**CIDSE echoes the Pope’s call for global solidarity to fight climate change and inequality through the encyclical “Laudato si’”**

(A conference organized by CIDSE and Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on 2-3 July in Rome will provide a platform for further discussion about the encyclical, more information below)

Today CIDSE echoed the Pope’s urgent and timely call for politicians, communities and people of all generations to act on climate change and social injustice. CIDSE warmly welcomes the encyclical “*Laudato si’*” on Care for our Common Home, whose open tone and bottom-up approach paves the way for dialogue with all the people of goodwill to identify solutions to the current ecological crisis and address inequalities.

The work carried out so far by many civil society organizations to fight for justice was not unnoticed by the Pope, who wrote: *“We cannot fail to praise the commitment of international agencies and civil society organizations which draw public attention to these issues and offer critical cooperation, employing legitimate means of pressure”.*  This, together with the message of hope for change that accompanies the encyclical, fills CIDSE with strength and hope for our future work.

The encyclical acknowledges the lack of progress to date in dealing with climate change, and calls for urgent action to tackle the mounting **“ecological crisis”.** Climate change denial has, according to the Pope, been driven by a will to protect vested financial interests: *“Politics must pay greater attention to foreseeing new conflicts and addressing the causes which can lead to them. But powerful financial interests prove most resistant to this effort, and political planning tends to lack breadth of vision. What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?”*

However, the Pope also sees opportunities for social transformation in addressing the climate crisis – opportunities that were missed at the time of the financial crisis but must now be seized. According to the encyclical, the climate is a **common good of all for all**, and social and environmental injustices go hand in hand**. We are called by Pope Francis to put the poorest at the center, the ones who are not responsible for the terrible consequences of climate change on people’s lives and have fewer resources to react.** The text states: “*Yet it would also be mistaken to view other living beings as mere objects subjected to arbitrary human domination. When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of “might is right” has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus*.”

This position is fully shared by CIDSE, and underpins our work in the field of “climate justice”. CIDSE President Heinz Hödl said: “*Many communities across the world with whom we work, such as in the Amazon region, are persecuted for defending creation and their rights against megaprojects. These so-called "development projects" for coal mining, monocultures and hydroelectric dams are emblematic of how a powerful few profit from today’s models based on fossil fuels and intensive resource extraction. We urgently have to move away from destructive practices, like by divesting from fossil fuels and redirecting investment towards sustainable energy access for all*.”

The encyclical also reinforces the **spirit of transformation** and “rethinking development” that runs through CIDSE’s work: based on St Francis’ understanding of the creation as our common home, the text makes a call for a transformational change that allows **all human beings to live in dignity** and that requires responsibility to be taken up at all levels: internationally, locally and individually. On an individual level, CIDSE joins the Pope’s call for simple living and lifestyle changes as acts of love allowing all to contribute to a more sustainable planet.

The timing of the encyclical is also relevant since **2015 marks a very important year for the future of humanity**. The Third International Conference on Financing for Development will take place in Addis Ababa in July, a new set of sustainable development goals should be agreed upon at the United Nations in September, and in December, the Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP 21) will seek a new agreement. Bernd Nilles, CIDSE Secretary General said: “*The coming months will be critical for decisions about development and care for the planet. We hope that politicians and decision makers will take the strong messages of the encyclical on board and that the outcomes of these international meetings will put the common interest first and be able to make the difference*.”

**CIDSE will further discuss and analyze the messages of the encyclical during the conference: ‘People and Planet First: the Imperative to Change Course’ taking place in Rome on 2-3 July. The conference will bring together Church leaders, Decision Makers, Scientists as well as a wide range of representatives of Catholic and civil society organisations from different regions of the world.** The conference will be preceded by a press conference on 1 July with the following speakers:

•H.E. Cardinal Peter Turkson: [President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/index.htm);
•Ms. Naomi Klein: Author. Latest publication: “[This Changes Everything](http://thischangeseverything.org/)” (Una rivoluzione ci salverà);
•Prof. Ottmar Edenhofer: Co-Chair of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC](http://www.ipcc.ch/)).
• Mr. Bernd Nilles: [CIDSE](http://www.cidse.org/) Secretary General.

More information about the press conference available at:

<http://www.cidse.org/newsroom/pontifical-council-for-justice-and-peace-cidse-press-conference-1st-july-2015.html>

**Interviews:**

Bernd Nilles (CIDSE Secretary General) and Meera Ghani, (CIDSE Climate Justice Policy Officer) are available for interviews on the CIDSE long standing work in the fields related to the encyclical.

To arrange interviews please contact: Valentina Pavarotti, CIDSE Media & Communication Officer, pavarotti@cidse.org, +32 (0)2 282 40 73

**Notes to the editors:**

CIDSE is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies working together for global justice. Our 17 member organisations from Europe and North America come together under the umbrella of CIDSE to fight poverty and inequality. We challenge governments, business, churches, and international bodies to adopt policies and behavior that promote human rights, social justice and sustainable development. These are important elements of our mission, which we try to achieve through joint advocacy, campaigning and development cooperation work. We work with people of all faiths and none.

<http://www.cidse.org/who-we-are.html>

Find out more about our Climate Justice work: <http://www.cidse.org/climate-justice.html>