

Draft Caritas Internationalis Strategic Framework 2019–2023



We cannot do everything,
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
And to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
A step along the way,
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter
And do the rest.
We may never see the end results,
But that is the difference between
The master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
Ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

This prayer was written by Bishop Untener. It was first presented by Cardinal Dearden in 1979 and quoted by Pope Francis in 2015.

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A note on process

One human family, one common home

Caritas believes change is possible, a change that will make the world a fairer place while caring for all of creation. The predominant model of human progress is no longer sustainable for either our planet or its people. We see the symptoms of the disease in violent conflicts, growing inequality, a culture of waste, and forced migration.

As Pope Francis says in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, “These situations have caused sister Earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course” (LS 53). The Holy Father laid out a different path: “a human alternative to the globalisation of indifference: (1) placing the economy at the service of peoples; (2) working for peace and justice; and (3) defending Mother Earth” (Speech on 05.11.2016).

Hearing the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth

We share Pope Francis's "dream" of a Church that contributes to inclusive and sustainable development, while caring for the Earth and bringing the whole human family together. We strive to be even more a people-centred and not a self-centred movement. At the heart of a Church of the poor and for the poor, we emphasise the need to listen and work together, give a voice to the voiceless in the Church and in society, so that all may fully participate in decisions that affect them.

We acknowledge that, by working together, we can really become agents of transformation (EG 24, 27), helping people to become artisans of their own destiny (PP 65) and changing the structures that prevent individuals from flourishing. Development must be integral. It must be for all people and not for a few. It must be about the whole human person not just the material dimension. We need feasible models of social integration that do not foment inequality. We must care for the environment and not exploit natural resources only for economic growth.

We are determined to be part of an outward looking Church, going to the peripheries. We will be there for the victims of disasters, tackling disease, changing unjust structures, upholding dignity, advocating for equal opportunities for women and men, supporting decent work, journeying with migrants and refugees, eradicating human trafficking promoting peace and caring for our common home.

We renew our commitment to act in communion with other structures of the Catholic Church, and in partnerships with others outside the Church. We recognise the urgent need to build a stronger Caritas confederation by making it more inviting and attractive, especially for women and young people, who have the duty and the right to participate in our decision-making.

The Strategic Framework 2019–2023 reflects the work Caritas member organisations want to do together as a confederation through its international and regional structures, and does not exclude the wide range of work we do on issues such as healthcare, supporting the disabled and their families, working with the elderly, education and much more. We as members of the Caritas family embark collectively on a renewed journey, hearing and acting on "the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth" (LS).

Our vision, mission and values*

Vision: Building a civilisation of love

Inspired by the Holy Scriptures, by the teachings of the Catholic Church and by the life experiences and hopes of people living in poverty and other inhuman conditions, Caritas Internationalis strives for a world where love, justice, peace, freedom and solidarity flourish; where the dignity of the human being, made in the image of God, is upheld; where people are no longer excluded or cast aside and where all can prosper, where there is no more discrimination, violence, intolerance or dehumanising poverty; where the goods of the Earth are shared, where everyone can enjoy the necessities of life; where all of creation is safeguarded; and where the voices of the excluded are listened to in the construction of a just and fraternal society.

*see Code of Ethics of Caritas Internationalis, May 2014.

Mission: Serve, accompany and defend the poor

Caritas Internationalis is an institution of the Catholic Church dedicated to serving the poor and promoting charity and justice. "For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being."¹

Caritas Internationalis is committed to fostering communion between the Universal Church and the particular Churches in the exercise of charity, and among the faithful, in pursuit of the common good. Caritas attends to the poorest, responding to disasters, providing social services, promoting integral human development, speaking out against the causes of poverty and violence and convening all people of good will to advocate and take action toward a world built on love, peace and justice. Such integral human development includes a deep care for the Earth as a gift of God to the whole human family, including the generations to come. In order to fulfil its mission, Caritas engages in:

¹Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, #25a.

- Transforming lives: Caritas promotes sustainable integral human development so that people in the most disadvantaged communities are able to flourish and live in peace and dignity. Caritas works to ensure that nature is respected and managed responsibly and sustainably in the interests of the entire human family and all of God's creation.
- Calling for a better world: Caritas seeks a world where the voices of the poor are heard, a world in which governments and institutions are just and accountable, so that women and men, even in the poorest communities, are able to influence the systems and decisions that affect them.
- Reducing risks, saving lives, rebuilding communities: Caritas responds quickly and effectively to humanitarian crises such as conflicts, forced displacement of peoples, natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Caritas saves lives, relieves suffering, and helps rebuild livelihoods and communities.

