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♦ **INTERVENTO DEL CAPO DELLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA SANTA SEDE, S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE, ALLA 63ma SESSIONE DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. NELL'AMBITO DELL'INCONTRO DI ALTO LIVELLO SULL'AFRICA**

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento pronunciato ieri alla 63ma Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. dal Capo Delegazione della Santa Sede, l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, all'incontro di Alto Livello sul tema: *"Le esigenze per lo sviluppo dell'Africa: stato di attuazione degli impegni presi, sfide e percorsi per il futuro"*:

• **INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE**

Africa has always played an important role in the various challenges taken up every year by the General Assembly of the United Nations. For the last 60 years Africa, with its historical and geographic particularities, has challenged the capacity of the United Nations to carry out the high ideals enshrined in its Charter of peace and prosperity for all. Recent history has also witnessed the capacity of African governments to harmonize their large variety of interests and local needs, their great cultural diversity and the special geographic and climatic challenges with the need to coordinate a common response to the serious problems that affect without distinction the entire continent.

The successes obtained in the consolidation of independence in the overcoming of the ideological conflicts of

the twentieth century, in the abolition of apartheid, and more recently in the strengthening of the African Union and of many other regional structures of cooperation are a sign of hope in the potential of Africa. It is now high time to allow and encourage an African sense of ownership in leading a sustained and sustainable developmental process that frees all the peoples of Africa from the scourge of extreme poverty.

The Holy See commends this very timely meeting aimed at taking stock of the implementation of various commitments put forward by the international community as well as the efforts being undertaken at the national level throughout Africa.

My delegation expresses its appreciation for the Report of the Secretary-General. The Holy See echoes the Report's call for concrete action and believes that delivery must be the principal result at the international, regional and national levels. The current outcome document constitutes an effective guide for such concrete action if accompanied by the political will to put its aspirations into practice.

The development of Africa is a great opportunity for the whole world given its human resources and unique climatic and cultural diversity. Africa is the "youngest" of continents with sixty percent of its population under 25. In a number of African countries growth has kept pace with and even surpassed that of developed nations. Such growth, substantiated in the Report of the Secretary-General, is due not only to the improvement of the terms of exchange of raw materials but also to a generalized improvement in methods of government.

In spite of this, however, the recent economic growth has not been sufficient to free from extreme poverty large segments of the population of Africa, and the average life expectancy remains one of the lowest in the world. Clearly there is still a long way to go in improving the health of the people of Africa.

Mr. President,

My delegation is privileged to outline here the day-to-day experiences of many communities of the Catholic Church present throughout the continent, even in its remotest corners, that share the burdens as well as the joys and achievements of many Africans. In the fight against HIV/AIDS as well as in the fields of education and health, the Catholic Church remains in the front line both from the point of view of the extension of its network of solidarity and the quality of its assistance.

Strengthened by this experience, the Holy See encourages the participants in this High-level meeting to continue efforts to adapt the development programs to the reality of Africa and achieve an authentic partnership, in which African countries are not simply a receiver of ideas and aids programmed from the outside, but a true agent of their own development.

The present difficulties in reaching a world-wide consensus on international trade rules could serve as an impetus to re-launch a special round for Africa and for the LDCs, with the scope of strengthening regional trade and an appropriate way of inserting it into the international context, thus giving a substantial contribution to the reform of African structures of production.

The purpose of a painstakingly planned and implemented international financial and commercial environment for Africa should be twofold: firstly, the creation of sufficient and productive urban employment for the young population of Africa; secondly, the promotion of and investment in a sustainable family farming system capable of meeting the food requirements of the whole of rural and urban African population and able to contribute to the trade gains of its countries.

The increasing integration of NEPAD into the structures of the African Union is a very positive sign of progress in African ownership of its own development.

African cultures have a keen sense of solidarity and community life. Such a precious heritage is an asset on which the Governments and African society should build in order to obtain effective results. At the same time,

the preservation of African families and their cultural identity must be the ultimate objective of all economic plans of development and also the definitive measure of their effectiveness.

Today let us leave this Hall with the hope that this High-Level meeting will be one more step along the road of shared responsibility in attaining this noble objective.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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