



**14th SUMMIT OF THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(Geneva, 23-25 January 2024)**

CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS

CONTRIBUTION ON THE GFMD THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Caritas Internationalis welcomes the 14th Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, chaired by France and due to be held in Geneva on 23-25 January 2024, as a milestone and precious opportunity for States and stakeholders to discuss major migration challenges and priorities for policy action.

Since 2007, the Global Forum on Migration and Development has been the largest *informal, non-binding, voluntary and government-led process*, bringing together expertise from all regions and countries at all stages of economic, social and political development. It has operated based on a unique participative working method, involving governments and policy-makers from a varied background. The GFMD has also established formal links with other processes such as the GFMD Civil Society Mechanism, the GFMD Business Mechanism, the GFMD Mayors Mechanism and the Migrant Youth and Children Platform (MYCP). These institutional links have allowed the *inclusion of the voices and expertise of diverse stakeholders*, including migrants and diaspora representatives and other civil society actors.

In the frame of the 14th GFMD Summit theme, **“From environmental concerns to cultural aspects of migration; adopting an inclusive approach to meet the challenges and increase the opportunities for human mobility”**, States and major stakeholders will discuss on six thematic priorities, including the impact of climate change on human mobility, rights and migration, labour migration and the economic inclusion of migrants, the role of diasporas as actors of economic, social and cultural development, the perception of migration in public opinion and a multi-level governance for improved migration management. These thematic priorities will be discussed in six Summit Roundtables and in 22 side events.

As a Confederation of 162 Caritas Members, inspired by Christian faith and gospel values, Caritas Internationalis has been actively engaging since its beginning in 1951 in addressing the root causes of forced migration and in welcoming, assisting, integrating and advocating for the human rights protection of migrants, refugees and displaced people all throughout their migration journey and regardless of their migration status.

Our Confederation has contributed to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees and to their implementation mechanisms (the International Migration Review Forum and the Global Refugee Forum). It has been actively engaged in the GFMD process, as member of the Civil Society International Steering Committee and the Civil Society Action Committee, and has given inputs to the **civil society advocacy papers** which will represent our joint civil society key messages at the Summit. The civil society delegation at the Summit is composed of 120 members from various regional and international networks. The GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting will take place in Geneva on the 22nd of January.

This policy paper is a further contribution of Caritas Internationalis to the upcoming GFMD Summit and presents Caritas inputs and recommendations on the six thematic priorities to be discussed during the Summit.

THEMATIC PRIORITY 1 - The impact of climate change on human mobility: preventive action, humanitarian action and development.

Back in 2015, in his Encyclical Letter to humanity *on Care for our Common Home, Laudato Si'*,¹ Pope Francis urged us to take responsibility for people who have to leave their place of usual residence due to climate change. Disappointingly, what he wrote back then is ever truer today. Indeed, *“there has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.”* [25] In this same Encyclical Letter, Pope Francis also reminded us to *“be aware that, regarding climate change, there are differentiated responsibilities.”* [52]

Based on its recent publication,² the Caritas Confederation comes to the GFMD with three overriding concerns: accountability, scale and justice.

Caritas Internationalis recognizes the emergence of a number of positive initiatives to address displacement due to climate change,³ as described in the Forum’s background paper regarding this topic.⁴ However, while this trend gives reason for hope, suffering on the ground is great and growing rapidly. Existing agreements still fail to be translated into concrete actions on the ground, initiatives are piecemeal and do not address the magnitude of the issue, and people are being left to bear alone the negative externalities of an economic model many barely benefit from. Therefore, to ensure the dignity of people being displaced due to climate change is protected, Caritas Internationalis urges the international community to **uphold its commitments and shift to bold action both on a new scale and firmly rooted in the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”**.⁵

The Earth’s temperature rise continues unchecked, and nearly half of the world population remains highly vulnerable to the changes in our common climate. Around the world, people’s places of usual residence are becoming uninhabitable and the productivity of their sources of livelihood is declining. Millions of people are already left with no choice but to migrate to try and find a more hospitable place to live and better options to earn a livelihood.

Caritas Internationalis’ national member organisations bear witness to a growing reality of suffering on the ground linked to displacement due to climate change; of women, men, children and elders left to bear the weight of multiple violations of their human rights and associated losses and damages. Of people mostly left to shoulder alone the consequences of a greenhouse gas emitting economy they barely benefit from. While having to leave behind all that makes one’s life is in itself very traumatic, displaced people face situations of high precariousness, disintegration of their households, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, conflict, violence and successive moves. Adding to their hardships, they are often forcibly returned to the place they initially had to flee and are left with no other option but to move again. Not to mention the impact of haphazard displacement on host communities, those who are left behind and on society in general.

¹https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

² Caritas Internationalis, *Displaced by a Changing Climate. Caritas Voices: Protecting and Supporting People on the Move*, Vatican City State, 2023. https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/caritas_climate_displacement.pdf

³ Caritas Internationalis considers all forms of human mobility due to climate change to be forms of displacement.

