



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

Universal Periodic Review of Italy UPR-Info Pre-session for Italy 22 November 2024

Franciscans International Board of Directors meet twice a year: in the first half of the year in Geneva, Switzerland and the last half of the year in New York, USA, unless otherwise. The two countries are chosen because that is where Franciscans International have their offices respectively. This year from the 17th-19th April 2024, I attended



International Board of Directors November meeting in New York

a workshop organized by our staff of the Franciscans International on human rights concerns, in Santa Maria di Angelis in Assisi. This meeting in Assisi attracted religious brothers and sisters, and the laity who work with migrants as well as for the protection of the rights of people deprived of their liberty. The Secular Franciscan Order of Sardinia was among the lay Franciscans who brought up the issues of the right to health and also the right to a healthy environment with which was presented at the UN during the UPR Pre-Session. The discussions were based on the purpose of making a submission under the UPR process. *The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)* is a unique mechanism of the Human Rights



Council that is done every four-five years and calls for each UN Member State to undergo a peer review of its human rights records. On the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the United Nations (UN) mechanism aimed at assessing the human rights situations of the Member States, the Pre-session of all the states being reviewed during Session 48 in January 2025 was held from November 19 to 22, 2024 at Palais des Nations in Geneva. On November 22, it was Italy's turn and Franciscans International participated in the pre-sessions for Italy, Bosnia and Madagascar. One Young Franciscan from Madagascar, Fabioala Todisoa, presented on Internal migration aggravated by climate change, human rights and environmental issues of Madagascar. During the Pre-session, representatives from National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) spoke to address the current human rights conditions in the Italian context and take stock of whether the country has implemented the recommendations it received in the Third Cycle. The Pre-sessions represent an important tool to increase the capacity of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to participate, return to the permanent missions a reliable picture of the situation in the countries under review, and consequently ensure the formulation of coherent and incisive recommendations during the UPR Working Group phase. Sr. Charity Nkandu spoke on behalf of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) of Sardinia in Italy and Franciscans International (FI) As a result, a joint submission was made for Italy's UPR in 2025. The presentation was focused on **the right to health and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment**. Some recommendations that were presented were:

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- Take concrete measures to redress the inequitable distribution of health services between the regions
- Ensure accessibility to health services in all regions, particularly peripheral and disadvantaged areas.
- Adopt a national action plan on sustainable forestry management to deal with the issues of abandonment of mountain territories; loss of old forest; use of the wood available; and fixing of carbon dioxide levels to ensure that Italian citizens enjoy a clean healthy and sustainable environment.
- Provide necessary resources to implement this sustainable forestry management plan with the technical capacities needed, beginning with forestry under State or local control.

By: Sr. Charity Katongo Nkandu