



**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 human rights of migrants
Geneva, 24 June 2022**

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and shares the concerns over the regrettable trend of the legitimization of pushback practices in several countries. Such practices often ignore even a basic consideration of the human person, failing to ensure the safety and dignity of migrants. In this regard, the Delegation of the Holy See wishes to highlight the Special Rapporteur's recommendation to consider life-saving assistance as a fundamental element of national border governance strategies. The protection of human life and dignity must be at the center of every decision and must go beyond any political considerations.

The Holy See has often recognized that, over and above the right to move, there exists a right to live in peace and safety in one's own country of origin. Several serious reasons might form the basis for the decision of migrants to leave their home countries. Thus, let us never forget that migrants are not just numbers, but our sisters and brothers who cannot be left behind.

The acceptance and proper integration of migrants is an opportunity for new understanding and broader horizons. As emphasized by Pope Francis in his 2022 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, "*building the future with migrants and refugees* also means recognizing and valuing how much each can contribute to the process of construction [...] We can grow in our common humanity and build together an ever greater sense of togetherness"¹. Pope Francis has offered an approach to the challenges posed by contemporary migration which can be summed up in four main verbs: "welcome, protect, promote and integrate"². In this regard, integration is a two-way process, with migrants who have the responsibility to respect the values, traditions and laws of the community which takes them in, and with host communities who are called to acknowledge the beneficial contribution which each immigrant can make to the whole community.

The ultimate goal of international efforts in the context of migration should be to ensure that migration is safe, legal and orderly. Therefore, we once again emphasize the importance of expanding the number and range of alternative pathways for safe, regular, and voluntary migration and resettlement, in full respect for the principle of non-refoulement.

In light of the recent unsettling practice of externalization of asylum procedures and delegation, by proxy, the responsibility to receive newly-arriving migrants, I wish to conclude by recalling Pope Francis' recent appeal to "Let us stop ignoring reality, stop constantly shifting responsibility, stop passing off the issue of migration to others, as if it mattered to no one and was only a pointless burden to be shouldered by somebody else!"³. The future of democratic societies depends on their ability to welcome migrants. We all have a responsibility and a moral duty to protect human life and dignity, in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility sharing.

Thank you, Mr. President

¹ Pope Francis, *Message for the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees* 25 September 2022.

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

³ Pope Francis, Address during the visit to refugees, "Reception and Identification Centre" in Mytilene, 5 December 2021.