



# ACTING FOR TRANSFORMATION

FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD

» CIDSE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK  
2016 - 2021



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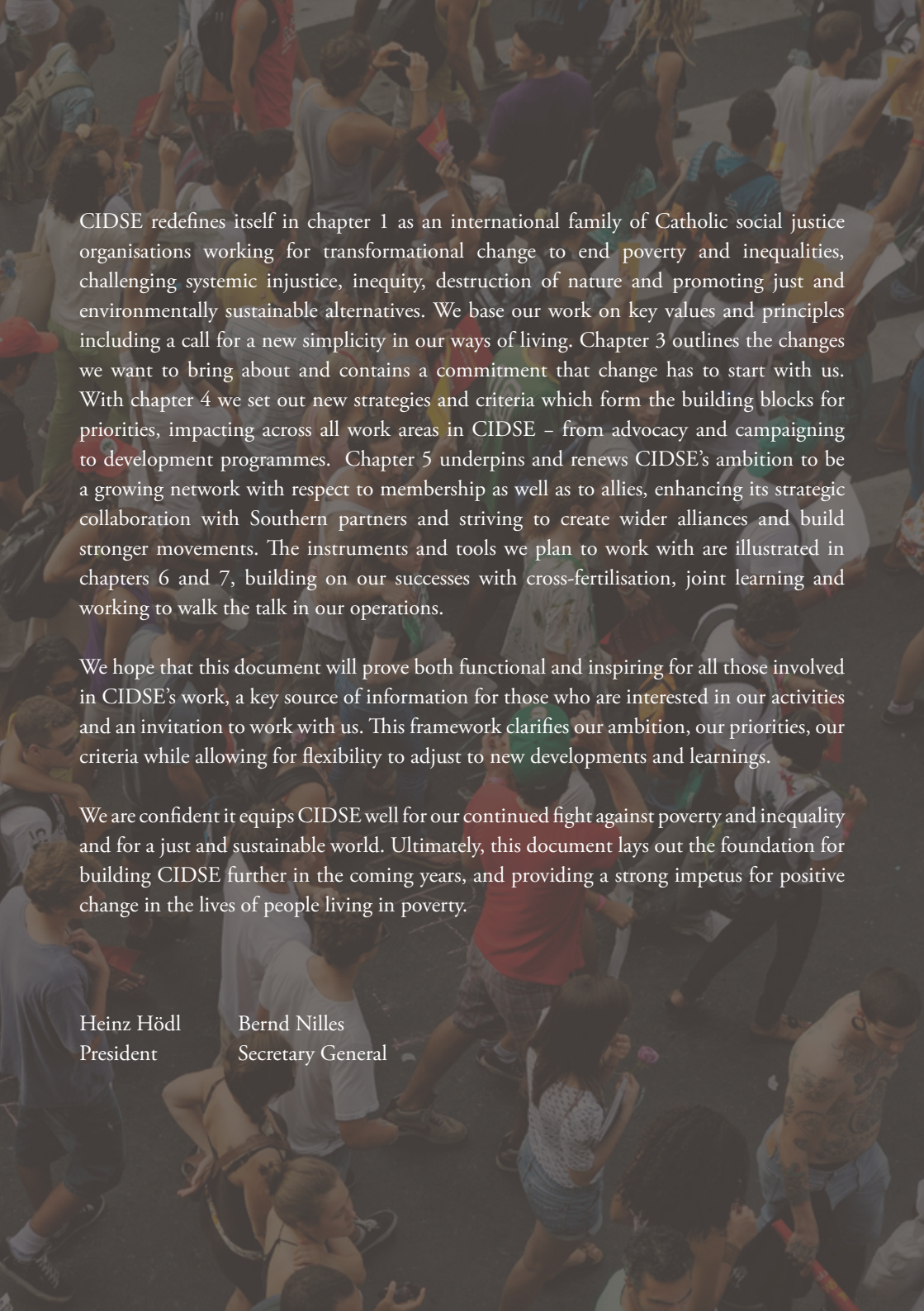


# FOREWORD

We are pleased to present to you CIDSE's new Strategic Framework *'Acting for transformation – towards a just and sustainable world'*, which outlines our network's strategic direction and priorities from 2016 to 2021. This framework is built on the experiences, knowledge and priorities of all of those who come together in CIDSE. We thank all those in Member Organisations, CIDSE groups and strategic partners of CIDSE who contributed with their ideas and inspiration. We would like to thank in particular the Strategic Planning Group composed by Philippa Bonella (SCIAF), Markus Büker (Misereor), Josianne Gauthier (Development and Peace), Lorna Gold (Trócaire), Marco Gordillo (Manos Unidas), Angelo Simonazzi (Entraide et Fraternité), Dirk Van der Roost (Broederlijk Delen), Bernd Nilles and Chiara Martinelli (CIDSE) who provided pivotal guidance in the discussions and preparations of this new document. Also, a warm thank you to Thomas Geusens who facilitated the group's work and to all staff in the CIDSE secretariat for their support.

This framework is based on lessons learned from the Strategic Framework 2010-2015, our 'paradigm shift' process with which CIDSE embarked on new work streams to rethink development, critique systemic failures in our economies and societies and look at alternatives we want to promote. Further it is based on an analysis of the challenges and opportunities CIDSE and its members face (chapter 2), the backdrops of the devastating multiple crises impacting on poor and vulnerable communities worldwide as well as recent opportunities: global agreements on sustainable development and climate, peoples actions and alternatives, Catholic social teaching and Church action brought about.

The strategy builds on past experiences and maintains several key strengths of CIDSE, while establishing a new spirit and direction.



CIDSE redefines itself in chapter 1 as an international family of Catholic social justice organisations working for transformational change to end poverty and inequalities, challenging systemic injustice, inequity, destruction of nature and promoting just and environmentally sustainable alternatives. We base our work on key values and principles including a call for a new simplicity in our ways of living. Chapter 3 outlines the changes we want to bring about and contains a commitment that change has to start with us. With chapter 4 we set out new strategies and criteria which form the building blocks for priorities, impacting across all work areas in CIDSE – from advocacy and campaigning to development programmes. Chapter 5 underpins and renews CIDSE's ambition to be a growing network with respect to membership as well as to allies, enhancing its strategic collaboration with Southern partners and striving to create wider alliances and build stronger movements. The instruments and tools we plan to work with are illustrated in chapters 6 and 7, building on our successes with cross-fertilisation, joint learning and working to walk the talk in our operations.