Caritas Internationalis promotes fraternal cooperation among its members, without diminishing their autonomy, by carrying out mobilisation, coordination, communication, representation and capacity building.

Values

“Caritas is the heart of the Church” (Pope Benedict, 2013) and “Caritas is the caress of the Mother Church to those suffering” (Pope Francis, 2013). Pope Francis calls on Caritas to help make a “poor Church for the poor” and to enlighten society towards greater solidarity, fraternity and justice. Caritas is a living witness of the love of God for all creation.

Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of 165 national organisations, mandated by their respective Bishops’ Conferences to promote charity and social justice. Caritas is inspired by the scriptures, doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church and the experiences lived by the poor. Caritas works with people of all faiths and with non-believers.

Dignity of the human person

Caritas believes in the intrinsic dignity and equality of every human person and the sacredness of human life, from conception to natural death, since “there is no human life that is more sacred than another, as there is no human life that is qualitatively more significant than another.”² Thus we categorically reject the objectification or exclusion of the poor, disabled, elderly, or any other vulnerable members of the one human family.

Mercy and compassion

Caritas is compelled to take action to alleviate misery and pain. Mercy is a Gospel value that is central to the message of Jesus and forms those engaged in the work of Caritas to be loving and compassionate.

Formation of the Heart

Caritas believes that “...while professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient. We are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity. They need heartfelt concern. Those who work for the Church’s charitable organisations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity. Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a ‘formation of the heart’”.³

²Pope Francis, Address to Participants in a Conference of Catholic Medical Associations, 13 September 2013, Rome.

³Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, #31.

Equal opportunities and responsibilities

Caritas is committed to promoting equal rights and responsibilities for men and women.

Preferential Option for the poor

Caritas combats dehumanising poverty that deprives people of their dignity and promotes the rights of poor and vulnerable people. Caritas accompanies them as they rediscover their sense of self-worth and dignity and assume co-responsibility in building a better world for all.

Universal destination of the goods of the Earth

Caritas condemns all structures – economic, financial, social, political and cultural – that stifle and prevent positive social transformation and justice.

Caritas works to change this world into one based on the centrality of human persons and their communities and to help people to enjoy their rights.

Solidarity

Caritas is committed to solidarity⁴ among all peoples, but particularly with poor people, seeing the world through their eyes, and recognising the interdependence of the human family. Solidarity includes the persevering determination to work for the common good. “Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor; of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business; solidarity among nations and peoples. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part on this.”⁵

⁴The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1939) teaches that “The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of ‘friendship’ or ‘social charity’ is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood.”

⁵*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1941).

Subsidiarity, fraternal cooperation and togetherness

Caritas acknowledges that all receive as well as give. In a spirit of fraternal communion, Caritas works together among members of the confederation, recognising the principle of local autonomy and looking for effectiveness by taking a united approach in the realisation of our common mission.

Stewardship

For Caritas, the Earth and all its resources are entrusted to all humankind. As true stewards of creation, Caritas members seek to act and to inspire others to act in an environmentally sustainable and responsible way so that nature will be preserved for future generations.

Caritas at the heart of the Church

Serve out of love

**“How I would like a Church
which is poor and for the poor!”**

Pope Francis (16.03.2013)

Caritas Internationalis and its national organisations are social pastoral instruments of the Catholic Church. We are entrusted with the mission of promoting integral human development in the light of the Gospel and Catholic teachings. We work in communion to build flourishing communities with the participation of all their members, particularly those living in poverty. We promote dialogue among people, cultures, and religions to challenge the culture of indifference and waste while promoting peace, reconciliation, and justice.

Objectives

Objective 1.1

We ensure that people living in poverty are active participants in building an inclusive and equitable society, a transformative Caritas, and a welcoming Church.

Objective 1.2

We actively collaborate to enhance communion and organisation between all actors and sectors of the Church to promote its social and developmental engagement.

Objective 1.3

We actively promote the unity of the human family to protect human dignity in an ever more polarised world through increased collaboration with other Churches and other Faiths and all people of good will.

