

## UNIAPAC 2016 International Conference – “Business Leaders as agents of economic and social inclusion” – New Synod Hall, 17th November 2016

At the beginning of the morning **Giancarlo Abete**, President of the Italian Association UCID, introduced the International Conference and shortly drew the attention of the audience on the factor that most characterizes Christian businessmen action in the public square (“*moral and human values are our distinctive power and we must keep on spreading them all around in the places where we ordinarily live and work*”) while **José Maria Simone**, President of UNIAPAC, declared that it’s time to react to the global economic and financial crisis and to move towards a more social perspective centered on the respect of the human person and his basic needs. The mission of the business leaders, in Simone’s words must be recalled as a noble one (“*businessmen are workers who create labour opportunities*” and “*decent-work is a key for fighting poverty*”) but at the same time it must be underlined that also “*subsidiarity is a process to dignify human people*” and to respect the fulfillment of vocation and personal freedom of everybody.

In the first session (“*Business Leaders in dialogue with international institutions for the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development*”) Cardinal **Pietro Parolin**, Secretary of State of Pope Francis, delivered a speech striking the needs of humanizing business and “*giving a soul*” to the civil order arguing that poverty around the world is increasing not just due to the social inequalities of globalization but also because there are still many wars around us and where there’s not peace it will be the development of the whole society to suffer (remembering that Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* wrote in the Sixties that “*the new name of the development is peace*”). **Marianne Thyssen**, European Commissioner in charge for employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility, on the other side, reflected on the human dignity as a politic value observing that it is clearly recognized in the International Charter of Human Rights that has been the inspiring document for building the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union. On this level, providing decent work (that is, a fair and safe job) appears to be a key-factor for fighting conditions of injustice and achieving social development. Moreover, European Institutions are nowadays strongly committed to solve the worrying problem of the growth of the youth unemployment and are calling for help and support from both businessmen and civil society.

In the third speech of the session, **Yoshio Matthew Nakamura**, Ambassador of Japan to the Holy See, presented to the audience the case of *Keidanren*, the Japanese Business Federation that includes 1500 members gathering the top-national corporations (Toyota, Sony, Canon, Mitsubishi,

Nissan etc.) and about 100 industrial associations. The Federation has been in fact strongly involved in the debates about social inclusion with reference, for example, to the factories of the Japanese corporations that were open on religious and civil days of vacation abroad (e.g.: forcing their workers to go to factory on Sunday in Christians Countries, or on Friday in Islamic Countries). This insensitive behavior towards faith, culture and customs of the local people finally caused a strong, public anti-japanese feeling on one side and a social exclusion of the damaged workers on the other side demonstrating that even if business executives act according to a just productive and efficient approach economic market is never perceived as a sort of neutral moral dimension, socially speaking.

**Sipho S. Moyo**, Chief of Staff and Director of Cabinet of the *African Development Bank*, informed on the impressive economic growth of the African Continent in the last decades quoting several facts and figures that show a terrific decline of the extreme poverty in many suburban areas. Nonetheless, huge disparities are still there and the wealth gap is still remarkable, not taking into account groups of more vulnerable and weak people such as women and youth, boys and girls. The good news is that in a few years (within 2040 at the most) Africa will be the younger continent, with an attractive human potential and with lots of areas attractive for investment. Social stability in general is a question point (especially in the center and in the south) and masses migration is a loose for everybody: the solution, according to Moyo, is as simple as hard to achieve in a short time: creating job-opportunities for African youth in Africa giving a chance to everyone in his own Country and investing on the human capital of the Continent.

The following paper by **Vic Van Vuuren**, Director of the Enterprises Department of ILO (*International Labour Organisation*), focused on inclusion and sustainable development (recalling the UN Millennium Goals) and underlining the social importance of family too, as an agent of personal development for its members and as a moral Institution. In order to give access to a major number of young people in the world of labour a persistent *vulnus* is the fact that our educational systems, especially in the West, are not updated with the new challenges that businessmen nowadays have to face and schools and universities are still away from the economic market needs and mentality. With all this in mind, it should not come as a surprise that partnership and “*working together*” among the different actors of the market is crucial if we want to survive at the present global crisis.

