

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE CANNOT STAY SILENT!

Montreal, March 17, 2021 – On February 25, a joint statement by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace – Caritas Canada (CCODP) announced the conclusion of its review of a number of international partners.

We learned that of the organization’s 205 partners, 52 were initially under review before the addition of 11 more, for a total of 63. No organization affiliated to *Caritas Internationalis* or integrated to a diocesan work had been reviewed. Following a number of intermediary reports, the final report was submitted to the CCCC’s Plenary assembly and to the National Council of the CCODP, and approved by these instances in September and November 2020, respectively.¹

Ultimately, the joint statement announced that 24 international partners will no longer receive support from Development and Peace, due to insufficient clarifications about serious concerns regarding public statements or actions contradicting the social and moral teachings of the Church.²

Does this statement respond to the legitimate questions asked by the many people who for several years have supported Development and Peace and contributed to its annual financial campaign? Absolutely not! However, the time for reflection and prudence in our reaction must end following the publication by the media outlet *Présence - information religieuse* of a lengthy article by Philippe Vaillancourt on March 8. The article relies on Development and Peace internal documents and a thorough analysis of the process and rationale that led to the removal of these 24 partners.

The present statement by the CRC has a single purpose: to call upon Development and Peace to respond to the allegations reported by *Présence Information*. Is that what happened? If not, what happened? Development and Peace’s continued silence would be harmful to its credibility, which is already undermined by this lengthy partner review process.

In a September 19, 2019, letter to members of the CRC, Br. Louis Cinq-Mars, OFM Cap, then president of the CRC, pointed out that:

¹ CCCC News Release – February 25, 2021

² Ibid.

Beyond the ideological considerations that seem to have led to this situation, the Administrative Council of the CRC's chief concern is the situation of our sisters and brothers who suffer and need this international aid, as well as the many collaborators working tirelessly to uphold their human dignity. (...)

Our mission in Canada and across the world invites us to develop the merciful gaze which Pope Francis calls us to. Faced with people's misery, we must mobilize because human dignity is at once a right and a duty which calls upon all of us. (...)

We reiterate our concern for the poor and the vulnerable and our will to collaborate with all who seek to give a voice to those most in need, to alleviate their sufferings and to support them. Our witness is all the more striking and compelling when our extended helping hand is moved by this merciful gaze which does not judge, but seeks to raise those who suffer the inequalities of our world. (...)

Development and Peace is a precious legacy of the commitment of Canadian Christian Catholics for our sisters and brothers in situations of vulnerability around the world. Its expertise and evangelical vision have guided their choice; may this spirit continue to ensure its credibility!

The Canadian religious conference therefore asks Development and Peace to respond to the allegations reported by *Présence - information religieuse*.

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