

Check against delivery

**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore
Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Observer of the Holy See**

**Economic and Social Council
47th session of the Commission for Social Development**

**On Item 6 (a)
Priority theme: social integration**

New York, 5 February 2009

Madame Chair,

At the very outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful report on *Promoting social integration* inasmuch as it clearly sets the meaning and scope of this agenda item toward social cohesion. While in a socially integrated society there is a sense of belonging, “in a socially cohesive society there is also a clear consensus on what creates a social compact with acknowledged rights and responsibilities of all citizens”.

Social cohesion, as an expression of social justice, is overall a condition that must be assured to all persons by reason of their lofty dignity. Beyond that it is also an indispensable condition to meet the global crises that confront humanity today.

In its detailed analysis of the regional perspectives, the report of the Secretary-General states that the absence of social integration, resulting in social exclusion, is pervasive in developing and developed regions alike and has common causes, namely poverty, inequality and discrimination at all levels.

My delegation is particularly pleased to note that the recommended strategies aimed at promoting social integration under the current circumstances stem from the very framework for developing, shaping and implementing socially inclusive policies provided by the World Summit for Social Development of 1995. This framework is marked by the conviction that the logic of solidarity and subsidiarity is the most apt and instrumental to overcome poverty and ensure the participation of every person and social group at the social, economic, civil and cultural levels.

A broad consensus around the commitment to promote development has been revealed in this last decade in the fight against poverty and in fostering the inclusion and the participation of all persons and social groups. This consensus is also formalized in the *Millennium Declaration* of the year 2000. The development goals enshrined therein are defined in reference to precise indicators and targets. The effort to constantly monitor the achievement of the targets is significant, in order to make living conditions more humane for all. Still, the preoccupation to obtain quantitative or measurable results must not distract our attention and our policies from achieving an integral development.

Monitoring the MDGs shows that it is relatively easy to attain the objectives pursued through measures of a technical nature that require, above all, material resources and organization. However, the pursuit of the goals and, in the end, of development and social cohesion requires not only financial aid, but the effective involvement of people.

The ultimate purpose and content of development programs is giving people the concrete possibility to shape their own lives and be protagonists of development. What seems to be missing in the fight against poverty, inequality and discrimination, are not primarily financial assistance, or the economic and juridical cooperation which are equally essential, but rather, people and relational networks capable of sharing life with those in situations of poverty and exclusion, individuals capable of presence and action, whose enterprise is recognized by local, national and global institutions.

This is similarly expressed by Pope Benedict XVI, who, on the World Day of Peace, stated that “the problems of development, aid and international cooperation are sometimes addressed without any real attention to the human element, but as merely technical questions – limited, that is, to establishing structures, setting up trade agreements, and allocating funding impersonally. What the fight against poverty really needs are men and women who live in a profoundly fraternal way and are able to accompany individuals, families and communities on journeys of authentic human development”.

The needs of families, women, youth, the uneducated and unemployed, the indigenous, the elderly, migrants and all other groups more vulnerable to social exclusion must be addressed through the appropriate legal, social and institutional structures. Yet, through living with and sharing the experiences of those who have been excluded by society we can find means for more fully integrating them into the community, and, more importantly, affirming their dignity and worth so that they can truly become protagonists for their own development.

The Holy See and the various institutions of the Church remain committed to fulfilling this obligation. Through programs, agencies and organizations in every continent, those whom many in society have forgotten are sought out and brought into mainstream society. Through such common effort the lessons learned from those who are marginalized reinforce the truth that poverty eradication, full employment and social integration will be achieved when clarity of purpose is matched by a commitment of spirit.

Thank you, Madame Chair.