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STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE AT THE 64th SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY BEFORE THE PLENARY, ON ITEM 63: NEW ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

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Here below the statement delivered by H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See, on 21 October 2009 at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly on item 63 before the Plenary: New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support.

Mr. President,

In congratulating the Secretary General for his Report on the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), my delegation would like to offer some remarks on the overall situation in Africa.

First of all, there are certain prejudices that must be eliminated once and for all. Often when one speaks about Africa, both journalistically and at the academic or political level, one speaks of extreme poverty, *coups d'état*, corruption and regional conflicts. Also, when speaking positively of Africa, it is always about the future of Africa, as if it had nothing to offer at the present time.

The reality is that Africa, even in its most difficult years, has been able to provide the international community examples and values worthy of admiration and, today, Africa can also offer signs of fulfillment of many of its hopes. Just think about the various cases in which Africa has proven its great capacity to manage the processes of transition to independence or reconstruction after situations of conflict. Consider too, the presence of so many valiant officials in the United Nations and UN Agencies through which Africa shows the world the capability and talents of her people to manage the multilateral sector. Think also of the increasing contribution of the sons and daughters of Africa to the scientific, academic and intellectual life of the developed countries.

Some African countries have succeeded in realizing the dream of a diversified agriculture, which obtains results

that were up to this point considered impossible; they have proven that family-farming of small scale or insignificant size can actually be multi-functional, capable of ensuring food security across the country and even generating export balance and managing the conservation of land and natural resources. What is more, many African countries have made impressive strides in the field of elementary education and improving the situation of women.

It remains true, nevertheless, that most of the people living in extreme poverty are in Africa and that the eradication of poverty and hunger, halving the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day by 2015, is beyond the reach of most African countries.

Africa needs, therefore, a factual solidarity not only to cope with the negative impacts of these crises, but to help eradicate the unacceptable scourge of poverty and make available to other countries Africa's true potential.

Africa requires a strong reinforcement of its basic economic support, consisting of the official development assistance and grants for eradicating extreme poverty and for the creation and maintenance of basic social structures. Long-term financing programs are needed to overcome the external debt of the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC), consolidate the economic and constitutional systems and create a social safety network. Likewise, international trading conditions have to conform to its proper needs and economic challenges.

In the current crisis, developed countries should not reduce their development aid to Africa, on the contrary, they should move in a farsighted vision of the economy and the world to increase their investment for those in poor countries.

In the same vein, Africa needs support for its agricultural programs. In addressing food insecurity, due consideration must be given to the structural systems, such as subsidies in developed countries and commodity dumping which drives down the ability of African farmers to make a living wage. In addition, the long decline in investment in the agricultural sector in Africa must be reversed and a renewed commitment to assisting family farmers to provide sustainable food production must be undertaken. Failure to assist Africans to feed themselves and their neighbors will only result in continued senseless loss of life from inadequate food security and increased conflict over natural resources.

Africa needs also support in diversifying its economies. Recently, the world observed both in a positive and negative manner the institutionalization of the G20 as a strong point of reference to manage the world economy. Positive because the large industrialized countries have felt the need to call to the negotiating table major emerging markets of the South. The involvement of emerging or developing countries now makes it possible to better manage the crisis. Negative for the risk of exclusion of small countries involved in these important discussions. However, one notes that emerging economies that will have an influence on politics and the world economy are those that have succeeded, to a greater or lesser extent, to diversify their industrial and agricultural facilities.

Finally, Mr. President, Africa needs integration support. The NEPAD and all regional as well as sub-regional initiatives of trade, economic and cultural cooperation, conflict management, peace-keeping and reconstruction should be promoted and strengthened. The AU has proven to be a strong focal-point for connecting Africa with the UN and the international financial and trade organizations. Similarly, the AU converges and coordinates the multiple sub-regional multilateral initiatives in Africa. The integrated economy of the present day does not make the role of States redundant but instead commits governments to greater collaboration with one another. The articulation of political authority at the local, national and international levels is one of the best ways of giving direction to the process of economic globalization.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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