

Warsaw, January 3, 2023

Bishop Américo Manuel Alves Aguiar - Organizing
Committee of WYD Lisbon

Dear Bishop Aguiar,

As parents of young people planning to attend World Youth Day (WYD) 2023, we are writing to express our opposition to certain elements of the WYD programme posted on the [WYD website](#). We are writing to request the removal of the [Agenda 2030, with the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (the "Goals") as a guiding element, from the WYD programme, the withdrawal of the partnership with GTI (and the removal of the links to the GTI websites) and the restoration of the religious character of WYD, without the inclusion of any political agendas and the promotion of other religions (Buddhism) through the GTI websites.

The reason for our request is that there is a serious risk that the Agenda 2030 and the Goals, promoted by the organisers of WYD, will have a negative impact on the youth attending WYD. This may occur as a result of a lack of or misunderstanding of the moral wickedness of some of these Goals. It is worth noting that the Agenda and the Goals have been controversial from the outset such that some countries, including the Holy See, have raised serious objections to them (e.g. Vatican Notes of 2015 and [2016](#)). By promoting the Agenda and the Goals at WYD, we can create in young people an unambiguously positive image of the Goals, which on many points are irreconcilable with the Gospel and the Church's teaching. This can, contrary to the intentions of the organisers of WYD, mislead, bring moral confusion to young people and be seen as condoning the use of morally unworthy methods to achieve the Goals. In extreme cases, the promotion of the Goals may justify the commission of mortal sin. The key contents in the Goals of concern and opposition to us are:

- the commitment of signatory states to provide universal access to unworthy methods of 'reproductive health' i.e. abortion i.e. the murder of the unborn child (under Goals 3.7 and 5.6),
- the recommendation to introduce universal sex education (Objectives 3.7, indirectly 4.7) without respect for moral norms and the rights of parents, education in a vulgar version and promoting moral permissiveness,
- the recommendation (Objective 3.7) of universal access to contraception and other unworthy forms of fertility restriction,
- the need to promote so-called gender equality, with the ambiguous concept of gender increasingly interpreted as a culturally determined sex that everyone has the right to change.

Since the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the Goals (2015), we see an increasing ideological interpretation of the Goals (e.g. the UN and its agendas, many Western countries) by expanding the catalogue of human rights with new pseudo-human rights such as the right to abortion, etc. This is a perverse replacement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), largely based on natural law (and the Decalogue), with new pseudo-human rights. Such changes hit the family and marriage understood as the basic cell of society based on the union of a man and a woman.

We are also critical of the WYD organisers' partnership with the Global Tree Initiative (GTI). The link on the WYD website to the GTI website de facto promotes Buddhism by making it easier for young people to learn about the teachings of, among others, the 14th Dalai Lama, who advocates the permissibility of abortion and accepts homosexual relationships. The GTI website promotes other controversial authorities and their teachings as role models.

We have included a detailed discussion of our objections and proposed solutions in Appendix 1.

On the occasion of the beginning of the New Year 2023, please accept our wishes for many graces of God and the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Mother of the Church.

On behalf of many parents from Poland : Piotr Zajkowski, Piotr Bednarski, Robert Kowalczyk,...[and other signatures].

For the attention of: Bishop Grzegorz Suchodolski - National Office for the Organisation of WYD, Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell LC - Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

Annex 1. Detailed observations regarding WYD program announced on WYD 2023 Lisbon website

Our comments relate to the programme of WYD as posted on the [main website of the organiser of WYD Lisbon 2023](#), i.e. Fundação JMJ Lisboa 2023, and the announced activities of the organisers of WYD on this website. **Our comments are divided into 2 parts: Part 1: covering Agenda 2030 and Goals, and Part 2: referring to Global Tree Initiative (GTI).**

1. A critical assessment of the inclusion as a key programming element in WYD Lisbon of the UN 2030 Agenda, with the Sustainable Development Goals ('Goals') as its guiding agenda.

