



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the
108th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration
Geneva, 30 November 2017

Madam Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Holy See extends congratulations to you, Ambassador Maurás, and to the Council Bureau, on your election and wishes to thank Ambassador Quinn of Australia for his work as Chair of the Council over the course of the last year. It also warmly welcomes the Republic of Cuba and the Cook Islands as new member States and Kuwait as a new observer State to the IOM family.

The beginning of this third millennium is distinctively characterized by the largest migratory movement of people in history, which, in terms of origin, transit and destination, involves almost every part of the world. Migration is a sign of the times—and one of the most powerful forces shaping economic, social, political and cultural life.

While it is important to respect the legitimate interests of States, Pope Francis encourages that migration be regarded with confidence, as an opportunity to build peace and not as a threat, “within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good”¹. He urges that all those fleeing from conflict, hunger, discrimination, persecution, extreme poverty, natural disasters and environmental degradation be received and protected.

In spite of the different motivations and often coercive causes, all migrants and refugees generally have in common a factor that underlies the decision to abandon their homeland and often their family and friends, that is, sheer necessity. Indeed, migrants “desire a better life, and not infrequently try to leave behind the ‘hopelessness’ of an unpromising future.”²

Madam Chairperson,

My Delegation wishes to stress the importance of addressing migration from an integral and holistic perspective, as migration has not only become a structural component, but indeed a vital one, for our societies. “The common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family.”³ In this regard, as highlighted by the Director General in his report, we are increasingly witnessing, for instance, dramatic episodes of record-setting natural disasters on almost every continent.

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Message for the celebration of the 51st World Day of Peace, 1 January 2018.

² *Ibid.*

³ Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 7

The Holy See shares the concern about the increasing role that environmental degradation and natural disasters are playing in shaping the movement of peoples. Since everything and everyone is closely connected, “our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.”⁴

In this regard, Pope Francis appeals to the political community, civil society, and religious institutions to join forces in offering a shared response to the complexities of the modern migration phenomenon⁵. This is summarized in a document that the Holy See has submitted as an official contribution to the processes leading to the two Global Compacts⁶ with four verbs:

- First, to welcome. We need a change of attitude, to overcome indifference and to counter fears with a generous approach of welcoming those who knock at our doors and offering them decent and appropriate shelter, personal safety and access to basic services regardless of their status. In safeguarding the fundamental rights and dignity of every migrant, this includes creative solutions and broader options to enter destination countries safely and legally, and to repatriate, normally voluntarily, under just and safe conditions.
- Second, to protect. Defending the inalienable rights of people vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence, ensuring their fundamental freedoms and respecting their dignity are duties from which no one can be exempt.
- Third, to promote. Development is an undeniable right of every human being. The promotion of the integral human development of migrants and their families begins with their communities of origin, namely the right to find in one’s own homeland the conditions necessary for living a dignified life. In countries of destination where migrants are enabled to earn their living, in fair and free conditions, and access to education and basic health-care of underage migrants is guaranteed, they enrich both their host communities and those of origin.
- Four, to integrate. Integration, which is neither assimilation nor incorporation, is not the superimposing of one culture over another, nor mutual isolation, with the insidious and dangerous risk of creating ghettos.⁷ It is a two-way process, rooted essentially in the joint recognition of the other’s cultural richness.

⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, n. 25.

⁵ Cf. Pope Francis, Address to the International Forum on Migration and Peace, 21 February 2017.

⁶ Cf. “*Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Action Points*”. See also Document UN A/72/528.

⁷ Cf. Pope Francis, Address to the International Forum on Migration and Peace, 21 February 2017.

On this last point – integration – the Permanent Mission of the Holy See is organizing together with the Permanent Mission of the Order of Malta, the International Catholic Migration Commission, and the *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation a special event on the “Mutual Contributions and Benefits: Integrating Migrants in Host Societies”. This meeting will take place today during the lunchtime slot in this very same room and we are very pleased that our distinguished Director General will also be taking part in this event.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, as we move towards the next phase of the Global Compacts, I wish to convey Pope Francis’ “heartfelt hope (...) [that the] (...) two Global Compacts... be inspired by compassion, foresight, and courage (...). If the ‘dream’ of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees’ and migrants’ contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true ‘common home’.”⁸

In conclusion, my Delegation shares the conviction that the Global Compacts should not be the finish line, but rather a new beginning for the human family, based on a more universal and solid ethic that values the well-being of all mankind and of each person. Only in this way will we be able to reap the true benefits of international migration.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

⁸ Pope Francis, Message for the celebration of the 51st World Day of Peace, 1 January 2018.