



# The Holy See

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**DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II  
IN OCCASIONE DEL 10° ANNIVERSARIO DELL'IFAD  
(FONDO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO AGRICOLO)\***

*Martedì, 26 gennaio 1988*

The recent institution of the Fund has not prevented it from assuming an important role in the vast effort of solidarity undertaken by the nations in the second half of the twentieth century. Your organization also occupies a special place among the international organizations which characterize henceforth the path of nations.

In the future when people mention the age in which we live, perhaps they will recall the many problems and differences, or the numerous conflicts, or again the great leap in scientific and technical development. However, they will also emphasize that this era was one of international solidarity, thanks to the efforts made to confront and resolve the problems facing humanity, and thanks as well to the numerous organizations created during the course of this period. Much will have been done in the realms of peace, justice, economic, cultural and scientific cooperation, human rights, public health, and famine relief. Such efforts cannot be in vain. How could they be forgotten by future generations?

2. The International Fund for Agricultural Development, which five years ago chose for its headquarters the city of Rome, dear to the whole world for its exceptional wealth of religious and human tradition, is integrated within the system of the specialized institutions of the United Nations which have the precise aim of combining and using financial resources in favour of projects and programmes concerning agriculture and food supply.

The Holy See, which attaches particular importance to the peaceful and solidary development of the international community, from the very beginning has encouraged the project of an institution specifically devoted to the financial support of individual or collective initiatives of cooperation in the regions of the less favoured. It will not fail to follow its growth because this initiative seems capable of contributing in great measure to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

3. The grave problem of hunger which still afflicts many regions of the world today cannot, therefore, be resolved merely by the intervention of the food-producing nations. An effective solution will be found only if it stimulates the considerable human resources of agricultural workers, fishermen and ranchers who lack the necessary economic means and

technology. Thus the redistribution of aid, the remuneration of productive work must take into the greatest possible consideration the demands of social justice and favour the cooperation of all. In fact, no one can fight alone against the constraints of ecological factors such as unfavourable atmospheric conditions, prolonged drought, parasites, or against the incredible erosion of the soil due to thoughtless human intervention or lack of proper care.

However, the Holy See's support of IFAD is also of the moral order because, for many countries, this organization represents a concrete means of assuming their responsibilities in regard to the development of the poorer nations. It gives entire categories of workers the means to fight against hunger and malnutrition. Therefore these men and women use their abilities better and affirm their own dignity.

4. In the same order of ideas IFAD is an original institution because of the criteria established to determine financial contributions according to the real economic possibilities and the development of each of the member nations, divided into three distinct categories. Further, the allotment of financial resources is proportioned to the possibility of use by the beneficiaries. Facing the most serious shortages or acute crises, they provide credit facilities and gratuitous gifts.

The objectives of the Fund, however, cannot be reduced to the distribution of credit or gifts, but they also comprise the study of the world economic situation. We are all convinced that, despite the efforts of international organizations and the results that have already been achieved, entire continents are confronted with the urgent necessity of improving the living and working conditions of hundreds of millions of people. In December 1986, during the tenth session of the Council of Governors of IFAD, its president emphasized the fact that in Asia, for example, tens of millions of people continue to suffer hunger and live without hope of any improvement.

In Africa the problem of survival has a catastrophic breadth, and in Latin America an important part of the population is cut off from development, living in distressing areas of misery. These situations are prolonged despite a notable growth in the world food production in recent years.

5. In 1967 my predecessor Paul VI, in his encyclical on the development of peoples, designated among the goals to be pursued, "a development which is for each and all the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human" (no. 20~; he mentions the lack of material necessities, the exploitation of workers; he also indicates other objectives: to assure everyone of the possession of necessities, to overcome social scourges, to work for the common good (n. 21).

In the face of such objectives, one cannot rely entirely on individual initiatives of free competition. John XXIII had already stated in his social encyclical *Mater et Magistra* the necessity of organized programmes to encourage, stimulate, and coordinate the action of individuals and intermediary bodies (cf. AAS 53 [ 1961 1, p. 414).

6. Henceforth, in addition to bilateral collaboration, multilateral endeavours have a particular weight, because they can overcome the risks of neo-colonialism or the fear of strategic hegemony in situations involving political, military, economic or ideological interests to the detriment of the human needs of the population.

