

## Amazon Synod is a providential opportunity to denounce oppressive global structures and to address the climate emergency

- CIDSE member organisations have worked in the Amazon for decades and see in this part of the world a clear case for systemic change and toward integral ecology, because this area has suffered all of the most common patterns of social and environmental injustice. The whole world is connected to the Amazon, hopefully the first of other biomes in Africa and Asia to be recognised for special protection from destruction.
- The Catholic community is alarmed over rising deforestation, extractivism and the plight of the Amazon's Indigenous people and their territories and sees the Synod as a prophetic summit about the future of these communities and the future of the whole planet.
- Among the special guests inside the Synod, Josianne Gauthier, Secretary General of CIDSE is one of the few women to be present in the Assembly, along with Msrg. Pirmin Spiegel, Director General of MISEREOR, CIDSE's German member.

Brussels, 1 October 2019.

CIDSE and its member organisations (MOs), present and active in the Amazon region for decades with longstanding collaboration with allies and partners in all nine countries of the region, working with hundreds of projects in solidarity with the most vulnerable communities, welcome the [Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region: New Paths for the Church and an Integral Ecology](#) (Rome, 6-27 October 2019). This important gathering aims to put at the centre of the Church's reflection the lives of 34 million people, as well as the protection of all forms of life in this region and its biodiversity, as a key contribution to the care of our common home.

The CIDSE family accompany in their daily work communities in the Pan-Amazon region who during the preparatory process of the Synod<sup>1</sup>, **identified the main social, economic, environmental and cultural challenges of the region, and denounced the grave human rights violations and environmental degradation they are confronted with.** Through the reflections already identified in the *Instrumentum Laboris* ([the Working Document for the Synod of Bishops](#)), this Synod intends to respond to the urgent call to tackle the climate emergency, shift in consumption patterns, or to stop corporate impunity. These questions are not comfortable but need to be voiced, not only for the reality in the territory of the Amazon but also within our institutions and our way of life.

In this special moment of the history of the Church, CIDSE commemorates **the names of people, communities, and territories of the Amazon that have been sacrificed in the pursuit of a model of greed and colonialism** which continues not only to bleed the Amazon of its resources, its cultures, its biodiversity, its colours, and splendours, but which is hurting and threatening the rest of the world as well. **Murders of human rights defenders and attacks on the rights of Nature in the Amazon are evidence of how the ruling**

<sup>1</sup> 87.000 people in the 9 countries participated in this unprecedented process led by REPAM, the Pan-amazonian ecclesial network.

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## PRESS RELEASE

**system deals with criticism.** CIDSE will continue to challenge systems of impunity, alongside the most affected communities and call for corporate regulation of businesses that operate in the Amazon and exploit its resources and people, while contributing to ecological degradation.<sup>2</sup>

**The Synod also facilitates a dialogue on global responsibility and it brings us beyond a regional reflection on the Amazon.** It is a global call to be "synodal": to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, to learn from experiences of sustainable way of living in harmony with nature, and with these motivations to embrace an approach of integral ecology and urgently act to protect our common home. **The Synod of the Amazon can ignite a profound transformation,** reminding us that everything is connected, and this is **hopefully the first of among other biomes in Africa and Asia to become a focus of protection.**

CIDSE believes that - as faith-based organisations together with many allies and partners worldwide - we have a crucial leadership role to play to bring about a paradigm shift towards a **more just and sustainable world.** CIDSE is also called to live this transformation and bring the messages and outcomes of the Synod and *Laudato Si'* into its ways of working, its territories, in Europe and North America.

In preparation for the Synod, CIDSE with REPAM launched a [specific toolkit](#) using the motto "**Save the Amazon, she will save us**" and the hashtag [#AmazonSourceofLife](#), consisting of graphic materials and a series of **17 mini video interviews on the Amazon** covering issues such as the upcoming Synod, nature, climate, gender equality, indigenous rights, land rights, corporate regulation and systemic change.

### CONTINUATION AND DEEPENING OF THE PROCESS/ FURTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The [Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region: New Paths for the Church and an Integral Ecology](#) is a key milestone in the life of the Church and the result of joint efforts by many actors in a process of several years. **CIDSE sees this Synod as a continuation and a deepening of the process** that was initiated by the Holy Father with the publication of the [Apostolic Exhortation \*Evangelii Gaudium\*](#) (2013, challenging the Church) and the [Encyclical letter \*Laudato Si'\*](#) (2015, calling for social and ecological justice), as well as the collective efforts of many actors across the globe who support integral ecology and the work for a real ecological conversion. **This reflection within the Church on how to build paths towards integral ecology in a specific context is the natural next step and an important responsibility.**

**For Catholic social justice organisations,** the Synod represents an opportunity to overcome the separation between spirituality and political and social action both in our work and more broadly within the Church. We look at the communities and Indigenous peoples in the Amazon fighting for and protecting Nature, seeing it as an extension of their own lives, inspired and guided by their cosmovision. **Christian spirituality and engaging for global justice can and should intermingle to nurture and guide our political actions as well.**

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<sup>2</sup> In parallel to the Synod, the UN Human Rights Council is gathered in Geneva to discuss a Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights (14-18 October).

