

OSCE CONFERENCE ON GLOBALISATION

Statement by the HOLY SEE

Vienna, 3-4 July 2003

Mr Chairman,

If we take 1983 as the year of the birth of globalisation, when T. Levitt coined the term, we have to recognize that this complex phenomenon has made in the last twenty years striking progress, not only in the economic and financial realm, but also in the scientific, cultural and communication domain. This phenomenon is so unpredictable and uncontrollable that structural adaptation has become the concept and instrument for the acceleration of the dismantling of state control and privatisation, according to the rule that everything unconnected with the market will inevitably be marginalized.

The welfare state often has to step back and individuals have to assume their responsibilities in many areas. There are many who accept the challenge, but a large number are unfortunately not capable of doing so.

This gives rise to new social problems, also in not a few OSCE countries, and it leads many observers to inquire into the ethical aspects of globalisation and the way how to manage this process.

The Holy See has tended to address the question of globalisation and its effects on the unity of the human family within the context of its reflections on development. It is concerned especially about inequalities and the exclusion of individuals and peoples from economic and social progress. Pope John Paul II addresses, for examples, the question of monopolies and unfair competition not in terms of market functioning, but in terms of the inclusion of the poorest: It is necessary to break down the barriers and monopolies which leave so many countries on the margins of development and to provide all individuals and nations with the basic conditions which will enable them to share in development (Centesimus Annus n.35).

The challenge is to ensure a globalisation in solidarity and without marginalization. It means to find out how to manage or govern the process of globalisation, in order that may effectively create a more inclusive and more equitable development process.

The ethical implications of globalisation can be positive or negative. There is an economic globalisation which brings some positive consequences such as efficiency and increased production and which, with the development of economic links between different countries, can help to bring greater unity among peoples and

make possible a better service to the human family.

However if globalisation is ruled merely by the laws of the market applied to suit the powerful, the consequences cannot but be negative like for instance: absolutizing the economy, unemployment, the reduction and deterioration of public services, the destruction of the environment and natural resources, unfair competition which puts the poor nations in a situation of ever increasing inferiority.

The concept of absolutizing the economy is particularly significant for the social implications of globalisation. Social progress cannot be achieved without sustained economic growth. Today it is more and more evident that sustained economic growth on its own will not necessarily achieve social progress. In fact, any Anew global economic and financial architecture requires a Anew development and new political architecture. The social goals of the international community cannot be determined only by the technical economics decisions on international financial institutions or by decisions heavily influenced by the domestic interests of a group of the stronger economies.

There are some other areas which I have not mentioned, even though very important, such as: human mobility alongside the mobility of goods and services, the cultural consequences of current globalisation models, and the entire question of financial markets.

In conclusion, the reality of globalisation, calls not to postpone the necessary harmonization of the requirements of the economy with those of ethics, in order to ensure that globalisation is managed in a just and efficient way.