

**SENATE OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Santo Domingo,
August 7, 2009

Ave. Máximo Gómez No. 27,
Post Office Box 312
Santo Domingo
Dominican Republic

Monsignor
JÓSEF WESOŁOWSKI
ACCREDITED ARCHBISHOP OF SLEBTE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
His Office

Your Most Reverend Excellency:

The launching of a discredit and defamation campaign against the Dominican Republic, specifically against the production of our emblematic staple, sugar, and the companies involved in its production, is motivated by conflicts of questionable interests, trapped in the nets of professional detractors and slanderers who seek, through threats and blackmail, to erect themselves in masters and owners of our society, imposing as collective truth a repeated falsehood.

We legislators have monitored the course and development of the present discredit campaign against the Dominican Republic, and are really not surprised at the heightened tone, the out-of-context, offensive and injurious discourses of some Dominicans, Haitians and people of other nationalities, at a time in which the Dominican Republic has achieved the opening of the European market through the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), on the basis of efforts of its main production businesses to improve its quality standards, and of the State in strengthening its international relations.

The EPAs define a new stage in the European Union's policies vis-a-vis the developing ACP member countries by establishing a framework that is wholly compatible with that of the WTO. Its general goals are the sustainable development of the ACP states, their linear and gradual integration into the world markets, and the eradication of poverty. Its specific goals are the improvement of sustainable growth, the increase in production and in the supply capability of the ACP countries, the promotion of structural treatment and economic diversification within ACP, and the support of regional integration. As you can see, it is essential for the advancement of developing countries such as ours.

The Dominican Republic made its debut with the initial purchase by Tate & Lyle, an EPA member firm, of 30,000 metric tons of raw sugar. It is for this reason that we are not surprised that malicious voices have spoken up; however, what does surprise us is that the worldwide defamation campaign has as its epicenter a Catholic priest, Christopher Hartley.

In their excessive and desperate attempt to stop the development of an industry, the intellectual authors of this campaign have attempted to cast doubts on the honesty, business and personal ethics of the main public and private entities and individuals who form part of the economic, political and social life of the Dominican Republic.

In the case of the National Congress, there has been an additional scheme of misinforming and deceiving the mass media on a worldwide scale, including the news daily El Mundo in Spain and the New York Times in the United States, under the assumption that this would serve the obscure interests of certain consultants who wish to sustain a debate over certain falsehoods, presumably based on alleged documentaries that hinder serious, responsible journalism and do not respond to the non-negotiable principle of Truth.

These documentaries, which have been sent also to the companies that purchase our products, seek to generalize the behavior of a small minority who act in an incorrect manner, and notwithstanding that, they are shown as award-winning documentaries, which generates great confusion since the awards received, for example, by the movie "The Price of Sugar", are recognition of merits to the production, acting, narration and filming of the documentary as an art, and should not be mistaken for an award to their credibility or a seal of truth. Such is also the case of the article published by Mr. Paco Rego in his supplement "Crónica" for the Spanish news daily El Mundo, in which he asserted that the Dominican Republic had just abolished slavery in 2009, through the National Constitution Commission, which is currently reviewing the Constitution, and, according to him, this was due to the efforts of Father Hartley.

For this reason, we prepared a letter signed by 32 lawmakers, where we made the necessary comments to the article, and sent it both physically and through electronic means to the news daily El Mundo, but we never received a reply nor was our letter ever published, which is a violation of our right of defense (our letter to the news daily El Mundo, as well as the article, are attached hereto). But in this particular case, this is not our main concern; instead, it is the National Economy, which depends heavily on the Sugar Industry.

Father Hartley's most recent impertinence, that we are ware of, was a letter he sent to Mr. Rown Adams, Director of Corporate Communications of Tate & Lyle PLC, and that company's whole board of directors, as well as to its counterparts in the companies Tereos and St. Luis Sucre, in which he threatens those firms for having purchased, or intending to purchase Dominican sugar. He accuses them of being unethical and questions the legitimacy of their Fair trade seals and their product quality certificates, while urging them not to source this product from the Dominican Republic.

