



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, 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 1: “The Road to COP 26 – Accelerating action to address migration and displacement in the context of climate and environmental change.”

Geneva, 25 May 2021

Mr. Chair,

The Holy See Delegation wishes to thank the panelists for their insightful presentations on a subject which is very dear to Pope Francis. In highlighting the effects of climate change in the lives of millions of displaced people, he affirmed that “to see or not to see” is the question that should lead us to the answer in action together.¹

Unlike the COVID-19 pandemic, which came upon us unexpectedly, the climate crisis has been unfolding for years, and yet it remained unaddressed until recently. The crippling consequences of the climate crisis is already a reality for millions of people worldwide. While climate change occurs everywhere, the capacity to respond and adapt to it varies greatly. It is the poor and most vulnerable who are disproportionately affected by the ecological and climate crises.

Mr. Chair,

It is vital to acknowledge that the climate crisis has a “human face”.² In this regard, this Delegation appreciates the work carried out by IOM to highlight the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on the migratory movements through the Atlas of Environmental Migration.

When people are forced to flee because their local environment has become uninhabitable, it might look like a process of nature, something inevitable. However, the deteriorating climate is “very often the result of poor choices and destructive activity, of selfishness and neglect, that set humankind at odds with creation, our common home.”³

Mr. Chair,

The human reality of migration as well as the issue of climate change require by their very nature and magnitude a collective and coordinated response by the international community. No single State alone can manage their consequences, and all States are affected to some extent.

In preparation for the 26th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, it is imperative that we address the human dimension of climate change without further delay.

As Pope Francis recalled recently, there exists an “ecological debt that we owe to nature, as well as to peoples affected by human-induced ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity. These issues are not simply political or economic; they are questions of justice, a justice that can no longer be ignored or deferred. Indeed, they entail a moral obligation towards future generations, for the seriousness with which we respond to them will shape the world we leave to our children.”⁴

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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, Address to the participants to the in the United Nations Conference on Climate in Madrid, 4 December 2019.

³ Cf. Pope Francis, *Preface to the Pastoral Orientations on Climate Displaced People*.

⁴ Pope Francis, Address to the Ambassadors Presenting Letters of Credence, 21 May 2021.