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**The Human Rights Dimension: Addressing the Rise of Global Genocidal Anti-Semitism and Vatican II’s Nostra Aetate**

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Conference at the United Nations

AMBASSADOR DR. CALEB OTTO, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pulau to the United Nations: Thank you all very much for coming. I would like to acknowledge the presence of my Pacific Island ambassadors and colleagues, Ambassador, His Excellency, Ambassador Feturi of Samoa and Her Excellency, Ambassador Jane of Micronesia. And I see His Excellency, Ambassador Canodam [inaudible].

On behalf of the co-sponsors and co-organizers of this meeting, the Missions of Cypress and Israel and the World Council of Independent Christian Churches in proclaiming justice to the nations, welcome to this lunch hour session on The Human Rights Dimension: Addressing the Rise of Global Anti-Semitism and the Vatican II Nostra Aetate.

Throughout the world in so many places, there are conflicts and immeasurable amount of human suffering and devastations of individual lives, of children, adults and families alike. Peace is sought after on so many fronts and yet continues to elude us due to our own unwillingness to stand up and say no to intolerance in all its forms. We all need to be stronger in this respect. Someone said the tolerant must tolerate the intolerant no longer.

At the end of World War II and the beginning of the United Nations, the world vowed never again to seek extermination of the Jewish people and, by extension, any race. As the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says, "This organization was born out of the ashes of World War II to, according to its charter, reaffirm faith in the fundamental rights, in the dignity and worth of human person, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of the common ends of peace and security."

Thus it appears that the organization has strayed from its mission when out of the 7,200 resolutions it passes each year between 15 to 20 of them are directed against one particular nation. In other words, one-fifth to one-quarter of all resolutions are directed negatively against Israel. Another way to look at it is to say that of all the resolutions passed to criticize a nation, three-fourths of them apply to Israel.

One has to ask the question then why that is. I am aware of the Israel-Palestine conflict and I pray that someday very soon a peaceful solution can be achieved for the Israelis and Palestinians. There are many other examples of conflicts between nations and between peoples but no one nation is condemned by the UN resolutions in the manner that Israel is. It seems to me then that the reason for condemnation is not so much the act of aggression or instigation of conflict or even who does it. It seems that the State of Israel is guilty because of its citizens, who are Jewish people. In all appearance, this is anti-Semitic.

Never again was the vow made only 70 years ago about the Holocaust. But now we are seeing a resurgence of the same reasons for mistreating the Jewish people. These reasons now give rise for advocating to boycott Jewish businesses and products, to boycott Jewish arts and entertainment. The main reason is that they belong to Jewish people.

We know from history that this reasoning resulted in the killing of six million Jewish people. This kind of attitude has no place anywhere in the world today, least of all within the walls of the United Nations, where we are supposed to be the premier peacemakers. Just last Sunday night we adopted an agenda for transforming our world. In its declaration we said we are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which are free from fear and violence. Fear and violence, how many Jewish people live in fear and violence and are subjected to violence in various parts of the world today only because they are of Jewish race? Also how many Muslims live in fear and subjected to violence because of their faith?

In preparation for the Nostra Aetate Second, Pope Francis reminds us that Christians should avoid hateful generalizations about Muslims because, as he explains, authentic Islam and the proper reading to the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.

And Prince Turki Al-Faisal, former Director General of Saudi Arabia's General Intelligence Directorate in an article called "Fahish, Not ISIS" in the spring issue of *Horizons*, a journal of international relations and sustainable development, he says, "Islam is an extraordinarily rich religion and historical tradition and a way of life for billions of ordinary people. In practice it translates into a religious life centered on devotion to God, respect for behavior to others, a peaceful, well-run society and an emphasis on self-improvement."

So as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations we can turn fresh pages of our attitude and behavior and embrace all peoples of all races as equal and deserving dignity and respect. I know this means a lot to everyone as it has to me. Because of the color of my skin I have been discriminated against many times. I have also experienced great satisfaction at times when people who would not even talk to me at first become great friends to me once we get to know each other.

This happened to me right here at the United Nations. During my first week here, a person sat next to me through the whole lunch hour without even acknowledging my presence. This person is one of my closest friends now. As Christians, we are called to be peacemakers. For me, this does not mean that I can only be a friend of a Jewish person at the expense of a non-Jewish person or vice versa.

I am here at the United Nations to be the bridge of goodwill, partnership and blessings to the people of Palau. I work hard to make friends and peace with all the members of the United Nations. And in seeking God's blessings for Palau, I will bless Israel because God said in Genesis 12:3, in speaking to Abraham saying, "And I will bless you and I will bless those who bless you."

For me, one does not need to hate or curse a person in order to bless another. It is, in fact, best to bless everyone. And for me, that is what the United Nations is all about. So let me close with the words of Prince Turki Al-Faisal again. "Peace is not the absence of violence but rather that active cultivation of social unity." I thank you.