



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
Fourth Formal Consultation towards a Global Compact on Refugees
Statement 1 – Programme of Action: Mechanisms for burden- and responsibility-sharing
Geneva, 8 May 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Delegation of the Holy See extends its gratitude to the UNHCR for releasing Draft 2 and, in particular, to the Assistant High Commissioner for his leadership and his thorough presentation.

To welcome and to protect refugees are common responsibilities of the international community. It is important that the Global Compact on Refugees be firmly centered on the human person, avoiding any ideological considerations. When responding to their needs, we are well aware that this solidarity does not happen without sacrifice. In some instances, refugees even outnumber the local population, thus presenting obvious challenges.

Just as during the previous formal consultations, the Holy See Delegation wishes to stress the importance that the Global Compact on Refugees be firmly centered on the human person, urging that the dignity of each and every human person and his/her fundamental human rights should guide and underpin all aspects of the Program of Action.

In this regard, in order to ensure better protection of refugees in countries, particularly those affected by large refugee movements or in protracted refugee situations, this Delegation deems it more useful to refer in Paragraph 13 to “diverse needs” rather than to more abstract “diversity” considerations. As the purpose of the Programme of Action is to facilitate the application of a comprehensive response (cf. Paragraph 12), the phrasing of “diverse needs” would better capture the whole spectrum of those who are in need of protection.

Therefore, the paragraph would read: “The Programme of Action is underpinned by a strong partnership and participatory approach, involving refugees and host communities, taking into consideration age, gender and diverse needs, as well as promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls...” and so on.

On a similar note, the Delegation of the Holy See welcomes the attention dedicated to persons with disabilities. We would like to point out that there exist different types of disability, hence the term should be used in the plural form. In any case, to ensure the drafting is sound and effective, we recommend the need to mainstream the comment related to Paragraph 13, to all the instances that present similar language throughout the text. We are happy to share the proposed changes in writing.

Mr. Chair,

We wish to reiterate the importance of keeping an all-inclusive and integrated approach throughout the whole Draft, with a focus on the centrality of the human person. A holistic approach remains, indeed, the best way to detect and overcome harmful stereotypes, to avoid stigmatizing anyone in respect to a few specific aspects, and to take into account all dimensions and fundamental aspects of the person. This is of paramount importance for the protection of refugees but also for the respect of the local communities.

Thank you.