

**Speech by Maria Mercedes Rossi (APG23 Permanent Representative)
at the Social Forum 2009 in Geneva - UN**

"Dear President, thank you for the opportunity given to me to speak to this forum and its leadership. I also thank the expert speakers for their presentations so enriching. My name is Maria Mercedes Rossi and the representative here in Geneva of the Association "Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII a faith-based organization with Pontifical Recognition, whose mission is to directly share the lives of the poorest and remove the causes of poverty and injustice. We are present in 24 countries and 5 continents.

For us, the poor we talked constantly these days, they have names, faces, sad stories and beautiful smiles ... We have repeatedly said in this forum that we must build immediately in the various States a system of social protection to meet the situation and highlighted the working examples that already exist. It has been said also that social protection is a cost-effective option. We all agree ... but we must bear in mind that this measure are only a response to an immediate need and that social protection itself is a necessary correction to the failure of the market economy. The real root cause that generates new poverty making increasingly poor who already is, is the current economic model based on liberalism. We are in a society of so-called PROFIT based on the concept of "homo economicus" where everything and everyone are marketable, where prevail the principles of the claim, possession and power, where the poor, who do not produce, are an encumbrance. Instead, we must go to and promote a society of solidarity and SOCIAL JUSTICE based on the principle of Human Rights and on the man who has value in itself and not because it has, produces ... where the poor show the correct step in the human march. During the forum, we heard terrifying numbers (one billion hungry people, 80% of the population of the earth without a social security etc..) The presence of so many poor people in the world is unfortunately the most obvious indicator that the human race is failing live and act as human FAMILY. We have repeatedly talked about the threshold of 'extreme poverty (1-2 dollars a day), but in reality, we should speak of the poverty threshold (there is to challenge any of us to survive in this way ..).

We also talked about the moratorium on public debt (in the sense of a temporary suspension of debt to deal with the crisis), but what there is 'need and that we must continue to propose the total cancellation of the debt for those countries heavily indebted, a debt that must be considered UNFAIR. Dr. Salomon. its clear and articulate presentation introduced the concept of REPAIR. We must have the courage to ask the Member States, the total cancellation of debt as a form of reparation to those were impoverished and the poor who don't have helped to cause the current financial and climatic crisis but who bear and suffer the worst consequences .

Thank you!