



# Caritas Africa

## Info

A Quarterly Newsletter of Caritas in Africa

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022**

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## **Caritas Africa Info**

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### Let us keep our lamps burning (*Mt 25:1-13*)



The year 2021 has given way to a new year!

This new year 2022 is coming with its issues and challenges that will require the Caritas Network in Africa to keep its lights on.

Our lamps will have to stay lit with regard to the professionalisation of Caritas in Africa in order to fight effectively against the situations of poverty that are rampant in Africa. To this end, the implementation of the Management Standards in their various components, which constitute real work sites for Caritas organisations, requires us to make further progress (*Thess 4; 1*), promoting the Catholic identity and the values and principles of fraternal cooperation.

As has been the case in recent years, and without wishing to play the prophet of doom, we all know that Africa will continue to face disasters of natural (cyclones, drought, floods, locust attacks, etc.) and/or human (conflicts of all kinds, terrorism, etc.) origin, which will further weaken the living conditions of the already vulnerable populations. It is therefore important that Caritas keep their lights on to further strengthen solidarity and sharing through the strengthening of the Regional Solidarity Fund, an instrument set up by the Bishops to enable Caritas Africa to provide emergency support to national Caritas that have to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations in countries affected by crises!

The fight against poverty and the reduction of the impact of crises on the people of Africa require that Caritas organisations keep their lights on in order to engage effectively in advocacy to influence public policy and contribute to the building of a fraternal and just world!

Let's keep our lights on is not a slogan but an exhortation to Caritas in Africa to engage in a collective approach that takes into account the **5 P's**: putting Vulnerable **Populations** at the centre of their actions, providing appropriate care for the **Planet** in a mutually responsible **Partnership** to lay the foundations for an inclusive **Prosperity** in an atmosphere favourable to **Peace**.

**Albert MASHIKA**  
*Regional Executive Secretary*  
*Caritas Africa*



## MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP PRESIDENT

### Living in spite of everything

*"The thief comes only to steal, slaughter and destroy; I have come that the sheep may have life and have it to the full."* John 10:10



Dear brothers and sisters  
Beloved of God,  
Peace be with you!

For the past two years, the world has been at the mercy of the coronavirus, which has not stopped raging with its different variants. Yesterday Alpha (United Kingdom, September 2020), Beta (South Africa, May 2020), Gamma (Brazil, November 2020) and Delta (India, October 2020), today Omicron identified in South Africa, it seems that we are going to live for a long time with the Covid-19 while the WHO specialists announced the end of the epidemic for 2022.

The vaccine was presented as a panacea, but it has instead raised questions and suspicion to the point that, even free of charge in Africa, the majority of the population are dragging their feet in getting vaccinated. The question on everyone's lips is: Why should I get vaccinated if it doesn't make me immune to the virus? Another question has emerged in Western countries after the second and the third doses: how many doses would it take to be permanently safe from infection?

The most comforting aspect of this situation is that life goes on. Women and men, lovers of life and defenders of life, have braved all possible risks to save lives, sometimes at the expense of their own. This surge of generosity and self-sacrifice of the medical staff was rightly greeted by people all over the world with loud applause every day at 8pm. Far from all the noise, other defenders of life, the social workers, went to meet the populations in their environment to help them live in spite of the disease. Caritas workers in Africa have been and are part of this fight for life despite limited means at their disposal. I would like to pay tribute to them, to their courage and perseverance.

As we enter a new year 2022, our faith in Jesus Christ allows us to believe in life and to celebrate it in spite of everything. It is traditional for me to send you good wishes. I can't deviate from this tradition. I wish you all the good and best things for you and your families. But above all, I wish you Life through the Infant Jesus born in the hearth of each of you at Christmas.

LONG LIVE, GOOD HEALTH AND LIFE!!!

