



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 Right to Development**
Geneva, 20 September 2023

Mr. President,

The Holy See takes note of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to development and reiterates the importance of adopting an understanding of this right that is holistic, as well as the need for a multistakeholder approach towards ensuring its effective implementation.

As Pope Francis has said on numerous occasions, the conventional understanding of development solely in economic terms, is insufficient, since it places material growth at the center, which risks to lead to a societal model that exploits the human person and the environment in a frantic pursuit of profit. Human beings must never be considered material goods to be consumed and discarded. Instead, the inherent and inviolable dignity of every human person can never be forgotten and must always be the starting point for pursuing a development model that is not only sustainable but also integral, while also taking into account all dimensions of the human person.

In a truly developed society, everyone should have access to basic goods, including *inter alia* decent housing, dignified employment, adequate food and drinking water. Similarly, fundamental human rights and freedoms, especially religious freedom also by manifesting one's religion or belief, either individually or in community, with others and in public or private, through worship, observance, practice and teaching, these, together with quality education, are essential for the flourishing of the human person. This ideal of integral human development should not be the exception, but rather the rule, encouraging truly comprehensive policies and founded on the promotion of the dignity of every human being, reaching all segments of society.

Attaining authentic human development and protecting human rights requires solidarity arising from the common humanity that all persons share. It cannot be the prerogative only of certain groups of people. Conversely, international solidarity must never be used to impose any form of ideological colonization, but must be supported by our deepest religious and ethical values¹.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Holy See wishes to reiterate its call for advancing a human-centered model of development that respects the value of each human person in every stage of life. As Pope Francis emphasized “every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country.”²

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Address to the Participants at the Conference on “Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Listening to the Cry of the Earth and of the Poor”, 8 March 2019.

² Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, N. 107.