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LE UDIENZE

Il Santo Padre ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza:

S.E. il Signor Rafael Bielsa, Ministro degli Esteri di Argentina, con la Consorte e Seguito;

Ecc.mi Presuli della Conferenza Episcopale dei Paesi Bassi, in Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum":

S.E. Mons. Franciscus Jozef Maria Wiertz, Vescovo di Roermond

con l'Ausiliare:

S.E. Mons. Everardus Johannes de Jong, Vescovo tit. di Cariana;

S.E. Mons. Adrianus Herman van Luyn, S.D.B., Vescovo di Rotterdam;

S.E. Mons. Antonius Lambertus Maria Hurkmans, Vescovo di 's-Hertogenbosch, Bois-le-Duc;

S.E. Mons. Pietro Sambì, Arcivescovo tit. di Belcastro, Nunzio Apostolico in Israele e in Cipro; Delegato Apostolico in Gerusalemme e Palestina; con undici Sacerdoti.

[00376-01.01]

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL COMITATO DI ESPERTI DELLA "CONVENZIONE SULL'INTERDIZIONE O LIMITAZIONE DELL'USO DI ALCUNE ARMI CONVENZIONALI CHE POSSONO PRODURRE EFFETTI TRAUMATICI ECCESSIVI O INDISCRIMINATI" (8-12 MARZO 2004, GINEVRA)

L'8 marzo scorso, S.E. Mons. Silvano Maria Tomasi, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite e le Istituzioni specializzate a Ginevra, ha preso la parola durante la VII sessione del Gruppo di esperti governativi degli Stati Parte alla "Convenzione sull'interdizione o limitazione dell'uso di alcune armi convenzionali che possono produrre effetti traumatici eccessivi o indiscriminati" (CCW), in programma a Ginevra dall'8 al 12 marzo 2004.

Riportiamo qui di seguito l'intervento di S.E. Mons. Silvano Maria Tomasi:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. SILVANO MARIA TOMASI

Mr. Chariman,

As we begin the seventh session of the Group of Governmental Experts, the Delegation of the Holy See would like to offer some methodological comments of a general nature in order to share with you, Mr Chairman, and with the Delegations of the States Parties some reasons of satisfaction and also to raise some questions regarding the present and the future of the CCW.

1. The Holy See expresses its appreciation for the positive results of the negotiations and for the adoption of a Fifth Protocol regarding explosive remnants of war. This is a step in the right direction. But some crucial issues remain to be solved in order to prevent the recurrence of victims and the damages of past wars. These victims remind us constantly of the exorbitant cost of any war in general and of the consequences of the choice and use of some arms in particular. The Holy See is also encouraged by the renewal of the mandate of the Group of Experts. Other problems equally important as those of explosive remnants of war are yet to receive adequate attention from the States Parties.

2. The multilateral negotiations of arms control or of disarmament still remain slow and long, and results are reached almost always on the basis of the lowest common denominator. On the contrary, the production of new conventional arms follows the most advanced and the most rapid scientific and technological discoveries. The result is that these arms are more and more devastating and cause useless human suffering for much longer periods of time than the conflicts themselves. Cluster bombs, which are increasingly being used in armed conflicts, illustrate tragically this worrying reality. In this context, States Parties should pay particular attention to this type of sub-munition, bearing in mind its traumatizing and devastating effects on civilian populations as well as the negative socio-economic consequences both during and after hostilities.

3. Mr. Chairman the Holy See is involved in a great number of countries of all the regions, in initiatives concerning victims of armed conflicts and their families, including victims of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war. I do not need to describe the frustration and discouragement of thousands of volunteer workers who are obliged to repeat over and over again the job that has already been done and, in some cases, have to

watch the sufferings of the victims without any form of action. It seems to me inappropriate to limit our work and decisions to the quest solely for remedial measures. Prevention is surely less costly in terms of human lives and socio-economic damage. A culture of prevention is the most appropriate in order to ensure a security which is based on justice, trust and cooperation between States. For that reason, the right equilibrium should be that of an armament maintained at the lowest level and whose effects would bring about minimal suffering and damages. There is no need to add to the failure of war in resolving problems its success in causing as many victims and as much unhappiness as possible.

4. Mr. Chairman, the Holy See is prepared to work with you and with all States Parties in promoting a culture of prevention and adopting new instruments which will spare us the efforts that are needed to continually heal the useless sufferings which are caused by these devastating weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00378-02.02] [Original text: English]

AVVISO DI CONFERENZA STAMPA

Si informano i giornalisti accreditati che **martedì 16 marzo 2004**, alle **ore 11.30**, nell'*Aula Giovanni Paolo II* della Sala Stampa della Santa Sede, avrà luogo la Conferenza Stampa di **presentazione del Congresso Internazionale su "*I trattamenti di sostegno vitale e lo stato vegetativo. Progressi scientifici e dilemmi etici*"**, (17-20 marzo 2004, Augustinianum), organizzato e promosso dalla FIAMC (Federazione Internazionale Associazioni Medici Cattolici) e dalla Pontificia Accademia per la Vita.

Interverranno:

S.E. Mons. Elio Sgreccia, Vice-Presidente della Pontificia Accademia per la Vita;

Prof. Gianluigi Gigli, Direttore del Dipartimento di Neuroscienze dell'Ospedale Santa Maria della Misericordia di Udine, Presidente della Federazione Internazionale delle Associazioni dei Medici Cattolici;

Prof. Alan Shewmon, Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics, Vice-Chair of Neurology at UCLA, Chief, Department of Neurology at the Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, California, USA, Relatore al Congresso.

[00374-01.01]

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