

27 August 2020

Submission
To the
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
as part of consultation on the
2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent

Today we have an opportunity to build something different. For example, we can nurture an economy of the integral development of the poor, and not [just] of providing assistance. The preferential option for the poor,... inspires us to conceive of and design an economy where people, and especially the poorest, are at the centre.

Pope Francis - General Audience, 19 August 2020

Introduction

1. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' agency for justice, peace and development. We work on behalf of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference for a world free of poverty and injustice through community development, advocacy, education, and emergency relief.
2. Our work is shaped by Catholic Social Teaching, which reinforces the dignity of each and every person, along with their responsibilities, regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender or religion. We promote, in particular, the principles of:
 - Human dignity – Te tapu o te tangata;
 - Solidarity – Kotahitanga;
 - Subsidiarity - Mana whakahaere;
 - Preferential option for the poor and vulnerable - He whakaaro nui mō te hunga rawakore;
 - Participation - Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou;
 - Stewardship – Kaitiakitanga; and
 - The Common Good - Hei painga mā te katoa.
3. Guided by these principles, we work closely with other members of the Caritas network in Oceania and grassroots-based partners in the Pacific and Aotearoa, on community-based development and advocacy. We promote integral human development, with a special focus on protecting and upholding the human rights of the poorest and most vulnerable people. Integral development promotes the good of every person and of the whole person. It requires

a vision of the economy that, on the international level, guarantees an equitable distribution of resources; responsive to awareness of our economic, political and cultural interdependence; and which unites people globally and makes them feel linked by a common destiny. A more human development brings benefit to rich and poor alike.

4. These principles and approach to development are all relevant towards achieving the 2050 vision. Of primary concern for us in Oceania facing interrelated social, environmental and economic crises, further complicated and exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, is the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, or as Pope Francis said, *“an economy of the integral development of the poor, ... an economy where people, and especially the poorest, are at the centre.”* In all our decisions, we need to prioritise the poor.

Our approach

5. Due to limited time, we have not followed the ‘Drivers of Change’ consultation questionnaire format. However, what we have done is identify key drivers from our perspective, and focused on how these drivers of change can be addressed. We have not prioritised these drivers, nor spelt out how they will impact the 2050 vision; choosing to focus on recommendations for action in the face of a complexity of drivers for change, drawn from existing documents and analyses, primarily our Caritas State of the Environment for Oceania report series, of which online copies can be found here: <https://caritas.org.nz/state-environment>
6. Key drivers of change from areas of interest and expertise (under the primary categories listed):
 - social development: culture, gender, migration, human rights
 - economic: access to adequate income, land and/or livelihoods; gross inequality in income, wealth and power/influence
 - environment: climate change, ocean health, extractive industries, offshore oil/mineral exploitation
 - technological: access to technology; access to and systems for renewable energy

Recommendations

7. Without linking directly to the drivers above, the recommendations below address them in an inter-related approach to development:

Strengthening resilience

- Oceania Governments and community organisations must work together to enhance food and water security for the most vulnerable, including encouragement of resilient practices; prepositioning supplies and identify vulnerable populations; and effective distribution of food and water aid in times of emergency.
- All Pacific Island governments should prioritise development projects that ensure food and water security for the most vulnerable communities.

- Oceania governments and regional bodies should strengthen regional co-ordination of humanitarian response, and improve the integration of community-based groups into planning and response.

Migration and displacement

- Fair arrangements must be made for people who are forced to relocate internally or across borders because of climate change or other environmental degradation.
- National, regional and local level governments need to identify populations most at risk from environmentally-induced migration. They then need to identify options, develop strategies and solutions with local communities.
- National, regional and local level governments, must provide for much increased adaptation action such as: ongoing and improved disaster preparedness; early warning systems; assistance with adaptation or relocation.

Other climate change related response

- All countries and appropriate regional bodies must strengthen current policies for mitigation, adaptation and climate finance, in accordance with keeping global temperature increase below the 1.5°C limit of the Paris Agreement.
- Governments and international bodies must rapidly increase and improve climate-related finance for local communities, ensuring the active participation of local populations and transparency at all stages of climate projects.
- Funding organisations and governments need to improve coordination to support vulnerable populations

Seabed mining

- The International Seabed Authority and national governments should stop issuing both mining and exploration licences for seabed mining, at least until much more is known about the impacts on ecosystems and communities. If such mining does proceed, there needs to be proper recognition of human and environmental rights, effective environmental impact statements, and appropriate remedies for damage done.