

MISEREOR
IHR HILFSWERK



60 YEARS IN PARTNERSHIP

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF MISEREOR PARTNERSHIP IN NIGERIA
CATHOLIC RESOURCE CENTRE, ABUJA - 25th NOVEMBER 2019

60 YEARS IN PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By Andreas Kahler, MISEREOR DPS

November 2019 marked 60 years of partnership between MISEREOR, the German Bishops Conference's Development Organization and its partners in Nigeria, since the first grant, which supported a health project in Lagos, was approved by MISEREOR in Aachen, on the 4th Nov. 1959. Since then, times changed, and there were changes regarding thematic areas as well as in ways of working together.

A milestone on the way of advanced cooperation was the establishment of the MISEREOR Dialogue and Partnership Service (DPS) at Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) ten years ago. We are thankful in particular for this partnership with the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria via its Secretariat, which we consider very fruitful.

Today as yesterday, we understand development as a process of exchange and mutual learning between partners, not just financial assistance.

On the occasion of the anniversary, we had the delight welcoming all partner organizations in Nigeria, in order to re-join as partners and friends and to re-consider the common ground of our cooperation. The celebration event comprised a panel discussion on *Laudato Si'* and a reception on the 25th Nov. 2019, followed by a four-day Strategy Workshop on impact & outcome-oriented planning and monitoring.

At the end of the day, after prayers, talks, music and more, we have been grateful for the impressive response by our partners. All present friends and partners from Church, civil society, diplomatic sphere made our celebration so unique. We appreciated the words by the Secretary General

(CSN), Rev. Fr Zacharia Samjumi, by Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN), Fr Uchechukwu Obodechina, and other contributions by important actors, especially our other panelists, Dr Priscilla Achakpa and Mr Helmut Kulitz who represented the German Diplomatic Mission in Nigeria.

Looking at today's search for renewed international cooperation, e.g. "world service" (Agiamondo, formerly AGEH), among us we had pioneers like Rev. Fr John Patrick Ngoyi and Rev. Fr George Ehusani. The latter advised European advocacy campaigns already in 2007, while the former recently reviewed strategy implementation at the German Council for Sustainable Development.

The idea to focus on "*Laudato Si'* as New Narrative for Development Cooperation" emerged from a workshop "*Making Sense of Laudato Si'*" (June 2019), which was initiated by some few partners from South-west region in 2018 and which showed the enormously thought-provoking power of Pope Francis' Encyclical in our context of development cooperation.



This is not only true for its crucial topic like the nexus between the global social question and ecological question but also for the Holy Father's call for dialogue and partnership in the struggle for just and sustainable global change.

When we commemorated the six decades of partnership in sustainable development, we could not foresee the worldwide Corona crisis which began almost simultaneously, but apparently "far away". Resilience to the pandemic crisis will need revision of our common ground. *Laudato Si'* in nexus with Agenda 2030, in this regard, will surely remain a solid compass, when aiming at overcoming the present crisis and achieving sustainable development.

As a way of saying *thank you!* We put together the present leaflet, keeping some good key moments, memories of the event.

We wish you an enjoyable read and all the best during this really difficult times.

Welcome Remark

By Ms Gabriele Huber, Regional Officer, MISEREOR

This month of November marks 60 years of our cooperation with development partners in Nigeria. Over the years, since the first grant was approved on the 4th of November, 1959, which supported a health project in Lagos, we have reached millions of households, groups and individual Nigerians across social, political and religious boundaries in the area of health, Education, agriculture, environment, water, governance, Human Rights, justice and peace building. We are grateful to the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria for providing the platform and long partnership through the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.

Our development cooperation activities are financed chiefly

by annual MISEREOR Lenten Campaign, contributions from the dioceses of the Catholic Church in Germany, public funds of the Federal Republic of Germany and direct donations from individuals in Germany. These funds constitute the significant financial assistance provided in match with the local contributions of our development partners in Nigeria in bringing about the expected change.

MISEREOR believes strongly in responsive partnership with local NGOs in bringing about effective social change and sustainable development. For the next five days, our Dialogue and Partnership Service in conjunction with the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria will be facilitating meetings and a strategy workshop with our partners in order to re-think our common ground and advance our cooperation with the view of bringing more meaningful social change in contemporary Nigeria.

