



Statement by H. E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the
United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the *Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development*

Geneva, 23rd April 2018

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See views the current discussion on the Right to Development as a timely dialogue within the United Nations, having regard to the widening economic and social gap between the “haves” and “have-nots”. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development represents an “important sign of hope”¹ through which the international community committed itself to effective measures to eradicate the root causes of those dire problems that too many people in the world are still facing. In this effort to address root causes, systemic issues and structural changes, the Declaration on the Right to Development stands squarely in favor of the right to development as a human right (art.1); of the human person as the central subject of development (art.2,1); of the responsibility for development as a duty of each and every human being (art.2,2); and of the duty of States to co-operate with each other in ensuring development (art.3).

The centrality of the person, in its individual dignity and collective solidarity, is the essential component to be preserved and mainstreamed in all of the economic and political decisions on every level. This twofold principle undergirds the right to development and certainly applies to every sector of life.

The 2030 Agenda, furthermore, explicitly acknowledges that peace and justice are development objectives. It recognises that neither freedom from fear nor freedom from want can be realised in isolation. On the contrary, all human rights work together, and together they build the core conditions for development and peace. The Agenda, therefore, makes

¹ Cfr., Pope Francis, Address during Meeting with Members of the United Nations General Assembly, UN Headquarters, 25 September 2015.

strong commitments to provide an end to corruption and access to justice for all, with effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This echoes the Declaration's emphatic call for "equal attention and urgent consideration" of the implementation, promotion and protection of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as well as its plea for disarmament and the use of released resources for development.

Development must not be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is integrally human. This involves, *inter alia*, building up a more decent life through united labour, by enhancing the dignity of all men and women and creativity in a way that is concrete and mirrors each individual's personal skills and vocation². These principles are intertwined, interdependent and essential for the achievement of a development that only can lead society out of its deep crises. Focusing on people means not only protecting them from heinous crimes, but also placing them ahead of all national and geopolitical interests; it means, at the same time, fulfilling all the commitments undertaken throughout the history of the United Nations, beginning with its Charter³, especially those that relate to social and economic development.

The dignity of the human person must be the fundamental concern in all issues related to poverty and development. We must be guided by a substantive view of what living an integral human life means. Where the dignity of each and every human person is not respected, either by States and institutions or by individuals, other criteria are at work within that society which are merely "functional", making of the human person a mere means for "material gain". The person becomes functional to consumerism or political power. In such cases, the dignity of others risks being "sacrificed" for a greater material end.

Facing the selfishness and short-sightedness of many policies, which aim at immediate gains instead of the common good of the human family, Pope Francis recalls that dialogue is "the only way to confront the problems of our world and to seek solutions that are truly effective". This points us in the direction of those with the greatest needs in the human family. To this end, we are called to "work together in promoting a true, worldwide ethical mobilization which, beyond all differences of religious or political convictions, will spread

² Pope Jean Paul II Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 29

³ Charter of the United Nations, paragraph 4 of the Preamble, article 1.3 and chapter IX

and put into practice a shared ideal of fraternity and solidarity, especially with regard to the poorest and those most excluded”⁴.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, the Holy See hopes that the *solemn commitments* made in 2015 will serve as a catalyst for the proper implementation of clear principles for the promotion of the common good and the improvement of all sectors of life for all people. The Holy See believes that Sustainable Development Goals will come to concrete fruition only if the Agenda 2030 is truly, fairly and effectively realized. Humanity is faced with a crucial challenge that requires the development of adequate policies, which continue to be discussed on the global agenda. As we all know, the challenges of true commitment and real implementation are even greater.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

⁴ Pope Francis, Meeting with the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, 9 May 2014