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The Multilateral Foreign Policy of the Holy See

The multilateral foreign policy of the Holy See is currently working on some prominent issues. The issues mainly focused by the policy includes human rights, disarmament and economic and social development.

Right to life

The Holy See has supported various programs at many international conferences and United Nations as well. The chief program promoted by Holy See is entitled as “Culture of life”. It also working on the goal to work against the bodies trying to get abortion and euthanasia to be legalized by using international polices present for such matters or by claiming non-binding assertions. Another objective focussed by this policy is to eliminate death penalty world-wide and pursuing to prohibit the research on human embryos. The Holy See at the United Nations General Assembly stated that:

“The right to life and respect for human dignity remains an inalienable right of every person and a founding principle of this Organization. It is therefore the duty of States to promote and protect this right from conception until natural death. To that end, we must work consistently to reverse the culture of death embraced by some social and legal structures which justify certain forms of destruction of life as a legal necessity or a medical service.” (Wikipedia, 2020)

Human cloning

At the international level, the Holy See has highlighted the ethical problems addressed by some recognized forms of biomedical research currently active and working in particular area. The Holy See has been actively working in the area of human cloning. In 2001, Germany and France proposed an international agreement to stop reproductive human cloning. This convention was presented at the United Nations General Assembly, Holy See along with other countries (Spain, Philippines, United States and Costa Rica) that were in support of the idea to legalize the human cloning and set a limit for research work as well. This is a thoughtful subject when it is considered whether it morally right rather than with respect to reproduction. Hence, it proposed

to ban all type of human cloning. The Holy See complained that millions of embryos were produced with aim to destroy them as part of the process claimed to be used in research work. It also highlighted that this dishonoured the women, in process of producing necessary human eggs. In March 2005 the efforts resulted in the favour of proposed pact, United Nation passed a declaration on human cloning prohibiting human cloning, that ensures human dignity with the protection of human life.

Death penalty

In 2007 at United Nations, Holy See discussed that death penalty should be used only when it is required or when it compulsory to keep society safe from an antagonist, or to deal with a situation. It was claimed because there are many other ways of dealing with problems and safeguarding the citizens. Furthermore, it is observed that capital punishment is mostly unfair and biased, and is often imposed on the under privileged members of the nation on the basis of religious , ethnic and racial differences, and it leads to the situation where guilty is walking free and an innocent is being punished closing all hopes of justice. In regards to this matter, a UN Moratorium on death penalty is submitted by the Holy See.

Freedom of conscience and religion

Succeeding Vatican Council II, Holy See has globally supported the significance of the freedom of conscience and religion among all Human Rights. It is of great importance as it relies on the core values of an individual and have an impact on one's life. Pope Benedict XVI also put emphasis that "religious freedom expresses what is unique about the human person, for it allows us to direct our personal and social life to God, in whose light the identity, meaning and purpose of the person are fully understood. To deny or arbitrarily restrict this freedom is to foster a reductive vision of the human person; to eclipse the public role of religion is to create a society which is unjust, inasmuch as it fails to take account of the true nature of the human person; it is to stifle the growth of the authentic and lasting peace of the whole human family." (Wikipedia, 2020) Therefore, it is concluded that ensuring the freedom of religion is the building block of showing respect for all other human rights. Hence, Holy See seeks to fulfil international obligations to guarantee the observance of the rights. It has stated that:

“Recognition of the dignity of each and every person, which the Human Rights Council was formed to protect and promote, entails full respect for the inner and transcendent dimension of the human person, which is an integral part of what it means to be a human being. Through the

free exercise of conscience and moral decision making, human beings are able to transform themselves into living members of social life whose good will, charity and hope promote the dignity and wellbeing of every member of the human family. Intrinsically linked to freedom of conscience is the freedom of religion by which human beings are able to pursue the most important relationship of their life, that is, their relationship with God. Freedom of religion necessarily entails the freedom to ascribe to a set of beliefs, to adopt or change one's religion, to profess one's faith and to practice fully that faith openly and publicly. Governments have a solemn responsibility to safeguard rather than ridicule this inalienable right. Since the State is not the author of any fundamental human right, it must respect that intimate and fundamental sanctuary of human freedom, the conscience, and to allow each conscience its fullest and highest expression in the free exercise of religious faith". (Wikipedia, 2020)

Concurrently, Holy See also criticizes the non-observance to the fact regarding freedom of religion, specifically when faced by Christians:

"It is painful to think that in some areas of the world it is impossible to profess one's religion freely except at the risk of life and personal liberty. In other areas we see more subtle and sophisticated forms of prejudice and hostility towards believers and religious symbols. At present, Christians are the religious group which suffers most from persecution on account of its faith. Many Christians experience daily affronts and often live in fear because of their pursuit of truth, their faith in Jesus Christ and their heartfelt plea for respect for religious freedom. This situation is unacceptable, since it represents an insult to God and to human dignity; furthermore, it is a threat to security and peace, and an obstacle to the achievement of authentic and integral human development." (Wikipedia, 2020)

Based on later discussion, Holy See emphasised that it is the responsibility of government and secluded entities to encourage patience, commons thoughts and show regards towards the admirers of diverse faith customs. Concurrently, Holy See prohibits religious extremism and violence to guarantee the freedom of religion. It also condemns possible means of aggression that hinders believer's role in civil and political life with respect to the religion.

