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LETTERA DEL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO AL PRIMO MINISTRO DEL REGNO UNITO DAVID CAMERON IN OCCASIONE DELL'INCONTRO DEL G8 (17-18 GIUGNO 2013)

LETTERA DEL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO AL PRIMO MINISTRO DEL REGNO UNITO DAVID CAMERON
IN OCCASIONE DELL'INCONTRO DEL G8 (17-18 GIUGNO 2013)

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- LETTERA AL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO DEL PRIMO MINISTRO DEL REGNO UNITO DAVID CAMERON

Il 5 giugno scorso il Primo Ministro del Regno Unito, l'On. David Cameron, ha scritto al Santo Padre Francesco per informarlo sull'agenda della Presidenza Britannica del G8 2013 e del Summit che si svolge a Lough Erne (Irlanda del Nord) il 17 e 18 giugno 2013.

Riportiamo di seguito la risposta del Santo Padre Francesco e la lettera dell'On. David Cameron:

- LETTERA DEL SANTO PADRE *To The Right Honourable David Cameron, MP Prime Minister*

I am pleased to reply to your kind letter of 5 June 2013, with which you were good enough to inform me of your Government's agenda for the British G8 Presidency during the year 2013 and of the forthcoming Summit, due to take place at Lough Erne on 17 and 18 June 2013, entitled *A G8 meeting that goes back to first principles*.

If this topic is to attain its broadest and deepest resonance, it is necessary to ensure that all political and economic activity, whether national or international, makes reference to man. Indeed, such activity must, on the one hand, enable the maximum expression of freedom and creativity, both individual and collective, while on the other hand it must promote and guarantee their responsible exercise in solidarity, with particular attention to the poorest.

The priorities that the British Presidency has set out for the Lough Erne Summit are concerned above all with the

free international market, taxation, and transparency on the part of governments and economic actors. Yet the fundamental reference to man is by no means lacking, specifically in the proposal for concerted action by the Group to eliminate definitively the scourge of hunger and to ensure food security. Similarly, a further sign of attention to the human person is the inclusion as one of the central themes on the agenda of the protection of women and children from sexual violence in conflict situations, even though it must be remembered that the indispensable context for the development of all the afore-mentioned political actions is that of international peace. Sadly, concern over serious international crises is a recurring theme in the deliberations of the G8, and this year it cannot fail to address the situation in the Middle East, especially in Syria.. In this regard, I earnestly hope that the Summit will help to obtain an immediate and lasting cease-fire and to bring all parties in the conflict to the negotiating table. Peace demands a far-sighted renunciation of certain claims, in order to build together a more equitable and just peace. Moreover, peace is an essential pre-requisite for the protection of women, children and other innocent victims, and for making a start towards conquering hunger, especially among the victims of war.

The actions included on the agenda of the British G8 Presidency, which point towards law as the golden thread of development – as well as the consequent commitments to deal with tax avoidance and to ensure transparency and responsibility on the part of governments – are measures that indicate the deep ethical roots of these problems, since, as my predecessor Benedict XVI made clear, the present global crisis shows that ethics is not something external to the economy, but is an integral and unavoidable element of economic thought and action.

The long-term measures that are designed to ensure an adequate legal framework for all economic actions, as well as the associated urgent measures to resolve the global economic crisis, must be guided by the ethics of truth. This includes, first and foremost, respect for the truth of man, who is not simply an additional economic factor, or a disposable good, but is equipped with a nature and a dignity that cannot be reduced to simple economic calculus. Therefore concern for the fundamental material and spiritual welfare of every human person is the starting-point for every political and economic solution and the ultimate measure of its effectiveness and its ethical validity.

Moreover, the goal of economics and politics is to serve humanity, beginning with the poorest and most vulnerable wherever they may be, even in their mothers' wombs. Every economic and political theory or action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one's own human potential. This is the main thing; in the absence of such a vision, all economic activity is meaningless.

In this sense, the various grave economic and political challenges facing today's world require a courageous change of attitude that will restore to the end (the human person) and to the means (economics and politics) their proper place. Money and other political and economic means must serve, not rule, bearing in mind that, in a seemingly paradoxical way, free and disinterested solidarity is the key to the smooth functioning of the global economy.

I wished to share these thoughts with you, Prime Minister,, with a view to highlighting what is implicit in all political choices, but can sometimes be forgotten: the primary importance of putting humanity, every single man and woman, at the centre of all political and economic activity, both nationally and internationally, because man is the truest and deepest resource for politics and economics, as well as their ultimate end.

Dear Prime Minister, trusting that these thoughts have made a helpful spiritual contribution to your deliberations, I express my sincere hope for a fruitful outcome to your work and I invoke abundant blessings upon the Lough Erne Summit and upon all the participants, as well as upon the activities of the British G8 Presidency during the year 2013, and I take this opportunity to reiterate my good wishes and to express my sentiments of esteem.

