



# HOLY SEE

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**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Francis Chullikatt  
Apostolic Nuncio  
Permanent Observer of the Holy See**

**Second Preparatory Committee for the  
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

**New York, 7 March 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset my delegation expresses its gratitude for the invitation extended to the Holy See to participate in this PrepCom, as it did exactly twenty years ago during the fourth PrepCom in March 1992 just before the Rio Conference where we agreed that the human beings are at the center of our concern.

The promotion of sustainable development is one of the most important challenges humanity faces today. As the main forum for dialogue on global issues, the United Nations as the "Family of Nations" will necessarily serve a key role in promoting international cooperation towards this goal. These preparatory meetings will provide a useful opportunity for Governments and civil society to discuss how the international community can best achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. My delegation hopes that this second round of preparatory meetings for the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development will be successful, trusts that all concerns will be heard and addressed in mutual respect and in a spirit of goodwill, and proposes its own small contribution in this same spirit. Above all, we must acknowledge that the human beings must remain the center of our focus and basis of our actions for sustainable development.

While many have suggested that this committee should focus exclusively on "strategies" and "best practices" and avoid "theoretical debates," in the view of my delegation it would be helpful to restate the principles that need to guide development strategies and policies lest our efforts create policies that could be harmful. This is particularly the case when we are considering concepts such as the proposed adoption of the theme of "green economy" as the Committee's Report recommends. In pursuing the goal of "Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" (GESDPE), my delegation hopes that we would not forget that the purpose of development is integral human development and that all our strategies and practices must be judged by this standard — for the human beings are and must remain at the center of our concern.

Many years ahead of the Earth Summit, the Holy See called for a new perspective on development that promotes the "authentic human development" of all persons and the whole person. This vision of development is not in opposition to economic growth and progress; instead, it is a recognition that economic growth, whether it is driven by markets or driven by States, will not necessarily promote the kind of development that is worthy of humans. Promoting economic development should not be at the expense of the poor and marginalized or of future generations, which is often qualified as "inter-generational engagement and justice". The well-being of all, and especially those who live with the pains of hunger and who are excluded from contributing to and benefiting from the economic, social and political life of their communities, requires that both markets and government policies be directed towards the higher goal of integral human development, grounded in the principle of the fundamental human dignity of each person. With them, it is our solemn obligation to remain in solidarity. We all must work together to ensure that this is incorporated into the goal of sustainable development and the concept of the "green economy."

Most of the development strategies and policies that have failed to promote integral human development in the past have done so because they reduced humans to a shadow of their humanity. On the one hand we are told that self-interest and greed are the sole drivers of human behavior, and that "free markets" are all that is needed to turn "private vice into public virtue." On the other hand we are told that human nature is what society makes it, giving us a development strategy that centers on structures and institutions, with the hope that the right institutions will be enough to promote

development. Each view has part of the truth: humans often are driven by self-interest and social institutions do greatly shape human attitudes and actions, markets and government policy both have potential to promote the common good. But humanity cannot be reduced to either selfish egos or social constructs. A full understanding of what it means to be human must also include the basic solidarity that is a necessary part of our humanity, that comports to the fundamental dignity of each person and that demands justice. Just as we need to improve the functioning of markets and the effectiveness of government policy, we must also work to promote solidarity and social justice.

Real development will not and cannot be produced by changes in structures or market incentives alone. Of equal importance is the required change of hearts and minds as well as our subsequent action. Benedict XVI wrote: "integral human development is primarily a vocation" (*Caritas in veritate*, 11), for development to be meaningful and sustainable it has to be human development, the development of each human in the totality of their humanity, directed towards the common good. If our view of the Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication (GESDPE) is based on either of the two narrow views of personhood, then the strategies developed will center only on "structural and technological changes in the institutions" and will in the end fail to promote authentic human development. Structural and technological changes will only promote real development if they are used to help people become more human. When they do not promote human development they risk becoming tools of social control and exclusion.

The economy needs objective moral formation in order to function correctly — not any ethics whatsoever, but a moral formation which is people-centered" (CV 45). An economy grounded in a people-centered ethics and morality will necessarily promote the goals of GESDPE, for it will promote both the care of humans and the care of creation. Such an approach must recognize that the economy starts with several vital gifts: first, the gift of creation to all humans and, second, the sharing of that gift between humans. An economy not grounded in a people-centered ethics and morality will undoubtedly instrumentalize the goods of the earth for the benefit of the rich and powerful. It will turn social and environmental indicators, which can be valuable tools for helping to promote authentic human development, into statistical fixations and false goals that give the appearance of progress without producing the reality of true progress. Or worse, they can become excuses for sacrificing human rights and assaulting human dignity, all for a distorted view of the common good. If humans in their full humanity are not viewed as the ultimate goal of development as was agreed in Rio twenty years ago, then we fear that humans will be seen by many as the primary barrier to development and we can be certain which humans these will be: the poor; the marginalized; the inconvenient; those yet to be born and those who due to age, disability or illness cannot defend themselves.

My delegation hopes that this Committee work will set the stage for a re-commitment to sustainable development at Rio+20. It may be a coincidence that this important conference corresponds to the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the late Pope Paul VI's landmark encyclical "*Populorum Progressio*" (Development of Peoples), considered the *magna carta* of development. We hope that it will also become a clarion call to people of goodwill for an integral human development that will form the foundation for peace, founded on social justice and animated by solidarity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.