

Caritas Internationalis Perspectives on the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Our “Non-Negotiables”

Statement prepared by Caritas Internationalis (CI)

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Key Messages

Overarching “Non-Negotiables” for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

- ✿ Strive for integral human development and international solidarity;
- ✿ Promote full realization of universal human rights by reducing inequality and by increasing access to basic entitlements and quality of life;
- ✿ Ensure, through equitable and sustainable economies, participation in the economy on fair terms by poor women and men;
- ✿ Facilitate social and economic progress within safe planetary limits in order to benefit both present and future generations;
- ✿ Guarantee participation and empowerment of people in poverty as central pillars in both planning and implementation of an ambitious Post-2015 development framework, in recognition of their rights.

Specific Strategies To Be Included in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

- ✿ End the scandal of hunger and achieve universal food security at all times;
- ✿ Mainstream effective action to counteract and reverse the effects of climate change and adopt a global warming target;
- ✿ Achieve universal health coverage for all people;
- ✿ Promote decent work and support adequate social protection as the most effective routes out of poverty and of the on-going global economic crisis;
- ✿ Mainstream migrants into pertinent goals and include a goal that aims to make mobility legal, safe, accessible and affordable;
- ✿ Bridge the gap between development, peace and reconciliation, in particular, by comprehensively engaging people affected by conflicts and by addressing the root causes of those conflicts.

For **Caritas Internationalis**¹, which is grounded in Catholic Church Teaching and service, the human person must be at the centre of all development. We believe that all people are created in the image of God and are endowed with unique dignity, and that human life is sacred from the moment of conception to natural death. Thus, in a letter to Hon. David Cameron on the 2013 G8 meeting theme of going “back to First Principles”, Pope Francis insisted that all political and economic activity, whether national or international, must centre on people and that “*it must promote and guarantee their responsible exercise in solidarity, with particular attention to the poorest*”². Our vision is of a world, sustainable for future generations, where all can enjoy access to health care, freedom from poverty and hunger, live in a clean planet, and lead a peaceful and fulfilling life.

Overarching “Non-Negotiables” for the Post-2015 Agenda

Strive for integral human development

All humans are created in the image of God and are equal in their dignity. Therefore, all currently existing and unjust inequalities in entitlements and opportunities, income and well-being, are unacceptable.

Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the right to development states: “*The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development*”. Catholic Social Teaching emphasizes the need for integral human development, an approach that takes into account the well-being of the person and of all people in their different life situations: economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and spiritual.

The Post-2015 agenda should be planned in accord with this spirit and should include “built-in” accountability mechanisms designed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of commitments made by governments.

Extreme poverty can only be eradicated if inequality in income, opportunity and access is reduced and universal human rights are protected and fulfilled

Caritas action is rooted in solidarity, the common good, and the preferential option for the poor. Solidarity in the Post-2015 context should be understood as “*a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, to the good of all and each individual*” (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, #38). Caritas recognizes solidarity as the basis of all coherent action needed to address global challenges that constitute root causes of increasing prevalence of both inequality and injustice.

The Post-2015 framework should address inequality of income and opportunity. Absolute priority should be accorded to outcomes that exert a positive and sustainable

¹ Caritas Internationalis is the official humanitarian and development organization of the Catholic Church. The confederation of 164 national Caritas organizations is dedicated to the promotion of charity and justice and the service of the poor, regardless of race or religion.

² Pope Francis Letter to Hon. David Cameron re: G8 Summit theme: “A G8 Meeting that Goes Back to First Principles”, June 17, 2013.

impact on the lives of the poorest and most marginalized members of society. This will be possible only if all countries commit themselves and take action according to their respective contexts including, *inter alia*, the empowerment of people in poverty to become active agents in their own development and in the achievement of their rights.

Equitable and sustainable economies should ensure that poor women and men can participate on fair terms in the economy and that social and economic progress occurs within safe planetary limits, for present and future generations

In the Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI insisted that business must serve society' and markets should not be governed solely by the principle of the equivalence in value of exchanged goods. Flourishing as a human being demands that we recognize, respect and strive to realize everyone's capacity for creativity, productivity, generosity and responsibility to others and to the natural world.