From the website of the organisers of WYD, we learn that the main focus of the meeting with Catholic youth is the political UN Agenda 2030, the leading idea of which is the programme for the implementation of the Goals, with 17 well-defined goals and nearly 200 specific tasks. Although it is a non-legally binding document (declaration), which has been signed by more than 190 UN member states, it represents a kind of commitment by states, the implementation of which is subject to reporting by the signatory states and checking by the UN and other organisations. This commitment also applies to those Goals which themselves have provoked and continue to provoke controversy and doubts of a moral, cultural, social and economic nature. These doubts are exacerbated by the way in which they have been radically interpreted and evaluated¹ by the UN and its agencies and by some states, including the European Union (EU).

These controversial Goals (e.g. 3.7 and 5.6, and indirectly Goals 4.7) mixed with Goals that are positive in nature, indicate the existence of an ideological political agenda with its far-reaching negative consequences for the moral health of societies, including young people and children. The 2030 Agenda and the Goals have been questionable from the outset and, therefore, some of the countries that have signed up to the 2030 Agenda and the Goals, have submitted special notes expressing doubts about the ideological wording contained in these documents, contrary to their prevailing legal order, traditions, culture and value system. In addition, some countries have presented their understanding of the provisions contained in the Goals, dissociating themselves from a distortion of the original intentions of the terms 'gender' or 'reproductive health'. These countries, e.g. the Vatican in [2015](#) and [2016](#), have made their reservations and clarifying comments on Agenda 2030 and its Goals and have challenged certain ideologized interpretations (e.g. of the terms reproductive health or gender equality). The effectiveness of these endeavours remains highly questionable, and developments in the UN and its agencies indicate that the above-mentioned reservations have limited impact when an extremely ideologized understanding of non-discrimination, gender equality or reproductive health, contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, begins to prevail in the UN and its agencies.

We want to strongly note and emphasise that Agenda 2030 and the Goals as a political work, is at many points irreconcilable with the moral teaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We can confidently state as practising Catholics that many of the provisions of this Agenda directly promote morally unacceptable actions that are an indication and encouragement to commit mortal sin, such as:

¹ E.g. Target 3.7 will be evaluated on the basis of, inter alia, [the proportion of women of reproductive age \(aged 15-49\) who have their need for family planning satisfied by modern methods](#). From the past experience of the operation of the UN and its agencies (e.g. WHO), it can be assumed with high probability that by satisfaction of the need for family planning, the evaluators of the UN and other organisations monitoring the implementation of the Goals generally mean the extent of access to abortion, early abortifacients, contraception. Restrictions on access to abortion or early abortifacients are generally assessed as a failure to meet Goal 3.7 and the country is negatively assessed.

- the murder of the unborn child (under targets 3.7 and 5.6²) by obliging states to provide universal access to wicked 'reproductive health' methods such as abortion,
- vulgar sex education (according to the radical WHO model giving recommendations contrary to the teaching of the CC on premarital chastity, masturbation, contraception)
- contraception, sterilisation (which falls under "reproductive health" according to many UN agencies, including the WHO and the EU position) . These are enshrined in Goal 3.7 and 5.6 . These goals give the UN the ability to pressure signatory states to adopt so-called "sexual and reproductive rights" into law, to adopt the rights advocated by homosexual and feminist communities, and to disseminate and implement "comprehensive sexuality education"
- the need to promote so-called "gender equality", where gender equality is understood by many countries such as the EU, the USA, Canada, who have a great deal of influence at the UN, in an ideological way, among other things as so-called "cultural gender", detached from the reality of biological sex (woman - man), which can be changed. Gender, defined in this way, has nothing to do with God's creation of human beings as male and female. The promotion of so-called gender equality, when gender is only culturally defined and fluid, is the basis for the promotion of the right to change own gender (surgically or other way), an action detached from biology. This push for such right is something we are seeing more and more of at the level of debates and resolutions by UN agencies and in the EU. Such policy strikes directly against the natural law and negates human reason, not to mention the moral order.

