, the Holy See Delegation wishes to state that nothing that the Holy See has done in the "Women 2000" process should be understood as an endorsement of concepts it does not support for moral reasons. Nothing is to be understood to imply that the Holy See endorses abortion or has in any way changed its moral position concerning abortion or contraceptives. The Holy See reaffirms its belief that life begins at conception and that every human life must be protected from the earliest moments to the end of the life cycle.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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