Human beings are only one part of creation and have been entrusted with the stewardship of environment. In order to attain human flourishing, we humans must use the unique gifts of creativity and productivity and exercise them responsibly, for the well-being of all Creation. Pope Francis has called for the "*respect and protection of the entire creation which God has entrusted to man, not so that it be indiscriminately exploited but rather made into a garden.*"³ In this perspective, the Post-2015 framework should strive to re-orient the current economic framework to become equitable and inclusive for the poor. A shift toward sustainable development is needed in order to ensure that development remains within safe planetary limits and economic systems work for the common good of all people.

Economic progress should not be measured solely by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). To the contrary, the well-being of a nation should be measured by a series of indicators linked to social protection systems, including access to quality services, decent work, adequate, safe and nutritious food, adequate housing, personal safety, and basic income security as well as the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The framework should enhance incentives for sustainable consumption and production patterns, as well as foster small businesses.

The participation and empowerment of people in poverty must be central to both decision-making on and implementation of the Post-2015 development framework

The right to participate is fundamental to a human rights-based approach to development. Such an approach obliges States, within the framework of existing legally codified commitments, to guarantee all human rights for every person under their national and extraterritorial jurisdiction, without regard to age, status, sex, race, ethnic or religious background.

³ Address of Pope Francis, *Apostolic Journey to Rio de Janeiro on the Occasion of the 28th World Youth Day, Meeting with the Bishops of Brazil*, July 28, 2013.

The principle of subsidiarity is key to promote the active participation of those affected by the implementation of development activities. *"Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also is it an injustice [...] to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do"* (Quadragesimo Anno, #79).

The Post-2015 framework should ensure that all people be empowered to act as agents of their own development and have the right, space and capacity to hold decision-makers and implementers accountable for their actions. To that end, participation should be reinforced by accountability mechanisms that include qualitative data sourced through participatory research and that facilitate effective access to justice.

The promotion and empowerment of women and girls is of particular importance since significant numbers currently are marginalized in many respects, despite the fact that they are essential actors in promoting and achieving development.

Informed participation requires an institutional environment that enables participation of civil society, including faith-based organizations, and especially of those organizations/groups that work with and represent the poorest and most marginalized. Supporting formal and informal education programs for the poor is key.

Specific Strategies to Be Included in the Post-2015 Agenda

End the scandal of hunger and realise food security at all times

Food security for all is a paramount moral imperative. The Bible constantly refers to this earthly need. However, food does not simply satisfy material needs: it also bears a spiritual and transcendental value. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for *"our daily bread"*, as a gift of God to be shared in solidarity. In the Gospel account, the multiplication of bread has many meanings, including the common responsibility to provide food for all (*"give them some food yourselves"* (Mt 14:16)). The equal dignity of every person includes the equal right to food. This right is ethically motivated: the biblical command, *"give the hungry to eat"* (Mt 25:35), is intrinsically linked to the defense of human life. Food is the fruit of Creation, which is itself a gift of God. In order to ensure the common good, the human family must respect and exercise stewardship over creation.

Hunger, the most extreme manifestation of poverty, must be eradicated in a definitive and irreversible way; only in this way can we fully realize the universal human right to safe, sufficient, nutritious and affordable food⁴, which is recognised in international law. This entails guaranteed access to, control over, and ownership of food production systems, including natural resources. In particular, the rights of women

⁴ High Level Consultation (HLC) on Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition in the Post 2015 Development Framework, held in Madrid on 4 April 2013. Synthesis Report by Joint Chairs and CO-leads.

farmers, smallholder producers and pastoralists must be guaranteed in relation to property ownership and use, education and civic participation. The Post-2015 Development Agenda, therefore, should foster investment in small-scale producers, strengthen environmental and community resilience (particularly through promotion of sustainable agricultural practices such as agroecology, collective and solidarity-based economy, and family farming) empower rural women, and facilitate the self-determination of populations, their communities and their democratic institutions.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda should strengthen democratic, inclusive, accountable and effective governance of the global food system. It should foresee accountability mechanisms that can be used by people to hold their governments accountable. Governments must be urged to put in place multi-stakeholder platforms at local, regional and national level in order to ensure democratic participation in policy development and implementation, especially by those most affected by such decisions and actions. Indeed, while the private sector should be accountable and contribute responsibly to the new development agenda in accord with its respective role, the responsibility of States to regulate, oversee and guarantee rights, good governance, coordination, transparency and fairness in the management of public goods must never be compromised. Strong control of food prices and volatility must be accorded an important place in the governance of a future development agenda. As an example, States should integrate the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food (which put governance at the forefront) and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests into their development cooperation policies and action plans.

