

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0507

Mercoledì 15.10.2003

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL TERZO COMITATO DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUL CONTROLLO INTERNAZIONALE DELLA DROGA

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato ieri dinanzi al Terzo Comitato (Item 109) dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. sul tema del controllo internazionale della droga:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to join the previous speakers in expressing our congratulations on your election and to assure you of our full cooperation as you guide the Committee's work this year. I take this occasion to convey the Holy See's continuing appreciation for the work of the United Nations, this Third Committee, and in particular the work of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the prevention, reduction and suppression of illicit drug abuse.

In all of its phases and dimensions, the illicit drug scourge robs the human person of his or her innate dignity. My delegation notes with special concern the ever more obvious links between the illicit drug trade and other human tragedies, such as the trafficking of human beings, the proliferation of illicit small arms, organized crime, and terrorism. The plague of drugs is not unlike an unweeded garden, whose devastation and spoiling effect know no political, geographical, or socio-economic boundaries.

As it has been mentioned by other distinguished delegations in this Committee, developing countries and populations afflicted by poverty are particularly vulnerable to the devastating trickle-down effects of the drug trade as easy trafficking points or inexpensive cultivators of source crops. It is for this reason that my delegation welcomes development projects that offer farmers profitable and viable alternatives to drug cultivation. These alternative development projects require comprehensive rural development programs, with stable infrastructures, appropriate technology and basic health care, education and so forth. Definitely, the problem of drug cultivation and illicit trafficking is not unrelated to the issues of sustainable human development as envisioned in the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to echo the statement offered by UNODC Executive Director in the 2003 Global Survey on Ecstasy and Amphetamines who called for the need for Global Social Change to truly reverse the alarming upward trends seen in the production and abuse of synthetic drugs, especially by young people throughout the world. With production of Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) estimated at just over 500 tons a year and more than 40 million people having used them in the past 12 months, the Holy See is especially concerned that the permanent health damages, including lasting impact on brain functions, caused by ATS is not fully understood and duly addressed.

My delegation would also like to thank the Executive Director of UNODC, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, for drawing special attention, in his opening remarks, to the importance of demand reduction measures that take a balanced and integrated approach, in accordance with UN drug conventions and the goals set out by the 20th Special Session of the General Assembly. In light of such an approach to demand reduction, the Holy See would like to highlight one of the key means that can contribute to effective prevention of drug abuse. That is, the role of the family.

In fact, the 2003 Report on the World Social Situation rightly stresses the importance of the family in addressing the questions of social vulnerability and risk affecting especially "young people living in so-called dysfunctional families, characterized by conflict, inadequate parental control, weak ties with other members of the extended family and community, and premature autonomy".

As the many causes and consequences of dependence on psychotropic substances are related to family dynamics, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, efforts should target family relationships in their biological, psychological, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Moreover, since the family forms the very basis of a society, illicit drug abuse can destroy the social fabric of a community and even destabilize a civil society.

A great number of researches clearly demonstrate a link between strong family bonds and the prevention of drug abuse by children. The family is usually the first to suffer from both the acute and the long-term consequences of substance-abusing members, a tragic situation which in most cases leads to the disequilibrium in the household relationship and finally to the breakdown of the family.

The family is the first environment where a child learns various habits. Nurturing parenting practices, such as involvement in their children's daily activities and open communications within the family, contribute to healthy social behavior in childhood and adolescence. Often, the simple act of parents sharing a meal regularly with their children has proven effective in reducing the likelihood of experimentation with drugs.

Mr. Chairman, in preparation for the observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004, my delegation wishes to encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, research and academic institutions, to work closely with the Social Policy Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs by exploring and sharing experiences and findings that could strengthen the central role of the family in drug prevention.

The phenomenon of the growing use and increasing abuse of narcotic and psychotropic substances has assumed tragic dimensions. It is especially worrying to note that this social ill affects thousands of young people, which implies enormous consequences for the future of society. The Holy See is confident that the international community will not fail to heed what so many young people are trying to say through their tragedies and anguished appeals, and will redouble its efforts in helping the young generation to liberate itself from this deadly phenomenon of narcotics abuse because the future of youth signifies the future of all humanity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[01599-02.03] [Original text: English]