



54th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 11 September – 13 October 2023

Biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights: “The impact of unilateral coercive measures and overcompliance on the right to development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”

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

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Mr. President,

APG23 and the co-signatory NGOs welcome the theme of this Biennial panel discussion and thanks all the panellists for their valuable inputs.

UCMs constitute an obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and cause enormous suffering to the populations of the countries on which they are imposed, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable people. Mostly, UCMs impede access to health care, education, drinking water and basic services, have a serious impact on the flow of funds, the procurement of goods and the health facilities of humanitarian agencies, hamper reconstruction and economic development and exacerbate poverty, especially in conflict-affected countries. Indeed, the right to life, the right to physical and mental health, the right to food, education, work and housing, as well as the right to a clean, health and sustainable environment and the right to development are negatively impacted by unilateral sanctions, especially of economic nature.

In this regard, we praise the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Ms. Alena Douhan, for the excellent initiative of developing a Sanctions Research Platform that aims to represent an independent reference tool for global data collection, research and analysis on sanctions and for making a call to all stakeholders to provide any research material useful for its preparation.

We are also very glad that the draft International Covenant on the right to development, as other International Law instruments already do, clearly condemns the use of UCMs in article 14 and stresses that States Parties shall refrain from adopting, maintaining or implementing such measures.

UCMs deprive peoples of their fundamental human rights and dignity. This is unacceptable and violates the essential principle of *First, do no harm*.

The international community must act quickly to end such harmful measures now! Thank You!