



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 72nd World Health Assembly – Committee A - Agenda Item: 12.4
“Promoting the health of refugees and migrants”, including Draft global action plan 2019-2023
Geneva, 27 May 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

The Holy See notes the development of the Draft Global Action Plan, 2019-2023, on promoting the health of refugees and migrants. The health care needs of such persons, and the public health impact of any further delay in addressing such needs, deserve urgent attention worldwide. My Delegation is grateful for the efforts of the Director-General to strengthen the leadership of WHO in promoting the health of refugees and migrants, in close collaboration with the other multilateral organizations that complement the global response to persons in such vulnerable situation.

With regard to the complex challenges of migration today, Pope Francis has called for a response “...less concerned with calculations, than with the need for an equitable distribution of responsibilities, an honest and sincere assessment of the alternatives and a prudent management. A just policy is one at the service of the person, of *every* person involved; a policy that provides for solutions that can ensure security, respect for the rights and dignity of all ...”¹

In this regard, my Delegation agrees with the premise in the Report that “nationality should never be a basis for determining access to health care ...” (#12).

The Holy See is deeply concerned, however, about the inclusion, in this document, of references to so-called “reproductive rights” (#18). My Delegation reiterates that it does not consider abortion or abortion services to be a dimension of reproductive health or reproductive health services. In a similar way, the Holy See considers the terms “sexual and reproductive health” and “sexual and reproductive health-care services” as applying to a holistic concept of health.²

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

¹ Pope Francis, Homily at Mass for Migrants, 6 July 2019,
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180706_omelia-migranti.html

² Statement of Reservations, Holy See Delegation, as noted in the Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995.