We are delighted to have you join us, and I wish you fruitful deliberations and practicable outcome in the end.



Welcome Address

*By Rev. Fr Zacharia Nyantiso Samjumi, Secretary General,
Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria*

Ms Gabriele Huber, Regional Officer West African Desk, distinguished Guests and Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.

In the Message of Pope Francis, commemorating the World Day of the poor, 2019, emphasized: “The option for those who are least, those whom society discards” (Evangelii Gaudium, 195) as a priority which Christ’s followers are called to pursue. According to him, doing so will not impugn the Church’s credibility but give real hope to many who are vulnerable in society. Christian charity finds concrete expression in compassion and the willingness of believers to share the love of Christ with those in need. Doing so strengthens the needy as well as confirms the preaching of the Gospel.

The Catholic Church prioritises charity as an integral part of the mission handed to her by Christ. It is in recognition of this responsibility that she creates structures to respond corporately and as well as organise her members to react dutifully and responsibly to the plights of the poor, the marginalised and the abandoned whose conditions are induced by human and systemic inadequacies of our society.

As a practical measure to concretise the will of God on the issues of Justice and Peace and at the specific request of the Second Vatican Council (cf. Gaudium et Spes 90), Pope Paul VI on 6 January 1967 set up a Commission on an experimental basis. The structure and framework of this Commission were given in the *motu proprio*, *Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*.

Pope Paul VI stated emphatically: “the purpose of its establishment is to awaken in the people of God full awareness of their mission today.... The name of this Commission, Justice and Peace aptly describes its programme and its goals.” The structure cascades from the universal,



national, diocesan and parish levels as a whole movement for justice, peace and development worldwide.

Based on the dynamics of the Universal structure that international collaboration became necessary as a mega demonstration of charity across borders irrespective of religious, racial or political differences. For 60 years running, MISEREOR, on behalf of the German Catholic Bishops Conference has adequately committed itself to the operationalisation of this worldwide structure through a sustained partnership with the Catholic Church Nigeria to reach out to the needy population and address systemic impediments for the common good.

Revisiting the basis and substance of partnership between the Church in Nigeria and her development partners, being the overall theme of the events of the week, creates an opportunity for revitalised engagement. The events of this week are strategic and critical for effective partnership in development. Therefore, on behalf of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, I congratulate MISEREOR on the occasion of its all-time partnership anniversary. The Nigerian Bishops remain committed to this partnership and look forward to a more significant impact. I wish the organisers, MISEREOR DPS-Nigeria, the experts and partners fruitful deliberations all through.

Thank you, and God bless.

Moderator's Introductory Remarks

By Rev. Fr George Ehusani

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” This question is at the heart of *Laudato Si'*. The crisis of environmental degradation and the call for environmental justice relates to the very purpose and essence of our existence and the sustainability or otherwise of all life on planet earth. The Earth, our common home, our mother, has been today mistreated and thoroughly abused. It is now groaning and lamenting, like all abused and forsaken human beings, and calling for justice. The Pope invites everyone – individuals, families, communities, religious groups and nations, as well as the international community, to what he calls an “ecological conversion” – to a “change direction” by taking on the responsibility and indeed the obligation of “caring for our common homes.”

We are today challenged all over the country with: Excessive exploitation & wastage of natural resources, noise pollution, air pollution, gas flaring & fossil fuel spillage, toxic waste dumping, reckless generation and disposal of non-bio-degradable waste, destruction of biodiversity.

The challenge is to do something urgently about: Air and Noise pollution, Refuse and Waste disposal, Open Sewages, Gas Flaring in the Niger Delta, Recycling Technology, Alternative (Cleaner) Energy sources, Adopting Eco-friendly habitats and architecture.

To domesticate this global challenge:

1. Justice and Peace Coordinators as well as other Development Partners of MISEREOR in Nigeria, must be engaged in advocacy mechanisms to call on the government at all levels to put in place effective and legal frameworks to tackle these problems.

2. Pastoral Agents must be in the forefront and show good example of environmental justice, ecological harmony, and sustainable development.

