



24th I.A.O. General Assembly
Rome, 25 – 30 June 2017

«The Christian understanding of global crisis and ways to overcome it»

Conclusions

The 24th IAO annual General Assembly that was held, upon invitation by our Italian colleagues, in the premises of the Italian Parliament in Rome, extends heartfelt collegiate greetings to our Italian colleagues Members of Parliament and to the Italian people at large. It was convened in order to discuss the highly topical subject *«The Christian understanding of global crisis and ways to overcome it»*, which gave rise to many productive discussions at the end of which the conclusion was drawn that people of good will need to develop joint action in order to defend the work of whole generations towards consolidating security, protecting the environment and the world against wars and violence.

It is important to stress the fact that our General Assembly was held in Rome, a place where Christianity was historically founded becoming itself the foundation of European Civilisation which continues to decisively influence the human spirit and culture as these were expressed in the principles of the Treaty of Rome 60 years ago and which became the beginning of a new Europe.

The IAO Assembly members, in a spirit of Christian solidarity and political responsibility, jointly concluded that the world is going through an unprecedented crisis caused, among other reasons, by social injustice leading to an accumulation of uncontrolled wealth while millions of citizens are led to abject poverty.

The world of our era stands in apprehension and uncertainty before the almighty technical inventions, the new technological achievements and globalisation. These new data have altered the

political and social “status” that was created after the October revolution in Russia and World War Two. They have in fact completely reversed the financial and production relations in many western countries.

Despite financial growth and overconsumption, the world has not become fairer or safer. The wealth amassing system that prevails in our days is not effectively controlled by any agency protecting social interests. New and greater masses of people are becoming destitute over the whole world. The social welfare system is ineffective and the exhortation by economists and politicians alike to people, living as they are in conditions of the utmost injustice, to become more competitive, sounds obscene and provocative.

Political groups, governments, the Church can't possibly overlook the inequality caused by specific trade globalisation practices, the commercialisation of Information systems in reference to the new financial sector technologies and new ways of money making.

The Assembly particularly pointed out the extreme practices that render ineffectual the efforts made by social responsibility agencies to reduce social tensions. Another item discussed was the need to implement policies not allowing individuals, bodies or restricted interest groups to create an uncontrolled financial system that does not cater for larger social needs but that aims exclusively to generating excessive profits.

Such a system gives birth to wars and millions of refugees that threaten Europe depriving it of positive prospects. The weakness of governments and their lack of political will, lack of a humanitarian value orientation completely alter the main features of policies in place rendering Europe incapable of substantial policy making.

Global Mass media at the service of the ruling class, by their abusive use of information they provide to society, create syndromes and phobias depriving people and politicians alike of their own free will. Nations paid with blood their social conquests and social welfare for workers the world over. And now they see all their fundamental rights coming under threat.

The rise of extreme nationalistic forces expanding rapidly in the EU Member States cannot be blamed on nationalists alone. It is also the result of mistakes made by government parties that now have to take on their share of responsibility for that.

Demonising globalisation and new information technologies as the sources of all-evil as some conservative forces, among which part

of the Church, do, does anything but help overcome these evils. Such an attitude does not contribute positively to the lives of citizens in general and believers in particular. On the contrary, what is now needed is a serious effort to approach, explore this situation and curtail its negative impact and consequences.

We, members of parliament are called upon to take a responsible stance vis a vis this situation and look for positive prospects. **In the course of our discussions, a list of questions were recorded as to what politicians and the Church can and are ready to do in this direction.** The capacity of democratic parliamentary systems to handle with political adequacy the global crisis and its isolated manifestations was positively assessed.

Equally in depth was analysed the capability of the two major political trends, socialist and liberal, to process, in the context of capitalist countries, socio-political perceptions-openings for the good of the peoples, while taking into consideration, among others, the historical experience of the radical socio-economic formations of the 20th century.

There were discussions of proposals made as to ways to protect democracy and consolidate legality as well as fight corruption, study rules of market economy ethics to be applied on wealth production processes, integrated in the democratic system as a whole and in the program of citizen social protection. Similar questions were raised in reference to the ecclesiastical space and the ways that Christianity uses to approach these phenomena as well as proposals emanating from the orthodox world public opinion in reference to the crisis and ways to overcome it on the basis of their own value system.

Interventions and presentations moved around the constant reminder of the need to safeguard peace in the world and to fight fundamentalism and terrorism, ethnic-confessional conflicts, all of which aggravate migration waves.

Contribution of the great monotheistic religions is considered a catalyst in this whole process and religious peace a necessary step towards a mutual understanding. To the end of protecting Christians against persecution and Christian monuments against destruction, IAO members pointed out the need for all peace loving forces to unite their efforts and suggested the creation of a wide antiterrorist body under the auspices of the UN.

The Assembly thoroughly examined issues pertaining to state interventions in the religious life of a number of countries, aiming at disrupting the ecclesiastical canonical order and obstructing the free

expression of religious sentiment and devotional practices of believers.

In reference to this, the IAO members expressed their concern for bills of law deposited in the Ukrainian parliament legitimating state interventions in matters of ecclesiastical peace and threatening the constitutional rights of millions of Ukrainian believers. They gave the mandate to the IAO Secretariat to continuously monitor this situation.

The Assembly expressed its support towards the communities of the believers whose interests are undermined by such activities. It also expressed its absolute opposition against the use of the historical and unique holy Church of Saint Sophia, symbol of Orthodoxy, as a mosque and it considers the attempted symbolism unacceptable and a provocation. The importance of the Synodic administration system for the Local Orthodox Churches was finally pointed out as a means of pluralism and richness in unity and it was said that it can only be perceived and interpreted as such.

Rome, 27 June 2017