

## Holy See on Development Goals' Status

"Global Community Seems to Be Losing Focus"

NEW YORK, OCT. 11, 2007 (Zenit.org).- Here is a statement given Tuesday by Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, to the 62nd U.N. General Assembly on the progress made in reaching the U.N. Millennium Development Goals.

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Mr. President,

At the outset, my delegation thanks the secretary-general for his first comprehensive report. We look forward to working with him and the membership, with a view to making the United Nations ever more responsive to the needs of all people.

As we reach the halfway point in the process of achieving the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals], the time is ripe to take stock of our successes and failures.

Still today almost 10 million children below 5 years old die each year mostly from preventable causes, too many mothers die in childbirth from preventable and treatable complications, last year 2.9 million people died of HIV/AIDS-related causes, and half of the developing world lacks even basic sanitation.

The global community seems to have been losing focus on the need to ensure the right to basic health care for all. Although studies show that simple medical prevention is often one of the most cost effective and successful ways of improving the health and stability of society, primary care is often neglected or replaced by more selective and even culturally divisive methods of health care. Focusing on the whole range of basic health care will surely make a substantial contribution toward the achievement of the MDGs and a saner health policy.

Such a sad landscape is made bleaker by the fact that as children die and generations lack even the basic necessities of life, we have continued to drift toward mutual and global destruction. The annual military expenditures of well over \$1 trillion, the talent and resources devoted to types of technology that destroy lives and our planet, the persistence of the misplaced trust in the law of force rather than in the force of law, are just some examples of action which are counterintuitive to goodness and human reason.

To prevent this situation from worsening, the United Nations, with the cooperation of all member states, must renew its commitment to the preservation of life at every level and in every corner of the world.

It is nevertheless encouraging to note recent findings indicating some real progress in achieving the MDGs. It is only right to recognize the efforts of those countries that have

contributed to the gains made. Now, greater attention must be paid to those states that still trail the rest of the developing world. In order to encourage both public and private investment and to create a favorable economic and social climate, peace and security and the rule of law should underpin reform efforts.

The United Nations is increasingly being solicited to respond to multifarious challenges around the world. To meet this ever growing need for humanitarian assistance, the United Nations should continue to work to promote partnerships with civil society that create a predictable and reactive humanitarian response. Member states play an important role in addressing humanitarian crises. By giving safe and unhindered access to humanitarian workers, they not only fulfill their responsibility to protect, but also help ensure that those who suffer from a humanitarian tragedy are not re-victimized.

During the last few years, this organization has dealt with issues related to culture and religion in an increasing number of resolutions, meetings and side events. This aspect is unfortunately omitted in this report. Most often, it is only when tensions and conflict emerge that governments and international organizations call on religious and cultural forces to help establish dialogue between parties. Cooperating in programs against incitement to hatred, witnessing for peace and against violence and peacemaking through religion-sponsored agencies are among the many things religious communities and their leaders can do to end conflict and build conditions for peace.

Mr. President,

My delegation commends the U.N.'s commitment to addressing the many challenges facing development, peace and security and human rights. In so doing, the organization must maintain its transparency and accountability to the decisions of the member states. To this end, modifications to the Millennium Development Goals, including the creation of new targets, as referenced in Annex II, need to be undertaken in an open manner, rather than as a result of executive or administrative decisions.

Finally, it is our earnest desire that this 62nd session of the General Assembly be strongly marked by a renewed sense of commitment and action toward not only achieving the Millennium Goals, but also completely fulfilling the vision of hope of this institution.

Thank you, Mr. President.