

Holy See Requests Tangible Relief for the Needy

Urges UN to Support Sustainable Economy

NEW YORK, JULY 2, 2009 (Zenit.org).- The Holy See is underlining the need to help the poorest countries during the recession, and to find ethical solutions in order to build a sustainable economy for the future.

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, affirmed this June 26 in a conference on "The World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development."

"We must not forget that it is poor people both in developed and in developing countries who suffer most and who are least able to defend themselves against the impact of this crisis," he said.

At the end of April, the prelate reported, the World Bank estimated that "an additional 55 million to 90 million people will now be trapped in extreme poverty in 2009" and the "number of chronically hungry people is expected to climb to over 1 billion individuals this year."

Thus, he said, the Holy See is underlining the "compelling moral obligation to address these worsening social and economic disparities, which undermine the basic dignity of so many of the world's inhabitants."

Church institutions worldwide are using the momentum to build "new structures of solidarity" and to call for a "redirection of the national and global financial and economic systems toward the principles of justice, solidarity and subsidiarity," the archbishop affirmed.

He continued: "Given the vulnerability of so many of the world's poor, we endorse the proposed approach to protect them with short-term stabilization measures while using longer-term measures to help ensure sustainable financial flows and reduce the likelihood of this crisis reoccurring."

These short-term actions should bring "tangible relief within a reasonable time period," he added.

Looking ahead

Longer-term goals, Archbishop Migliore stated, should focus on supporting sustainability.

He lauded the commitments made at the Group of 20 London Summit last April to "make available more than \$1 trillion in additional assistance," but noted that only a "small part of this" was "targeted for the poorest developing countries."

The prelate underlined the importance of giving "adequate financial assistance" to these countries.

He also expressed support for "measures aimed at strengthening food security, the protection of social expenditures, and, more generally, a people-centered focus of public expenditure."

The prelate continued: "Underlying the current economic crisis is an ideology which places

individuals and individual desires at the center of all economic decisions.

"The practice of economics has reflected this ideological focus and has sought to remove values and morality from economic discussions rather than seeking to integrate these concerns into creating a more effective and just financial system."

The archbishop underlined the need to give priority to the poorest countries and to adopt an "ethical approach" in "economics by those active in international markets, in politics by those in public office," and to "allow for inclusive participation by all members of civil society."

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