



Promoting Digital Child Dignity From Concept to Action, From 2017 to 2019



Meeting 14-15 November 2019 | On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, representatives of the United Arab Emirates Government, and the Child Dignity Alliance would like to host a joint ecumenical meeting on the protection of children in the digital world and the responsibility of the religious communities. Pope Francis himself will conclude the meeting on 15 November.

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences has the aim of promoting the study and progress of the sciences, ensuring that it works to advance of the human and moral dimension of man, promoting justice, development, peace, as well as encouraging dialogue between science and spiritual, cultural, philosophical and religious values.

The Child Dignity Alliance, established following the October 2017 World Congress on “Child Dignity in the Digital World”, which brought together global experts and policy makers to discuss the risks and challenges of the digital age and its impact on the dignity of children, aims to achieve the goals of the Declaration of Rome, signed by the Holy Father at the end of the Rome Congress, spreading knowledge and awareness on child sexual exploitation and abuse through interfaith collaboration and research.

The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and the Child Dignity Alliance will convene this new international meeting on the protection of children in the digital world at the Casina Pio IV in the Vatican, headquarters of the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences, on 14-15 November, inviting important religious leaders from different communities, experts, academics, policy makers, and technology industry leaders.

The meeting is a follow-up of the process that began with a joint commitment for the protection of children during the *Child Dignity in the Digital World* meeting in 2017, which ended with the approval of the Declaration of Rome, and the *Interreligious conference of the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities: Child Dignity Online*, held in Abu Dhabi in 2018, which ended with the approval of the Declaration of Abu Dhabi. It is also a follow up of the first interreligious declaration of Pope Francis’ Pontificate, signed at the Casina Pio IV in December 2014, which stated that “In the eyes of God modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, and organ trafficking is a crime against humanity”.

Pope Francis has clearly encouraged these efforts for the protection of child dignity in the digital world many times, for instance during his trip to Abu Dhabi, when he referred to the Abu Dhabi Declaration in his speeches. Moreover, we must not forget the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together which Pope Francis signed with Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar.

For this reason, it is important to involve the representatives of the UAE Government who organized the Abu Dhabi conference in November 2018, so that the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities can co-promote

the meeting with the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and the Child Dignity Alliance, continuing the joint commitment for the protection of children in the digital world.

Moreover, the Sustainable Development Goals, unanimously approved after Pope Francis's speech to the United Nations in September 2015, in particular Goals 8.7 and 16.2, insist on this new moral imperative, which derives from a religious and civil need.

Pope Francis is eager for this commitment to continue and – in this respect – he will address the participants at the end of the meeting.