

OPENING SESSION

CAPP International Conference, May 12th, 2016

Domingo Sugranyes Bickel, Chairman

My heartfelt welcome to all participants. We have 320 participants from 23 countries in this room. I am especially happy to welcome those who have travelled a long way from South Korea and the Philippines, from the United States, from Africa and from Latin America. And I am very happy to see again many friends and members of the Foundation from Italy and from other European countries. Your presence here is a sign of the strength of Catholic Social teaching today, and of the good health of our Foundation, which continues working along our founder's call. St John Paul II wrote in his Apostolic Letter *'Novo Millennio Ineunte'*:

Now we must look ahead, we must 'put out into the deep'... What we have done... cannot justify a sense of complacency, and still less should it lead us to relax our commitment. On the contrary, the experiences we have had should inspire in us new energy, and impel us to invest in concrete initiatives the enthusiasm which we have felt''.

These words apply perfectly to our present situation and to the challenge before us: we have gone through great constructive experience in economic life, we know what works and what does not work. But there is no reason for complacency. The challenges of poverty and displaced persons which are every day in the news are the challenges the market economy has to face and to take on.

The Church celebrates 25 years of the *Centesimus Annus* encyclical, a ground-breaking document in that it opened a new age in Catholic thinking about the market economy at the service of human development. The encyclical looked at the past 100 years since *Rerum Novarum*, but above all it was directed to the future, as Saint John Paul II writes at the end of the document, on the threshold of a new century.

We are now deeply into the 21st century, many things have changed since 1991: we have experienced spectacular worldwide growth before falling into a crisis of enormous consequences. The difficulties of managing globalization, the huge debt mountain – public and private - and the new technologies all mean difficult reforms to be undertaken and uncertainty on the future of work; many young people feel unprotected for their future and large sectors of populations, even in rich countries, are afraid of economic and social decay. It is possible that, being in the middle of what some people call a new industrial revolution, the trees prevent us from seeing the wider picture. But in the meantime we have to face the tremendous consequences of war and displaced populations, while many people from poorer countries want to find a better future in Europe and the United States.

This explains the subjects chosen for this conference – and I am especially grateful to Professor Quadrio Curzio and our whole Scientific Committee for their help in defining the approach –. And there is no doubt: the subjects on our agenda transmit a definite sense of tragic urgency.

The preparations for this Conference includes a number of contributions from local groups which have been distributed, and which represent a real elaboration work within our Foundation. But our real challenge is not just in seeing the real problems and exhorting for their solution. For us, professional lay people engaged in economic life, the challenge lies in finding realistic ways of bridging a revived market economy and the wider human needs. This search has to embrace the whole economy but also, for each of us in his or her daily context, it has to translate into direct reformist action and new solidarity initiatives.

I would like to thank His Eminence Cardinal Calcagno, under whose friendly supervision we try to continue and develop the work of our predecessors in the Foundation. And I wish you three days of intensive listening, thinking, exchange, prayer and mutual support.