



AMERICA/MEXICO - 88-year-old Mgr. Lona continues to defend the indigenous population

Chimalapas (Agenzia Fides) - Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Tehuantepec (Mexico), His Exc. Mgr. Arturo Lona Reyes, has publicly stated that Rosario Robles Berlanga, the Federal responsible of SEDESOL (Secretariat of Social Development), "should study the history of the indigenous people" in order not to make "absurd and discriminatory" statements. The head of the Institute of Social Security, which distributes subsidies to the population most in need, a few days ago said that "subsidies will not be given anymore to indigenous women with more than 3 children". In addition, being in the indigenous community of Los Encinos, in the municipality of El Nayar, in Nayarit, the official added that indigenous women seek to have more children in order to have access to a greater number of benefits.

The declaration, considered "discriminatory", has sparked protests in several areas of the country, including the Church, especially by Mgr. Lona Reyes. According to the Bishop, Robles Berlanga's statements are absurd, because she "does not know the ethnic structure, does not even know that the women of the indigenous people do not know what abortion and contraceptives are ... they only know about the miracle of life".

Mgr. Lona Reyes has publicly complained about the ignorance of the officer during the first regional meeting of the "Defensoria of human rights of the people of Oaxaca", casting doubt on the outcome of the assistance programs in the area, as they do not reach the communities. He therefore recommended that the distribution of resources "is carried out in the villages", because there are women who walk up to 10 hours for a pittance and in the end, do not bring anything back. "Since I have retired - said the Bishop, who is 88 years old - I have been living in the forest area of Chimalapas, and nothing arrives there. Institutions must do everything possible to reach communities" (CE) (Agenzia Fides 15/05/2014)