MISEREOR has gathered together its partners in Nigeria to reflect on *Laudato Si'*, as it marks 60 years of its development cooperation with partners in Nigeria. I have myself been relating with MISEREOR for nearly 30 out of these 60 years - from the time I was Assistant Development Coordinator for Lokoja Diocese, through the years I spent at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, to the Sabbatical Year I spent working at the MISEREOR head office in Aachen.

I congratulate Gabriele Huber, the MISEREOR Desk Officer for Nigeria, Andreas, the DPS Officer and his team, representatives of the German Embassy, Fr Samjumi, the Secretary General, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Fr Obodochina, the Executive Secretary, Catholic Caritas Foundation, the Nigerian Partners of MISEREOR, Fr John Patrick, the Keynote Speaker, and all other invited guests here present.



PROMOTING THE INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA TODAY AND TOMORROW IN THE LIGHT OF LAUDATO SI'

By Fr Jean Patrice Ngoyi, cicm

I remember, vividly, the euphoria and jubilations on the 25th of September 2015 in New York, when 193 Heads of States and Governments unanimously adopted Agenda 2030, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This was the crowning of a true collective effort of millions of peoples including Governments, Private sector, civil society groups, academia and people with disabilities. This was the result of more than two years of broad consultations by the United Nations, in search of an overarching development framework, to replace the Millennium Development Goals that were going to expire on the 31st of December 2015. Indeed, it was a Feat worth global celebration.

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, officially, came into force on January 1st 2016. To some extent, this agenda represents the new global consensus for development for the next 15 years. It constitutes for Nations the new Development paradigm for Integral Human Development, consisting of four parts, namely: A Preamble; A Declaration; The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Targets; and Means of implementation and the Global Partnership.

This new Agenda includes some transformational shifts, in terms of how development is understood by the international community: a universal agenda applicable to all countries; integrating environmental protection and poverty eradication;

promoting widespread participation of all groups; and tackling inequality and promoting inclusion with a focus on Leave No-one Behind. The Agenda is complex and interlinked, and no part can be picked to represent the whole. The States signatories to the Agenda 2030 with the 17 SDGs, committed themselves to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner. (...)

The challenge is to engage with clear proposals in these new policy and political spaces, based on our Catholic identity, Catholic Social Teaching and the reality of the populations that we are working with. It is in this context that Pope Francis' encyclical "LAUDATO SI'" constitutes the new Development Narrative for Catholic-based Development Agencies. (...)



„I want to, on behalf of all those in Maiduguri Diocese, who have benefitted from the support of MISEREOR in these 60 years, say thank you to MISEREOR and their back donors.“

Fr Timothy Cosmas Danjuma, JDPC Maiduguri

LAUDATO SI' GLOBALLY SUPPORTS GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE OF AGENDA 2030

As with the 2030 Agenda, the integrated approach of Catholic Social Teaching means that issues cannot be addressed independently from one another. However, it is important to mention some key themes in Laudato Si' as indicative of the approach the encyclical takes.



Certain themes and approaches can be seen throughout Agenda 2030. Some of these, such as dignity and human rights, build on the existing international consensus and universal agreements. Others, such as: leave no one behind, integrating environment and development, increased participation and addressing inequality, represent a new international consensus for sustainable development that is seen as potentially transformational. Still others, such as the focus on growth, certain models of production and consumption and the role of technology are more controversial. (...)

Engagement of Agenda 2030 should be both constructive and critical, as there are assumptions and approaches within Agenda 2030 that Laudato Si' tackles head on, particularly those which have to do with how we think about progress and the role we give to the economy, technology, business and political leaders.

1. UPHOLD THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si' affirms the dignity of each person as the basis of human rights and links this dignity with responsibility towards the common good, the environment and future generations, as well as an expected change in lifestyle.

Men and women are **created in God's image and likeness** (Genesis 1:26) and this *"shows us the immense dignity of each person"* (LS 65). This **human dignity is then the basis for human rights**, including the right to basic services (LS 154), housing (LS 152), natural resources (LS 23), and water (LS 29-30).

