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**LETTERA DELL'EM.MO CARD. ANGELO SODANO, SEGRETARIO DI STATO, IN OCCASIONE
DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE ORDINARIA DELL'ORGANIZZAZIONE DEGLI STATI
AMERICANI**

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Dal 4 al 6 giugno, nella città di Windsor (Canada) si è svolta la 30a Assemblea Generale dell'Organizzazione degli Stati Americani.

L'Osservatore Permanente presso l'Organizzazione, S.E. Mons. Gabriel Montalvo, che ha presieduto la Delegazione della Santa Sede, ha consegnato all'Onorevole Lloyd Axworthy, Ministro degli Esteri del Canada e Presidente dell'Assemblea, una Lettera dell'Em.mo Segretario di Stato, Cardinale Angelo Sodano, il cui testo riportiamo qui di seguito:

Your Excellency,

I have the honor to send to the Thirtieth Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States the cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and to express to you his fervent hope that the goals set out in the agenda of the meeting will be attained.

Conspicuous on the agenda are, as always, references to the pursuance of the range of conventions forming the Inter-American system of human rights, and the continuation and development of the means of strengthening mutual trust and peace in the hemisphere.

The Holy See expresses its appreciation of the conclusions of the "Dialogue on the Inter-American system for the protection and promotion of human rights" which, at the Permanent Council's direction, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs has conducted in the time since the last Assembly. It is a reassuring sign of the institutional effectiveness of the OAS that there is unanimous agreement among the delegates of member States and the representatives of international agencies and non-governmental organizations on the question of the criteria and means of strengthening the Inter-American system of human rights and of giving universal force to the related juridical instruments.

The full ratification and implementation of the Inter-American instruments of human rights, the acceptance of the competence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in matters of dispute, and the application of the decisions and recommendations of the Court and the Commission are rightly considered as essential conditions for the strengthening of the system. Full and effective application of the stipulations of the American Convention on Human Rights and other documents also demands that the appeals, actions and proceedings before the Court and Commission be more agile and conclusive, and that the laws of each member State incorporate the decisions and verdicts of the two institutions. Acceptance of these criteria will also ensure that the agencies concerned with the defence of human rights have adequate funding and personnel.

It is clear, however, that in addition to the necessary institutional link between the Inter-American system and national policies and legislation, effective implementation of human rights requires a culture of rights, not only on the part of those in public office, but in the behaviour of all citizens. Such a culture is an expression of the solidarity which ensures that social duties are fulfilled and the rights of others are respected.

Therefore, the Holy See considers that the surest guarantee of human rights in the American continent is the education of all citizens. The efforts in this direction of the OAS and of other organizations of the Inter-American system, and also of the regional offices of the agencies of the United Nations, deserve respect, esteem and encouragement.

Furthermore, the actual realization of such a civic culture calls for a continuing improvement of the material conditions which ensure a healthy life for families and the many other bodies and associations which link the family to the state and form a network of economic security and social harmony.

The Holy See is happy once again to participate in this Assembly. It expresses the hope that the Inter-American system of human rights will make constant progress, and that all the States of the region will have access to the economic means needed to ensure that this noble international juridical undertaking will be accompanied by the promotion of social harmony within each member State and by the material and spiritual development of all their citizens.

From the Vatican, May 30, 2000

Angelo Card. Sodano

Secretary of State

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