Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Holy See follows the political and social developments that are unfolding in some countries of North Africa with great attention and concern. The current crisis in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, however, is particularly worrying because of the unwarranted loss of human lives, the targeting of civilians and of peaceful protesters, and the indiscriminate use of force.

In the present circumstances it becomes urgent to reaffirm that the primary responsibility of the State is the protection of its citizens and the respect of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of assembly, and to serve the legitimate aspirations of its people.

In fact, this Delegation supports any effort aiming at bringing together in honest dialogue all parties involved, demonstrators and Authorities of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, to prevent any further escalation of violence, of revenge and of intimidation. Violence only leads to a humanitarian catastrophe. Especially vulnerable in this crisis are asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular immigrant workers from Sub-Saharan Africa, who risk being made a scapegoat of accumulated frustrations.

Mr. President, the Delegation of the Holy See expresses its condolences to the Libyan people and to the families of the victims of this bloodshed and prays for the recovery of the wounded. Let us pray that peace may soon prevail and allow a renewed society to look with hope to a future where human rights and the innate dignity of every person are respected.

Thank you, Mr. President.