



**49th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 28 February – 1 April 2022**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and any other child sexual abuse material**

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

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Mr. President,

APG23 thanks the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children for her exhaustive report.

As widely reported, the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply jeopardised all efforts made so far to tackle child exploitation, and has increased children's vulnerability and their exposure to sexual abuse and trafficking. Abused children vastly suffer from irreparable harm that affects their emotional, social and human development, further compromising their physical and mental health.

As APG23, we are convinced that the early identification of risk factors of child abuse and exploitation must be taken into growing consideration; prevention mechanisms, cooperation, synergy and liaison with pertinent institutions, are crucial and fundamental to the mitigation of these risk factors. There is an urgent need to build safety-nets to prevent and protect children from falling under the dangers of human trafficking and sexual abuse.

On this issue, APG23 works with a multilevel approach to address trauma and exploitation. We are convinced that such phenomenon requires an intervention that is based on the redefinition of oneself and the fostering of the victims' full reintegration into society.

Prevention, education and social inclusion are necessary to keep these children away from danger and violence. As Pope Francis reminds us: "The abuse of minors is a "psychological murder", it takes their childhood away. Therefore, the protection of children against sexual exploitation is a duty of every State."

We think that a perspective of preventive solidarity is cardinal to the elimination of the root causes of children's sale and sexual exploitation, prostitution, and violations. The principle of international solidarity alongside the implementation of the Right to Development are essential and can set the hallmark to the next strategies to realize the full enjoyment of children's rights against all violations.

Thank You!