

Holy See: Good Societies Aid Weakest Members

Archbishop Says Poverty Offends Human Dignity

NEW YORK, FEB. 8, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Unemployment and poverty are offenses to human dignity, and a good society is one that assists its weakest members, says the Holy See.

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, said this Thursday to a social development commission meeting of the Economic and Social Council.

The topic of the meeting was to promote full employment and decent work for all, an objective which the archbishop said the United Nations has always had as a priority.

The Vatican spokesman considered two aspects of unemployment and poverty: "first, that the lack of full employment and decent work and its associated poverty and social disintegration offend human dignity, and second, that we can only hold the trust of the people if we listen to them and concretely take their needs into account."

The poor, said Archbishop Migliore, "are the hardest hit in times of economic downturn, thus, any policy to stimulate the economy must provide them concrete economic help. Assisting them is a question of justice and solidarity, but it is also a financially sound measure to stimulate national economies and international trade."

He continued: "The Holy See wishes to recall that the compelling needs of the poor have a priority claim on our conscience and on the choices financial leaders make, and as such, it is incumbent upon international fora to provide a platform to the poor because, more often than not, they are left voiceless in the search for solutions to problems that also deeply matter to them."

"A good society," added the Vatican spokesman, "is measured by the extent to which those with responsibility attend to the needs of the weaker members, especially those most in need. A good society is one in which all benefit from the common good, and nobody is left outside the common concern."

"Economic policies that help low-income working people live dignified, decent lives should be a priority of any good society worthy of the name."

"The persistence of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration are by-products of distrust and the absence of fair relations among the various components of the economic

and social mechanisms," said the archbishop. "A lack of mutual trust among parties also means a lack of confidence in the future which, in turn, means the absence of job security."