



38th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 18 June - 6 July 2018

Item 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on health and the Special Rapporteur on leprosy

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

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Mr President,

APG23 thanks the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for its latest report.¹

We would like to highlight few issues of our concern:

- 1) “The likelihood of being detained as a child is linked to the social determinants of health”. Therefore, investments should prioritize social determinants of health instead of punishment; the needs of families with minors in difficulties should be taken into consideration to allow better responses to the challenges of growth and development in children.
- 2) Too many minors around the world are still confined in detention centres in inhuman and degrading conditions that undermine their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. No child deserves that. A child is entitled to dedicated responses that take into consideration their needs in terms of physical and mental health. States must be encouraged to develop alternative solutions to detention of children in order to safeguard, inter alia, their right to health.
- 3) Former detainees are often labelled for life according to the error they have made. Since this attitude has the potential to hinder their access to existing health systems, more efforts should be done in order to facilitate their full reintegration into society through appropriate measures to fight stigma and discrimination.

APG23 welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members.²

Discrimination and stigma are a sad reality in the life of people affected by leprosy and their families. More efforts should be done to tackle the social determinants of health and to promote social policies of inclusion that take into consideration, inter alia, better support for the families of the affected people.

The World Health Organization has developed a Global Leprosy Strategy (2016-2020) in which an important role is attributed to the defence of fundamental human rights, the reduction of the stigma and consequent promotion of integration and social inclusion, the restoration of the dignity of those afflicted by the disease, and access to care.³ As Card. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, said in his message for the 65th World Leprosy Day: “It is extremely urgent to abrogate, where present, discriminatory laws which obstruct fundamental human rights. It is no longer possible to delay this further.”⁴

Thank you!

¹ A/HRC/38/36

² A/HRC/38/42

³ http://www.searo.who.int/entity/global_leprosy_programme/documents/global_leprosy_strategy_2020/en/

⁴ <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/01/28/180128a.html#>