**+ Gabriel Justice ANOKYE**  
*Metropolitan Archbishop of Kumasi (Ghana)*  
*and President Caritas Africa*

### IMBISA Zone. Call for fraternal cooperation between Caritas regional entities



*His Eminence Wilfrid Cardinal Napier (3rd from right) President of Caritas South Africa, the Regional Executive Secretary of Caritas Africa (3rd from left) and the Secretaries General of Caritas Angola, Mozambique and Sao Tome & Principe.*

As part of the capacity building workshop for 22 representatives from 9 national Caritas in the IMBISA Region, co-funded by Caritas Japan and Trocaire Ireland (IDEAS Project), Secours Catholique, AFC and Caritas Africa (Outreach Programme) and CAFOD (Resource Mobilisation), His Eminence Wilfrid Cardinal Napier, President of Caritas South Africa, addressing the participants in his keynote address, said that there is a need for leaders of the humanitarian and development arm of the Catholic Church under the jurisdiction of the Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) to encourage fraternal collaboration among themselves.

Speaking at a Caritas IMBISA workshop on Monday 8 November, Cardinal Wilfrid Napier acknowledged that the interconnectedness of all aspects of the earth requires collaboration.

*"As frontline agencies of the Church, Caritas must prioritise ... fraternal cooperation and the creation of spaces of communion. Everything is linked. Disaster risk reduction, climate change*

*adaptation, environmental management and humanitarian action are linked. Together we are stronger,"* he told the session held at the Padre Pio Spiritual Centre in the Archdiocese of Pretoria, South Africa.

The Cardinal added that Caritas members must work together to implement the *"principles of fraternal cooperation, mutual respect, mutual support and mutual accountability"* as stipulated by Caritas Internationalis (CI).

*"The Church has an important role to play in bringing together actors at parish, national, diocesan, regional and international levels to share, reflect and learn from each other,"* said the Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Durban. He noted that the fraternal collaboration between Caritas leaders is in line with Pope Francis' call for universal brotherhood and solidarity in the encyclical letter Fratelli Tutti.

*"The Holy Father calls for a new universal fraternity and solidarity among and between people and nations. He draws our attention to the counter-values that lead to political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes."*

The Cardinal says that Pope Francis, who is also drawing our attention to natural and man-made disasters, is suggesting the application of the "See, judge and act" method of social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning.

In his speech on the Church in the modern world and the role of Caritas in a rapidly changing humanitarian context, the Cardinal, who is Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Eshowe in South Africa, also called on Caritas members to bridge the gap caused by digital media.

He noted that digital media plays a crucial role in global crises and stressed the need for the Church to use platforms to let the world know about the plight of the people it serves.

*"We believe that national Caritas in the Africa region need to support diocesan Caritas in participating in online debates and dialogues so that these ultimately enable local communities to engage in these spaces,"* said Cardinal Napier.

A member of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), Cardinal Napier also informed Caritas leaders of the role they must play in involving more men in the life of the Church. He noted that the majority of Church goers in

the IMBISA region are young people and women, adding that men often participate in Church activities when disaster strikes.

*"Without male role models, boys and young men may continue to drift away from the Church and its work, precisely when we need it most. Without men, our families are extremely vulnerable."*

Given the extreme weather conditions the continent often experiences, the 80-year-old Cardinal said Caritas Africa "must therefore help national and diocesan Caritas to equip themselves by investing in community-led disaster risk reduction.

*"This is where parish Caritas has a role to play. It is well placed to advocate for better delivery of social services and relief. In this way, it is the voice of the voiceless,"* said Cardinal Napier, before adding that a remarkable "Caritas work" has been achieved through close cooperation between leaders of different churches and even religions.

*Magdalene Kabuu*

*ACI Africa*



### Burundi

#### Caritas committed to becoming truly community-based

*A more community-based Caritas. This will be translated during the Country Forum, 2021 edition, organised by Caritas Burundi in Bujumbura, at Mont Sion Gikungu, on 14 and 15 December 2021. Placed under the theme "Consolidation of the identity of Caritas in view of a Community Caritas through a policy of Safeguarding and Social Protection", the work of these meetings was solemnly opened and closed by Bishop Joachim Ntahondereye, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Burundi, Bishop of the Diocese of Muyinga.*



It is now a tradition. Every year since 2013, Caritas Burundi organises the Country Forum for its partners in order to evaluate its interventions in the field of pastoral care and to identify strategies to further improve its services to vulnerable people.

