



The Holy See

**LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO MR GAMANI COREA, SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)***

*To Mr Gamani Corea
Secretary General
United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*

The sixth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development is meeting at a time when many questions of grave importance claim the attention of leaders and specialists in the fields of politics, social problems, economics and development. In such an atmosphere in which problems are many and solutions not easy, often enough it is difficult to bring together sufficient resources and energies combined with the necessary political commitment to face up adequately to the many specific challenges in the areas that will be examined by your Conference. Mindful of the very real human factor and informed about the history of previous Conferences, I am writing to you, Mr Secretary General, to offer this important meeting words of support and encouragement which stem from my profound wish that this Conference might contribute to the betterment of the conditions of life and thus to the present and future well-being of the developing countries, especially the countries that have the most need for concrete help.

As you know, the task of the Church is spiritual and religious in nature. Animated by the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, the Church, consistent with that spiritual mission, never hesitates to speak a word and to lend a hand, in order to collaborate in the responsibilities we all must face to enhance life and secure a better future for all peoples, especially those who are in the greatest need.

In my Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, I spoke of the importance of international collaboration, pointing out that they “must let themselves be guided by an exact diagnosis of the complex

situations and of the influence exercised by natural, historical, civil and other such circumstances. They must also be more highly operative with regard to plans for action jointly decided on, that is to say, they must be more effective in carrying them out" (IOANNIS PAULI PP. II, *Laborem Exercens*, 18).

Many and varied are the studies and analyses that have been carried on by various agencies and governments in the past twenty years concerning development and trade around the world and within individual nations. These have been utilized with varying degrees of success by those responsible. However, what I would want to emphasize today is the need to move from the studies which are already available, or which might be readily available where needed, and to arrive at the next point. Aware of their mutual dependence, and in a spirit of solidarity, international organisations and nations should bend their efforts at this UNCTAD VI to plan for action jointly decided upon that might be more effective in furthering the well-being of nations and peoples who come to this forum looking for help.

To this end, there is a need, I believe, for a relaunching of the North-South dialogue with fresh perspectives and with a renewed political will to carry out programmes that will be mutually helpful. Everyone is aware of the domestic problems that for some time have beset all the nations of the world without exception. Great as these are, it would be a pity if the internal difficulties of a developed nation were to be used as an excuse to avoid responsibilities in the international sphere. Thus one can see that in the area of development the fundamental step must be the initiation of a dialogue that accepts the other as an equal partner and that seeks to find the ways through sincere and honest negotiations to resolve real and concrete problems. There can be no substitute for this dialogue. There is no nation which has the right to exempt itself from the demands that such a dialogue presents.

If the North-South dialogue can be renewed and given new impetus and direction - and this Conference can play an important role in such an endeavour - then a first fruit of that process will be the discovery of a new quality of interdependence. The interdependence of nations is expressed in a number of ways, from the most simple bartering to the most complicated of international economic and trade agreements. These are, however, the plain facts of interdependence which indicate to us that no one nation is able to live solely by itself, looking only to its own interests. Yet in these facts one can discover a more important reality, namely the quality of interdependence or interchange that must be expressed and developed beyond the mere facts. This must be fostered in the renewal of the North-South dialogue: the quality of the dialogue must be improved. The vision of a world living together in harmony must be emphasized. Esteem for the values of one another's cultures must be deepened. Above all the full dignity and value of the human person in society must be protected and fostered. The dialogue which you in this Conference must conduct about economics and trade, about development and appropriate technology, will be guided by and expressive of the value you place upon the peoples and nations with whom you are dealing. This is, need I add, a mutual discovery and a mutual obligation: to

develop a North-South dialogue that embodies and expresses a quality of interdependence that gives to all those involved their true worth and thus opens up the concrete steps to be taken in order to arrive at that sense of the worth of the human person and the common good of all.

It is my earnest hope that UNCTAD VI will make a real and lasting contribution to this dialogue, a contribution that will find its way into programmes that overcome the current disparities and give new hope to the lives of peoples and nations most in need - a contribution that will press forward to a world in which the worth of every person and nation is fully respected and honoured.

I pray that God, our common Father, will bless this Conference, your deliberations and the fruit of your work.

From the Vatican, 25 May 1983.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. VI, 1 p. 1453-1456.*

L'Osservatore Romano 8.6.1983 p.1.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n. 34-35 p.12.

Paths to Peace p. 256-257.

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