

Caritas Africa

Regional Executive Secretariat



Report

Response to Laudato Si' by Caritas Africa
and its Member Organisations

On the 5th anniversary of the publication of the Encyclical
16th-24th May 2020



On Care for our common home

735, Boulevard des Armées, Tokoin Séminaire, Lomé - Togo

Tél. + 228 22 21 29 37 - secaf@caritas-africa.org - <https://www.facebook.com/CaritasRegionAfrique/>

Special thanks to all the National Caritas who have contributed in producing this report by providing materials : reports, pictures, videos, etc.

May our joint efforts contribute to disseminate the Pope's Encyclical and its contents to all Africans and thus make our common home better and better.

Albert MASHIKA Bin-Kasongo
Regional Executive Secretary
Caritas Africa

Cover page

National Commission for Justice, Peace and Caritas Liberia marking the 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si' through a tree planting activity at the secretariat in Monrovia on 18th May 2020. (Photo credits- NCJPC Liberia)

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Call to Action

Marking of the 5th Anniversary of *Laudato Si'*

by Caritas in Africa and Next Steps

Dates: 16th-24th May 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

Peace be with you.



“These situations have caused sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness.” (LS 53)

In the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* -on care for our common home, Pope Francis addresses “*every person living on the planet*” and invites us to a dialogue on consumerism, development, environmental degradation and global warming. The Encyclical further calls us to reflect on *integral ecology* and the *culture of encounter* by building relationships with God, one self, other human beings and with creation.

This call to action is in response to the letter we received from Caritas Internationalis on 24th February 2020, on the global mobilisation to **mark the 5th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* from 16th-24th May 2020**. This is also a follow up to the decisions taken at the Regional Commission that was held in Accra, Ghana in March 2020.

Caritas Africa would like to invite its Member Organisations to consider marking *Laudato Si'* week within their respective organisations and also mobilise Diocesan Caritas organisations to join the process. We are mindful of the challenges that the Coronavirus pandemic poses to the implementation of programs in an environment of social distancing. Therefore, this year’s activities may have to be different as we have to come up with unique ideas to show support for climate action during this challenging time.



As we celebrate the 5th anniversary of the encyclical, it is important to take stock of the activities that we have carried out over the years in response to *Laudato Si'*, these may include amongst others:

- The number of people reached through *awareness creation sessions on Laudato Si'*, in workshops, community meetings, advocacy initiatives and communication channels;
- Results from *Policy advocacy* on climate action;
- Achievements and challenges from conducting campaigns *through tree planting, adopting renewable energy, waste management*;
- Reviewing our internal policies to *reduce our carbon footprint*;
- Networks and partnerships forged; and
- *Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning* from all these initiatives.

This may translate to a consolidated report that will be used for future engagements in advocacy activities to demonstrate the development potential of faith communities in Africa.

As Caritas Africa, we will be undertaking the following activities on *Laudato Si'* week:

- Hosting a conference call and webinar with zone coordinators to collect information on planned activities on each zone. This will be documented and shared on our E-Magazine.
- Designing of IEC materials on climate action in response to *Laudato Si'*, this will be shared on various communication platforms.
- Digital Outreach/ social media outreach, through creating a common hashtag for Caritas in Africa, we encourage the youth in member organisations to participate to increase our online presence and reach.
- *Suggested Hashtag*:
 - **#CaritasAfrica2020LaudatoSi**
 - **#5thAnniversaryofLaudatoSi**
- Conduct an online survey to collect information on climate action activities for the last 5 years, kindly share with us photos and captions.

We propose the following activities for Member Organisations:

- Common national prayer for the fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*.
- Host conference calls with Diocesan Caritas Organisations and other commissions to discuss on unique ways to mark the 5th Anniversary.
- Dissemination of messages on climate action through Diocesan radio stations and bulk messaging platforms.
- Youth engagement in social media outreach.



- Letters from the Arch/ Bishop to Christians on caring for our common home.

