

**Governance of the XXI century,
a long-term vision to promote solidarity and the common good.**

Thanks for inviting Caritas Internationalis to discuss such important issues.

Caritas is a response of the Catholic Church to the social and justice needs of the times. Created by Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1951, to foster coordination among Catholic caritative organisations especially in the field of the response to major emergencies, it is today at the same time a Confederation of 165 national member organisations and a central entity of the Holy See. What you probably know of it is the concrete response faith communities bring to the poorest and most vulnerable everywhere in the world, where the Catholic Church is present and can act in the social field. At the last GA held in May this year, 5 strategic orientations have been decided by the members for the next 4 years:

1. Caritas at the heart of the Church
2. Save lives, rebuild communities
3. Promote integral sustainable human development
4. Build global solidarity
5. Strengthen the Confederation

These orientations are implemented at all levels, animated by the General Secretariat in Rome with delegations in New York and Geneva, and the 7 regional secretariats around the world. Thanks to this worldwide presence with and to the people and communities that suffer, Caritas has a deep vision of their realities and needs and of the need to work not only in helping them in times of disasters and more importantly in trying to improving their lives through organisation and formation of the communities, but also of the need to tackle the causes of those situations in which they find themselves engulfed.

Among those causes is bad governance. At the local, regional, national levels, when authorities see their own interests or those of their groups whether ethnic or religious or economic, as their major priority. We have so many examples before our eyes. Look at the failed coup in Burkina Faso last week or the attempt to destabilisation of the Central African Republic this week.

Global governance is also a real fundamental question. More and more, as we have heard in our discussions, but also at the UN where I was these days. What to do in front of the wars in the Middle East? What to do in front of massive movements of people looking for asylum or simply a decent life? What to do in front of the challenging massive inequalities that have grown over the years? What to do in front of the increasing impoverishment of large groups of people here and there? What to do in front of a lack of responsibility of major businesses? What to do in front of a financial sector wanting to continue to play casino?

Our world has moved to a level of globalization that cannot afford not to be properly governed. We need change there. As Pope Francis put it when meeting the social movements in Bolivia on the 9th of July this year:

“Let us not be afraid to say it: we want change, real change, structural change. This system is by now intolerable... We want change in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our everyday reality. We want a change which can affect the entire world, since global interdependence calls for global answers to local problems.”¹

What did the Pope mean by these words? The answer can be found in *Laudato Si'* and in all the social teachings of the Church before this last encyclical. The present development model has created a system in which nature and people are exploited or discarded. It has created a culture of waste and rejection. When I need this, I use it. When I don't need it anymore, I throw it away. My attention was called this week by the assisted suicide of an old lady in Belgium who asked for euthanasia because she thought her life had no more meaning. How many people could be invited to suicide because they are considered as a cost to society, and because society does not offer them any attention anymore? It is the society we have. Is this the society we want?

In § 160 of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis questions us:

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal. When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and values. Unless we struggle with these deeper issues, I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results. But if those issues are courageously faced, we are led inexorably to ask other pointed questions: What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the earth have of us?²

This is an invite to a more profound reflection. The present global governance at the UN level has been accompanied by the overall move to secularism, materialism, consumerism. It is insisting to the weaker nations that it should embrace this model. Some governments even condition their aid to rolling over moral issues. If Africans don't want to promote gay marriage, why should they be forced to do so?

It is this model where what makes us human, that is love, respect, attention to the others, especially those victims of poverty or violence, those abandoned, those excluded, it is this

¹ FRANCIS, Address to Popular Movements, Bolivia, 9th July 2015

² FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* on care for our common home (24 May 2015), 160.

model where what makes us more human is being pulled apart, where people are better seen as objects than subjects, and can be discarded. Until their frustration explodes and leads to wars and terrorism.

At the same time, the UN don't have that much power.