We hope that this document will prove both functional and inspiring for all those involved in CIDSE's work, a key source of information for those who are interested in our activities and an invitation to work with us. This framework clarifies our ambition, our priorities, our criteria while allowing for flexibility to adjust to new developments and learnings.

We are confident it equips CIDSE well for our continued fight against poverty and inequality and for a just and sustainable world. Ultimately, this document lays out the foundation for building CIDSE further in the coming years, and providing a strong impetus for positive change in the lives of people living in poverty.

Heinz Hödl  
President

Bernd Nilles  
Secretary General



wards Sustainable  
for the Planet – Care



CHANGE FOR  
THE PLANET

# THE CIDSE NETWORK

Working  
together  
for global  
justice



## WHO WE ARE

We are an international family of Catholic social justice organisations with a diverse set of members in many countries and an international secretariat in Brussels. We work together with others to promote justice, harness the power of global solidarity and create transformational change to end poverty and inequalities. We do this by challenging systemic injustice and inequity as well as destruction of nature. We promote just and environmentally sustainable alternatives and believe in a world where every human being has a right to live in dignity.

CIDSE is in the first place a network of committed members, who work together to achieve its mission. Our values and principles are inspired by the Gospel and drawn from Catholic Social Teaching. We are part of a worldwide community of learning and action that is open to working with all people and groups of good will.

The CIDSE secretariat is a facilitator and initiator, contributes to leadership in implementing decisions taken by the network and can act on behalf of the network.

## OUR MISSION

Working together with others, we want to serve the poor, promote justice, harness the power of global solidarity and create transformational change to end poverty, inequalities and threats to the environment both global and local.

## OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

We are part of a worldwide community of learning and action that is open to working with all people and groups of good will. As CIDSE we think and act along the following **values and principles**:

- » **DIGNITY:** All human beings possess an equal dignity made concrete in human rights. When human rights are violated, so is human dignity. This is why CIDSE works to help enable those who have been denied their rights and the dignity to define for themselves how they wish to live in the global community. We also take up our own responsibilities and strive to change behaviours and structures in our own countries impacting global human dignity, both as individuals and at the political level.
- » **SOLIDARITY:** We are all linked to each other as human beings and as God's creatures. We work together with people and communities who live in poverty, are excluded or oppressed, to help them transform their situation. Why are people poor and marginalised? What unjust structures underpin this? How is this related to culture, business, finance and politics in our own countries? This is why solidarity also changes us and our countries/societies.
- » **OWNERSHIP:** CIDSE members together agree on how to translate our common mission into joint strategies and activities. Strategic debates and decisions are inclusive, allowing all members to participate actively and on an equal footing. By sharing the resources and experience of the entire network, we try not only to achieve our common goals but also to add to the individual achievements of our member organisations. As Catholic agencies we seek to practice what we preach.
- » **PARTNERSHIP:** We base our cooperation with partners in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Middle East on trust, shared values and common goals. While aware of underlying power issues in some relationships, we aim to establish and maintain equitable relations. Through joint dialogue, analysis, and advocacy, we share responsibility for the impact we can achieve together, and the recognition we gain for doing so.



- » **DIALOGUE:** We believe that listening to, understanding, learning from and communicating with each other are fundamental to all change processes. They are the foundation for mutual understanding, meaningful coexistence and cooperation, whether local or global. Developing a dialogue with partners on the other continents is essential to our way of working.
- » **SUBSIDIARITY:** As we strive to fulfil the mission of our network and achieve its goals, we try to translate into practice the idea of subsidiarity and to give those responsible for the different areas of our work the support they need. Obviously, the principle of subsidiarity – working as closely as possible to the people who we strive to represent – not only applies to working structures within CIDSE, but also to the way CIDSE cooperates with its partners in the Global South.
- » **SUSTAINABILITY:** We are the Earth's stewards, not its owners. We are part of the environment and any harm done to the environment is harm done to humanity. When promoting human development we have to respect planetary boundaries. We need to preserve the resources on which present and future generations depend. We think the Global North and Global South have joint, but at the same time different, responsibilities in this regard.
- » **LIVING SIMPLY:** We believe that simplicity is enriching. We do not find meaning in more and more material wealth. The 'good life' implies a more modest lifestyle for people in the Global North and in general for wealthy people worldwide. This means that we must set ourselves limits, in line with what is sustainable for the planet on which we live and in line with what is fair to our fellow human beings, especially in the Global South, with whom we share the earth.
- » **STEWARDSHIP:** We are committed to professional standards: we strive to be good stewards of all the resources entrusted to us: cost-effective in our work, openly accountable for our work, transparent in our decision-making. We are focused on results and try to demonstrate on a permanent basis how we have the most impact.



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

An opening for a  
new approach for  
CIDSE's work

As we have the ambition to change the existing realities around us, it is useful to have a look at the challenges, which the present state of affairs poses. By understanding and analysing these realities, we will be able to contribute to finding fair and just solutions.

## THE WORLD AROUND US: OUR CHALLENGES

### » ONE CRISIS

Our strategic framework 2016-2021 comes in the aftermath of the most serious financial crisis after World War II to hit the industrialised world. Although some would have it that the great crisis of 2007-08 is over and that we can go back to business as usual, the world is not as it was before the crisis. Overall poverty may be declining, but many live in poverty and poor conditions whereas almost 800 million people risk falling back into poverty if setbacks occur, with women in low income situations being particularly vulnerable.<sup>1</sup> The poorest and most vulnerable groups have been disproportionately affected by natural<sup>2</sup> as well as economic disasters. “The financial crisis of 2007-08 provided an opportunity to develop a new economy, more attentive to ethical principles, and new ways of regulating speculative financial practices and virtual wealth. But the response to the crisis did not include rethinking the outdated criteria which continue to rule the world.”<sup>3</sup> Today “we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The ability of women – with a majority working in informal sectors – to cope with adverse shock is compromised by the lack of formal social protection, and vulnerabilities compounded when individuals working informally face harassment by public authorities. Human Development Report, 2014. <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> During the 2005 Mumbai floods the poorest households were the most vulnerable. In Bangladesh, in major flooding events in certain years, up to 7.5 million hectares of crops were damaged, hurting mostly the poor. Human Development Report, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 189, May 2015. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 139, May 2015.



