GENOA, Italy, JUNE 4, 2001 (Zenit.org).- Economies cannot be measured solely by the logic of supply and demand, said a conferee at a weekend congress which produced proposals for the upcoming G-8 summit. The meeting hoped its efforts help give a "human face to globalization."

Entitled "Toward a United World Through Globalization in Solidarity," the conference drew 1,000 participants. New Humanity, a group inspired in the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, held the event. The event had the support of the Archdiocese of Genoa, headed by Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi, and the local municipality. It came in anticipation of next month's G-8 summit here.

Some anti-globalization movements are planning to protest the meeting of representatives of the seven major industrialized nations and Russia.

To give positive options for the summit to consider, the weekend conference produced a "Genoa Document," which contained proposals for making economies more humane. It was presented Sunday in the presence of Cardinal Tettamanzi.

During the event, University of Padua professor Benedetto Gui said the simple logic of supply-and-demand isn't adequate for measuring an economy. Hence, the Genoa Document proposed the concept of "communion," in the sense of universal and complete participation in the economic system. Gui said the idea is ambitious "yet applicable and fascinating."

Lorna Gold, of New York University, said the idea of "the economy of communion" arose in the context of increased internationalization of human relations. Focolare founder Chiara Lubich coined the expression. The idea is based on the principle that the human family has one Father, and thus the network of solidarity can go beyond the limits of local communities.

The "economy of communion" has already been applied at the international level, especially in Africa. It has created new forms of business management, such as the three-part subdivision of earnings, where one part is allocated to the poor, another to financing the "culture of giving," and the third to reinvestment in the business.
Likewise, the project calls for rigorous ethical standards in all aspects of business life.

In speaking of the "culture of giving," the project refers to the financing of small model neighborhoods, publishing houses and formation centers. The formation centers are considered valuable in the struggle against the spread of AIDS.

The operation has Catholic roots, and its basic lines are widely shared by the World Council of Churches, which is made up of more than 340 Christian denominations.

Freddy Knutsen, the council's representative, emphasized the need to free poor countries, and those impoverished by globalization, from the "slavery" of debt. But it is not enough to cancel the debt, he said. Rather, he called for a transformation of the system, which he said allows some countries to be poor and even worsens their debt.

The conference also proposed the so-called Tobin tax as a way to reduce speculation in foreign-exchange transactions. The tax has the support of the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Focolare Movement, Pax Christi International and nongovernmental organizations such as Halifax, Initiative and Kayros-Europe.

Anja Osterhaus of Kayros-Europe said that agents often buy and sell the same day, in order to obtain earnings resulting from variations of quotations, even if the latter are very small.

The 0.1% Tobin tax could noticeably reduce these types of speculative transaction -- which can amount to $1.5 billion a day -- given that the levy in many cases would be higher than the expected profit, Osterhaus said. Another benefit is that the tax would create a fund for those less favored by globalization.

Alberto Ferrucci of New Humanity said he sees greater economic change resting on four pillars: optimism, based on faith in Divine Providence; confidence, by making credit accessible to all; a preferential option for the poor and marginalized; and communion.