



Statement of the Permanent Mission of the Holy See
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 47th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3 – Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity

Geneva, 24 June 2021

Madam President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity. As highlighted by Pope Francis, “in our continuing reflection on the current pandemic, we have seen how closely connected we are, dependent on one another precisely because we were created by God and share a common home”¹. In this difficult time, the principle of solidarity is more necessary than ever if we want to emerge stronger.

As noted in the report, the pandemic has unveiled serious gaps in international solidarity, including the tendency in many parts of the world towards excessive “vaccine nationalism”. In addition to the COVID virus, the “virus of individualism” has spread across the globe giving the illusion that “the laws of the market or intellectual property” could be placed over the “laws of love and the health of humanity”². Experience has revealed, however, that individualism and selfishness do not lead to freedom or equality but rather to conflicts and indifference in the face of the suffering of others.

Madame President,

As highlighted by the Independent Expert, there are numerous examples of effective international solidarity which reaffirm its importance and the need to provide sufficient legal and ethical grounds for its implementation³.

In this context, the Holy See would like to encourage actors at all levels, including national and local authorities, international organizations and businesses, to foster a spirit of mutual solidarity rather than competition and to commit themselves to seeking concrete and durable solutions to the challenges posed by isolationism. In particular, the Holy See supports the recommendation of the Independent Expert that States, multilateral agencies and private partners work together to implement a waiver on intellectual property rights in order to

¹ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, 2 September 2020.

² Pope Francis, Video message to the Participants in “Vax Live: The Concert to reunite the World”, Saturday, 8 May 2021; “*Urbi et Orbi*” Message of His Holiness Pope Francis, Christmas 2020, Benediction Hall, Friday, 25 December 2020.

³ Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, A/HRC/47/31, pp. 15-19.

ensure universal access to Covid-19 care and vaccines.

Madam President,

As stressed by Pope Francis, “[a]uthentic solidarity is not just about offering help to others; it is a matter of justice; it requires a radical change in our thinking that looks to the good of the community, defends the right to life for all, and promotes a just sharing of the earth’s goods”⁴.

The COVID-19 pandemic offers the international community a concrete opportunity for realizing this transformation and rethinking our way of life, as well as our social and economic models. This will depend on our ability and willingness to abandon individualism and shape a more solid ethical framework based on international solidarity and the promotion of the common good.

Thank you, Madam President.

⁴ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, 2 September 2020.