



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA PLENARIA DELLA 59ª ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUL PUNTO 45: DECIMO ANNIVERSARIO DELLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE SU POPOLAZIONE E SVILUPPO

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, il Nunzio Apostolico S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato giovedì 14 ottobre scorso alla Plenaria della 59ª Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. per il decimo anniversario della Conferenza Internazionale del Cairo su Popolazione e Sviluppo (item 45):

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. President,

In observing the 10th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, we recall the vital importance of the well-being and progress of every member of the human family. This theme of the Cairo Conference continues to have a heightened significance in the light of the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor of the world is still widening, a situation which poses an ever increasing threat to the peace for which humanity longs. The theme of the Cairo Conference emphasizes the reality that all proper concerns about human population are inextricably connected with the development and flourishing of every human being.

An important milestone at ICPD was the link between migration and development that, ever since, has prompted increased sensitivity, research, cooperation and effective policies in this field. Migration is now recognized as a major challenge for all, linked to development and poverty, as well as to financial and health security. In particular, migrants are now seen as proactive agents of development. While appreciating the proper importance of these achievements, States now have to focus much more on creating jobs where people live. Political will and firm determination are needed on the part of Governments and civil society in order to foster a proper cultural, social and juridical environment capable of overcoming the persistent phenomena of discrimination, violence, human trafficking and xenophobia. Migration, now more than ten years ago, has international attention because of demographics in the developed world.

A decade ago, we were informed of United Nations studies indicating that a rapid decrease in the global rate of population growth was expected to begin during the 1990s and carry on into the new century. It is now a fact that population growth has declined appreciably in many of the industrialized developed nations, and that this decline poses a serious threat to their future. The Holy See continues to follow these matters carefully, while encouraging accurate and objective assessments of population issues and global solidarity in regard to development strategies, especially as they affect the developing nations of the world. The Holy See is concerned that proper attention is not always given to the comprehensive set of principles, including the ethical ones, essential in determining the right response to the demographic, sociological and public policy analyses of the data on population trends.

Population policy is only one part of an overall strategy for the betterment of humanity. It is essential that any discussion of population policies must simultaneously consider the actual and projected development of the human race. All development worthy of the name must be integral and cannot consist in the simple accumulation of wealth and in the greater availability of goods and services, but must be pursued with due consideration for the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of every human being. Development programs must respect the cultural heritage of peoples and nations, foster structures of participation and shared responsibility, and empower our human capacity, so that each one of us can become the person that he or she was created to be.

It would therefore be wiser if focus were placed upon the formulation of population policies that promoted a responsible kind of personal liberty, instead of one that was too narrowly defined.

From this, it follows, among other things, that the duty to safeguard the family demands that special attention be given to securing for husband and wife the liberty to decide responsibly, free from all social or legal coercion, the number of children they will have and the spacing of their births. It should be the intent of Governments and other agencies to help create the social conditions which will enable couples themselves to make appropriate decisions in the light of their responsibilities. We know that responsible parenthood is not a question of unlimited procreation or lack of awareness of what is involved in rearing children, but it also involves the right of parents to use their liberty wisely. Moreover, couples that choose to have large families deserve to be supported.

The seriousness of the challenges that Governments and, above all, parents must face in the education of the younger generation means that we cannot abdicate our responsibility to lead young people to a deeper understanding of their own dignity and potentiality as persons. It remains our task to challenge them with a demanding ethic which fully respects their dignity and which leads them to the wisdom which is needed in order to face the many demands of life.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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