

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0507

Sabato 08.10.2005

INTERVENTO DELLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 60a SESSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U SUL TEMA: "WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND"

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che il Capo della Delegazione della Santa Sede, il Sig. Francisco Dionísio, ha pronunciato il 6 ottobre 2005 nel corso della 60a Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, sul tema: "*World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*":

• INTERVENTO DEL SIG. FRANCISCO DIONÍSIO

Mr. President,

My delegation is pleased to participate in this important discussion on the World Programme of Action for Youth. It was once said flippantly: "youth is wasted on the young"; nevertheless, the Holy See is pleased that the United Nations continues to have a high regard for their importance.

Recently, at a gathering of hundreds of thousands of young people in Cologne (Germany), Pope Benedict XVI echoed the sentiments of young people around the world, saying, "We are concerned for the state of the world and we are asking: 'Where do I find standards to live by, what are the criteria that govern responsible cooperation in building the present and the future of our world?'"

Young people aspire to be great. But to achieve greatness, they must be mindful of others, especially those who are without. Nor can they achieve this alone. They need the leadership and resources of governments, the interest and cooperation of non-governmental organisations and the good will and hard work of all people.

In the light of this concern, my delegation has carefully followed developments since the launch ten years ago of the World Programme of Action for Youth. Its ten priority areas for action touched upon significant issues and themes that affect the lives of young people and our world.

The Secretary-General's 2005 World Youth Report returns to some troubling elements that still affect young people's lives today. Addressing one of those concerns, my delegation reiterates its position on the use of the expression "sexual and reproductive health", as contained in the Report. My delegation understands it as a holistic promotion of the health of women, men, youth and children. It does not consider abortion or access to abortion as a dimension of these terms.

The Holy See also continues to be fully committed to the role of **youth in the global economy, poverty, education and employment**. Currently in the world, there are over 196,000 Catholic primary and secondary schools attended by more than 51 million children and youths. Additionally, there are almost 1,000 Catholic universities, colleges and other institutes, educating more than 4 million young adults. Young people are being helped to receive the education they deserve and are encouraged to give back to others. Education is the gift that continues to give.

With respect to **youth in relation to society, environment, leisure and participation**, by means of thousands of youth groups around the world, the Catholic Church shares and promotes the importance of caring for one's self, the environment and one's peers.

Regarding **youth at risk, health, drugs, delinquency and discrimination against girls and young women**, there are almost 12,000 Catholic hospitals and institutions of healthcare and preventative medicine throughout the world. Trained local professionals, through their work there, support the principle that all human life is sacred, and that each person has worth. The young are clearly cared for as precious and vulnerable members of society.

Mr. President, the ability to accomplish the specific goals of the ten priorities boils down to commitment. The round table discussion for young people called it "making commitments that matter". We know that we live in a complex and complicated world, and many young people know that such commitment requires three things: recognising needs, especially in the poorest members of our world; planning a response; and following through.

The Holy See encourages the UN to continue to identify the needs of the world's young people, especially of the poorest and weakest of them. It further recommits itself to working together with the international community to develop realistic, appropriate, immediate and long term responses. Building a better world is a lifelong process. Oftentimes it is a very long journey. But young people recognize that their journey is just beginning. And precisely given their youth, they are still at the initial steps in paving a path for success in the future. Every person of every age matters as we work together to build a world that is safe and happy for young people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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