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FROM: The Secretary

April 4, 1967

Meeting of Executive Directors, April 4, 1967

STATEMENT BY MR. LUIS ESCOBAR ON THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL  
"ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES"

1. Last week the world press published the Encyclical letter that His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, addressed to the bishops, priests, religious, the faithful and to all men of goodwill "On the Development of Peoples".
2. I should like to take the liberty of calling the Board's attention to the substance of the Encyclical, as I find a basic and fundamental coincidence between the ideals proclaimed by the Pope and the essential principles of philosophy and policy underlying the activities of the World Bank. I would do the same if similar statements had been made by other important religious or temporal leaders as, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, to my mind, these constitute an expression of support and encouragement from an outside party to all of us who, in one way or another, contribute to the Bank's daily operations.
3. Without going into or even mentioning the various interesting chapters dealing with different aspects of economic growth and social progress, I should like to point out that they too strengthen and, in truth, provide an invaluable support for the principles and the policies which are being followed at the regional level of the Inter-American system within the Alliance for Progress, in accordance with the Charter of Punta del Este.
4. I also want to acknowledge - from the outset - that many people - including myself - would make more than one qualification to some of the statements contained in the Encyclical; but this is not what interests me on this occasion. I shall only allow myself to underline what the Pope has said with regard to international cooperation between rich and poor countries as I feel that, amongst his many statements, this is the point which bears the most direct relationship to our work here.
5. After suggesting - or, better said, clearly indicating - that the benefits of cooperation amongst countries do not only go to those who receive but also to those who give, he states:

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"In order to be fully effective, these efforts ought not to remain scattered or isolated, much less be in competition for reasons of power or prestige: the present situation calls for concerted planning. A planned program is of course better and more effective than occasional aid left to individual goodwill. It presupposes, as we said above, careful study, the selection of ends and the choice of means, as well as a reorganization of efforts to meet the needs of the present and the demands of the foreseeable future. More important, a concerted plan has advantages that go beyond the field of economic growth and social progress; for in addition it gives significance and value to the work undertaken. While shaping the world, it sets a higher value on man."

6. Could we think of a better way of outlining the objectives of the World Bank?

7. Immediately following - and with a realism that reminds us of the work of our staff on Supplementary Financing - he goes on to speak of equity in trade relations:

"The efforts which are being made to assist developing nations on a financial and technical basis, though considerable, would be illusory if their benefits were to be partially nullified as a consequence of the trade relations existing between rich and poor countries. The confidence of these latter would be severely shaken if they had the impression that what was being given them with one hand was being taken away with the other."

8. His thinking on the necessity of collaboration amongst countries which forces them to overcome, on occasion, the great obstacle of exaggeratedly nationalistic feelings rendering the achievement of the objective difficult, is most opportune:

"Nationalism isolates people from their true good. It would be especially harmful where the weakness of national economies demands, rather, the pooling of efforts, of knowledge and of funds, in order to implement programs of development and to increase commercial and cultural exchange." ... "We hope that the countries whose development is less advanced will be able to take advantage of their proximity in order to organize among themselves, on a broadened territorial basis, areas for concerted development: to draw up programs in common, to coordinate investments, to distribute the means of production and to organize trade. We hope also that multilateral and international bodies, by means of the reorganization which is required, will discover the ways that will allow peoples which are still underdeveloped to break through the barriers which seem to enclose them and to discover for themselves, in full fidelity to their own proper genius, the means for their social and human progress."

9. On previous occasions, Mr. Chairman, I have had the opportunity of talking about this matter in this Board and, especially, when commenting on the summary that Mr. Orvis Schmidt gave us of the last meetings of the Inter-American system held in Buenos Aires.

10. At the end of the Encyclical, the Pope has coined a phrase that we might want to borrow from time to time: "Development is the new name for peace."

"Excessive economic, social and cultural inequalities among peoples arouse tensions and conflicts and are a danger to peace." ... "Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever-precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day." ... "The peoples themselves have the prime responsibility to work for their own development. But they will not bring this about in isolation. Regional agreements among weak nations for mutual support, understanding of wider scope entered into for their help, more far-reaching agreements to establish programs for closer cooperation among groups of nations - these are the milestones on the road to development that leads to peace." ... "This international collaboration on a worldwide scale requires institutions that will prepare, coordinate and direct it, until finally there is established an order of justice which is universally recognized. With all our heart, we encourage these organizations which have undertaken this collaboration for the development of the peoples of the world, and our wish is that they grow in prestige and authority."

11. I am one of those who think that our individual happiness is greatly increased by believing that our work is not only a means of earning our living but also a way of contributing to the community, in whatever way we interpret or visualize it: at the local, national or international level. Obviously, in this institution, we and our staff have to think and believe that we are effectively rendering a service to the well-being of humanity and to bettering relations between peoples; I have always thought that an international civil servant must have a true vocation for service if he is to perform his duties well and, at the same time, be happy in discharging them. And now, one of the world's spiritual leaders tells us that we are practically dedicated to what appears to be mankind's most important task at the present time. It is for this reason that I have thought it fitting to take note of this fact in this Board; I consider that it is good for us to know what is thought of our duties and responsibilities, and for statesmen and civil servants throughout the world to ponder on these important declarations - which are, in my judgment, an historic event - for to the extent that these thoughts are translated more and more into policies, the world will be able to look to its future with greater optimism and we will have the illusion of having fulfilled our duties with greater efficiency.