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Statement by Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher at the Summit of the Future

The following is the statement given yesterday by Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Secretariat of State, at the *Summit of the Future*:

Statement by Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher

Statement by H.E. Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher,

Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Holy See,

at the Summit of the Future (21 September 2023)

Mr. Chair,

“The future has a name, and its name is hope.”[1] As we contemplate the grandiose project of a “Summit of the Future”, we should perhaps begin by asking ourselves: what is our hope and where is it rooted? Our answers will not be so different: in God, our faith or belief, our families, our culture and our tradition. Hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning.”[2] From those roots grows the promise of a brighter future for the whole human family, for “all serious and upright human conduct is hope in action.”[3]

One of the greatest political achievements of the last century was this very Organization. Devastated and divided by war, States recognized in 1945 that the only way forward for the world was to tread the path of multilateralism. Three years after the foundation of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, lighting what was—in the words of Pope St. John Paul II—a lamp that could “show the way to freedom, peace, and solidarity.”[4]

The Holy See has consistently reaffirmed the importance of the United Nations placing hope in its activities. At the same time, Popes have not shied away from highlighting the pressing need for reform of the Organization “so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.”[5]

The Summit of the Future now presents the occasion to appraise our progress on the path laid out in the foundational documents of the UN, and to identify what shape possible reform might take. This collective endeavour should not drown in platitudes, but rather lead to agreement on effective strategies to ensure the collective well-being, safety, security and prosperity of our nations and peoples. Undertaken in the spirit of true multilateralism, this calls for the pursuit of consensus, “to avoid power being co-opted only by a few countries and to prevent cultural impositions.”[6]

Furthermore, in drawing up the “Pact for the Future”, we should be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[7] seizing the outcome of the Summit as an opportunity not to redraft the 2030 Agenda but to strengthen our efforts in the fight against poverty and in the promotion of prosperity, inspired by the hope for a more just world.

Many are the challenges to overcome in the present, but Pope Francis reminds us that “we [...] are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members.”[8] United as one human family, may we choose to embrace hope, for “hope is the door that opens onto the future.”[9]

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair.

[1] Pope Francis, Video Message on the occasion of the TED Conference in Vancouver, 26 April 2017.

[2] Pope Francis, Address to students at Fr. Félix Varela Cultural Centre, Havana, Cuba, 20 September 2015.

[3] Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, 30 November 2007, N. 35.

[4] Pope Saint John Paul II, Address to the 50th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, 5th October 1995.

[5] Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 29 June 2009, N. 67; and Pope Francis, Encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 3 October 2020, N. 173.

[6] Pope Francis, Encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 3 October 2020, N. 173.

[7] Cf. A/RES/76/307, Modalities Resolution for the Summit of the Future.

[8] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 3 October 2020, N. 78.

[9] Pope Francis, Video Message on the occasion of the TED Conference in Vancouver, 26 April 2017.
