



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
7 November 2023

English only

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## Human Rights Council

Fifty-third session

19 June–14 July 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 May 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **The Revised Draft Declaration on the Right to International Solidarity**

Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) welcomes the report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Mr. Obiora Okafor, for the 53rd regular session of the Human Rights Council entitled “Revised draft declaration on human rights and international solidarity”. We also welcome the provision of the rationales for revising the pre-existing draft declaration on the right to international solidarity and the final revised text of the declaration and explanatory notes that the report has as annexes.

Mr. Okafor will have his second mandate expiring in this session. We would like to thank him for the very good work he has done during the two mandates and for his efforts and commitment in recommending the adoption of the draft declaration on the right to international solidarity by the Human Rights Council.

We appreciate very much the robust arguments that Mr. Okafor provides in his report towards the criticism that some Academics and States have on the proposed right to international solidarity and fully agree with his analysis and explanations. We also thank Mr. Okafor for the calling on the Human Rights Council to adopt the revised draft declaration at the earliest opportunity, through an intergovernmental process.

In January 16, Mr. Okafor held a one-day Global consultation to gather input from States and other stakeholders on how to strengthen the existing draft Declaration, considering current trends and developments that need to be taken into account in that text. The consultation sought to bring together relevant experts and practitioners, and the representatives of Member States, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, civil society including non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions selecting the participants on the basis of their expertise in conceiving, advising on and implementing governmental policies in the areas of sustainable development, social development, poverty alleviation, food sustainability, public health, international cooperation, trade, finance, environmental protection, natural disasters prevention and management.

A proposed revised draft Declaration, prepared by Mr. Okafor with the help of a five-members Expert Advisory Group, was discussed in this consultation. Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23), on behalf also of the Working Group on international solidarity of the Catholic Inspired NGOs (CINGO) Forum in Geneva (1), actively participated in the consultation and sent later on a joint written contribution on the revised text. In this regard, Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) acknowledges with pleasure that some of our suggestions have been incorporated in the final revised declaration such as the recommendation to shorten the preambular part and some amendments in few operational paragraphs.

The first draft declaration was presented in April 2017, at the 35th regular session of the Human Rights Council, by Ms Virginia Dandan, the former Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity (2). The draft declaration defines not only the principle of international solidarity as the “the expression of a spirit of unity among individuals, peoples, States and international organizations, encompassing the union of interests, purposes and actions and the recognition of different needs and rights to achieve common goals” (3) with its three fundamental components “of preventive solidarity, reactive solidarity and international cooperation” (4), but also affirms international solidarity as « a human right by which individuals and peoples are entitled, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination, to participate meaningfully in, contribute to and enjoy a social and international order in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized” (5), establishing positive obligations of States (6).

Comparing the first draft declaration presented by Ms. Dandan with the final revised text of Mr. Okafor, Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) would like to comment as follows:

1. We appreciate the reorganizing of the preambular paragraphs into a better order and sequence, modifying them where necessary and more consistently articulating the content from the general to the particular;

2. We also appreciate the recognizing and incorporation into the preamble of both the latest relevant developments at the United Nations and in the world and some other key instruments or documents, such as the Global Compact on Refugees, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

However, we noticed that the Declaration on the Right to Peace and the Constitution of the World Health Organization mentioned by Mr. Okafor in his report with the explanations of the revisions made, are omitted in the final text of the declaration. Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) does indeed regrets the fact that the 2016 declaration on the right to peace is not mentioned in the preamble as it was instead cited in the revised text discussed during the global consultation held last January.

3. We fully agree with singling out in the 12th preambular paragraph, the Declaration on the Right to Development underlying its connection with international solidarity and also singling out the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the preambular paragraph 16.

4. We regret the deletion of the preambular paragraph mentioning the main regional agreements that are founded on and express international solidarity and cooperation, including the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Charter of the Organization of American States, the Charter of the League of Arab States, the founding treaties of the European Union, and the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Such a paragraph was present in the first draft declaration and also in the first revised text.

5. Furthermore, we appreciate updating and detailing the concept of “duty” in the draft declaration to include the “respect, protect and fulfil” concepts as well as introducing duties on States to create indicators to measure the impact of their international solidarity actions and report on how they have achieved them as part of the universal periodic review process and with a view to easing and advancing implementation;

Both the draft declaration and the revised text share common objectives and principles, emphasizing the significance of international solidarity in addressing global challenges and promoting human rights. They recognize the interdependence of states and peoples and stress the importance of cooperation and assistance. However, the revised text by Mr. Okafor introduces valuable additions that enhance the clarity, effectiveness, and accountability of the declaration. The clarification of state obligations and the inclusion of accountability mechanisms provide a more robust framework for implementation and monitoring.

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, international solidarity is crucial for addressing global challenges and promoting human rights. International solidarity as a right embodies the principles of human dignity, equality, and shared responsibility.

By recognizing solidarity as a fundamental human right, nations can strengthen global cooperation, promote sustainable development, and foster a just and equitable world order. It offers a pathway for nations to transcend self-interest and prioritize the collective good, ensuring the well-being of present and future generations. Solidarity as a right also underscores the interconnectedness of the global community and the need for collaborative efforts to address complex challenges such as poverty, climate change, and public health crises.

As we strive to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful world, it is imperative that individuals, governments, and international organizations work together to uphold and promote international solidarity as a fundamental right. It is through collective action and unwavering commitment to solidarity that we can overcome global challenges and forge a future characterized by justice, equality, and prosperity for all.

(1) The Working Group on the Right to International Solidarity of the Forum of Catholic-Inspired NGOs (CINGO) is composed by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23), Association Points-Cœur, AVSI, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, International Institute of Mary Our Help of the Salesians Sisters of Don Bosco (IIMA), International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEL), MIAMSI, New Humanity, Teresian Association, and VIDES International (International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, Development)

(2) A/HRC/35/35

(3) Article 1 of the Draft Declaration on the right to international solidarity

(4) Article 2 of the Draft Declaration on the right to international solidarity

(5) Article 4 of the Draft Declaration on the right to international solidarity

(6) Articles 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Draft Declaration on the right to international solidarity