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Members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors meeting in Rome said there was a continued need to make safeguarding consistently part of the life of the church around the world.

"The emerging significance of the concept of vulnerable adult, in particular its definition, has been given attention" as well, given the passage earlier in the year of legislation and safeguarding guidelines for Vatican City State, the Vicariate for Vatican City and the Roman Curia, according to a press release from the commission Sept. 16.

The commission also renewed "its unwavering commitment to contribute to a world that is safe for children and vulnerable persons," especially in light of this year's 30th anniversary of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, it added.

The commission met in Rome Sept. 12-15 for its 11th plenary assembly.

The assembly's proceedings began with hearing "a powerful testimony of pain, brokenness, healing and forgiveness from a Brazilian man who suffered both familial and clerical abuse," the commission said.

Every plenary begins with a listening session "to serve as a reminder for the commission members why they are here and their mission for the Catholic Church," it added.

Members, who do outreach and education around the world and in Rome, continued with a "key element" of their work, which is building relationships with members of different offices and departments of the Roman Curia and Holy See in order to "facilitate the work of safeguarding at all levels within the church."

"There is a continuing need for the culture and mission of safeguarding to be, and to be seen to be, systemically embedded into the life of the church across the globe," the commission noted.

The commission's mandate is to advise the pope and help the church on every level, including religious orders, lay movements and Catholic associations. In addition to formation and education, the commission also is preparing "expert colloquia and major educational conferences."

While the commission no longer has survivors serving as members, it does still work with survivors and is developing "platforms for the church to listen to the voices of people who have been abused" and trying to get those voices integrated into the life and mission of the church, it said.

"Pilot Survivor Advisory Panel programs are up and running on three continents with another being finalized on a fourth continent," it added. The panels are meant to be a way to listen to and learn from survivors in a safe and culturally familiar space.

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