Ending hunger and ensuring food security for all requires policy coherence within all areas that have an impact on food and nutrition. Therefore, the Post-2015 Development Agenda must ensure long-term social, economic, and environmental sustainability: this implies, on the one hand, a correction of the damaging trends of our food consumption and production patterns on the environment and planet resources and, on the other hand, elimination of the international determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition, such as unjust trade policies and the imbalances in the global food market. Such actions should be undertaken in accord with the extra-territorial obligations of States. Ensuring food security at all times requires constant attention to both short-term and long-term development needs: therefore, humanitarian and development interventions should be integrated in the new development agenda.

To guarantee access to food for everyone, social protection systems must be scaled up, strengthened and adapted to national contexts in order to assure sustainable costs and to aim toward an adequate diet for all. Steadfast progress must be made towards a world where no child suffers from stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition. In this regard, consideration might be given to establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection.

Mainstream effective action against Climate Change and adopt a global warming target

All are called to serve as stewards of God's creation. *"Christian love forbids choosing between people and the planet. It urges us to work for an equitable and sustainable future in which all peoples can share in the bounty of the earth and in which the earth itself is protected from predatory use."*⁵ The Catholic Church repeatedly has taught that the misuse of God's creation betrays the gift given by God for the good of the entire human family. Science has proven that global climate change has led to alterations in weather patterns that hinder the ability of a significant number of people to access food. We must be especially attentive to the impact of climate change on the poor.

The very concept of sustainable development includes the preservation and improvement of the environment, which involves serious attention to the global challenge of climate change. A failure to take strong and coordinated action to control climate change will bear dramatic consequences on the world's capability to feed and provide adequate livelihood to a growing population. The Post-2015 Development Agenda should mainstream action to address climate change across all policy areas, in particular by striking a fair balance between mitigation and adaptation needs (supported by adequate funding). An explicit Climate Change target (containing global warming within 2°C) should feature under the final list of Development Goals and leverage an ambitious agreement for a legally binding instrument in the UNFCCC.

Accomplish Universal Health Coverage for all members of the population

Pope Benedict XVI clearly outlined the dilemma of access to health care in today's world: *"In our time we witness on one hand a care of health that risks being transformed into pharmacological consumerism, medical and surgical, becoming almost a cult of the body, and on the other, the difficulty of millions of persons to accede to conditions of minimal subsistence and indispensable medicines to be cured."* He went on to appeal for the establishment of a *"true distributive justice that guarantees to all, on the basis of objective needs, adequate care."*⁶

The post-2015 agenda needs to aim toward completion of the positive results already attained through the health-related Millennium Development Goals. Complete change in focus and priorities should be avoided or we risk additional outbreaks of generalized epidemics of life-threatening infectious diseases.

The international community also should promote an integral system of care that prioritizes community-based, primary care, and includes prevention as well as treatment services. Such care also should be holistic in focus, attending to the needs of the whole person, including physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

The post-2015 agenda should take into account and aim toward positive policies

⁵ *Renew the Earth*, Section 4, para C.

⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, *Message to the 25th Conference of the Pontifical Council of Health Pastoral Care*, Vatican City, November 18, 2010.

and practical action to eliminate the negative social, economic, and political determinants of poor health, including poverty, poor quality education, insufficient or improper nutrition, conflict and violence, in order to assure quality of life and living conditions that promote and assure "Health for All". Of particular concern in this regard are the non-communicable diseases, many of which have a behavioral basis and the prevention and control of which will require significant economic and professional resources as well as re-shaping of attitudes, culture, and nutritional and exercise patterns.

The agenda needs to acknowledge and support the key role of civil society, and, in particular, of faith-based organizations, in addressing the health needs of isolated populations, of those living in "failed states", of those affected by generalized violence and long-term emergencies, and must aim to ensure adequate resources to non-State actors engaged in health care in places that are not reached by the public health systems.

Decent work and support of adequate income and social protection⁷

In today's globalised world, work is increasingly informal, precarious and unprotected. But the promotion of work as a means of eradicating poverty should not be viewed as an issue that could be compromised: as Pope Pius XI affirmed in his Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, "*Labor [...] is not a mere commodity. On the contrary, the worker's human dignity in it must be recognized. It therefore cannot be bought and sold like a commodity*".