We further encourage you to plan for long term activities to overcome the climate challenges that the world is facing. Even small actions will make a difference. We can increase engagement of the youth, women and children in the conversation on environmental conservation. The media is also an important tool to educate our communities on climate change and sustainable agricultural practices. In the view of Integral Human Development, we need the accompaniment of our brothers and sisters in the different commissions such as Justice and Peace, Education, Social Communications and Health.

Finally, let us continue to engage partners in government, national civil society coalitions, the academic community, media, other Catholic agencies and organisations working on environmental issues and indigenous communities as we endeavour to integrate environmental support and protection in our projects, policies and processes.

We commit all our plans to the Lord and entrust you the motherly intercession of Holy Mary, our Lady of Africa and all the Saints. We ask God protect all of us as we face the outbreak of this pandemic.

Yours in the RISEN Lord,

Most Rev Gabriel Justice Yaw ANOKYE
Metropolitan Archbishop of Kumasi and
Bishop President of Caritas Africa



Everything is connected



As we mark the 5th anniversary of the publication of the Encyclical by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, *on care for our home*, I encourage us to bring increased attention to the 7 aspirations in Africa's Agenda 2063 which reflect the desire for a prosperous and united Africa, a continent of free citizens where the full potential of women and youth are realised. As mentioned in the document, one of the ways this will be achieved is through *environmentally sustainable climate and resilient economies and communities* by putting in place measures to sustainably manage the continent's rich biodiversity, forests, land and waters and using mainly adaptive measures to address climate change risks.

In 2020, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to suffer from environmental problems including, deforestation, desertification, wetlands degradation and insect infestations such as the ongoing locust plague in East Africa. In the recent past, the communities we serve through Caritas have been affected by climate related disasters such as tropical cyclone *Idai* which caused catastrophic damages to towns and rural settlements in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. You may recall that these regions were later affected by cyclone Kenneth causing additional damages to the already affected populations. In April 2020, heavy rainfall in Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo triggered massive landslides leading to loss of lives and displacement of over 5,000 people. Also, recurrent droughts heavily impact food security in Africa.

Despite the numerous challenges faced by our people, we are reminded of our theme at the Caritas Africa 2019 general assembly that ***Africa is a land of hope***. The continent is rich in natural resources and a home to 30 per cent of the world's mineral reserves, 8 per cent of the world's natural gas and 12 per cent of the world's oil reserves. In addition Africa boasts 65 per cent of the world's arable land and 10 per cent of internal renewable fresh water source (UNEP). All these resources if well managed, will be our ticket to a united and prosperous Africa. In the words of the political economist, George Ayittey, we need ***"African solutions to African problems"***. This year's theme is *"everything is connected"*. The Holy Father in his encyclical challenges us to embrace the concept of *integral ecology* and a *culture of encounter* by assessing the relationship we have with ourselves, the environment, our neighbours and our creator.

When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from



ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. (LS, 139)

This report is a result of a conference call that was held with 17 Caritas Africa Member Organisations on 15th May 2020. It captures highlights of our initiatives in response to *Laudato Si'* over the last 5 years and how Caritas Africa's Member Organisations marked *Laudato Si'* Week from 16th-24th May 2020. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to member organisations for all their initiatives as they continue to demonstrate the love of Christ through the service of charity. I further encourage all our partners and different decision makers in sub-Saharan Africa to engage with this report as we continue working together to care for our common home and attain Africa's Agenda 2063 and UN Agenda 2030.

Finally, Caritas Africa invites its Member Organisations to join the efforts of Caritas Internationalis General Secretariat to work closely with the Dicastery for Integral Human Development Service (DPIHD) to engage in the preparation and celebration of the Year of *Laudato Si'* 2020-2021. As Pope Francis clearly stated, **"Laudato Si' is not a green manifesto or a green encyclical, but a teaching of the Church on social justice and human dignity based on integral ecology in which the human person must be placed at the centre of all our attention"**.

