



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
109th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration

Geneva, 28 November 2019

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, the Delegation of the Holy See extends its congratulations to you on your election and warmly welcomes Lebanon to the IOM family. Please also allow me to thank the Director General for presenting his annual report on the state of affairs.

Mr. Chair,

Migration is a reality that from time immemorial “has helped to foster human relationships, to create new bonds of collaboration, to bolster the exchange of knowledge and cultural and economic enrichment, to compensate for labor and demographic shortages and to expand the outlook of people to see objectively an interconnected world.”¹

It is a well-established fact that migrants can make an even richer contribution when their integration in the country of residence is favored and their fundamental human rights and dignity are respected. At the same time, those who arrive should also be disposed to integration, respecting the culture and values of the host countries.

Today, migration continues to be one of the most powerful forces shaping the economic, social, political, and cultural aspects of our society. While accompanied by challenges, for the most part, migration happens regularly and results in benefits for countries of origin, destination, and for the migrants themselves.

In spite of this, the debate around migration continues to be largely one-sided, with a strong focus on security, often driven by fear and stereotypes, which often gives rise to exploitation and abuses, thus eclipsing its positive benefits.

Mr. Chair,

For these reasons, my Delegation wishes to share with this Council the remarks of Pope Francis that the debate about migration is not only about migrants. Rather, it is about all of us, and about the present and future of the human family. As we witness a growing trend towards extreme individualism and the “globalization of indifference”, it is a matter of ensuring that no one is excluded, including the poor and the most vulnerable.²

Pope Francis affirmed that “In this scenario, migrants, refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking have become emblems of exclusion. In addition to the hardships that their condition entails, they are often looked down upon and considered the source of all society’s ills. That attitude is an alarm bell warning of the moral decline we will face if we continue to give ground to the throw-away culture.”³

¹ His Eminence Pietro Card. Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, Concluding Remarks at the Meeting with the resident Ambassadors to the Holy See, Vatican City State, 19 October 2018.

² Cf. Pope Francis, Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 29 September 2019.

³ Pope Francis, Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 29 September 2019.

Mr. Chair,

Since no State alone can deal with this complex phenomenon, the Delegation of the Holy See would like to emphasize three points:

1. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration represents an important step toward an effective governance of migration, as it provides the international community with an opportunity to implement a more concerted and dignified response to migration, grounded in shared responsibility and on common principles.

If we are to fulfill our pledge to making migration voluntary, safe, orderly and regular, we must address the factors that cause the migratory flows by creating the conditions that allow everyone to live in safety and dignity in their own countries, as it is rightly acknowledged in paragraph 13 of this Compact.⁴

While peace, development and true integration are fundamental to ensuring the implementation of the Global Compact, my Delegation wishes, in particular, to underline that a key point is to harness the potential of youth to build on resilient and sustainable societies. In order to do so, it is important to invest in accessible and inclusive education to empower the youth and allow for mutual understanding and exchange. It is particularly appreciated that the International Dialogue on Migration this year was dedicated to the youth.

2. Among the root causes of migration, the Delegation of the Holy See wishes to highlight and reiterate the concern over the ever-increasing effect that natural disasters and environmental degradation are playing in causing growing poverty and, consequently, in shaping the movement of peoples both internally and internationally.

This Delegation supports the IOM's increasing involvement in seeking to bring environmental migration to the heart of international, regional and national concerns. However, there needs to be greater global attention to these phenomena that displace more and more people every year, especially in developing countries. The Holy See considers it crucial to dedicate more time to this issue and develop a common consensual framework around key terms.

3. Lastly, on the future of IOM, the Holy See has been following attentively the consultations on the proposals for strengthening the Organization. While faithful to IOM's mandate, principles and objectives, it is important that IOM keeps pace with the ongoing challenges as well as with the increased role that the IOM has assumed in recent years. At the same time, it is imperative to always retain the human person in his/her inherent dignity firmly at the center of its concerns and multilateralism with its working requirements as the functioning model.

Mr. Chair,

It is not just about migrants but about the present and future of our societies. Migrants offer an invitation to look anew at international relations and at our solidarity as one family of nations. [On 29 September 2019, to mark the Catholic Church's 105th Observance of the International Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis inaugurated a sculpture depicting a group of migrants and refugees of diverse faiths and cultures and from different historic times. The statue now stands in Saint Peter's Square with the following inspiring inscription: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares".]

Thank you.

⁴ Cf. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness Statement at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Marrakech, 10 December 2018.