

Caritas contribution for the GFMD in Stockholm, May 2014

*International cooperation in the spirit of solidarity for protecting and promoting the human person.*

**Basic assumptions and our vision**

Joining with many other brothers and sisters belonging to civil society we believe that all humans are created equal in their dignity, therefore existing and **unjust inequalities in entitlements and opportunities are unacceptable**. 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.”*<sup>1</sup>

Migration needs to be seen as an opportunity for all rather than a difficulty or even a threat. States need to adopt flexible mobility policies to allow for safe and lawful ways of labour migration. Migrants and refugees have the right to family reunification and states should give immediate and flexible access to it for all those who suffer from being separated from their loved ones.

Caritas is inspired by the words of Pope Francis released on the occasion of World Migrants Day 2014: *“The reality of migration, needs to be approached and managed in a new, equitable and effective manner; more than anything, this calls for international cooperation and a spirit of profound solidarity and compassion. Cooperation at different levels is critical, including the broad adoption of policies and rules aimed at protecting and promoting the human person.”*<sup>2</sup>

Catholic Social Teaching squarely recognizes 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.”*<sup>3</sup>

Pope Francis addressing migrants and refugees the day after the shipwreck in the Mediterranean in October 2013 which killed 399 people trying to reach Europe to build a better future, denounced the *“globalization of indifference”* threatening rich societies.

We call upon governments, civil society and people of good will to work against this indifference and act in solidarity in order to make migration an informed choice and not a necessity. Wherever people move to, they should have opportunities to contribute to the flourishing of communities they live in, as well as contributing to their societies of origin.

The reasons for human mobility are manifold and a distinction between those who are forced to leave their country of origin and those who are moving in search of new challenges and opportunities has to be made. <sup>4</sup> Forced migration amongst other things is a symptom of a lack of opportunities for men, women, children and their families to live in their own country and to build their future there. Confronted with mixed migration flows however, the distinction between forced migration and “voluntary” migration is not always clear cut.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, “Message for the 2013 World Day for Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World”

<sup>3</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, #62,

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html)

<sup>4</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Pontifical Council Cor Unum, “Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons.

## Recommendations with regards to the right to move in search of better opportunities

Caritas Internationalis endorses the “5-year action plan for collaboration” of Civil Society proposed for the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013. Caritas would like to stress the following points with regards to the right to migrate:

- Caritas endorses **the need to regulate the migrant labour recruitment industry.**
- Caritas underlines the importance **to guarantee labour rights for migrant workers, as they are often to be found in labour sectors with precarious working conditions, among them many migrant women. Decent work and support of adequate income and social protection**<sup>5</sup> should be accessible to migrant workers, in the same way as citizens of a given country.
- **Integration policies that provide opportunities for migrants** to contribute with their talents and skills to the societies welcoming them should be in place.  
Migrants who are integrated in the receiving society can be **agents of change** in two directions: towards the receiving society as well as towards their society of origin. In the receiving society they contribute to a larger diversity, they challenge existing values, they revive markets, and they are ambassadors of multilingualism and cultural diversity. As with many other potentially vulnerable groups in the receiving society they are a touchstone for our ability to live peacefully together<sup>6</sup>.
- As half of world migrants are women and nowadays many of them move independently, **migration policies should be checked against their impact on female migrants.**<sup>7</sup>
- Finally Caritas recommends **the implementation of pre-departure counseling**, to protect migrants from deceit, exploitation and from unrealistic expectations, ultimately to make migration an informed choice.

## Recommendations with regards to the right to stay at home and fighting the root causes

Forced migration can be caused by different root causes and most of them are linked with the lack of development and opportunities in their societies of origin. As stressed before migration should be an informed choice and not a necessity. Recent significant arrivals on the shores of Italy, but also in North Africa (arrivals and stranded migrants) underpin the fact that there is insufficient advancement on development policies that encourage people to choose to stay at home.

- Caritas recommends further exploration regarding the **incentives to make potential migrants choose to stay at home** and investing their savings there, rather than investing money in dangerous journeys. Among those are opportunities to invest their talents and resources in education, especially vocational training, the creation of new and additional jobs especially in agriculture – a sector that has a negative reputation, through off-farm and value chain development activities focusing on processing and local market development.
- Caritas stresses the imperative for **eradicating hunger sustainably** and realising the **right to food** for all. Famine, malnutrition and under nutrition can be the trigger elements for forced displacements. Climate change **can further provoke migration.** Therefore *“it urges 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”* (Renew the Earth, section 4, 1991).

