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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL 2006 HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF ECOSOC

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Si è tenuta a Ginevra, dal 3 al 5 luglio 2006, la riunione del 2006 del Segmento ad Alto Livello dell'ECOSOC sul tema *"La creazione di un ambiente che a livello nazionale e internazionale favorisca un impiego pieno e produttivo e un lavoro dignitoso per tutti, ed il suo impatto sullo sviluppo sostenibile"*.

S.E. Mons. Silvano M. Tomasi, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite e delle Istituzioni Internazionali a Ginevra, il 5 luglio scorso ha pronunciato l'intervento che pubblichiamo di seguito:

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

Mr. President,

1. The goal of equitable development regularly pursued by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has taken a new and timely turn in the present session. ECOSOC focuses on a theme that is both timely and strategic: "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development." The Delegation of the Holy See fully endorses this agenda that highlights the central place of the human person, the value of human work and that points out the way to overcome chronic poverty and marginality. Decent work, in fact, entails a quality of life that goes beyond production: it is a dimension of the person himself, who gives work its highest value.

People looking and hoping for a job, who find themselves out of work, are at an all time high with the consequent serious risk that the fight against poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be frustrated and that this frustration may provoke disorderly behavior and, surely, a less secure world. Already in 1967 Pope Paul VI had stated: "Development is the new name of peace." (*Popularum Progressio*).

It may be now the occasion to ask why much direct financial assistance and technology exchange have not been as effective as planned and to reconsider the relationship between development and the broader goals of international cooperation.

2. If individuals and the different groups and associations which make up society take on a primary responsibility in the economy in a healthy subsidiarity, this local involvement can propel the economy forward. At the grass root level it is the creation of new jobs that puts the economy in motion. Active participation in work unclench the creative capacities and energies of each person within the specific moment and level of development of a country. Step by step poverty is reduced, emigration becomes an option instead of a necessity, social standards begin to develop, people are lifted out of a vicious circle of misery and indecent conditions of life. It becomes clear that "the primary basis of the value of work is the human person as such" (John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, 6).

To obtain this goal for societies in the grip of unemployment, assistance for capacity building will have to be adapted to the level of development of each country. In this way, a waste of resources will be avoided. Donors will see their solidarity fruitful for the receiving countries and, in the long run, also for themselves. In our present interconnectedness, to the necessity of preparing products for the global market corresponds the responsibility to help the people of the least developed societies to have the training and the know-how that allow them a fair chance to compete. A realistic partnership gives priority to the choices based on local possibilities of labour intensive economic initiatives managed with honesty and responsible competence and leading out of a stifling status quo. Such a job creating approach prevents the unintended effect of some official development assistance that ends up by enriching a small group of corporations or small group of persons who then incline to block democratization and even to tolerate corruption.

3. When the process of transformation of society takes hold, decent work contributes another important dimension, that of a sense of future that is hopeful and that gives the possibility to recover personal protagonism and self-respect, and that favors a more integrated social structure. In fact the family can be supported, children are not forced to work and instead can accede to education, the values of organization and participation are learned. On this base, work serves as a major element in the self-fulfillment of each woman and man.

4. The way forward, then, appears to be the political acceptance of conditions that allow for local labour-intensive employment and this creation of jobs fights poverty and sets in motion social change. In the context of today's globalization, however, while wealth increases, the gap between rich and poor persists. A convergence or coherence among international actors in the economic and development arena can multiply the results in job creation, and this implies a better coordination of financial investment policies, of agricultural reforms and access to markets, of good governance. A progressive elimination of external debt will then result as a consequence of this strategy.

If the Doha trade round negotiations fail to conclude with some positive agreements, the world's poor and hungry will pay most of the price and the chance for their growth, their development and for decent work will vanish for a long time. The courage and political imagination to make the needed compromises can lead instead to a renewal of common action and show a concrete commitment to the elimination of global poverty which is still a scandal and a threat to peace and security.

At this juncture in history when the international family of nations wants to promote "better standards of life in larger freedoms", special interests of agencies and of countries should give away to the opportunity of a coherent action for the common good, for a fair share by all in trade, in decision-making, and in the benefits of development.

5. Work and development call for a change in focus and priorities so that the enabling environment of peace, dialogue, respect of subsidiarity and participation may allow for the growth of decent work and ultimately the development of every person. The proposed 'Decade for Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All' could serve as a period of reflection and action on these priorities. The rules of the economy and trade, the technical progress we daily witness, the political engagement for a just international order: all these are components of an enabling environment geared to safeguard the dignity and creativity of every human person and ensure a future of justice and peace for the entire human family.

