



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
51st Session of the Human Rights Council- Agenda Item 9, Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent
Geneva, 3 October 2022

Mister President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent¹, and notes with concern the regrettable incidents of racially motivated violence, especially those against children. Such practices of discrimination seriously harm the dignity of victims and undermine their physical and moral integrity.

The Holy See is strongly concerned about the ongoing practices of racial profiling and discriminatory treatment of people of African descent. Sadly, the conflict in Ukraine has also seen instances of racial discrimination against people of African descent who have, at times, been treated unfairly by border patrol officials, humanitarian aid organizations and host communities. In this way, these individuals, already suffering the hardship of war, also face discrimination due to the color of their skin. Needless to say, refugees ought to be welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated into their host communities, regardless of their race, sex, country of origin, culture or religion and should never be treated as a burden. “Indeed, - as Pope Francis says - history teaches us that the contribution of migrants and refugees has been fundamental to the social and economic growth of our societies. This continues to be true in our own day. Their work, their youth, their enthusiasm and their willingness to sacrifice enrich the communities that receive them.”²

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to emphasize the importance of ensuring that Children of African Descent enjoy access to quality education at all levels. Indeed, education is a universal and inalienable right, and must be protected by fostering educational environments of equal respect, without discrimination of any kind.

Lastly, the Holy See is particularly concerned by States that continue to undermine parental rights and responsibilities, including those of peoples of African descent, thereby disrupting the integrity of the family. As enshrined in the UDHR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the family is the foundation of society and parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring the integral human development of their children. Every effort must be made to preserve the family structure and to promote family reunification, especially of children who have been separated from their loved ones along their journey.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “we are called to nurture and promote respect for the inherent dignity of every human person beginning with the family, sharing brotherhood and solidarity, but also in the various social contexts we engage in”.³

Thank you, Mister President.

¹ Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (A/HRC/51/54).

² Pope Francis, Message for the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 25 September 2022.

³ Pope Francis, World Conference on Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the context of global migration conference, 20 September 2018.