Dignity comes with responsibility. Dignity comes with special responsibility to respect creation: *"by virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are*

"On behalf of the Board, members and staff of the Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED), I take this opportunity to extend our heartiest congratulations to MISEREOR for your 60 glorious years of partnering in Nigeria. You have always been on the top of the list serving humanity with your kind and noble services. It has been a real honour working with MISEREOR and its brilliant team of dedicated staff. We value and cherish our relationship. With your commitment, sincerity and pro-poor services, you have proven your worth and have gained the much deserved recognition and fame from the communities we worked. You have always kept people's satisfaction as your priority and have never resorted to any wrong approach. Not only do you provide learning platform but also offer us a growing career curve. We wish you all the success for many more years to come. And hope to continue working with you."

Ibrahim M. Zikirullahi, PhD (h.c), Executive Director, CHRICED, Kano



Participants registering

called to respect creation and its inherent laws” (LS 69). The right to education doesn’t just include individual improvement but must include a focus towards “ways of acting that directly and significantly affect the world around us” (LS 211).

Dignity is relational. We are people in relationship therefore human dignity leads to both a focus on the integral development of individuals and the pursuit of common good: “*The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies*” (EG 203). It includes respecting the rights of nations and peoples (SRS 73, quoted in LS 93) and future generations (LS 67).

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si’ sees current damaging attitudes and behaviours of a global elite as negatively affecting the ability of everyone to live a dignified life and enjoy their human rights to the full.

2. LEAVE NO-ONE BEHIND

Agenda 2030 recognises the weakness of previous approaches that focused on national averages to measure success, and pays special attention to the hardest to reach groups.

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si’ affirms a preferential option for the poor, which related closely to leave no-one behind. It builds further by requiring a focus on the poorest groups as a way of measuring progress and seeing the poorest people as agents of change.

The preferential option for the poor is an ethical imperative. “*In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principles of the common good immediately becomes logically and inevitably a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters*” (158).

It includes a focus on **countries and groups, not just individuals** (LS 93, 51) and a **special focus on the most vulnerable groups** including the poorest in society, indigenous peoples (LS 146), people with disabilities, precarious workers (LS 128), future generations (LS 95), and unborn children (LS 120).

It demands **prioritising the weakest members of society as a way of measuring progress**, not just bring them up to the level of everyone else (*Puebla*, 1134; 1147; 1158) as well as rediscovering the mission of the poor, who are not merely recipients of pity, but rather **agents of change** (*cf. Puebla*, 1134; 1147; 1158). No voice can be left out, especially voices



“Congratulations to MISEREOR for reaching this height.”

Samuel Ioron Foundation - SIF, Benue State

of the local population most affected by any type of development (LS 183).

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si' demands a holistic approach to leaving no-one behind, which cannot be limited to policy or technical solutions. It requires an ecological conversion that is both personal and communal.

3. TACKLE INEQUALITY

Inequality in all its forms is included throughout Agenda 2030, with a focus in Goal 10.

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si' affirms the need to tackle inequality in all of its forms, both within and between countries. It recognises the links between inequality, environmental damage and further poverty.

Inequality is a moral issue that affects us all, but mainly the poorest people. *"We should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some, considering themselves more worthy than others. We fail to see that some are mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea of what to do with their possessions"* (LS 90).

Inequality includes a **lack of access to technology, food, health and water** (LS 48-52). While approximately a third of all food is thrown away, millions are starving. It is as if it were *"stolen from the table of the poor"* (LS 50).

Inequity affects both individual and countries and *"compels us to consider a new ethics of international relations"* based on solidarity (LS 51). Inequality leads to environmental damage due to the disproportionate use of natural resources, export of raw materials, pollution, deforestation by certain countries, companies and individuals. There is an **ecological debt** between global north and south based on commercial imbalances and use of natural resources (LS 51). This then perpetuates inequality by impacting the poorest communities worst (LS 48).

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si' argues that we need to address structural and relational drivers of inequality, which also means looking at ourselves and our own role (LS82).



