



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent
Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in
Geneva at the
50th Session of the Human Rights Council - Item 3
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to education
Geneva, 23 June 2022

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the Report of the Special Rapporteur which considers the impact of the digitalization of education on the right to education.

As has been demonstrated over the course of the pandemic, digital technologies are having an ever-increasing role in the education of children. While such technologies enabled millions of children worldwide to be able to continue their education via distance learning, countless other children, especially in least developed and developing countries, did not have access to such a possibility, thrusting into stark relief the concrete impact of the digital divide on the enjoyment of the right to education.

At the same time, it must be stressed that distance learning should never become a long-term solution, much less a total substitution for face-to-face education. Indeed, education cannot be reduced to the mere acquisition of knowledge but must be seen in the context of the full and integral development of the human person.

As the Special Rapporteur points out in the report, educational settings provide children with essential human interaction that are fundamental for the emotional, moral and psychosocial development of the person. In this regard, the Holy See also would like to reiterate the fundamental role of parents in the education and formation of their children, including the prerogative to choose schools for their children, based on their moral convictions or beliefs.

Mr. President,

In 2019 Pope Francis launched a Global Compact on Education to foster a renewed commitment to the education of children and youth not only in the classroom, but also in the family and the community. Indeed, as Pope Francis affirms, our common goal “is to ensure that everyone has access to a quality education consonant with the dignity of the human person and our common vocation to fraternity [...] May we be sustained by the conviction that education bears within itself a seed of hope: the hope of peace and justice; the hope of beauty and goodness; the hope of social harmony”¹.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Pope Francis, Video message on the occasion of the Meeting organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education: “Global Compact on Education. Together to look beyond”, Pontifical Lateran University, 15 October 2020.