In his welcoming remarks, the President of Caritas Burundi, Bishop Georges Bizimana of the Diocese of Ngozi, recalled that the Country Forum is a privileged framework that allows members of the Burundi Caritas Network and partner organisations to meet to harmonise

their way of seeing and understanding their mission, given that they are all called to contribute to the integral development of the human person in general, and in a particular way, to come to the aid of the poor and victims of calamities and natural disasters.

Convinced that the enemy to be fought is common to all societies, the President of Caritas Burundi said that the best way to face it is to act in perfect synergy.

*"Insofar as we work in the Church, the concern to promote the charitable dimension must be ours. The opportunity is offered to me*

to call on all partners so that we can harmonise our ways of expressing our commitment to social issues," said Bishop Georges Bizimana.

The same willingness to work in partnership was expressed by the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Burundi, Bishop Joachim Ntahondereye, in his opening and closing speeches at the 2021 edition of the Caritas Burundi Country Forum.

"We reaffirm the need for partnership for a more incisive social ministry. Caritas Burundi cannot do without working in synergy with other organisations sharing the same vision. It cannot do without partnership with other non-denominational organisations committed to social assistance and development," he said.

Bishop Ntahondereye also indicated that this Country Forum is organised at a time when the Catholic Church is already committed to awaken in all its components the sense of synodality to walk and work hand in hand, in diversity but sharing the same perspectives.

"We are delighted to be able to give, through this Country Forum, the necessary space for the expression of these diverse commitments to the same cause".

During the course of the work, avenues leading to the promotion of a truly community-based Caritas through the policy of Safeguarding and Social Protection were identified. These include

- having a concern for an immediate response to the most vulnerable;
- being able to take the right action at the right time
- acting with technically correct actions that demonstrate a heartfelt concern;
- to act in complete independence from parties and ideologies;
- not to use charity to impose the faith of the Church, to name but a few.

Claver HAKIZIMANA  
Communication Officer





*With financial support from Irish Aid through Trocaire on the project "Legal Aid Empowerment for marginalised women, girls, boys and men in the Western Rural District", Caritas Sierra Leone - Freetown management staff conducted a two-day training for 50 staff, volunteers and associates on Safeguarding policies and complaints handling mechanisms/procedures*



*A view of the training participants*

The training was aimed at participants from different departments (Christ the King Hospital, Justice & Peace Commission, Sick Pikin Project, Partners for Humanity, SGBV project Volunteer) and had three (3) major objectives:

- To strengthen the knowledge of Caritas staff on Caritas Internationalis Safeguarding policies and their commitment to the implementation and enforcement of these policies.
- To strengthen staff/volunteers/interns' understanding of the complaints mechanism.
- To make staff/volunteers/interns understand the systems and structures that have been established for effective implementation of Safeguarding policies at institutional and community level among community beneficiaries.

Two key messages emerged from the training, one from Caritas Sierra Leone and the other from Trocaire.

**"It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and contractors/associates to protect and promote the image and integrity of the Catholic Church by preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment as part of Caritas Sierra Leone's engagement with the people and communities we are privileged to serve to prevent and promote Safeguarding at all times."** *Caritas Sierra Leone*

**"The safety and well-being of the people we work with is our priority. We have a zero tolerance approach to abuse or exploitation. We also continue to work with our partners to strengthen their safeguarding policies and practices."** *Trocaire*

The training was segmented into 6 modules which covered the following topics

- ◆ Building a Safeguarding culture
- ◆ Exploring different types of harm
- ◆ Exploring vulnerability: children and vulnerable adults.
- ◆ Reviewing expected behaviour
- ◆ Harassment in the workplace
- ◆ Reporting Safeguarding issues.

It lasted two (2) days and was facilitated by senior managers, programme staff, the Human Resources Manager, the Acting Programme Director and the Head of Paralegal.

The staff, volunteers and associates present were very satisfied with the sessions, reiterating that the knowledge gained helped them to know the importance of Safeguarding. They promised that they would use the Safeguarding policy.

At the end of the sessions, the Caritas Sierra Leone Freetown staff, volunteers and associates present signed the compliance form documenting their agreement to comply with the Safeguarding policy.

