

MODEL ADVOCACY LETTER FOR THE USE OF CARITAS ORGANIZATIONS

To H.E. XXXX
Minister of the Environment
Country XXX

Capital city, month xxx, 2015

Subject: Caritas recommendations for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC

Your Excellency,

In view of the political processes that are taking place, internationally and in our own country, on the new agreement on Climate Change to be adopted in Paris in December, we would like to hereby submit some points to your attention.

They not only represent Caritas' main advocacy concerns, but their content reflects the message of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, in his Encyclical letter "Laudato Si'". As part of the universal Catholic Church, and for our mission to build justice in solidarity with the poorest, we are deeply committed to working with and for people suffering from the effects of climate change. We know and defend the *human face of ecology* and, along with Pope Francis, we call upon the **moral responsibility of international decision-making**.

We should thus like to recommend to our Government and the delegation who will represent it in COP21 to seriously consider the following:

- *Laudato Si', 53: The establishment of a legal framework which can set clear boundaries and ensure the protection of ecosystems has become indispensable, otherwise the new power structures based on the techno-economic paradigm may overwhelm not only our politics but also freedom and justice.*

We call for a **legally binding agreement** on Climate Change for the good of present and future generations, which has concrete and positive effects for the world's population, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable people, who are not responsible for climate change. The agreement should contain clauses foreseeing **reviews every 5 years**, to allow for targets to be increased. We also call for ambitious pre-2020 mitigation commitments under the UNFCCC.

- *Laudato Si', 139: When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves (...) Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.*

In a perspective of integral ecology (whereby ecology goes hand in hand with the search for common good and the preferential option for the poorest) tackling climate change is among the key actions to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition. This entails the support for a **human rights-based approach** in the new climate agreement. Internationally recognized human rights reflect the innate

human dignity and should be respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled in all future climate actions. To ensure everyone's **access to adequate food at all times**, the new climate agreement should recognize the importance of, and guarantee **food security** for all (only mentioning "food production" would not be enough to this purpose).

- *Laudato Si', 52: The developed countries ought to help pay this [ecological] debt by (...) assisting poorer countries to support policies and programmes of sustainable development. The poorest areas and countries are less capable of adopting new models for reducing environmental impact because they lack the wherewithal to develop the necessary processes and to cover their costs. (...) regarding climate change, there are differentiated responsibilities.*

In order for such commitment to be serious and foster trust, we maintain the need for **adequate funding**. This means for **industrialized countries to honor their commitment to contribute sufficient amounts towards the 100 billion USD per year** required for the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Such funds should be coming mostly from public finance; 50 per cent of public finances should be allocated to adaptation for communities already affected, and in particular for smallholder farmers. Any delivery of funds for climate projects on the ground should aim at **truly environmentally sustainable and socially just development** – for example, by scaling up agroecology and sharing clean technologies. Developing countries must be supported so as to acquire the capacity to integrate their climate targets into their economic and development planning.

- *Laudato Si', 165: We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay. 169: Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most.*

It is time to build new models of development and lifestyles that both counter global warming and bring people out of poverty. Crucial to this is to put an end to the fossil fuel era, **phasing out fossil fuel emissions** and starting reforming as of now **fossil fuel subsidies**, phasing in 100% renewables with sustainable energy accessible to all.

The Encyclical invites all of us to an "ecological conversion" and calls upon humanity for responsible action at individual, community and political level. **The bottom line of our call to you and to our government is to come to Climate Change negotiations with a heart and spirit open for a honest dialogue with your counterparts, in particular the poorest countries].**

We thank you very much for your attention. We assure you of our prayers for a blessed and fruitful work and wish you every success in your endeavors.

Yours sincerely,

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Secretary General