

For a Climate of Solidarity

Caritas Internationalis - the Confederation of Caritas organizations working worldwide on integral ecology, human development and emergency relief - looks forward to the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23), the first to be held under the Presidency of a Small Island Party, Fiji, and kindly hosted in Germany. This year our Confederation is being represented by a delegation of members coming from Europe, Africa and Oceania.

Through our long-standing engagement in UNFCCC processes, we have been advocating for outcomes that contribute to sustaining livelihoods, food security, poverty eradication, increasing climate resilience, steady reduction of greenhouse gases, equitable growth and finance, and sustainable development for the most vulnerable¹. The message of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* speaks clear: humankind has to redefine its relationship with the environment. We echo Pope Francis' call for a new social covenant involving the environment, present and future generations under an **integral ecology** paradigm. This "includes our unique place as human beings in this world and our relationship to our surroundings"² and is inseparable from the search for the common good and the preferential option for the poorest³. The Encyclical invites to an **ecological conversion** and calls upon humanity for responsible action at individual, community and political level. Governments, businesses, churches, communities and individuals all have a role to play in addressing climate change. Caritas organizations would like to contribute to climate policy debates by offering the following considerations, for the well-being of present and future generations, in particular of the poorest and marginalized ones.

COP23 is not about just technical work, but calls for real political commitment to increase efforts in building a world that is ecologically and socially fair. It should be capable of ensuring implementation while safeguarding the Paris Agreement (hence PA) spirit and vision. Solidarity and cooperation, attention to the most disadvantaged, equitable sharing of burdens, as well as mutual respect, encouragement and support should be the principles guiding these negotiations, as opposed to the current political context based on national interests.

Bringing the Talanoa Dialogue to good results: State Parties must deploy a much greater effort to reduce at the soonest their GHG emissions, speeding up on the pathway towards 2018, where their contributions will be reviewed. Urgent decarbonization of the economies is needed. This

¹ "The landscape of international relations shows a growing capacity for responding to the expectations of the human family, also with the contribution of science and technology (...). Yet even these new developments do not succeed in eliminating the exclusion of much of the world's population: how many victims of malnutrition, wars, climate change are there? How many people lack work and essential items, and are forced to leave their land, exposing themselves to many and terrible forms of exploitation?"
World Food Day, Address of Pope Francis, 16 October 2017.

² LS, Chapter V.

³ LS, 156, 158.

requires reliable actions such as the adoption of short-term and long-term objectives and strategies. The people of the world need to regain trust in their governments and politicians from seeing they are capable to take courageous steps to contain global warming, thus caring for the future of new generations⁴. We look forward to a “Talanoa dialogue” that is truly constructive, inclusive, participatory and transparent, advancing common understanding for the sake of the “collective good”⁵. Caritas organisations are willing to accompany this dialogue by bringing the voices of the poor and most affected by climate impacts.

Implementing Human Rights: Virtuous cycles are created when human rights guide climate change policies, enhancing the ability of States and communities to adapt. The realization of human rights for all is closely related to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, both standing in “intrinsic relationship” with climate change (Preamble of the PA). Achieving virtuous synergies between climate action and human rights can be done, among others, by duly integrating human rights principles and obligations into the operational modalities of the PA to ensure just and effective climate policies. In addition, Caritas organizations also draw the attention of State Parties to the following thematic areas:

- **Addressing climate migration:** On World Food Day 2017 the governments of the world recognized that migration is increasingly caused by extreme weather events resulting from climate change⁶. The rights of migrants are explicitly mentioned in the Preamble of the PA; migrants contribute to the resilience of communities and societies, and their knowledge, skills and capacities can be useful in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction; migrants must be engaged and their rights prioritized especially in Adaptation and Loss and Damage issues. The Task Force on Displacement, under the Warsaw International Mechanism, should address climate-related migration in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. In this context, it should adopt recommendations towards COP24 that consider migration and forced displacement as a result of climate-induced conflict over natural resources like soil, water, land. It should open up consultation with CSOs, especially those supporting vulnerable communities on the field.
- **Empowering local communities and Indigenous Peoples:** The implementation of the PA needs to include the active role of local communities through organized spaces for their active participation, local ownership and free prior-informed decision-making⁷. As stewards of land, Indigenous Peoples are uniquely situated to provide critical perspectives on climate governance. Caritas Organizations call on all Parties at COP23 to strengthen the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and rely on their traditional knowledge (including their relationship with their land, air and water) when developing policies to implement the Paris Agreement, as well as in other key international processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. With regards to the Indigenous Peoples Platform (IPP), Caritas supports in particular the

⁴ “It is not acceptable to avoid commitment by hiding behind linguistic sophistry that denigrates diplomacy, reducing it to the “art of the possible”, a sterile exercise to justify selfishness and inactivity.” World Food Day, Address of Pope Francis, above.

⁵ Informal note of the COP22 and COP23 Presidencies, *Facilitative Dialogue 2018 – Approach*, 1 November 2017.