⁴https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%201%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN

⁵ As spelled out by the Paris Agreement.

Just letting displacement due to climate change happen comes with high costs for all.⁶

As Caritas Internationalis Secretary General, Mr Alistair Dutton, put it “It is time for State leaders to step up to their common, but differentiated, responsibilities and take action to uphold the common good. Heavy emitters must reduce their greenhouse emissions and provide support for those who need to locally adapt to the consequences of climate change so that the decision to stay or to move can remain truly free. Where such efforts are failing, and people are left with no choice but to move, or decide to move preemptively, governments have the obligation to ensure they can do so safely and with dignity.”⁷ They must ensure people can move to communities prepared to welcome them and that restorative actions address economic and non-economic losses and damages that could not be avoided.

No matter how much support and protection people receive when they move due to climate change, some non-economic losses and damages will be unavoidable and can never be fully remedied. Moving due to climate change is a coping mechanism people resort to when mitigation and other adaptation measures are failing, rather than an adaptation “strategy” that is being “offered” as if it were an opportunity, as suggested in the Forum’s background paper.⁸ People are being displaced.

For Caritas organisations working side by side with affected communities to address the root causes of displacement, strengthen their resilience and protect their human rights, **this is a matter of global justice**. At COP28, in Dubai, Caritas therefore advocated for phasing out fossil fuels, consistent and localised climate funding, and operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund.⁹ In light of the outcome of the First Global Stocktake,¹⁰ which highlights the imperative for decisive action in tackling climate change, it is crucial to underscore the link between climate action and human rights, particularly regarding people being displaced. While this process also recognized national efforts to address displacement and called for better coordination of such efforts, far more action is urgently required to protect the dignity of people affected by displacement due to climate change.

⁶ See pages 75 to 78 of our publication for a discussion of this issue.

⁷ Alistair Dutton in *Displaced by a changing climate*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁸ https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%201%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN

⁹ For Caritas Internationalis contribution to COP28, see <https://www.caritas.org/2023/11/caritas-extreme-poverty-and-inequality-to-rise-globally-if-vulnerable-communities-affected-by-climate-change-are-not-protected/> and <https://www.caritas.org/2023/12/fossil-fuel-phase-out-and-climate-justice-at-cop28/> [Accessed: 3/04/2024]. On non-economic loss and damage see the newly issued document *Unheard, Uncharted: A holistic vision for addressing ‘non-economic’ loss and damage* by Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Australia and SCIAF – Caritas Scotland, https://www.caritas.org.au/media/ifxlcjgw/neld_full_report_final-1.pdf [Accessed: 3/04/2024].

¹⁰ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17_adv.pdf

Caritas Internationalis calls on governments and the international community to

1. Fully account for internal and cross-border displacement due to climate change in all planning processes, to ensure the new needs and aspirations of affected communities are fully accounted for.

These planning processes should:

- a) **fully leverage existing - but presently underutilised - ¹¹ NDC, NAP, DRR and development planning instruments** to make concrete provisions for human rights based and sustainable solutions to displacement due to climate change. Looking ahead after COP28, as each party to the UNFCCC updates its Nationally Determined Contributions for 2025 - hopefully with ambition as encouraged by the Global Stocktake outcome - addressing displacement must become an integral component to all planning processes. The clear recognition and integration of this consideration is essential for comprehensive and effective climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies moving forward;
- b) **be community-centric.** Both those considering a move or already in such a situation, and the host communities need to be actively involved in all decision-making, especially as concerns planned relocation, and their traditional solutions must be valued;
- c) **enable the creation of alternative sustainable living and livelihood opportunities as close as possible to people's original place of residence,** but out of climate change harm's way;
- d) **adapt and increase service infrastructure using all-of-society and all-of-government approaches** to holistically attend to the new material and non-material needs of people who will move or have moved;
- e) **and be informed by improved data collection.**

2. Uphold international commitments and ensure regular and rights-based migration pathways are accessible to all people who are displaced due to climate change, internally or across borders, in such a way "no one is left behind" by:

- a) **ensuring individuals can migrate** through regular and rights-based pathways, **regardless of their capacity to contribute to the workforce**, should the impacts of climate change compel them to do so. While labour migration is presently the most politically palatable option from the perspective of policymakers in potential host countries - in particular for High-Income Countries, which are increasingly suffering from generalised labour shortages due to the ageing of their populations - it should not be the only pathway;
- b) **actually applying and expanding existing admission and protection frameworks.** These are still far from being implemented to their full potential, and the human rights of people being displaced by climate change are widely violated. They are not in a position to wait. Indeed,
 1. **on internal displacement,**
 - i. most States have yet to effectively adopt and implement the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and rare are those with community-centred relocation policy frameworks;
 2. **on cross border displacement,**
 - i. the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Cartagena Declaration and the Organisation of African Unity Convention have yet to

¹¹ In addition to further explanation in our own study on pages 47 and 48, the latest data on the UNFCCC instruments indicates that "only 20 of 42 NAPs (48%) and 23 of 166 NDCs (14%) make concrete provisions on climate-related displacement".

