



THE HOLY SEE

Economic and Environmental Sessions of the 2010 Review Conference

19-26 October 2010, Vienna

Working Session 5: Environmental Cluster

Monday, October 25, 2010

- **Ensuring sustainable development and economic growth through promoting technological innovation and modernization in the economies, fostering social development, capacity-building for environmental governance;**
- **Protecting the environment;**
- **The way forward.**

Mr. Chairman,

1. This Session of the Review Conference opens its “Environmental Cluster”, thus entering in the field that is intrinsically linked to the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security and its activities: the environment. This concept should be viewed within the larger picture of sustainable development. Indeed, in this context we need also to bear in mind different aspects of sustainable development, such as poverty eradication, protection of the environment and management of the natural resources. The three components of sustainable development - economic development, social development and environmental protection - are interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars. They are also elements one cannot ignore in dealing with the OSCE concept of security in which, in our view, even more attention should be given to economic and environmental issues and, in particular, to economic development, social development and environmental protection.

2. The Holy See is of the view that protecting the environment means more than defending it. Protecting the environment implies a more positive vision of the human being, in the sense that the person is not considered a nuisance or a threat to the environment, but one who holds oneself responsible for the care and management of the environment. In this sense, not only is there no opposition between the human being and the environment, there is established an inseparable alliance, in which the environment essentially conditions man’s life and development, while the human being perfects and ennobles the environment by his or her creative activity.

3. As stated by Pope Benedict XVI in his *Message for the World Day of Peace 2010*, the protection of the environment is one of the conditions required to cultivate peace. It is necessary to underline the moral imperative that all, without exception, have a grave responsibility to protect the environment. While the duty to protect the environment should not be considered in opposition to development, it must not be sacrificed on the altar of economic development.

The Holy See believes that, at its core, the environmental crisis and problems are a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth and what we pass on to future generations. It exhorts us to live in harmony with our environment. Thus the ever-expanding powers of the human being over nature must be accompanied by an equally expanding responsibility toward the environment.

4. Environment is inseparable from questions such as peace and justice, national interests and international solidarity. It is not hard to see how issues of environmental protection, models of development, social equity and each one's share of the responsibility to care for the environment are inextricably intertwined. These elements are also elements that should necessarily be present in the OSCE approach to security and cooperation in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Thank you Mr. Chairman!