



NOW MORE THAN EVER, LET'S ALL STAND TOGETHER FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

Statement from CIDSE Directors on World Day of Social Justice 2025

20 February 2025

Today's UN World Day for Social Justice invites each of us to consider how we can collectively work towards building fair and just societies where peace and well-being are a reality for all. Recognising the collective responsibility to address the root causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, we, the Directors of CIDSE (the international family of Catholic social justice organisations), urge political, economic, and social leaders to confront the harsh realities of our times and take immediate, bold action.

CIDSE has its origins in the Vatican II Council, and it was during its final session in 1965 that Cardinals Frings, Alfrink, and Suenens, moved by the appeals of bishops from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, came to a consensus to establish a new network of Catholic organisations. These organisations were to be dedicated to the alleviation of hunger and disease, as an expression of the Church's global solidarity. Their vision was one of collaboration, justice, and action. Today, that same vision calls us to urgently address the interconnected crises that affect our common home and the most vulnerable among us.

As we celebrate our 60th anniversary in this Jubilee year of hope, we are reminded of the Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching that have guided our work so far. They continue to inspire a deeper commitment to justice and solidarity, supporting our mission to stand with those most affected by the current interconnected crises.

While it is true that global challenges persist, such as economic systems that prioritise profit over people, and perpetuate cycles of conflict, colonisation, human rights violations and unjust debt, there are also reasons for hope. Despite the shrinking space for civil society and the erosion of democratic processes, the pursuit of justice remains critical but possible.

Encouraging signs are emerging from the Global South, where the communities we work with are demonstrating remarkable resilience. They are lifting themselves out of poverty, building brighter futures, adapting to climate change, and defending their rights. Their spirit and determination in the face of significant challenges due to environmental and financial exploitation are a source of inspiration, encouraging us to stand in solidarity with them. Together, we aim to address systems of oppression and inequality, striving for a socially and ecologically just planet.

In this context, CIDSE has a unique role to continue to play. Through our global network of organisations and communities, we have the capacity to connect with local movements and

decision-makers, amplifying unheard voices and ensuring that the struggles of the most vulnerable ones are met with concrete action from the global community.

This year is a decisive moment for collective efforts in the face of interconnected global crises. The 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* and key global events like the UN climate conference in Brazil call us to act. The Paris Agreement must be implemented with stronger national pledges to avert the climate crisis. Similarly, the international community must take decisive steps toward debt justice, a critical issue for the Global South, where debt burdens continue to trap nations in cycles of exploitation, inequality and poverty.

Now is the time for bold, concrete action. For this reason, we urge political leaders, especially in the Global North, to commit to:

- Implementing the Paris Agreement with stronger national pledges to avoid worse climate impacts;
- Relieving the debt of vulnerable countries to free them from financial exploitation and allow them to build sustainable futures;
- Increasing development aid to support climate adaptation and poverty alleviation in the Global South.

On this UN World Day of Social Justice, we urge not just reflection, but immediate, collective action from governments, organisations, and individuals to address these urgent issues.

As we celebrate CIDSE's 60-year legacy, let us take bold steps to ensure justice, peace, and the care of our common home, for this generation and the next ones.

List of signatories:

- Lieve Herijgers, Broederlijk Delen, Belgium
- Christine Allen, CAFOD, England & Wales
- Virginie Amieux, CCFD–Terre Solidaire, France
- Josianne Gauthier, CIDSE, International
- Heleen Van Den Berg, Cordaid, Netherlands
- Luke Stocking, Development & Peace, Canada
- Axelle Fischer, Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium
- Daniel Fiala, eRko, Slovakia
- Bernd Nilles, Fastenaktion, Switzerland
- Ana Patricia Fonseca, FEC, Portugal
- Ivana Borsotto, Focsiv–Volontari nel Mondo, Italy
- Anja Appel, KOO, Austria
- Ricardo Loy, Manos Unidas, Spain
- Susan Gunn, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, USA
- Andreas Frick, MISEREOR, Germany
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