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/deliver/891ced36-en.pdf?itemId=%2Fcontent%2Fpaper%2F891ced36-en&mimeType=pdf>

- be fully implemented - according to their respective potentials -¹² to grant asylum to people displaced by climate change;
- ii. commitments made when adopting the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and international principles such as that of *non-refoulement* are still far from being honoured;
- iii. complementary pathways, such as regional free movement agreements, humanitarian visas, temporary protection status and labour migration schemes, are of great value but need to be expanded beyond anecdotal cases and be based on human rights, including those specifically pertaining to migrant workers.

3. Vastly increase funding both for adaptation and for losses and damages, to lift the burden of having to privately finance adaptation and deal with losses and damages off from the shoulders of people affected by the impacts of climate change. Such funding should be

- a) proportional to actual needs**, as acknowledged at COP28 by the Global Stocktake:¹³
 - i. average finance needs for **adaptation**, according to submitted NAPs and NDCs, are actually estimated at **USD 387 billion** per year by 2030,¹⁴ well above the goal of reaching “the annual USD 100 billion pledge with a balance between adaptation and mitigation” proposed by the background paper. Considering only a minority of these declared plans make concrete provisions to also support proactive migration, adaptation funding should be even higher;
 - ii. total **losses and damages** for developing countries may reach **USD 580 billion** per year by 2030.¹⁵ This is completely out of proportion to the total USD 700 million in pledges announced at COP28 for the new Loss and Damage Fund. Pledges will need to increase from millions to billions to also address the economic and non-economic losses and damages due to displacement inflicted on those who have to move, their hosts and the wider society through urgently needed financial and non-financial restorative actions;
- b) provided in the form of grants¹⁶ - not of loans - by the States which are historically the heaviest greenhouse gas emitters and within the framework of the UNFCCC.** While assistance to address migration, displacement and planned relocation is also provided through other channels, when due to climate change the funding must come from the States historically responsible for climate change, in accordance with the principle of the “polluter pays”;
- c) allocated in consultation with affected communities** - in particular the most vulnerable - **and made directly accessible to them.**

¹²The Geneva Convention can be applied to cases where people are displaced due to persecution in addition to the impacts of climate change. The two regional agreements include ‘circumstances that have seriously disturbed the public order’ as reasons for granting asylum, and could be applied to situations where people are displaced due to climate change.

¹³ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17_adv.pdf

¹⁴ Range USD 101- USD 975 billion from https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2023?gclid=CjwKCAjwkY2qBhBDEiwAoQXK5ZiH_EYFpm8DGBsSsWcA94iPq6ZTFy_N6Sg-38SNo-y6yBJLLbY6IKxoCSs8QAvD_BwE

¹⁵https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-72026-5_14

¹⁶The Global Stocktake “notes that scaling up new and additional grant-based, highly concessional finance, and non-debt instruments remains critical to supporting developing countries” and “calls for a continued increase in the scale, and effectiveness of, and simplified access to, climate finance, including in the form of grants and other highly concessional finance.” https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17_adv.pdf

THEMATIC PRIORITY 2 - Rights and Migration: working to ensure the health, safety, and rights of migrants.

According to the World Bank “World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees and Societies”¹⁷, about 184 million people—2.3 percent of the world’s population—live outside their country of nationality. Almost half of migrants live in, and a significant majority of them come from low- and middle-income countries.

While acknowledging efforts made by some States to enhance regular migration pathways for migrant workers, grant humanitarian visas to people compelled to leave their countries and facilitate regularization of undocumented migrants, as reported in GFMD GRT2 Background Paper¹⁸, we cannot overlook that **many migrants and asylum seekers have suffered in these years from increasingly restrictive migration policies**, limiting legal migration and leading to pushbacks of *people on the move* at the frontiers, in full violation of the principle of non *refoulement* and of States’ international human rights obligations. Physical and legal walls continue to be built and agreements to be signed to **externalize border control or outsource asylum processes** to relocate asylum seekers in countries that do not meet international protection standards, thus undermining their dignity and human rights. There has also been an **increase in forced internal and cross-border returns, which has put at risk the lives of migrants**, by not allowing them to take a truly informed decision to return to their country in safety and to be fully reintegrated in their communities.

