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Press Conference to present the volume “Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displaced People”, edited by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

At 11.30 this morning, a press conference was streamed live from the Holy See Press Office to present the volume “Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displaced People”, edited by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The introductory greeting from His Eminence Cardinal Michael Czerny, S.J., under-secretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, was followed by interventions from the following speakers: Fr. Fabio Baggio, C.S., under-secretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, S.D.B., official of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and coordinator of the ECOLOGÍA Task Force of the Vatican Covid-19 Commission; Dr. Cecilia Dall’Oglio, associate director of European programmes of the *Global Catholic Climate Movement*; Archbishop Claudio Dalla Zuanna, S.C.I., of Beira, Mozambique, by live link-up; and Ms. Maria Madalena Issau, a 32 year-old resident in a camp for displaced persons 60 km from the city of Beira, Mozambique, by live link-up.

The following are their interventions:

Intervention by Fr. Fabio Baggio, C.S.

The Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displaced People are a document published in the form of a booklet, which contains data, interpretations, policies and proposals related to the phenomenon of climate displaced people. To begin with, I propose to take the famous phrase uttered by Hamlet, “to be or not to be”, and turn it into “to see or not to see, that is the question!”. Everything, in fact, begins with our seeing, yes, with mine and yours. (Pope Francis, *Preface*)

This is how the Holy Father begins his preface to the latest document published by the Migrants and Refugees

Section, entitled “Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displaced People”. The verb “to see” is the first step in a process of awareness raising, which aims to act on the causes of the climate crisis and its consequences in the field of migration.

The climate crisis has a “human face”. It is already a reality for millions of people all over the world, in particular for the inhabitants of the existential peripheries. The Catholic Church has a maternal concern for all those who have been displaced by the effects of this crisis. This particular situation of vulnerability is the *raison d'être* of this document.

The Magisterium of the Catholic Church has previously considered the plight of internally displaced persons and developed reflections and suggestions regarding their pastoral care. These new Guidelines focus exclusively on climate displaced persons - those persons or groups of persons who have been forced to leave their place of habitual residence due to an acute climate crisis, highlighting new challenges posed by the current global scenario and suggesting appropriate pastoral responses.

The main aim of these Guidelines is to provide a set of considerations, which may be useful to Episcopal Conferences, local Churches, religious congregations and Catholic organisations, as well as pastoral workers and all the Catholic faithful in pastoral planning and development of programmes for the assistance of climate displaced persons.

The guidelines proposed in this document are deeply rooted in the reflection and teaching of the Church, as well as her practical experience in responding to the needs of climate displaced persons, displaced both within the borders of their countries of origin and beyond.

The Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displacement are the result of careful listening to the local Churches and numerous religious congregations and Catholic organisations working in the field. Although approved by the Holy Father, they do not claim to exhaust the Church's teaching on climate crisis and displacement.

The Guidelines open with a short glossary, which aims to clarify some of the key terms used in the document. This is followed by a general introduction, which explains the purpose of the Guidelines and the working methodology adopted.

The body of the document is divided into ten points. The first is dedicated to a general overview of the topic, in order to clarify the state of the art regarding the link between climate crisis and displacement. The following nine points focus on particular aspects of the phenomenon, according to a dynamic of challenges and responses.

The starting point is the need to promote awareness of the issue, to enable everyone to “open their eyes to the reality of the impact of the climate crisis on human existence” (p. 21). Sometimes hasty departures can be avoided by finding alternatives to climate displacement: this is what the third point is about. If departure is unavoidable, then it is necessary to prepare people for displacement (fourth point), promote their inclusion and integration with the communities that receive them (fifth point), exert a positive influence on decision-making processes affecting them (sixth point) and ensure their pastoral care (seventh point). The eighth point is devoted to cooperation between all actors in planning and strategic action for climate displaced persons. The ninth focuses on the promotion of professional training in integral ecology for pastoral agents. The last point emphasises the need to increase academic research on the climate crisis and related displacement.

The Guidelines close with a small chapter dedicated to some practical indications on how to use the document, mainly addressed to local Churches and other Catholic actors.