Mr Albert MASHIKA Bin-Kasongo
Regional Coordinator - Caritas Africa



1. Laudato Si' in Practice

Laudato Si' has been used by Caritas Africa and its member organisation as a reference document to shape internal policies and inform our advocacy agenda around *Africa's Agenda 2063*, *UN Agenda 2030*, *UN global compact on migration and mobility*, the *Paris Climate Change Agreement*, the *Sendai Framework*, amongst others. In the Encyclical, Pope Francis observes that inequalities cannot be tackled without addressing the structural drivers of inequality, this calls for the removal of all barriers to equality between all persons and for equal access to economic opportunities, political participation, decision-making and justice. *Laudato Si'* calls for ecological conversion and further invites us to question the current models of development and why the concentration of power and wealth is in the hands of the most powerful.

Through support from partners, Caritas Africa has responded to *Laudato Si'* through research on Agenda 2030, hosting conferences and training workshops on food security, climate change and agroecology and used funds from the Caritas Africa Solidarity Fund to support communities affected by *cyclone Idai* and *Kenneth* in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique.

1.1 Highlights on Caritas Africa's Activities



The Caritas Africa Side event was held on 26/02/2020 at Grass Island 1, from 1.00-2.30 Pm at the Elephant Hills resort in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

- ◆ Co-hosted the CARITAS-CIDSE 2019 Agroecology conference in Nyahururu Kenya, to facilitate experience sharing, amongst diverse stakeholders in government and civil society, on innovations in *agro-ecological* approaches to protect the environment, promote food safety and operationalise the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.



- ◆ Hosted a side-event at the 2020 6th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable development (ARFSD 2020) in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe to raise awareness on the role of faith communities in attaining sustainable development in Africa, in reference to *Laudato Si'*, and the underpinned principles in the 2030 Agenda
- ◆ Participated in the *Bringing Agenda 2030 to life* research project that was carried out by CAFOD and University College London (UCL) in partnership with National Caritas Organisations in Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zambia
- ◆ Mobilization and strengthening of national caritas on the promotion of the right to food.

1.2 Caritas Africa's Campaign Messages on Laudato Si' week

During the *Laudato Si'* week, Caritas Africa run a social media campaign through use of IEC materials to disseminate the following messages :

A call to collective action to combat environmental challenges

- ⇒ The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. (LS, 13)
- ⇒ The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. (LS, 23)
- ⇒ Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. (LS, 228)
- ⇒ A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. (LS, 91)
- ⇒ Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture. (LS, 43)
- ⇒ A true “ecological debt” exists, particularly between the global north and south.... The export of raw materials to satisfy markets in the industrialized north has caused harm locally... The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, **especially Africa**, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming. (LS, 51)



Dialogue on environmental concerns in Africa and role of the Media

- ⇒ I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. (LS, 14)
- ⇒ Furthermore, when media and the digital world become omnipresent, their influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously. (LS, 47)

Pollution and Waste Management

- ⇒ Account must also be taken of the pollution produced by residue, including dangerous waste present in different areas. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated.... The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish. (LS 21)

Inequalities

- ⇒ Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited. For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. (LS 25)

Safe, orderly and legal migration

- ⇒ There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. (LS 25)

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- ⇒ Water poverty especially affects Africa where large sectors of the population have no access to safe drinking water or experience droughts which impede agricultural production. (LS 28)
- ⇒ One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor. Every day, unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases, including those caused by microorganisms and chemical



substances. Dysentery and cholera, linked to inadequate hygiene and water supplies, are a significant cause of suffering and of infant mortality. (LS 29)

Ecological awareness

- ⇒ Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life. (LS,213)
- ⇒ Political institutions and various other social groups are also entrusted with helping to raise people’s awareness. So too is the Church. All Christian communities have an important role to play in ecological education (LS 214)

Integral Ecology

- ⇒ Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop. (LS 138)
- ⇒ When we speak of the “environment”, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. (LS 139)
- ⇒ Ecology, calls for greater attention to **local cultures** when studying environmental problems, favouring a dialogue between scientific-technical language and the language of the people.

2. Highlights from Caritas Africa Member Organisations

Caritas Africa Member Organisations have responded to *Laudato Si'* through interventions in *food Security* and *food production systems* to adapt to the effects of climate change on crop and terrestrial food production.

