



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, 29 April 2019

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See congratulates you for your election. We consider this 20th session of the Working group as an opportunity “to confront the problems of our world and to seek solutions that are truly effective”.¹

Rejecting negative models, and proposing alternative ways forward, applies not only to others, but also to us. We should all commit ourselves to promoting and implementing the development goals that are supported by our deepest religious, cultural and ethical values. Human development is not only an economic issue or one that concerns experts alone; it is ultimately a vocation, a call that requires a free and responsible answer (cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 16-17).

My Delegation considers the Declaration on the Right to Development as a fundamental pillar that has attained the recognition of the right to development as a human right (art.1) and of the human person as the central subject of development (art. 2,1). Indeed, integral human development should be addressed to *all* people – not just a few – and to the *whole* person – not just the material dimension (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, 14).

The responsibility for development is a duty of each and every human being (art. 2,2); and it is the duty of States to co-operate with each other in ensuring development (art. 3). Four years ago, through the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the International Community committed itself to renewed *impetus*, marking a vitally “new and universal solidarity” (*Laudato Si’*, 14).

It should be noted that, with the gradual evolution of the concept of development, some valuable principles have been emphasized. These do not stem only from the Declaration; they also are part of the international legal framework. With regard to such a legal basis, the Delegation of the Holy See notes that any definition of development should

¹ Pope Francis, Meeting with the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, 9 May 2014.

meet the satisfaction of both material and non-material basic needs and considers it to be of paramount importance that human persons play an active role and fully participate in shaping their own reality. The Holy See also believes that the achievement of a degree of individual and collective self-reliance, as well as the respect for the principles of equality and non-discrimination, should be considered as essential parts of the development process. Such an approach could represent an effective answer to the dynamic nature of a right that can be relevant for both current and future challenges.

Any fruitful discussion of development should propose alternative ways to address effectively existing inequalities and the degradation of the environment and thus offer a model of social integration and ecological conversion.² An inclusive approach to development seeks not only economic and political goals, but also focuses on all aspects of human dignity.

Respecting human dignity constitutes the precondition to promote sustainable integral human development. Thus, the human family must provide an appropriate answer to poverty eradication through the empowerment of marginalized and most disadvantaged communities, especially by overcoming the various forms of corruption that create inequalities. In this regard, the Holy See urges respect for human dignity and the guarantee of integral human development – by promoting good governance and facilitating equal access to indispensable services and vital resources, including education, drinking water, healthcare, clean energy, and land.

Mr. Chairman,

With increasing interdependence and globalization, the solemn commitment taken through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals calls us to move from decision to action. During this week and in the negotiation process, we have to be ready to engage in fruitful discussion by rejecting the temptation to look for a merely technocratic response to the challenges before us and be prepared to address the root causes and the long-term consequences of our work. We should commit ourselves to promoting and implementing a human development that is rooted in fundamental ethical values, encompasses an international duty of solidarity, and includes a moral duty of reparation.

Our Delegation sees a paramount priority in accelerating our actions as we adapt to present circumstances and future challenges by “*addressing the root causes and long-term solutions*”.³ If we want to achieve the goals of the Agenda 2030, we must do our best to respond adequately to “*both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*”.⁴

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

² Pope John Paul II, *Catechesis*, 17 January 2001.

³ Pope Francis, Statement at the Conference on “Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): listening to the cry of the earth and the poor”, 8-March 2019.

⁴ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'*, 49.