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**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio,
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**Economic and Social Council, Substantive session of 2005
High-level segment**

**Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those
contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing
the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits:
progress made, challenges and opportunities**

New York, 1 July 2005

Mr. President,

The Holy See is pleased to associate itself with those who support the accord reached in London recently by the G8 finance ministers to cancel the debts of 18 heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). In these last decades, the Holy See has been among the most outspoken advocates of this kind of step, as expressed by the late Pope John Paul II, who often raised his voice in favour of debt cancellation for the world's poorest countries. For now, the London accord remains only a proposal. The G8 leaders, meeting at Gleneagles on 6-8 July next, must now pay attention to the demands of their own people and of civil society, and place before their respective legislatures bills that will lead to the immediate fulfillment of the accord's promises.

In order to consolidate these achievements and convert them into a kind of launch pad we have to put them in perspective.

It cannot be ignored that, while countries are quick to defend and promote whatever is perceived as in their own interests, there is often a marked contrast with international financial measures on behalf of the world's poorest countries. It must also be acknowledged that the actual sums involved here are modest compared with the vast military expenditure throughout the world and the subsidies that the industrialised countries pay to sectors in their own economies, when often those very subsidies are responsible for severe distortions in the world's poorest countries.

The Secretary-General's Report *In Larger Freedom* and the draft declaration for the forthcoming UN summit of heads of state in September 2005 both recall that the true guarantee of world security is to be found in the development of the world's poorest countries and in that of the more marginalised sectors in each of those countries. In other words, it is a question of working at both inequality within individual countries and inequality between different States.

The debt remission measures which one hopes to see effectively adopted by the multilateral financial institutions are just the start of that path, first of all because the measure in question needs to be extended to some 38 HIPC countries. Secondly, if debt remission were implemented by diverting financial resources from other aid programmes and if there were no significant increase in real ODA, the world would end up facing a situation worse than before the measures adopted at Gleneagles.

The upcoming G8 meeting must show the world the magnanimity and breadth of vision of its leaders, something which could serve as a solid and

effective basis for a broad consensus at the forthcoming Millennium+5 summit in September.

This year will also see the sixth ministerial conference of the WTO taking place in Hong Kong in December. Debt remission and the increase in ODA necessarily must be complemented by the creation of an international trade system that is at the very least friendly towards the most indebted countries, in the terms delineated at Doha. The obligations undertaken by countries which are either very poor or have grave structural deficiencies, for their part, must become flexible enough to promote at home an economic development which is fully responsive to local social requirements. Thus, the most industrialised countries - along with emerging economies and more recent industrial powers – should not hesitate in allowing, even favouring, concessions and privileges for extremely poor countries.

Finally, when talking of financing for development, one cannot fail to mention the lack of financing for basic scientific research and for the industrial development of pharmaceutical products to combat the major tropical diseases such as malaria, as well as the lack of research in favour of agriculture in poorer regions. There would appear to be no point in waiting for private financing to invest in such fields, since these are problems which do not concern directly the public of the countries where the resources exist. What is needed is a generous provision of public monies in favour of the many existing initiatives, like the Global Fund for example, to promote an intensive and broad participation of the world's scientific research institutes.

The multilateral political events of the second half of this year, starting with this session of ECOSOC, could become an international turning point, in which the financing of international development converts itself into the highest international priority, if world leaders were able to move their Governments and peoples. Thus all countries, developed and poor ones alike, would be able to play their true part in the achievement of the MDGs.

Thank you, Mr. President.