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Intervention of the Cardinal Secretary of State at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The following is the text of the address delivered by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin today at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 27, taking place in Sharm el-Sheikh from 6 to 18 November 2022:

Address of the Cardinal Secretary of State

XXVII SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Sharm el-Sheikh, 6-18 November 2022

***Intervention of His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State***

HOLY SEE

Mr. President,

On behalf of Pope Francis, I extend a cordial greeting to all of you and wish to assure you of his closeness, support and encouragement as you work diligently toward a fruitful outcome from this Conference. A few days ago, in Bahrain, he emphasized the hope that COP27 will be a step forward for “concrete and far-sighted choices, undertaken with the younger generations in mind, before it is too late and their future is compromised”[1].

This is the first UNFCCC's session to which the Holy See participates as a *State Party to both* the Convention and the Paris Agreement. This important step is consistent with Pope Francis' announcement in 2020 that the Holy See would commit to the goal of net-zero emissions, responding at two levels[2]:

1) First, the Vatican City State is committed to reducing *net emissions to zero before 2050*, through intensifying its efforts to improve its environmental management, efforts that have already been in place for a number of years;

2) Second, the Holy See is dedicated to *promoting education in integral ecology*. Indeed, political, technical and operational measures are not enough, they must be combined with an educational approach that promotes new lifestyles, while fostering a renewed pattern of development and sustainability based on care, fraternity and cooperation as humankind, and on the strengthening of the "covenant between the human beings and the environment"[3].

Mr. President,

The *socio-ecological crisis* that we are living is a propitious moment for individual and collective *conversion* and for *concrete decisions that can no longer be postponed*. The human face of the climate emergency challenges us deeply. We have a moral duty to act concretely in order to prevent and respond to the always more frequent and severe humanitarian impacts caused by climate change. The growing phenomenon of migrants being displaced by it is a concerning sign. Even when they lack access to international protection, States cannot leave without tangible solutions, including in the areas of adaptation, mitigation and resilience. Where this is not possible, it is important to recognize migration as a form of adaptation and to increase the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

Worryingly, we must admit that global events like Covid-19 and the increasing number of conflicts all over the world, with their serious ethical, social and economic consequences, risk undermining global security, exacerbating food insecurity, jeopardizing multilateralism, and even overshadowing our efforts here in Sharm el-Sheikh.

We cannot allow for this to happen. Climate change will not wait for us. Our world is now far too interdependent and cannot permit itself to be structured into unsustainable isolated blocks of countries. This is a time for international and intergenerational solidarity. We need to be responsible, courageous and forward-looking not just for ourselves, but for our children.

Last year, at COP-26 in Glasgow, Pope Francis sent a Message in which he stressed that «the wounds inflicted on our human family by the Covid-19 pandemic and the phenomenon of climate change are comparable to those resulting from a global conflict»[4]. Now, this message takes on even more significance. Our political will should be guided by the awareness that either we win together or we lose together.

We must admit that the road to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement is complex and that we have less and less time available to correct course. COP27 provides us with a further opportunity, which cannot be wasted. It is an opportunity and also a challenge to seriously tackle the four pillars of Paris Agreement: mitigation, adaptation, finance, and loss and damage. These four pillars are interconnected and are a matter of fairness, justice and equity. We should also not neglect the non-economic side of loss and damage, like loss of heritage and cultures. Here we have a lot to learn from indigenous peoples.

By acceding to the Convention and the Paris Agreement, the Holy See is even more committed to moving forward on this journey together, for the common good of humanity and especially on behalf of our youth, who are looking to us to care for present and future generations.

Thank you.

[1] Pope Francis, *Meeting with the Authorities, the representatives of the civil society and the Diplomatic Corps*, Awali, Bahrain, 3 November 2022.

[2] Pope Francis, *Video-Message to the High Level Climate Ambition Summit*, New York, 12 December 2020.

[3] Benedict XVI, *World Day of Peace 2008: The Human Family, a Community of Peace*, N. 7, 8 December 2007.

[4] Pope Francis, *Message for COP26*, 29 October 2021.
