



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the **109th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration**
Geneva, 28 November 2018

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, the Delegation of the Holy See extends congratulations to you on your election and warmly welcomes Grenada, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Republic of Palau to the IOM family. Please also allow me to extend congratulations to the Director General, Mr. António Vitorino, and wish him a successful mission at the head of IOM at a time of heightened international migration challenges.

Mr. Chair,

Migration is a reality that from time immemorial "has helped to foster human relationships, to create new bonds of collaboration, to bolster the exchange of knowledge and cultural and economic enrichment, to compensate for labor and demographic shortages and to expand the outlook of people to see objectively an interconnected world."¹

It is important to recall that most international migration occurs legally. Notwithstanding the complexities that come with migration, the perceived challenges of today must not obscure the opportunities and contributions offered by migrants. It is also from this perspective that the Holy See tries "to help understand and deal with this complex phenomenon. It has done so with sincere concern for the people involved and with respect to States who are primarily responsible for welcoming them, in a spirit of openness, responsibility and collaboration. Only on the basis of a mutual understanding may one propose a lasting response to today's human mobility, sustainable for migrants and refugees, as for all the countries concerned."²

Mr. Chair, I would like to elaborate on three points.

1) Poverty, inequalities, unemployment, violence, environmental degradation, studies abroad, family reunification and so on. In spite of the different motivations and often compelling causes, all migrants and refugees generally have in common a factor that underlies the decision to leave their homeland, 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."³

Among the root causes of migration, the Delegation of the Holy See wishes to highlight and reiterate the concern over the ever-increasing role that natural disasters and the environmental degradation of our Common Home are playing in shaping the movement of peoples, both in

¹ His Eminence Pietro Card. Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, Concluding Remarks at the Meeting with the resident Ambassadors to the Holy See, Vatican City State, 19 October 2018.

² *Ibid.*

³ Pope Francis, Message for the 2018 World Day of Peace, 1 January 2018.

developed and developing countries alike. It is more important than ever to consider the phenomenon of migration within a broader picture. We cannot let fear and insecurity be the determining factors of the decision to relocate. Before the right to migrate, every person has an inherent right to live in dignity and safety in his/her country of origin.

2) Integration is a two-way process, based on mutual knowledge and reciprocal openness. It cannot be mere assimilation that leads migrants or the host societies to suppress or to surrender their own cultural identity. This would only lead to social exclusion and disharmony. At the same time, however, it is important that migrants know and respect the laws, the culture and the traditions of the countries that welcome them, in a true spirit of encounter.

In this context, to invert the old saying that “good news is no news”, there are positive examples of integration and welcome by host societies, as well as contributions from migrants to the well-being of host societies. Regrettably, more often than not, this kind of news stays under the radar. In this regard, as Pope Francis recalled “the mass media should be driven by the need to explain the different aspects of migration, also making the public aware of the causes of this phenomenon”,^{4,7} in order to portray the bigger picture and shape an honest approach to migration.

3) As we move towards the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration in Marrakesh, it is important to return to the spirit and the letter of the New York Declaration and ground responsibility for the shared global management of international migration in the values of justice, solidarity and compassion.⁵ In this regard, in view of the proposed implementation of the Compact, the Holy See Delegation wishes to stress once again the important role played by IOM in the process. In order to be fruitful in the long term, international cooperation in the area of migration must consider the interests of all legitimate actors, so that all stakeholders are involved in finding the best solutions and systems. Such participation will help to allay ignorance, fear, or indeed suspicion of such systems.⁶

Mr. Chair,

Lastly, I wish to recall the words of Pope Francis during his homily at a Mass for migrants on July 6th last. I quote: “Before the challenges of contemporary movements of migration, the only reasonable response is one of solidarity and mercy. A response less concerned with calculations, than with the need for an equitable distribution of responsibilities, an honest and sincere assessment of the alternatives and a prudent management. A just policy is one at the service of the person, of every person involved; a policy that provides for solutions that can ensure security, respect for the rights and dignity of all; a policy concerned for the good of one’s own country, while taking into account that of others in an ever more interconnected world.”⁷

Thank you.

⁴ Pope Francis, interview with “Libertà civili”, Rome, 28 March 2017.

⁵ Cf. Message of Pope Francis to the Holy See – Mexico Conference on International Migration, Vatican City, 14 June 2018.

⁶ Cf. Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration, 3 February 2017, par. 90

⁷ Pope Francis, Homily during Holy Mass for migrants, Vatican City, 6 July 2018.