



Special Event organized by the  
Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See  
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva and the United Nations  
Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

*Integral Human Development*  
*Transforming our world: The Holy See and the 2030 Agenda*

The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva is pleased to organize a Special Event for Diplomatic Missions, religious and non-governmental organizations, and other members of civil society, to present the observations of the Holy See on the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, to be held on 18 May 2017, at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. On this occasion, we welcome His Eminence Peter Cardinal Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Prefect of the Holy See Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development who will serve as the keynote speaker at this event as well as key officials of the international community in Geneva, who will respond to the presentation by His Eminence and thus inspire a stimulating discussion among all participants in the event.

On 25 September 2016, the Holy See transmitted a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General, in the context of the first anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and of the deliberations of the Seventy-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly concerning the “Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit”.<sup>1</sup> This letter will form the basis of the intervention of His Eminence at the Special Event on 18 May 2017.

During his address to the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, Pope Francis described the adoption of the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” as “*an important sign of hope*”.<sup>2</sup> The Holy See believes that this hope will be realized only if the Agenda is truly, fairly and effectively implemented. During the above-mentioned Address, Pope Francis outlined **key principles to evaluate the 2030 Agenda and to interpret and implement this Agenda at national and international levels**. They include:

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Letter dated 25 September 2016, from the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations address to the Secretary-General, A/71/1430*.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Address during Meeting with Members of the United Nations General Assembly, UN Headquarters, 25 September 2015, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150925\\_onu-visita.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_onu-visita.html)

**Understanding integral human development**, which “... demand[s] that we recognize a moral law written into human nature itself, one which includes the natural difference between man and woman (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 155), and absolute respect for life in all its stages and dimensions (cf. *ibid.*, 123, 136).”<sup>3</sup>

**Recognizing the poor as dignified agents of their own destiny:** “To enable ... real men and women to escape from extreme poverty, we must allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny. Integral human development and the full exercise of human dignity cannot be imposed. They must be built up and allowed to unfold for each individual, for every family, in communion with others, and in a right relationship with all those areas in which human social life develops – friends, communities, towns and cities, schools, businesses and unions, provinces, nations, etc.”<sup>4</sup>

**Providing both spiritual and material means:** “...the simplest and best measure and indicator of the implementation of the new Agenda for development will be effective, practical and immediate access, on the part of all, to essential material and spiritual goods: housing, dignified and properly remunerated employment, adequate food and drinking water; religious freedom and, more generally, spiritual freedom and education. These pillars of integral human development have a common foundation, which is the right to life and, more generally, what we could call the right to existence of human nature itself.”<sup>5</sup>

**Respect for the principle of justice:** “Our world demands of all government leaders a will which is effective, practical and constant, concrete steps and immediate measures for preserving and improving the natural environment and thus putting an end as quickly as possible to the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime.”<sup>6</sup>

**The right to education in the light of the transcendent destiny of the human person,** “...– also for girls (excluded in certain places) – which is ensured first and foremost by respecting and reinforcing the primary right of the family to educate its children, as well as the right of churches and social groups to support and assist families in the education of their children. Education conceived in this way is the basis for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for reclaiming the environment.”<sup>7</sup>

**Respect for the rule of law:** “The work of the United Nations, according to the principles set forth in the Preamble and the first Articles of its founding Charter, can be seen as the development and promotion of the rule of law ... In this context, it is helpful to recall that the limitation of power is an idea implicit in the concept of law itself. To give to each his own, to cite the classic definition of

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

*justice, means that no human individual or group can consider itself absolute, permitted to bypass the dignity and the rights of other individuals or their social groupings.”<sup>8</sup>*

**Peaceful resolution of disputes:** *“The Preamble and the first Article of the Charter of the United Nations set forth the foundations of the international juridical framework: peace, the pacific solution of disputes and the development of friendly relations between the nations. Strongly opposed to such statements, and in practice denying them, is the constant tendency to the proliferation of arms, especially weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons.”<sup>9</sup>*

**Service to others, respect for the common good, and building the foundation of human fraternity:** *“This common home of all men and women must also be built on the understanding of a certain sacredness of created nature ... one which ... rejects the creation of an all-powerful élite, and recognizes that the full meaning of individual and collective life is found in selfless service to others and in the sage and respectful use of creation for the common good.”<sup>10</sup>*

**Building the foundation of universal fraternity:** *“The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the sacredness of every human life, of every man and every woman, the poor, the elderly, children, the infirm, the unborn, the unemployed, the abandoned, those considered disposable because they are only considered as part of a statistic.”<sup>11</sup>*