As a contribution to the discussion of the Post-2015 Agenda, Caritas, together with other Catholic Church-inspired organizations working at global, national, and local levels, re-affirms that "[h]uman work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question, if we try to see that question really from the point of view of man's good".⁸

We believe that poverty eradication requires specific and concerted commitments by governments, employers and workers organizations, the private sector and civil society; commitments that are grounded in human dignity, human rights and responsibilities, and solidarity. For work to be decent, it must be "*work that expresses the essential dignity of every man and woman in the context of their particular society*".⁹

The extension of social protection is a fundamental means to accomplish solidarity within and across society. Social protection mechanisms are essential to eradicate poverty, as they protect workers and their families from risks of life, such as unemployment and illness. Social protection floors as defined by the ILO recommendations¹⁰ are powerful tools to expand protection to cover all workers, families and

⁷ Source: *Statement of Catholic-Inspired Organizations on Decent Work and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, Geneva, June 2013.

⁸ Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1981.

⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 63, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009.

¹⁰ Social protection floors are "defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion" (*ILO Social Protection Floors Resolution*, No 202, 2012).

communities.

Human mobility

Catholic Church Teaching squarely recognizes migration, and, in particular, forced migration, as *"a social phenomenon of epoch-making proportions that requires bold, forward-looking policies of international cooperation if it is to be handled effectively."*¹¹ We believe that *"every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance."*¹²

Migration can serve as a development enabler, a strategy (certainly not the only one) to fight poverty and to overcome climate-induced disasters, to foster trade and diversity. Research indicates that *"even relatively small increases in freedom of movement for migrants from developing countries would equal or exceed the gains from elimination of all remaining policy barriers to movement of goods and capital."*¹³

In our globalised and interconnected world, we recognize the need to allow for and regulate the movement of goods, capital and services; we have not yet achieved such an understanding of the mobility of people, despite the fact that this issue should be paramount.

The nexus between Migration and Development should feature prominently in the post-2015 agenda. It is a unique opportunity to fortify the nexus with indicators and targets. The guiding principle should be that human mobility can occur under secure, lawful, affordable conditions and fosters the contributions by migrants and Diaspora to sending and receiving societies.

Caritas promotes a specific goal on human mobility, but also believes that issues related to migrants and diaspora should be included, as appropriate, in other goals. Within the context of the Post-2015 development agenda, governments, employers and workers organisations and civil society should work together to ensure that all migrant workers and their families benefit from the same rights and assume the same responsibilities in the country where they live as any other worker. Specific attention is to be paid to fundamental principles and rights at work as well as to the provision of adequate, fair, and portable social protection, at levels that conform to universal human rights and international labour standards.¹⁴

Peace and Reconciliation

Fifty years ago, Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris*, promoted the necessary political will to address the plight of the poorest of the poor, literally billions of people, caught up in systems where injustices never deliver peace or development. His successor, Pope Francis has proclaimed the individual and collective

¹¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, #62.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Position on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda*.

¹⁴ Source: *Statement of Catholic-Inspired Organizations on Decent Work and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, June 13, 2013.

responsibility of the entire human community to live and work in a context of genuine solidarity among all God's people everywhere. Informed by such Catholic Church Teaching, all those engaged in the work of Caritas recognize the Gospel mandate to become instruments of peace.

In September 2000, at the beginning of the 21st century, the international community affirmed its commitment to the Millennium Declaration. Without hesitation, there was a strong response to the UN Secretary General's urgent appeal that together we must work to "*alleviate human suffering*." A persistent gap in the efforts to, in the words of the UN Secretary General, "*alleviate human suffering*," however, is evidenced in the failure to include concrete peace building and reconciliation processes among the global goals. In places where wars have been ended, where communities have been restored, have development processes been able to sustain the journey along the long paths needed for peace?

Respect for human rights, self-determination, Rule of Law, effective good governance, human dignity, and protection of all people, have been consigned to the margins for too long. The UN Peace-building Commission was established as a potential response to these clamouring needs, but we need a much clearer vision and action plan: "*No peace without development; no development without peace*." There is a need to address the root causes of conflicts, including illegal arms trade and traffic, as well as exploitation of natural resources.

"*A life of dignity for all*" is possible and sustainable only when the entire international community is completely committed to peace-making among all members of the human family. The Post-2015 Development Agenda must aim to promote new programs and projects that invite and facilitate full participation by both individuals and communities, on local, national and regional levels, to discern achievable resolutions to conflict and to ensure sustainable conditions for peace and harmony long into the future.

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