Globalization has increased the power of transnational businesses, and especially as seen recently the financial ones. And of the major powers. But not to that same level. The political power has actually not followed. The UN remain a platform that can at the best facilitate, mediate, impulse, but the international community remain a set of 193 independent nation states, with all their specificities and diverse expectations. It is not the political counterpart necessary to dialogue with and frame the space of action of the big multinational companies. It is not either, or not sufficiently the space for taking the necessary decisions to curb human trafficking, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, all of this led by transnational criminal organisations.

Even at a lower level, we presently experience in Europe the fact that Europe is not a federation. Many laws have been elaborated at the European level, but there is not enough integration of the states to give the European governance a real role in front of the tragedies we are presently confronted to.

The Climate Summit of Paris at the end of the year is seen as the last opportunity to come to a binding agreement on the reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases so that the global temperature does not go beyond the level that life can sustain. Will it succeed in doing so? There again, we see that it depends mainly on the good will of the major powers of the world. Not on a structured international community.

So what global governance is necessary? What do we need?

We need at the same time a cultural revolution and an international authority.

A cultural revolution that brings back at the centre of everything the human person; and beyond the person, the family, the community. And the respect of our common home. This is fundamental. The Caritas work demonstrates it perfectly everywhere. We can build a different society as our Faith in a loving God invites us to, based on those who suffer most, from whatever type of suffering, be it physical, mental, psychological... a society that respects both people and the environment as God's creatures.

An international Authority, not a platform only as is now. The UN have to be reformed according to that need. The Church has proposed solutions, as for example the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace that produced in 2011 a reflection on the creation of an international authority in the monetary and financial spheres. The fight for tax justice, that is

one aspect of what the Church has suggested, is central to redistributing wealth where it is most needed. The OECD, as an international body, is working on this without the full success expected, again because of a lack of global authority. There are many other fields where an overall decisional space is necessary to master and orientate our future and that of the next generations. Based on some fundamental principles taught by the Church and recognized by all major religions, such as the common good and the universal destination of the goods of this earth, so that everyone can share in its prosperity and the one human family can flourish.

You probably think: but how come, from where is he speaking like this to us?

Well, my vision is inspired from down under (not Australia!), from the poorest communities whose lives are impacted by the overall present “jungle”. Caritas’ experience is immense in all fields of life. And whatever initiatives are taken with the best aptitude and intelligence at the grassroots, which is where there can be a difference made in people’s lives, if the environment is not conducive, enabling, then all those efforts fall short and do not reach their potential. You know that perfectly in the business world. It is the same with people’s initiatives. They need an enabling frame to succeed in the end.

Now, the real big challenge we are confronted to is: who wants global governance? Who can make it happen?

The States? There is a good opportunity to reflect upon it when the UN are celebrating their 70 years. Is it taken seriously? I don’t think so. Not easy to go out of the box, especially when you benefit from it.

The international organizations of states like the UN and the World Bank? That is their mission, but even if international treaties have a binding element, most of what is being done depends a lot on the will of the member states. And the UN administration is said to be too bureaucratic, struggling to survive within their comfort zones.

The private sector? Alone, it is not its business. Multinational companies usually prefer a weak international frame as it benefits them. You have a specific role to play, as successful entrepreneurs, inspired by your faith in a loving God for all. But beyond?

The civil society organizations? They play a unique sting role which can be effective if it is rooted in grassroots experience and analysis, and not in ideological approaches. All the more so with the part of CSOs called FBOs. I will come back to it later. We have seen local governance improved in a number of places thanks to their involvement and an attentive attitude of the local authorities.

Putting these 4 components together in multi stakeholders’ approaches can be effective, as seen in some experiences: I can speak of the EITI of which I have been a Board member for 6 years between 2006 and 2011. Bringing together persons of different backgrounds, with

different expertise and different expectations with one goal: transparency, has allowed to make some changes. This has been due to the will and human qualities of the people around the table and their capacity to represent and engage their constituencies.

You probably know more of these experiences that have brought some positive change in governance processes.

How to go forward?

