



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 **55th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council**
Item 3

Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on climate change

Geneva, 13 March 2024

Madame President,

In 2023, over 333 million people faced acute levels of food insecurity,¹ and it is projected that this number will increase to almost 600 million by 2030. Climate change is a leading cause of the current, unprecedented rise in global hunger. My Delegation is convinced that upholding the interrelated rights to food and a clean and healthy environment should be a cornerstone of economic and climate policies.

As noted in the High Commissioner's report, we have the capacity to feed the world². The Holy See's is firmly convinced that blaming the poor or high birth rates for climate change and food insecurity is misleading, false, and unacceptable. Children are a resource, not a problem – they enrich life, not diminish it. The emissions per capita of wealthier countries are significantly higher than those of poorer countries. It is a fact that the latter, who make up almost half of the world's population, are responsible for barely 10% of toxic emissions. However, the adverse effects of climate change disproportionately affect the poor and exacerbate existing problems of hunger and malnutrition. Pope Francis has repeatedly proposed the establishment of a global fund to end to hunger, using the vast resources currently allocated to arms and conflicts³.

Decisive human action is necessary to address climate change as it is primarily caused by human activity. Mitigation measures that address deep injustices should be adopted, along with social security systems that cover climate risks and impact. “The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. [...] Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us and ‘take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system’”⁴.

Thank you, Madame President.

¹ Cfr. World Food Programme, *A global food crisis*, available at <https://www.wfp.org/globalhunger-crisis>.

² Cfr. A/HRC/55/37, n. 2.

³ Cfr. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, n. 262.

⁴ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, n. 5.