



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI
TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE
ON THE APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOPMENT****

Monday, 24 October 1966

It is a joy and an honor for us to welcome the eminent specialists who compose the Consultative Committee of the United Nations for the Application of Science and Technology to Development. We note the happy coincidence that this meeting is taking place on October 24, the very day of the United Nation's anniversary.

You are meeting in Rome, gentlemen, chiefly to study two very precise questions: how to increase the production and the use of proteins in food in order to combat malnutrition; and how to obtain, for the same purpose, the maximum use of agricultural and non-agricultural natural resources.

These are two technological questions about which you do not expect us to offer you advice. As we said on one occasion recently when speaking of Latin America, no claim is made that the Church has expertise in particular disciplines like economics and sociology.

You have, however, shown a desire to see and hear us because you are aware that beyond the specialized studies in which you are engaged, you, as men of science and technology and we, as representing moral and religious forces, do meet on common ground - the desire and determination to come to the assistance of our unfortunate brothers and sisters, millions of people who go hungry for lack of food. This mammoth problem has but recently evoked a cry of alarm from the Director General of the FAO which has caught public attention.

It is an enormous problem or, rather, an enormous combination of problems of all kinds which, as any careful observer can see, belong both to the technological and to the moral sphere.

The unfortunate victims of malnutrition have a right to expect that the resources of human

intelligence and human science be put to work to extricate them from their misery. They are just as set upon having their human dignity made the prime consideration of aid; and the aid provided for them cannot consist in just the betterment of their material standard of living, but in their integral development and in the enhancement of their whole human persons with all their faculties.

The Church is very concerned about this aspect of the problem of development. In the eyes of the Church, human development must progress along both material and spiritual lines; at the same time that the economic order is being improved, the moral order must also be perfected. There are no real prospects for progress, stability, and peace unless moral and spiritual factors are operative.

We believe that we are not mistaken, gentlemen, in thinking that you, too, are of this opinion. We are equally convinced that the United Nations' generous and far-reaching undertakings have been inspired by the true good of humanity. That is why, following the example of our immediate Predecessors, we have not hesitated to do whatever we can to encourage these enterprises. We feel impelled, too, by the recent decrees of the Second Vatican Council, which once more has affirmed with exceptional solemnity and to the whole world the Church's care for human progress and its readiness to offer its service and support to all who work for human development.

You, gentlemen, are among those workers and the means at your disposal put you in the happy position of improving the situation of the less fortunate members of our great human family. Science and technology are, as people today readily admit, ambivalent values, capable of effecting great benefits or great evils, depending upon the use to which they are put.

In your capable hands how can they do anything but serve the good, promote progress, and further human development in its most complete sense - economic, social and moral!

That they will do so is my wish for you as I welcome you today, invoking God's abundant blessings on your countries, yourselves, and the happy continuation of the work in which you are engaged.

*Paths to Peace p. 284-285.