

Holy See: Planet Is Everyone's Responsibility

Archbishop Notes Pontiff's Efforts on Behalf of Environment

NEW YORK, FEB. 14, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI's personal commitment to safeguarding the planet, shown in part by his numerous public appeals, has inspired a change in lifestyles in favor of the environment, the Holy See noted.

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, affirmed this Wednesday during the 62nd session of the U.N. General Assembly titled "Addressing Climate Change: The United Nations and the World at Work."

"The ongoing debate on climate change has helped put into focus the inescapable responsibility of one and all to care for the environment, thereby building consensus around the common objective of promoting a healthy environment for present and future generations," he noted.

In this effort, he affirmed, "the Holy See assures of its collaboration."

In particular, Archbishop Migliore noted the work done personally by the Holy Father.

"The personal commitment and numerous public appeals of Pope Benedict XVI have generated awareness campaigns for a renewed sense of respect for and the need to safeguard God's creation," he stated. "Individuals and communities have started to change their lifestyles, aware that personal and collective behavior impacts climate and the overall health of the environment.

"While such lifestyle changes at times may seem irrelevant, every small initiative to reduce or offset one's carbon footprint, be it the avoidance of the unnecessary use of transport or the daily effort to reduce energy consumption, contributes to mitigating environmental decay and concretely shows commitment to environmental care."

The prelate also noted the Holy See's practical steps to participate in safeguarding the environment. He mentioned the solar panels scheduled to be installed at Vatican City State. One project will be finished this year and will provide all the energy needed for Paul VI hall. Surplus will be used at other locations.

And the archbishop noted participation in a tree planting project in Hungary, which will "will provide environmental benefits to the host country, assist in the recovery of an environmentally degraded tract of land, and provide local jobs."

Archbishop Migliore highlighted the shared responsibility of individuals and nations in protecting the planet.

"It is incumbent upon every individual and nation to seriously assume one's share of the responsibility to find and implement the most balanced approach possible to this challenge," he said. "Sustainable development provides the key to a strategy that harmoniously takes into account the demands of environmental preservation, climate change, economic development and basic human needs."

Clean and green

The Holy See representative encouraged the use of "clean technologies," saying they are an "important component of sustainable development."

And he recommended that developing countries be helped to learn from the mistakes made by their highly-industrialized counterparts.

"The pooling of resources makes initiatives of mitigation and adaptation economically accessible to most, thus assisting those less equipped to pursue development while safeguarding the environment," he said.

Archbishop Migliore further urged that markets patronize "green economies" and not to "sustain demand for goods whose very production causes environmental degradation."

"Consumers must be aware that their consumption patterns have direct impact on the health of the environment," he stated. "Thus through interdependence, solidarity and accountability, individuals and nations together will be more able to balance the needs of sustainable development with those of good stewardship at every level.

"Indeed, the challenge of climate change is at once individual, local, national and global. Accordingly, it urges a multilevel coordinated response, with mitigation and adaptation programs simultaneously individual, local, national and global in their vision and scope."