

International web Conference – 30th October, 2020 session

Opening address by Chairwoman Anna Maria Tarantola

Eminences, Excellencies, dear Members and Friends,

Good afternoon and welcome to this second session of the IC devoted to education and training.

In the first session, held on 23rd October last, we addressed the issue of the changes needed in Governance and in production and consumer models to pursue a human economy inspired by integral ecology, with less poverty and inequality and with greater respect for the environment.

But this new model cannot be achieved without getting involved in education and training for at least two reasons:

- First, because education is central to the economic system and businesses, human capital is today the fundamental productive factor,
- Second, because only investment in inclusive education and training can activate the change in individual and collective behavior needed to build new paradigms capable of responding to the challenges and emergencies of the modern world.

In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis states: "*Many things have to change course, but it is we **human beings above all who need to change**. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared by everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual educational challenge stands before us and it will demand **that we set out on the long path of renewal**.*" (LS, 202).

He also affirms that " Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote **a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature**". (LS, 215).

There is a close link between socio-economic development and the educational process. Both of them must change.

In particular, the educational / training model must evolve to create a new mentality, new analytical approaches, new methods. Schools and universities must return to transmitting moral and civic values for the good of each and everyone.

The pandemic has dramatically highlighted that the solution to the problems triggered by Covid 19 depends not only on political choices but on the behavior of individuals who must responsibly feel part of a community.

The Holy Father speaks of **an educational alliance** based on an educational village for an "education that integrates and respects all aspects of the person" by bringing together study and daily life, teachers, students and their families, politics, economy, business, finance and civil society. A great challenge that we are **all called** to face together by placing the human person at the center of this village. A challenge that must be faced **urgently** in the situation we are experiencing affected by the devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Regeneration towards a better world needs competent, conscious and inclusive human capital.

Investing in education and training means **helping young people** who are the real subject of development. In the 15th October, 2020 video message addressed to the participants at the meeting "*Global Compact on Education. Together to look beyond*", Pope Francis directed an urgent invitation to all sections of society: "Let us heed the plea of the young, which opens our eyes to both the urgent need and the exciting opportunity of a renewed kind of education that does not turn the gaze the other way favoring grave injustices, violations of rights, terrible forms of poverty and the waste of human lives." (GCE Message)

The Pope shows us an integral and shared journey, a most necessary and urgent path for a **new educational pact** to transmit to young people "an integral, participatory and multifaceted culture" (GCE Message) and prepare them to face an uncertain future increasingly characterized by complexity. To do this, the Holy Father asks for everyone's commitment to "putting the human persons, his value and dignity, at the center of every formal and informal educational process in order to foster their distinctiveness, beauty and uniqueness and their capacity for relationship with others and with the world around them, while at the same time teaching

them to reject lifestyles that encourage the spread of the throwaway culture.” (GCE Message).

On this path, many aspects of the educational process must be addressed: access to study, structures, methods and contents to provide everyone, without exception, not only with the specialized skills necessary to seize the new job opportunities of the digital world, but also the humanistic, spiritual and ethical ones with a multidisciplinary approach capable of forming creative and relational people able to manage the complexity and uncertainty that characterize today's world with a spirit of solidarity.

[The Church reminds us that we need to overcome a purely cognitive vision of learning and introduce fundamental aspects such as spirituality, sociality, creativity, the formation of the personality, the internalization of moral values, with a view to growth and well-being for everyone and protection of creation.

In *Laudato Si'* the Holy Father speaks of the need for “*educators capable of resetting pedagogical itineraries of a religious ethics, so that they effectively help people to grow in solidarity, responsibility and care based on compassion.*” (LS, 210).]