I would like to conclude this brief presentation by quoting the final words of the Holy Father's preface: “To see or not to see is the question that leads us to respond, working together. These pages show us what is needed and what we must do, with God's help.” (Pope Francis, *Preface*).

Intervention by Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, S.D.B.

CLIMATE CRISIS & DISPLACEMENT NEXUS

I would like offer three reflections on the intricate nexus between Climate Crisis and Displacement.

First of all, it is important to acknowledge that the climate crisis is real.

We are currently living in the Holocene which began nearly 12,000 years ago – an interglacial epoch described as the “long summer” and characterized by stable climate and steady sea levels - during which we managed to invent agriculture and settle down and create the human civilization.

During the entire period of the Holocene, the average temperature of Earth hardly varied by more than 1°C. However, since 1850, and during the last few decades in particular, greenhouse gas emissions from human activities have been rising, leading to a drastic climate change. The temperature has already risen by 1.1°C from pre-industrial times and the rate of warming is faster than any time in the past 65 million years. With the current rate of emissions we could reach 3.5°C by the end of the century. Scientists warn us that if we are to go beyond the threshold of 1.5°C – the ambitious goal of the Paris Agreement - we risk crossing several tipping points (like the melting of the Arctic and the West Antarctic ice sheet which could raise sea levels by several metres).

We are in a climate crisis, or rather in a climate emergency, as 11,000 scientists got together to warn us in 2019, a concern echoed by Pope Francis in his *Message for the World Day of Prayer for Creation* in 2020. It is a message that has been reinforced by our own children and young people who took to the streets in thousands during the last couple of years, warning us of the risk of leaving them an uninhabitable home.

Secondly, we need to acknowledge that there exists a strong nexus between climate crisis and displacement.

Displacement can take place either due to *rapid-onset triggers*, mainly extreme weather phenomena like floods, storms, droughts and wildfires or *slow-onset processes* like water scarcity and depletion of other natural resources, desertification, rising temperatures and sea-level rise (globally about 145 million people live within a metre above the current sea level).

The climate crisis is becoming one of the primary triggers of displacement in recent years. Numbers speak for themselves. Of the more than 33 million newly displaced people in 2019, 8.5 million were displaced as a result of conflict and violence while 24.9 million due to natural disasters. In the first half of 2020, 14.6 million people were displaced: 9.8 million as a result of natural disasters and 4.8 associated with conflict and violence. While about 10.3 million people were displaced by climate change-induced events such as flooding and droughts in the last six months, about 2.3 million others were displaced by conflict in the same period, indicating the vast majority of internal displacements are now triggered by the climate crisis. It is estimated that over 253.7 million people were displaced by natural disasters from 2008 to 2018, with such disasters displacing three to 10 times more people than armed conflict worldwide, depending on the region in question.

Climate crisis and other ecological hazards are becoming the primary drivers for displacement, and could reshape patterns of migration in the coming decades.

Thirdly, we need to offer an integral response to the challenge of climate crisis and displacement.

An integral response to the challenge of CC and D will need to be “humane” as the crisis itself has a human face. It is ultimately a moral problem. The poor and vulnerable communities whose carbon emissions are only a fraction of those of the rich world are already the early and disproportionate victims of the crisis.

It is an ethical imperative for the rest of humanity to reduce their disproportionately huge emissions that cause the climate crisis. We need to cut the emissions by half by 2030 and reach net zero emissions before 2050, to remain within 1.5° C, going beyond which would be catastrophic. Nations need to commit to much more ambitious targets at the Climate Summit – COP26 – which appears to be a like “a last call” for our planet (only 30% of the global emissions are covered by current commitments). We need to embark on “rapid and far-reaching” low carbon strategies in terms of energy transition, sustainable life styles, circular economy, sustainable agriculture and industry, etc.

This is not just philanthropy. It is only paying back the “ecological debt” (*Laudato si'*) that we owe to the most vulnerable amongst us. It is also the legacy we will be leaving for our children and future generations.

We also need to offer climate displaced people protection through legislation and policies. International protection for climate-induced displacement is limited, piecemeal, and not always legally binding.

