



# Caritas Internationalis

Strategic Framework 2011–2015



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# Introduction

For 60 years, Caritas Internationalis has exercised a preferential option for the poor, responding with love and action to human suffering in an unjust and unequal world. During that time, we have seen great progress in international development and poverty eradication, as well as in our ability to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

In the second decade of the 21st century, however, we face a series of challenges that threaten to halt or even reverse that progress. Our strategic directions leading up to 2015 are designed not only to address those challenges, but also to raise our fight against poverty and injustice to a new level.

Despite all the development progress that has been made in the past half a century, there are still more than a billion people living below the poverty line. Most live in fragile states, often wracked by conflict, natural disasters and famine.

Now, as the gap between rich and poor gets ever wider, the world's poorest people are the hardest hit by the additional challenges of climate

change, rising food prices and the continuing effects of the global financial crisis.

Our strategic vision is encapsulated in just five words: "One Human Family, Zero Poverty".

Caritas believes in the essential unity and interdependence of the entire human family. The solidarity we share as part of that family, means we find it intolerable that any of our sisters and brothers should continue to have to live in extreme poverty – let alone more than one billion of them. We are pained by the injustice of a world in which:

- 30,000 of our sisters and brothers die every day from malnutrition and preventable diseases.
- 1.2 billion people lack access to basic sanitation.
- 72 million children worldwide – the majority of them girls – are denied the right to education.
- half a million women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or during the six weeks following delivery.
- more than a billion people suffer hunger every day – 70 per cent of them women and girls.

Caritas seeks a world in which every human person can live in dignity and peace and in which the continued existence of extreme poverty is unacceptable. A focus on the causes and effects of poverty should therefore be at the heart of all aspects of our work, whether it be humanitarian emergencies, climate change, migration, health, education, food security or peacebuilding.

The target of zero poverty may at first glance seem unrealistic, but it is the only logical successor to the Millennium Development Goals, which aim to halve global poverty by 2015. The MDGs must be seen as an important milestone along the road, but not as the end of the journey. By 2015, Caritas wants to see the international community committed to finishing the job that was begun with the Millennium Declaration in 2000, in which world leaders promised to “free all men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty.”

‘One Human Family, Zero Poverty’ sets out the strategic directions for the Caritas confederation up to 2015. Underpinned by a confident faith

identity, and rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, they form a framework for partnership, solidarity, intergenerational justice and transformative change, aimed at delivering four priority objectives in the areas of humanitarian response, integral human development, advocacy and organisational development.

This document follows on from the 2007–11 Strategic Framework, which set an ambitious agenda of change aimed at shaping a Caritas confederation able meet the challenges of the 21st century. Since 2007, the management structure and processes of the General Secretariat have been overhauled to make our confederation stronger and more efficient. The Strategic Framework for 2015 builds on those achievements and aims to take us up to new levels of effectiveness at the service of the poor.

*“In an increasingly globalised society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to shape the earthly city in unity and peace.”*

**Benedict XVI**

**Caritas in Veritate, 7**

# We are Caritas

**Caritas is at the heart of the Church's mission, a sign of God's love for humanity in Jesus Christ. Based on this precept, Caritas organisations link together to form a confederation to serve the world's poor. We are inspired by scripture, Catholic Social Teaching and by the experiences and hopes of people who are disadvantaged and living in poverty. We work with people of all faiths and none.**

## **Compassion**

Confronted by global poverty and suffering, our fundamental response is compassion rooted in love. Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, we make a preferential option for the poor. We refuse to accept the suffering of our brothers and sisters and we are compelled to take action to alleviate it.

## **Hope**

Our hope is inspired by Christian faith and the strength and resourcefulness of our partners and the people whom they serve. In the knowledge that Christian hope is not passive we believe that by working together, a better world can and must be achieved so that all can enjoy fullness of life.

**We seek a world where the voices of the poor are heard and acted upon, where each person is free to flourish and live in peace and dignity, where our natural environment is managed responsibly and sustainably in the interests of the entire human family.**

**The values that inspire Caritas work are:**

## **Equality**

We believe in the intrinsic dignity of every person and that all women and men are equal. We work with all people regardless of race, gender, religion or politics.

## **Justice**

We believe you cannot make a gift of something a person should already have by right. We work to transform economic, social, political and cultural structures that are opposed to a just society. Caritas listens to the voice of the silent poor and enables them to speak for themselves.