Thus, Caritas Internationalis echoes the concerns expressed by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Mr. Felipe González Morales, in his Report on “Human Rights violations at international borders: trends, prevention and accountability”¹⁹. Increasing challenges and risks faced by migrants and asylum seekers on the migration routes often turn hope into despair. **The IOM’s Missing Migrants Project, the only current effort to document migrant deaths worldwide, has recorded the deaths of 61,049 people during migration since 2014.** The remains of 25,742 people who lost their lives during migration have not been recovered. The deadliest route is the Central Mediterranean route, where at least 22,594 people have died since 2014. Civil society actors and NGOs attempting to rescue them have been even criminalized by some State authorities for this act of solidarity.

On the 20th of May 2022, UN Member States adopted the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum, hence renewing their commitments to the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM)²⁰, and reaffirmed “their collective responsibility to preserve the lives of all migrants and take action to prevent loss of migrant lives”, especially by enhancing safe and regular migration pathways²¹.

Thus, Caritas Internationalis urges governments to **enhance regular migration pathways and refrain from pushbacks and externalization policies** which violate people on the move’s fundamental human rights. It also calls on States to **put an end to practices of separation of family members and the detention of migrants, especially child detention**, upon entry or when staying in a State’s territory.

The Caritas Confederation also wishes to draw the attention to **complementary migration pathways such as humanitarian, university and labour corridors as a tool to ensure safe entry and integration of refugees and other people in situations of vulnerability in host countries.** In 2016, Caritas Italiana, the Community of Saint Egidio and the *Tavola Valdese* started specific programs called 'humanitarian corridors' to relocate refugees and displaced people in situations of great vulnerability from Africa, the Middle East and Asia by signing several agreements with the Italian government. Since then, they have been implementing this mechanism that allows refugees - especially families with children, people with disabilities or with severe health issues, single women, and elderly - to reach Italy safely and legally²².

¹⁷ World Bank. 2023. *World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1941-4. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2023> (Accessed: 31/12/2023).

¹⁸ https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%20%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN

¹⁹ 50th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 13 June-8 July 2022. Document available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/328/57/PDF/G2232857.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed: 3/01/2024].

²⁰ IMRF, *Progress Declaration*, May 2022. Available at:

https://migrationnetwork.un.org/system/files/resources_files/Final-%20IMRF%20Progress%20Declaration-%20English.pdf [Accessed: 3/01/2024].

²¹ *Ibidem*, Para. 59.

²² People in need of protection are channelled into community-based 'widespread reception schemes', where basic needs are met and access to the health system and medical care is guaranteed. The corridors effectively integrate beneficiaries into local host

In addition to this, various Caritas organizations joined EU-PASSWORLD, a three-year project to enhance the links between community sponsorship and complementary pathways of admission for refugees and other people in situations of vulnerability and explore options to scale the numbers of people received via these pathways²³.

Along with several organizations working with migrants, Caritas members have also **called for long-term regularisation of undocumented migrants in host countries**. Providing a regular residence status to undocumented migrants would bring many benefits for the migrant and local populations, as **it would ensure the full inclusion of everyone in the public health response, in access to basic services and in the formal work market and bring undocumented migrants out of the shadows and of exploitative situations in the informal economy**²⁴. Pope Francis has urged improvements in the working conditions of migrant farmworkers in Italy and defended their regularisation, and the United Nations called to explore “various models of regularisation pathways for migrants in irregular situations” in a policy brief on COVID-19.

Once migrants are welcomed in the host communities, integration processes are needed to cover the fundamental moments of living. **Housing, work, health, education, cultural, social and political rights are the areas in which long-sighted integration policies should take shape. A special attention should be devoted to access to education** along with access to health care and housing. Our Caritas organizations are still witnessing challenges to the integration of migrants in terms of language and educational barriers. This means:

- a) No or little access to primary, secondary and high school education (as compared with natives);
- b) No recognition of previous learning experience and academic titles and professional titles, including expertise acquired during the migratory journey;
- c) No or less training opportunities than natives to match with the labour market demand;
- d) Lack of legal advice and psychosocial counselling to help migrants understand laws, administrative rules, customary laws, cultural issues.

The Caritas Confederation, human mobility networks and partnering faith-based organizations offer numerous examples of educational pathways, as well as entrepreneurship training, coaching and mentoring, which have allowed migrants to widen their opportunities to find a qualified job or set up a small enterprise and to be fully included in the life of local communities. RED CLAMOR²⁵ members as well as local Caritas and church communities in various Regions organize courses for migrants to learn the language and culture of

communities through a sponsorship and self-financing process focused on civil society. So far, more than 1,300 (one thousand and three hundred) refugees and other displaced people from Ethiopia, Turkey, Jordan, Niger and Pakistan could be received in Italian host communities through the humanitarian corridors. All of these countries have faced the impact of huge crises affecting their neighbours over the past 10 years

²³ The project is implemented in 2022-24 by a consortium of 11 state, civil society and faith-based partners, and implements specific activities to expand labour and education complementary pathways in Belgium, Ireland and Italy. In its 2020 Recommendation on Legal Pathways to Protection in the EU, the European Commission reaffirmed that community sponsorship should play “a structured role in welcoming and integrating those in need of international protection” and underpin resettlement, humanitarian admissions and complementary pathways for education and work. Projects co-funded by the European Union’s Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund such as EU-PASSWORLD and Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E) have been piloting different policy approaches to education and labour pathways, testing to what extent engaging receiving communities in welcoming and providing wrap-around integration support to students and workers arriving through skills-based complementary pathways can make these more sustainable.