Questions and answers session

„Complement of the season and best wishes from Shendam Diocese on the occasion of 60th Anniversary of MISEREOR Partnership in Nigeria; a Partnership worth doing more and more and a Partnership of great impact on the lives of our people in various communities.“

Fr Sylvanus Ali, JDPC Shendam

4. INTEGRATE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Agenda 2030 is the first effort ever made by the UN to integrate environment and development across such a broad range of concerns

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si' calls for an integral ecology that integrates issues of social and environmental justice. We all have responsibility to care for creation for current and future generations.

Everything is interconnected. We need an integral ecology or integral human development (LS 137,8) that recognises fundamental relationships of a person with God, him or herself, other human beings, and the rest of creation. *"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"* (LS 139). **Social justice and environmental justice need to be addressed together.** *"A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the **cry of the earth and the cry of the poor**"* (LS 49). We have a **responsibility to future generations:** *"Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations"* (LS 67).

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si' challenges current models of development that lead to environmental degradation and calls for greater honesty, lifestyle changes and commitments by the international community.

Honesty is needed to **question certain models of development**, production, consumption and waste (LS 138). Climate change is aggravated by a model of development built on fossil fuels (LS 23) and it **impacts the poorest countries and communities worst** (LS 25). When evidence suggests serious harm is possible to people or the environment, projects should be modified or stopped (LS 186-7). **We need to look at our own lifestyles** (LS 22-3) as every purchase is a moral decision not just an economic one.

5. PROMOTE PARTICIPATION AND DIALOGUE

The process to formulate the SDGs was much more inclusive, with national dialogues and thematic consultations involving many people around the world. Every UN Member State has agreed to implement them (193 countries).

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si' affirms the need for participation and calls for a new dialogue about our common home that includes everyone, with particular focus on local populations and the most vulnerable groups, emphasising the need to celebrate and respect cultural identity.

Need for a new dialogue. *"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet"* (LS 14) which is our common home. This dialogue needs to be a process and is both of intrinsic value and also leads us to better outcomes where consensus should be reached between different stakeholders (LS 183), building on the model of agreeing Agenda 2030.



"I want to say very big congratulations to you on the event that marks your organization's sixty years anniversary of her partnership intervention in Nigeria."

Fr Fidelis Arhedo, JDPC Uromi

Local population have a special place, based on their agency and cultural identity. The poor “are artisans of their own destiny” (PP 65) and should engage in dialogue based on their own identity (LS 81) and culture (LS 144), respecting the various cultural riches of different peoples (LS 63). Local population should have a special place as they are concerned about their own future and can transcend immediate economic interest (LS 183). No voice can be left out, especially not the voices of those most affected (LS 14, 63).

Need broader alliances, coalitions and ways of working. Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds (LS 219). Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed (LS 14) and we need to develop broader alliances and coalitions.

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si’ calls for a much deeper encounter than in current politics or policy-making, with deeper relationships and willingness to change through a generous encounter, and with special concern for indigenous communities and their relationship with our common home.

Dialogue means that **each person needs to be open to change**. Dialogue is necessary for finding new models of development (LS 164), for changing or stopping existing plans (LS 186-7) and for making politics and economics serve the greater good: *“Today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life”* (LS 189).

6. STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE AND GLOBAL COOPERATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Agenda 2030 is a universal agenda that reaffirms the role of each state in determining its own development choices, as well as the need for greater global cooperation for the implementation of such an ambitious agenda. There are challenging targets for rich countries as well as poor ones. At the same time, countries have different responsibilities, based on their resources and historic development paths.

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si’ affirms the need to strengthen governance at local, national and international level. For this we need both a new universal solidarity for the common good, and subsidiarity focused on local ownership and decision-making.



„Congratulations to MISEREOR for the 60th anniversary celebration of fruitful service to humanity in Nigeria. We are so proud to be part of this great partnership (...) in the work of promoting the dignity of the human person. Accept our warmest felicitation.”

Rev. Fr Kassam Basil Fukshiwe, JDPC Pankshin



bring about decisive political action. ...Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment” (LS 179).

CHALLENGE:

Need to recognise and challenge the vested interests of certain economic sectors, governments, individuals and groups and to develop new political leadership and approaches that can effectively tackle current problems.