⁶ According to the FAO, in 2015 more than 19 million people were internally displaced because of natural disasters. Between 2008 and 2015, an average of 26.4 million people were displaced annually by climate or weather-related disasters. <http://www.fao.org/world-food-day/2017/theme/en/>

⁷ ILO 169.

establishment of a Platform that both strengthens Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge in matters related to climate change and enables them to fully and meaningfully participate in UNFCCC process, in ways to represent all regions of the world. We believe this platform should strengthen their capacity to protect biodiversity and sustainability, especially in areas where there are still rich natural ecosystems protected by natives.

- **A “Gender Action Plan” for climate justice:** Women, in particular **women farmers** are especially suffering from climate change impacts. Women make up, on average, 43% of the agricultural workers in developing countries; yet, strong inequalities persist between women and men in rural areas. Ensuring climate justice requires a differentiated approach to adaptation i.e. reflecting the different impacts climate change has on men, women, girls and boys. A “Gender Action Plan” should enhance, through adequate funds and programs, women’s and girls' active participation in decision-making processes that affect them, as well as in their implementation and assessment. Such a Plan should significantly contribute to ensuring that climate policies do foster equality and equity between women and men, raising awareness and creating conditions for men to play their role in advancing women’s and girls’ status. It should contribute to the realization of SDG 5 and of the “Leave None Behind” approach. Acknowledging existing inequalities in climate-related policies and measures requires, on its turn, promoting women’s equal access to land rights, social welfare, production resources (such as water, seed and agro-ecological diversity), education and training, as well as effective channels and resources enabling women to be supported and claim their rights.

Ensuring Food Security: The UNFCCC was originally created to answer the threat climate change poses to food production. With the Paris Agreement, the Parties showed ambition to move further by including the respect of food security in the Preamble. But the current state of discussions and work does not reflect this fundamental preoccupation. We call for the creation of a joint Work Program on Food Security and Agriculture to prioritize issues of adaptation including building resilience and supporting the livelihoods and rights of vulnerable smallholder farmers, promoting agroecology, agroforestry, indigenous knowledge and land use corresponding to locally adopted approaches, while ensuring permanent reduction of non-CO2 emissions in agriculture. This work program could ensure a coordinated approach to adaptation and mitigation in agriculture within the scope of the four pillars of food security (availability, access, utilization and stability), and foster policy coherence with other UN bodies like the World Committee on Food Security.

We reject climate-damaging indirect land-use changes (ILUC) from cash crops, e.g. biomass plantation, which creates market-driven competition between energy and food production. We also condemn extractive mega-projects which, in several regions like Latin America, aggravate the climate crisis and deteriorate large territories where agroecological projects could be implemented.

Operationalizing Climate Finance: Climate finance towards adaptation of the most vulnerable and climate change mitigation is a matter of sheer survival. Despite climate finance reaching areas of need, it often does not reach the most vulnerable, or it does it too late. Concrete terms of identifying and reaching the most vulnerable are necessary to ensure the 100 billion USD/annum by 2020 goal is effective. Another fundamental problem is access to climate funds. Despite a push for national ownership of climate plans, much climate finance continues to be

channeled through multilateral institutions. More needs to be done to facilitate access to climate finance by further streamlining and simplifying the application, approval and disbursement processes. Ultimately, climate finance will be most effective when it is supporting locally-owned approaches to dealing with climate change. A number of governments have not yet established mechanisms to make these funds accessible also to grass-root NGOs and faith-based communities, for the implementation of socially-sound adaptation and mitigation programs. Funding should be made available also to spread information about the extensive and constantly expanding body of knowledge on climate-resilient agriculture, indigenous knowledge systems, disaster preparedness with local communities, civil society bodies, and vulnerable people. Experiences, approaches and strategies should be discussed to evaluate the social impact of measures taken, along with the most vulnerable. Climate funds should also enable integrated programs for disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness, in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Addressing Loss & Damage, especially in Agriculture: In Oceania, for example, the loss of land means the loss of history, identity, culture, and even family in addition to the loss of income. The Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) aims at advancing knowledge gathering, coordination and support to address loss and damage associated with extreme and slow onset events in vulnerable developing countries (Decision 2/CP.19)⁸. Agriculture in developing countries accounted for 23 percent of all damages and losses caused by medium and large-scale disasters between 2006 and 2016⁹. The findings by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) show that, of a total US\$140 billion worth of loss and damage caused by 78 disasters, agriculture and its subsectors sustained damage worth \$30 billion. Thus, addressing vulnerabilities in the agriculture sector assumes more significance. COP provides an open door for an ‘enhanced and strengthened’ WIM. Caritas organizations call on all Parties at COP23 to work ‘on a cooperative and facilitative basis’ to ‘enhance understanding, action and support’ in areas including early warning systems, comprehensive risk assessment and management, risk insurance facilities, climate risk pooling, and non-economic losses.

Bonn, November 2017

⁸ unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/892863/>