



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/9554 *rAdd.1*
26 April 1974
ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH/
SPANISH

Sixth special session
Agenda item 7

STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF RAW MATERIALS AND DEVELOPMENT

Note of the Secretary-General

At the request of the representatives to the United Nations of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, the Philippines, Spain and the United Republic of Tanzania, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the text of the message dated 4 April 1974 addressed to him by His Holiness Pope Paul VI.

ANNEX

Message dated 4 April 1974 from His Holiness Pope Paul VI

To the Honourable Dr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

We are happy to take the occasion of this special session to send a message of support as the General Assembly embarks on the study of the problems of raw materials and development. Our deep interest in these important aspects of man's life stems from our spiritual mission at the service of the whole man and of all men.

We are indeed aware of the importance and urgency of the problems that this General Assembly is trying to solve by reviewing the existing relationships between developed and developing countries, and by endeavouring to create the basis for a new relationship which will eliminate the inequality existing between the rich and powerful nations and those whose true development is hampered by so many obstacles. It is of the utmost necessity for the world community to bridge this ever-growing gap and to alter the situations wherein raw materials do not bring to the peoples who produce them a just and equitable measure of human well-being.

It is evident that none of these problems can be solved by policies that serve only national self-interest. Nations are often blinded by egoism and prevented from seeing how their own true interests are indeed compatible with the interests of other States and coincide with the general good of the human family as a whole. It is therefore imperative that existing difficulties should be solved through a dialogue undertaken in an international forum in which all work together. We are convinced that only in this way can the interests of the entire human community and of each of its members be promoted; only in this way can the vested interests of nations or groups of nations be overcome for the true benefit of all.

The Church steadfastly professes the belief that all acceptable solutions must be based on international social justice and human solidarity, and be the practical applications of these principles.

The developing nations must continue in their efforts to promote the true welfare of their peoples, utilizing all their own energies, working together and sharing among themselves. But international justice demands equally that the wealthy and privileged nations should match that effort by removing any obstacles of economic or political domination, by sharing more equitably economic power with the weaker nations, by allowing developing nations to be the agents of their own development and to exercise their true role in the decision-making that affects the very lives of their peoples. Only when the developing nations have the means to reach their destiny will they in turn be able to discharge the full measure of their responsibility within the brotherhood of nations.

Convinced as we are that a new order of development will promote peace and serve the genuine advantages of all, we appeal to the developed nations to make greater efforts to forgo their own immediate advantages, and to adopt a new life style that will exclude both excessive consumption and those superfluous needs that are often artificially engendered through the use of the mass media by a limited segment of society in search of riches. Likewise, one should not forget that a life style based on ever greater consumption has deleterious effects on nature and the environment and finally on the moral fibre of man himself, especially youth.

Through the goodwill of all, the riches of this world must serve the true benefit of all - as they were indeed destined by the Creator who, in his bountiful providence, has put them at the disposal of the whole of mankind (cf. John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, AAS 53 (1961), p. 430).

As we call for the application of justice for everyone, we deem it a duty to make a special appeal for the nations most deprived of natural resources or of the fruit of industry. Worthy of particular priority by every honourable standard, these people must be given the means that will enable them to fulfil their human destiny.

All countries must be aware of their obligation in this field, and of the consequences that their success or failure will produce. Just and equitable relations between all nations can only be promoted if all will agree within an international context to take the necessary measures for revising certain policies heretofore followed. If this is not done despair will ensue on the part of the poor and powerless, a despair that will spur them to aggressive search of methods - other than international co-operation - to gain what they consider to be their economic rights.

In this regard we feel constrained to state once again that the giving of aid - however laudable and necessary - is not sufficient to promote the full measure of human dignity required by the solidarity of mankind under the fatherhood of God. The nations must succeed in creating new, more just, and hence more effective international structures in such spheres as economics, trade, industrial development, finance and the transfer of technology. We repeat the challenge that we launched three years ago when we stated that "it is necessary to have the courage to undertake a revision of the relationship between nations, ... to question the models of growth of the rich nations and change people's outlooks ..." (Octogesima Adveniens, 43, AAS 63 (1971), p. 432).

Despite the efforts necessarily involved in such a demanding programme, we are confident in the goodwill of all. Moreover we are convinced that all those who believe in God will realize more and more that the exigencies of their faith include justice and fraternal love for every man. In the first century of Christianity a great exponent of brotherhood under God expressed the universal challenge of human solidarity, asking: "... how can God's love survive in a man who has enough of this world's goods yet closes his heart to his brother?" (1 Jn 3:17).

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Because of the profound conviction that we have expressed personally before the United Nations General Assembly "that this Organization represents the path that modern civilization and world peace are obliged to take" (Address of 4 October 1965, AAS 57 (1965), p. 878), we do not hesitate to repeat the invitation that we subsequently extended in our Encyclical on the Development of Peoples: "Delegates to international organizations, it depends on you to see that the dangerous and futile rivalry of Powers should give place to collaboration which is friendly, peaceful and free of vested interests, in order to achieve a responsible development of mankind, in which all men will have an opportunity to find their fulfilment" (Populorum Progressio, 84, AAS 59 (1967), p. 298).

We assure all those pursuing these goals, all those earnestly striving to find just solutions to the pressing problems confronting society today of our prayerful and enduring support.

From the Vatican, 4 April 1974

PAULUS PP. VI
