

**D R A F T**

**Remarks of His Excellency Silvano M. Tomasi, c.s.,  
Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
to the United Nations and Specialized Agencies in Geneva  
at the Parallel Event to 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Human  
Rights Council focusing on the theme:**

**“Solidarity, Development, and MDG8:  
Keys for Achieving MDGs through Global Partnership”**

It is a great honor for the Holy See Mission to the United Nations in Geneva to join as a co-sponsor in this important event and for me, personally, to offer these introductory remarks. Perhaps this theme is more relevant today than ever before. Most regrettably, society increasingly becomes more inwardly focused, more rejecting of the newcomer or the “stranger”, more fixated on profits for those who already have many possessions, and more begrudging of support to those who can barely eke out their daily subsistence. The Millennium Developments Goals aims to reduce poverty by half by 2015, but inequality persists. If you look at the numbers for sub-Saharan Africa, for example, you see that extreme poverty has doubled from 1981 to 2005. The political concern is often directed in the wrong direction with some third world countries governments more worried to be accountable to their donors than they are to their populations.

The MDG8 envisions a “Global Partnership for Development”, but most of the specific targets are limited to economic developments. Important as these are, they will fail if not integrated into a comprehensive approach. Effective partnerships that include foreign aid and non-aid policies should promote an integral human development which enables all people to enjoy their God-given human dignity through improvement of their economic, social, emotional, and spiritual state of life. It may be useful to recall that religion can contribute to the resolution of conflict , a frequent cause of underdevelopment, and to the promotion of human flourishing in a globalized world. Indeed, the values held in common by most of the world’s great religions can be summed up by the word “solidarity”. In his Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI offers this working definition for solidarity: “The individual who is animated by true charity labors skillfully to discover the causes of misery, to find the means to combat it, to overcome it resolutely” (#30). Most religious traditions, Christianity in particular, hold the belief that God has created one human family and that from this unity comes the ethical responsibility of mutual accountability and support. The common good, toward which aim all development efforts, transcends regional and State borders and embraces all people. As the U.N. Millennium Summit Declaration states:”...only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable.” Juridical formulation for cooperation find their strength in the ethical responsibility already inscribed in the fact that we are all members in one human family.

In this age of increasing inter-connectedness, or globalization, among all nations, economies, cultures and peoples, we know that individual charity,

while indispensable, is not totally sufficient to make sweeping and life-saving changes in the lives of the billions of people who live in extreme poverty or abject marginalization. In order to address such structural injustices, we need an authentic globalization of solidarity. Thus, in his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, Pope Benedict urged the human family to make “room for an ethical approach to economics on the part of those active in the international market, an ethical approach to politics on the part of those in public office, and an ethical approach to participation capable of harnessing the contributions of civil society at local and international levels (#12).” This is the appropriate context to understand and promote an eventual declaration on the right of peoples and individuals to international solidarity as the Human Rights Council and the Independent Expert are pursuing.

During our discussions today and, most especially, during the time remaining for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, while taking into account the generous giving of many rich countries and the critical contributions made by trade and debt relief provisions, let us not ignore the ethical requirements to realize an integral human development. The task is enormous as many areas of life remain yet to be addressed in an adequate and fair way. Through solidarity among individuals, families, local communities, nations, and the entire human family, we can and must attain development that respects the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death; that assures the right to religious freedom; that fosters the interaction of different levels of human knowledge with special attention on equitable access to life-saving and life-enhancing medicines and technologies; that prioritizes access to steady employment under conditions

of decent work and with adequate wages; that establishes adequate international norms able to safeguard the needs and rights of individual migrants and their families, and at the same time, those of the host countries; and that re-establishes a financial system base on renewed structures and operating methods after much misuse, which has wreaked such havoc on the real economy.

There remains a vast field of action where to exercise international solidarity, but it is the only reasonable road toward a future where justice and peaceful living together can be achieved.