### **Solidarity**

We work to enhance solidarity with the poor, seeing the world through their eyes, and recognising the interdependence of the human family.

### **Partnership**

We uphold the principle of subsidiarity to build links between communities across the world, acknowledging that all receive as well as give. We work within and beyond our Catholic family seeking justice to change our world for the better.

### **Stewardship**

We believe the planet and all its resources are entrusted to humankind and seek to act in an environmentally responsible way as true stewards of creation.

*“The development of peoples depends on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together...”*

**Benedict XVI  
Caritas in Veritate, 53**

# Four objectives of One Human Family, Zero Poverty

## Reduce the risk and impact of humanitarian crises

Responding to humanitarian crises such as natural disasters, conflict and the effects of climate change. Saving lives, relieving suffering and helping rebuild livelihoods and communities so that women and men in the poorest and most vulnerable communities are able to survive and recover from humanitarian crises and live in a safe and secure environment.

## Transform unjust systems and structures

Increasing power and influence so that women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities are able to influence the systems, decisions and resources that affect them and live under governments, institutions and global structures that are just and accountable.

Compassion  
in action

Advocacy for  
a better world



**Promote  
integral human  
development**

### **Eradicate extreme poverty**

Promoting integral human development and charitable services so that women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities have equal access to essential services such as clean water, education and healthcare and the resources they need to live sustainably, with dignity.

**A stronger  
more effective  
confederation**

### **Build organisational competence and global partnership**

Caritas will build its organisational competence and standards so that the confederation is professionally accountable, financially sustainable and is able to challenge global poverty, rooted in faith, through prayer and action in effective global partnerships.

# Strategic functions

**As a global confederation, the activities of Caritas Internationalis are held in unity through effective coordination, advocacy, communication and the development of strong, competent member organisations.**

## **Coordination, Advocacy and Communication**

*Caritas Internationalis will:*

- Work at the heart of the Church as an agent of change in the world.
- Focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged people.
- Strengthen our capacity for emergency humanitarian response.
- Build a stronger advocacy voice for the confederation.
- Ensure accountability, transparency and aid effectiveness.
- Encourage global linking and partnership.

## **Strengthening Organisational Competence**

*Caritas Internationalis will:*

- Consolidate governance and management restructuring.
- Improve management and leadership.
- Ensure financial sustainability.
- Promote effective fundraising.
- Improve communications and information management.
- Develop international humanitarian good practice, standards and accountability.
- Coordinate technical support and capacity development.
- Strengthen working relationships with the Holy See and international networks.

***“We must travel this road together, united in minds and hearts.”***  
**Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, 80**



# Compassion in action

## Objective One: Reduce the risk and impact of humanitarian crises

Responding to humanitarian crises such as natural disasters, conflict and the effects of climate change. Saving lives, relieving suffering and helping rebuild livelihoods and communities so that women and men in the poorest and most vulnerable communities are able to survive and recover from humanitarian crises and live in a safe and secure environment.

### Strategies

- 1 Launch effective emergency responses, according to international standards and in close cooperation with other agencies.
- 2 Establish confederation-wide policies and standards to ensure that we meet the needs and interests of those we serve.
- 3 Coordinate training and assistance for disaster preparedness and risk reduction, including coping mechanisms for hostile and erratic climates.
- 4 Ensure continuity between emergency response and development programmes.
- 5 Promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution programmes.
- 6 Develop effective policy and advocacy positions to prevent communal and gender-based violence, forced displacement and armed conflict.
- 7 Lobby the UN and governments for the protection of vulnerable communities and the creation of 'humanitarian space' in humanitarian crises.



### Horizon 2015: What we will have changed

- 1 More communities will have the necessary resources to survive and recover from disasters and to minimise their impact.
- 2 More communities have the financial support and technical know-how to respond to the effects of increasing environmental threats.
- 3 More Caritas organisations respond to human suffering collectively and appropriately, according to international standards and in close cooperation with other agencies.
- 4 Caritas organisations have the capacity to help communities build peace and reduce their vulnerability to major emergencies
- 5 Caritas organisations have developed effective policy and advocacy positions to prevent communal and gender-based violence, displacement and armed conflict.