## » DECLINING INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

On top of a continuing economic and financial crisis, we are also confronted with a declining sense of common responsibility. Many countries that belong to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) do not live up to their development commitments and are in fact calling for a redefinition of Official Development Assistance to absolve their commitment to 0.7% of their GDP. Others expect China or the BRICS – Brazil, India, South Africa and Russia – to take over the (financial) responsibility for development goals and call for these countries to bear a greater share of responsibility. At the same time, important groupings of industrialised countries on the global stage – the countries of the UN Security Council in its current composition, the G8 and the DAC – seem to show more appetite for relinquishing international solidarity than for sharing power. In short, international common responsibility is in decline at the expense of the most vulnerable.

## » DESTRUCTIVE GROWTH

While geopolitics are shifting and the efforts of traditional economic powers to consolidate their positions continue, the growth paradigm continues to prevail. The Global North leads the race to the bottom for natural resources, energy and new markets. The consequences are visible and widespread – not only in terms of environmental degradation, health problems and hunger, but also in the form of conflicts that are being fuelled or ignited by the strife for natural resources, by land grabs,<sup>5</sup> and the quest for other short term material gains.

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<sup>5</sup> According to a Friends of the Earth report, the spread of jatropha plantations in Ghana is pushing small farmers, particularly women farmers off their land; in Tanzania thousands of rice and maize farmers were forced off their land in 2009 or have been threatened with eviction. European companies, backed by the EU Energy Initiative and UK and US aid money are behind a number of the developments. See: [www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/FoEE\\_Africa\\_up\\_for\\_grabs\\_0910.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/FoEE_Africa_up_for_grabs_0910.pdf).

## » LESS STATE, MORE PRIVATE SECTOR

We also observe a shift away from the State towards – unaccountable – private entities. At the same time, many States, especially in the Global South are too poor and too fragile to be able to defend themselves against upcoming and increasingly powerful financial and economic actors.

There is a growing emphasis on the role that private finance actors – on their own or incentivised by public money – can play in our societies, for example in contributing to sustainable development goals and climate finance. The private sector rather than the State is increasingly being promoted as the principal building block of the future “global partnership for sustainable development” with a small number of very powerful Transnational Corporations (TNCs) in a leading role.<sup>6</sup> Mega-trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, if enacted, will bind large parts of the industrialised and industrialising worlds into vast spaces aiming at potentially unregulated economic growth that lack the necessary checks and balances as well as democratic scrutiny.

## » UNSATISFACTORY RESPONSE TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Against this background, there seems to be a growing disconnect between the reality of increasing monopolies of power, influence and wealth in the hands of a few<sup>7</sup> on the ground and the global policy environment, which declares that it has the ambition to tackle global challenges like climate change and states that it will “leave no one behind and will protect the planet”<sup>8</sup>. The fundamental transformation of the economy and all facets of society in order to promote sustainability are mostly being paid lip service to but do not transform words into effective policy deeds.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance, Roberto Bissio’s commentary on the new Partnership Facility of the UN: [www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/252-the-millennium-development-goals/52506-a-new-partnership-facility-for-the-united-nations.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/252-the-millennium-development-goals/52506-a-new-partnership-facility-for-the-united-nations.html).

<sup>7</sup> Oxfam Issue Briefing, Wealth: Having it all and wanting more, January 2015. [www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/ib-wealth-having-all-wanting-more-190115-en.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/ib-wealth-having-all-wanting-more-190115-en.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Outcome document of the UN Summit for the adoption of the Post-2015 development agenda. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, September 2015: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>.

## » GLOBAL TURMOIL

Last but not least, the post-World War II order is eroding, with war and confrontation being part of modern-day politics again. Millions of people now migrate due to multiple reasons like terrorism, violence, environmental degradation, economic interventions or development without people. The largest social transformations that the world has witnessed in the first decades of the new millennium were not so much the result of organised civil society effort or were not directly attributable to public policy but came mostly about through popular uprising, spread by the power of social media. People, societies and structures seem to be in constant flux and traditional approaches do not provide the answers needed in this state of constant turmoil.

## THE WORLD AROUND US: OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Against this background, one could easily lose hope or forget that there are many opportunities, which can lead us to the solutions, which are so urgently needed. Among those hopeful and positive developments we want to mention a few of the most important.

## » *LAUDATO SI'* - A NEW KAIROS FOR THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY

The emphasis that Pope Francis has placed on being a Church of the poor and 'going out' fills us with hope. This resonates with the appeal of millions of people far beyond the walls of the Churches who look to Pope Francis – and us – for leadership and action. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* as the latest document in Catholic social teaching is opening up new dialogues in the search of responses in critical public debates such as social justice and climate change. *Laudato Si'* emphasises "public pressure has to be exerted in order to bring about decisive political action. Society, through non-governmental organisations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous



regulations, procedures and controls” and the encyclical praises the “ecological movement” and “organisations of civil society” for their contributions and efforts through which the environmental questions have increasingly found a place on public agendas and encouraged more far-sighted approaches.<sup>9</sup> This growing attention for the work that organisations like CIDSE do strengthens our mandate and will allow us to promote and support alternative models to live together, allowing all people to flourish equally in harmony with creation. *Laudato Si'* points to a new ethical vision which needs to emerge within the political and economic sphere – to bring a ‘revolution of tenderness’ and ‘fraternity’ to life.

## » REVITALISED AND NEW FORMS OF HUMAN SOLIDARITY

The present refugee crisis has seen encouraging forms of human solidarity. While politicians debated numbers and borders, many people assumed the responsibility to provide refugees with basic provisions like food and shelter and show solidarity and human respect. These forms of human solidarity encourage us to think that there are other, alternative or additional ways of influencing realities or working on the more fundamental reforms that are needed.