Sexual and reproductive rights

Holy See has emerged as a profound entity playing a significant role in supporting traditional sexual norms and marriage internationally. It also has been observed that Holy See is working

closely with bodies recognized worldwide for aim to support and incorporate sexual and reproductive rights for humans.

Traditional family

At different international conferences, Holy See discussed that the orthodox family foundation is laid upon a solid, loving and caring relationship between a man and a woman. It plays a significant role in starting and fostering a new life and healthy relation among the couple. Therefore, people must acknowledge the importance of conventional family's impact on the society by encouraging proper ethnic, economic and communal policy. At Cairo conference held in 1994, Holy See claimed that the global population policy eventually should be directed by ensuring esteem for life and self-respect for an individual to nurture a family based marriage ensuring that each family member i.e. parents, father and mother should take and fulfil their responsibilities by taking mutual decision making while creating a healthy lifestyle and educating their children. On the other hand Holy See remarks against towards the attempts to create conflicts in the family or to recommend essential restructure of family values, for instance, assigning the status of family to other life-style forms

Sexual orientation

Specifically, in international human rights instruments, Holy See has remarked against the terms practiced as "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" because of the fact of the inexistence of a proper definition of the latter terms in international law. By using these terms can support in redefining a family structure. In this context, the term gender can reflect both identities i.e. male and female on the basis of biological identities. In 2008, Holy See on the bases of above mentioned fact, denies the acceptance of a declaration on sexual orientation and gender identity presented by United Nations General Assembly. Simultaneously, Holy See denounced all types of ferocity against homosexual community and to appealed remove criminal charged imposed on them.

Responsible sexual behaviour

The Holy See criticized the irresponsible sexual behaviour, which in the context, often oppresses women and children. This happens because it is raised as to fulfil personal pleasure and satisfaction. This thought is nurtured because of the way and attitude towards the sexual leniency. Moreover it discusses that adopting conventional sexual customs, is the ideal solution

to avoid sexually transmitted diseases e.g. AIDS. Health minister of the Holy See specified at a UN special session on AIDS:

“Regarding the sexual transmission of the disease, the best and most effective prevention is training in the authentic values of life, love and sexuality. A proper appreciation of these values will inform today's men and women about how to attain full personal fulfilment through affective maturity and the proper use of sexuality, whereby couples remain faithful to each other and behave in a way that keeps them from becoming infected by HIV/AIDS. No one can deny that sexual license increases the danger of contracting the disease. It is in this context that the values of matrimonial fidelity and of chastity and abstinence can be better understood.” (Wikipedia, 2020)

Pope Benedict XVI in 2009, discussed that prevention cannot stop or cure the out spread of AIDS, beside this will increase the chances. So, to overcome this, there are two essential elements human needs to work on: firstly, identify human sexual dimension i.e. how to behave towards other and in what limit, and secondly, to develop true friendship qualities, that will help an individual to help others in the time of suffering and foster qualities such as self-control and patience.

Family planning

The Holy See highlighted the fact that accountable guardianship requires responsibility and it needs to be disciplined and self-controlled, predominantly with respect to sexual behaviour. The Holy See condemns the attempts made to support family planning methods. This separates “What” and focus on the two important areas of human sexuality i.e. development of life and parent’s love and care. In a conference at Cairo, Holy See condemns family planning services that aims to promote controlled child birth programs commonly entitled as sterilization. This step was taken as it is frequently abused when encouraged among needy or illiterate individuals. At the Beijing Conference on Women held in 1995, the Holy See highlighted repeatedly that a various range of family planning services should not be considered as family planning methods as these are morally intolerable, also hinders freedom for life partners, self-respect or the rights of the concerned ones. Specifically, it does not make sense to promote fertility control (contraception) or the use of condoms, if it is to be considered while family planning or prevent HIV/AIDS. While on the other hand, Holy See also debated on the education of children and adolescents regarding sexual behaviour. Holy See claims that sex

education is the responsibility of parents not the state and requested international community to provide parents full rights of guardianship so to carry out their responsibilities at fullest.

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