



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
to the UN and Other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the High-Level Side Event  
on the “Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”

*17 September 2019*

Thank you, Excellency, and thank you for inviting the Holy See to become a partner in this important event on such a momentous topic.

The very fact that we are here gathered together, with these distinguished panelists, indicates how much hope we can find in the world for a peaceful coexistence and dialogue, not only among states, being this the aim of the United Nations, but also among different religions and cultural traditions, which can dialogue together and together concur to build a world that is more peaceful, developed and just.

It is my distinct pleasure, now, to read a message from H.E. Archbishop (soon to be a Cardinal) Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Holy See, who has worked to the drafting of the important Document on 'Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together'.

I quote:

*“Your Excellencies,*

*I am grateful to His Excellency Obaid Salem Alzaabi, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva for organizing this High-Level Side Event on the Document on 'Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together'. I also thank you all for your valuable presence on this occasion.*

*The Document on 'Human Fraternity' is truly a milestone on the path of interreligious dialogue. It marks how far we have come together, but it is also a point of departure. Thus, the Document on Human Fraternity is not so much a map, but a day-to-day commitment of working together for the common good and contributing, as believers, along with people of good will, to heal our wounded world.*

*Fraternity cannot mean exclusive to my group, community, culture, religion but inclusive of all. Fraternity can be the dynamic, as the Document suggests, by which we rise above differences and instead build bridges of coexistence for a new world.*

*Pope Francis in his speech at the Global Conference of Human Fraternity said: "There is no alternative: either we will build the future together or there will be no future. Religions in particular cannot renounce the urgent task of building bridges between peoples and cultures. The time has come when religions should more actively exert themselves, with courage and audacity, and without pretense, to help the human family deepen the capacity for reconciliation, the vision of hope and the concrete paths of peace." (Address of Pope Francis at the Global Conference of Human Fraternity, Founder's Memorial Abu Dhabi, 4.2.2019).*

*Beside the well-known obstacles, confrontations, prejudices and conflicts in today's world, the Abu Dhabi Declaration beckons us to move beyond any difficulty by remaining always rooted in our own identity, avoiding any kind of syncretism, and supported by the sincerity of our intentions.*

*In this way, we commit ourselves to serve humanity through our mutual collaboration in promoting that peace which the world yearns for. Let us promote this historic Document on Human Fraternity calling everyone to reflect and study this new chance for peace and coexistence.*

*I'm thanking also all the efforts made by the United Arab Emirates to promote the historic Document on Human Fraternity. In fact, at the end of August, an higher committee for the implementation of the Human Fraternity document has been established in the United Arab Emirates. The Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said that the formation of the committee would help to implement the shared vision of developing initiatives and ideas to foster tolerance, cooperation and coexistence. Pope Francis encouraged the committee's work and thanked the UAE "for the concrete commitment shown on behalf of human fraternity".*

*It is my heartfelt wish and profound desire that the Abu Dhabi Declaration bring fruits for the development of a new phase of interreligious dialogue." End of quote.*

I would like also to add that on September 11 last, in the Vatican, a mixed committee of seven members, established earlier this year, started its work to identify and implement concrete steps to foster human fraternity. Among other distinguished members, Dr. Sultan Faisal Al Remeithi, is part of this committee, while the Holy See is represented by H.E. Archbishop Ayuso Guixot himself. I understand that the committee will invite representatives from other religion to join in.

Among the initiatives, a proposal stands out: the idea of a UN International Day of Human Fraternity, to be celebrated between 3 and 5 February every year.

The Holy See stands committed to bring along a new era in the dialogue and mutual understanding with different religions.

Thank you so much for your attention.