



Vaticaan tekent VN-verdrag Rechten Gehandicapten niet

Persbureau Heilige Stoel, 1 februari 2007

Made public today was a talk delivered by Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Holy See permanent observer to the United Nations in New York, concerning a Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, approved by the U.N. General Assembly on December 13, 2006 and due to be signed by member States on March 30.

In a note accompanying the talk, the archbishop recalls that, "since the beginning of work in July 2002, the Holy See has participated actively in the preparation of the document, collaborating in the insertion of explicit references to respect for the right to life and the recognition of the role of the family in the lives of disabled people. Nonetheless, in the final stage of the work, unacceptable references to 'reproductive health' have been introduced into articles 23 and 25 and, for that reason, the Holy See has decided not to adhere to the new convention."

In his English-language talk, Archbishop Migliore highlighted how "the Holy See has consistently called for disabled individuals to be completely and compassionately integrated into society, convinced that they possess full and inalienable human rights."

With reference to article 23 of the convention, he indicated that his delegation "interprets all the terms and phrases regarding family planning services, regulation of fertility and marriage in article 23, as well as the word 'gender,' as it did in its reservations and statements of interpretation at the Cairo and Beijing International Conferences," held respectively 1994 and 1995.

"Finally, and most importantly, regarding article 25 on health, and specifically the reference to sexual and reproductive health, the Holy See understands access to reproductive health as being a holistic concept that does not consider abortion or access to abortion as a dimension of those terms. ... We opposed the inclusion of such a phrase in this article, because in some countries reproductive health services include abortion, thus denying the inherent right to life of every human being, also affirmed by article 10 of the Convention. It is surely tragic that ... the same Convention created to protect persons with disabilities from all discrimination in the exercise of their rights, may be used to deny the very basic right to life of disabled unborn persons.

"For this reason," he concluded, "and despite the many helpful articles this convention contains, the Holy See is unable to sign it."