In the specific case of Tate & Lyle PLC, he has attempted, as we said previously, to mount a campaign of misinformation and lies to discredit a particular producer of sugar, resorting to information manipulation regarding certain labor court processes presently under way, which is normal in a business that handles more than 35,000 direct employees and more than 131,000 hectares of sugar cane plantations, in which case, the latest episode of the defamatory campaign omits the fact that a majority of such judicial decisions, among other things, have been dismissed.

The Dominican Republic has 2.7 million hectares under agricultural, livestock and forestry exploitation. Just to agriculture we dedicate 1.1 million hectares, out of which only 131,000 are dedicated to sugar cane; we plant each year approximately 109,000 hectares, yielding approximately 5.8 million metric tons for a mean production of 53.4 metric tons per hectare during the 1999-2008 period.

From the cane produced and ground in the Dominican Republic, 70% corresponds to the sugar mills and 30% to independent cane growers. In the same period, the country produced an annual average of 482,214 metric tons of sugar, between raw and refined. The former represents 70% of the harvest and the latter 30%. From 2002 on, only three sugar mills (Central Romana, Cristóbal Colón and Barahona) produced 95% of the national total. During the last harvest, they recorded 97% of the 504,748 tons produced.

The sugar mills currently in operation have an installed capacity of 33,000 metric tons of cane per day, which represents a production of 5.9 million metric tons per harvest. But in the last four years, production had dwindled to an average of 4.5 million metric tons per harvest, equivalent to 76% of installed capacity.

The opening of new international markets such as that of the European Union, will allow the country to use up its entire installed capacity, which will translate into greater development of its cane-growing regions and the country as a whole, more jobs for locals and foreigners, including Haitian nationals who work in the cane fields. It is for this reason that the sugar producers must be protected by the Dominican State from this discredit campaign which, as it regards the attacks on the private sector, has been strictly personal.

The names of the principal executives of such businesses have been arbitrarily mentioned in the most negative settings, without any type of limit or control. Their faces, homes, employees and offices have been shown on films undeserving of any credibility which misportray them as systematic violators of basic Human Rights, before a European Union that tends to become more sensitive to such topics, not knowing that they have been deceived in their good faith by a priest who seeks to be canonized through the repetition of falsehoods.

The sympathy that these falsehoods generate, have produced windfall profits for Father Hartley and the various institutions that mirror his myths -- millions after millions of Euros --which have in turn allowed them to make more films and paid declarations. He has even gone as far as to film abandoned agricultural villages as if they were active, and communities living in absolute poverty, misrepresenting them as being part of the most

prestigious sugar mills; these windfall profits have in turn allowed him to engage the most highly paid producers, narrators and editors to publish his documentaries and exert influence so they win prizes based strictly on the fame of his collaborators. But what concerns us the most, indeed, exceedingly, is the fact that the voice that is spreading such falsehood is an authorized voice of the Catholic Church. That is why we have come to you, the direct link we have with the Holy Seat.

Pope John Paul II, in L'Osservatore Romano, 1987, said that "Solidarity, as a basic attitude implies, in economic decisions, a feeling of empathy with the poor. Feel the misery of the underprivileged as your own and thereby you will act with rigorous consistency". It is not a matter only of professing good intentions, but also of the unwavering will to look for effective solutions in the technical level of the economy, with the foresight that is engendered by love and the creativity that emerges from solidarity". It is on that solidarity economy that we base our best hopes for the region.

Likewise, John Paul II said in his "Homily at the Canonization of Saint Ezequiel Moreno", in 1992, that our challenge in these circumstances must have as a common base the service to Latin American man in his most urgent needs, the eradication of poverty and hunger, unemployment and ignorance; the transformation of the potential natural resources with intelligence, dedication and perseverance; the increase in production and promotion of development; the humanization of labor relations- always putting the human being's interest ahead of selfish interest." As we look at the present situation in Latin America and, more so, its future perspectives, it becomes necessary to set the foundations for a solidarity economy.

