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**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE
AS DELIVERED BY MSGR. MARINKO ANTOLOVIĆ
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION
(INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH EDUCATION)**

Tirana, Albania
21 – 22 May 2013

Plenary session 3: Combating anti-Semitism

Mr. Chairman,

The Holy See remains concerned over the increase of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, manifested in various ways, such as Holocaust denial, justification of hate incidents against Jews through sentiments related to the State of Israel, growing nationalistic movements targeting Jews and igniting hateful sentiments against them, and worst of all murder.

It has to be repeated over and over again that there is no place in the modern world for anti-Semitism. The Catholic Church has irrevocably committed itself to pursuing the path of dialogue, fraternity and friendship between the Catholic community and our Jewish brothers and sisters, a journey which has been deepened and developed in the last forty years, through important steps and significant gestures.

My Delegation would like to recall what the Second Vatican Council clearly affirmed, namely: the Catholic Church “deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source” (*Nostra Aetate* n. 4). This is the position of the Catholic Church on anti-Semitism, and therefore various statements of the Roman Pontiffs have given voice to this deep awareness, emphasizing that anti-Semitism has no place within the Catholic Church.

As His Holiness Benedict XVI has stated: “The hatred and contempt for men, women and children that was manifested in the Shoah was a crime against God and against humanity. This should be clear to everyone, especially to those standing in the tradition of the Holy Scriptures, according to which every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. It is beyond question that any denial or minimization of this terrible crime is intolerable and

altogether unacceptable.... The Shoah must be a warning for all against forgetfulness, denial or reductionism, because violence committed against one single human being is violence against all” (Address to Members of the Delegation of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, 12 February 2009).

The progress made in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people is in no small part due to the work of the International Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations and, in more recent years, the Mixed Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See, which have worked together in discovering anew a common spiritual patrimony, in order to keep open the space for dialogue, for reciprocal respect, for growth in friendship, and for a common witness in the face of the challenges of our time, which invite us to cooperate for the good of humanity.

Mr. Chairman,

For more than 60 years we have had the horror of the Holocaust crime before us; in spite of that, anti-Semitism has not yet disappeared. As if some had nothing to learn from the crimes of the past, certain organizations, with branches in various countries, keep alive the anti-Semite and anti-Jewish racist myth, with the support of networks of publications. Terrorist acts which have Jewish persons or symbols as their target have multiplied in recent years and show the radicalism of such groups.

The struggle against anti-Semitism means fighting for human rights and promoting peace. In this regard the item is rightly placed on the OSCE agenda. Those who are seated around this table are well aware that whoever loves peace cannot be restrained by prejudice of any kind, nor by incomplete or superficial judgments. Justice would not be served and consequently a solution to this problem would not be provided; indeed it would be made all the more difficult.

So as to make the commitment against anti-Semitism effective, we believe that it is important above all to stress that the question is not merely to uproot from citizens and cultures any lingering feelings of anti-Semitism, but rather to arouse through educational work a serene evaluation of the problem and a sense of respect for Jewish communities. The ongoing commitment to promote a culture of acceptance of the other by those who are marked by generational memories of anti-Semitic oppression is also decisive for properly addressing the problems linked with anti-Semitism.

May the *Shoah* teach, as much the old generations as the new ones, that only the path of listening and dialogue, of love and pardon, albeit wearying, leads peoples, cultures and religions of the world to the desired encounter of fraternity and peace. May violence never again humiliate the dignity of man!

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!