It is ultimately a “pastoral” challenge. Accompanying our brothers and sisters who are increasingly displaced by climate crisis and other ecological hazards is the journey we are called to become a credible and witnessing Church, a caring and inclusive ecclesial community - as we live in a “common home” (*Laudato si'*) together as a common family, as brothers and sisters (*Fratelli Tutti*). This is what POCDP is about!

Intervention by Dr. Cecilia Dall'Oglio

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for this invitation to speak on behalf of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, an alliance of more than 700 organisations and thousands of individuals from different continents who, since 2015, have been journeying together to live according to *Laudato si'* and to respond to the urgency of the climate crisis, to the cry of the poor and the earth, connecting the spiritual dimension with that of personal and community lifestyles and commitment in the public sphere. I am here to give you my testimony on point 8 of the Pastoral Guidelines: *Cooperating in strategic planning and action*, and to present some examples of concrete responses to combat the climate crisis.

The first practical response is to find spaces for collaboration and strategic action in the joy of walking together, which is the spirit of the Canticle of Saint Francis.

In the Preface to the “Guidelines” Pope Francis writes: “This is the work the Lord is asking of us now, and in it there is immense joy. We will not emerge from crises such as those of the climate or COVID-19 by locking ourselves up in individualism, but only by ‘standing together’”.

And again, in the opening quote of Challenge 8 we read: “One body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call” (*Eph 4,4*).

This not being alone but, rather standing together, in the Body of the Lord, this synodality is the answer to our prayer before those who suffer and whom we would like to love, the cry that resounds in our heart, because the challenge is great.

We are not alone in reaching out to the rejected of the cities, the rejected of this economy, but there is a body and a plurality of charisms, a community that together reaches where we alone cannot reach. What joy! Cooperation in planning and strategic action is not a burden added to our busy schedules and commitments, but a gift.

- The text “This cooperation is in itself a sign of the way forward” is already a gift.

- The fruit of this collaboration was the Document entitled “On the road to caring for the common home - Five years after *Laudato si'*”, drawn up by the Holy See’s Interdicasterial Table on Integral Ecology: I refer you to this document where you will find many “practices” and operational elements to encourage cooperation in the various spheres, including those touched on in points 9 and 10 of these *Guidelines* in the field of academic research and professional formation.
- In this regard, following it personally, I would like to mention the experience of collaboration between the Pontifical Universities and Universities of Rome that in 2017 gave rise to the “Joint diploma in integral ecology” by including in the academic programme informal training proposals that follow precisely the direction of these *Guidelines*, as students were led to immerse themselves in situations committed to “Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating”, such as the *Casa Scalabrini 634* in Rome. With these *Pastoral Guidelines on Climate Displaced People*, Pope Francis invites us to “see”, and it is necessary, aware of the urgency of changing course towards an integral ecology, alongside formal training to offer educational proposals of great significance with the methodology of “learning by doing”. Indeed, when a proposal is offered through experience, it finds very special meaning, capable of overcoming the barrier of indifference and experiencing “facts of hope” by meeting witnesses who make this future possible and open to experience.
- Another practical example of collaboration in promoting “Information campaigns that highlight the gravity of Climate Displacement, and concentrate on the ‘human face’ of the crisis and on the need to act with urgency” and promote dialogue and ecumenical networks is surely the experience that Christians throughout the world live by uniting in prayer and action for the “Time of Creation”, held every year from 1 September, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to 4 October, feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. It is important to highlight how, in the context of the Time of Creation, there is also a great opportunity for collaboration to celebrate with the local Churches the World Day of Migrants and Refugees on 27 September, and to raise awareness among Christians all over the world of the care for the most vulnerable and most affected by climate change. This year’s theme will in fact be “*A home for all? Rediscovering God’s oikos*”, which links to the theme of World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2021, “Towards an ever greater ‘us’”: an opportunity to involve the most vulnerable in our ecumenical prayers and to draw on their wisdom for the integral ecological conversion of the entire Church.