Other interventions include the integration of environmental support and protection in Caritas work through tree planting and waste management campaigns. Member organisations have also conducted advocacy around environmental protection laws and the implementation of the Sustainable Development goals. Youth, women and children has also been engaged in the dialogue on caring for our common home.

Over the last 5 years our member organisations undertook the following activities:



2.1 Caritas Ghana



Training of stakeholders on electronic waste management

- ⇒ Trained stakeholders on electronic waste management
- ⇒ Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference facilitated awareness creation on *Laudato Si'*.
- ⇒ The Encyclical shaped Caritas Ghana's Strategic plan and Advocacy strategy
- ⇒ Ongoing campaign on sanitation and pollution.
- ⇒ Ongoing debt relief campaign.

2.2 National Commission for Catholic Justice, Peace and Caritas Liberia



National youth retreat, February 2020

- ⇒ Hosted 5 days national youth gathering, over 300 youth were taken through key messages on *Laudato Si'*.
- ⇒ Invited the national environmental management body to share ideas on responding to *Laudato Si'* as part of climate change mitigation and adaptation.



2.3 Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria

- ⇒ Rolled out the paperless workflow management system.
- ⇒ Reached over 5 million people, through the following programs (1) *Emergency Response & Humanitarian Services* (2) *Health (Community Management of Severe Acute Malnutrition by Caritas Nigeria Humanitarian team)* (3) *Agriculture & Livelihoods* (4) *Good Governance* (5) *Anti-Human Trafficking & Migration* (6) *Institutional Development & Capacity Strengthening*.
- ⇒ Installation of solar panels.
- ⇒ Micro gardens for vulnerable communities.
- ⇒ Distribution of organics fertilisers to farmers.



2.4 Caritas Zambia



⇒ Convened the 2016 *Laudato Si'* Conference under the theme “*Care for our common home in the context of large-scale investments in mining and agriculture*”.

⇒ Partnered with CAFOD in training and formation of *Laudato Si'* Hubs. 8 of the hubs are currently active.

⇒ Awareness creation through pastoral letters, reflections, knowledge cafes and media engagement.

⇒ Training communities on fabrication of wood efficient stoves.

The Bishop of Mansa, Rev. Patrick Chisanga and the holy childhood planting pine trees at Namwendwe parish during 2019 diocesan ecological week.



2.5 Caritas South Africa

- ⇒ Policy advocacy on land degradation as a result of coal mining.
- ⇒ Championing for the rights of personnel working in mining companies.
- ⇒ Engaging civil society to petition government to set up a mining charter ombudsman. Communities would then be able to submit their complaints to this ombudsman when they are aggrieved by mining companies on issues of environmental damage and failure on the part of the company to meet its developmental obligations to the communities.



Promoting the use of biogas in villages

- ⇒ Promotion of the use of biogas in Limpopo province. Caritas is working with chiefs to impose a moratorium on tree cutting.
- ⇒ Engaging civil society to monitor the implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement.
- ⇒ In South Africa, 8% of land area provides 50% of surface water. Justice and Peace commission activists are in the process of mobilising some traditional leaders in the areas to work with lawyers to submit a formal request to the minister of mineral resources to protect water catchment areas from mining activities.
- ⇒ Justice and Peace activists in Mpumalanga, a legal firm and department of environment are investigating water pollution by mining activities that have



affected communities in *Barbeton* (affected by *Sheba* mine and *Komati* mine), 4 communities in *Steelpoort* (affected by 2 mines), 3 communities affected by Malelane mine, and 3 communities (*Marchadadorp*, *Nhlaḡatse*, *Baadidas*).

- ⇒ *Laudato Si'* challenges us to embrace “*cultural ecology*”, a shorthand for the way the human environment and the natural environment are mutually interdependent. When nature suffers, so do cultural and social values. Caritas South Africa has conducted advocacy to protect communities against forced removal from their land by mining companies.

