



# HOLY SEE

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**General Debate of the  
64<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly  
of the United Nations**

**New York, 29 September 2009**

Mr. President,

As you assume the presidency of this 64<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, my delegation wishes you all the best in your endeavors and looks forward to working with you in order to address the many challenges facing the global community.

Every year anticipation surrounds the General Assembly in the hope that governments will be able to find points of agreement on the persisting problems that afflict humanity and adopt common direction for resolving them in a peaceful manner for the well-being of all.

Understandably, the deliberations of the preceding session of the General Assembly were dominated by preoccupation with the world financial and economic crisis. It is only fitting that this year delegations have been asked to focus on effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development.

In view of a political and cultural dialogue oriented toward the harmonious evolving of the world economy and international relations we would do well to revisit the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations where it affirms: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small..."

The various world crises that intertwined in the last months bring to the discussion presuppositions of thought and principles of individual, social and international behavior, which extend well beyond the financial or economic field. The idea of producing resources and assets, i.e., the economy, and strategically managing them, i.e., politics, without wanting together with the same actions, to carry out also the good, i.e., ethics, has been proven to be a naïve or cynical and fatal delusion. A more solid and profound contribution that the General Assembly must give to the solution of the international problems lies in promoting the principles contained in the Preamble and in article 1 of the Charter of this Organization, in a manner that such high human and spiritual values serve to renovate the international order from within, where the real crisis lies.

A first element of truth is found exactly in the "We the peoples of the United Nations." The theme of peace and development, in fact, coincides with that of the relational inclusion of all peoples in the unique community of the human family that is constructed in solidarity.

Evident in the diverse G8, G20, regional and international meetings, held in parallel with the work of the preceding General Assembly, was the necessity to give

legitimacy to the political commitments assumed, confronting them with the thought and needs of the entire international Community, so that the devised solutions would be able to reflect the points of view and the expectations of the populations of all the continents. That is why efficacious modes must be found to connect the decisions of the various groupings of Countries to those of the UN, where every nation, with its political and economic weight, can legitimately explain itself in a situation of equality with others.

Mr. President,

It is in this context of truth and sincerity that the recent appeal of Pope Benedict XVI is put in perspective. As he notes in his Encyclical, *Charity in Truth*, “in the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession,” for an urgent “reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.” Such reform is urgent “to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making” (n. 67).

Admittedly, the duty to build the United Nations as a true center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends is an extremely difficult task. The more the interdependence of peoples increases, the more the necessity of the United Nations becomes evident. The need to have an organization capable of responding to the obstacles and increasing complexity of the relations between peoples and nations thus becomes paramount.

The United Nations will advance toward the formation of a true family of nations to the extent that it assumes the truth of the inevitable interdependence among peoples, and to the extent that it takes up the truth about the human person, in accordance with its Charter.

Mr. President,

As we consider the nature of development and the role of donor and recipient countries, we must always remember that true development necessarily involves an integral respect for human life which cannot be disconnected from the development of peoples. Unfortunately in some parts of the world today, development aid seems to be tied rather to the recipient countries' willingness to adopt programs which discourage demographic growth of certain populations by methods and practices disrespectful of human dignity and rights. In this regard, it is both cynical and unfortunate that frequent attempts continue to be made to export such a mentality to developing countries as if it were a form of cultural progress or advancement. Yet such a practice is by its nature

not one of reciprocity but imposition, and to predicate the decision to give development aid on the acceptance of such policies constitutes an abuse of power.

Every human being has the right to good governance, that is, all social actions, at the national and international level, contribute directly or indirectly, to guarantee for all persons a free and dignified life. At the same time, it is an essential part of that dignity that everyone takes responsibility for his actions and actively respects the dignity of others. Rights always exist inseparably from responsibilities and duties. This applies to individual men and women and analogically to States, whose true progress and affirmation depends on their capacity to establish and maintain responsible relations with other States and to express a shared responsibility for world problems.

At the origin of many of the current global crises is the pretense of States and of individual persons that only they have rights and their reluctance to take responsibility for their own and other people's integral development. Often in the activity of international organisms is reflected an inconsistency already widespread in the more developed societies: on the one hand, appeals are made to alleged rights, arbitrary and non-essential in nature, accompanied by the demand that they be recognized and promoted by public entities, while, on the other hand, fundamental and basic rights, already explicit in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, remain unacknowledged and are violated in much of the world. The rights and duties of Nations do not only depend upon agreements, treaties and resolutions of the international organisms, but find their ultimate foundation in the equal dignity of every individual man and woman, be they citizens or aliens. Ultimately, true multilateralism and dialogue among cultures must be based on assuming the duty of commitment for the development of all human beings. We must not forget that the sharing of reciprocal duties is a more powerful incentive to action than the mere assertion of rights.

In this light, the equity of the international commercial system and world financial architecture will be measured by the creation of permanent sources of jobs, stability of work, the just retribution of local production and the availability of public and private credit for production and work, especially in the poorest countries and regions. Thus, the effects of the inevitable economic cycles will be buffered, preventing them from becoming new and more serious global crises.

The implementation of the principle of the "responsibility to protect," as formulated at the 2005 World Summit and approved by unanimous consensus of all UN Member States, becomes a touchstone of the two enunciated principles of truth in international relations and of global governance. The recognition of the core objective and indispensability of the dignity of every man and woman, ensures that the governments always undertake with every means at their disposal to prevent and

combat crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and any other crimes against humanity. Thus, recognizing their interconnected responsibility to protect, States will realize the importance of accepting the collaboration of the international community as a means of fulfilling their role of providing responsible sovereignty.

The mechanisms of the United Nations for addressing common security and the prevention of conflicts were developed in response to the threat of total war and nuclear destruction in the second half of the last century and for this reason alone they deserve perennial historical remembrance. Moreover, the works of peacekeepers have ended and stabilized innumerable local conflicts and have made reconstruction possible. Nevertheless, it is well known that the number of conflicts that the United Nations has not been able to resolve remains high and that many of these conflicts have become occasions of serious crimes against humanity. That is why the acceptance of the principle of the responsibility to protect and of the underlying truths which guide responsible sovereignty can be the catalyst for the reform of the mechanisms, procedures and representativeness of the Security Council.

In this context, Mr. President, my delegation would like to remember here the Honduran people who continue to undergo suffering, frustration and hardships from the already too long political upheaval. Once more, the Holy See urges the concerned parties to make every effort to find a prompt solution in view of the good of the people of Honduras.

Mr. President, this session of the General Assembly began with a special Summit on climate change and will soon hold the Copenhagen Climate Conference (8-16 December 2009). The protection of the environment continues to be at the forefront of multilateral activities, because it involves in cohesive form the destiny of all the Nations and the future of every individual man and woman. Recognition of the double truth of interdependence and personal dignity also requires that environmental issues are taken as a moral imperative and translated into legal rules, capable of protecting our planet and ensuring to future generations a healthy and safe environment.

In closing, Mr. President, in these changing times the international community – “we the peoples” - has the unique chance and responsibility to ensure full implementation of the UN Charter and thus greater peace and understanding among the Nations.

Thank you, Mr. President.