In some of the descriptions of the Goals and subsequent UN documents referring to the Goals and the 2030 Agenda, the tendency to promote 'new' pseudo-human rights or ideological reinterpretations of existing human rights is revealing. These new rights (outside the catalogue of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights) are being added and expanded by various UN agencies, but also by some countries and the EU, and include new 'quasi-rights' such as the right to gender reassignment, the right to universally accessible abortion without restriction, the right to same-sex marriage, the right to euthanasia and many others. These new 'rights', are an outright rejection of natural law by the modern political, cultural, legal, educational and media world.

The above examples touch upon only some of the consequences of the adoption of the Goals and give rise to the supposition of a possible intention to replace the ethics based on natural law included in the majority of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) with some new global ethic, where the protection of the family as the basic cell of society and of marriage as a union between man and woman is not guaranteed, and where families and marriages are even treated as anachronisms and patriarchal institutions, oppressive towards women, for example. This new 'modern' ethic also has an anti-natalist dimension, as a way of limiting population growth, which is considered by some UN agencies and many liberal and 'green' political parties now at the helm of government in many EU and North American countries to be a decent thing to do and regarded as a morally upright act because of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or the supposed increase in human well-being that is realised by reducing fertility.

Furthermore, viewed in the dimension of Catholic Social Teaching, the implementation of the Goal (Objective 13), i.e. the rapid and radical reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, in order to combat global warming and the resulting concrete consequences for states, in the form of the introduction of a radical

² 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

"green" transformation of the economy³, carbon tax, the reconstruction of social life, will bring about the necessity of bearing enormous financial and social costs, which will probably paradoxically be borne by the poorest. And all this in the name of the idea (contested by some experts) that such a rapid and costly energy transformation is the right way to counteract the negative effects of human activity allegedly having a key impact on global warming. It is already estimated that the economic and social policies of some countries that are linked to the Goals (e.g. Goal 13 and others), e.g. the increasingly radical legal solutions in the EU for e.g. corporate financing in conjunction with climate risk assessments (above all so-called transition risks), with the aim of reaching the Net zero emissions target in 2050, could lead to limitation of credit supply, and such policy can lead to significant impoverishment of societies (e.g. due to a significant increase in energy costs and their consequences), social tensions and a painful transformation of society at the cost of huge sacrifices.

The social policies proposed in the 2030 Goals and Agenda, and above all those ethically controversial elements of them that we have described above (the so-called right to "reproductive health" methods and so-called family planning, gender equality), in their very essence undermine the teachings of Christ the Lord and - the teachings of the Catholic Church which rejects immoral measures (abortion, early abortifacients, artificial contraception, etc.) which presumably serve achieving only (apparently) legitimate moral goals such as slowing down climate change or a materially improving situation for families (fewer children), etc.

The new emerging global ethic extending the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) with new pseudo-human rights such as the right to abortion, the right of young people to change sex without parental consent, etc. is a perverse replacement of the Decalogue and natural law with new norms of behaviour, the negative of which are already visible in many countries⁴.

As parents who have made a commitment before God and the Church at Baptism to bring up our children in Catholic faith, we strongly object to the fact that in events such as WYD, instead of aiming at strengthening of the faith, propose a political programme which in many points promotes moral evil (promotion of reproductive health and gender equality as a duty of States), might likely lead to a misjudgement of the wickedness of the proposed methods of solving the problems of our Earth, leading to a loss of faith in divine Providence or to a distorted understanding of the moral teaching of the Church and resulting in moral relativism.

Moreover, the WYD programme presented on the website of the WYD organisers, in a more or less open manner (e.g. use of references to Agenda 2030 and the Goals, WHO guidelines, various UN resolutions, graphics used by the UN) promotes the UN and its agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, whose activities raise many moral and other questions⁵. As parents, we believe that the Catholic Church is not an agenda of the UN and should keep a critical distance from UN programmes, trying to support what is good but also clearly pointing out what is morally wrong. We do not see clear warning of the dangers posed by Agenda 2030 and the Goals on the website of the organisers of WYD 2023.