2.6 Caritas Rwanda

- ⇒ Implemented a project to protect nature in the basin of the Nile River that flows into the Mediterranean Sea.
- ⇒ Promoting Agroforestry.
- ⇒ Caritas Rwanda projects work towards the reduction of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide, the reduction of pollution of river waters, reduction of the use of harmful pesticides and chemicals, increasing land productivity and promotion of bio-diversity.

Promoting the use of solar energy in homes



2.7 Caritas Burundi

- ⇒ Awareness raising and training of communities on the fabrication and use of energy efficient stoves.
- ⇒ Community engagement on sustainable land management remediation plans
- ⇒ Training communities on Agroforestry.
- ⇒ Training on the techniques of management of nurseries and seed harvesting techniques.
- ⇒ Youth engagement in environmental protection.
- ⇒ Awareness raising on the dangers of bushfires and the importance of eco-building.
- ⇒ Community managed disaster risk reduction (CMDRR) training.
- ⇒ Policy advocacy on sustainable land use and water management.
- ⇒ Engagement of community leaders on environmental protection and effects of soil erosion.
- ⇒ Training of pupils, pupil representatives of parents, teachers on the



development of contour lines the production and planting of forest and agro-forestry trees.

⇒ Supporting the establishment of environmental protection committees.



Source Twitter: @Caritas_Burundi on February, 6, 2019. Three communes of Kirundo, Busoni, Bugabira, Kirundo affected by a famine following a drought, a hundred have already gone into exile

2.8 Caritas Burkina Faso

⇒ Raising the awareness among the Christian faithful during Eucharistic celebrations about their role in protecting the environment.

⇒ The production of radio programs on the JNPE and on *Laudato Si'*.

⇒ Raising public awareness on the use of plastic bags on the environment and good agricultural practices.

⇒ Raising children's awareness on the importance of preserving nature and its impact on human life.

⇒ Engagement of students in tree planting activities.

⇒ Reforestation.

⇒ Sanitation activities (cleaning and collection of plastic bags).

⇒ The organization of public conferences on themes related to the environment (pesticides, plastic waste, gold panning, climate change, etc.).



Engaging children, youth and women in environmental conservation activities



2.9 Caritas Togo

- ⇒ Has been implementing a project on the preservation of bio-diversity since 2014.
- ⇒ In the south-west of the country, advocacy with the authorities for the recognition and securing of sacred forests.
- ⇒ Training of farmers bordering sacred forests on production techniques.
- ⇒ The reintroduction of missing and extinct forest species.
- ⇒ The establishment and training of committees for the conservation of sites.
- ⇒ In the north of Togo, existence of an agroecological training centre that trains and installs farmers for the promotion of agroecological practices.

2.10 Caritas Côte d'Ivoire

- ⇒ Participation in the planting of trees in the vein of the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Catholic Bishops of Côte d'Ivoire (a key action of the axis dealing with the promotion of IHD).
- ⇒ Implementation of various WASH projects in rural areas with the Diocesan Caritas (development and preservation of natural resources). Project currently being tested in the East and North-East of Ivory Coast with Caritas Bondoukou.
- ⇒ Project to strengthen the socio-economic structures of farmers in the west of the Ivory Coast. This project was carried out between January 2016 and December 2018. It focused on the promotion of sustainable agriculture through: (i) Extension of innovative and agro-ecological practices; (ii) Development of rice and rice-fish farming lowlands; (iii) Support for the management of small poultry farms.

2.11 Caritas Benin

- ⇒ Projects in diocesan caritas promote integral ecology.
- ⇒ Preparation of organic compost / manure.
- ⇒ Preparation of pesticides using indigenous plants.
- ⇒ In accordance with the Pope's wishes, Caritas Benin has launched several projects and programmes aimed at restoring the environment, combating deforestation, promoting reforestation and the natural regeneration of land for agricultural use.
- ⇒ Initiation of children to environmental protection and the collection of drinking water for environmental protection.
- ⇒ Intensification of the approach of eco-citizen education in schools, and the creation of school gardens.



