



## PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 5 July 2023

### "Global faith leaders unite in urgent call for a strong EU due diligence Directive"

In a powerful show of solidarity, more than 160 faith leaders worldwide, men and women from various faiths, have come together in a common statement urging European Union lawmakers to adopt a robust legal framework to hold companies accountable for environmental damage and human rights abuses. The statement, released by CIDSE – the international family of Catholic social justice organisations – emphasises the urgent need for a sustainable and just global economy, highlighting the crucial role that the draft EU Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive can play in safeguarding human rights and the planet. This is not the first time religious leaders have spoken out in favour of mandatory laws to prevent and remedy corporate abuses. In 2020, [more than 230 Catholic Bishops urged for similar legislation](#).

In the [statement](#), faith leaders call for a strong EU law that is aligned with international standards, and that covers a substantial and wide range of human rights and environmental impacts through a company's whole value chain. Amongst the demands advanced, a crucial place is given to civil liability. For the religious leaders, *"when corporations cause or contribute to harm, victims should not be expected to carry the burden of evidence"*. They call on the EU Parliament, Council and Commission, to pay special attention to Indigenous Peoples, women and human rights and environmental defenders who suffer the most from corporate abuses.

*"I am convinced that we need not only to protect Indigenous and other peoples from corporate abuses but all creatures – particularly in view of the rapidly increasing loss of biodiversity"* stated Kees Nieuwerth, a Quaker and former Vice-President of the Council of Churches of the Netherlands; *"even here in the Netherlands, communities – not only human, but also plant and animal communities – are threatened by the continuing pollution of the natural environment by large companies"*, he added.

Faith Leaders from the Global South are often close to communities experiencing first-hand the devastating impacts of corporate activities, especially when large extractive or agro-industrial projects violate their rights.

One of them is Dom Vicente Ferreira, currently Bishop of Bahia (Brazil), previously Auxiliary Bishop of Belo Horizonte. When in 2019 a dam certified safe by a EU company collapsed in Brumadinho, killing 270 people and causing long-lasting environmental damage, Monsignor Ferreira and his community were ready to help the victims.

*"This is a call to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. We must raise the voices of the grassroots and bring them to the table of decision-makers"* stated Sr. Maamalifar M. Poreku, Executive Co-Secretary of the JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) Commission USG and UISG who remembered the words of a peasant from Apurimac in Peru, expressing the feeling of many of those facing corporate impunity: *"Do we have to die so that our country has money?"* and who added *"Do people have to die for companies to make money without thinking of the planet and the people?"*

The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive is currently undergoing trilogue negotiations, which should reach an end by the end of the year. Faith communities are placing high expectations on EU decision-makers:

*“Our land in Africa is threatened on a daily basis by corporate activities – often linked to businesses in richer parts of the world. We need the EU to assume its responsibilities and agree on a strong law”,* said Stephen Dami Mamza, Bishop of Yola (Nigeria), President of the SECAM Justice, Peace and Development Commission.

*“This powerful statement cannot be ignored by decision-makers. Faith groups are joining tens of thousands of citizens, civil society groups and trade unions in calling for a strong Directive”* said Josianne Gauthier, CIDSE’s Secretary General. *“We are one human family, all interconnected and an integral part of Creation, recognising this fact is crucial to build a sustainable economic system. Together, we can make a difference and change the global economy for the better”,* she added.

END

---

## NOTES TO THE EDITORS

The Faith leaders’ statement is available in [EN](#) / [ES](#) / [FR](#) / [DE](#).

A Press kit is available with additional information in [EN](#) / [ES](#) / [FR](#).

## About CIDSE

CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations. We work with global partners and allies to promote justice, harnessing the power of global solidarity to achieve transformational change for people and the planet. We challenge systemic injustice and its destructive impacts through connecting, mobilising, influencing and telling stories of change. We promote environmentally and socially just alternatives to allow everyone to thrive-in our common home. CIDSE’s work is guided by Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values. [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org)

CIDSE members: Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), CAFOD (England and Wales), CCFD-Terre Solidaire (France), Cordaid (the Netherlands), Development & Peace (Canada), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium), eRko (Slovakia), Fastenaktion (Switzerland), FEC (Portugal), FOCSIV (Italy), Partage Lu (Luxembourg), KOO (Austria), Manos Unidas (Spain), Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (USA), MISEREOR (Germany), SCIAF (Scotland), Trócaire (Ireland), Vastenactie (the Netherlands).

## MEDIA CONTACTS

- Giorgio Gotra, CIDSE Communications Manager, [gotra\(at\)cidse.org](mailto:gotra(at)cidse.org)
- Giuseppe Cioffo, CIDSE Corporate Regulation Officer, [cioffo\(at\)cidse.org](mailto:cioffo(at)cidse.org)