



Sustainable Development and the Future of Work in the Context of the Jubilee of Mercy: *Statement of Commitment and Action*

We, representatives of Catholic organisations, movements of trade unions and of cooperatives, associations of business leaders, and other organisations involved in the promotion of decent work at local, national or international levels, gathered in Rome, between 2 and 5 of May 2016, for a Global Seminar on “Sustainable Development and the Future of Work in the Context of the Jubilee of Mercy” are:

- appreciative of the facilitating role of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the International Labour Organisation, Caritas Internationalis, the Working Group of Catholic-Inspired Organizations Engaged in the Promotion of Decent Work, and the German Commission for Justice and Peace, in convening this important discussion to identify some of the most critical issues in the world of work, and exchange on innovative solutions;
- (We are) convinced that people, including workers, their families, and communities, should be placed at the center of sustainable development policies and should be the first concern in the reflection and debate on the future of work;

We envision that our profound discussions and reflections, held during this Global Seminar, have set us firmly on a steady path which will be marked by progress on securing additional commitment to establish fair and just public policies and practices, by effectively increasing access to youth employment and quality education and program development to protect job stability and to eradicate deterioration or marginalization of international labor standards.

- (We are) committed to promote dignity, dialogue, and the promotion of human rights and international labour standards as the core of any sustainable development policies.

Of critical importance are issues such as lack of respect and legal guarantees to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and just wage, the eradication of child labour; forced labour, trafficking and the modern forms of slavery as well as any form of discrimination, the difficult access to employment for many young adults; worsening situations of work, including indecent, undignified, and unsafe conditions, especially with regard to the increasing precarity and informalization of work in the global supply chain, lack of recognition for the value of work, failure to pay just wages and to provide other social protections for workers and their families; transformation of the world of work, including through digital and other forms of technology; lack of access for migrants and refugees to decent working

conditions; lack of access to adequate social protection for children, the sick, the disabled, the unemployed and the elderly.

- (We are) keenly aware and deeply concerned that women, despite their equal dignity with men, as human persons created in the image and likeness of God, regularly are confronted with inequitable, discriminatory, and stigmatizing policies and practices in the world of work and in other socio-economic arenas;

In this regard, we received hope and further courage through the designation by Pope Francis of the Prayer Intention for the month of May 2016, on “Respect for Women”: *“The contribution of women in all areas of human activity is undeniable, beginning with the family... We have done little for the women who are in very difficult situations - despised, marginalized, and even reduced to slavery ... It is a prayer - that in all countries of the world women may be honored and respected and valued for their essential contribution to society.”*¹

- (We are) inspired by the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church and by the values and teachings of other religious traditions, including respect for and enhancement of human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, and sustainability, which also are congruent with the principles and international standards that ground the tri-partite processes and activities of the International Labour Organisation (ILO);

We recall in particular the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia (1944)²: “All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity; the attainment of the conditions in which this shall be possible must constitute the central aim of national and international policy”;

Other key ILO resources include ILO’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998)³ and the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008).⁴

“We celebrate the most recent contribution to Catholic Social Doctrine provided by Pope Francis in his enlightening encyclical, *Laudato Si*, in which he notes the urgent need for all members of the human family to strengthen their relationships with God, with creation, and with each other, from the perspective of integral ecology, and specifically addresses the vocation of human work, including the following points of great relevance to our concerns and efforts:

If we reflect on the proper relationship between human beings and the world around us, we see the need for a correct understanding of work; (...) Underlying every form

¹ <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-prayer-intentions-for-may-are-on-respPrint>

² Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organization adopted at Philadelphia on 10 May 1944, www.ilo.org

³ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_467653.pdf

⁴ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/genericdocument/wcms_371208.pdf

of work is a concept of the relationship which we can and must have with what is other than ourselves. (#125)

Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment. (#128)

In order to continue providing employment, it is imperative to promote an economy which favours productive diversity and business creativity. (...) Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good. (#129)⁵

It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” (#139)⁶

We call upon the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the International Labour Organisation, Caritas Internationalis, and the Working Group of Catholic-Inspired Organizations Engaged in the Promotion of Decent Work, to seize the opportunity, during the ongoing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the ILO Future of Work Centenary Initiative, to continue promotion of exchange and dialogue among organisations involved in the world of work, especially since dialogue is one of the strong values held in common by both the Social Doctrine of the Church and the ILO. Engagement with other religious structures and communities also is of the utmost importance.

Promotion of exchanges between and among countries of the South and the North, as well, is urgently needed, in particular, to identify and reinforce best practices, and to search for alternative models of socio-economic integraton based on the principles underlying the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church and the standards set in ILO Conventions and Recommendations, We sincerely hope that such dialogue and advocacy will result in the formulation, strengthening, enforcement and monitoring of public policies by States, in order to guarantee decent work, equitable compensation, and social protection for all workers and their families.

We further believe that the Catholic Church, other religious organizations, and civil society as a whole, have a serious responsibility to promote just work policies and practices, both within their respective institutions and in all sectors of society, and to report all forms of exploitation and abuse of human dignity, particularly in the context of the Catholic Church’s observance of this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. All individual and institutional employers have a responsibility to transform the world of work so that it will reflect the dignity and rights of all workers. In particular, Church-related structures have a responsibility to base all employment-

⁵ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html

⁶ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html

related policies and actions on Gospel values so that they could credibly witness to the power of God's mercy and justice.

To this end, we, the participants in this Global Seminar, propose to:

- conduct broad outreach and establish wide networking to address the tripartite constituencies of the ILO, especially governments, and with other stakeholders and civil society, in our advocacy efforts to raise awareness and promote effective action related to the importance of decent work, particularly in the context of discussions about the future of work and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- organize a series of regional consultations with the goal to reinforce exchanges in preparation for the 2019 celebration of the ILO centenary;

The results of these exchanges should be made available in an accessible format in order to encourage and develop further dialogue and experience exchange among organisations at the national and local levels, as well as with governments and multi-lateral organizations, including the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations. As member-based organisations, including respective Episcopal Conferences, ecumenical and interfaith structures, and associations of workers and employers, we will continue to promote such dialogue;

- promote regular exchange among participants in these consultations, especially in the context of the Observance of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the ILO Future of Work Centenary Initiative, and the annual International Labour Conferences, will be developed, through mutual invitations and sharing of information. In addition, the 2017 Global conference on Child Labour, to be organized by Argentina under SDG Target 8.7, could serve as a landmark in this preparation toward 2019.

In conclusion, we recall the challenge launched to us by Pope Francis, during his Sunday address and blessing to Catholics and all people of good will gathered in St. Peter's Square on Sunday, 01 May 2016: "Tomorrow in Rome begins the international conference on sustainable development and the most vulnerable types of work. I hope that this event can create awareness among authorities, political and economic institutions and civil society, so that a model of development will be promoted that takes into account human dignity in full respect of standards on work and the environment."⁷

⁷ Pope Francis, « Regina Caeli : on the Gift of the Holy Spirit », Zenit, 01 May 2016