



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Apostolic Nuncio,
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations
in Geneva at the **Sixth Formal Consultation towards a Global Compact on Refugees**
Program of Action – Part III.B “Areas in need of support”
Geneva, 4 July 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We are grateful to other Delegations for sharing their views and concerns in a respectful manner. My Delegation also wishes to provide some additional comments and considerations on Part III.B of the GCR.

The Holy See Delegation insists once again on the importance of keeping a holistic and integrated approach, with a focus on the centrality of the human person, truly capable of improving lives of millions of refugees and host communities alike. In this regard, we appreciate the emphasis on education, health, and the promotion of decent work. We also welcome the reference to the support for the development of alternatives to detention, recalling that detention can never be in the best interest of the child.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Holy See is familiar with the particular risks that women and children face in the context of humanitarian emergencies and their specific and integral needs regarding access to basic healthcare. In order to have a powerful impact, it is important that the GCR retains a non-politicized nature and does not become a “hunting ground” for competing interests.

In this regard, while in subsection 2.3 on “Health”, at the beginning of Paragraph 72, the Draft refers to “States and relevant stakeholders”, footnote 32 refers only to some intergovernmental agencies while leaving out many other relevant actors.

Additionally, we are concerned about the reference to WHA.70.15 (2017) in the same footnote. Indeed, such a resolution refers to the so-called “framework of priorities and guiding principles to promote the health of refugees and migrants”, which urges prioritization of a so-called “minimum initial service package” that has not been negotiated by States and is not based in international refugee law.

This Delegation wishes to reiterate the need to ensure that the health needs of persons affected by forced displacement be considered in the context of broader government policies, including engagement and coordination with other sectors, as well as civil society, the private sector, associations of refugees, and the affected populations themselves, to find joint solutions that benefit the health of refugees.

For these reasons, in order to provide more objective and comprehensive attention to the drafting process, and to ensure a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, we would

suggest the deletion of footnote 32 and the rephrasing of the very 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 organizations and civil society, will contribute resources and expertise [..]”*

In paragraph 73, focusing on the need for access to a wide range of diagnostic, therapeutic and health promotion interventions and resources, we suggest that the reference to “preventive commodities” be broadened to “commodities” in general, thus deleting the word “preventive”, since many persons affected by forced displacement have need of assistive devices as well, including those that address a wide range of physical disabilities.

Mr. Chairperson,

This Delegation is pleased to see the modification to subsection 2.10, now entitled “Fostering good relations and peaceful coexistence”. Similarly, we wish to voice once again our support for such references, as found in Paragraph 95, to “access to family reunification”, “private or community sponsorship programs”, “humanitarian visas” and “humanitarian corridors”, as well as “scholarships and student visas” as complementary pathways for admission to third countries.

Lastly, this Delegation wishes to echo the words of Pope Francis for the World Refugee Day, which we observed a few days ago, expressing the hope that we “may reach an agreement to ensure, with responsibility and humanity, assistance and protection to those who are forced to leave their own country” and reminding that “each one of us is also called to be close to refugees, to find moments of encounter with them, to appreciate their contribution, so that they too may be better integrated into the communities that receive them.”¹

Thank you.

¹ Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 17 June 2018.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2018/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20180617.html