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REPUBBLICA DI SAN MARINO

SECRETERIA DI STATO PER GLI AFFARI INTERNI

SPEECH BY MR. ANTONIO LASSARO VOLPINARI

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

OF THE REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Cairo, Egypt

5 - 13 SEPTEMBER 1994

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen

Thanks to the organizational efforts and to the traditional Egyptian hospitality all Countries of the world are gathered in Cairo today, in order to discuss the most challenging issues related to the common future of our planet. In this context, it is not surprising that even the Republic of San Marino - a State with a very limited population and territory - wishes to voice its own opinions addressing this numerous Assembly.

Even if San Marino is not experiencing an alarming population growth within its boundaries, it wishes to express on this occasion its participation in the world' 8 common concerns in a spirit of sincere solidarity, Prompted by this sense of solidarity this small state is willing to contribute, within the extent of its limited powers, to the solution of the problems threatening the future of the world.

Poverty, a slow and uneven development, the inequality in the distribution of natural resources, a lack of stability and peace and, in this context, armaments expenditure, the unfear and unacceptable condition in which women still live, the continued environmental degradation, the status of young children, the lack of a comprehensive protection of the family and poor health care guarantees continue to be major obstacles to the achievement of an even development in the respect of human dignity.

We are convinced that we cannot derogate from the tenet that men and women have equal dignity, since this is enshrined in the universal and natural order. As a consequence, in a civilized and advanced society, women must have all the rights men are entitled to, If this aim is not attained, woman may always run the absurd risk of being considered as the

only responsible for the very rapid demographic increase; an aspect that becomes a serious problem when development economy and territory do-not expand and improve At the same rate as that of population.

Under the present circumstances, it is obvious that this Conference can only lay down and accept long-term proposals and recommendations, which might be useful to the interested Governments as general guidelines. These proposals and recommendations will have then to be adapted to the various local realities, taking also into account the historical, civil, cultural and religious traditions of each country,

In addressing population issues, San Marino is guided by the clear and firm belief that abortion, in principle, cannot be included among the possible means to lower birth rates.

Mr. President,

It is beyond all doubt that the present population growth rate represents a serious threat to the future of our planet, since it reduces, from an economic and environmental point of view, the chances of survival of each human being. At the same time, this factor is closely linked to economic growth and sustainable development and, more precisely, to environment, health and migrations.

Another major challenge to be faced is presented, as a matter of fact, by population movements, At present, it seems that we have no means to step this phenomenon caused by wars and hunger which has already taken on worrying proportions. If our society is not able to prevent this plague of millions of men, women, old people and even children having to leave the place where they are born and where their culture and traditions are, it means that is unable to safeguard all human rights.

Which is the future of these men deprived of their roots badly accepted and sometimes even rejected by other countries, if they manage to survive at all? The images of suffering children transmitted by all television companies of the world move us deeply, but the old do not meet with the same solidarity, nor they arouse the same emotions.

We believe that in addressing all these problems we should be guided first of all by a spirit of solidarity. This means a sense of shared responsibility and implies participation and help, including material support where this is possible, as well as understanding and tolerance vis-a-vis different cultures, socio-economic traditions, attitudes and values which represent an inalienable right of each individual and people.

It is our opinion, Mr. President that the rapid population growth and the 810w and uneven development do not represent the only threats to our future. We believe, indeed, that another crucial problem deserves a special priority. I am referring to the present trend, according to which the developed countries consume more than they should . By so doing, they deprive other countries of their resources, environment and territory.

During this Conference, we have heard that some small islands will inevitably disappear if the sea-level continues to rise. And this menace too is a responsibility of all of us. Against this background, it is clear that we cannot solve all our problems by simply reducing the population size, even if nobody can deny that an excessive demographic increase is, in itself, a cause of poverty and underdevelopment

San Marino wishes the attainment of a higher quality of life for all

people in a widespread and armonic development and it stresses that many needs related to education and gender equity, which represents an indispensable step for reducing population growth, have still to be satisfied,

Each new child should always be the result of a free and responsible choice of the couple, while society has the task to ensure its right to life, the respect for its dignity and sex, its health and well-being, the right to grow old and to freely express its opinions, as well as the right to be able to grant these same conditions, if he to wants, to its children.

May I conclude, Mr. President, by expressing a consideration and a wish For the Republic of San Marino, a very small country with a territory covering an area of only 60 sq.km., a sound, protected and well preserved environment is of fundamental importance for its survival. If one considers then that our territory has not great natural resources, it is clear that environment and people form the only wealth of this country. And we hope we will never forget to consider our people as the central sub subject of all our present and future debates, choices or decisions.

On behalf of the Republic of San Marino I wish this Conference to be able to give an answer to the present demands and meet the future challenges in a spirit of serenity and cooperation.

Thank You. Mr. President.