



**Statement of H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza  
Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations  
Fifty-First Session of the Commission on Population and Development  
Agenda Item 3(b):  
Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration  
United Nations, New York, 9-13 April 2018**

Mr. Chair,

Migration is a testament to the innate human desire for happiness, greater opportunity and a better life, and a normal human response to crisis. When properly managed and voluntary, migration positively contributes to sustainable development, vibrant economies and healthy societies at the national, regional and international levels.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is currently under intergovernmental negotiations, with the aim of creating a comprehensive framework that will improve the international management of migration and ensure that migration is truly beneficial for all, leaving no one behind. In practice, this will mean a human-centered approach to migration, one that considers not only the sovereign right of States to manage and control their borders, but also their responsibility to promote and protect the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all those on the move, regardless of their migratory status.

Mr. Chair,

According to the New York Declaration, a genuinely human-centered approach to international migration begins with ensuring the right of every person to remain in one's homeland in peace, prosperity and security. This primary commitment to ensure that migration is a choice, not a necessity, implies a shared responsibility among all States for the well-being not only of their own citizens but also for the prosperity, peace and security of all, something the international community prioritized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This responsibility requires, first and foremost, combating the scourge of poverty and the inequalities that drive internal migration and that often lead to the cross-border movements of individuals and even entire families seeking a better life in a more secure environment. It requires long-term and reliable investment at both the national and international levels in education, health care, urban planning and policies that promote decent work and that ensure access to social protection, adequate infrastructure and housing. While costlier upfront, these human-centered investments to sustainable cities

and societies make sense in the long term. They are the key to making migration more sustainable in the future, because they ensure that migration is voluntary and not an act of desperation.

Mr. Chair,

In the past years, many countries in the global north and the global south have been overwhelmed by migratory flows largely caused by emergency situations stemming from intractable conflicts, crippling economic crises, natural disasters and environmental degradation. Faced with massive mixed flows of migrants and refugees, many States have been caught off guard and lacked not only the necessary capacity to integrate migrants properly but also the political will to receive them with the dignity they deserve. Moreover, with an insufficient number of regular pathways available, especially for the migrants in the most vulnerable situations, many individuals have been forced to seek irregular and often dangerous migratory routes, falling victim to smuggling, human trafficking, modern slavery and other forms of exploitation. This situation stems from our shared inability to meet the basic needs and fundamental human rights of persons, first at home and, only later, abroad.

Mr. Chair,

Because of increasing globalization and interdependence, the decisions and actions one country takes in its national interest directly impact the situation of other countries. Any country that wants to manage its borders effectively must also take responsibility for the common good of its neighbors. As the recent past has taught us, there is no shortcut to better management of migration outside international cooperation. Unsustainable short-term solutions that prey on fear and use demography to justify closed borders or promote population control only lead to more unmanageable crises in the future.

This current session of the Commission, dedicated to sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration, is an opportunity to recommit ourselves to what Pope Francis has called a “culture of encounter,” which involves the humble recognition that the problems faced by people on the move cannot be addressed in isolation and therefore demand greater solidarity and commitment to the common good both at home and abroad.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.