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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA TERZA COMMISSIONE DELLA 60a SESSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U, SUL PUNTO 65: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENTITLED "WOMEN 2000: GENDER EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY"

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato ieri a New York nel corso della Terza Commissione della 60a Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. sul punto 65: *"Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century"*:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See continues to devote attention to the follow-up process of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, as well as to the subsequent Outcome Documents. Despite some positive advancement in the condition of women in today's world, vulnerability remains a constant in women's lives.

Violence against women in all its forms, including domestic violence and harmful traditional practices, is a grave violation of the dignity of women and their human rights. In some countries female foeticide and infanticide continue. Often, violence against women results from the consideration of a woman, not as a human person with rights on an equal basis with others, but as an object to be exploited. In this context, an increasing scourge is trafficking of women and girls, as well as various forms of prostitution. All forms of violence against women are rightly to be condemned and the Holy See, for its part, seeks to work in collaboration with all those of good will in giving priority to social policies aimed at the elimination of the causes of such violence. For example, in June of

this year, the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People organized an International Meeting of Pastoral Care for the Liberation of Street Women.

Any strategy aimed at improving the lives of women must include special consideration for the women and girls who suffer so. While this process will not be easy, it is essential in order to enable them to regain their self esteem, rebuild trusting relationships, and become aware once again of their value, dignity and worth.

According to recent International Labour Organization (ILO) statistics, women represent 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor. These women do not earn enough even to lift themselves and their families above poverty or the salary of one dollar a day. Poverty prevents women from attaining their basic needs such as nutrition, sanitation, basic health care and education, and it continues to deprive societies of the enriching and irreplaceable contribution that can be furnished only by women.

In order to reverse the process of the feminization of poverty, my delegation believes that attention should be given to increasing women's access to and control over productive resources and capital. Several Catholic Organizations are engaged in microcredit programs for women aimed at empowering them through forming self-managed microcredit projects, in places like Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Once empowered, women will play a key role in the development and well being of their family, community and society. All members of society have a role to play in promoting that empowerment.

Illiteracy, present especially among women in rural areas, is an evident obstacle to development and to the attainment of women's basic rights. With the assistance of others, every woman has the right to make the fullest of her potential, talents and abilities because, as we read in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right to education". More and more, we are made aware of the fact that investment in the education of girls is the fundamental key to the full advancement of women.

The Delegation of the Holy See recognizes the need to address urgently specific health care needs of women. We know that many women today still do not have access even to basic health care. The Holy See continues to advocate a holistic approach to the health of women which does not exclusively focus on a single aspect of a woman but on her overall and comprehensive health care needs. It is a matter of serious concern that women are particularly vulnerable to the tragic consequences of world health problems and epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, as well as to the lack of safe-water and sanitation. Furthermore, women have the right to the highest standard of health care during pregnancy and the right to deliver children in a clean, safe environment, with adequate professional help.

It is clear that much still has to be done for the full advancement of women in today's world. It is to be hoped that the United Nations will play an important role in transforming their legitimate aspirations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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