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Position of the Holy See on a Global Coalition for Social Justice

par Pape François

Mr. Director-General,

Alow me first of all to congratulate you once again on your election as Director-General of this distinguished Organization and to thank you for your Report on the proposal of developing a Global Coalition for Social Justice. Indeed, many of the principles and objectives described in your vision of this initiative resonate with the priorities of Pope Francis, especially with its focus on international solidarity, inclusion and dialogue.

The Global Social Justice coalition is a opportunity to put into practice the appeal that Pope Francis voiced to the UN General Assembly: "*To give to each his own, to cite the classic definition of justice, means that no human individual or group can consider itself absolute, permitted to bypass the dignity and the rights of other individuals or their social groupings. The effective distribution of power (political, economic, defense-related, technological, etc.) among a plurality of subjects, and the creation of a juridical system for regulating claims and interests, are one concrete way of limiting power*"[1].

Mr. Director-General,

In your Report, you aptly re-echo the urgent appeal of the UN Secretary General who has warned against growing divisions within and between societies, thus calling for a renewed multilateralism and a proposed "new social contract" between governments and their people and within societies, anchored in a comprehensive human-centred approach that respects the rights of all.[2]

Indeed, the most egregious consequence of these divisions is the scourge of war. While the present conflict in Ukraine rages on, Pope Francis has repeatedly warned the global community that we are in the midst of a Third World War which is being fought in many protracted and unresolved conflicts all around the world. "War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment."[3]

Unfortunately, war is only one example of the threats to multilateralism and social justice. Throughout the world, the misuse and destruction of the environment are also accompanied by a relentless process of exclusion. Indeed, a selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity lead both to the misuse of

available natural resources and to the exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged, either because they are differently abled, or because they lack adequate information and technical expertise, or because of a lack of decisive political action. Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offense against fundamental human rights and the environment. The poorest are those who suffer most from such offenses, for three serious reasons: they are cast off by society, they are forced to live off what is discarded and they suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment. They are part of today's widespread and quietly growing "culture of waste".[4]

The current global health crisis only exacerbates these injustices. Nonetheless, the Covid-19 pandemic has reminded us that there are no differences or boundaries between those who suffer. We are all fragile and, at the same time, all of great value. Let us hope that what is happening around us will shake us from our slumber. The time has come to eliminate inequalities, to cure the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family, and to forge a new way forward which is deeply rooted in the recognition that our common humanity is stronger than the differences that could divide us.[5]

Mr. Director-General,

Your call for a Global Coalition for Social Justice, then, comes at an opportune time. Indeed it aims to respond to a fundamental mission of the Catholic Church " *to appeal to everyone to work together, with governments, multilateral organizations and civil society, to serve and care for the common good and to ensure everyone's participation in this task. No one should be left aside in a dialogue for the common good, the goal of which is, above all, to build and strengthen peace and trust among all. The most vulnerable — young people, migrants, indigenous communities, the poor — cannot be left aside in a dialogue that ought to also bring together governments, business people and workers.*"[6]

In this sense, it is the hope of this Delegation that your proposal of a Global Coalition for Social Justice may bring about, inter alia, the three following objectives:

- to help overcome the "crisis of trust"[7] that is facing multilateralism, and which renders it ineffective, so that "the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth"[8];
- to help ensure that global strategies and policies are not dictated by the wealthy few[9], but rather are developed in coordination with and at the service of all, with a preferential option for the poor and marginalized;
- to promote the rule of law and timeless recourse to negotiation, through authentic dialogue, in the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations [10].

In concluding, allow me to re-echo the words addressed by Pope Francis to the 109 th International Labor Conference. "*Looking to the future, it is fundamental that the Church, and therefore the action of the Holy See with the International Labour Organization, support measures that correct unjust or incorrect situations*

that condition labour relations, completely subjugating them to the idea of "exclusion", or violating the fundamental rights of workers."[11]

Thank you.

[1] Pope Francis Message to the United Nations General Assembly, 25 September 2015.

[2] Cf. GB. 346/INS/17/1.

[3] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*, n. 257.

[4] Pope Francis, Message to the United Nations General Assembly, 25 September 2015.

[5] Cf. ibidem.

[6] Pope Francis, Message to the 109th International Labor Conference, 17 June 2021.

[7] Pope Francis, Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, 10 January 2022.

[8] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*, n. 173.

[9] Cf. ibidem.

[10] Cf. ibidem.

[11] Pope Francis, Message to the 109th International Labor Conference, 17 June 2021.

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