



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič Permanent Observer of the Holy See
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 46th Session of the Human Rights Council, Agenda Item 3
Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Geneva, 2 March 2021

Madame President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the Report of the Special Rapporteur, which examines, in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the right to food and emphasizes a human rights approach in ensuring access to adequate and healthy nutrition.

As recalled in various legal instruments on human rights, the right to food is understood as the set of conditions that allow each person to access, at all times, adequate and safe nutrition or use of those resources necessary for their livelihood. This security must be provided in ways that are respectful of human dignity and of different cultures and traditions.

The Holy See notes the regrettable lack of social protection offered to workers in the food and agriculture sector as well as migrant workers throughout the pandemic. The inherent human dignity of these workers should be at the forefront of discussions on agricultural development and the promotion of sustainable living conditions. As such, it is crucial that societies provide protection and stability to its often-marginalized workers who make up “nearly half of the world’s 3.3 billion global workforce.”¹

Moreover, my Delegation wishes to underscore the challenges faced by many indigenous peoples. The Report states explicitly that “Governments and companies, through new laws or coercion, are pushing through agribusiness, mining and infrastructure megaprojects on ancestral and farmlands.”² We share the Special Rapporteur’s concern that “pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture.”³

Madame President,

“[N]ational and international responses to the pandemic have been inconsistent.”⁴ The global economic impact of the pandemic has greatly contributed to this inconsistency.⁵ As Pope Francis has noted in his most recent Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli tutti*, amidst the current crises we have witnessed “a fragmentation that made it more difficult to resolve problems that affect us

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, A/HRC/46/33, 12.

² Ibid, 27.

³ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, 146.

⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁵ Ibid, 20.

all.”⁶ Now, more than ever, it is necessary to adopt a coordinated approach, strengthened by sincere dialogue, to adopt policies at the local, national and international levels that ensures the right to food for all people, with special attention given to persons in vulnerable situations. Indeed, “no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together.”⁷ Only by “placing people at the center of policy responses,”⁸ can an authentic human rights approach promote the necessary global collaboration among States to seek a sustainable and integral development at international, regional, and local levels.

Going forward, may we respond to the “crisis of care”⁹ with the understanding that “man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life.”¹⁰ Doing so will lay the foundation, as Pope Francis states, for a “culture of care”¹¹ and create an avenue to foster international solidarity with the goal of ensuring food security.

Thank you, Madame President.

⁶ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli tutti*, 7.

⁷ Ibid, 32.

⁸ Ibid, 33.

⁹ Ibid, 18.

¹⁰ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 63.

¹¹ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, 231.