



# **BOLLETTINO**

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## **INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA CONFERENZA DIPLOMATICA SULLE MUNIZIONI A GRAPPOLO (19-30 MAGGIO 2008, DUBLINO)**

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Dal 19 al 30 maggio si tiene a Dublino la Conferenza Diplomatica sulle munizioni a grappolo. Pubblichiamo qui di seguito l'intervento che S.E. Mons. Silvano M. Tomasi, Osservatore Permanente presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite e le Organizzazioni Internazionali a Ginevra, Capo della Delegazione della Santa Sede, ha pronunciato il 19 maggio scorso:

### **● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. SILVANO M. TOMASI**

Mr. President,

1. The Delegation of the Holy See is particularly honoured to take the floor at the start of this Diplomatic Conference. It is happy to see the fruition of the concerted efforts of a large number of actors to take to a positive conclusion a process that seeks greater security and protection. We need to move beyond a reductive and narrow vision that would give the illusion that protection comes only through arms, specifically, those we are engaged to ban.

First of all, the Delegation of the Holy See would like to express its satisfaction to see you, Mr. Ambassador, preside the proceedings of this meeting and facilitate the negotiations toward a strong and operational agreement.

The Holy See offers Ireland its support and is available to join forces in building together a more human, more secure and more cooperative world.

Mr. President,

2. This Dublin Conference is the result of the awareness that a concrete, credible and effective action is needed to respond to a problem that has lasted too long. For years NGOs, ICRC, and various Countries, have raised the issue of cluster munitions without success at first. Our satisfaction is great now. No one today denies the

existence of humanitarian problems linked with cluster munitions, the urgency of a collective action, and the indispensable effort to translate this concerns into a targeted development of international humanitarian law.

The different partners of the Oslo Process and the States parties to the *Convention on certain conventional weapons* (CCW) are in agreement on this urgency. No doubt, important differences still exist concerning an appropriate response.

The Holy See, however, cannot but insist on the priority of human dignity, of the interests of the victims, the priority of prevention and stability, and on the concept of security based on the lowest level of armament. Peace transcends by far the framework of military considerations. Peace is not just the absence of war.

Human rights, development, social and political participation, justice, cooperation, this and similar concepts, take a critical role in a modern definition of authentic peace.

Security relying only on arms and force is ephemeral and an illusion. Cluster munitions illustrate perfectly the point. Even so-called victories prove to be lasting defeats for the civil population, for development, for pacification, for stability. Decades after the utilisation of cluster munitions, peace preserves a bitter taste with thousand of victims, socio-economic development stifled, considerable human and financial resources wasted.

3. The chance for a decision is given us here and now. In a globalised and more and more inter-dependent world, the problems of some are the problems of all: of rich and poor countries; of developed and developing countries; of countries producing and exporting cluster munitions and countries that import them; user and non user countries. What is not done today, it will have to be done tomorrow with a supplement of suffering, of economic costs, and of deeper wounds to heal.

4. Understandably, some countries will face greater difficulties to implement the commitments that will derive from the future instrument. Make no mistake, however. Affected countries and victims are those that have paid and keep paying the most exorbitant price. Those who have to renounce these type of arms, those who have to give up exporting them, those obliged to destroy their stocks, those who will engaged in demining and decontamination activities, those who will invest resources for the victims, their families and communities, all people involved in the various humanitarian activities, will have to make also some efforts. Such efforts should be considered by the political and military leadership, and by the people of their countries, as a necessary but quite rewarding participation in the construction of a more peaceful and more secure world, where everyone enjoys greater security.

5. In this as in other contexts, cooperation and partnership are essential for success. A partnership among States, United Nations, International Organisations, the Committee of the Red Cross and the NGOs, is the secret to a common success and an indispensable element to reach the object of the future instrument. Victims should have a privileged place in this plan, their role should be an active one from start to finish. In the negotiations under way, every player should find its appropriate place, so that support for the Convention to be adopted may result complete, strong, and operational. Every one is needed in the implementation of this project. Let us work hand in hand as partners to meet now the challenge of the adoption and tomorrow that of implementation.

Mr. President,

6. True, States have a right to defend peace, security and the stability of peoples under their responsibility. But this can be better achieved without recourse to the arms race and to war. In his address before the United Nations General Assembly in 1965, Pope Paul VI reminded the Community of Nations of the challenge of peace without recourse to arms: "One cannot love with offensive arms in hand. Arms, above all terrible arms that modern science as provided, even before causing victims and destruction, generate bad dreams, nourish bad feelings, bring about nightmares, lack of trust, bad decisions; they required enormous expenses; they block solidarity projects and useful work; they distort the psychology of peoples. Till men will remain weak, unstable and even mean as he often shows to be, defensive arms will unfortunately be necessary. But you, your courage

and your quality prompt you to study the means to ensure international life without recourse to arms: here a goal worthy of your efforts, here is what peoples attend from you, here is what must be reached!".

Mr. President,

7. The eyes of peoples, of victims, of affected countries, are focused on this Diplomatic Conference, and all wait from us a courageous decision, as Pope Benedict XVI reminded the world yesterday. The world awaits an act of faith in the human person and his highest aspirations to live in peace and security, a commitment to make solidarity the most splendid expression of the unity of the human family and of its common destiny.

I am convinced, Mr. President, that at the closing of this Conference all participants will leave as winners and satisfied to have made the right choice.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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