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Fourth Informal Thematic Session:  
*Contributions of migrants and diaspora to all dimensions of sustainable development,  
including remittances and portability of earned benefits*  
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Panel 1

**Contributions of migrants to all dimensions of  
sustainable development: the linkages between migration and development**

Mr. Chair,

The Holy See is very pleased to participate in this Fourth Informal Thematic Session in preparation for the Global Compact as we focus together on the linkages between migration and development and the contributions migrants make in helping their communities and the world achieve sustainable development.

The profound linkages between migration and development can first be seen, sadly, in the absence or breakdown of many of the pillars of sustainable development that have compelled millions to go on the move: in the endemic poverty, hunger, violence, inadequate work, environmental degradation and droughts, weak and corrupt institutions and so many of the other areas being concertedly addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

That is why a sound starting point for our reflection is the right to remain in one's homeland in dignity, peace, and security. No one should ever be forced to leave his or her home due to lack of development or peace. The right to remain helps to focus the international community's efforts on its prior obligation to ensure the sustainable and integral human development of all people in their place of origin and to enable them to become active agents of their own development. It also helps us to recognize the social, economic and cultural costs that migration can mean for a country when its own citizens

feel constrained to leave rather than remain. It is by ensuring the conditions for the exercise of the right to remain, then, that makes migration a choice, not a necessity.

All of us know that “poverty and the lack of prospects for development frequently spur so many individuals and families to seek ways to survive in distant lands. They are often their countries’ best: the youth, the talent, the courage, the hope. They risk their lives traversing the Mediterranean and many of the world’s seas in search of survival and a better life. They seek at least the minimal conditions of human dignity and integral and sustainable development. It seems to be for sure a moment of net loss for their countries. Whether it becomes a gain - for them, their families, their countries of destination and hopefully one day perhaps their countries of origin - depends on the extent to which – as Pope Francis suggested<sup>1</sup> - they are welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated. It hinges on whether they are helped to transition from objects of emergency care to dignified subjects of their own development and to use the education, skills, ambitions, experiences and cultural wisdom they already have, and those that could be enhanced through further schooling and training for the development of society.

For this desired win-win to occur, migrants must first be received and treated as human beings, with dignity and full respect for their human rights, and protected against all forms of exploitation or from being permanently cast-away, whether socially, economically or legally. The communities that receive them must be given adequate assistance to integrate them in a way that does not leave the local poor behind; one way to do this is through the adoption of development and donor policies that set aside a percentage of the direct assistance provided to migrants and refugees for local infrastructure and for the benefit of local families and communities experiencing economic and social disadvantages. This will help provide the conditions necessary for genuine sustainability. Similarly, as the hosts seek to incorporate the beneficial contributions each immigrant can make to the community, the migrants have the responsibility to respect the values, traditions and laws of the community that takes them in. Thus, the welcome and integration of migrants and refugees will be an opportunity for new understanding, broader horizons and greater development for everyone.

Pope Francis pointed to the link between migration and development last month when he said, “The presence of so many brothers and sisters who experience the tragedy of immigration is an opportunity for human growth, encounter, and dialogue between cultures in view of the promotion of peace and fraternity among peoples.”<sup>2</sup> Such fraternity and solidarity lead to the types of peaceful and inclusive societies that foster the sustainable development to which the international community is resolutely committed.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Address of Pope Francis to the International Forum on Migration and Peace, 21 February 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Letter to the Italian news agency ANSA*, 14 June 2017.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.