



Statement of H.E. Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on
the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States
on the full enjoyment of all human rights,
particularly economic, social and cultural rights
15 March 2023

Mister President,

The Delegation of the Holy See thanks the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt for her report examining the implications of new technologies and digital trade on the full enjoyment of human rights.

Indeed, while such technologies have the potential to generate enormous social and economic benefits and create millions of new jobs¹, at the same time new and largely unregulated realities associated with the digital space raise numerous concerns regarding the protection of human rights, as well as the effective promotion of integral human development and the common good.

Of particular concern is the unregulated collection, storage and transfer of the personal data of individuals who conduct digital transactions. Much of this data is not collected in relation to the transactions themselves, but rather without the effective knowledge or consent of the individuals concerned. This is a disturbing practice that violates the right to privacy and risks being utilized for purposes other than the financial transactions in question.

In a similar vein, the lack of transparency and traceability introduced by blockchains and cryptocurrencies increases the risk of tax evasion and other nefarious practices, including human trafficking, potentially enabling criminal activity and reducing the ability of States to ensure adequate welfare and social protections for their citizens.

The Holy See is particularly concerned about the exacerbating effect that new forms of digital transactions have had on irresponsible overborrowing. Such a reality, far from promoting progress, subjects people to mechanisms which generate greater poverty, exclusion and dependence, encouraging a vicious cycle from which it may be impossible to escape.²

Mister President,

While the development of international regulatory frameworks for e-commerce continue to be discussed in other international fora, it is of utmost importance that the international community recognizes the importance of treating these complex issues from more than just an economic perspective. In order to address the situation in a holistic way, it is necessary that States and all stakeholders exhibit the necessary political will to enact policies that promote responsibility, transparency and accountability, with a view to promoting the common good.

Thank you, Mister President.

¹ Cfr. A/HRC/52/34, n. 54.

² Cfr. Pope Francis, Statement at the UN General Assembly, 25 September 2015.