Need to recognise and tackle vested interests. Some economic sectors are stronger than states (LS 196) and many countries have placed national interests above the common good (LS 169) so we need solutions from a global perspective that do not simply defend the interests of a few (LS 164). *“Greater attention must be given to the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable in a debate often dominated by the more powerful interests” (LS 52).*

7. CHANGE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Agenda 2030 recognises the need to change production and consumption patterns.

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si’ affirms the need for changes in lifestyle, waste, consumption and production and the need for political support to do this.

“Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or

Strengthened governance at all levels. Solutions are needed from both the global perspective of *“one world with a common plan”* (LS 164) as well as local level (LS 183). We require both subsidiarity and solidarity, with active participation at all levels (Compendium 189). **New universal solidarity for the common good is needed** (LS 14) that can address structural forms of poverty (LS 14), counter the laws of the market (LS 30) and self-interested pragmatism (LS 215) and include future generations and all of creation. We are already together as **one global family** so solidarity is not an option but comes as part of our very human identity (LS 52). This will include enforceable international agreements and global regulatory norms (LS 166, 173-4), based on common but differentiated responsibilities of countries (LS 52).

Develop an **ecological citizenship to tackle corruption and protect the environment**, based on principle of subsidiarity where **people** contribute to the cultural, political, social, economic life (Compendium 189) and have control **over political power**: *“because the enforcement of laws is at times inadequate due to corruption, public pressure has to be exerted in order to*

„I Must first of all congratulate MISEREOR for her 60 years of touching and changing lives in Nigeria. It is indeed a great presence. CONGRATULATIONS!”

Fr Nicholas Bonoh, JDPC Kontagora

aggravate it” (LS 23). There is a tendency of **wasteful consumption** (LS 162) and **overconsumption within privileged sectors** in all countries (LS 172).

Developed countries need to take the lead, recognising **differentiated responsibilities** (LS 52), with all countries stepping up **political support** needed to develop more sustainable models of production and consumption and promote energy efficiency (LS 180).

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si’ is radical in calling for a personal and communal conversion, needing new habits and new types of development to protect the environment, based on generosity, sufficiency and celebration. It challenges a consumerist vision of human beings and a throw away culture.

Need a personal (217) and communal (219) **ecological conversion** to a different way of life. **Change in lifestyle can be a route to political change:** through bringing *“healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power”* and *“changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production”* (LS 206).

Need new types of development. *“The time has come to accept decreased growth in some parts of the world, in order to provide resources for other places to experience healthy growth. Benedict XVI has said that ‘technologically advanced societies must be prepared to encourage more sober lifestyles, while reducing their energy consumption and improving its efficiency’”* (LS 193).



8. PROMOTE THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Agenda 2030 includes the role of technology in almost every Goal and has a section in Goal 17 on the means of implementation.

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si’ affirms that technology, when directed towards social progress and the service of people, has brought significant benefits to society.

Technology has brought enormous benefits for society and we are right to rejoice in these advances as products of God-given human creativity (LS 102).

Technology that is directed well can **improve the quality of human life** (LS 103) but must be **directed towards progress** that is *“healthier, more human, more social, more integral”* (LS 112) – it must be at the **service of people**.

„A big Congratulation to MISEREOR and all Nigerian partners on this 60th celebration of partnership. We thank god for the journey thus far.”

Fr Gabriel Adeleke, JDPM Oyo

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si' has significant challenges for how we view and engage with technology, criticising a 'technocratic paradigm' based on the idea of unlimited growth and of human domination of the earth's resources.

Need to challenge the current 'technocratic paradigm' that sees technology and market forces alone as capable of solving environmental problems (LS 108-109), without addressing human relationships (LS 20), the ideology of consumerism or vested power interests. In fact, technology can be damaging when linked too closely with power and ideology as it **limits creativity, solidarity and generosity**: "we have to accept that technological products are not neutral, for they create a framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities along the lines dictated by the interests of certain powerful groups" (LS 107).

9. SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH, BUSINESS AND DECENT WORK

The economy has a central role in Agenda 2030, especially in Goal 8, with a focus on sustained, sustainable and inclusive growth, with private business activity as a major driver of this growth.

