



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza
Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See
At the Conclusion of the Fifty-First Session of the
Commission on Population and Development on
Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration
New York, 13 April 2018

Mister Chair and Madam Facilitator ,

The Holy See would like to underscore once more its strong support for the theme of the Commission this year. As Pope Francis has said, “Solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility [for all] ... men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.”¹ Vigorous support from the international community for the human condition of migrants is of utmost importance for global peace and a sustainable future.

My Delegation would like to express our disappointment at the failure to achieve an outcome. Given the constructive participation of Delegations throughout the entire process, we were hopeful to achieve a strong and substantive outcome document that would contribute significantly to the amelioration of the status of migrants and those in cities without prejudging the Global Compact on Migration. The position of the Holy See has been throughout that fundamental human rights must be accorded to all, regardless of their migration status, and we regret that this Commission was not able to deliver an outcome in this regard.

From our perspective, the failure to achieve an outcome was the result of persistent disregard for the redlines clearly articulated by Delegations throughout the process. The success and longevity of this Commission is contingent on a return to the fundamental principle of consensus and to respect for the positions of sovereign States, especially with regard to sensitive issues. It is regrettable that this process was derailed because of an inordinate focus on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and an unwillingness to accept a reference to State sovereignty.

The International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD], upon which this Commission is grounded, unambiguously states that abortion is to be determined

¹ Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018, 14 January 2018

according to the national legislative process (para 8.25) and that State sovereignty includes the right of each country to implement the recommendations of the ICPD in a manner consistent with its national laws and with full respect for its religious, ethical, and cultural values.² By insisting that this Commission uphold these provisions, Delegations have been asking that the CPD stay true to the ICPD—a position that is thoroughly understandable, constructive and consistent. The view of the Holy See is that these principles remain paramount, and rightfully should have been included in any eventual text.

We once again thank the Chair, the Facilitator, and participating Delegations for their commitment to achieving an outcome. While we did not achieve our aim this year, we look forward to a return to the pursuit of authentic consensus and to future successful outcomes for this Commission.

² ICPD Principles