



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Intervention of the Holy See Permanent Observer at the United Nations Organizations and Organs for Food and Agriculture at the 41st Session of the FAO Conference: Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development

This morning Msgr. Fernando Chica Arellano, Holy See Permanent Observer at the United Nations Organizations and Organs for Food and Agriculture (FAO, IFAD and WFP) and head of the Holy See delegation, spoke at the 41st Session of the FAO Conference, taking place between 22 and 29 June 2019 in Rome.

The following are extensive extracts from Msgr. Chica Arellano's intervention:

"The specific theme of this general debate: "Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development", offers the opportunity to focus attention on problems of great current relevance, whose protagonists are not figures or mere statistics, but rather people afflicted by pain and bitterness. They are human beings like us, but who find themselves compelled to abandon their countries and their homes to flee from poverty, conflicts, persecution, and the harmful effects of climate change and natural disasters. Indeed, they are constantly increasing in number. They leave not out of free choice, but rather they are moved by discouragement and desperation, often dictated by the impossibility of obtaining that daily bread that is an integral part of the fundamental right to life.

"The analysis of issues related to the vicious circle of hunger, migration and poverty cannot, first and foremost, ignore the centrality of agriculture. It plays a crucial role in the dynamics of a country's sustainable development, constituting one of the main catalysts through which other economic and social activities can find an effective impetus. Therefore, it is essential to invest in sustainable agriculture ... Activities aimed at agricultural development may be interpreted as a contribution to implementing the right to remain in one's own land and in the context of Article 13 of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* which states that "we must work together to create conditions that allow communities and individuals to live in safety and dignity in their own countries".

"However, recent studies indicate that, in low- and lower-middle income countries, the development and growth of incomes usually leads to an increase in emigration and, only when a medium-high income level is reached do

migratory phenomena decrease. They also stress that, before a country reaches the stability that allows people to exercise their right not to emigrate, decades may elapse. It is important to take this into account, first of all, so as not to succumb to the error of thinking about development simply as a useful tool to reduce migration, when in reality it is an undeniable right of every human being.

“Migratory flows that have a structural character, whose meaning and scope the FAO demonstrates to have understood, making it necessary “to deal with the present emergency phase by providing programmes which address the causes of migration and the changes it entails, including its effect on the makeup of societies and peoples” [1]. This evidence that could be translated, for example, into the formulation of policies aimed at protecting immigrants employed in the agri-food sector of many developed countries and who play a crucial role in the business value chain. In this context, the frequent and very numerous testimonies of immigrants victims of illegal hiring who are not guaranteed the most basic and fundamental rights, and who forced to accept inhuman working conditions that offend their dignity, are troubling.

“Along with people who migrate from one continent to another, we must also pay attention to those who move within their own countries and who actually make up the numerical majority of migrants. These are people who often move from rural to urban areas. However, lacking the necessary preparation or professional skills required in cities, they are constrained to remain in the vicious circle of poverty. It is a painful phenomenon that particularly affects large numbers of young people who feel less and less attracted to agricultural activities. However, rural development can not do without its valuable contribution. If they were offered the right means, they could not only spur the rural economy but also promote food security in urban areas.

“Finally, let me mention the young people belonging to indigenous communities. They are often forced to leave their lands. It is a sad reality that leads them to live uprooted from their origins Addressing them, Pope Francis ... invited them to return to their cultures of origin, to “take charge of your roots, because from the roots comes the strength that will make you grow, flourish and bear fruit” [2]. In this way, the Holy Father highlighted the link between origins and growth, between roots and what bears fruit. If we want to apply this relationship to the development of rural areas, we see the need to value the family, the primary cell of society and, more specifically, the numerous rural families scattered all over the world. These produce around eighty per cent of the food worldwide, but, nevertheless, they are the first to suffer as a result of poverty and food insecurity.”

[1] Francis, *Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 2016. 12 September 2015.

[2] Francis, *Video Message to participants in the World Indigenous Youth Gathering*. Soloy, Panama, 17 January 2019.
