



## Jubilee 2025: Caritas Internationalis convenes global ‘townhall’ on ending debt crisis keeping billions in poverty

*Online panel discussion and press conference with senior economists and religious leaders*

### **When:**

**Wednesday 28 May 2025, 14:30-16:00 CEST (Vatican City/Rome)**

**Press conference to be held at the conclusion of the webinar between 16:00-16:30 CEST.**

### **Zoom link to register:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/pQx9\\_BrYSdeyHDdfW\\_Np7A](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/pQx9_BrYSdeyHDdfW_Np7A)

### **What:**

Internationally-recognised economists, civil society leaders and senior Vatican officials will speak at a global ‘townhall’ online meeting to discuss how to end the global debt crisis keeping billions of people in poverty.

The event – *Pilgrims of Hope: A Jubilee inspiration for action on debt, climate and development* – will bring together policy experts and religious leaders to discuss how the Jubilee year the Catholic Church is celebrating in 2025 provides a vision for ending the global debt crisis that is keeping billions of people in poverty.

The global townhall is organised within the framework of Caritas Internationalis’ global “[Turn Debt into Hope](#)” campaign, launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024. The campaign seeks to raise awareness of the current yet silent global debt crisis — a crisis that is ultimately one of development, not merely finance.

Coinciding with the tenth anniversary of *Laudato Si’*, this event responds to Pope Francis’ appeal on the 2025 World Day of Peace for debt relief for the world’s most heavily indebted countries, not as

an act of generosity, but as one of justice, also calling for the creation of a renewed international financial architecture, with human dignity for all at its heart.

[More than 3.3 billion people](#) are living in countries where governments are spending more on repaying creditors than on basic public services such as education, healthcare and preparing for climate disasters.

**A 30-minute press conference will be held immediately after the conclusion of the webinar. Journalists are invited to register an intention to ask a question by emailing Alfonso Apicella ([apicella@caritas.va](mailto:apicella@caritas.va)).**

## Who

The townhall event is being organised by the global Catholic aid confederation Caritas Internationalis and the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Panellist will include:

- Alistair Dutton – Secretary General, Caritas Internationalis
- Sister Alessandra Smerilli – Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- His Eminence Cardinal Jaime Spengler, OFM – Archbishop of Porto Alegre, Brazil; President of the Latin American Episcopal Council
- His Excellency Most Rev Gabriele Giordano Caccia – Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
- Professor Martin Guzmán – School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University; Former Minister of Economy of Argentina
- Ms Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi – African Center for Economic Transformation
- Ms Lucy Esipila – Executive Secretary, Caritas Africa

## Background information

Governments in the world's poorest countries are being forced to allocate more funds to debt servicing than to healthcare, education and climate adaptation combined. This debt crisis exists alongside cuts to aid budgets and the imposition of tariffs by governments in the global North, reducing further what resources are available to governments in the global South to provide basic public services.

Discussions at the event will reflect on what steps must be taken to relieve debt burdens and reform the global financial system in the context of the Catholic Church's Jubilee year in 2025 – a moment traditionally associated with debt cancellation since Biblical times. Panellists will draw on the legacy of Pope Francis's teaching on the necessity of financial systems to serve human rights and care for the environment, ten years after the publication of the late Pontiff's landmark encyclical *Laudato Si'*. [Pope Leo XIV has similarly spoken](#) in the early days of his papacy about the need to say "no" to an economy "that impoverishes both people and planet".

Contributions will also reference an upcoming report from a Vatican-commissioned group of experts on debt convened by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS) and Columbia University's Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD), under the chairmanship of Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

## Notes to editors

- For more information, please contact: Alfonso Apicella, [apicella@caritas.va](mailto:apicella@caritas.va)
- Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of over 160 members who are working at the grassroots in almost every country of the world. When a crisis hits, Caritas is already on the ground. The diverse members give us our strength – from small groups of volunteers to some of the biggest global charities. Inspired by Catholic faith, Caritas is the helping hand of the Church – reaching out to the poor, vulnerable and excluded, regardless of race or religion, to build a world based on justice and fraternal love.