



40th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 25 February - 22 March 2019

Item 3: General Debate

Joint oral statement

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Mr President,

APG23 and other 13 co-signing NGOs are concerned about the fact that multilateralism is currently under threat. The withdrawal of some powerful states from multilateral agreements, the return to bilateralism, the rising power of exclusive clubs are just few examples, among others, of the attacks to multilateralism. In addition, we are concerned about the weakening of international solidarity, proved by the closing of borders and the increasing detachment from international laws. Indeed, if the late 20th century was an age of coming together, the early 21st century looks like an age of drifting apart.

However, multilateralism is pivotal for delivering the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, for the implementation of the two Global Compacts, for the commitments taken in the Climate change agreements and for advancing the respect and fulfilment of human rights, including the right to development, in the world.

We need to move toward a modern form of multilateralism adjusted to our current times that is people-centred and inclusive, that put the respect of human rights at the core of any action, agreement and policy and seek above all for the common good of the human family.

In several occasions¹, Pope Francis stated that building a fair society and a stable and lasting peace is impossible without a conscience of fraternity, and that “fraternity remains the unkept promise of modernity.” Fraternity is at the basis of the so called “solidarity rights”, that comprise, inter alia, the right to development, the right to a healthy environment, the right to peace and the proposed right to international solidarity. Nowadays, these rights are necessary more than ever to preserve our multilateral system, which is itself an expression of international solidarity, together with fair international cooperation.

For this reason, we affirm that enhancing multilateralism is a way of exercising a “preventive solidarity” to help the human family address the current global challenges. Thank You!

¹ Message for the World Day of Peace in 2014 “Fraternity, the foundation and pathway to peace”; Annual Christmas address in 2018; Letter addressed to the President of the Pontifical Academy for Life on the 25th anniversary of its foundation; Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional Exchange of New Year, 7 January 2019