HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE
BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO
SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0755

Lunedì 10.10.2022

Intervento del Capo Delegazione della Santa Sede alla 73.ma Sessione del Comitato Esecutivo del Programma dell'Alto Commissario per i Rifugiati (UNHCR)

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'Intervento che la Dott.ssa Francesca Di Giovanni, Sotto-Segretario per il Settore multilaterale della Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati e le Organizzazioni Internazionali, Capo Delegazione della Santa Sede, ha pronunciato oggi nel corso della 73.ma Sessione del Comitato Esecutivo dell'Alto Commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati (UNHCR), in corso da Ginevra (Svizzera) dal 10 al 14 ottobre 2022:

Intervento della Dott.ssa Francesca Di Giovanni

Statement of Dr. Francesca Di Giovanni, Undersecretary for the Multilateral Sector,
Section for Relations with States and International Organizations,
Head of Delegation of the Holy See to the 73rd Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner's Programme for Refugees
Geneva, 10 October 2022

Mister Chairperson,
Mister High Commissioner,
Excellencies and distinguished Delegates,

This Executive Committee meets at a time when violence, persecutions and conflict fracture our sense of fraternity and the unity of our human family.

Just last month, Pope Francis addressed this very concern by pointing out that, "after two tragic world wars, it seemed that the world had learned to move progressively towards respect for human rights, international law and various forms of cooperation. Unfortunately, history shows signs of regression. Not only are anachronistic conflicts intensifying, but instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are re-emerging (cfr. Fratelli Tutti, 11), and new wars of domination, […] are causing destruction everywhere. The many ongoing

armed conflicts are of serious concern. I have said that it was a third world war being fought “piecemeal” – perhaps we can now say that it is “all out” – putting people and the planet at ever greater risk.”1

It is in this dramatic, historical moment that record-numbers of displaced people are far outpacing durable solutions and available humanitarian aid. While our gaze is inevitably directed towards Ukraine, we should never forget the scope of the global crisis of solidarity and humanity we face. It is in this wider context that the Holy See follows with great apprehension the consequences of the war in Ukraine, including forced deportations, while also expressing gratitude to all that have offered welcome, in a true spirit of fraternity and generosity. At the same time, the Holy See calls on all States to do everything possible to bring an end to the war and to recommit themselves to authentic dialogue for lasting peace. This situation is not sustainable and yet, it also is not inevitable!

Mister Chairperson,

The increased impact of climate change and natural disasters on forced displacement requires deeper reflection and concrete action. Already, it is a harsh reality for the poor and vulnerable. While specific initiatives exist, a more harmonized international and institutional approach that reaffirms the protection mandate of UNHCR, is needed.

At the same time, the Holy See wishes to urgently appeal for more tangible and effective progress on durable solutions more generally. Significant numbers of refugees continue to be lost in a state of limbo, unable to return home or to integrate within their countries of asylum. In such cases, resettlement to a third country is fundamental. It is of the utmost importance to identify alternative pathways for timely, permanent solutions. 2

Conflict and protracted refugee situations cannot become the “new normal”. Refugees and displaced persons are human beings and therefore the subjects of rights and duties, not objects of assistance. In this regard, the Holy See expresses its gratitude to Countries that have increased their resettlement quotas and the many intermediary and faith-inspired organizations that collaborate with them on the ground. As Pope Francis has affirmed, building the future with migrants and refugees also means recognizing and valuing their contributions, growing in our common humanity and building together an ever-greater sense of togetherness.3

Here, the Holy See recognizes that the solidarity shown by some States, in particular, deserves special recognition. However, neither solidarity nor generosity are inexhaustible resources and we cannot let geographical proximity be the sole factor in determining our shared responsibility for protection or level of humanitarian assistance.

Mister Chairperson,

In this regard, the Holy See reiterates its concern that certain Countries have increased the burden of host-communities through an unsustainable strategy of externalization, avoiding direct responsibility for large, mixed flows through agreements that stop them at strategic points along their journey. Such delegation of responsibility does not lead to more efficient and effective durable solutions. Instead, it pushes many asylum seekers to embark on even more dangerous alternative routes in search of protection.

Mister Chairperson,

Before concluding, the Holy See wishes to go on record, once again, concerning the use of the “*Conclusions*” of this Executive Committee to push certain agendas and ideologies, rather than technical guidance necessary for UNHCR to address the concrete needs of refugees and host communities. The “take it or leave it” approach used by certain Delegations, including in other UN fora, undermines political will and multilateralism. This delegation looks forward to a return to good faith dialogue and is ready to work with other States that see value in rebuilding the foundations of authentic consensus.

Mister Chairperson,

Finally, in this regard, we note an increasing fragmentation of solutions, which only fuels further tensions and divisions.4 It would be short sighted to focus only on the provision of assistance while ignoring the “symptoms” of various crises confronting the human family at this time. For these reasons, the Holy See wishes to propose a deeper collective reflection on the root causes of forced displacement. This includes making every effort to ensure the necessary conditions for people to live in peace, security and dignity in their countries of origin. It also requires parallel efforts to promote and facilitate reconciliation. For this, “it is necessary to shift from the strategies of political, economic and military power to a plan for global peace: no to a world divided among conflicting powers; yes to a world united among peoples and civilizations that respect each other.” 5

The Holy See welcomes the renewal of your mandate, Mister High Commissioner, and renews its commitment to working together for the good of refugees around the world.

Thank you, Mister Chairperson.

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1 Cf. Pope Francis, Address to the Pontifical Academy of Science, 10 September 2022.
2 Cf. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti § 130
3 Cf. Pope Francis, Message for the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 25 September 2022.
4 Cf. Statement by His Eminence Cardinal Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness Pope Francis, at the General Debate of the High-Level Week at the Opening of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 24 September 2022.
5 Cf. Pope Francis, Words after the Angelus, 3 July 2022

[01549-EN.01] [Original text: English]

[B0755-XX.01]