

Reservations of the Holy See upon Adoption of the Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair:

The document before us reflect a complex and, at times uneven advancement towards an integral fabric for sustainable development, which we have explored together over the past thirteen months.

Our Delegation has worked hard, in a constructive way and in a spirit of good will to make these draft goals more responsive to people.

My Delegation would be remiss in its duty, however, if it did not ~~also~~ indicate several critical areas where it strongly disagrees with the text. In this regard, it is with regrets that we note in the text exaggerated efforts to include concepts exceeding the political mandate for development established by Rio+20. Likewise, my Delegation ~~and~~ observes regretfully the challenges reflected in attempting to incorporate unagreed, perhaps even unagreeable concepts in a consensus agenda. And yet the challenges to consensus were not limited to how much to accept but, at times, by also how much to give.

In light of the above, my Delegation's participation in consensus can be only partial because of several points in the Document, which are incompatible with what my Delegation deems integral to development. These points are indicated in the following reservations:

- (1) With reference to “sexual and reproductive health”, so-called “reproductive rights,” “family planning” and other language on which the Holy See has registered reservations at Cairo and Beijing, we reiterate these reservations as set out more fully in the Report of the ICPD and in the Beijing Platform for Action. In particular, the ICPD rejects recourse to abortion for family planning, denies that it creates any new rights in this regard.
- (2) With respect to so-called “education” or “information” on “sexuality”, my Delegation reaffirms the “primary responsibility” and the “prior rights” of parents, including their right to religious freedom, when it comes to the education and upbringing of their children, as enshrined, inter alia, in the UDHR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- (3) By “gender” my Delegation understands to mean “male or female” only, and to have no meaning other than the customary and general usage of the term.

My Delegation will continue, in collaboration with all actors of the international community, to make our specific contribution, and indeed to intensify our traditional concrete service of basic education and care, in complete respect for human life, towards the sustainable development of the human person in solidarity.

I ask that the text of this statement be included in the official records of this meeting.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.