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### **CIDSE NETWORK ACTIVITIES DURING THE SYNOD**

A CIDSE delegation will be present in Rome and will be involved in a series of activities during the three weeks of the Synod. Most of them are included in the special website created on this occasion "Amazon: Common Home" (<http://amazonia-casa-comun.org>). See summary below. Please check [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org) for the latest updates about our activities; Interviews can also be arranged on site in different languages (see details at the end of this press release).

WHEN	HOUR	WHAT	WHERE	ORGANIZER
1-27 October		Pilgrimage "On the way with Amazon" #OnTheWaywithAmazon	From Portugal to Italy	FEC
7 -27 October <b>OFFICIAL INAUGURATION 7 October 14 h.</b>	Weekly 9 h- 19 h. / Saturday 9 h- 13 h. / Sunday closed	"Fragile Amazon" Photo exhibition by Ana Palacios	Casa Internazionale delle Donne, Via della Lungara 19 00165 Roma	CIDSE/REPAM co-financed by European Union
Saturday 5 October	19.30 H. - 21.30 H.	Official opening of the Tenda and vigil	Church Santa Maria in Traspontina, Via della Conciliazione, 14c 00193 Roma	ALL ORGANISATIONS of the space "Amazon: our common home"
Wednesday 9 October	17 H. - 20 H.	Alternativas al desarrollo en la Amazonia / Alternativas de desenvolvimento	Casa Carmelitas, Vía de la Conziliazione 10, Roma	MISEREOR/CIDSE
Thursday 10 October	17 H. - 20 H.	Urbanización/Ciudad (Pueblos Indígenas en la ciudad)	Casa Carmelitas, Vía de la Conziliazione 10, Roma	MISEREOR/CIDSE
	19.30 H.- 21.30 H.	Round Table "El Sínodo escucha a las comunidades afectadas por la minería" and Conference "Minería: Mal Común en la Amazonía"	Church-Centro Internazionale Giovanile "San Lorenzo" Via Padre Pancrazio Pfeiffer, 24, 00193 Roma	Iglesias y Minería/Manos Unidas/CIDSE
Friday 11 October		The Synod listens to communities affected by mining		Iglesias y Minería/Manos Unidas/CIDSE
Sunday 13 October	13 H. - 16 H.	Outdoor lunch and interactive Laudato Si' prayer walk	FOCSIV garden, Via S. Francesco di Sales, 18 00165, Roma	FOCSIV/GCCM
Wednesday 16 October	14 H- 18 H.	Journalists and Experts Panel "TALKING INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND LIVING SUSTAINABLY" and official launch of the "JOURNALISTS' TOOLKIT ON SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES"	Sala Marconi Palazzo Pio Piazza Pia, 3 00193 Roma	CIDSE with REPAM/GCCM/FOCSIV/DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE/MISEREOR and with the collaboration of

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				Dicastery for Communication.
Thursday 17 October	17 H. – 20 H.	Exchange on food sovereignty	Casa Carmelitas, Vía de la Conciliazione 10 Roma	MISEREOR/CIDSE
Saturday 19 October		Pilgrimage in support of the synod	Pilgrimage to begin Piazza della Repubblica and end in St. Peter's Square.	ALL ORGANISATIONS of the space "Amazon: our common home"
Tuesday 22 October		Presentation of the Atlas of conflicts in the Pan-Amazonian region		CCFD-Terre Solidaire /CIDSE/MISEREOR/CPPT and Pastoral de la Tierra
Wednesday 23 October	17 H- 19 h.	Screening of CIDSE Documentary "Energy to Change"	Sala Marconi Palazzo Pio Piazza Pia, 3 00193 Roma	CIDSE/FOCSIV/FASTE NOPFER
Saturday 26 October	10 H. – 12 H.	Encounter with indigenous leader and NGO	Centro Internazionale Giovanile "San Lorenzo" Via Padre Pancrazio Pfeiffer, 24 00193 Roma	FOCSIV

**MORE RESOURCES for Media**

- [Flyer - "Fragile Amazon" Photo exhibition of Ana Palacios](#)
- [Flyer - Journalists and experts' panel "TALKING INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND LIVING SUSTAINABLY" and official launch of the "JOURNALISTS' TOOLKIT ON SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES"](#)
- [Flyer - Documentary Screening "Energy to Change"](#)
- [CIDSE YouTube Channel](#) - 17 interviews about the Amazon with [EN](#) / [FR](#) / [GE](#) / [ES](#) / [PT](#) / [IT](#) subtitles.
- **PICTURES FROM THE AMAZON** or **PROFESSIONAL TV FOOTAGE** (available upon request)

**MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS CIDSE CONTACTS IN ROME**

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**CIDSE - International family of Catholic social justice organisations** . Broederlijk Delen-Belgium ~ CAFOD-England and Wales ~ CCFD-Terre Solidaire-France ~ Cordaid-the Netherlands ~ Development and Peace-Canada ~ Entraide et Fraternité-Belgium ~ eRko-Slovakia ~ Fastenopfer-Switzerland ~ FEC-Portugal ~ FOCSIV-Volontari nel Mondo-Italy ~ Partage.lu-Luxembourg ~ KOO-Austria ~ Manos Unidas-Spain ~ Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns-USA ~ MISEREOR-Germany ~ SCIAF-Scotland ~ Trócaire-Ireland ~ Vastenactie-the Netherlands

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