



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
2nd Thematic Discussion towards a Global Compact on Refugees

Panel 3: “How can we support receiving States to identify persons in need of international protection?”

17 October 2017

Mr. Moderator,

Best practices and lessons learned do not always stem from positive experiences, but rather quite the contrary.

When faced with large-scale situations it is important that receiving countries, especially developing ones, be given timely support to scale up or establish appropriate procedures to ensure that those with international protection needs are duly recognized. In this regard, the Delegation of the Holy See wishes to stress that international protection has to be seen as a dynamic and action-oriented function, rather than an abstract concept, aimed at safeguarding the dignity and safety of persons.

The adoption of inadequate or unfairly strict acceptance policies and lengthy modalities for processing asylum claims impacts dangerously on the safety of persons in need of protection, with the end result being increased human suffering.

Mr. Moderator,

The securitization of border control and the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers should not be seen as a dichotomy, but rather as mutually reinforcing. It is important to adopt inclusive and non-discriminatory national security policies that prioritize the safety and protection of citizens as well as those of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing armed conflict, persecution or widespread violence to find safety quickly by ensuring an expeditious screening and admission process.¹

Indeed, an exclusively security-oriented approach ignores the tragedies that force-people to seek protection elsewhere. Addressing the problem of identifying persons in need of international protection from the perspective of the uprooted, can help the international community to devise a more comprehensive and humane programme of action. In this regard, arbitrary and collective expulsions can never be a viable option. The principle of “*non-refoulement*” has to be respected in every case.

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¹ Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Action Points, Migrants and Refugees Section, Holy See’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Finally, my Delegation wishes to draw attention to the increasing phenomenon of unaccompanied children seeking asylum, especially because this is frequently the direct result of the desperate situation of many families and because it is too often “solved” by an ambiguous system of detention. Could the panelists share some successful examples of policies and mechanisms in the identification of persons in need of protection that allow for greater sensitivity to the needs of refugee families, consistent with ethical legal provisions and practices?

I thank you, Mr. Moderator.