

Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See

to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

at Human Rights Council – 28th Session of the Universal Periodical Review

**Benin**

Geneva, 10 November 2017

Mr. President,

The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of the Republic of Benin during the presentation of its National Report for the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.

The National Report highlights the significant advances in the legislative field along with the daily struggle for ensuring that the people of Benin may enjoy their fundamental human rights, amidst the severe needs the country is facing.

My Delegation notes, in particular, the initiatives to foster protection, education and healthcare services to children, both in rural and urban areas, and the birth registration programme which helps in the fight against trafficking in children and other forms of slavery.

It is also worth mentioning the efforts to eradicate the killing of, so-called, witch children through education, social dialogue as well as through the criminal prosecutions of perpetrators.

My Delegation wishes to present the following recommendations:

* To approve the Criminal Code and, in particular, the abolition of the death penalty;
* To redouble efforts to improve the conditions of detention facilities with particular consideration for women and children, and to expedite trials;
* To keep improving the system of child registration at birth and to avoid any form of violence toward children;
* To improve healthcare infrastructure, access to emergency obstetric care, midwife training, and healthcare access for women from both rural and urban backgrounds.

Thank you, Mr. President.