Outcomes

Outcome 1.1

People living in poverty are protagonists of their own development. They actively participate in decisions that affect them at all levels of Caritas, the Church, their communities and wider society. The expression and participation of those living in poverty enriches the social teachings and evangelical experience of the Church.

Outcome 1.2

Caritas cooperates, coordinates, and promotes harmony among the structures of the Church in the fulfilment of all the dimensions of its mission (proclamation, celebration, service of Charity), especially at the diocesan and parish levels.

Outcome 1.3

Caritas takes part in platforms for dialogue and joint humanitarian, development, and advocacy initiatives with Christian, faith-based and civil society organisations.

Strategic Orientation

2

Reduce risk, save lives, rebuild communities

Reduce the impact of humanitarian crises by enhancing disaster preparedness and response

“Serving means working beside the neediest of people, establishing with them first and foremost human relationships of closeness and bonds of solidarity.”

Pope Francis ([Speech 10.09.2013](#))

Caritas animates people and communities so that they can organise themselves to face disasters and be better prepared to cope with them. It provides rapid, high-quality and coordinated responses to humanitarian crises. This is achieved by supporting local, national, and regional Caritas efforts to save lives, relieve suffering, provide protection and begin immediate planning for rehabilitation and recovery. Building on the experiences of locally-led emergency responses, Caritas informs humanitarian policy and practice on the national and international level to mitigate the effect of future disasters.

Objectives

Objective 2.1

We promote coordinated, rapid and effective emergency responses according to international standards, implemented in a spirit of fraternal cooperation and in cooperation with other organisations.

Objective 2.2

We strengthen coping capacities of communities to make them more resilient to disasters through disaster risk reduction (DRR) and preparedness programmes.

Objective 2.3

We bring the voice of people affected by crises to the structures and spaces where humanitarian policies and practices are shaped.

Outcomes

Outcome 2.1

Caritas responds collectively and effectively to complex emergency responses under the leadership of well-prepared and efficient national member organisations.

Caritas leads participatory, locally-led, and innovative emergency responses, accountable to crisis affected people and communities.

Outcome 2.2

Communities living in poverty have locally-based preparedness and resilience programmes.

Outcome 2.3

Caritas promotes the experiences of locally-led emergency responses to improve and shape humanitarian policies.

Strategic Orientation

3

Promote sustainable integral human development and care for creation

Eradicate all forms of poverty by empowering communities, transforming unjust structures, and caring for creation

“Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones.”

Pope Francis (LS 231)

Caritas accompanies people living in poverty, the marginalised, and the excluded by being present in their lives and listening to their unique needs. Caritas promotes and advocates collective actions so individuals can empower themselves, engage in developing their own means of livelihood, and influence the systems and decisions that affect them. Upholding human rights and inspired by integral ecology, Caritas hears the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, advocating so that everyone has access to essential social services and basic rights within a framework of good governance.

Strategic Objectives

Objective 3.1

We provide leadership opportunities to poor and marginalised people, especially women and young people, and their communities through animation, formation, mobilisation, and advocacy.

Objective 3.2

We promote reconciliation and lasting peace, advocating for and taking actions to bring about non-violence and peace.

Objective 3.3

We promote sustainable integral human development by addressing issues of climate and social justice in light of *Laudato Si'*.

Objective 3.4

We implement strategies for displaced people, migrants and refugees, and contribute to solutions that minimise the risks of human mobility while highlighting its positive contribution to an interconnected world.

Outcomes

Outcome 3.1

Poor and marginalised people and their communities, women and youth especially, exercise leadership in promoting and protecting their dignity and rights.

Outcome 3.2

Caritas advocates for peace and that people affected by injustices, violence, and conflict become actors of peace.

Outcome 3.3

Caritas contributes to the fulfilment of Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, and other appropriate frameworks through advocacy strategies addressing social and climate justice issues.

Outcome 3.4

Accompanying people on the move and supporting the implementation of the Global Compacts, Caritas works for policies and measures to uphold their rights, to challenge human trafficking and to foster social inclusion.

Strategic Orientation

4

Build global solidarity

Amplify the voices of the poor through coordinated communication, public education, and campaigning

“I pray that you may involve in your efforts those whom you seek to help; give them a voice, listen to their stories, learn from their experiences and understand their needs. See in them a brother and a sister, a son and a daughter, a mother and a father”.

