

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 – 34th Session of the Universal Periodical Review

The Gambia

*Geneva, 5 November 2019*

Mr. President,

The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of The Gambia at the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review and thanks it for its National Report.

My Delegation notes with satisfaction the efforts to align the Country with international standards and in particular the action taken in view of abolishing the death penalty.

Access to justice, the availability and quality of health services and of education, especially for women, girls and people living in rural areas, may constitute an opportunity to build a more vibrant society and reduce inequality.

My Delegation would like to offer the following recommendations:

* To ensure access to basic health services to all, in cities as well as in rural areas;
* To intensify efforts to address food insecurity and malnutrition, especially for children and pregnant women;
* To improve the health-care system, particularly by improving infrastructure and providing more resources for maternal health, including midwife training, with a focus on health-care for mothers and their children through pregnancy and childbirth;
* To ensure universal registration at birth and take due measures to facilitate the registration of children above 5 years of age, so as to avoid statelessness.

The Holy See expresses to the Delegation of The Gambia its best wishes for a successful UPR.

Thank you, Mr. President.