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Intervention of the apostolic nuncio in Indonesia at the Conference “Our Ocean, Our Legacy” (Bali, 29-30 October 2018)

The following is the text of the intervention by Archbishop Piero Pioppo, apostolic nuncio in Indonesia and head of the Holy See delegation, pronounced yesterday at the conference “Our Ocean, Our Legacy”, taking place in Bali, Indonesia, from 29 to 30 October 2018:

Intervention by H.E. Msgr. Piero Pioppo

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See is pleased to join all those States and organizations that continue to support the “Our Ocean” cycle of Conferences, with a special appreciation for the efforts to make it as “cross-cutting” as possible, attempting to involve different actors.

I wish to thank the Government of Indonesia for hosting this Conference. Indonesia, because of its specific geographical location and its history, is one of those countries that can well testify how the issues related to oceans are complex and interconnected. Indeed, oceans require our attention and a willing collaboration for the implementation, on the one hand, of a serious interdisciplinary approach and, on the other, of the principle of subsidiarity, involving the local, national and regional contexts, as well as the international level. The common objective is to ensure a real protection of what the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea describes as the “common heritage of mankind”.

The interdisciplinary and integral approach that we should adopt with regard to the theme of oceans becomes ever more necessary when we recognize that they are mentioned specifically in SDG 14 “to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” and are inherently connected with other SDGs. In this regard, it might be helpful to develop the relationship between the topic of oceans and SDG 16 which concerns the promotion of “peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development”. Indeed, an inclusive approach with the participation of all can only have positive benefits for the

care of our common home and, in particular, for the oceans and coastlands.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of the seas is important to the Holy See and to the Catholic Church. This is demonstrated in the numerous initiatives undertaken by the Church including, among others: the various types of assistance offered to seafarers; supporting the development of fishing communities and the protection of their rights; the incessant work with and in favor of migrants in many countries; the activities with communities that are threatened by rising sea levels; as well as raising awareness about those initiatives that risk damaging the seabed.

Indeed, it is worth noting that interest and activities that involve oceans has increased significantly. Consider, for example, the reality of migratory flows, the exploration and the exploitation of marine resources, as well as those issues related to maritime trade and transport. In order for these interests and activities to be truly at the service of the common good, of the whole human family and of the integral and harmonious development of each person and of each community, it is important that they be guided by just ethical principles. In particular, a healthy anthropology must illuminate our relationship with this marvelous and impressive gift - the oceans.

One must not be limited to a vision of the oceans that is framed solely by technology, by concerns of security, or by the search for profits. It would not be enough even to concentrate exclusively on biodiversity and ecosystems, if the role of the human person were left aside. Furthermore, we must address the threats to our oceans in a courageous and adequate way. Often, the causes of these threats are found on land: dangerous and forced migration, the scourge of various forms of criminal trafficking and the pollution of the seas. Think, for example, of the problems caused by the waste of chemical products and plastics.

In the management of marine and ocean resources, it is necessary to employ responsible behaviors, as well as to facilitate the necessary assistance and cooperation for the development of the most vulnerable communities, and to ensure effective monitoring of the commitments undertaken to protect the wellbeing of humanity and of biodiversity.

From this perspective, it should not be forgotten, as indicated by the Message of the Holy Father to the previous Our Ocean meeting, that "the oceans remind us of the need to educate for the covenant between humanity and the environment (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 209-215). In this regard, efforts should be made to train young people to care for the oceans but also, wherever possible, helping them to grow in knowledge, appreciation and contemplation of their vastness and grandeur. For the contemplation of creation can teach us valuable lessons and be an unending source of inspiration (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 85)" (Message on behalf of the Holy Father at the Fourth Conference "Our Ocean", Malta, 5 October 2017).

Thank you!
