

Global security must not rely on nuclear weapons



Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, secretary for Relations with States and head of the Holy See delegation to the fifty-sixth General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), yesterday addressed that gathering, which is meeting in the Austrian capital Vienna from 17 to 21 September.

"Global security must not rely on nuclear weapons", the archbishop said in his English-language remarks. "The Holy See considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) an important tool to achieve this aim, without mentioning its potential civil and scientific application through its International Monitoring System. ... The Holy See is convinced that, in working together, the signature, ratification and entry into force of the Treaty will represent a great leap forward for the future of humanity, as well as for the protection of the earth and environment entrusted to our care by the Creator.

"Also in this regard", he added, "the ratification on the part of all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, of the respective Protocols to the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones Treaties is of paramount importance. The Holy See restates its strong support for the efforts to establish such a zone in the Middle East and remains hopeful for the discussions that will take place on this topic in Finland. Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones are the best example of trust, confidence and affirmation that peace and security are possible without possessing nuclear weapons".

"An important issue affecting not only the IAEA family, but the human family at large, is the topic of nuclear safety. ... What transpired at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station quickly revealed that a local nuclear crisis is indeed a global problem. It also revealed that the world is exposed to real and systemic risks, and not just hypothetical ones, with incalculable costs, and the necessity of developing international political coordination the likes of which have never been seen, thus raising many questions".

"The Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency is one of the principal instruments for transferring nuclear science and technology to member States in order to promote social, economic and

integral development. Its initiatives, when tailored to the needs of the recipient States and their partners in the context of national priorities, help to combat poverty and can thus contribute to a more peaceful solution of the serious problems facing humanity". In this context Archbishop Mamberti mentioned the role of radiation therapy in cancer treatment, at the same time noting that "in the developing world, more than half of the number of patients suffering from cancer will not have access to radiotherapy due to the lack of appropriate equipment and sufficiently trained staff. ... The Holy See appreciates the work and efforts of the IAEA and its partners in the planning and furthering of cancer-control programmes and encourages the IAEA to continue to pursue and strengthen these eminently important activities".

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