At the same time, we would like to point out that the climate policy of the UN and other international organisations is based, in some of its aspects, on the "pedagogy of fear", creating fear of a climate catastrophe allegedly (opinions are divided among experts as to the importance of the real impact of man on

³ Patrz np. Lomborg, Bjørn (2020). False Alarm: How Climate Change Panic Costs Us Trillions, Hurts the Poor, and Fails to Fix the Planet. Basic Books.

⁴ See for example: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-your-daughter-defies-biology-11546804848>, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/how-many-more-mutilated-victims-of-transgender-ideology-will-choose-assisted-suicide/>, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/tragic-and-sinful-us-bishops-education-chief-rebukes-lgbt-ideology-in-catholic-schools/>, <https://evangelicalfocus.com/europe/18187/hundreds-of-families-could-sue-transgender-clinic-tavistock-for-medical-malpractice>

⁵ <https://ordoiuris.pl/ochrona-zycia/plany-unicef-uderzajace-w-dobro-dzieci>, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-education-summit-wants-to-stamp-out-traditional-values/

climate change) caused by man and the destruction of living conditions on Earth (here one can see the total reliance on oneself and the lack of trust in Divine Providence in the search for morally decent solutions).

At the root of this policy is the old, erroneous Malthusian claim, more intensively promoted in recent years by some political parties in power in many countries, that the Earth is threatened by overpopulation and radical steps are needed to depopulate the Earth. This position is nowadays reinforced by the modern erroneous thesis that man is the greatest threat to the world, to nature, to the climate, even a parasite to be fought. Serious consequences flow from this.

We are sensitive to this as those who lived under the totalitarian systems of communism and real socialism, motivated by the utopian idea of a socialist 'paradise on Earth' without God, a vision of human happiness reduced to matter, without a transcendent dimension. We have experienced for many decades a system fighting against religion, personal freedom, freedom of expression, promoting various social and economic experiments, ending in a real economic crisis and human poverty. These actions and misguided policies of 'real socialism' or communism and their consequences have been experienced by our families and we do not want a repetition of such social engineering, under new versions of the utopia of 'paradise on Earth', of which the 2030 Agenda, implemented in a morally unworthy manner, may be an element.

It is also worth noting that, under the influence of the opinions and often propaganda of representatives of science, politics and business (often speaking with one voice at the World Economic Forum or UN conferences), including many well-known and influential personalities, there is nowadays explicit talk of the necessity of depopulation as a necessary factor in saving the Earth.

In the younger generations, especially also in the context of other phenomena such as the Covid pandemic, attitudes of fear and reluctance to marry, to form families, to give birth to children have been more and more present. Such a narrative has been also promoted in the mass media, in the education system for at least some years. It is also increasingly visible in culture, cinema and in many institutions, not excluding government programmes. There are entire campaigns urging people to give up the idea of having children or radically limit their number (e.g. anti-natalist propaganda campaigns to this effect in Canada, the UK) in the name of stopping climate warming and forcing governments to take radical steps.

Today, young people are asking the question: why should we have children if we are about to face a climate catastrophe? In the last 3 years in Canada, the UK and elsewhere, these campaigns against having children have been portrayed as an expression of concern for the future of the planet or as helpful in the face of government action to reduce CO2 emissions. According to a 2022 study⁶ of a sample of the Polish population, almost 38% of respondents were anti-natalist, with this group having significantly more arguments citing climate change as a reason for not having children. In this light, it is understandable that abortion, contraception and euthanasia are 'benevolent programmes leading to the healing of Mother Earth'.

We do not expect salvation and the saving of humanity through the actions of the UN, governments and human beings as such. These actions are needed if they are morally decent and right. But we are certain that the only way that leads and transforms man is through the Saviour Christ the Lord Himself, in whom faith gives hope for the improvement of temporal fate but above all hope for eternal life. The faithful Catholic is obliged to do good things and to use decent means to achieve his or her aims, including those connected with temporality, such as protecting the environment, reducing unnecessary gas emissions, etc.. However, such actions must not in any way be at the expense of compromising with evil and forming alliances with

⁶ <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/20/13575>

partners such as the United Nations or other organisations, corporations or institutions which increasingly and clearly do not respect the moral law given to us by God.