²⁴ In Belgium and France, numerous municipalities, CSOs, undocumented migrants’ associations, trade unions, lawyers, intellectuals, doctors and parliamentarians have called for regularisation, going so far as to organise demonstrations on the topic. A working group, of which Caritas Luxembourg is a member, prepared in 2022 some recommendations toward the Luxembourg government about regularisation and the fight against exploitation and human trafficking. In the same year, 400 organizations supported in Spain a petition and the campaign #RegularizacionYa, called for an extraordinary regularisation of all migrants in an irregular situation, as did the city of Barcelona. Caritas Spain has been advocating for the regularisation of undocumented migrants in the agricultural and domestic care sectors for years. Similar campaigns are ongoing in various countries.

²⁵ RED CLAMOR is a human mobility network, linked to CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano y Caribeño) which coordinates and supports the pastoral work of Catholic Church organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean that welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants, displaced persons, refugees and victims of trafficking. Several Caritas, congregations (Jesuits, Scalabrinian etc.) and Church organisations are members.

their host communities. The network members accompany migrants in the process of obtaining the recognition of their studies and academic degrees. To strengthen the capacities of migrant-receiving communities or border communities, infrastructure works are developed for schools, clinics and community centres. Finally, Caritas organizations and networks have found in art a valuable tool to leverage the integral human development of migrants, to make their problems visible and help them in the process of integration. Through music, poetry, theatre and other artistic manifestations, migrants, refugees and refugees and survivors of human trafficking share their life experiences, their sufferings and joys, channel their feelings of the uprootedness and longing for their loved ones. This helps inner healing and facilitates integration.

Caritas Internationalis calls on States and the international community to:

- 1. Enhance and diversify rights-respecting regular pathways for migration and simplify access procedures to regular status for undocumented migrants;*
- 2. Support humanitarian and education corridors as a model of solidarity involving both institutions and civil society, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, and changing the narrative about refugees and migrants in situations of great vulnerability;*
- 3. Refrain from applying pushback policies and practices, including by prohibiting collective expulsion and by upholding the principle of non-refoulement;*
- 4. Promote inter-State cooperation to search for disappeared migrants and asylum seekers within strict parameters of confidentiality and privacy safeguards;*
- 5. Ensure rights-centred, community-based, non-custodial alternatives to immigration detention, including community and civil society partnerships, for all migrants, especially minors, and stop practices of separation of families at the borders;*
- 6. Decriminalize undocumented migrants as well as civil society organisations and human rights defenders attempting to rescue them; promote regularisation processes to allow all migrants and their families to have a clear legal status and avoid falling victims of human trafficking;*
- 7. Ensure equitable and non-discriminatory access to basic services – in particular to housing, health, education, formation and vocational training – to all migrants, regardless of their legal status, and support the work done at grassroots level by faith-based and civil society organisations;*
- 8. Duly recognise the potential of migrant youth and women to be the drivers of transformative processes in societies and support initiatives aiming at their promotion and inclusion at all levels of socio-economic, cultural, community and political life.*

THEMATIC PRIORITY 3 - Diasporas as actors of economic, social and cultural development

Migration is a deeply human story filled with aspirations, challenges, hopes, and resilience, and it is an enriching **experience of encounter and cross-fertilization of our societies**. Migration is also **a resource and opportunity for development**. Thanks to the vital role migrants play with their talents, vital experiences, knowledge, work, remittances, cultures, and values, both the host communities and the communities of origin can achieve an integral human development which leaves no one behind, as explained in GFMD RT3 Background paper²⁶.

Outside their country of origin, and to face situations of great socio-economic and legal vulnerability, **diaspora communities organise themselves** spontaneously to facilitate their understanding of the society in

²⁶https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd11801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%203%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN

which they live, to support each other in solidarity in the new contexts, and to defend their rights. In these organisations, migrants are doubly protagonists: they are both actors and addressees, those who accompany and those who receive. They have a **set of intentions and objectives** in which three main areas of intervention can be distinguished: the promotion of integration processes and intercultural activities; the transmission and promotion of the culture of origin and intra-community solidarity in defence of rights, especially labour rights; cooperation for the development of contexts of origin. Being part of the community itself, they constitute a **privileged channel of information with migrants and refugees**; they do not encounter problems of intercultural understanding in identifying needs and responding to them; they can contact the country of origin (family, administration), become an instrument of collective mediation and represent for migrants - together with other associations - the hope of being heard and welcomed, the place where one can find comfort, solidarity and help, where one can feel at home. By becoming part of the associative landscape in “host” countries, they help to revitalise civil society and make their contribution to social issues that go far beyond foreign nationals.