## » AN OPENING FOR A NEW APPROACH

Organised civil society organisations like ourselves have started to question if they can achieve the fundamental transformation and can really influence the needed policy change without a paradigm change. Therefore, we in CIDSE have embarked on a paradigm shift discussion and have identified key elements of the social and economic transition that we would want to see. CIDSE now has a crucial window of opportunity to bring its vision and values to bear on the many pressing global challenges we face today keeping in mind that although “the post-industrial period may well be remembered as one of the most irresponsible in history, nonetheless there is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities”.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 179, May 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 165, May 2015.

## » A NEW UNIVERSAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' agreed by governments in September 2015 seeks to respond to many of today's most pressing challenges. It sets out a vision of a world where all life can thrive. It is a result of unprecedented levels of discussion, consultation and mobilisation. It is a universal agenda, recognising the interdependence of economic, social and environmental goals. It is built upon explicit recognition of human rights and contains valuable goals to end poverty, achieve gender equality, reduce inequality, realise sustainable consumption and production, and combat deforestation and climate change. Implementation of these goals and accountability towards people around the world will determine its ultimate value. At the same time, the limitations, gaps and inconsistencies in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be recognised and addressed. The SDGs do not overcome contradictions in seeking harmony with nature while prioritising sustained growth for all nations, imply continued competition for limited natural resources, do not tackle unjust global rules of finance, taxation, trade and investment, essential to realise the structural transformation needed to address the root causes of poverty and inequality.



New forms of  
human solidarity

## » A GLOBAL PACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Paris Agreement reached at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015 was a watershed moment. It recognises the structural challenges that climate change poses. It contains a binding agreement to limit temperature increases to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, largely thanks to efforts of many actors, including the Catholic Church and vulnerable countries, as well as mass mobilisation and popular pressure on politicians. It also contains a review mechanism to encourage countries to go further and an emissions monitoring framework. The agreement's long term goal to decarbonise is a hopeful sign of a transition to low carbon economies but only talks vaguely about 'technologies' and 'actions' without defining what these are. This leaves the door open to all kinds of false solutions (such as climate smart agriculture and others<sup>11</sup>). The agreement lacks ambition and urgency in many areas, including where it failed to ensure new, additional and predictable finance. It also falls short on compliance mechanisms and safeguarding human rights and food security. All these are necessary elements to ensure the protection of the poorest and most vulnerable.

The present new strategic framework provides us with the opportunity to adapt our ways of working and cooperating to the new needs and new (global) trends. In the next chapter we outline how we want to do this. The CIDSE secretariat facilitates the new way of working, with advice, support and operational capacity in view of achieving the paradigm shift, which we have embarked to realise.

<sup>11</sup> [www.cidse.org/publications/just-food/food-and-climate/csa-the-emperor-s-new-clothes.html](http://www.cidse.org/publications/just-food/food-and-climate/csa-the-emperor-s-new-clothes.html).



A woman in a red sari is standing on a wooden ladder, working on a solar panel mounted on a metal pole. The background shows a lush green valley and a prominent mountain peak under a cloudy sky. Two overlapping circles, one red and one dark green, are positioned on the left side of the image, containing text.

# THE CHANGES WE WANT TO BRING ABOUT

Fighting the  
structural causes  
of injustice and  
poverty

## CHANGE: AN UPHILL BATTLE

Over the past six years, CIDSE has worked to challenge assumptions on growth, development and consumption. Together with our partner organisations, we have endeavoured to fight the structural causes of injustice and poverty, whether related to the impacts of mining, climate change, land grabbing or gender injustice.

As Catholic organisations, we want to work for a society based on social, economic and gender equality and solidarity, where the economy is at the service of society and functions within planetary boundaries. But we have learned that advocating policy change is not enough to achieve transformation. Despite partial progress, there is a sense of frustration with the overall trends in inequalities, hunger, climate change and corporate interests being put before people and planet.

### » SYSTEMIC CHANGE

**The above has led us to identify the need for the following systemic changes:**

- A fairer share of and limits in the use of global resources;
- Governance systems in which power relations are democratised, where people regain control over choices in their societies and where global rules allow for the flourishing of local alternatives;
- Economies based on the commons, with new models of diversified, decentralised structures and actors;
- A renewed true solidarity based on justice and shared responsibility (between peoples) leading to empowerment and transformational change in society as well as in individuals, contributing to a global movement for change.

We have come to understand that deep changes often come from below, from people striving for a better life, for human dignity. Therefore, we will look closer at the solutions and alternatives that people themselves bring up, that people themselves work for and which work for people themselves.

## » CHANGE STARTS WITH US

Given the new global context we described above, it is obvious that we need to define new approaches and must work together in new ways to bring about the systemic change. This has also consequences for the way we work as organisations and as CIDSE. The core of the change that we need is real partnership, true learning and open channels of communication with the people we want to support.

