



**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 2: “Understanding the role of women and youth in mitigating the impacts of climate change-
driven food insecurity on migration and displacement”
Geneva, 24 October 2022**

Thank you, Madam Moderator.

Madam Deputy-Director General,

The specific topic of this panel offers the opportunity to focus our attention on the impact of climate change-driven food insecurity on migration and displacement. In this regard, the Holy See wishes to recall that the “protagonists” of such migration and displacement are not numbers or mere statistics, but rather human persons who are often forced to make life-saving decisions.

In this regard, Pope Francis has affirmed that “to see or not to see” the effects of climate change on displacement is the question that should lead us to the answer in action together.¹ Indeed, the human reality of migration and the ubiquity of climate change require a collective and coordinated response by the international community. While no single State can manage the consequences of climate change alone, every State must acknowledge that the poor and vulnerable are at the greatest, most immediate risk.

Madam Moderator,

Our planet, our beautiful common home, cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as the mere place in which we live. Along these lines, in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis appealed to each of us to alter the trajectory of environmental degradation by changing our patterns of consumptions, starting from individual behavior to national policies and also international multilateral agreements.

In the wake of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is fundamental to promote a culture of care in response to the individualistic and aggressive tendency of a “throwaway culture” and to promote “dedication to a more just world, at the service of our defenseless and needy brothers and sisters”.²

Additionally, given that much of the world’s poor live in rural areas and depend primarily on agriculture for their daily subsistence, the discussion on climate change-driven poverty and food insecurity on migration cannot ignore the centrality of agriculture. Therefore, it is essential to find creative ways to invest in sustainable agriculture, including through international cooperation.

Madam Moderator,

The Holy See urges the international community and all stakeholders to adopt an ethical approach to climate change that inspires solidarity with future generations. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional. It is a basic question of moral justice. Without a global approach guided by ethical considerations, we are left with a system where “some are concerned only with financial gain, and others with holding on to or increasing their power,” resulting in “conflicts or spurious

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, *Preface to the Pastoral Orientations on Climate Displaced People* released by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on 30 March 2021.

² Cf. Pope Francis, Message to FAO’s 42nd Conference, 14 June 2021.

agreements where the last thing either party is concerned about is caring for the environment and protecting those who are most vulnerable”³.

For these reasons, this Delegation wishes to reiterate that the migration debate is not only about migrants. Rather, as Pope Francis reminds us, it is about all of us, and about the present and future of the human family.⁴ Building the future with migrants also means recognizing and valuing their contributions, growing in our common humanity, and building an ever-greater sense of togetherness.⁵

Madam Moderator,

In recent years, the climate crisis and migratory/displacement nexus has become increasingly evident, involving international as well as internal migration and displacement. In this context, the Holy See wishes to renew Pope Francis’ urgent call “for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all”⁶

Within this conversation, it is important to acknowledge and understand the role of women and youth. As innovators, they develop new skills and different approaches to old and new problems alike, becoming protagonists of development. In this regard, this Delegation has two questions:

- 1) Could the panelists share an example of how the role of migrant youth and women has helped their communities to mitigate the impact of climate change in local rural communities?
- 2) What is needed at the policy level to bring about that change in approach to harmonize the various initiatives aimed at protecting young people forced to move because of the climate crisis?

Thank you.

³ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, §198

⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 29 September 2019.

⁵ Cf. Pope Francis, Message for the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 25 September 2022.

⁶ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, §14.