



Statement of the Holy See at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

“Building momentum towards the 2023 SDG Summit: Transformation for accelerating implementation of the SDGs”

Mr./Madam Chair,

The Holy See welcomes the theme of this general debate: “Building momentum towards the 2023 SDG Summit: Transformation for accelerating implementation of the SDGs” and would like to offer a few considerations.

Halfway to 2030, the promise “to end poverty and hunger, [...] to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality [...][,] to protect the planet from degradation” and to “foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies”¹ is in peril.

Recent data shows that the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has either been insufficient or has regressed, including as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact.² Particularly alarming is that as many as 670 million people are living in extreme poverty today and 575 million are expected to still be living in extreme poverty in 2030.³ Poverty eradication remains “the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.”⁴

Moreover, as Pope Francis has often recalled, new forms of poverty are emerging.⁵ It is the case, for example, of the growing impoverishment caused by different “forms of speculation in various sectors, which have led to dramatic price increases that further impoverish many families” making them “choose between food for nourishment and medical care”, “forcing sacrifices that compromise the dignity of every person.”⁶ We also cannot

¹ A/RES/70/1, preamble.

² Cf. Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition), *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet*; cf. *Global Sustainable Development Report 2023*.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁴ A/RES/70/1, preamble.

⁵ Cf. Pope Francis, *Message for the 2023 World Day of the Poor*; Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 21.

⁶ Pope Francis, *Message for the 2023 World Day of the Poor*.

forget the “peoples caught up in situations of war, and especially children deprived of the serene present and a dignified future.”⁷

Equally alarming is the rising number of men, women, and children edging closer to the brink of starvation, facing food insecurity or malnutrition, and yet a pervasive throwaway culture continues to foster indifference “to all kinds of wastefulness, starting with the waste of food.”⁸

What is thrown away is not only food, but often human beings in the most vulnerable situations. The sick, those with disabilities, and the elderly are frequently regarded as a burden to society and are, therefore, abandoned, excluded, neglected, and discarded. Moreover, the “fear of life”, as Pope Francis calls it, often translates into a “fear of the future and a difficulty in creating families and bringing children into the world.”⁹

The throwaway culture also leads to the exploitation and degradation of the environment and its natural resources. Therefore, taking up the challenge of protecting the planet and all its creatures requires an approach that combines the care for our common home with care for our brothers and sisters, which is what Pope Francis has called “integral ecology.”¹⁰

The international community should take advantage of this High-Level Political Forum as well as the SDG Summit in September to renew its commitment to multilateralism “as the expression of a renewed sense of global co-responsibility, a solidarity grounded in justice and the attainment of peace and unity within the human family.”¹¹ This means working together at the service of the common good, avoiding individualism and divisions, and generating development processes in which the inherent dignity of every person is respected, the needs of the poor and those in vulnerable situations are met, and a harmonious relationship with our common home is restored.

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, 18.

⁹ Pope Francis, *Address to Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*, 9 January 2023.

¹⁰ Cf. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Laudato si'*, 11, 62, 124, 159.

¹¹ Pope Francis, *Address to the seventy-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 25 September 2020.