Indeed, the organisations which assist displaced persons play a fundamental role as a bridge within the Catholic Church to unite the human family, and to “Develop pastoral programmes that integrate” as highlighted in the *Guidelines* in Chapter 9. The site of Time of Creation will help us to promote and replicate best practices, as advocated in the *Guidelines*, starting “from the ground and case by case, fighting for what is most concrete and local, to the last corner of the country and the world”.

- The *Guidelines* ask us to collaborate strategically also by promoting a process of “Collaborative Advocacy with denominational and civil society organisations”: Chapter 1 states that the Catholic Church “has warned that the world must pursue all necessary efforts to achieve a ‘rapid and farsighted’ transition to low carbon emissions ... in order to contain global warming within the crucial threshold of 1.5°C”, and in Chapter 6 on the challenge to “Exercise a positive influence on decision-making processes” quoting *Laudato si'* 26 tell us that “There is an urgent need to develop policies so that ... the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced”. As a final example of a concrete response I want, therefore, to mention here the campaign for divestment from fossil fuels (<https://catholicclimatemovement.global/divest-and-reinvest/>) which also responds to the invitation that the *Guidelines* make to collaborate with civil society organisations. In fact, Catholic organisations are playing their part within a broader worldwide movement for divestment. The attention that the *Guidelines* call for in “Developing a broader and more coherent communication strategy” is also well represented by the choice that the announcement - by Catholic organisations deciding to divest and take their money where their values are - to be more effective be made in a coordinated way, at particularly significant moments and in collaboration with the broader Civil Society Movement. Divestment is the rudder stroke to reverse the course of this extractive economic development model, which we first and foremost, from our democratic countries, must fight by assuming our responsibilities and doing our part for climate justice, for our brothers and sisters who have nothing left. (The next divestment announcement will be on 17 May).

In conclusion, is it not the case, then, that for the integral ecological conversion that is so strongly called for also in these *Pastoral Guidelines*, it is necessary, “essential” first of all to “make room”? To make room for paths that

promote, as the document makes explicit in its responses to this challenge, “effective coordination in strategic planning and action in order to avoid duplication and waste of resources”?

“Young people demand change from us”, the *Guidelines* state in their conclusion.

Young people demand change from us, they ask us not just to do our little bit right but to be strategic in order to achieve change.

Laudato si' 49 also tells us why things are not changing: “This is due partly to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems. They live and reason from the comfortable position of a high level of development and a quality of life well beyond the reach of the majority of the world’s population”. And this is what could happen to us today to us, who are “too full up” to find room for cooperation, for strategic action.

We do not emerge from this, and certainly we do not come out of it better!

Our climate-displaced brothers and sisters risk finding hands too full to take hold of them! Hands that are self-sufficient, to paraphrase the document, engaged in “unilateral and uncoordinated actions that can compromise the speed and effectiveness of responses” and thus change. Hands not looking for other hands to hold in order to walk and collaborate and “make a home together” around the hearth that, as point 1 of the Guidelines says, warms us from the cold of indifference. The Spirit has given us the different Charisms but it blew when “they were all together in one place” (*Acts 2:1*) and we must leave these places, these “spaces” free for collaboration, free like that part of the garden of the Franciscan friaries where the Spirit makes them bloom “where it wills”.

Thank you.

Intervention by Bishop Claudio Dalla Zuanna, S.C.I.

With almost 3,000 km of coastline bordering the Indian Ocean, Mozambique is a country familiar with tropical storms and cyclones. Its good fortune is to have in front of it, like a great shield, the island of Madagascar, where cyclones meeting land lose their destructive power. Only those cyclones that bypass the island's extremities and enter the Mozambique Channel reach the Mozambique coast, generally to the south or north of the long coastline. Rarely do cyclones reach the central part of the country where the city of Beira is located. But this is no longer the case!

The temperature of the waters of the Channel has risen consistently in recent years, allowing tropical storms and cyclones that do not exhaust their force on the land of Madagascar to recharge through heavy evaporation and to increase in category in the mere two days it usually takes such disturbances to cross the 400 km of sea to reach Mozambique. If it then happens that, for different reasons, the disturbance lingers over the Mozambique Channel for 5 or 6 days as it did in March 2019, a cyclone of extraordinary strength can be unleashed, such as Cyclone Idai, the strongest cyclone in memory in Southern Africa. This cyclone damaged 90% of the city's buildings, razing precarious suburban neighbourhoods to the ground but also ripping apart the cathedral, which in its 100 years of existence had never suffered such severe damage. The city's hospital, which serves the region's approximately 3 million inhabitants, several public institutions, schools and even the bishop's house, had their roofs blown off by winds of over 200 km per hour.