From the Vatican, 15 June 2013

FRANCISCUS

[00894-02.01] [Original text: English]

• **TRADUZIONE IN LINGUA ITALIANA** *All'Onorevole David Cameron, MP* *Primo Ministro*

Sono lieto di rispondere alla sua cortese lettera del 5 giugno 2013, con cui ha voluto informarmi sull'agenda del Suo Governo per la Presidenza Britannica del G8 nell'anno 2013 e sul prossimo Summit, previsto Lough Erne, nei giorni 17 e 18 giugno 2013, intitolato "A G8 meeting that goes back to first principles".

Affinché tale tema abbia il suo più ampio e profondo significato, occorre assicurare ad ogni attività politica ed economica nazionale ed internazionale un riferimento all'uomo. Infatti, dette attività devono, da una parte, consentire la massima espressione della libertà e della creatività individuale e collettiva e, dall'altra, promuovere e garantire che esse si esercitino sempre responsabilmente e nel senso della solidarietà, con una particolare attenzione ai più poveri.

Le priorità che la Presidenza britannica ha fissato per il Summit di Lough Erne riguardano soprattutto il libero commercio internazionale, il fisco, la trasparenza dei governi e degli agenti economici. Non manca, comunque, un'attenzione fondamentale all'uomo, concretizzata nella proposta di un'azione concertata del Gruppo per eliminare definitivamente il flagello della fame e per garantire la sicurezza alimentare. Parimenti, è segno di attenzione per la persona umana il fatto che uno dei temi centrali dell'agenda sia la protezione delle donne e dei bambini dalla violenza sessuale in situazioni di conflitto, anche se occorre non dimenticare che il contesto indispensabile per lo sviluppo di tutte le accennate azioni politiche è quello della pace internazionale. Purtroppo, la preoccupazione per le gravi crisi internazionali non manca mai nelle deliberazioni del G8, e quest'anno non si potrà non considerare con attenzione la situazione nel Medio Oriente e, particolarmente, in Siria. Per quest'ultima auspico che il Summit contribuisca ad ottenere un cessate il fuoco immediato e duraturo, e a portare tutte le parti in conflitto al tavolo dei negoziati. La pace esige una lungimirante rinuncia ad alcune pretese, per costruire insieme una pace più equa e giusta. Inoltre, la pace è un requisito indispensabile per la protezione delle donne, dei bambini e delle altre vittime innocenti, e per cominciare a debellare la fame, specialmente tra le vittime della guerra.

Le azioni incluse nell'agenda della Presidenza Britannica del G8, che intendono puntare sulla legalità come il filo rosso dello sviluppo, con i conseguenti impegni per evitare l'evasione fiscale e assicurare la trasparenza e la responsabilità dei governanti, sono misure che puntano alle radici etiche profonde dei problemi, giacché, come ben aveva segnalato il mio predecessore, Benedetto XVI, la presente crisi globale dimostra che l'etica non è qualcosa di esterno all'economia, ma è una parte integrale e ineludibile del pensiero e dell'azione economica.

Sia le misure di lungo respiro per assicurare una adeguata cornice di legalità che guidi tutte le azioni economiche, sia le misure congiunturali di urgenza per risolvere la crisi economica mondiale, devono essere guidate dall'etica della verità, che comprende, innanzitutto, il rispetto della verità sull'uomo, il quale non è un fattore economico in più, o un bene scartabile, ma qualcosa che ha una natura e una dignità non riducibili a semplici calcoli economici. Perciò la preoccupazione per il benessere basilare materiale e spirituale di ogni uomo è il punto di partenza di ogni soluzione politica ed economica e la misura ultima della sua efficacia e della sua eticità.

D'altra parte, il fine dell'economia e della politica, è proprio il servizio agli uomini, a cominciare dai più poveri e i più deboli, ovunque essi si trovino, fosse anche il grembo della loro madre. Ogni teoria o azione economica e politica deve adoperarsi per fornire ad ogni abitante della terra quel minimo benessere che consenta di vivere con dignità, nella libertà, con la possibilità di sostenere una famiglia, di educare i figli, di lodare Dio e di sviluppare le proprie capacità umane. Questa è la cosa principale. Senza questa visione, tutta l'attività economica non avrebbe senso.

In tal senso, le varie e gravi sfide economiche e politiche che il mondo odierno affronta richiedono un coraggioso cambiamento di atteggiamenti, che ridia al fine (la persona umana) e ai mezzi (l'economia e la politica) il posto loro proprio. Il denaro e gli altri mezzi politici ed economici devono servire e non governare, tenendo presente che la solidarietà gratuita e disinteressata è, in modo apparentemente paradossale, la chiave del buon funzionamento economico globale.

Ho voluto condividere con Lei, Primo Ministro, questi pensieri, nel desiderio di contribuire a sottolineare quello che è implicito in tutte le istanze politiche, ma che a volte si può dimenticare: l'importanza primordiale di mettere l'uomo, ogni singolo uomo e donna, al centro di ogni attività politica ed economica nazionale ed internazionale, perché l'uomo è la più vera e più profonda risorsa della politica e dell'economica e, allo stesso tempo, il fine primordiale di esse.