AFFIRM:

Laudato Si' affirms the important role of all types of business in a diverse and creative economy. They should be directed towards authentic development that improves the quality of human life, protects the environment and supports a dignified life through work.

"Authentic development will include efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life" (LS 147). "Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good" (LS 129).

A goal of business and economic activity should be steady **employment for everyone** (C in V 32) and a **dignified life through work** (LS 128). To provide employment we need a **diverse and creative economy** (LS 129) that includes a focus on supporting small producers and **"small-scale food production systems** which feed the greater part of the world's peoples" (LS 129).

CHALLENGE:

Laudato Si' challenges the idea that we can have sustained and sustainable growth and calls us to rethink the meaning of progress, the purpose of the economy and the wider role of business. There is no option of business as usual.



"Congratulations to MISEREOR and partners on occasion of the event to mark 60 years partnership anniversary in Nigeria. Remain blessed."

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Laudato Si' is a new Development Narrative respected and widely accepted by the International Community. The Catholic Development Community in general has adopted it, except in Africa where the adoption process is very low. The Catholic Community in Africa should seize the occasion of the 5th Anniversary to gather momentum and join the international Catholic Community by launching « **LAUDATO SI' FOR AFRICA** » in Christian communities, research centers and through Advocacy for the inclusion of this new perspective in Public Policy across the Continent.

In order for the Church to influence Public policies in Africa and indeed in our individual countries, I propose three complimentary mechanisms.

1. We must specialise and professionalise.

Today every profession has gone into details. It is no longer a matter of being a general surgeon. You are a heart surgeon, a bone surgeon, an eye surgeon, etc... The World will listen to us as a Church when we talk about the will of God (therefore the teaching of the Church to the society) about the ecosystem only if we can show that our teaching is based on a sound knowledge of the ecosystem. The same applies to the Economy, Politics, Education, Biology, Culture, etc... We may not necessarily get priests or nuns to specialise in Theology and other sciences at the same time. We must at least find a modus operandi that integrates such knowledge in the Church official teaching. Such interface may concretely involve lay people with expertise in the different fields as the Church has always called for.



From the left to right: Mr Andreas Kahler, Head DPS, Fr Zacharia Sanjumi, Secretary General (CSN), Fr Uchechukwu Obodoechina (CCFN), Fr George Ehusani

2. We must improve our public relations and build a strong social capital with the various stakeholders across the continent. It is not enough for us to professionalise if we cannot be trusted. The way we are perceived by the public and the decision-makers in Africa matters a lot. Are we perceived as an institution that means well for Africa and Africans or as a group that cares only for the interests of a particular group? Is it true that as a Church, we preach the need to protect and promote the Common Good?. Are we perceived in our public image as witnessing to that Common Good? The 1971 Synod of the Bishops on Justice in the World warned us: "whoever ventures to speak to the others about justice, must not only be just, but also be seen to be just." How many key decision-makers are we familiar with? (...)

„Congratulations to MISEREOR and all her Nigerian partners.“

Justice, Development and Peace Makers Centre, Catholic Diocese of Osogbo

3. We must learn to communicate effectively and efficiently.

The business of policy influencing has also become a Science of its own with its own regulations and modus operandi. You may be a professional who knows his/her onions while entertaining excellent human relations with policy makers. These two qualities may not be enough to influence public policies. You do not just improvise yourself in the lobbying profession. You need to develop the capacity to recognise and enter the room of policy making whenever it opens up and before it closes down. Such windows of opportunity are known not to last for too long.

They resemble the Biblical story of the sick man who had been waiting for the water to be stirred up and move in at the right time, or else he would miss the chance to be healed. Listen to him talking to Jesus: ***“Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another step down before me”***; in other words, when the window of the opportunity to be healed opens up, the person in question was not ready to seize it. Only the one who is ready takes advantage of it. They could not predict it (Jn 5,7). And in Jn 5,4 we are told what used to happen: ***“For the angel went down at a certain time into the water, then whoever stepped in first, was made well of whatever disease he had”***. The opportunity opens up and goes away. Whatever the number of years the poor man spent waiting for that opportunity, became a waste as he missed all opportunities that opened and closed up because there was no body to take him in at the appropriate moment or window of healing opportunity.

