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# Statements By The Holy See At The 2024 High-Level Political Forum On Sustainable Development: Sustainable Development Goals 1 And 2

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Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations

*"SDG 1 AND INTERLINKAGES WITH OTHER SDGS – NO POVERTY"*

Tuesday, 9 July 2024

Madam Chair,

Almost a decade ago, the international community adopted a new shared vision in the 2030 Agenda, acknowledging that poverty represents “the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.”<sup>[1]</sup> As we convene to reassess the implementation of the Agenda, it is evident that the appalling reality of persistent poverty in all its dimensions still exists. In fact, if current trends continue, it is estimated that only one third of countries will have halved national poverty by 2030.<sup>[2]</sup> Consequently, as we debate the means of accelerating the achievement of SDG 1, it is imperative to reiterate that poverty is the greatest global challenge we face and is the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda.

The most effective strategies for eradicating poverty acknowledge it as a multifaceted phenomenon, a confluence of interrelated factors that manifest in all aspects of human existence. When we consider the human person as a whole, including the educational, social, political, cultural and spiritual needs, we see that poverty is about more than the financial resources upon which people rely for their survival. It manifests in a variety of

forms necessitating an integral approach that aligns monetary-based measures with comprehensive policies addressing the non-monetary deprivation experienced by millions of people on a daily basis.

However, the scandalous reality is that addressing the multidimensional aspects of poverty is beyond the reach of many developing countries, which are forced to divert precious resources towards repayments on unsustainable debts. A significant disparity exists between the proportion of government expenditure allocated to essential services, such as education, healthcare and social protection, in advanced economies and that in emerging and developing economies.

It is therefore imperative that the international community takes a radical and transformative action on debt in order to achieve the goal of a world without poverty by 2030. This must include the implementation of debt restructuring strategies that provide developing countries with the necessary fiscal space to invest in their people. The lowering of interest rates and the extension of repayment periods represent potential avenues for developing countries to direct investment towards areas such as education, healthcare and social protection, thereby breaking cycles of poverty. Furthermore, we also reiterate the appeal made by Pope Francis to affluent nations to “forgive the debts of countries who will never be able to repay them.”<sup>[3]</sup> He asserts that this is “more than a question of generosity, but a matter of justice.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Madam Chair,

By ensuring that developing countries are not burdened by unsustainable debt, it is possible to make the necessary investments required to disrupt the persistence of poverty, improve the lives of millions and achieve integral human development for all.

Thank you.

[1] *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), preamble.

[2] SDG Report 2023.

[3] Pope Francis, *Spes non confundit*, 16.

[4] *Ibidem*.



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***“SDG 2 AND INTERLINKAGES WITH OTHER SDGS – ZERO HUNGER”***

**Tuesday, 9 July 2024**

Madam Chair,

My Delegation would like to take this opportunity to reflect on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and on the progress made in our shared pursuit of a world without hunger.

The global community finds itself at a critical juncture, facing alarming levels of hunger and malnutrition worldwide. The global landscape, ravaged by economic crises, climate change and conflict, exacerbates the vulnerabilities of millions, pushing the vision of a world without hunger further from our grasp. Furthermore, the reality that hunger and malnutrition perpetuate even greater levels of poverty compounds this concern. The health consequences of inadequate food quantity and quality affect people’s ability to learn and work. In the words of Pope Francis, “hunger is criminal; food is an inalienable right;”[1] and it is an affront to the inherent God given dignity of the human person.

My Delegation would like to draw attention to the pivotal role played by non-State actors in efforts towards the achievement of SDG2. This includes the Catholic Church, which through numerous organizations, initiatives and charities, is present on the ground throughout the world at the forefront of efforts to combat hunger, including but not only

by distributing daily meals. For those most in need, these represent the primary source of safe, sufficient and nutritious food, if not the only one.

Nevertheless, a mere reliance on short-term solutions is inadequate. In order to achieve the goal of zero hunger, it is necessary to act with a renewed sense of urgency. This requires not only the alleviation of immediate hunger but also the transformation of food systems to ensure sustainability, resilience, and fairness.

The paradox is that, despite the availability of sufficient resources and the production of enough food to feed everyone, hunger and starvation remain the daily reality for a significant proportion of the global population. In order to achieve SDG2 by 2030, it is therefore necessary to take steps to ensure the sustainable production and fair distribution of food.

This new way of thinking requires a renewed commitment to partnerships. It is imperative that the most vulnerable populations, who are often the hardest hit by food insecurity, be at the forefront of all efforts. This includes smallholder farmers, indigenous communities, and women, who play crucial roles in agriculture yet frequently lack access to resources and decision-making processes. It is both necessary and urgent to accelerate action and strengthen partnerships in order to meet the immediate needs of those suffering from hunger.

Madam Chair,

As we enter the final six years of the 2030 Agenda, it is important to heed the words of Pope Francis and “enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the most affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Thank you.

[1] Pope Francis, Message of the Holy Father for the 2023 Campaign for Fraternity of the Church in Brazil.

[2] Pope Francis, Address to Participants in the 38th Conference of the FAO, 20 June 2013.





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