- ⇒ Planting trees for reforestation to combat natural disasters
- ⇒ Plantations of 146,450 medicinal and aromatic plants to supplement food, fruit and artemisia.
- ⇒ Promotion of allotment gardens, agriculture and animal husbandry, all for the preservation of the environment.

2.12 Caritas Mali



Source: Caritas Mali -Photos N ° 1 and 2: Realization of anti-erosion works / stony cords



- ⇒ Awareness raising on environmental degradation and Climate change.
- ⇒ Partnered with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to implement a project on food security, resilience and agroecology.

Half-moon application in Sirini (Bamako)

2.13 Caritas Namibia

- ⇒ Staff training on *Laudato Si'*.
- ⇒ Lobbying government officials to enact the environmental protection laws in order address deforestation.
- ⇒ Conducting environmental cleaning campaigns.





⇒ Conducting advocacy on climate change.

Namibia is the 34th largest country in the world and has the least rainfall in sub-Saharan Africa. "The unequal distribution of wealth in Namibia is a problem. There's wealth in the country but no spirit of solidarity among those who have it," says Sr Aida Manlucu of Caritas Namibia (left). Credit: Caritas Namibia- Caritas Internationalis Website)

2.14 Caritas Sierra Leone



⇒ Conducted advocacy on environmental support and protection.

⇒ Training women on the use of energy efficient stoves to minimise the use of charcoal.

Sierra Leone has a population of 8 million. 98% of its population uses wood and charcoal for cooking. In partnership with Sun 24 Caritas Sierra Leone is training women to use energy efficient cook stoves (Photo Credits: Sun 24)

2.15 Caritas Malawi



⇒ Convened a Catholic Bishops conference meeting on *Laudato Si'*.

⇒ The implementation and the development of the natural resources management to understand what the manual means for the church.

⇒ Mainstreaming environmental support and protection in programme work.

⇒ Wrote case studies regarding different issues that are mentioned in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and how to domesticate them in Malawi.

⇒ Design of risk management programs.

Caritas in Malawi strengthen local communities with Disaster Risk Reduction strategies so they are able to withstand future floods. Photo by CADECOM/Caritas Malawi



2.16 Caritas Uganda

- ⇒ Developed a new strategic plan incorporating proposed activities to respond to *Laudato Si'*.
- ⇒ Run climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes through initiatives such as tree planting.
- ⇒ Promoted the use of clean and renewable energy among rural households.
- ⇒ Engaged in advocacy on climate change and agriculture.
- ⇒ Participated in public dialogue on environmental concerns.



Tree planting is key. Forests have potential to mitigate some of the impacts of climate change like drought, floods and landslides. Credits: Nicholson/ Caritas

3. Marking of *Laudato Si'* week by Member Organisations on 16th-24th May 2020

The outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) greatly affected outdoor activities and most member organisations expressed their solidarity for action towards climate change indoors or online. During *Laudato Si'* week, Caritas Africa and its member organisations marked the 5th anniversary of the encyclical through the following activities:

- ⇒ Staff reflection on *Laudato Si'* and planning for long term activities to address environmental concerns.
- ⇒ Digital Outreach on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp using the common hashtags **#LaudatoSi5** **#CaritasAfrica2020LaudatoSi** **#5thAnniversaryOfLaudatoSi**.
- ⇒ Hosting webinars to facilitate information sharing and learning on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- ⇒ Facilitating of awareness creation through use of videos and IEC materials.
- ⇒ Radio shows and media briefings.
- ⇒ Youth engagement on environmental issues.
- ⇒ Caritas paperless day.
- ⇒ Tree planting.
- ⇒ Collaboration with inter-faith alliances to plan for joint advocacy initiative.



Below are highlights on the outdoor activities by some of the Member Organisations whilst observing barrier measures. We'll provide more details in next reports of what has been done by national Caritas.

3.1 NCJPC Liberia



The National Commission for Catholic Justice, Peace and Caritas Liberia marked the week through tree planting and staff reflection on environmental issues and climate change

3.2 Caritas Sierra Leone and Caritas Freetown

In Sierra Leone, Caritas Freetown and the Caritas National office collaborated with Society of Africa Missions, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church and the Kwama community in planting 1000 trees.



