



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 0458

Martedì 19.09.2006

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALL' "HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE MIDTERM COMPREHENSIVE GLOBAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010"

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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 a New York all' *"High-level Meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010"*:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Madam President,

Although both the progress made by LDCs and the increased ODA afforded them by partners are to be warmly commended, a consensus exists that recent growth remains extremely vulnerable, since it rests almost entirely on the exportation of raw materials, especially oil, and has not yet produced overall progress in the reduction of poverty or in the improvement of human well-being. The Holy See joins those who point out that this relative and fragile macroeconomic improvement must not distract from giving serious consideration to the grave underlying problems as yet unresolved, nor tempt us to lose sight of their dramatic urgency.

The present economic data should also be read in the light of other grave realities such as war - which afflicts a significant number of LDCs - ecological degradation and desertification, persistent hunger and child malnutrition and the continuing scourges of AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and many other diseases associated with poverty.

Moreover, the unstoppable flight of masses of people from impoverished regions towards the more developed areas of the world has brought the grave problems of the LDCs, once an academic and distant reality, knocking literally on the doors of the rich countries. This dramatic situation underlines the need for a genuine global commitment in order to achieve promptly the goals of Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA), with fresh attention paid to dignified living conditions and productive work as essential elements.

Therefore, as well as the pressing moral imperative of economic solidarity towards poor countries, based on the unity of the human race and on the equal dignity of all persons, we are faced today with the urgent task of remedying a situation which, in the absence of solutions that are effective, just and respectful of human rights, will continue to cause intolerable damage in the LDCs and inevitably bring about a state of permanent instability in the social fabric of developed countries.

The overall creation of dignified employment is just as important as the two columns presented in the BPoA: the basic quality of life and overall political and macroeconomic conditions. All these elements are inseparable and mutually dependent. Productive employment can exist only if there is a healthy and educated population. Likewise, achieving and maintaining a certain quality of life is the result of a national productivity capable of generating resources that allow societies and governments to attain this goal. Productivity, in its turn, is always conditioned by an environment of peace, good governance and favourable external macroeconomic conditions.

The Cotonou Strategy clearly identifies the responsibilities of the LDCs and the action expected from their development partners. LDC governments must ensure that all policies are people-centred, implement measures to eradicate corruption, guarantee transparency and the rule of law, and enforce policies that will boost the productive capacity of their countries.

The active participation of international partners is indispensable. This should not be seen as something complementary or as an optional concession which can be postponed in the face of pressing national concerns. It is a grave and inexorable moral responsibility, founded on the unity of the human race, on the common dignity and the shared destiny of rich and poor alike, drawn ever closer by the process of globalization.

Trade conditions clearly favourable to LDCs must be maintained where they exist and created where they do not. Among such conditions are the opening of developed markets, the provision of quota free and duty free market access to 100% of exportable products from LDCs without further delay and the elimination of all trade distorting barriers, including tariff peaks and tariff escalations, high subsidies and other mechanisms and practices disadvantageous to exports from the LDCs.

Provision must also be made for the rapid, total and unconditional cancellation of the external debt of the LDCs together with the means that ensure that the countries do not fall again into unsustainable debt. Developed countries should recall and implement their obligation to full compliance with the commitments made in terms of external aid.

A massive investment of resources in the research and development of medicines for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and other tropical diseases is needed. It could be said that the first and foremost scientific challenge to the developed countries is the discovery of a vaccine against malaria. Equally needed is the transfer of medical and pharmacological technology and health care expertise with no legal or economic conditions attached. These are just some of the challenges facing all members of the international community.

Representatives of the LDCs meeting in Cotonou rightly recognized that the honesty of government officials, the vitality of the democratic institutions and the rule of law are essential elements for fostering people-centred policies and building human capacity. In this context, the international community must continue to work for the drastic reduction of the legal and illegal conventional arms trade, the illegal trade of precious raw materials and the flight of capital. Citizens of developed countries who corrupt officials of poor countries or engage in money-laundering practices should be punished just as if they had committed these crimes in their country of origin.

As is well known, the Catholic Church has undertaken many initiatives in the last decade with a view to bringing both its own members and all people of good will to a greater awareness of the shared responsibility in relation to the problems derived from international trade and finance. Today many of its members, from rich and poor countries alike, associated in a wide variety of organizations, are engaged in favour of LDCs. Likewise, through an extensive network of centres of formation and health care, we give active support on all levels to the efforts of LDCs. This is taking place in education at all levels where future leaders learn about their respective responsibilities. It is also happening in a vast range of health care, from the struggle against child malnutrition to

the care of the elderly and the incurable. In this area our institutions are making extensive and important contributions in the struggle against AIDS, malaria and TB.

The Holy See continues to encourage the international community, especially the more developed and medium income countries, to support the implementation of the BPoA, and appeals for a *surge of solidarity*. The world needs a *surge of solidarity* in favour of LDCs. The adoption of the measures proposed in the Cotonou Strategy may appear costly for developed countries and their citizens, but they will be less than the social burden generated in the same countries in the medium term if the problems facing the LDCs are not resolved.

Twenty years ago, public opinion was moved by those who risked their lives climbing fences that kept them prisoners of dictatorial regimes. Today, millions risk their lives to escape from the dictatorship of poverty. Fences will not stop them. For their good and for the prosperity of all of us, developed countries and LDCs must implement effective policies such as those found in the BPoA, so that the citizens of LDCs will choose freely to remain at home, where they can attain, for themselves, their families and their country, employment and living conditions that can truly be called dignified.

Thank you, Madam President.

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