Is the Church in Africa through SECAM ready to seize the bull by the horns? Are we sufficiently equipped to match the competitors, force for force and argument for argument? How well do we know those, who like us, are seeking to influence the Public space? Indeed, it is high time we returned to our Lord and Master to listen to Him, admonishing us:

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish; all who see it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him, who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace” (Luke 14: 28-32).

The admonition here speaks for itself. We have great possibilities for policy dialogue/influencing and issue-based negotiations, as well as policy-oriented partnerships in the spirit of, ***“whoever is not against us is for us”*** Mark 9: 40. The implementation of African Agenda 2063, the UN Agenda 2030, in the spirit of and with the Narrative of Laudato Si’ demands the pro-active move in the building of Multi Stakeholder Partnerships across Boards. The Church at the local, national and international levels is called to play a critical and vital role.



„Our pleasure to be part of the celebration. Well done for the thoughtful and wonderful organization. Kudos to DPS Nigeria for marking the anniversary in this manner... May the years of partnership ahead be fruitfully blessed.”

Fr Henry Dabang, JDPC Bauchi



“A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS”

By Rev. Fr Uchechukwu Obodoechina

Given the interrelated challenges expounded in the Laudato Si, an equally integrated approach is required to effectively address this compound of challenges such that ensures sustainable development for the benefit of the present and the future generations. This is in consonance with the integral human development which the church has always preached and advocated. The affirmation of Laudato Si on integral ecology for integrated social and environmental justice, forms the fulcrum for solidarity, partnership, collaboration and popular participation across social strata and sectors in bringing about solvent and enabling policies, right attitude, knowledge and practices.

To that effect, three practical measures are necessary for a start in furthering the cause of Laudato Si by the church vis-à-vis Agenda 2030; which include:

- Transformative strategic Policy advocacy. Such policies should create nexus in the existing gaps for harmonized activities of the eco-agencies (industries, institutions and consumers). This point should be checked against the Agenda 2030 SDGs and targets for update.
- Continuous impact assessment for control and policy review
- Rippled enlightenment and education, and chain participation. To leave no one behind requires method of engaging everyone in a trackable and organized manner, a kind of stratified link system from the researcher, to the producers with interest groups, economic groups and communities as primary agencies.

It is therefore a collective responsibility of the state and non-state actors, multilateral companies and industries alike.



„Thank God for the Journey thus far.”

CARUDEP, Jos



WHAT HAS GENDER GOT TO DO WITH LAUDATO SI'?

By Dr Priscilla Achakpa

Have you read the Laudato Si'? In the year 2015 the Holy Father Pope Francis at the United Nations General Assembly eulogized the earth which he referred to as "our common home, a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us". He cautioned the world to take immediate actions to save the earth by changing the unsustainable development. The Laudato Si' has gained prominence as strong advocacy tool for environmental sustainability. According to the Pope, God created and loves the Earth, and wants humans to love it too. Therefore, choosing to care for the environment and fight climate change is simply following his God's wishes. (...)

Laudato Si' is as a new narrative which has iterated that mainstreaming gender in environment means valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity. In acknowledging differences, the Pope states *"we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and*

find mutual enrichment." This is a clear indication that mainstreaming gender in environment is an imperative for achieving the sustainable goals and the church has a greater role to play in creating awareness and sensitizing her lay faithful on the Laudato Si' which is a powerful tool for gender equality.

Women are the most vulnerable to environmental challenges yet have value traditional knowledge to rebuild the environment. Women and nature, the mother earth as reiterated by Pope Francis in his address at the opening of the Climate Change Conference in 2015 in New York. While all stakeholders have a critical role to play in safeguarding the environment, Women Environmental Programme has supported interventions such as the development of National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Environment and provided solar tents to strengthen the resilience of women in environment among so many other initiatives.

The Church in Nigeria should embark on massive education of the SDGs, especially SDG 13, through capacity building and lifesaving skills amongst the Catholic Women Organization, Catholic Youth Organization and the lay faithful.



From the left to right: Mr Helmut Kulitz, Dr Priscilla Achakpa, Fr Uchechukwu Obodoechina

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