Rev. Fr Francis (SMA) planted the first tree and explains the benefits of the following trees that they planted to mark this occasion: Neem, Acasian, Avens Africana and Maylina tree.



3.3 Caritas Burundi



Caritas Burundi marked the day through a press conference and awareness raising initiatives.

3.4 Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria

On 21st May 2020, Caritas Nigeria hosted a *Laudato Si'* webinar under the theme “Nurturing mother earth for fullness of life”. Participants reflected on the effects of environmental issues in Africa today.

3.5 Caritas Zambia

In Zambia, the Catholic Bishops Conference marked the end of *Laudato Si'* week by launching a campaign on “Building resilient communities in the context of *Laudato Si'*.” In a press statement, Fr. Cleophas Lungu, the Secretary General of the conference invited stakeholders to undertake the following activities:

- ⇒ Strengthening outreach and meaningful community involvement;
- ⇒ Strengthening communication to benefit from the indigenous knowledge of local communities; and empower communities with information on ecological conversion;
- ⇒ Complement environmental and mitigation projects affecting overburdened communities;
- ⇒ Advocate for environmental justice in community based work;
- ⇒ Continuing to support peer-to-peer learning to identify best practices on how to address environmental justice concerns and resilient communities;
- ⇒ Strengthening community involvement in development, and improve responsiveness to the environmental justice concerns of indigenous peoples.



3.6 Caritas Ghana

Caritas Ghana convened a virtual conference call with 20 Diocesan Caritas Directors to discuss on deepening awareness on environmental concerns and championing for ecological conversion through personal behaviour change on managing the environment.

The Executive Director of Caritas Ghana, Mr. Samuel Zan Akologo indicated that tree planting, sustainable energy use, sanitation. Pollution and electronic waste management would remain flagship interventions of Caritas Ghana as a direct response to environmental concerns.

3.7 Caritas Congo ASBL

A mass was celebrated to mark the launch week of the 5th anniversary of Laudato Si'. During this celebration, the Executive Secretary of Caritas Congo launched an appeal for a change of behaviour for the protection of the Earth, our common Home.

Mr. Boniface Nakwagelevi ata Deagbo, Executive Secretary of Caritas Congo ASBL, during the mass



4. Bolstering climate Action Post COVID-19

Caritas Africa will collaborate with Bishop Presidents of Caritas Africa Member Organisations, Caritas Internationalis, National Caritas, SIGNIS Africa and Sister Agencies to undertake the following activities;

Regional Level

⇒ Strengthen engagement with actors at the regional and global level such as the African Union, UNEP, UN Faith for environment, Regional Economic Communities, WHO Africa region, FAO, Faith communities, Media, and Civil Society coalitions to address unmet needs on environmental issues in Africa.

⇒ Liaise with Caritas Europa to conduct advocacy on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the ongoing negotiations on the EU comprehensive strategy for Africa. A joint position paper has been published.

⇒ Representation in high level advocacy platforms such as the High Level Political Forum and UN Climate Summits.

⇒ Strengthen partnerships with existing partners such as SUN 24 to promote use of solar energy.

⇒ Engage Bishop Presidents in Africa to strengthen ecological awareness through church structures such as Schools, Hospitals, Parishes, Catholic



- Women and Men associations, Small Christian communities and in catechesis.
- ⇒ Review of internal policies to reduce organisational carbon footprint.
 - ⇒ Strengthen the *Communication and Advocacy reference group* to facilitate awareness creation on *Laudato Si'* in Africa.
 - ⇒ Strengthen partnership with Catholic communication Agencies such as SIGNIS AFRICA to enhance social media and digital outreach.
 - ⇒ Building a network of Caritas Youth in Africa.

