

DIALOGUE TAKES MORE THAN TALKING, HOLY SEE SUGGESTS

Vatican Official Gives Overview of UN

NEW YORK, SEPT. 30, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Voicing opposite positions and irreconcilable ideologies is not truly dialogue, a Vatican representative told the United Nations. Rather, he said, true dialogue means exchanging and sharing wisdom.

This was the reflection made by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, secretary for relations with states at the offices of the Vatican Secretariat of State. The prelate gave a French-language address at the U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday.

He said that the "undeniable good that the United Nations Organization represents for the whole of humanity" could not have been expected without inter-governmental and societal dialogue.

"However, to be sincere and fully effective, this dialogue must really be dia-logos -- exchange of wisdom and shared wisdom," the archbishop clarified. "[...] To dialogue does not mean only to listen to the aspirations and interests of other parties and to try to find compromises," but it "must pass rapidly from exchange of words and the search for balance between opposite interests to a real sharing of wisdom for the common good."

Archbishop Mamberti observed that at the United Nations, so-called dialogue can sometimes be "more than anything, a confrontation between opposite ideologies and irreconcilable postures."

Nevertheless, the Vatican official affirmed that the United Nations is of great interest to the Holy See, as it has become "an irreplaceable element in the life of peoples and in the search for a better future for all the inhabitants of the earth."

"In spite of the imperfection of its structures and of its functioning, the U.N. has attempted to contribute solutions to international problems of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character," said the prelate.

Achievements

Archbishop Mamberti went on to list a few of the notable U.N. achievements, including in the field of disarmament, such as the treaty prohibiting cluster bombs, progress in nuclear disarmament and the promotion of peaceful uses for nuclear energy. He applauded the START Treaty between Russia and the United States on the further reduction of arms, as well as other treaties on nuclear testing and the production of nuclear weapons materials. "One must continue to do everything possible to arrive at a world free of nuclear arms. It is an objective that cannot be given up, even if it is complex and difficult to attain, and the Holy See supports all efforts in this connection," he said.

The prelate also noted U.N. achievements in the field of humanitarian aid, such as that given in response to the January earthquake in Haiti. In fact, he noted, the leader of the U.N. mission there was among those killed, along with several dozen members of the peace force.

"Their sacrifice must become a renewed stimulus for a global commitment in favor of maintaining peace," he affirmed.

Challenges

The Vatican official acknowledged, however, that there is no lack of reasons for concern about global peace.

Among these, he mentioned worldwide military expenses, which "continue being excessively onerous and even increase."

He also spoke of the "problem of the exercise of the legitimate right of states to a peaceful development of nuclear energy, compatible with an effective international control of non-proliferation."

The prelate said that "the Holy See encourages all the parties involved in the regulation of various controversies under way, especially those concerning the Korean Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, as well as the adjacent areas, to further a sincere dialogue that is able to reconcile harmoniously the rights of all the nations concerned."

He also spoke of humanitarian crises such as that in Pakistan.

A response, the prelate affirmed, must be associated with "an effort of mutual understanding and of further reflection on the causes of the hostilities."

Archbishop Mamberti went on to consider the problems in the Middle East, Iraq, Myanmar, Central Asia and Africa.

He lamented that in a majority of these conflicts, economic interests are at work.

"A substantial improvement in the conditions of life of the Palestinian population and of other peoples who live in situations of civil or regional war, will certainly make an essential contribution to transform violent opposition into serene and patient dialogue," he contended.

Human rights

After speaking about progress on the Millennium Development Goals, Archbishop Mamberti focused on what he called the "fundamental national interest of all governments," that is, "the creation and maintenance of the conditions necessary to develop fully the integral good -- material and spiritual -- of each of the inhabitants of their nations."

"That is why," he said, "respect and the promotion of human rights are the final objective of dialogue and of international affairs and they are at the same time, the indispensable condition for a sincere and fruitful dialogue between nations."

"The history itself of the development of human rights shows that respect for religious liberty, which includes the right to express one's faith publicly and to spread it, is the essential stone of the whole building of human rights," the prelate affirmed.

He said the greatest guarantee for the future of the United Nations is in this vein: It will continue fulfilling its "historic mission," he stated, "with a constant reference to the dignity of all men and women and by their effective respect, beginning with the right to life -- including of the weakest such as the sick in the terminal phase and children about to be born -- and to religious liberty."