



Statement of H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 54th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council
**Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur
on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Geneva, 28 September 2023

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the report of the Special Rapporteur which underscores the potential negative implications of green finance on Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous peoples across the world often face discrimination and violence. In addition, the exploitation of their land and resources threatens their ability to survive and preserve their identity.

If the customs and way of life of indigenous peoples disappear, what Pope Francis has described as “a treasury of sound customs and teachings”¹ will be lost. After centuries of colonialist practices of assimilation that have systematically marginalized indigenous peoples around the world, it is essential to address the continued implementation of policies and practices that do not respect and protect their specific cultures.

For this reason, while reiterating the importance of seeking sustainable approaches to development, the Holy See wishes to emphasize that every policy and practice utilized in implementing a “green transition” should be subordinated to the dictates of the common good. Therefore, policies, laws, and government programs should maintain a perspective that is focused on the respect for, and promotion of, human dignity, in a spirit of solidarity among people. This implies that, while emphasizing the value of protecting the environment and searching for solutions for climate change, we should, *inter alia*, involve Indigenous Peoples, particularly in decisions that directly affect them.

Indeed, their collective knowledge and values are important for the entire international community, providing viable and sustainable methods to care for our common home. Indigenous peoples possess an “industriousness and constant concern to protect the land and the environment, in fidelity to a harmonious vision of creation as an open book that teaches human beings to love the Creator and to live in symbiosis with other living creatures”.²

Mr. President,

All of the great challenges of our day are global, they regard everyone, and must be addressed in a coordinated and intentional fashion by the whole human family. Whether we like it or not, the future of humanity will either be built together or not at all. Therefore, “we need to be able to look, as the indigenous wisdom tradition teaches, seven generations ahead, and not to our immediate convenience, to the next elections, or the support of this or that lobby”.³

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Journey to Canada, Meeting with Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Métis and Inuit, 25 July 2022.

² Pope Francis, Apostolic Journey to Canada, Meeting with civil authorities, representatives of indigenous peoples, and members of the Diplomatic Corps, 27 July 2022.

³ *Ibidem*.