Signor Primo Ministro, con la speranza di aver offerto un valido contributo spirituale alle vostre delibere, formulo fervidi voti di un fecondo esito dei lavori e invoco abbondanti benedizioni per il Summit di Lough Erne e per tutti i partecipanti, nonché per le attività della Presidenza Britannica del G8 durante l'anno 2013 e colgo l'occasione per rinnovare i miei migliori auspici ed esprimere i miei sentimenti di stima.

Dal Vaticano, 15 giugno 2013

FRANCISCUS

[00894-01.01] [Testo originale: Inglese]

• **LETTERA AL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO DEL PRIMO MINISTRO DEL REGNO UNITO DAVID CAMERON** *Your Holiness,*

When I said farewell to Pope Benedict at the end of his historic State Visit to Britain in September 2010, I made a number of promises. I said that the United Kingdom would keep its promises on aid, in particular in dedicating 0.7% of GNI to international development aid, despite the tough economic times. I said that we would continue to help the poorest and ensure the money we spend on aid goes to those who need it most. I also promised that we would redouble our resolve to work for the common good, working closely with the Holy See.

In 2013, the United Kingdom holds the Presidency of the G8 group of nations. I am determined to ensure that our G8 agenda will lead to real benefits for the global economy and will help people in developed and developing countries alike. Your Holiness has spoken eloquently about the need to rebalance the global economy, to help the poor and disadvantaged, and to find people work. My aim for our G8 Presidency, especially at the G8 Summit at Lough Erne on 17 and 18 June, is to do this by restoring strong and sustainable growth to the world economy by practical action on fairer taxes, freer trade, and greater transparency.

I will use the G8 to galvanise collective international action to effectively tackle tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance - problems shared by developed and developing countries alike. We shall promote a new global standard for automatic information exchange between tax authorities to shrink the space for tax evasion. We shall provide political support for the ongoing OECD and G20 work to prevent some individuals and corporates artificially shifting their profits to ultra-low tax jurisdictions, distorting competition and seek to enhance the flow of information to tax authorities. We shall seek to set out concrete steps we will take to let law enforcement and tax collectors find out who really owns and controls every company. We shall also explore what more can be done by the G8 to support lower-income developing countries to collect the tax revenues owed to them, thereby strengthening their public services in areas like health and education on which people's well-being depends.

On trade, I know the Vatican has taken a keen interest in trade liberalisation, particularly the potential that it offers to alleviate poverty, and the need to ensure the poorest countries are integrated into the global economy. This is very much in line with the trade agenda for Lough Erne. We shall ensure that the G8 shows leadership on free trade by opening our markets, resisting protectionism and supporting an open, global rule-based trading system to ensure that all countries can benefit from increased trade. Protectionism and trade bureaucracy are amongst the most significant brakes on the global economy, affecting developing and developed economies alike and creating a barrier to economic and social progress. This is why I will put political impetus on progressing bilateral and plurilateral deals as well as supporting the multilateral trading system.

We will support efforts to conclude a multilateral deal on Trade Facilitation at the WTO Ministerial Conference in December, which could add \$70 billion to the global economy and would help boost trade in Africa in particular.

We will also work with African countries to help them realise their goal of a Continental Free Trade Area, including through our support for regional integration. This could see intra-African trade double by 2022. If G8 countries complete all of their current trade deals and those in the pipeline, it could boost the income of the whole world by more than \$1 trillion. Under our G8 Presidency, I also want to see real progress on tackling food and nutrition insecurity through practical action and greater political commitment to fighting global malnutrition.

Many of the world's poorest countries are shackled by a lack of transparency, poor rules, corrupt practices and weak capacity. Too often, a veil of secrecy allows corrupt corporations and officials in countries to flout the law and prevent development. Too often, mineral wealth in developing countries becomes a curse rather than a blessing, as a lack of transparency fosters crime and corruption. Too often, instead of a shared hope for the next generation, such wealth brings conflict, greed, and environmental damage. Through the G8, I plan to push for mandatory higher global standards for the extractives sector, to encourage responsible and sustainable investment in land, and setting the standards for ensuring that government data are released in an open and useable format.

Finally, the High Level Panel Report on the post-2015 development agenda, which we transferred to the UN Secretary General last week, highlighted the importance of trade, tax and transparency to better the lives of the world's poorest. The Report presents an ambitious roadmap to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030. It says that everyone - regardless of gender, ethnicity, income, disability, age - must have their basic needs met, and their economic and human rights respected. It too makes a strong call for economic growth that promotes social inclusion and preserves the planet's natural resources for future generations. It says that freedom from violence, good governance and justice are not only fundamental to achieving poverty eradication, but goods in themselves that all citizens of the world have equal right to enjoy. I hope that you will be able to read the Report and offer support for its core messages.

You have called for disinterested solidarity and for a return to person-centred ethics in the world of finance and economics. As President of the G8, I aim to help secure the growth and stability on which the prosperity and welfare of the whole world depends. To do this, we must tackle the conditions that cause poverty, stiffen the sinews of responsible capitalism, and strengthen governance and transparency.

I believe that this path is one which requires more than the G8 to find success, that responsible governments, business and faiths can and should travel together, doing what we can to turn these values into practical action for the benefit of all.

DAVID CAMERON

[00895-02.01] [Original text: English]

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