



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer  
of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment  
Explanation of Position on the resolution entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of  
emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”

*Geneva, 23 June 2017*

Mr. President and Distinguished Co-facilitators,

My Delegation would like to thank the co-facilitators and OCHA for their commitment and hard work in achieving consensus during this year’s informal negotiations of the resolution entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.”

Despite an open and fruitful cooperation of many delegations, this year’s negotiations have been particularly difficult. If, on the one hand, we made some progress, such as specific paragraphs on famine and food insecurity, on the other hand, we regret the inclusion of the controversial Minimal Initial Service Package (MISP) in the text.

The Minimal Initial Service Package (MISP) is a set of priority activities, provided by UNFPA, and includes 13 types of Reproductive Health Kits designed for women and girls of reproductive age, some of which entail abortion. Among them, “KIT 10” provides the well-known “vacuum extractor”, which is the most common method to procure abortion, and which brings serious risks also to the mother’s health. Our Delegation would like to insist that healthcare services must never be intended - or operate - against the life of the most defenseless or the unborn. The application of the right to life must never discriminate based on the various stages of life.

Although we acknowledge the particular risks that women and children face in humanitarian emergencies contexts and their specific and integral needs regarding access to basic healthcare, essential obstetric services, sanitary and food security, we cannot accept as an appropriate solution those services that provide and/or promote abortion. For these reasons, our Delegation dissociates itself from the paragraphs of the resolution that promote MISP as a proper answer to the already dramatic situations faced by so many women and children in challenging humanitarian settings.

In addition, our Delegation would like to reiterate its reservations on the following concepts:

1. The Holy See does not consider abortion, access to abortion, or access to abortifacients as a dimension of the terms “sexual and reproductive health” and “sexual and reproductive healthcare services”.

2. With reference to “gender”, the Holy See understands the term to be grounded in biological sexual identity and difference.

We kindly ask that the text of this statement be included on the official records of this meeting.

I thank you.