



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

### **Panel discussion on the importance of robust public policies and services for the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in contributing to the COVID-19 pandemic recovery**

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

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Mr. President,

APG23 welcomes this panel discussion and thanks the panellists for their contribution in deepening the focal points of this debate.

In his report, the Secretary-General has raised crucial issues that remind the huge challenge of fully promoting economic, social and cultural rights while designing public policies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

The harshness of this challenge is well reflected by the factors that are hampering recovery efforts in low-income countries: a clear example is the impact of the globally unequal and inadequate access to vaccines. As the Secretary-General has outlined, "such a divergent recovery will, if not corrected, undermine trust in multilateralism and governments, thereby increasing the likelihood of conflict and forced migration, and make the world more vulnerable to future crises".<sup>1</sup>

The concrete measures proposed in the report are a valuable roadmap to reverse the negative effects of those factors, but are likely to be unrealistic if no widespread political commitment will be devoted to overcome unsolved deficits in the multilateral decision making processes and to face the structural obstacles to sustainable development.

We therefore invite all Member States to engage in this commitment by deploying concrete international cooperation initiatives, able to foster an enabling environment at global level for the public policy measures identified in the report.

Among those, we want to underline the absolute need for adequate financial resources to realize economic, social and cultural rights. Expanding fiscal space for low-income countries is therefore crucial, to be achieved also by facing issues as unfair debt servicing and tax dumping within UN-based frameworks.

Finally, as the Secretary-General does in his report, we believe that necessary steps for a human rights enhancing economy are the development of sustainable, people-centred and inclusive economic and business practices, as well as the establishment of different priorities in allocating public resources: first of all, by reducing military expenditures with the redirection of

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/SG-Policy-Brief-on-Jobs-and-Social-Protection-Sept%202021.pdf>, p. 3.

the released resources towards social protection initiatives, health system strengthening and the achievement of the SDGs.

Thank you!