



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA SESSIONE PLENARIA DELLA 58a ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SULLA "NUOVA PARTNERSHIP PER LO SVILUPPO DELL'AFRICA"

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Pubblichiamo qui di seguito l'intervento sul punto 40 dell'agenda della 58a Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite, "New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)", pronunciato dal Capo della Delegazione della Santa Sede, S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, nell'ambito delle sessioni plenarie del menzionato incontro internazionale, il 16 ottobre scorso:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. President,

A year ago, this General Assembly unanimously welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the institutional response of the African Union to meet the special needs of Africa. My delegation is confident that the international community will not fail in assisting the efforts of this new alliance of African countries in responding to the challenges facing their continent. The call to as well as the need for solidarity among all peoples increase with the passage of each day.

In the present world order, the African nations seem to be among the most disadvantaged. In the face of the current marginalization of Africa, we have a duty in solidarity to maintain the commitments we have collectively made to move forward with a new pattern of solidarity and cooperation between the wealthier nations and the peoples of Africa. This requires a rapid and definitive solution to the external debt overhang of African countries. Partial solutions have shown themselves in the past to have been inadequate. It is time to move forward with a courageous and generous solution, which at the same time involves ownership both by the governments of Africa and also by broad sectors of civil society.

The sum total of African external debt is small by global standards. Hence, not only in terms of justice, but also of effective economic possibilities, the burden of external debt necessitates a comprehensive and expeditious solution through the enhanced *Highly Indebted Poor Countries* initiative and other debt relief measures, as

agreed upon in the Plan of Action of the Third LDC Conference. This relief process should not drag on long under the yoke of technical and bureaucratic requirements. Moreover, such process should neither be subject to excessive conditionalities nor become an obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Together with the remission of debts, the target set by the international community to contribute 0.7 per cent of GNP to Official Development Assistance (ODA), especially in favor of the less developed countries, among whom are the majority of African States, should become a real commitment and not a simple declaration of good will. Furthermore, the Plan of Action of the III LDC Conference requires that concrete efforts be made to reach ODA level to 0.15/0.20 per cent of the GNP to the LDCs. This ODA should be allocated primarily for building basic infrastructure and for providing basic health care in favor of the poorest African countries, that would then be able to expand their attention to other related goals of economic and social development, as enunciated in the Millennium Development Declaration. Proposals such as the *International Financial Facility (IFF)*, which could ensure the substantial increasing of stable and predictable aid flows deserve particular attention from the donor countries.

For external trade to become an essential factor of African development, the international community should uphold and apply aptly the true values of trade by eliminating all types of unfair competition against African countries. Establishing trade barriers to protect the economic advantages of the producers of rich countries, particularly in those sectors in which Africa can be competitive, is inconsistent with all those solemn economic international commitments. In conformity with the Program of Action of the Third Conference of the LDCs for the decade 2001-2010, the objective of granting duty-free and quota-free market access to LDCs should remain as a peremptory obligation. In the aftermath of the Cancún Conference of the WTO, my delegation hopes that the international community will consider providing a coherent response to the trade claims of African countries, specially in relation to the leading case dealing with cotton.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to note that Africa needs to develop a family-based diversified agrarian economy, capable of responding to multiple challenges, such as excessive urban migration, lack of food security, welfare of the family and rural communities, protection of the environment, and greater economic growth. Furthermore, it is not possible to achieve an economic and social development without providing appropriate technology and know-how. However, such technology should be specifically designed for the economic, ecological and social realities of Africa and not an imposition of scientific and technological programs that are alien to the African reality.

Without peace in Africa, it is impossible to think of just structures of economic and social development. The prevention and resolution of regional and internal conflicts, as well as peace negotiations correspond to the role of the African Union and to the rest of the regional and sub-regional organizations, in conjunction with the interested governments. The United Nations and the rest of the international community have, nevertheless, an important role to play by sustaining and supporting regional initiatives and, eventually at a subsidiary level, by supplementing local efforts where necessary.

The African ownership of NEPAD should not be an end in itself. Its processes of implementation and ultimate responsibility will become fully African only if it is manifested in an effective and profound manner through the ennoblement of African values, especially the respect for the family. Within the family, the fundamental unit of society, is deeply rooted an acute sense of solidarity and community life, which in African societies is a true reflection of the extended family. The NEPAD should become the maximum political expression of this extended African family. It is therefore the hope of my delegation that the NEPAD's pursuit of political, social and economic progress will also help in the advancement of the authentic values of Africa. The Holy See is confident that Africa will always preserve this priceless cultural heritage and never succumb to the temptation to individualism, which is so foreign to its best traditions.

Thank you, Mr. President.