Universities must play a very special role in this new training course. In his address to Participants at the International Conference for Leaders of Universities on 4th November 2019, the Holy Father stated that the true vocation of universities is to “*prepare new generations to become not only qualified professionals in various disciplines, but also proponents of the common good, creative and responsible leaders in social and civil life equipped with a proper vision of the person and the world. Universities today, then, need to consider what contribution they can and must make to the integral health of the person and to an inclusive ecology.*”

If we want to pursue a “human economy” the teaching of economics must change, it must take place in a broad and articulated cultural context together with philosophy and other humanistic subjects, in order to encourage integral human development.

Universities must form new types of leaders, therefore they should teach business not only as a producer of profits for shareholders, but also as a tool for economic and civil development. To do this, it would be useful to study and talk about the virtuous cases of companies that are already inspired by this new business concept which creates value for everyone and nourishes knowledge in society (as Adriano Olivetti did and now the Benefit Corporation).

Business schools, in particular, are called upon to train managers with professional ethics and personal morality, who know how to put the common good before their own interests; who have a vision, who know how to decide not only on the basis of their own knowledge, although indispensable, but also, I would say above all, of moral integrity, responsibility and courage. This manager figure is particularly crucial in the current phase of management, and hopefully soon, of the reconstruction, of the pandemic because we must build a new world based on principles and values which regrettably have been forgotten.

We need to form communities of young people prepared to become entrepreneurs, managers, financial operators and representatives of institutions, politics and governments who are guided by ethical principles and are attentive to people's needs and environmental protection. We need to train responsible, collaborative, inclusive and supportive leaders.

Education in Solidarity is not easy but it is very important.

At the General Audience of 2nd September 2020, Pope Francis stated: "... *the principle of solidarity* is now more necessary than ever, as Saint John Paul II taught (cf. Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38-40).

And he added: "*Solidarity today is the road to take towards a post-pandemic world, towards the healing of our interpersonal and social ills. There is no other way. [Either we go forward on the path of solidarity or things will worsen!]*"; he also said that solidarity "*presumes the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few*" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 188). *This means solidarity. It is not just a question of helping*

others - this is good to do, but it is more -: it is a question of justice (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1938-1940).]

An educational process oriented to form a "new mentality" sensitive to solidarity with a spirit of responsibility, is an epochal change compared to what has been taught in the last fifty years in which at the center of all the teaching of corporate economics has been not the person, but the capital, thus influencing the vision and behavior of the whole world.

The new educational pact does not only involve universities but all schools at all levels. Even those of childhood. It is from an early age, as many researches show, that cognitive skills and affective relationships can be activated for the growth of the child and all his faculties. For this reason, families must be included in the pact and the educational model must evolve towards a greater, more fruitful school-family dialogue at all levels.

Public and private bodies responsible for education must cooperate more. In particular the world of business and finance can play an important role in the new educational pact both in supporting and encouraging public institutions to promote access for all to adequate education and also by directly activating effective training tools for their employees in application of the subsidiarity principle.

Businesses can be important generators of good relationships. Among other things, several studies show that the quality of relationships in the workplace positively influences relationships in the family and thus greater serenity and cohesion.

We talked about it at our 7 Consultation held in Milan 30th-31st January 2020. The proceedings are on the *Centesimus* website.

As Pope Francis tells us (Holy Mass in Santa Marta 16th May, 2020) we need a **new look**, we need people and organizations open and capable of looking in a new way at the many pandemics that afflict the world and of walking the path towards "integral human development" and fullness of life with responsibility, courage and hope.

Centesimus aims to contribute to the realization of the new look to be achieved also through new educational models. This is the issue of this session.

I warmly thank His Eminence Cardinal Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, who agreed to give the Opening Address and the speakers: Professors Martjin Cremers, Annamaria Lusardi and Alessandro Vespignani for their testimony.

A heartfelt thank you to Archbishop Nunzio Galantino who will close the Conference works.

And last but not least, a wholehearted thank you to Bishop Guy-Réal Thivierge for having agreed to moderate the session.

I now pass the floor to the Secretary General of the Foundation, Eutimio Tiliacos.