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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 44ma SESSIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE PER LO SVILUPPO SOCIALE DEL CONSIGLIO ECONOMICO E SOCIALE DELL'O.N.U. SU: "PRIORITY THEME: REVIEW OF THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY (1997-2006)"

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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 ieri davanti alla 44ma Sessione della Commissione per lo Sviluppo Sociale del Consiglio Economico e Sociale dell'O.N.U. su: "*Priority theme: review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)*":

● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr Chairman,

It may be true that the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty has declined from 40 to 21 per cent between 1981 and 2001, but that still leaves far too many countries and peoples living with high levels of poverty.

The Holy See is therefore pleased to welcome the Review of the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and to compliment the authors of the progress report on its quality and candour, as it highlights the main obstacles and challenges still to be overcome if the first of the Millennium Development Goals – to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – is to be achieved. My delegation also supports the three recommendations made in the Review.

Although the Review rightly highlights the encouraging progress being made in poverty reduction in several Asian countries, it also points out that the global picture is mixed, with sub-Saharan Africa having made little or no progress in reducing the incidence of poverty in the 1990s. If these trends continue, only eight African countries will halve extreme poverty by 2015. Indeed, as the World Bank recently noted, the scale of deprivation continues to be alarming as the number of Africans now living on less than \$1 a day has nearly doubled since

1980, from 165 million to 315 million.

The harsh reality of poverty today requires renewed efforts by the international community. A three-pronged agenda is needed for developing countries: to improve the terms of trade; to double aid assistance; and to provide further debt relief.

Lessons from the experience of some developing countries, particularly in Asia, make it clear that rapid poverty reduction cannot take place without sustainable economic growth in which the poor share equitably in the benefits. Consequently, developing countries' leaders need to be encouraged and assisted in the pursuit of policies that will enable their countries to attain much higher economic growth rates than so far achieved since 2000.

With regard to the links between poverty eradication and inequality, my delegation believes that, as well as considering low levels of income, more attention should also be paid to inequalities within and between societies. Such differences can make men and women look elsewhere for better paid work and may lead to the flight of both skilled and unskilled labour, often to the detriment of developing countries' economies, in spite of spin off gains such as remittances. Poverty eradication and a more even social development will necessarily include the means to attract and retain labour of every kind.

Results on the ground are critical, but they remain elusive for many countries. As the Review underlines, progress in poverty reduction is falling short of what is needed especially in the poorest countries, due mainly to weak implementation. This will require special attention from the international community, to build up the needed capacity and to enable the effective implementation of public investment programmes critical to attaining the poverty eradication goals.

In conclusion, the Holy See continues to see a key role for ECOSOC in monitoring progress towards achieving the MDGs in the world's poorest countries. Such monitoring needs to be done now, on an annual basis, given the close proximity of 2015. In those countries where progress continues to falter, special action plans need to be drawn up on a country by country basis, with the involvement of the governments in question and the donor community. Such plans should address resource constraints, implementation difficulties, and other problems that need to be overcome in order to secure the timely achievement of poverty reduction targets.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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