



HOLY SEE

**Address of Monsignor Anthony R. Frontiero
Official of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace**

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Mr. Moderator,

The phenomenon of migration is striking because of the sheer numbers of people involved, the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and to the international community. The complexities surrounding migration are further illuminated when considering the context of “mixed migration,” which includes economic migrants, refugees, asylum seeker, trafficked persons, unaccompanied children, marginalized groups, among others. Pope Benedict XVI has recently noted that: “We can say that we are facing a social phenomenon of epoch-making proportions that requires bold, forward-looking policies of international cooperation if it is to be handled effectively.”¹ Such policies should set out from close collaboration between the migrants’ countries of origin and their countries of destination, and should be accomplished by adequate international norms capable of coordinating legislative systems with a view to safeguarding the need and rights of migrants and their families, and at the same time, those of the host countries.

No country can be expected to address today’s problems of migration by itself. We are all witnesses of the burden of suffering, the dislocation and the aspirations that accompany the flow of migrants. The phenomenon, as every one knows, is difficult to manage; but there is no doubt that foreign workers, despite any difficulties concerning integration, make a significant contribution to the economic development of the host country through their labor, besides that which they make to their country of origin through the money they send home. Obviously, these laborers cannot be considered as a commodity or a mere workforce. They must not, therefore, be treated like any other factor of production. Every migrant is a human person, who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance.²

The Catholic Church and indeed many churches and religious institutions have made it an apostolic priority to offer spiritual resources to migrants, as well as material help under the form of assistance and support during the difficult process of settlement; and then social resources, acting as facilitators and often as promoters in a network of relations based on their dual belonging, cultural and confessional.³ Confronting the phenomenon of migration is a two-fold task: (1) the long-term

¹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 62.

² Cfr. *ibid.*

³ Cfr. Agostino Marchetto, *People on the Move* (December 2008), p. 140.

solution is of course to ameliorate the conditions of life in the countries of origin. We must strive for the day when human beings can remain in their homelands and live and support their families in dignity. Governments should pursue economic and social policies and practices that make the need for their citizens to cross borders less compelling and necessary. Simply protecting the borders of our countries is not the solution to this complex problem; (2) in the interim, what is required is a concerted international commitment, including the development of international standards on the reception and care of vulnerable migrants, and norms and protection and humanitarian services to help all migrants who are victims of illiteracy, poverty, violence, corruption, trafficking, and trauma, including by the provision of food, adequate medical attention, and assistance in utilizing legal migration channels.

Mr. Moderator, in a climate that has seen increasing xenophobia, accompanied by increasing instability in various parts of the world, the commitment of the OSCE on behalf of migrants and refugees can become a prophetic sign that leads to peaceful co-existence among peoples. By increasingly breaking down the barriers that lead to prejudice and mistrust, participating States through their individual and collaborative efforts can foster a new solidarity with the migrant, and offer those who find themselves away from home the respect, dignity, justice and care they deserve as human beings.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.