### **Putting the 2030 Agenda into Action:**

The Holy See views the 2030 Agenda as “... a clear sign that, in spite of differences in some areas, the international community has come together and affirmed its commitment to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to ensure that all children, women and men throughout the world will have the conditions necessary to live in true freedom and dignity.”<sup>12</sup> Putting the Agenda into action requires a global commitment to “... eradicate poverty in all of its forms and dimensions” (Preamble para. 1) based on the “centrality of the human person as the subject primarily responsible for development” and the related pledge that “no one will be left behind.” (Preamble para. 2 and paras. 4, 48).<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Letter dated 25 September 2016, from the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations address to the Secretary-General, A/71/1430.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

In practical terms, the Holy See views life in dignity as including: “... religious freedom and education as well as lodging, labor, land, food, water, and health care.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in the words of Pope Francis, “[w]e cannot call any society healthy when it does not leave real room for family life. We cannot think that a society has a future when it fails to pass laws capable of protecting families and ensuring their basic needs” In the context of family life, the Holy See acknowledges “that women have a special role to play in the family and society and, in specific regard to integral human development per se. This is due to their unique presence in the creation of life as physical and spiritual mothers, who have special, but not exclusive gifts, that include defending, nurturing, and caring for life, from conception until natural death.”<sup>15</sup>

The Holy See believes that religious freedom “shapes the way we interact socially and personally with our neighbor whose religious views differ from our own” and interreligious dialogue, permits us to speak to one another, as opposed to taking up arms. Taking into consideration the ongoing atrocities against Christians and other religious minorities, the Holy See maintains that issues relating to religious freedom per se and freedom of conscience as well as inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue must be given priority for the ultimate success of the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, the separate goals in the 2030 Agenda relating to peace and inclusive societies are of particular importance for the related crisis concerning the increasing numbers of migrants, refugees and displaced persons, who are obviously bringing with them various religious traditions.<sup>16</sup>

According to the 2030 Agenda, it is an “integrated” development plan based on the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental ... (Preamble). This means that the success of the 2030 Agenda depends upon going beyond the language of economics and statistics precisely because the real emphasis is on the human person and his or her activities.<sup>17</sup> It follows that Goal 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns should be understood as not only regarding limits on natural resources but also as including criteria that relate to the promotion of solidarity and self-restraint.” Regarding the term “sustainable development”, the Holy See understands this concept as referring to the acknowledgement of “the limits of available resources and of the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature...as well as the nature of each being and his or her mutual connection in an ordered system, called the cosmos.”<sup>18</sup> The Holy See prefers to use the expression “‘**integral human development**,’ which includes sustainable development.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* See also the Intervention of the Holy See, United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, New York, 27 September 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Pope John Paul, Encyclical Letter, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 30 December 1987, nos. 26, 34.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Letter dated 25 September 2016, from the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations address to the Secretary-General, A/71/1430.

## **Programme for the Special Event**

### **18 May 2017 - Room XXVI**

- 11:00 – 11:10 Welcome and Introduction of the Panel – Introduction of the Theme and Programme – **His Excellency Archbishop Ivan JURKOVIČ**, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Specialized Agencies in Geneva.
- 11.10-11.15 Welcome remarks on behalf of Mr. **Michael MØLLER** Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.
- 11:15- 11:25 Opening remarks *UNCTAD contribution to the implementation of SDGs*, by **Dr. Mukhisa KITUYI**, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- 11:25 – 11:45 Keynote Address: *Integral Human Development - Transforming our world: the Holy See and the 2030 Agenda*, **His Eminence Peter Cardinal Kodwo Appiah TURKSON**, Prefect of the Holy See Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.
- 11:45 – 12:30 Responses of the Panellists (10 minutes each):
- Peace as precondition for the implementation of SDGs*, **His Excellency Mr. Elhadj As SY**, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- Access to Universal Health Care and the Elimination of Preventable and Treatable Pandemic Illnesses*, **Dr. Luiz LOURES**, Deputy Executive Director of Programme and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- The implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development a perspective from International Geneva*, by **Ms. Nadia ISLER**, Head of SDGs Lab, Office of the Director-General.
- Migrants and Refugees – Active Agents of Integral Human development*, **Mr. Pasquale LUPOLI**, Senior Regional Adviser for Europe and Central Asia, International Organization for Migration
- 12:30 – 12:50 Discussion and Questions
- 12:50 – 13:00 Summary and Conclusions