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<sup>5</sup> Caritas Internationalis Perspectives on the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Our “Non-Negotiables”, October 2013

<sup>6</sup> « A reflection on the dynamics between Migration and Development », Caritas Europa reflection paper, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Caritas Internationalis, “The female face of migration”, Advocacy and best practices for women who migrate and the families they leave behind.

### Recommendations with regards to migrants in distress

Migrants in distress are both those who are victims of a large-scale disaster or facing individually a situation of violence or trauma in transit. The level of development of a society can also be “measured” against its will to share and show global solidarity. *“A firm and preserving determination to commit oneself to the common good, to the good of all and each individual”* (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, #38), should be a fundamental principle behind it.

In line with the “5-year Action Plan for Collaboration” Caritas stresses the need to **address their assistance and protection needs, especially those of women and unaccompanied minor migrants.**

- Caritas **recommends that detention of minor migrants should be avoided**, as it is not in their best interest and there are other less costly ways to protect them.
- Caritas proposes to **explore the feasibility of an international referral system**, by which many CS actors providing, shelter, legal, social and psychological counselling around the world are connected, in order to provide a support network to individual migrants facing situations of violence and trauma.
- Based on the principle of solidarity **refugee protection should be paramount**. Every human being eligible for international protection should receive it together with a perspective for a life in dignity. The vast majority of world’s refugees live in third countries, many of them showing great solidarity in spite of being developing countries themselves. The international community should uphold international protection schemes and moreover provide durable solutions for refugees, such as refugee resettlement schemes. Major refugee receiving countries need to receive generous support from the international community.

### Recommendations with regards to the involvement of diaspora communities and migrant organizations

Diaspora communities have grown steadily in the last century and are very active in promoting development in their home regions and countries of destination, often without being acknowledged for it. If allowed to contribute in a structured way to their communities in the countries of origin and destination, diaspora organisations will increase solidarity within and between societies, providing more options and diminishing the risk that people embark on a hazardous journey.

Diaspora associations show that migrants have the potential to build a bridge between the societies of origin and the societies of destination, by bringing in skills and ideas, fostering cultural exchange and awareness and increasing economic activity and trade relations with the countries of origin.

- Caritas supports the engagement of diaspora and migrant associations and **“frameworks that facilitate (their) engagement as entrepreneurs, social investors and policy advocates and partners”**<sup>8</sup> at the centre of migration phenomena and source of consolation for men and women living far from home.
- Caritas underlines that it is important to **facilitate ties among migrant communities abroad and their communities of origin**, namely being able to connect with families left behind or to do family/community visits without losing a stable legal status, or to allow for exploration visits in case of a planned return.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “The 5-year Action Plan for Collaboration”, UN HLD Civil Society 2013

<sup>9</sup> Dr Anna Lindley, Refugee Studies Centre, Working Paper No. 47 “Conflict-induced migration and remittances: exploring conceptual frameworks”, May 2008: It appears clearly that a significant factor for mobilizing financial flows and is the intensity of the ties between migrants and their home countries. These ties are likely to depend in part on the frequency of visits. Migrants’ legal status that makes it more or less difficult to visit home may facilitate or hinder maintaining strong ties and may encourage or discourage financial flows. *“... Length of stay, permanence of status, nature of separation and return options, mediated by refugee regimes in the host country, have important implications for conflict-induced migrants and their relationship with family members ‘left behind’ that may also shape their remittance behaviour in important ways.”*

### Human mobility in the post 2015 agenda

In our globalised and interconnected world, we recognize the need to allow for and to 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.

Migration is an enabler for development. Notably, 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”*<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore the nexus between Migration and Development should feature prominently in the post-2015 agenda, which is a unique opportunity to fortify it with clear indicators and targets. Human mobility can occur under secure, lawful, affordable conditions and fosters the contributions by migrants and diasporas to both sending and receiving societies.

- Caritas promotes a specific goal on human mobility in the post 2015 framework, but also believes that issues related to migrants and diasporas might need to be included, as appropriate, in other goals.

Caritas is present at the GFMD 2014 with representatives from Caritas Internationalis and Caritas Europa, Cordaid (Caritas of The Netherlands) Caritas Lebanon, Norway, Senegal and Sweden (host).

Vatican City State, May 2014

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<sup>10</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM) Position on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.