

SOCIAL FORUM 2010 “The adverse effects of Climate Change on the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to life and economic, social and cultural rights”

Associazione Comunita' Papa Giovanni XXIII- Oral statement

Thank you, Madame Chair.

First of all, we would like to congratulate you for the way you are leading us in this social forum and to thank all the panellists who intervened so far for their interesting presentations.

I am speaking on behalf of the Associazione Comunita' Papa Giovanni XXIII, a Catholic organisation whose members share directly the life with the marginalised, the excluded, the people who live in poverty and extreme poverty, people whose social, economic and cultural rights are violated on daily basis.

We would like to draw the attention of the distinguished delegates and participants to few points related to the climate change' debate:

1. As Mr. Stephen Humphreys, from London School of Economics, pointed out in the conclusion of his presentation in the first day and I quote: “.. we need to start questioning the consensus that the market can solve these issues. It cannot. It has not fulfilled economic and social rights before now, and climate change simply makes it obvious that it never will. If we are to address the human rights implications of climate change , we need to begin finding a new vocabulary for talking about the global economy” end of the quote.

We concur that the actual economic model based on the capitalistic logic is one of the deepest root causes that generate the multiple crisis faced by the world today and above all the climate change threat. The market logic places financial gain over people. People are valued more by what they have than by who they are. For this system, profit and profitability are placed above everything else and the rights to access and the efficiency of basic services for the people are converted into commerce. Even climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes may become a “business” for this logic. The model of development based on unlimited growth is going against the human dignity which is at the basis of human rights ,and is destroying nature. We need to rethink global economy starting from the assumption that resources of the planet are limited and wants should be limited too and fairly distributed among individuals and countries.

2. We welcome the study on climate change and human rights of the Office of the High Commissioner contained in document A/HRC/10/61 and its findings. As the OHCHR study points out, States have a clear obligation under international human rights law to protect individuals within their jurisdiction against the effects of climate change . Nevertheless, it is clear that the root causes of climate change-related effects transcend national borders and lie beyond the effective control of any single State. “Climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution”.

We can say that “climate change” is the “common evil” which requires, as an answer, the seeking together of the “common good”. A human rights based approach to climate change , the building up on the principle of International Solidarity eventually recognised as an individual and collective human right, the full implementation of the Right to Development, are all instruments that will contribute to the solution of the problem of climate change.

3. Finally, we need to consider that the responsibilities to face this crisis pending upon our humanity, lie at all levels:

-At individuals level by adopting as citizens of the world new sober styles of life respectful of nature and of the others human beings and by re-appropriation of a collective consciousness, ethics and spirituality .

-At national levels, by Governments adopting the right policies to contain the global warming and protect its citizens, and especially the most vulnerable groups, from the effects of climate change.

-at international level, by reinforcing international cooperation and progressing towards the establishment of a better world based on equity, social justice and peace.