**We therefore want to introduce the following changes in the way we organise our work:**

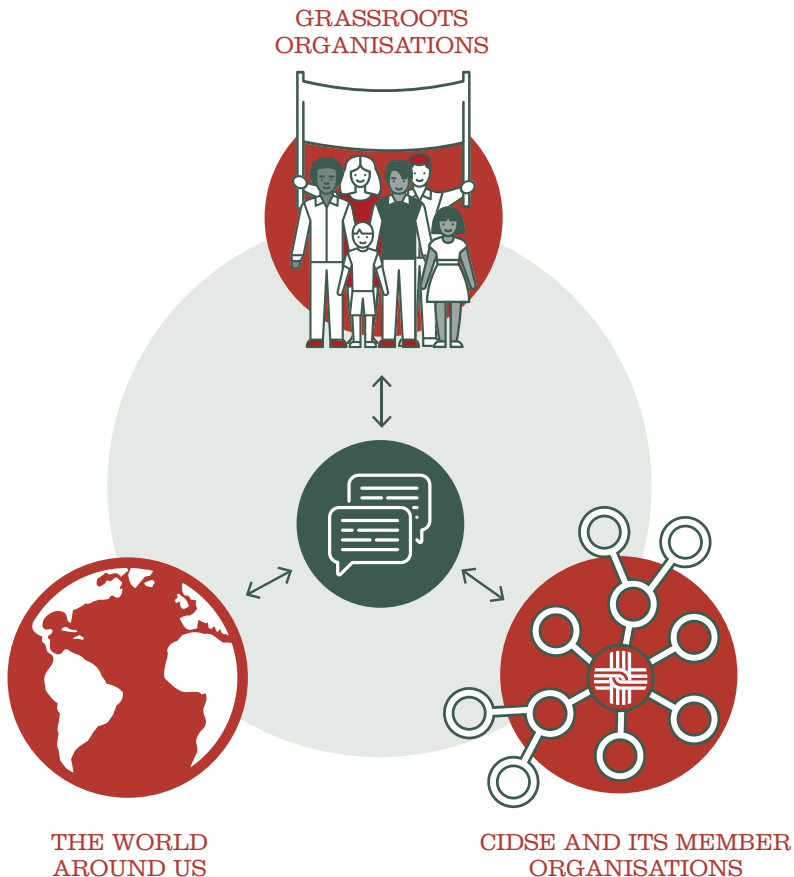
- Changes in the way we work as organisations and as a network – promoting real partnership, experimenting together and learning from each other, building a bridge between communities and ways of living in North and South;
- More integrated ways of working, joining up our partnership work, our public and political work as well as our funding efforts in a common approach, making use of our organisations and network to embark on innovative ways of development work.



Promoting real  
partnership

This strategic framework will not replace member organisations' strategies. It is a guiding document for working together and reinforcing each other as a collective: filling in gaps, bringing experience and expertise from the grassroots and member organisations' level into the network and back.

This framework is meant to build on member organisations' work, and most recent developments and intends to sharpen CIDSE's profile and particular niche and added value. It is also an invitation to all members to benefit from joint learning, capacity building, testing, risk sharing and coordinated action.





A close-up photograph of a woman with a determined expression, shouting into a white and green megaphone. She is wearing a grey tweed jacket over an orange sweater and a red and grey knit beanie. A green ribbon is tied around her neck. The background is blurred, showing other people and flags, suggesting a protest or public demonstration. Two large, semi-transparent circles, one green and one orange, are overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

# HOW WE WANT TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

We want to  
offer innovative  
alternatives

Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, CIDSE will continue to tackle the structural causes of injustice and advocate change that upholds human rights, ensures the common good and particularly addresses inequity, access to resources, gender equality, the needs and rights of the poorest and most vulnerable in society.

## WHERE WE WILL CONTINUE OUR APPROACHES

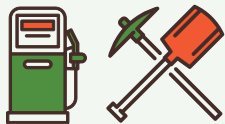
In doing this, we seek to be prophetic and inspirational. We want to push boundaries and offer innovative alternatives, rooted in the challenges and solutions of our partners, in the South and the North, and those that emerge in our own societies. As a network we have established a great deal of experience, collaboration and influence in the areas of climate justice, just food, business and human rights, and finance and development. We will continue to work on these areas, while building more integrated approaches.

”

*“Public pressure has to be exerted in order to bring about decisive political action. Society, through non-governmental organisations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls.”*

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

# MORE SPECIFICALLY, we will work towards

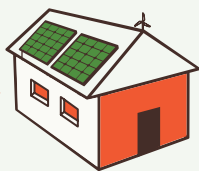


1 Moving away from **fossil fuels** and **extractivism**



2

While promoting transition paths and models of development which respect a global temperature rise **below 1.5°C** as well as communities' **right to food, land and fair livelihoods**



3 Redirecting finance from dirty energy to **decentralized community-based renewable energy**

4



5

Strengthening **local, democratic food systems and agroecology**, while ending investment in industrial agriculture which also contributes to climate change



6 **Regulating business and trade** to enforce human rights obligations, while **limiting the power of transnational corporations** to influence public policy

7

Reforming rules on tax and fiscal policy towards **sustainable finance** and **fair wealth distribution**



8

**Supporting** food producers, workers, indigenous people's, women and local community leaders to **organise** and **speak for themselves** at the negotiating table



9

Continuing dialogue on **gender equality**, and confronting gender inequalities across our work



10

Sparkling and enabling **sustainable ways of living**, limiting consumption and waste and rethinking production of food and energy at the community and political level



Our political advocacy work at the international and highest levels has always been a particular strength of the CIDSE network. It will remain an important building block of our work in the future, but in order to become truly transformative we must change the type of advocacy we do: focusing more on matching the scale of problems and solutions, connecting micro-experiences to larger systems and looking to reforms not hurting the poor whether far or near. Obviously, we can best influence values and policy by working jointly as a network and through coordinated efforts. Therefore, the work and strategies conducted by individual members will be the basic building blocks of the collective work, while the CIDSE network will address collective targets such as the United Nations, the European Union or the Catholic Church.

## WHERE WE WILL DEVELOP NEW APPROACHES

The character of this new strategic approach is ‘less of the same old and more of the different new’. Our new approach is more of an agenda setting one, where we will go beyond responding to the political agenda set by governments and instead put forward our own. It is about existing alternatives which need to be acknowledged, protected and scaled up. This strategy is also about telling stories of change, where it acknowledges the importance of people-driven change. It is about enhanced collaboration with Southern partners also at CIDSE level going hand in hand with more communication, coordination and transparency so that work at network and members level are aligned. And it is about working together and joint learning to create change. In fact, we want to contribute to building movements, strong, cohesive and inspirational enough to create the change that we need. As a connector, CIDSE actively participates in movements for change, engages in spaces where movements come together, and recognises the Church’s movement building potential. This approach integrates work across themes and across advocacy, campaigns and programmes, towards transformative change and in order to spread our messages as widely as possible. Finally, it is about our role in our Church and the contribution the CIDSE family makes to allow our Church to flourish with great people bringing hope and living the change required.

Most importantly, we work together. We work for reforms with transformative potential; we choose challenges, which impact more areas at the same time. We work with our partners to identify concrete and visible struggles, where we can bring about the change we need, prioritising and deciding together what is most effective for our objectives.