Pope Francis ([Speech 03.12.2016](#))

Caritas calls for global solidarity with those inflicted by injustice. By transforming the hearts and minds of society, Caritas influences policy and reduces prejudice while enhancing Caritas’ visibility as a transformational force of positive social change.

Objectives

Objective 4.1

We promote the cries and hopes of the poor leading to a conversion of mind, values, and lifestyle through awareness raising programmes and active participation of people.

Objective 4.2

We mobilise a global movement to fight poverty and injustice, support the right of the poor to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and ensure their voices are heard.

Objective 4.3

We increase the awareness and conscience of Caritas being the major integral human development and humanitarian network of the Catholic Church.

Outcomes

Outcome 4.1

People living in poverty participate directly or indirectly in our communications, representation, advocacy and campaigning including social media and awareness-raising programmes.

Outcome 4.2

Caritas implements a common, confederation wide, action oriented four-year campaign providing poor and vulnerable communities, donors, supporters, and the wider public the ability to transform policy, practice and prejudice.

Outcome 4.3

Caritas increases its visibility as one family through greater collaboration and coordination, stronger shared branding, and robust internal communications leading to increased engagement of supporters, volunteers, donors, parishes, campaigners and youth.

Strategic Orientation

5

Increase the effectiveness of the Caritas confederation

Build a stronger Caritas based on professionalism, the mobilisation of resources, and the involvement of women and youth

“The Church’s charitable organisations, beginning with those of Caritas (at diocesan, national and international levels), ought to do everything in their power to provide the resources and the personnel needed for this work. Individuals who care for those in need must first be professionally competent...these charity workers need ‘a formation of the heart’.”

Pope Benedict XVI (DCE 31)

Caritas enhances organisational expertise and standards to efficiently respond to the need for quality service with those living in poverty, the marginalised, and the vulnerable. We are accountable, financially sustainable, compassionate, and work professionally in diverse cultural settings and in fraternal cooperation with the people we serve. Caritas supports the training of staff members, with a focus on professional, pastoral, and relational knowledge and skills. Caritas creates an organisational environment where women and young people have greater leadership opportunities.

Objectives

Objective 5.1

We support organisational development and sustainability through the implementation of the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CIMS) and relevant member organisation improvement plans.

Objective 5.2

We work together as members of one Caritas family.

Objective 5.3

We support the personal and professional capacities of women, with an aim to increasing opportunities for women's leadership at all organisational levels of the confederation.

Objective 5.4

We provide leadership opportunities for youth to serve their respective communities and countries.

Outcomes

Outcome 5.1

Caritas is equipped with professional competencies, supported by appropriate spiritual formation.

Caritas supports its most fragile member organisations.

Caritas increases self-reliance and sustainability, resource mobilisation strategies in place, and a greater diversity of public and private funding.

Caritas exemplifies a culture of safeguarding and protection based on adherence to accepted protocols, policies, and standards.

Outcome 5.2

Caritas upholds the principles of authentic fraternal cooperation.

National member organisations coordinate with member organisations present in their country with the support of bishops, leadership, and staff.

Outcome 5.3

Women's rights and needs are reflected in internal policies.

Strategies to increase the number of women in leadership positions at all levels of Caritas are developed.

Outcome 5.4

Young people are involved and contribute to operational and programmatic decisions.

A note on process

This Caritas Internationalis Strategic Framework was developed in stages, placing the contributions of all Caritas organisations at its core. A mid-term review on the progress of the 2015–2019 Operational Plan fed into the reflections of the Representative Council, which started off a process of collecting inputs from the wider confederation. These inputs were the basis of the first draft Strategic Framework that was presented to the Confederation Strategic Framework (CSF) Committee, a committee appointed by the Representative Council to accompany the strategic planning process, with members from each of the regions. The CSF Committee discussed and refined the draft and proposed it to the Representative Council.

The new version was sent to all Members for a second round of consultations. The framework was discussed and approved by the Executive Board and the Representative Council in March 2019 and was presented to the General Assembly for final approval. In small group discussions during the General Assembly suggestions for the operationalisation of the strategy on the national, regional and international level were developed and compiled for inclusion in the Confederation Operational Plan 2019–2023 to be prepared by the CI Representative Council.

The General Assembly approved the Caritas Internationalis Strategic Framework on 25 May 2019.



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