



## Reaffirming Global Solidarity, Restoring Humanity



*"To all those who live in lands where weapons impose terror and destruction, I assure you of my personal closeness and that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring Christ's love to the defenseless victims of forgotten wars through her prayers for peace, her service to the wounded, the starving, refugees, the displaced and all those who live in fear. The Church also speaks out in order to make leaders hear the cry of pain of the suffering and to put an end to every form of hostility, abuse and the violation of fundamental human rights". His Holiness Pope Francis, Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2014*

### **Context**

The number of conflicts is steadily increasing. Currently 60 million people worldwide, equivalent to Italy's entire population, are displaced by conflicts. Natural disasters are growing even faster, both in frequency and in severity – in 2013, there were 880 major natural disasters and over the past decade 106,000 people lost their lives every year as a result.

The overall trend – driven by extremism and climate change – should not be surprising. Most worrying of all, we will continue to see regions where the impacts of chronic natural disasters and conflict intersect, magnifying the negative impacts on the people living in those regions. We should expect to see more extreme weather conditions such as droughts, typhoons and cyclones causing floods.

In 2014 out of the 123 million people needing humanitarian assistance, less than three quarters of those were able to receive help. **The current humanitarian system is not able to respond to all the**

**needs of affected people which will continue to grow.** Never before has the world been so generous - global humanitarian financing has jumped from US\$2 billion in 2000 to nearly US\$25 billion in 2014. Yet, never have global humanitarian needs be so high, exposing an ever-widening gap between supply and demand: UN appeals are 40 per cent under-funded and in Africa and the Middle East food rations have been cut down.

In view of the above, the Secretary-General of the United Nations created an independent High-Level Panel [1] on Humanitarian Financing, to help him find new ways to tackle this complex challenge. The panel will advise him how we can work together to better deliver humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of all people and in the most dignified manner. Its input will feed into the **first World Humanitarian Summit** to be held in Istanbul in May 2016.

### **Key objectives of the Event**

The event proposed to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences will take place under the **theme of sustainable humanity**. It will bring together **world religious leaders to highlight their joint request to meet global humanitarian needs**. Through their presence at the event, they will be demonstrating their solidarity in reducing human suffering and setting an example for others to collaborate. The event aims to explore **and inspire governments, communities, civil society groups, individuals and private companies to do more** to reduce human suffering.

### **Key messages**

- The responsibility to help our fellow human beings is a shared one and calls for universal solidarity.
- There is a moral imperative upon the comparatively wealthy to help the poor, especially those whose lives are crushed by conflicts and disasters. In a world of wealth, no one should be left behind without assistance.
- There is simply no way to win the war against extreme poverty without helping the most fragile and vulnerable communities [2]
- Every single person can do something to help reduce human suffering

### **Footnotes**

[1] Co-chaired by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria) and HRH Nazrin Shah (Malaysia), Sultan of Perak. Other members of the Panel are: Hadeel Ibrahim (UK – Executive Director of Mo Ibrahim Foundation), Badr Jafar (UAE – Chief Executive of the Crescent Group), Walt Macnee (Canada – Vice-Chairman of MasterCard

Worldwide), Tervor Manuel (Sr. Advisor to the Rothchild Group), Linah Mohohlo (Botswana – Governor of the bank of Botswana), Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah (Sri Lanka – Secretary General of CIVICUS) and Margot Wallstrom (Sweden – Minister for Foreign Affairs).

[2] 93% of people suffering extreme poverty live in countries that are either environmentally vulnerable (30%) or politically fragile (32%) or both (31%). That 31% alone represents more than 325 million people