

Address of **Aloysius John**, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis at the International Conference entitled *The Church's Response to trafficking and Unsafe Migration (23-26 January 2020 – Yangon, Myanmar)*

Yangon, Myanmar, 24 January 2020

Your Eminences, Your excellencies,  
Honorable Minister  
Reverend Fathers and sisters,  
Dear ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to first share with you the greetings from our President Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle who extends his support and sends his blessings for the success of this important international conference on the burning question of migration and human trafficking.

It is also a pleasure for me to be in your midst to listen to your discussions and also learn from your own experiences in the region. This theme is a priority for the confederation and Caritas Internationalis is determined to commit itself in helping the migrants in close collaboration with all the structures of the Church working for this cause.

According to the UN reports of 2018, there were more than 71M people living outside their own homeland either as IDPs or as refugees and among them a percentage of them victims of human traffickers. The same reports claims that in 2018, every minute **25 people** were forced to flee their homeland.

Pope Francis condemns human trafficking with indignation. He condemns trafficking in human beings as “one of the most dramatic manifestations of the “commercialization of the other”, a crime against humanity that disfigures both the victims as well as those who carry it out”.

Caritas Internationalis is determined to take up the challenge and the struggle to enable migrants to have a safe and dignified life in the countries where they find themselves and at the same time to build awareness to those who are potential candidates for migration. There are reflections and common actions taken in Africa, in the middle east reflection are underway at the regional level and in Latin America, next week the bishops of CELAM are meeting in Cucuta to reflect on the plight of the refugees and IDP victims of the political crisis.

This conference in Asia that you have organized, inviting the different actors of the church is an important occasion to witness Church's Commitment to address this issue with determination and Coordination at the Regional level. I would like to thank you, Cardinal Nichols, and the Santa Martha Group.

In September 2019, while addressing the representatives of Talitha Koum, the Holy father urged more congregations and Church sectors to join in this struggle . “Considering the scale of challenges posed by human trafficking,” the Pope said, “it is necessary to promote a synergistic commitment on the part of the various ecclesial realities.”

One of the key challenges that Caritas as a confederation wants to address is how to enable and prevent people from falling into the trap of migration. Cardinal Napier, in July 2019, in the planning session of Caritas South Africa said, “Migration is the result of bad or selfish planning both at the national and the international level and is a push factor for migration, resulting in the exodus of our younger generation leaving their villages in the quest of better lives and ending up in the hands of scrupulous traffickers and some of them drowning in the Mediterranean sea”.

The major causes are climatic change and economic crisis in the developing countries or the political crisis and consequently leading to violence and exodus of millions. We need to address this; and reflect on how our development programs in Caritas and also in the other institutions could nurture development activities which would help our younger generation to live in their homelands.

I would like to conclude with these words of Pope Francis, “We need to respond to the cry of our many brothers and sisters who yearn to be freed from the yoke of poverty, violence and injustice.” We need to work in synergy with all the organisations of the church in order to be effective in our response.

I want to appreciate the work done by Caritas Asia, the President Dr. Benedict Alo d'Rozaio and Mr. Zar Gomez have systematically promoted action and reflection on Migration and Human trafficking as a priority. I also would like to thank the FABC, the Santa Maria as well as ICMC for this wonderful occasion to work together on this crucial issue with Caritas as one of the instruments of the church for the socio-pastoral work. I Wish great success for this conference. Thank you.