There are many migrant and refugee groups present in the territories where we live, but **due to policy obstacles and bureaucratic problems, lack of financial resources, spaces and knowledge of regulations, many of them cannot form themselves into recognised associations**; many groups, despite being active in the territory, are unable to make their action visible, to **find space at negotiating tables**, and to network with other associations on issues of common interest. They are not always included in cooperation for development programs as relevant actors with knowledge and expertise on their countries of origin.

The political and social participation of migrants is becoming a crucial issue within societies. It is a new demand for inclusion in the public space and, at the same time, a test of the quality and real extent of the spaces for democratic participation in our political systems. In a social climate where the stereotypical image of migrants as dangerous individuals is unfortunately widespread, promoting the knowledge, networking, and emergence of associations and informal groups of migrants active in the territory, as well as their active involvement in negotiating tables, in cooperation for development programs, as well as in the social media, is a concrete and positive response to an attitude of general indifference and rejection and a way to change the narratives on migration. The Caritas Confederation and human mobility networks are daily committed with diaspora communities to the human rights’ protection, integration and full citizenship of people on the move in host communities²⁷.

Inspired by Pope Francis’ message “Building the future with migrants and refugees”²⁸, Caritas Internationalis calls on governments and the international community to

- 1. Promote anti-racism policies and immigration laws that put care at their core by recognising the dignity and human rights of migrants;*
- 2. Support migrant’s own forms of organisation by removing policy and administrative obstacles to their legal recognition, providing legal training and financial support and valuing their experience in the formulation and implementation of migration policies;*
- 3. Ensure effective representation of diaspora and their community organisations in economic and social policy planning, and value their expertise as key agents of development in the host country’s cooperation with their countries of origin.*

²⁷ Testimonies of this collaboration were presented in the webinar “Building the future today with migrant and refugee community organisations”, which was organised by Caritas Internationalis, RED CLAMOR and RAEMH (Réseau Afrique Europe sur la Mobilité Humaine – a Caritas network) on 14 December 2022, on the occasion of International Migrants Day (18 December). These videos are available at: https://raemh.org/media_webinar.php?lang=fr&webinar_id=20 [Accessed: 2/01/2024].

²⁸ Pope Francis message on the occasion of the 108th World Migrant and Refugee Day (2022). Available at: <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/20220509-world-migrants-day-2022.html> [Accessed: 31/12/2023].

THEMATIC PRIORITY 4 - Labour migration: promoting the economic inclusion of migrants.

Migrants are an essential “resource” for host societies and contribute with their talents, knowledge, expertise and cultures to an integral and sustainable human development that leaves no one behind. The full socio-economic integration of migrants in host societies is a crucial and complex process which involves all actors of the host community. It depends first on the time that the reception system takes to provide regular documents recognizing their legal status, their education degrees and their social needs, and the policies put in place to facilitate their access to work opportunities and to protect their human rights. **Slow procedures to provide migrants with legal status and the lack of recognition of education degrees push them into the informal economy**, to accept jobs without contracts and with very low wages. Low wages linked to urban ghettoization and the violation of their worker rights lead them easily into labour exploitation. During the COVID pandemic, trade unions and civil society actors denounced the fact that many migrants had fallen **victims of wage theft, labour exploitation and human trafficking** or had been obliged to return to their villages and countries of origin without any economic support and perspective²⁹. These challenges have been clearly highlighted in GFMD RT4 Background Paper³⁰.

As stated by Juliana Manrique Sierra, Labour Director of the National Association of Colombian Entrepreneurs (ANDI)³¹, “The 10 guiding principles of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), particularly the principle focused on the potential of migration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), can help drive actions focused on creating opportunities and identifying benefits that result from migration. These principles encourage changing perceptions about migration. It is necessary to comprehend this phenomenon differently: Migration is not a problem, but an opportunity to be more competitive by integrating a population that can **help grow the economy and fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries**”. In this context, a cooperation between governments, the private sector and Trade Unions is crucial to promote migration strategies consistent with the SDGs and the GCM, and in particular by **implementing the GCM objectives 5, 6 and 18 on regular migration pathways, recruitment and decent work, and skills development and recognition**.

