



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva at the International Dialogue on Migration of the International Organization for Migration
Panel 4 – “The role of women in the Covid-19 response and recovery”
Geneva, 16 October 2020

Mr. Chair,

As the world continues to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the crisis “is changing our way of life, calling into question our economic, health and social systems, and exposing our human fragility”¹.

Covid-19 also has further exacerbated the challenges and risks faced by women and girls. This remains a global concern that hinders the full exercise of the unique and irreplaceable role of women, and that results in negative consequences, not only for women themselves, but also for their families, communities, and society at large.

The vulnerability faced by women is nonetheless met with extraordinary resilience: even during these challenging times, women have shown their strength and taken on key roles in promoting the wellbeing of society as a whole. Indeed, many women, including migrant women, are at the frontline of the responses to COVID-19. Among them, the Holy See wishes to stress the invaluable contribution of many unsung religious sisters engaged in humanitarian activities. They give their time and service to the benefit of the most vulnerable, tending to the sick in these challenging times, often in places the State cannot reach and where no other alternatives exist.

Mr. Chair,

Everyone should feel safe and secure in their homes, and therefore it is deeply regrettable that, during the lockdowns, there has been an upsurge in domestic violence and abuse. As pointed out by Pope Francis, “Every act of violence committed against a human being is a wound in humanity’s flesh; every violent death diminishes us as people... [...] We must break this cycle which seems inescapable”².

In this regard, this Delegation urges that the pandemic become a wake-up call to strengthen the invaluable role of women in society. In light of the challenges and risks faced by women and girls today, aggravated by the pandemic, we would like to ask the panelists two questions:

- 1) How can we amplify women’s voices in the recovery phase of the pandemic for a more equitable and healthier future?

- 2) What practical measures - and best practices - can be shared to help prevent domestic violence?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

¹ Pope Francis, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, 25 September 2020.

² Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter “Fratelli Tutti”, par. 227.