



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the
Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
78th Standing Committee - Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Statement on "Resettlement and Complementary Pathways"
Geneva, 7 July 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to acknowledge the targeted efforts of the High Commissioner to increase third-country solutions for refugees through the "Three Year Strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways (2019-2022) as envisaged in the Global Compact for Refugees. In this regard, we also welcome the pledges made to achieve this strategy in the context of the first Global Refugee Forum.

On many occasions, Pope Francis has expressed his urgent hope, "that a greater number of countries will adopt private and community sponsorship programmes, and open humanitarian corridors ..."¹ The document prepared on "Resettlement and complementary pathways"² offers data-based evidence of progress in achieving such goals.

The document further identifies resettlement and complementary pathways as "tangible mechanisms for more equitable burden-and responsibility-sharing"³. The Holy See Delegation also wishes to point out, however, that countries which welcome refugees also participate in "benefit sharing". In fact, many "... refugees have abilities which must be appropriately recognised and valued" and a determined effort "to promote the social and professional inclusion of ... refugees" should be encouraged, "... guaranteeing for all ... the possibility of employment, language instruction and active citizenship."⁴

My delegation appreciates the emergency measures taken to evacuate refugees from Libya, where they were at great risk, to centres in Niger and in Rwanda. In response to that situation, Pope Francis had appealed that "...serious efforts ... be made to empty the detention camps in Libya, evaluating and implementing all possible solutions"⁵, and that "...in particular women, children and the sick may be swiftly evacuated through humanitarian corridors."⁶ We are grateful to note, therefore, that some 1,200 of these refugees were resettled through an emergency mechanism.

Mr. Chairperson,

¹ Pope Francis, Message for the 104th Day of Migrants and Refugees, 14 January 2018.

² UNHCR, Document on "Resettlement and complementary pathways" (EC/71/SC/CRP.10).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Pope Francis, Message for the 104th Day of Migrants and Refugees, 14 January 2018.

⁵ Pope Francis, Address to Refugees Recently Arrived from Lesbos, 19 December 2019.

⁶ Pope Francis, Regina Caeli Address, 28 April 2019.

The Holy See further recognizes the steps taken by the High Commissioner and many host governments to offer durable solutions to refugees, including through third country resettlement programs and the provision of other complementary pathways, especially for refugees in vulnerable situations and who cannot safely return to their respective countries of origin or be integrated in countries of asylum. These national efforts are frequently supported by faith-based organizations and other civil society efforts to ensure positive inclusion and integration in local communities.

We note with regret, however, that the overwhelming majority of refugees and families remain uncertain of their future and are forced, at best, to survive without being able to fulfil their own daily needs or, at worst, are confined to detention centres, where they are deprived of access to education, health care, and decent work opportunities, and risk being subjected to the crimes of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

Thus, at the specific urging of Pope Francis, the Holy See is "... committed to working with every responsible partner in a constructive dialogue aimed at proposing concrete solutions" to mass migration and refugee movements, ..."with the goal of preserving human lives and dignity, alleviating suffering and advancing an authentic and integral development. [...]"⁷

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

⁷ Pope Francis, Address for the Presentation of Credential Letters by the Ambassadors of Switzerland, Malta, The Bahamas, Cabo Verde, Estonia, Iceland, Turkmenistan, Grenada, Qatar and The Gambia accredited to the Holy See, 13 December 2018.