Indeed, there are **still many obstacles to the socio-economic inclusion of migrants**, as highlighted especially by our Caritas organizations from the Asia Region, among which:

- **National and regional political constraints** → political instability in the host country; restrictive migratory policies; lack of a human-rights based approach;
- **Macro-economic constraints** → Slowdown in economic growth and slow recovery in employment rates;
- **Legal status related issues** → Lack of legal status and documentation to access basic services and regular jobs; institutional/legal/administrative barriers to long-term permits and citizenship;
- **Educational and legal barriers** → No recognition of previous learning experience, Academic and professional titles, including expertise acquired during the migration journey; no or less training opportunities than natives to match with the labour market demand; lack of legal advice and psychosocial counselling to help migrants understand laws, administrative rules, customary laws, cultural issues;
- **Economic barriers and lack of financial inclusion services** → Little access to bank services and to microcredit; less state and private incentives for entrepreneurial activities; high-cost rates for remittances;

²⁹ See COATNET Report “Breaking the chains, COATNET against labour exploitation”, 2023, available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jiRpl-oFTaZPqxC31s2Mw-xCXsBkPfT3/view?usp=sharing> COATNET (Christian Organisations Against Trafficking NETwork) is led by a Steering Committee and supported by an Assistant based in the General Secretariat of Caritas Internationalis. With 26 members, including 19 Caritas MOs and seven non-Caritas organisations, COATNET strives to enhance the efforts of its affiliates and leverage the resources of churches to combat human trafficking.

³⁰ https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd11801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%204%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN

³¹ Juliane Manrique Sierra, *The inclusion of migrants in the labor market: A private sector commitment to transparent, effective, and humane migration policies*, ANDI, Se Le Tiene, 2020.

Available at: https://migrationnetwork.un.org/system/files/docs/ENG%20version_ANDI%20Blog_January%202023_edits.pdf [Accessed: 2/01/2024]

- **Barriers in access to employment** →: Slowdown in employment rates in the country / region; lack of employment opportunities; no training to upscale own skills; underqualified jobs (though having high qualifications and skills); lack of intergenerational mobility;
- **Lower or no protection of workers' rights** → lower employment rates and wages than natives; workplace discrimination; lack of protection and risk of exploitation at work, especially for undocumented migrants, often victims of criminal organizations exploiting them; less representation in trade unions etc.
- **Policy, legal and administrative barriers to family reunification** → restrictive laws, long and expensive administrative procedures, travel costs, lack of documentation proving relationships and proving migrants' income (due to black work), language barriers, limited access to embassies and consulates etc.
- **Barriers to full participation in decision-making**: no inclusion in negotiating tables and in the planning of policies affecting migrants' life; little or no legal recognition of migrants' own forms of organization, denied right of association, no support and inclusion of these organizations in negotiating tables.

Caritas Internationalis calls on governments to

- 1. Adhere to all international labour standards and rights as enumerated in International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and principles for all workers, regardless of status, and sign and implement the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;*
- 2. Foster human rights-based labour agreements between States and Cooperation/Association Agreements between Regions;*
- 3. Facilitate access to regular documents that recognize the migrant's legal status;*
- 4. Remove policy and administrative barriers and facilitate recognition of education degrees, Academic qualifications and skills acquired in the countries of origin and/or during the migration journey;*
- 5. Recognize workers' agency and guarantee equal job opportunities, equal wages, freedom of association and collective bargaining for decent work, the right to organize and join unions, social protection and the same security at work as for natives, without any discrimination and regardless of their migration status or sector;*
- 6. Facilitate family reunification and the human rights protection of migrant workers' families;*
- 7. Improve financial support to migrants' entrepreneurial training and activities through access to credit;*
- 8. Provide legal recognition of migrants' associations, and foster migrants' representation and participation in collective bargaining and in government negotiating tables;*
- 9. Reduce the high rates of migrants' remittances.*

THEMATIC PRIORITY 5 – Improving the perception of migration in public opinion through narratives, culture, emotion and rational discourse.

Integration risks carrying with it the implicit preconception that migrants must be assimilated into a society whose fixed and immutable identity is assumed. Migrants are thus confronted with the obligation to adapt in a condition of inferiority. The demand for integration may conceal the claim to deny their “diversity/otherness” and fundamental rights. This is why the reference to integration must be complemented by a clarification: **it is not a matter of assimilation, but rather of an arduous process in which**

reciprocity is emphasised, as stated in the GFMD RT5 Background Paper³². When speaking of intercultural enrichment, **the emphasis is on relationship**. In contrast to the claims to standardise the other to oneself, integration indicates that the fundamental challenge lies in giving value to the presence of the other in the encounter, in **intercultural exchange**. This is why migration is an opportunity. It is not differences that pose a threat to coexistence, but the lack of dialogue and political choices that favour the recognition of dignity and encounter. Integration processes meet with positive outcomes where there is a direct encounter, an opportunity to overcome prejudices and stereotypes in **listening and becoming aware of the root causes of an increasingly forced migration and of governments' responsibilities, in particular of the Global North. Integrating in the first place is the work of patient proximity and mutual education to encounter**. And this is implemented at the local level by giving importance to those spaces where relations of recognition are made possible.

That is the reason why Caritas Internationalis has promoted a world-wide **Share the Journey Campaign** in 2017-2021 to create spaces and opportunities for migrants and refugees to come together with communities, promoting the culture of encounter and learning about each other³³.