It is evident that Father Hartley acts out of economic interests, since that is the type of interests he is attacking. The target of his discredit and misinformation campaign is an industry that brings into the Dominican Republic thousands of millions of pesos annually in taxes, sustains 35,000 direct jobs, and, above all, offers a respite to the misery of many families from our sister nation, Haiti.

We fail to understand why Father Hartley is determined to destroy the source of employment of thousands of faithful parishioners who used to congregate in the very same parish he serviced, as well as many others, and who eventually demanded that he be expelled from the Dominican Republic for jeopardizing their household economies and safety. We cannot imagine any motives other than the satisfaction of his own ego by remaining in the public eye, at the expense of the poor and based on a faked preoccupation for the welfare of those whose very job security he puts at risk. His actions resemble the works of economic agents of companies that see the Dominican sugar industry as their main economic rival, since he acts like a merchant rather than a man of God.

It is undeniable that the Catholic Church exerts vast influence over thousands of millions of people throughout the world, so it would be useful to review some of the facts included in this document. Unrestrained declarations and lack of discipline by members of the Church can bring about catastrophic results for the Dominican economy and its

international relations. This could in turn precipitate massive unemployment of Dominicans and immigrants alike, including those who have nowhere else to go and no other choice but to cross the border and work in the Dominican Republic's cane fields. We do not believe that Father Hartley has reflected on the possible consequences of his irresponsibility, fueled solely by an aversion toward the Dominican Republic that we cannot understand.

The Catholic Church, in respect of Father Christopher Hartley, must again make available its solidarity toward us Dominicans, and inform Father Hartley's immediate superiors of the serious damages on the Dominican Republic being caused by the negative international campaign he is promoting. It should find out which interests it responds to, who is financing his campaign and who benefits from his actions.

With his attitude, Father Hartley seeks to bring about the condemnation of our country by international organizations, that our export quotas in the United States and European Union preferential markets be suspended, and, as we have said before, that European tourists abstain from visiting our country, which would mean a serious blow to our economy.

Again, Your Most Reverend Excellency, Monsignor Józef Wesolowski, the Church has the last word on Father Hartley and the damages he is causing the Dominican Republic economy-along with thousands and thousands of cane cutters.

With high consideration and esteem, we the undersigned, all Legislators and Assemblymen of the Dominican Republic, respectfully subscribe ourselves, your most obedient servants,

SENATOR PRIM PUJALS NOLASCO,
CHAIRMAN

SENATOR FRANCIS E. VARGAS
FRANCISCO,
VICE-CHAIRMAN

SENATOR JESÚS VÁSQUEZ
MARTÍNEZ,
SECRETARY

SENATOR FÉLIX MARÍA NOVA
PAULINO,
MEMBER

SENATOR ALEJANDRO LEONEL
WILLIAM CORDERO,
MEMBER

SENATOR NOÉ STERLING
VASQUEZ,
MEMBER

SENATOR ANTONIO DE JESÚS
CRUZ TORRES,
MEMBER

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Article by Sr. Paco Rego, published on April 26, 2009 by news daily El Mundo of Spain.
2. Letter dated April 29, 2009, from the Congressmen of the Dominican Republic to the Editorial Manager at the Spain's daily El Mundo.

3. Letter dated July 10, 2009, sent by Father Hartley to Mr. Rowan Adams, Director of Corporate Communications of Tate & Lyle PLC.
4. Translation into Spanish of the letter dated July 10, 2009, sent by Father Hartley to Mr. Rowan Adams, Director of Corporate Communications of Tate & Lyle PLC.
5. Letter dated July 20, 2009, sent by Anibal de Castro, Dominican Republic Ambassador to the United Kingdom, to Mr. Christian Rees, President of Tate & Lyle PLC.
6. Translation into Spanish of the letter dated July 20, 2009, sent by Anibal de Castro, Dominican Republic Ambassador to the United Kingdom, to Mr. Christian Rees, President of Tate & Lyle PLC.