Since March 2019, the city of Beira has been struck by a further two cyclones, the last on 23 January this year; cyclones which, while of lesser strength, have left destruction in their wake. (The bishop's house lost its roof a second time). Three cyclones in less than two years seem to have made their way over the city of Beira. Some recent studies have shown that the temperature in the central zone of the country has increased above the

national average, which has also increased, perhaps due to the fact that deforestation for the export of timber has been greater in this region. (In the last ten years, more timber has been exported from Mozambique than in the preceding 500 years). This temperature increase could be one of the causes of these extreme disturbances in the central part of the country.

Besides strong winds, tropical storms bring huge amounts of rain, which in a flat area such as Beira, with areas below sea level, creates flooding, sometimes very serious as in the case of Cyclone Idai, which caused an area of 2,000 square metres to be flooded around the city, isolating it for many days, leading to over 800 deaths and displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

With these forced displacements, people lose their homes, property, employment opportunities, access to school and health services (for example, as a result of Cyclone Idai, thousands of people with AIDS and on antiretroviral treatment had to stop their treatment, with all the negative consequences this entails).

These forced relocations weaken the community and the social fabric with its relationships, and everything has to be rebuilt in anonymous resettlement sites, far from the city, with little help and on a temporary basis, leaving the most fragile people unable to rebuild their lives.

Climate change is not a hypothetical threat, but rather it is already a reality that demands immediate action, including the creation of conditions to accommodate those displaced by the ever-increasing number of disasters. We cannot limit ourselves to emergency intervention, sometimes motivated by emotions that fade quickly, nor to resettling displaced persons in areas where essential services are not in place. This applies to governments, but also to the Church in her vocation to be a welcoming home, a family of God. The document that is being released today is a response in the right direction; it is up to us to make it bear fruit.

Intervention by Ms. Maria Madalena Issau

My name is Maria Madalena Issau and I am 32 years old. I am a mother of five children and look after two other orphaned nephews. My husband died in the year 2018.

Since the year 2001 I have lived in Praia Nova, a neighbourhood located on a beach in the city of Beira where I bought and resold fish to support my family.

Due to its location, the neighbourhood suffered a lot from beach erosion and frequent flooding. In the year 2014, an extraordinary flood destroyed many houses and I lost my possessions and all our food. Many families were displaced from the place, but I returned to live there as I had nowhere else to go and no other way to support my family.

The worst came in March 2019, with the passage of Cyclone Idai which destroyed everything. All the families were sheltered in two schools and two months later, 618 families were relocated to a resettlement centre 60 kilometres from Beira and 5 kilometres from the nearest village, which is called Mutua. The government gave us a plot of land measuring 20 metres by 30 metres, a tent and a standpipe for water. The families also received a plot of land to cultivate, but because of the distance many stopped cultivating.

A few months ago, an NGO started building 200 houses of 25 square metres (one room and one room) for vulnerable people, widows and orphans. Other families still live in tents or huts. There is no health care post and the nearest one is 8 km away. There is a school only up to grade 4, and the other children must go to Mutua (5 km away). In the resettlement there is no electricity, no work and no business can be done; there are no projects to educate young people or to employ people, and for odd jobs people must travel many kilometres. The NGO that offered food terminated its activity a month ago and we are now very worried about our future.

I am not Catholic, but I can testify to the presence of the Catholic Church in the resettlement since the first months after our arrival, when the bishop came to learn about our situation and to express his solidarity with us. The parish helped to lay the sheets to cover five classrooms and built a chapel as a sign of the Catholic presence among the people, where regular catechetical meetings and celebrations are held. The parish has distributed clothes to the whole population and milk to the children, and continues to help those most in need, especially the children, for whom it is planning to build a kindergarten.