Pope Francis tells us that dialogue is important, fundamental. Faced with common challenges, seen from different angles, all parties to an issue have something to bring and to listen to from the other parties. You used the words “solidarity” and “common good” for the title of this session. Yes, as Christians, we want to promote these values. They have to be at the core of all multistakeholder initiatives that could flourish, at all levels. They have the effect of attenuating the divergences that can be strong when interests dominate.

Beyond dialogue, form alliances with people with vision, firmly rooted in their communities and entities. The World Economic Forum offers a space but that has not been yet very effective in terms of building real partnerships. Too far from the ground. For civil society, the World Social Forum has been a place of confrontation and initiatives. Alliances were born there or expanded, such as the Global call to action against poverty or the work on human trafficking.

Caritas Internationalis and other Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) are more and more being called by the international organisations.

On the occasion of our General Assembly this year, Ban Ki Moon sent us a message telling us: “We must also forge new relationships with each other based on mutual trust, care and solidarity. Our objective in the forthcoming adoption of a new set of sustainable development goals is to eradicate extreme poverty and to put social and environmental priorities on a par with economic concerns.”

Jim Kim, the President of the World Bank in a video message at the same audience, was incredibly calling: “we have a shared commitment to end poverty and combat climate change... We will not achieve our goals unless we adopt the preferential option for the poor...I believe the leadership of Faith based organizations and communities is essential in getting there... we must have a combination of evidence based poverty reduction strategies and greater citizen driven demand for change. In other words, we need to build an evidence based movement... We want very much to form alliances with you, from the global to the national level, to translate these inspiring words and ideas into greater action and impact... the WB group is committed to working with you, in ending extreme poverty and building a more inclusive and sustainable world, and also to promote a preferential option for the poor.”

That already translates into concrete action, like in the fight against AIDS with UNAIDS and the Global Fund, but it largely remain to be built. The call is being reinforced at the time when the SDGs have been adopted. Though at this UNGA, among the 26 speakers representing CSO, no FBO was invited.

What can Caritas do?

The Caritas family, at all levels, is engaged in the promotion of a dignified life for all.

Decent work is one of the most pressing areas. Various initiatives are taken, in the agricultural sector for instance, to help small farmers organise themselves to face drought, to build water conservation works, to create cooperatives to commercialize their products, to develop a sustainable agriculture.

In the field of creating jobs, what is called “social solidarity economy” is promoted, through support to the creation of small business, cooperatives, with a strong focus on women. At the UN this week has been launched an international movement of this SSE. We can see it gains ground. CRS, our US member, is looking for investors ready to invest into small businesses with poor communities. They speak of impact investing. What has been tried and has worked can be multiplied provided there is funding for it.

We are ready to go beyond!

You say that “we need to work together in the development of a global ethics as a result of globalization based on corporate social responsibility, transparency and effective mechanisms of regulation to set up a Common Good oriented Governance.” I fully agree and would like to comment on

1. Corporate Social Responsibility: it has to be beyond social also environmental and fiscal. How to go beyond words? Could home laws apply worldwide for multinational corporations?
2. Transparency: a fundamental issue, but business interests often do not allow for such transparency. Though the business community itself perfectly knows. It often appears as a club that want to protect its interests.
3. Effective mechanisms of regulation: cannot be voluntary then, they have to be compulsory. When the Dodd Frank bill was passed in the US, there were so many reactions and ways of avoiding it, up to now!

You also say that “Civil society organizations have a positively critical public function in our societies in advocacy roles facing governments and monitoring activities of the private sector

and International Institutions.” Caritas is doing it more or less well with the governments, but have hardly engaged with the private sector. We are ready, but would need resources for that.

In Caritas, we frequently say: “together we are more!”. We can make this Earth a better world if we respect and love it not as a property, but as a gift received and handed over to future generations. Then we can say with St Francis: “Laudato si’, mi Signore!” because we will have lived this Earth as mother and sister.

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