



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
Fifth Formal Consultation towards a Global Compact on Refugees
Program of Action – Part III.B “Areas in need of support”
Geneva, 13 June 2018

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

In line with the overarching objective of “leaving no-one behind”, it is important that refugees are not put on “hold” or “standby” but, rather, that they be offered hope and positive expectations through access to opportunities leading toward their integral development. In this regard, this Delegation welcomes and supports the emphasis on education, health, and the promotion of decent work.

In order to have a powerful impact, it is important that the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) retains a non-politicized nature and does not become a “hunting ground” for competing interests. In this regard, under subsection 2.3 on “Health”, at the beginning of Paragraph 72, the Draft refers to “States and relevant stakeholders”, but footnote 49 only outlines some intergovernmental agencies while leaving out many other relevant actors. This Delegation wishes to reiterate the need to ensure that the health aspects of forced displacement be considered in the context of broader government policies and in engaging and coordinating with other sectors, including civil society, the private sector, refugees’ associations and the affected populations themselves, to find joint solutions that benefit the health of refugees.

In order to fill this gap in the drafting and to ensure a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, we would suggest the deletion of footnote 49 and the rephrasing of the beginning of paragraph 72 with the following: *“In line with national health care laws, policies and plans, and in support of host countries, States and relevant stakeholders, including intergovernmental agencies and civil society, will contribute etc...”*

The Holy See insists on the importance of keeping a holistic and integrated approach, with a focus on the centrality of the human person. The “cherry-picking” of documents, some of which do not enjoy international consensus, fails to respect the intention of the international community. In this regard, my Delegation recommends the elimination of footnote 50, which references documents not found in the previous Draft and on which our delegation has already expressed reservations. We are pleased to provide these suggestions in writing.

Mr. Moderator,

The decision of refugees to flee their homes is a testimony of faith and hope in the genuine solidarity and charity of the human family, which should not be limited by national borders.

This Delegation is concerned by the changes to Section 2.10 which is now entitled “Tolerance and peaceful coexistence”. Achieving mere tolerance is not sufficient, as it runs counter to the ideals of solidarity underpinning the GCR and to the tragedies of forced displacement.

As stated by Pope Francis, a *“change of attitude towards [migrants and] refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world.”*¹

At the same time, it is important to reaffirm that refugees have duties and responsibilities to respect the cultural heritage, laws, and regulations of the host countries. For these reasons, this Delegation wishes to suggest the deletion of the reference to “tolerance”, renaming Section 2.10 *“Promoting peaceful coexistence”* and adding a reference in Paragraph 84 to the duties and responsibilities of refugees towards the host countries. We are happy to provide these comments in writing to the Secretariat.

Mr. Moderator,

Lastly, this Delegation wishes to voice its support for such references, in Paragraph 95, to “access to family reunification” and to “private or community sponsorship programs that are additional to regular resettlement”, to “humanitarian visas”, “humanitarian corridors”, as well as “educational opportunities”.

Thank you.

¹ Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2014.