The vast majority of families sending their children do not have a basic knowledge of what Agenda 2030 and the Goals actually are and the threat they pose to young people. Young people will only remember fragments or symbols from WYD in Lisbon, and that Agenda 2030 and the Goals contained therein are a good and necessary programme to protect 'Mother Earth' from climate catastrophe.

Today's media, cultural, educational and virtual worlds, with their specific content, are changing people, especially young people, far more than was the case in previous generations. In this world, there is no place for the Triune God; the god is man and his lust incessantly fuelled by impulses coming from various sources. This leads to obvious unhappiness, for where there is no God and no Our Lord Jesus Christ there is sin, no hope, finally despair. The way to the salvation of the soul will certainly also be missing. We as parents experience this in our Catholic families and we see it in the families of our friends and acquaintances.

Going to WYD will also be a big financial challenge for many families. Will such a trip bring the positive spiritual fruits expected by young people and their parents, in a situation where a political agenda that is harmful to faith and morals is already visible on the WYD website and will be promoted and discussed at WYD meetings?

What will be the further consequences if young people return from WYD convinced that the 2030 Agenda and the Goals are worthy of implementation, without seeing the negative elements in them and without encouraging the use of inappropriate methods to solve the world's problems?

The UN 2030 Agenda, and certainly the ones that will follow, is already a powerful tool of political pressure on national governments to implement the various elements of this agenda in national legislation, where the greatest emphasis is placed on those issues (such as universal access to reproductive health, gender equality) that are contrary to the teaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church.

Moreover, even though the 2030 Agenda itself is not a legally binding document, since it was signed by many states in 2015, it is already apparent after several years of its application that it is becoming an instrument of political pressure on states to enforce the implementation of this declaration (or at the very least, it is a basis for criticising, shaming and publicly stigmatising its non-implementation). The numerous so-called tasks arising from the Sustainable Development Goals translate into recommendations for concrete changes in a country's laws and policies and are assessed by external experts, who are able to reproach governments for their lack of progress in implementing legal solutions and policies, including those relating to so-called reproductive health (e.g. criticise restrictions on access to abortion), sex education or gender equality. The 2030 Agenda unfortunately affects the actions of the entire UN, including the treaty committees and all agencies around the UN as well as the largest NGOs. Therefore, we see all the more the negative consequences of placing this kind of political document as central to the agenda of WYD Lisbon.

Among these consequences will be the perpetuation in the minds of the young people at WYD of a positive image of Agenda 2030, while this Agenda aims, at least in part of the programme, at morally wicked goals as we have shown above.

We observe with concern the changes in the world today and we note with concern that political changes and national and supranational legislators (European Union - EP, EC, Council) are moving in an anti-Christian direction in many of their decisions. We see how many so-called new human rights are simply opening the way to morally unworthy phenomena from the point of view of Catholic morality. What is more, these new laws hit families and marriages that adhere to the natural law and the teachings of the Church.

While adhering to the Decalogue and the teachings of Christ, we Christians are portrayed, also in the light of Agenda 2030, as a people full of hatred, homophobic, rigid, rejecting what is considered the progress of civilisation. Already today, some who are faithful to the moral teaching of the Gospel, are victims of persecution. Christian virtues are increasingly judged, including by government institutions, as violations of human rights and opposition to freedom, to a proper understanding of sexual development, to human needs.

2 Critical evaluation of the collaboration of the organisers of WYD with the Global Tree Initiative (GTI) and the indirect promotion of questionable authorities and a foreign religion - Buddhism.

In addition to Agenda 2030, of great concern is the information given by the Organisers of WYD Lisbon that they have entered into a partnership (partnership) with GTI - Global Tree Initiative (<https://www.lisboa2023.org/en/article/wyd-lisbon-2023-challenges-pilgrims-to-plant-trees-worldwide>). On the WYD website there are links (buttons) leading directly to the official website of the GTI (<https://plantgrowsave.org/>), where young WYD participants can learn that the sole founder of the GTI is Tenzin Ösel Hita Torres, a 37-year-old free-thinking, eternal student, former Buddhist monk, who is officially recognised by the Dalai Lama as the next incarnation (in so-called reincarnation) of Lama Thubten Yeshe who died in 1984.