The most important speech of the day, though, was delivered – as expected – by **Pope Francis** at the Audience in the Sala Regia in the late morning. The Pope focused his speech on two parables of the Gospel in some way related to the ‘entrepreneurial activity’ such as the ‘precious

pearl parable' (see Mt, 13, 45-46) and the 'unfair administrator parable' (see Lc, 16, 1-8) and on a real, converted by Jesus business-man, Zacchaeus (see Lc 19,1-10). Francis chose three concepts in order to recall and deepen the most important guide-lines of the Catholic magisterium on social inclusion: 1) the meaning of using, spending and saving money, 2) the practice of honesty as an evangelical virtue, and 3) fraternity as a service for the achievement of the common good. In relation to the first point, the Pope quoted Pius XI concerns about the growing "*International imperialism of money*", Paul VI worries about the "*economic dictatorship*" that treats men throughout the world like objects and finally John Paul II blames towards "*idolatry of money*", suggesting that human selfishness and greed are in every time the real enemies of any fair human development. Money as a tool is, of course, a neutral tool and therefore must be used "*to serve*" and not "*to make other people (our) servants*". Coming to the second point, the Pope said that the opposite to honesty is corruption and taking a view into human history as well as into the present social issues it's quite easy to see that corruption is at power in the most social questions we have to face today. The corrupted man is, basically, a liar, that is, someone who is not true towards his colleagues...and what does the *Gospel* say about that? That those kind of people have a father, just as liar as they are: that is, the Devil, the Father of the lie (see Gv, 8,44). Therefore Francis suggested to develop fraternity in order to contrast human vicious on one side, and "*to recover the social meaning of the financial and economic activities*" on the other, adding as a final hope that "*credit shall be more accessible to everybody*".

In the afternoon the second session focused on "*Vision of business leaders and economists. Recent Conferences and Perspectives*" making the point on some of the most important international conferences on economy of the last two years. According to **Seamus Finn**, Vice Chair Board of Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, private sector is finally at the table of debate and action, inside and outside the Church: that means that 'civil' economy is generating more attractive and fruitful initiatives compared to the Seventies or the Eighties but many, and perhaps too many actors on the stage are not still aware of the fact that "*we live in a state of interdependence on planet*" and thinking my personal profits and well-being apart from other people and environments is just unreal and not sustainable anymore. For these reasons new and argued considerations on impact investing and social consequences of the business activities are more and more needed (for an interesting example of this approach, see the GIIN – Global Impact Investing Network Research, that lately has defined 10 specific areas of 'quality standards' like sustainable agriculture, affordable and accessible housing and healthcare and clean technology at the following website: [www.giin.org](http://www.giin.org)).

**Sergio Cavalieri**, President of Latin America UNIAPAC, presented the achievements of the last UNIAPAC World Congress in Belo Horizonte (held in 2015 in Brasil) on politics, business leaders, civil society and common good, underlying the importance of changing and correcting those social behaviours that have an impact on social inclusion and human development and create bad, and un-economic, habits and customs in the higher as well as in the lower classes. Another point is that in order to overcome the global crisis and maximize resources is crucial for businessmen to re-discover strategic partnership and new ways of alliances (between business leaders and between business leaders and others).

For **Mathilde Mesnard**, Senior Advisor of OECD Secretary General, the ‘growth of the unemployed’ is by far ‘the’ topic of the present crisis with seven million people more suffering than in 2008 in the OECD Countries (59 Nations among Europe and Asia) and even the wealth/pro capite is nowadays much more concentrated and not socially invested than in the first years of the XX century. In this kind of situation creating and offering new technologies (information technology, digital nets etc) is a good thing but it will not automatically solve the main unemployment-problems because an intelligent and efficient use of this technology also demands good skilled and prepared people.

By contrast, **Raj Sisodia**, Professor of Global Business at Babson College (USA), looking at a latest survey published in the US (according to which only 20% people in the world have confidence in business) is convinced that also the public image of the business as it is generally seen in the mass-media must be changed. Business leaders should work to “*change the narrative of business based on self-interest*” with “*higher purposes*” including the participation of every stakeholder and a more clear connection with the creation of the common good. In any case, business simply “*doesn’t exist apart from society, on an island*” and always implies a social environment in order to have success. It’s therefore necessary to produce a cultural change in the contemporary mentality of looking at the business area in general and at its leaders if we want to be seen as the part of the solution and not as the part of the problem.

Finally, **Stephane Jacquemet**, regional representative for Southern Europe of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), concluded the last session of the day admitting that human development throughout the world is damaged from the many open conflicts (wars, civil conflicts etc) that destroy the material structures of the societies and the souls of the men involved too (counting 18 at the moment, from Syria to Libia to Iraq to Yemen). In this dramatic context the role of the business community is that of facing the migrant-crisis investing in the migrants themselves, providing jobs, helping social inclusion and avoiding new miseries in their Countries

but, at the same time, bearing in mind that “*they could see the results and earn the real profits of their choice in eight, nine, or ten years time*” because the investments in the single human person are always to be considered in long-terms of time: it’s a risk and a challenge but, as the real businessmen know, every new opportunity usually comes from the ability to manage a difficult challenge.