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INTERVENTO DEL CAPO DELLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA TERZA CONFERENZA DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUI PAESI MENO SVILUPPATI

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Mercoledì 16 maggio, S.E. Mons. Diarmuid Martin, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite ed Istituzioni Specializzate a Ginevra e Capo della Delegazione alla Terza Conferenza delle Nazioni Unite sui Paesi meno sviluppati, in svolgimento a Bruxelles, dal 14 al 20 maggio 2001, ha pronunciato l'intervento che riportiamo di seguito:

The number of LDC's has increased

The Community of Nations has in recent years repeatedly reaffirmed a series of targets and commitments which aim at reducing in our world the immense number of men, women and children who find themselves living in abject poverty, in conditions unworthy of their God-given dignity and which prevent them from fully realizing the God-given potential that each possesses.

Indeed, as the title of our Conference recalls, this situation applies not just to individuals but to entire nations and regions of the world. Despite the enormous opportunities that the scientific progress of recent years has placed at the disposal of our generation, so many people remain unable to draw equitable benefit from them.

The fact that the number of the least developed countries has actually increased in a time of such potential progress shows that as yet globalization has not brought its benefits to all. We cannot remain indifferent to such a situation. A world society which leaves so many of its citizens on the margins of its progress has no title to call itself global. When a global economic system is accompanied by such marginalization and by such increasing inequalities, then that entire system remains vulnerable. No sector of that system is exempt.

The international community is still a dysfunctional community

Our era possesses the knowledge, the means and the policy orientations needed to address poverty, exclusion and crass inequalities. It recognises that investment in persons and in human capacity is in the long term the most needed investment worldwide. It recognises that only a comprehensive, holistic development strategy, centred on the human person, will ensure long-term development. It recognises the importance of education,

health and of decent work as central pillars for fostering economic and social progress of persons and their families. It recognises the importance of transparent and efficient governance structures at the service of citizens.

Despite such consensus, our responses have been partial, at times contradictory. The international community still remains a dysfunctional community. There is still a persistent gap between the commitments made with words and strategies and the resources set aside to realise them. Targets are set and then the appropriate financial and human resources are not allocated to meet them, by donor countries and developing countries alike. The least developed countries are encouraged to open their markets, but they find their products are still faced with protectionist barriers. They are told to assume ownership of their own development and poverty reduction strategies, and then they are faced with at times impossible complexes of conditionalities imposed from outside. So many policy changes are suggested, but the technical assistance and human formation offered to implement such policies is, in comparison, often merely symbolic. Knowledge urgently needed to advance the common good is unduly protected to foster private gain.

Focus on and monitor what works

This Third Conference on the Least Developed Countries cannot simply be just another occasion in which to repeat targets and to update strategies, that already enjoy wide consensus within both the political and scientific communities. The Conference must ask: why, with such consensus, have we not succeeded? We must above all look more carefully at what has succeeded and see where this can be built on and where possible replicated.

We must identify "achievable", we must multiply "achievable". But we must also attentively and objectively monitor our policies and individual activities to see precisely what has worked well, where we have failed and how efficiently our resources have been used. Our bilateral and multilateral programmes of assistance have not been models of efficiency and much still remains to be done to ensure that they best achieve their goals. We must be especially attentive in examining how far the benefits of our initiatives really reach the poorest. Where necessary we must continuously re-focus our targets on the poorest.

The verification process must indeed involve those local communities who are to be the beneficiaries. We must learn to listen to them, to be sensitive to their cultures, to their indigenous knowledge and to the experience of local conditions which they only can offer. It is important that the savings which result from successful local enterprises be reinvested locally, so that these enterprises can take firm root, flourish and create new opportunities for employment and trade. A11 too often, for example, debt-sustainability levels are still fixed too highly, with the effect that the savings from genuinely productive resources cannot be reinvested locally but must be diverted for debt servicing.

The importance of human communities

Our reflection on development policy in recent years has led us to a greater understanding of the centrality of the human person but also of the importance of human communities, as subjects of development. Our strategies must aim to enhance such communities, beginning with the family, to ensure that development is fully rooted in local cultures and becomes well spread across a nation.

The much desired participation of local communities and civil society in the elaboration and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies must become a reality. The necessary rapidity with which the interim poverty reduction strategies, linked with the enhanced HIPC initiative, had to be elaborated has meant that civil society participation was, in many cases, achieved only marginally. More innovative and daring models must be rapidly found by the collaborative effort of all concerned.

Vibrant communities are a prerequisite for an effective market. Community building is, likewise, an essential dimension of pursuing good governance. Good governance cannot be attained simply by issuing decrees or promulgating rights. It must be accompanied by an investment in the building up of human and community capacity, within the different cultural contexts of the world.

Development requires that the fundamental rights of persons be respected and fostered, especially their right to be active participants in all decision making processes which affect their lives. Pope John Paul II recently recalled that in this era of globalization, in an age in which technology and work relationships are moving too quickly for cultures to respond, "social legal and cultural safeguards - the result of peoples efforts to defend the common good - are vitally necessary if individuals and intermediary groups are to maintain their centrality"(Address to the 2001 Session of the Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences). But structures and norms will be fully successful only when they are taken up by communities and peoples who possess the ability, the enthusiasm and the courage to make them work.

A framework of solidarity

The growing international development consensus must underpinned and accompanied by certain underlying principles, also of an ethical nature. Development is above all about certain basic human aspirations and values, understood within a holistic vision of the relationships between humankind and the rest of creation. In a knowledge-based economic system, development consensus must be person-centred, it must aim at inclusion and policies which enhance human capacity and strengthen participative human communities. Development must be inserted into a framework of solidarity and shared responsibility.

Our task is to make solidarity a reality. We must make create a worldwide movement which understands solidarity as a natural duty of each person, each community and each nation. Solidarity must be a natural and essential pillar of every political grouping, the private possession of neither right nor left, neither North nor South, but an ethical imperative of a humanity which seeks to re-assert its vocation to be a global family. God, in fact, "gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone" (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, n. 31)

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