A specific issue related to narratives and the perception of migration in public opinion refers to the young generations of migrants or second generations, to how they see themselves and how they are seen in the host societies where they live and where some of them were even born. The question in the background is that of the integration of second generations, an issue that proves crucial both to understand the changes in current migration processes and to grasp the transformations affecting receiving societies, considering that the integration of second generations represents a real challenge for social cohesion.

The multiplicity of experiences, places and cultures belonging to these young people, by virtue of their being migrants or from migrant families, reinforces their ability to adapt previously accumulated knowledge to the contexts they experience in the present and to their plans. The life stories of immigrant youth allow us to understand how individual skills, but also and above all the availability of good social, cultural and family capital, are key ingredients to allow an immigrant child or youth to integrate well into the receiving context. The presence of policies favouring integration, of positive and inclusive narratives on migration, as well as the transmission of values aimed at acceptance, rather than oppositional rejection of diversity, certainly produces a greater willingness and openness of natives towards the young generations of migrants and allows them to feel and be fully recognized as citizens.

A way to change the prevailing negative perception of migrants and of second generations in public opinion is moving from a representation of migrants' lives mostly done by Western journalists and TV programme presenters to a storytelling done by migrants themselves – looking at the root causes of their migration stories and at their positive contribution to the societies where they live and to their communities of origin. **A further step would be that of removing the dual perspective to promote the inclusion of migrants and young generations in films / TV programs/ fictions / newspaper editorial offices as integrant part of the community, without differentiating between “us” and “them”**.

Caritas Internationalis calls on States and the media to:

- 1. Promote educational pathways aimed at an in-depth understanding of the root causes of migration and displacement and at intercultural dialogue in the host communities; combat toxic narratives, penalize violence against migrants and fake news and hate speech;***
- 2. Invest in enhancing connectivity between informal neighbourhoods and main cities, as well as between urban and rural areas, by building public infrastructure and bridging the digital gap, to foster knowledge, mutual understanding and social cohesion in all communities;***

³²https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%205%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN

³³ Caritas Internationalis *Share the Journey* Campaign: <https://www.caritas.org/four-years-of-sharing-the-journey/>

3. *Value the experience, knowledge and skills of young generations of migrants by giving them greater visibility in public discourse, and enhance their access to full citizenship, to build positive and inclusive narratives on migration and convey those values of welcome, hospitality, community and respect which are rooted in their cultures of origin;*
4. *Foster a storytelling done by migrants themselves, but also the involvement of migrants and young generations in media's work as an integrant part of the community, thus removing the dual perspective and differentiation between "us" and "them".*

THEMATIC PRIORITY 6 – Multi-level governance: bringing together the various stakeholders for improved migration management.

Integrating is a **commitment in which**, as highlighted in GFMD RT6 Background paper³⁴, **the main actors – migrants and welcoming communities with the various stakeholders (mayors and other public authorities, private sector, migrants' association, faith communities, CSOs, Academia) - are primarily responsible** and mutually supportive in their life paths. Support in finding housing, in access to decent work, accompaniment in learning the language and in education to form skills, care to cultivate faith and interreligious dialogue, are outcomes of choices and a political planning that places attention on people and trust. A wide-ranging cultural work that promotes responsibility must be matched by political decisions, which at various levels can invest energy and resources in promoting cooperation with all the actors of the social fabric. It is a matter of mutual responsibility and cross-fertilisation: everyone in different ways is called to a path of mutual listening, change and novelty in the design of social living.

In a context of **welfare migration characterised by the co-presence of the so-called "private social" actors, the function carried out by the different faith communities and faith-based, non-governmental (non-profit) organisations should be acknowledged and supported by including them in multi-level and multi-stakeholder migration governance.** Public policies are often integrated by services that faith-based organisations offer in the first reception phase and in the second phase of integration in the territory. While affirming the duty of each State to guarantee basic services to every person, it is important to acknowledge and support the vital, complementary role that, for example, dispensaries and medical services, or welcoming centres run by faith-based organisations, especially those led by migrants' communities of faith, play in ensuring long-term coverage for all migrants, including stateless and undocumented migrants, who are often at risk of marginalisation in access to public health services, education, social housing and regular employment.

Caritas Internationalis calls on States, local public authorities and the international community to:

1. *Recognise and value the role played by various actors, including faith-based organisations, CSOs, migrant and refugee associations, and Academia in migration management and development;*
2. *Widen the spaces for interaction with migrants, their associations and civil society actors at all levels of decision-making and in international processes;*
3. *Enhance the collaboration between public authorities and private social actors in the provision of basic services, education and training and opportunities for intercultural exchange.*

³⁴https://www.gfmd.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1801/files/documents/france2023/roundtables/GFMD%20GRT%206%20-%20Background%20paper%20Final_EN.pdf?EN