



International Society of
Human Rights
(Frankfurt. a.M. roster)



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

ITEM 2 & 3- SG/HC thematic reports/oral update: report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Panel discussion on the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

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

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Mr President,

APG23 and 6 co-signing NGOs welcome the OHCHR report on the panel discussion on the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

These declarations are two cornerstones of today's international human rights law system and of the continue struggle to achieve a free, just, equal and peaceful world where human beings and their dignity are at the centre.

As a diamond in the rough, some of the potential of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has already been developed, but some remains still unfulfilled. In article 28,¹ the Declaration clearly calls for social justice in the world. Freedom, justice and peace would be possible only if the peoples of the world and nations recognise fully the notion of being a human family and act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

A crucial new step to honour the spirit of the UDHR, to advance the respect of all human rights and obtain benefits from an enhanced international cooperation, would be to develop the principle of solidarity into the right to international solidarity. In our opinion, this right is very much needed nowadays for the safeguard of the human dignity, the respect of the principle of equality, and for facing the complexity of global problems such as the increased migratory flux, the threats posed by climate change and raising conflicts.

In this regard, APG23 and the co-signing NGOs welcome the draft declaration on the right to international solidarity², and hope that it will be soon adopted by the General Assembly.

¹ UDHR, article 28 "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized"

² A/HRC/35/35

We welcome also the adoption by the General Assembly in 2016 of the declaration on the right to peace³, another important step for the progress of the human family towards the awareness that human rights, development and peace are strictly linked and mutually reinforcing.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirmed the principles of the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness as well as the equal dignity of human rights. In this regard, there is need to protect the universality of human rights and counter the risk of selectivity exercised by some countries in name of traditions that are not respectful of human rights, and by other countries in name of a culture that exacerbates individualism.

The Vienna declaration and Programme of Action also forged a consensus on the Right to Development as a universal and inalienable human right. Time has come to implement fully this fundamental right taking also advantage of the momentum created by the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

As the years pass, let us make sure that the UDHR and the VDPA are not just monuments to be admired or documents to be archived but rather the foundation pillars upon which human rights law and instruments should be further developed!

Thank you!

³ General Assembly resolution, 71/189, Declaration on the Right to Peace, A/RES/71/189 (19 December 2016)