



PC.DEL/380/13
22 May 2013

ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE
AS DELIVERED BY H.E. MSGR. MARIO TOSO, SDB
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION
(INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH EDUCATION)**

Tirana, Albania
21 – 22 May 2013

Plenary session 5: The role of human rights youth education in promoting mutual understanding and respect for diversity in accordance with the existing OSCE commitments

Mr. Chairman,

At this point in time in human history, when various negative forces threaten the legitimate aspirations in many regions of the world for peaceful co-existence, my Delegation would like to use this opportunity to explore the responsibility shared by all participating States as well as civil society in doing everything possible to form all people, especially the young generation, into becoming peace-makers and promoters of true tolerance and non-discrimination.

The roots of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance are often found in prejudice and ignorance, which are also fruits of faulty and inadequate education. To form young men and women into becoming people of peace, mutual respect and understanding is an urgent summons to collective engagement and common action.

As part of the general youth education process, to promote universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, on the one hand, and to counteract intolerance and discrimination, on the other, there must be a specific effort to present certain major values such as the unity of the human race, the dignity of every human being, and solidarity which binds together all the members of the human family.

The role of family is indispensable in this process. The natural family, in fact, constitutes a community of love and solidarity which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society. By exercising its mission to educate, the family contributes to the common good and constitutes the first school of social virtue, which all societies need. In the family, persons are helped to grow in freedom and responsibility, indispensable prerequisites for any function in society. With education,

certain fundamental values are communicated and assimilated. That is why the natural family has a completely original and irreplaceable role in raising children. Parents have the duty and right to impart a religious education and moral formation to their children, a right the State cannot annul but which it must respect and promote. This is a primary right that the family may not neglect or delegate, yet must at the same time exercise with responsibility in close and vigilant cooperation with civil and ecclesial institutions; such cooperation is necessary for an integral approach aimed at educating people in dialogue, encounter, sociality, legality, solidarity and peace, through the cultivation of the fundamental virtues of justice and charity.

In schools, colleges and universities, as young people mature by relating, studying and working with others from different religions and cultures, teachers and others responsible for their training have the noble task of ensuring an education that respects and celebrates the innate dignity of all human beings and promotes friendship, justice, peace and cooperation for integral human development. With spiritual and moral values as the bedrock of education, it becomes their ethical imperative also to help students not to succumb to ideologies that feed on discord and division.

Mr. Chairman,

While states and individual leaders in the social, political and cultural fields, generally have their own important roles to play in strengthening the education of the young, religious leaders in particular, by reason of their vocation to be spiritual and moral leaders, they must continue to inspire the young generation to walk the path of peace and to become messengers of peace, respect and love for others. In this regard the Catholic Church recalls her very extensive active role “on the ground”, in educating and instructing young people of every confession and on every continent throughout the centuries. Faithful to her values, the Church places herself at the service of every person and of the whole person. For, in the Church’s view, all people of whatever race, nation, religion, sex or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons have an inalienable right to education. This education should be suitable to the particular destiny of the individual person, and should be conducive to fraternal relations with other nations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world.

In order to promote the culture of human rights, everyone has the duty to educate for peace; but the media have a particularly important role in this area. Given the prodigious and positive development of the means of social communication, the Church recalls that the responsibilities of the individuals using them have become still greater. In fact, serious risks are involved, not so much with regard to the techniques used as to the content of what is communicated. Those responsible for information must never forget their duties to society as a whole. The first of these concerns the common good, for society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice and solidarity. In communicating information, therefore, the primary duty is truth but a corollary of this is that the right to communicate the truth is not unconditional. This right must be guided by charity, because it is not an end in itself; the life and reputation of private citizens must be respected, as must the common good.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!