In contrast, on the main page of GTI we find an acknowledgement from the founder and can read his words there: "For me, really, the new religion is to take care of Mother Earth, Pachamama, and ensure that we survive as a race, you know?". . Is this the message of WYD for the young ?

Indeed, on the GTI website, to which the WYD organisers' website directs us, we do not find any information supporting the faith and moral principles of the children and young people - the WYD participants - but there is mention of a global religion project and a new global ethic.

This begs the question: why direct the attention of WYD participants to websites where not only is there no reference to the teaching of the Catholic Church or the message of prominent figures of the Catholic Church (saints such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta), but where there is promotion of values and moral principles, some of which are contrary to the moral teaching of the Church.

On the GTI website, our young people and children will find messages from the 14th Dalai Lama, often referred to as His Holiness (books and numerous interviews are recommended), a man who advocates the permissibility of abortion and the acceptance of homosexual relationships, and who calls for the creation of a new global ethic for the new millennium - an ethic that is to be completely detached from religion. In addition, GTI promotes such authorities as:

- **Greta Thunberg** ("I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear that I feel every day"),

- **Late, liberal Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931-2021)**, supporter of gay 'marriage'⁷, supporter of contraception and abortion and pro-abortion Marie Stopes Int'l⁸ and promoter of the priesthood of women, critic of the Catholic Church for, among other things, the CC's teaching on the moral evil of artificial contraception)
- **Robina Courtin**, a woman who left the Catholic faith, then was a feminist activist and is now a female Buddhist monk.

We express our genuine concern and opposition to the promotion of the aforementioned pseudo-authorities and their teachings (a kind of propaganda of 'foreign gods' and a new global ethic completely detached from true religion) by the organisers of WYD in Lisbon by pointing to the GTI website.

There is equally strong opposition to the announcement of the distribution during WYD in Lisbon of educational materials prepared by GTI.

As parents, we cannot agree to expose our children to the influence of followers of "foreign gods" and ethics contrary to the teaching of the Church (sin against the First Commandment, idolatry, suggestion of content contrary to Catholic faith and morals) . We do not want our children and young people to listen to and read the messages of promoters of anxiety and fear, e.g. of the climate warming cataclysm (Greta Thunberg), because anxiety and fear are opposed to Christian hope, to faith in God's Providence, which guides us, and moreover, even on the natural level, such emotions exclude reason and its search for constructive solutions to existing problems.

We are fed up with other anxieties, fears, often depression caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the closing of churches, the lack of access to the sacraments during the pandemic, the scare of the Armageddon of climate change. This, too, will not affect the positive development of children and young people, and, moreover, such an atmosphere of anxiety and fear about climate change or other more or less real threats makes it easier to manipulate the younger generation. We have more than enough experience of families in Poland operating the so-called 'fear pedagogy' and forcing changes in the law or in young people's attitudes in such an atmosphere. We also know of examples of the penetration of the environments of children, young people and students by various sects and religions alien to us, operating under the guise of serving the good of humanity and promising happiness beyond the path indicated by Christ, which has led and will continue to lead to negative consequences.

Engaging in so-called dialogue with other religions, which some of them contain elements contrary to our faith or even demonic, alongside the light of truth, can lead children and young people who are unprepared for such a confrontation to confusion, abandoning the faith and even, in extreme cases, to demonic enslavement or possession. We do not want this for our children!

In conclusion, we ask that Agenda 2030 be completely excluded from the WYD programme and that the partnership with GTI and everything to do with politics and the promotion of other religions to Catholic youth be abandoned.

⁷ See for example ["Desmond Tutu Would Prefer Hell Over A Homophobic Heaven" at The Huffington Post \(26 July 2013\)](#)

⁸ [Pro-abortion Archbishop Tutu's invitation to a Catholic university 'shameful': pro-life activists](#)