Liberty, mutual respect, and the principle of equality, as well as the development of international cooperation, are part of

the recognized goals of the member countries of the United Nations. Their objectives always remain to be sought and defended; their realization depends on the vitality of international relations; it is hindered by crises; it is annulled by the effects of violence, but it makes progress in mutual esteem and confidence; it is favoured by the common will for effort; it is benefited by the climate of detente between the various countries.

7. The tenth anniversary of the institution of IFAD, which we are celebrating today, affords us a privileged opportunity to verify what has been accomplished and, at the same time, to pave the way for the future. In fact, the role which the Fund intends to play will be all the more dynamic in that it will have reaffirmed the common will to put into effect the ideals declared ten years ago.

We are witnesses of a process of international detente marked by a first agreement of effective disarmament reached between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, and we would hope that it is a first step to a more radical disarmament. However, none of this will have any meaning if it does not lead to a greater degree of economic cooperation benefiting the less favoured regions of the world. Therefore it seems logical that the immense resources invested in the constitution of atomic arsenals or the acquisition of so-called conventional weapons should massively affect the development of the poorer countries.

I would like to reaffirm here what I had occasion to say recently to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See: the progress of peace and of international detente requires justice, the safeguarding of the rights of persons and peoples, development. That is why the saying coined by Paul VI twenty years ago is still valid: «Development is the new name for peace». It shows where the efforts of all must be directed in the years to come.

From this podium, in the presence of the distinguished representatives of many member States of the Fund, I want to address an appeal to all governments so that each according to its political and economic possibilities, may collaborate in this great work of giving peace the name of development/ a development which respects the rhythms of faith and the values of every people and culture: a development which means victory over endemic maladies, victory over the forms of poverty which afflict humanity, victory over hunger, "the urgency of urgencies" (Discourse to the Diplomatic Corps, 9 January 1988) A development which should be truly worthy of man and his dignity.

No longer to see entire populations perish because they lack basic necessities is not a utopia; it is a hope. We are responsible for its fulfilment. We must dare to renounce excessive military spending in order to devote the maximum resources to economic, social, agricultural, medical, cultural, and scientific cooperation. Development depends on the possibility of workers, especially the most marginalized, to join together for a productive cooperation, to commercialize the fruits of their labours. It depends on the manner in which we subordinate the search for profits to respect for the equal dignity of the entire human family, so that the person will no longer be considered an instrument nor the poorer peoples as simple suppliers of primary goods. The respect which we have for humanity, which today is humiliated by hunger and misery, will only be sincere if the more developed societies concretely aid the development of the underprivileged.

It is, however, necessary that the generosity of the richer countries should not diminish; that a new confidence should be born between the more developed countries and those that are on the path of development; that we renounce every temptation to hegemony; that the administrations concerned show perfect rigour in the use of financing and credits; that

they have the true desire to obtain the social and human development of peoples.

8. In this perspective the Church wants to lend her support and contribution to those who are the promoters of the progress of social justice and the improvement of international economic life. The Church in her domain does not propose theoretical solutions or techniques. Rather, she tries to recall that all of the solutions held must be well adapted to the concrete situations that they concern. It is precisely in respect for this criterion that in 1984, following the creation of the Foundation for the Sahel, I considered it essential that the local Churches study and administer the development projects planned in a region so sorely tried by natural disasters. They thus participate, in complementarity, in the efforts of populations, in giving priority to the training of the Africans themselves in order to make them fight more against drought and progressive desertification. Although it is both modest and recent the initiative is already beginning to bear fruit; hope is given to the communities that are once again becoming responsible for the future of their land.

I hope that your Organization, whose goal is to favour international development, will not be content merely to distribute the financial means which have been given it but at the same time to give confidence to all peoples so tried by endless sufferings.

9. Mr. President, in my intervention I wanted to recall the objectives and the spirit of action of the Organization over which you preside, and to propose several essential criteria for the important work which the International Fund must accomplish for agricultural development.

I am certain that, thanks to the experience of a decade, IFAD will not fail to give its activity a new impulse in the clear consciousness of the humanitarian and social objectives implied by its own goals. This activity will be impossible without the financial and technical contributions of the member countries. I would like to use this occasion to express my great esteem to the governments that do not and will not fail to make their generous contribution. The responsibility of man development of the more impoverished areas, in particular of those that are trying to achieve autonomy in food production, is everyone's responsibility. Each of us must be involved until there are no more men or women lacking necessities. In these conditions IFAD could truly be a living sign of the common desire to give human coexistence a more secure future and hope.

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