



**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 International Dialogue on  
Migration of the International Organization for Migration**

Panel 1: “What do we know? – Climate change, food insecurity and human mobility and the role of oceans, water and land”

*Geneva, 24 October 2022*

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

Mr. Director-General,

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to thank the International Organization for Migration for highlighting the impacts of food insecurity and climate change on migration and displacement in this year’s International Dialogue on Migration.

Pope Francis has repeatedly denounced the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, while also highlighting the “evident link between environmental instability, food insecurity and migratory movements”.<sup>1</sup> The crippling consequences of the climate crisis are already a reality for a multitude of people worldwide with severe consequences for the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. It is vital to acknowledge that the climate crisis has a human face, which also increasingly includes millions of uprooted and displaced people.

While climate change occurs everywhere, the capacity to respond and adapt varies. As is becoming more apparent, it tends to be the poor and vulnerable who are disproportionately affected by the ecological and climate crises<sup>2</sup>. When people are forced to flee because their local environment has become uninhabitable, it might look like a process of nature, something inevitable. However, the deteriorating climate is “very often the result of poor choices and destructive activity, of selfishness and neglect, that set humankind at odds with creation, our common home.”<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Moderator,

Everything is connected: poverty, food insecurity, climate change, migration. At a time when the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine and elsewhere are causing spikes in energy and food prices, it is shameful and worrying that so many do not have access to adequate food or the means to provide for themselves. Indeed, “[k]nowing that multitudes of human beings do not have access to adequate food or the means to obtain it – this being a fundamental right of every person – to see food thrown away or spoiled...is truly shameful and worrying.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the 41st General Conference of the FAO*, Vatican City 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, *Address to the participants to the in the United Nations Conference on Climate in Madrid*, 4 December 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, *Preface to the Pastoral Orientations on Climate Displaced People*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, *Message to Mark the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste*, 29 September 2022.

Climate change also has far-reaching effects on agricultural productivity and livestock, which often cause movements of people across borders or within countries. For rural communities, which rely on the productivity of crops in particular, the impact is much stronger. It is important to ensure the resilience of displaced communities. This can be done through international cooperation, including by encouraging the adoption of agriculture and fishing techniques that are sustainable, thus reducing the risks of human-induced ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity. These issues are not simply of a political or economic nature. They are a matter of justice. They are moral obligations towards future generations.

While fully respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people on the move, it is also important to create conditions that allow communities and individuals to live in safety and dignity in their countries of origin, consistent with paragraph 13 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In this regard, it is past time to acknowledge that, when people must flee, it is not enough to encourage increased coordination among States in the area of their search and rescue (SAR), disembarkation and resettlement. Instead, there is serious need to reconsider and reform the current approach to managing mixed flows at international borders and at sea. If not, the current chaos that continues to result in countless acts of violence, abuse and increasing loss of life, particularly in the Mediterranean, will only get worse.

Mr. Moderator,

I am pleased to share that last July, the Holy See, in the name and on behalf of the Vatican City State, acceded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to the Paris Agreement. The challenges posed by climate change to humanity and to our common home have “not only environmental, but also ethical, social, economic and political relevance, affect[ing] above all the life of the poorest and most fragile. In this way they appeal to our responsibility to promote, through collective and joint commitment, a culture of care, which places human dignity and the common good at the center”.<sup>5</sup>

To conclude, this Delegation would like to ask a question to the panelists. In recent years, the international community has acknowledged the magnitude of the climate crisis and has made significant efforts to address its impact through various agreements. With a view to the upcoming 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the States Parties to the UNFCCC, how can we harmonize approaches at the international level to ensure that the rights of persons displaced due to climate change and natural disasters are adequately protected?

Thank you.

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<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, Video-Message for the Climate Ambition Summit, 12 December 2020.