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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA SECONDA COMMISSIONE DELLA 60a SESSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. SUL PUNTO 52: "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato ieri, 3 novembre, a New York nel corso della Seconda Commissione della 60a Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. sul punto 52: "*Sustainable development*".

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr Chairman,

My delegation believes that development plans and poverty reduction strategies must be integrated into environmental sustainability. Without environmental stewardship, development will have no sound foundation, and without development, there will be no means of investment, rendering environmental protection impossible.

Responsibility and solidarity are linked here in such a way that action in favour of the environment becomes an affirmation of belief in the destiny of the human family gathered around a common project crucial to everyone's good. This echoes the first principle of the Rio Declaration that "human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development".

However, the numerous difficulties encountered in confronting the problems of global environmental degradation such as climate change, drinking water shortage, deforestation and desertification, show the complexity of facing the problems of development in a coherent, integrated way, and the need to replace fragmented sectoral approaches with a holistic and multisectoral one.

Among the first cluster of threats identified by the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change were economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation. We agree that these three questions ultimately threaten the security of present and future generations. The need to

address these challenges as an ensemble is indispensable to a collective security system. They are not stand-alone threats.

In facing them and in promoting the development of responsibility and solidarity, local communities will have to be involved in evaluating and conserving nature, and receive a fair share of benefits, if they are willingly to collaborate; costs to natural ecosystems need to be taken into account in all economic decisions, since nature's resources are clearly finite; and protection of natural assets will have to gain a much higher priority in governments' planning, investment and budgeting if it is to be successful.

Of particular concern are forests, which remain essential in terms of food, shelter, fuel, fresh water and fibre to 90% of the world's 1.2 billion extreme poor; yet forest loss is still evident in too many places. The finalisation of an international treaty on the protection of forests is much to be desired.

Nor should we forget the targets contained in MDG 7 which aim to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation, as well as significantly improve the lives of slum dwellers by 2020, as restated recently in the CSD 13 Decision. Unfortunately, many states will not meet the 2005 target for establishing integrated water resources management programmes. It is nevertheless in the interest of all countries to assist and invest in the implementation of such schemes.

Another grave question is that of climate change and energy, which the Secretary-General has rightly described as one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The themes of next biennial cycle of the CSD will have an impact on many related questions such as the environment, economics, politics, ethics and social questions, as well as national and international security. It will be an occasion for international reflection on themes central to peace and human development, above all in the poorest areas with the slimmest capacity to adapt, with scarce energy resources and a greater exposure to the consequences of climate change.

Finally, it is encouraging to witness the growing awareness of climate change demonstrated for example at the G8 summit in Gleneagles. Serious discussions should follow, on the means by which states can provide incentives for the further development of renewable energy sources, begin to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, especially for fossil fuel use and development, and invest in the research and development of a clean, efficient and cheap replacement for fossil fuels. The world is going to need dramatically more, not less, energy in the next fifty years: we owe it to future generations everywhere to start immediately on such a path. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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