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What Is the Holy See Doing at the UN?

Father Lombardi: Archbishop's Address Reflects Vatican's Key Role

ROME, OCT. 10, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The director of the Vatican press office is the first to admit that one could question why the Holy See participates in U.N. activities.

What are the Vatican's representative doing in a world body such as the U.N. General Assembly, "often a theatre of fierce political debate?" Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi asked in the most recent edition of his Vatican Television editorial.

To see the reasons, "it is enough to read the [speech](#) of His Excellency Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, secretary of Relations with States, in the current session," the Jesuit suggested.

Father Lombardi highlighted the continuity of the archbishop's Sept. 27 speech "with the great speeches delivered by the Popes in New York."

"Pope John Paul II insisted on the fact that the United Nations must be a place where nations recognize one another as members of a 'family,' inspired by mutual solidarity and by a concern for the common good of all humanity," the spokesman recalled. "In the light of this vision, Pope Benedict XVI developed the concept of the 'responsibility to protect,' as a concrete expression of concern for the weakest members of society."

Father Lombardi noted how Archbishop Mamberti illustrated these points, showing the responsibility to protect as it applies to ongoing humanitarian crises such as in the Horn of Africa, and to the defense of peace and human rights.

"He insisted, too, on religious freedom, which today is too often either blatantly violated or subtly limited by marginalizing religion from the life of society," Father Lombardi added. "He then turned to the relationship between ethics and economics, which lies at the foundation of the today's global crisis. He talked about sustainable development, the subject of an upcoming U.N. sponsored international conference, recalling that the awareness of being a 'family of nations' guides and supports the sense of responsibility for and protection of the environment, as well as the fight against arms trafficking."

The family "is a community based on interdependence, on trust and mutual aid, in sincere respect," Archbishop Mamberti concluded.

And Father Lombardi affirmed, "It is in the interest of every human person to remember this, so that it might become a living reality in the world. It is for this reason above all that the Holy See is in New York."

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