



48th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 13 September – 8 October 2021

Half-day panel discussion on deepening inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications for the realization of human rights

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

Madam President,

APG23 is critically concerned with the decline in human rights standards occurring all over the world as a result of the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are witnessing the worst recession in decades, whereby inequalities within and among countries are deepening. As a matter of fact, Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is even further from achieving its objectives. In this regard, those who suffer the most, such as persons with disabilities, minority groups, refugees and migrants, are often neglected by the recovery measures put in place by States, both on a national and international level.

The widening gap between industrialized economies and the least developed ones is even more evident in the unfair distribution and availability of the COVID-19 vaccines. We live in a scenario where some hold their intellectual property rights tight and others use vaccines as propaganda or as foreign policy tools. Meanwhile, the virus keeps mutating and spreading, exposing everybody to infection.

We urge the international community to boost the supply of vaccines, possibly through waivers to the TRIPs Agreement. The ultimate goal should be ensuring equitable access for every country and person in the world, because no one is safe until everyone is safe.

We believe that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are not irreversible as long as swift action is taken towards fostering international cooperation, especially with regard to the implementation of the right to development and the principle of international solidarity. People's participation and empowerment are imperative to address inequalities and shape a just, equitable and accountable development.

The economic and social impact of the pandemic will likely take its toll on the most vulnerable people for years to come. In order to realize the commitment to leave no one behind, common emergency efforts cannot wait any longer.

Thank You!