



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
Second Formal Consultations towards a Global Compact on Refugees - Part I

Geneva, 20 March 2018

Mr. Moderator,

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

Pope Francis reminds us that, also in the context of forced migrants: “defending their inalienable rights, ensuring their fundamental freedoms and respecting their dignity are duties from which no one can be exempted.”¹ In this regard, we welcome the well-articulated objectives and vision outlined in Part I of the Draft; these are rooted in well recognized values and principles that constitute a common patrimony of humanity enshrined in international law.

While it is our common hope that the root causes of refugee movements could be eliminated, we must acknowledge, with regret, that refugees always have been part of our human history, and that the plight of refugees continues to be “*a shameful wound of our time*”². Regrettably, as recent emergencies have demonstrated, while the causes of forced movements are manifold, there is one tragic common denominator: millions of people forced to leave their homes, their livelihoods, their families and their countries.

In this regard, the role of faith-based groups, which have an enduring presence and are often the first providers of protection during emergencies, is crucial. Their response is driven by solidarity, compassion and a deep understanding of the local context. In my Delegation’s view, it is vital that the Draft delineates better the links between such groups and the UNHCR so that the protection mandate may be better achieved.

Mr. Moderator,

The Delegation of the Holy See expects that the Global Compact on Refugees will make a difference in alleviating the stories of pain and in supporting the stories of hope among those caught in a desperate search for a more secure and dignified existence. At the same time, given the undue burden placed on certain countries, we are pleased that the Draft also acknowledges the efforts of those States that, in spite of their own hardships, have kept their borders and hearts open to welcome

¹ Pope Francis, Address to the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”, 21 February 2017.

² Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Letter to the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees*, 25 June 1982.

refugees through generous and admirable responses, and thus ought to receive tangible and prompt support from the international community.

In fact, the treatment granted to refugees by the international community, and the support provided to those States carrying the burden of caring for the refugees in their respective territories, constitute a true litmus test of our shared humanity and solidarity.

Mr. Moderator,

Lastly, the Delegation of the Holy See wishes to emphasize the importance of preventing and addressing the root causes of refugee movements. Open questions must be resolved by means of diplomacy, dialogue and prevention, which are also basic requirements in the promotion of integral human development that is built on peace and security.

The most comprehensive and effective way of achieving durable solutions is to ensure the right of all to live and thrive in dignity, peace and security in their countries of origin. In this regard, my Delegation wishes to note the importance of promoting dialogue and reconciliation, which are essential elements to achieve the conditions for safe, voluntary, and dignified return. Let us not forget that the human person is inherently capable of forgiveness. Alas, this virtue is too often ignored, even though it is absolutely essential during and after periods of crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.