**A new set of criteria will guide our strategic choices and concrete struggles. These criteria are:**

- The transformational potential and the contribution towards reaching our systemic objectives, including the questioning of dominating economic paradigms;
- A balance between proactive (setting the agenda, promoting alternatives and stories of change) and reactive (defending against/resisting false solutions) elements;
- Built upon strategic discussion with our partners, linked to realities on the ground, addressing advocacy and action at different levels (international, national, local) in integrated ways;
- Strategies and narratives, which align advocacy, programmes and campaigns and provide credible alternatives and concrete, practical policy solutions;
- A balance between inside (focused on national and international decision making) and outside (emphasising people-driven change, movement building and joint mobilisation) strategies; an active use of our potential and role within the Church, within civil society, within societies, with partners, to contribute to building a movement for change.



This will allow us to bring local struggles of our partners and communities to the public and political attention. In this respect, we want to build new alliances, bringing together in new ways people, like-minded organisations and movements and create mutual learning. CIDSE wants to actively fulfil the roles of facilitator, catalyst, connector, and accompanier of local communities' and civil society processes of change. In a spirit of solidarity and building on our ambition to develop long term cooperation projects, we will emphasise our roles as change agents working in solidarity with poor communities far away as well as organisations bringing about positive change to our home societies.

## EVOLVING WAYS OF WORKING

Since this collective work, which CIDSE does, can only be successful as long as it reflects our members' priorities and our partners' needs and experience, we will, when required, adjust the priorities or the focus of the work in this field accordingly. Our new strategic framework incorporates a more flexible approach to our work.

We continue testing, evaluating and learning related to the members' campaigns on lifestyle changes as well as related collective initiatives like 'joint actions'. We link these actions with a solid advocacy strategy aiming at preparing the ground in North and South to allow alternatives such as different lifestyles to flourish. In this respect, we will practice what we preach.





# MEMBERSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS, ALLIANCES

Our relationships  
with partners and  
allies worldwide are  
a fundamental pillar  
of our work

CIDSE is a dynamic network. Its priorities, strategies, membership and collaborations evolve.

## MEMBERS

In the first place, we intend to strengthen and where possible increase our membership base. We intend to have members who strongly feel that it is worthwhile to be an active part of the CIDSE network.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Furthermore, we will strengthen our partnership base. Our relationships with partners and allies worldwide are a fundamental pillar of our work. Over the years, our members have developed long term relationships with thousands of organisations and initiatives working for social justice and human development. Partners increasingly make it clear that while financial support is important, strategic and concrete collaboration, working for social justice and human development, should be at the heart of working together. CIDSE fulfils these requirements particularly at the international level.





**This is what we want to achieve in the coming years:**

- We will explore and develop our North-South partnership cooperation more in-depth and develop our relations – in particular in the Global South – further;
- We will invest in alliance building with the Southern partners of our members and we will engage with networks and movements in a well-structured and transparent way, particularly at the international and regional level.



## ALLIANCES

Our vision calls on us to work with other people of good will to promote justice and global solidarity and to end poverty and inequality. Working in alliances will offer CIDSE an opportunity to continuously exchange with other important actors. We strive to create wider alliances and a stronger movement, consisting of our partners within the Church – like our sister network Caritas Internationalis - as well of secular allies.

### **More specifically, in order to move forward:**

- We will particularly work with Catholic Church-, lay-, civil society- and ecumenical organisations, networks and alliances;
- We will maintain our relationship with the Holy See and pay special attention to developing it further;
- We will work with the Southern Bishops Conferences and many Bishops worldwide.



A woman with dark skin and short, curly hair is speaking into a microphone. She is wearing a colorful, patterned dress and a necklace. A name tag is pinned to her dress. The background is a mosaic wall. A large red circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title 'INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS'. A smaller dark brown circle is overlaid on the bottom right of the red circle, containing a quote.

# INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS

We want to  
open up spaces  
for the creation  
and exchange of  
knowledge

This new strategic framework capitalises on the combined strengths of the network and its organisations: knowledge generation and sharing, mobilisation and cooperation, development and education. We need to organise ourselves internally in the best possible way to have an external impact. Therefore, we need to revitalise a number of instruments that we have used in the past or we need to develop new ones in order to mobilise all the expertise, experience and energy available in the network.

### **Our priorities in this respect are:**

» **TO FACILITATE CROSS FERTILISATION WITHIN OUR NETWORK**, be it inter-sectoral discussions to allow us to include different actors and voices within the organisations or be it the interaction with national or regional-level networks and communities of practice. This inter-sectoral work will help break the isolation and separation of strategic and policy discussions, as well as reduce duplication and multiplication of priorities. Therefore we will reconsider programme coordination structures and approaches, including the desired leadership within groups. At the same time, the evaluation of CIDSE's work shows that a stronger integration of programme and advocacy work can be very powerful. We will test new ways of working allowing thematic and regional working groups to cooperate more closely.

» **TO MAKE CIDSE A TRUE LEARNING NETWORK**. We have the ambition to become better in generating and sharing lessons learned and in helping each other to reach the next level of development. A true learning organisation is based on good cooperation and open, transparent sharing of successes and failures to mutually support each other and stimulate each other to do better next time. CIDSE wants to open up spaces for the creation and exchange of knowledge, for the continued development of common strategies and positions, for the sharing and learning among the members, who work at different levels within our network. CIDSE will aim to provide tools for knowledge management and research that will strengthen the collective impact of all of this knowledge produced.

» **TO ORGANISE SPACES, MEETINGS AND FORA** designed for sharing experiences, creating cooperative projects as well as strategic thinking processes. As a facilitator within the network, CIDSE will help to create the conditions for better cooperation and sharing within the network.

» **TO IDENTIFY, MAP AND BRING TOGETHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCES** of the organisations in our network and to use member organisations' best practices, existing tools, experiences, common challenges to advance our mission. CIDSE will continue to set up spaces for sharing, coordinating and brainstorming. Working groups will continue to play their role around thematic or geographic priorities and will thus continue to be important drivers of CIDSE work. However, new tools will be developed as well, also making use of new IT possibilities.

