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Vatican urges U.N. to focus on job creation to boost global economy

by Catholic News Service

Geneva — Job creation must become a key component of any United Nations plan to lift people out of poverty around the world, the Vatican's observer to the United Nations told the International Labor Conference.

Speaking during a conference session Wednesday, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi said 45 million to 50 million jobs will be needed annually over the next decade to keep up with the growth in the world's working-age population.

"Experience shows that work is the way out of poverty for poor households and that the expansion of productive and decent employment is the way economies grow and diversify," the archbishop said. "For countries at all levels of development, an adequate supply of jobs is the foundation of sustained and growing prosperity, inclusion and social cohesion."

Citing the creation of jobs that has led to the lessening of poverty in numerous Latin American and Asian nations, Tomasi urged conference participants to take steps to encourage diversification of economies, inclusive access to finance and employment-friendly macroeconomic policies to foster investment and consumption.

Tomasi called for the development of employment policies that benefit both worker and business.

Tomasi also stressed the people must be seen as more than consumer, but as integral members of society whose dignity can be upheld through employment.

"The worldwide financial and economic crisis has highlighted a grave deficiency in the human

perspective, thus reducing man to only one of his needs, namely that of consumption. Worse yet, nowadays, human beings themselves are considered as consumer goods which can be thrown away," the archbishop told conference delegates.

"All too often policies are aimed at addressing the needs of businesses without considering the needs of workers, and vice versa. We must promote the conditions for a recovery built on substantial job creation in order to establish a new social pact that puts the person and work at the center of the economy."

At the end of 2012, five years since the beginning of the global financial crisis, nearly 200 million people remained jobless, he said. Even with modest job growth forecast for 2013 and 2014, he said, large numbers of people will remain unemployed.

The archbishop pointed to the high level of youth unemployment, which stood as high as 50 percent in some nations, as cause for the U.N. to act. He suggested the policies be put in place to address conflict across generations as older workers hold onto jobs longer even as young people are unable to find work.

Rebuilding links between education and work also must be addressed so that schools provide young people with the skills necessary to obtain work, he added.

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