*“Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate...  
because the standard you use will be the standard used for you.”*

Luke 6:36–38

# Promoting integral human development

## Objective Two: Eradicate extreme poverty

**Promoting integral human development and charitable services so that women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities have equal access to essential services such as clean water, education and healthcare and the resources they need to live sustainably, with dignity.**

### Strategies

- 1** Increase global and inter-regional focus on equality and justice for the poorest and most disadvantaged.
- 2** Lobby world leaders to establish new goals to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals based on zero tolerance of extreme poverty.
- 3** Promote technology sharing and capacity building to support and enable climate mitigation and adaptation programmes.
- 4** Coordinate members' work to establish access to food and water as a human right, investment in agriculture and rural development and policy development to address the root causes of global food insecurity.
- 5** Promote programmes and capacity building for better treatment and prevention of pandemic diseases, notably HIV and AIDS.
- 6** Coordinate regional programmes to promote and defend best practice on labour, migration and trafficking.



### Horizon 2015: What we will have changed

- 1 More women and men will have adequate access to integrated essential services such as clean water, food, education and healthcare.
- 2 Caritas organisations will have an increased capacity to deliver change through effective programmes and services to enable people to meet their needs and those of their families.
- 3 Governments and international institutions will be on track to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will provide sufficient resources for developing countries to respond to climate change, food and water security.
- 4 Environmental programmes are prioritised across Caritas.
- 5 Men and women are not forced to leave their place of origin and have access to opportunities and choices to sustain their livelihoods.

*“It is like the mustard seed which, at the time of its sowing, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.”*

Mark 4:30–32

# Advocacy for a better world

## Objective Three: Transform unjust systems and structures

**Increasing power and influence so that women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities are able to influence the systems, decisions and resources that affect them and live under governments, institutions and global structures that are just and accountable.**

### Strategies

- 1** Coordinate a single global poverty campaign that incorporates the same messaging and actions at international, regional and national level.
- 2** Increase Caritas influence at international and regional level in order to bring about effective social change, engaging decision makers in a values-based vision of the world.
- 3** Apply research and economic and political analysis of the causes of poverty to inform policy development, advocacy and communications strategies, making full use of member organisations' analysis and learning.
- 4** Develop programmes on civil society advocacy to ensure that governments prioritise accountability to their own citizens in the implementation of pro-poor policies and in the use of resources and monitoring of governance process to ensure respect for the rule of law.
- 5** Raise awareness on global interdependence and global citizenship and their implications for the eradication of poverty.



### Horizon 2015: What we will have changed

- 1 Caritas is recognised as one of the leading protagonists promoting a world without poverty and is respected for well-informed and principled analysis through its joint actions delivering justice for the poor.
- 2 Caritas organisations will have increased their national and regional capacity for values-based analysis and advocacy on social policy affecting the poorest and most disadvantaged.
- 3 People, particularly women, will be acting as global citizens working for the common good and achieving positive changes in structures, policies and practices that affect their lives.

*“He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly.  
He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty.”*  
Luke 1:52–53

# A stronger, more effective confederation

## Objective Four: Build organisational competence and global partnership

Caritas will build its organisational competence and standards so that the confederation is professionally accountable, financially sustainable and is able to challenge global poverty, rooted in faith, through prayer and action in effective global partnerships.

### Strategies

- 1 Promote good governance and minimum standards in management, finance and accountability across Caritas confederation organisations.
- 2 Develop a realistic membership fee structure appropriate to different regional realities and build a diverse external funding base from sources that reflect Caritas values.
- 3 Coordinate legal and technical advice on issues of concern as well as capacity building on organisational development, finance, security, communications and advocacy actions.
- 4 Coordinate and provide effective communications for international policy development and advocacy actions, linked to regional and national advocacy priorities, in partnership with the Holy See, other Catholic and faith organisations and major international humanitarian and development networks.



### Horizon 2015: What we will have changed

- 1 New Caritas Internationalis Statutes and Internal Rules have strengthened governance and management.
- 2 Caritas is financially sustainable through just distribution of resources and effective fundraising.
- 3 All Caritas organisations have developed plans for achieving minimum standards of accountability in management and finance.
- 4 Regional structures and work plans reflect confederation coherence and unity.

*“This is what the Lord asks of you: only this,  
To act justly,  
To love tenderly  
And to walk humbly with your God.”  
Micah 6:8*

# Notes

This is a working document of the Caritas Internationalis XIX General Assembly.

*“If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, ‘I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty,’ without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? In the same way faith, if good deeds do not go with it, is quite dead.”*

James 2:15–17

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*“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you  
and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*  
Jeremiah 29:11

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