» **TO SECURE COORDINATION WITHIN THE CIDSE NETWORK**, providing a common frame, bringing together talents and voices in order to increase impact. As initiator and facilitator CIDSE sees possibilities to promote more cooperation and to bring talented colleagues together in specific projects and activities.

» **CIDSE FEELS THAT EVERYONE WITHIN THE NETWORK SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE**, to launch an idea, a process or a workstream and be supported by the network in doing so. Beyond our core priorities, members are welcome to self-organise, however the secretariat can facilitate and accompany the preparation.

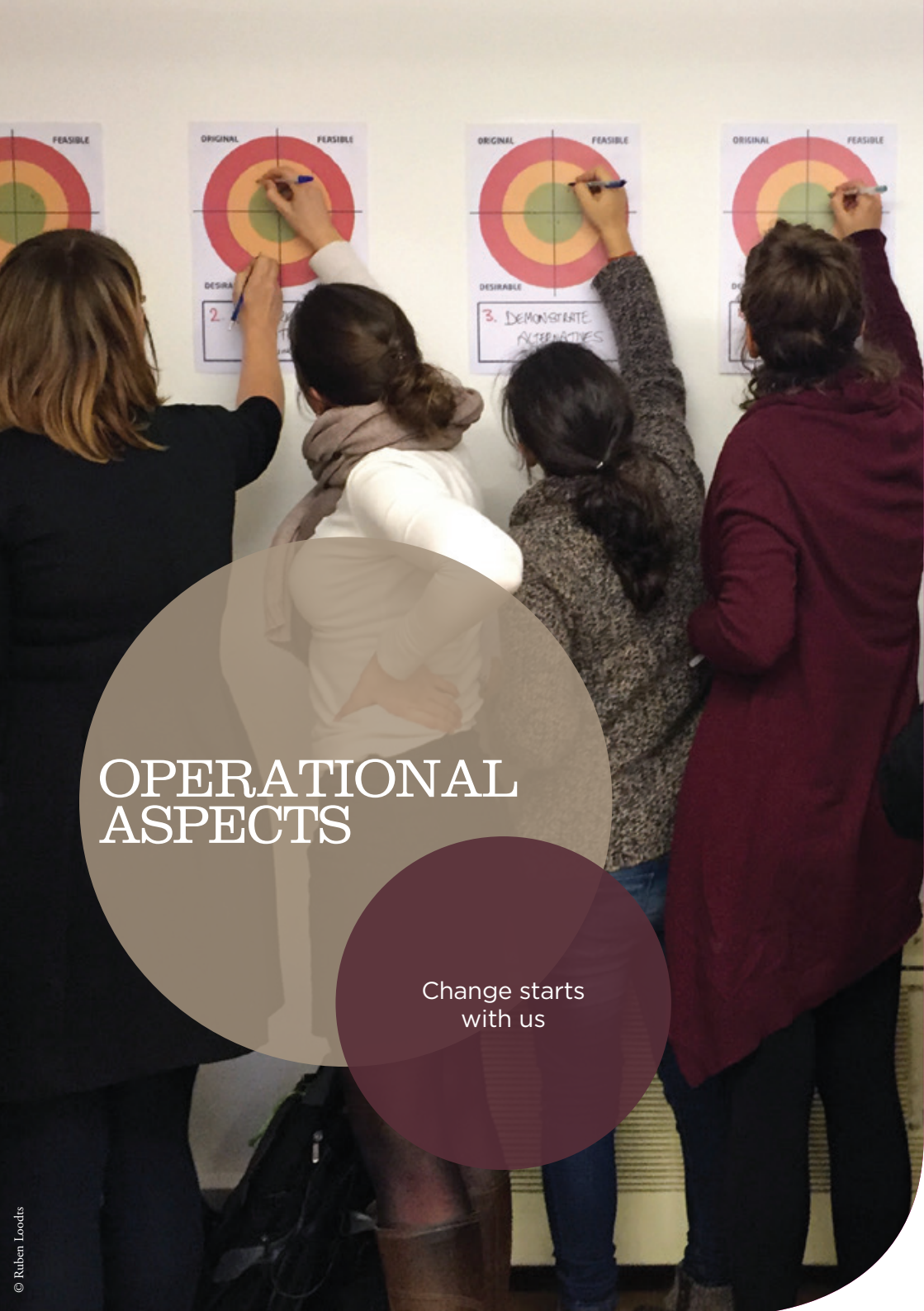
» **TO FACILITATE THE CONTACTS AND COLLABORATION WITH NEW ACTORS AND IN INNOVATIVE SPACES AND DISCOURSES TOWARDS BUILDING A NEW MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE.** CIDSE wants to map out and build internal knowledge on where we are as network/member organisations in relation to social movements and other civil society organisations. We need to assess both our capacity within networks as well as our existing entry points for liaising with other movements/networks. As an international network, CIDSE wants to promote a continuous conversation with other international actors, experts and southern partners.

» **TO SUPPORT BETTER INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.** CIDSE provides channels for internal communication. There is a will within the network among several members to try to create more synergies, alignment, and coordinated efforts; to better use the limited human and other resources we have; to harness the potential of being part of a family; to help with taking strategic choices and undertaking work collectively.

» **TO INCREASE OUR USE OF IT IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN OUR CURRENT WORK AND FUTURE DECISION MAKING.** With the new available technologies, CIDSE will be able to achieve the objectives, outlined above, in a more efficient and more cost effective way.

» **TO SUPPORT THE CIDSE NETWORK WITH NEW FUNDING EFFORTS AND EXPERTISE.** Members recognise that CIDSE needs stable and sustainable funding including an appropriate core budget financed by its members. We also recognise the decline within some members' financial capacity. This challenge will be addressed. CIDSE sees the possibilities of a changing funding landscape favouring effective networks and the great innovation potential of members who have limited financial means, but innovative ideas; therefore, it will bring those members together who are interested in collectively exploring funding opportunities to make new collective actions and initiatives possible. The network as a whole should be able to explore new external funding opportunities and should benefit from the many good ideas available within the network to tap into the available new funding streams. Such initiatives are meant to strengthen the network and its members and to increase the collective impact, necessary to act for transformation.





# OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

Change starts  
with us



This strategic framework will help us to analyse and identify clearly what we will do more and what less. For example:

## WHAT WE WILL DO LESS

- » Formulate policy positions by ourselves only; we want to strengthen our work with partners and allies when formulating positions or approaches to problems;
- » Lobby and advocacy work following set agendas and frameworks of governments and not having transformative potential;
- » Use less jargon, acronyms and policy speak in order to be better understood by a wider audience.

## WHAT WE WILL DO MORE

- » Produce robust policy positions to feed into priority international negotiation processes and advocacy strategies, while setting the agendas ourselves, rather than focussing on influencing set agendas, with strong positive stories/alternatives;
- » Alongside our ongoing policy positions, develop more transformative positions; ‘think pieces’; which can be put into the public arena at opportune moments;
- » Build and sustain relationships with a small group of identified key decision-makers/influencers, who can help us;
- » Give a real say to our allies and partners in the creative process of policy formulation;
- » Develop our network of representatives, decision-makers and partners to make sure that we have a well functioning accessible list of contacts, which can help us to influence or approach them at key moments.

## ALIGNING THE WORK OF CIDSE MEMBERS AND THE CIDSE NETWORK

Furthermore, we want to develop new thinking about how to align what CIDSE members want to do and what the network should do. We realise that there will always be a natural tension between the results of collective thinking and strategising and the mandate and strategies of the staff of CIDSE member organisations. Rather than a threat, we see this as enriching. Nevertheless we see the need to establish strategic fora and spaces in CIDSE which have leverage for CIDSE's members at home. This can only happen if programme, advocacy and other managers come together regularly to contribute to the operationalisation of cross-cutting strategies. This would support the work of working groups and the secretariat when addressing more systemic questions like Sustainable Development Goals, economic growth, paradigm shift, doing policy accompaniment of joint actions, etc.

CIDSE will also explore establishing an advisory group to accompany and guide the transition regarding membership and mechanisms to involve Southern partners in CIDSE's work and decision making.

## MEASURING IMPACT

To strengthen our long-term impact, in 2016-2021 we want to measure all our efforts and strategies against its transformative character, against the question of whether it has a potential to contribute to a paradigm shift. Change starts with us: to be transformational in our work, we allow the questioning of how we work, our frameworks, our relationships with partners, how we advocate, how we fund our work, the ecological footprint we create... We aim to be credible actors, walking the talk guided by Catholic Social Teaching.

We are aware that systemic change, the change of a dominating paradigm, characterised by imbalances in political and economic power and more fundamentally between women and men, is a long term task. But we are convinced that we can best contribute to this goal and learn when we succeed to measure the impact of our work.

**In more concrete terms, we will measure progress against the following criteria:**

- CIDSE is a recognised and influential actor by key decision makers in EU, UN and related international organisations;
- CIDSE is a recognised and influential actor in our Church – particularly at the regional and international level;
- CIDSE works closely with key allies and forms part of influential networks;
- CIDSE opens up spaces for deeper engagement with key Southern allies and works with a long term strategy towards a more global constituency and partnership;
- CIDSE is recognised for our strong value based work, pushing boundaries, aiming at systemic change towards true global justice and promoting real alternatives for the people in South and North;
- CIDSE works with tools and methodologies allowing members to engage in CIDSE, benefitting from their membership, feeling stronger and being part of a learning and challenging family;
- Members engage in and via CIDSE to support and create movements of change with help of their partner and supporter networks;
- The CIDSE working groups, fora and leadership meetings are an asset, flourishing and results oriented;
- CIDSE and its members have reduced their ecological footprint.

## WALKING THE TALK

As part of the operationalisation of the framework, we will ensure that we walk the talk. We will devote time and energy to mainstream our gender objectives, our South-North re-orientation, our climate and sustainability objectives, our commitment towards transparency and accountability in the day to day execution of our work.

### **More specifically, we intend:**

- To reduce our carbon footprint, among others by travelling less and using IT tools more effectively;
- To create more openness and inclusiveness, among others by inviting allies regularly to board meetings and conferences aiming at enhanced collaboration and integration.

## THE SECRETARIAT

This new strategic framework will demand extra efforts from the CIDSE secretariat. The secretariat has to strengthen certain elements of its set up and ways of working.

### **In particular, the secretariat wants to focus on:**

- Strengthening the support to our members by freeing the capacity of secretariat staff to intensify the work with our members;
- Facilitating the exchange of information within the network, especially making sure that there is two-way communication between the Brussels secretariat and the CIDSE members, to reduce the risk of working in isolation and avoid delays in seeking and providing inputs; hence, the secretariat will look at the way it shares information with the network, will pay attention to information management and will make an effort to adapt the kind of information to the specific needs of our members; at the same time, the secretariat will invite CIDSE members to share relevant information freely with the secretariat and the other network members;

- Promoting innovation and new ways of working together by strengthening the horizon scanning function of the secretariat, identifying new developments at an early stage;
- Facilitating learning and knowledge management by making sure that all projects and initiatives are properly evaluated and that lessons learned become available for the whole CIDSE network.

In short, we will make sure that the secretariat – with the support of its members – will put the resources, procedures and (IT) infrastructure in place to ensure that the Strategic Framework can be implemented.

At the same time, it is clear that changing ways of working will demand extra effort and new skills from the secretariat. Therefore, the secretariat will engage in a (above-mentioned) stop and go exercise, identifying which activities and initiatives are no longer required under the new framework and where freed up resources should be used to maximise impact and results.



All these means will help us to challenge systemic injustice, inequity and destruction of nature; to promote just and environmentally sustainable alternatives; and to work together to create transformational change to end poverty and inequalities.









## CIDSE members



Austria



Belgium



Belgium



Canada



England and Wales



France



Germany



Ireland



Italy



Luxembourg



the Netherlands



Portugal



Slovakia



Scotland



Spain



FASTENOPFER  
Switzerland



United Kingdom



USA

» CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations, working together to promote justice, harness the power of global solidarity and create transformational change to end poverty and inequalities. We do this by challenging systemic injustice and inequity as well as destruction of nature. We believe in a world where every human being has the right to live in dignity.

## Contact details

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