National Level

- ⇒ Train CA MOs on policy advocacy around *Laudato Si'*, Paris Climate Change Agreement, the Sendai Framework , amongst others.
- ⇒ Support national environmental campaigns on tree planting and waste management.
- ⇒ Accompany National Caritas Organisations in their contribution to Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).
- ⇒ Enhance representation of National Caritas Organisations in national civil society coalitions.
- ⇒ Organisational representation of National Caritas in UN Forums on environment and climate change.
- ⇒ Information sharing on Caritas Baobab.
- ⇒ Facilitation of learning exchanges among National Caritas Organisations.

Sub-National Level (Diocesan and Parish Caritas)

- ⇒ Mainstreaming *Laudato Si'* in projects implemented by Diocesan Caritas in the parishes.
- ⇒ Conduct research to collect evidence for advocacy and propose data driven solutions.
- ⇒ Support Diocesan Caritas to participate in Local Voluntary National Review ahead of the High Level Political Forum each year.
- ⇒ Training of Caritas Youth and volunteers on environmental issues.
- ⇒ Media advocacy on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- ⇒ Participation in Inter-faith forums on environmental issues.
- ⇒ Conducting tree planting and waste management campaigns.

5. Conclusion

Pope Francis on 24th May 2020 invited everyone to take part in the *Laudato Si'* Year, which is [promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development](#) and runs from 24 May 2020 until 24 May 2021.



The Holy Father also announced this special prayer that would be dedicated to the *Laudato Si'* year and encouraged everyone to pray it.

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times,
especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity
as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing
the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and
interdependent.

Enable us to succeed in listening and responding
to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.

We pray through Christ our Lord,
under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,

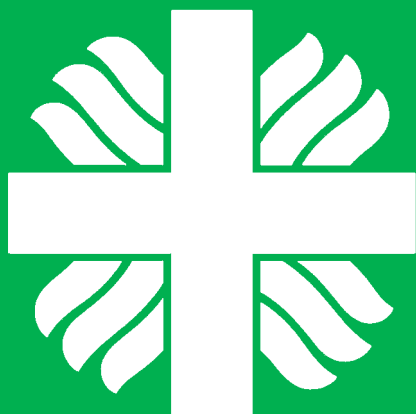
Amen.



6. List of Conference Call Participants on Friday, 15th May 2020

	Name	Caritas
01	Mr. Albert MASHIKA	Africa
02	Mr. Francois AMEDE MEGNAN	Africa
03	Mrs. Beatrice SIMTAYA	Africa
04	Ms. Christelle Kitenge MASHIKA	Africa
05	Ms. Lucy ESIPILA	Africa
06	Mr. Alfonso APICELLA	Internationalis
07	RP Philippe SANHOUKOUA	Benin
08	RP Benoit HODANOU	Togo
09	Rev. Fr. Jean-Bosco NINTUNZE	Burundi
10	RP Jean-Marie Vianney TWAGIRAYEZU	Rwanda
11	Mr. Antoine SAGARA	Mali
12	RP Jean Pierre TIEMELE	Côte d'Ivoire
13	Abbé Constantin SERE	Burkina Faso
14	Mr. Léonard NTAKIRUTIMANA	Comores
15	Mr. Samuel Zan AKOLOGO	Ghana
16	Rev. Fr. McDonald NAH	Liberia
17	Mr. William DAUDA	Sierra Leone
18	Ms. Patricia KAFOE	Sierra Leone
19	Rev. Fr Uchechukwu OBODOECHINA	Nigeria
20	Ms. Nkese Maria UDONGWO	Nigeria
21	Mr. Eugene KABILIKA	Zambia
22	Ms. Musamba MUBANGA	Zambia
23	Rev. Fr Linus NGENOMESHO	Namibia
24	Mr. Richard MATANDA	Namibia
25	Mr. Godfrey ONENTHO OTWI	Uganda
26	Mr. Chimwemwe PHIRI	Malawi
27	Mr. Francis Dominic MENDY	Gambia
28	Sr. Maria de Lurdes RISSINI	South Africa





Caritas Africa

735, Boulevard des Armées

Tokoin Séminaire, Lomé - Togo

Tél. + 228 22 21 29 37

E-mail : secaf@caritas-africa.org

Site web : www.caritas-africa.org