*Rev. Fr. Peter A. Konteh  
Executive Director / Acting Country Director  
Caritas Sierra Leone*



*Energizer session during the training*



*This year, the National Week of OCDI Caritas Togo was celebrated from 21 to 28 November. The general theme chosen was: "Let us listen to the cry of the EARTH and the cry of the POOR".*

*This theme was proposed as the theme for the year and even for the 7 years of actions in favour of the Earth and the Poor.*

Indeed, this year, following the Laudato Si Year, Pope Francis launched a platform of initiatives: <https://plate-formedactionlaudatosi.org/> which he describes as follows: "It is a seven-year operational journey that will guide families, parish and diocesan communities, schools and universities, hospitals, companies, groups, movements, organisations, religious institutes to assume a sustainable lifestyle".

The first year "will be dedicated to the three fundamental tasks of community building, resource sharing and the development of concrete action plans for the realisation of the seven goals of Laudato si".

This will be followed by "five years of concrete action". The final year will be "a sabbatical year of praise and thanks to God".

It should be noted that several diocesan and parish OCDIs have already registered on this platform to carry out and share actions in favour of the Earth and the Poor.

To this end, a national poster has been designed and sent to all dioceses/parishes in Togo.

ORGANISATION de la CHARITE  
pour un DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL  
OCDI CARITAS TOGO

**Suite à l'Année Laudato si,  
le Pape François  
a lancé une plateforme d'initiatives qui,  
pendant sept ans, nous guidera à assumer  
un style de vie durable.  
Pour faire ce chemin il faut, nous a-t-il dit :**

**ECOUTER  
le CRI  
de la TERRE  
et  
le CRI des PAUVRES**

**SEMAINE NATIONALE de l'OCDI  
21 au 28 novembre 2021**

Plateforme d'initiatives :  
<https://plate-formedactionlaudatosi.org>



In addition, as every year, a pocket calendar was prepared. It was sold in the parishes for the benefit of the OCDI's parish fund.



*OCDI Caritas Togo calendar presented by a lady*

During this week, all the parish teams of the OCDI showed initiative in the organisation of activities. Apart from the usual activities (radio broadcasts, visits of the diocesan team to the parishes, visits to the vulnerable, rummage sale, kermesses) an environmental study was

carried out in the parishes. The aim was to prepare for the formation of the OCDI parish teams which, in most parishes, takes place during Lent.

*Fr. Jean Piontek*



*The Zambian Seed and Food Festival is a concept that aims to bring back seeds that are in danger of extinction due to the hybrid seeds of multinationals that have taken centre stage. The festival also aims to encourage the preservation of seeds that can still withstand the current adverse weather conditions in order to address food and nutrition insecurity. It is a platform for small-scale farmers to share their ideas on why and how to save the local Zambian seeds that have fed generations.*



Among the many stalls at the festival were farmers from Caritas Zambia's food security projects in Kumena and Zambia under the livelihoods programme. They presented a fascinating seed exhibition, which showed the importance of traditional seeds as major contributions to the food system, in terms of nutrition, economic empowerment, social and cultural heritage as well as political power in relation to traditional seeds and foods.

Farmers from all diocesan Caritas presented a diversity of seeds while highlighting the story of increased production, household income, value addition, better marketing, reduced suffering of women and improved food security of their communities. As a result, they won the award for the best presentation of seed diversity at the 4th Zambian Traditional Food and Seed Festival 2021.

On receiving the award, the farmers expressed their joy, but also their concern that the lack of diversity in seed and food production is affecting the diet of many communities, leading to hunger and malnutrition. "Therefore, our exhibition is a strong call to improve diversity in both food production and consumption by promoting local seed diversity.

Farmers from Caritas Zambia, Food Security Projects and Kumena, reiterated the call for seed sovereignty, which includes the rights of farmers to save, reproduce and exchange seeds, to have access to diverse seeds. This is the case for traditional open-pollinated seeds that can be saved, replanted and are not genetically modified. "Seed sovereignty recognises the importance of farmer-saved seed systems, which are essential for food security at the household level.

Caritas Zambia says that in addition to displacing and destroying diversity, commercialised seed varieties also undermine seed sovereignty and farmers' rights. That's why small-scale farmers should be encouraged to grow their own traditional seeds.

The award received by Caritas Zambia comes with a call and recommendation to invest in research and development and seed system services.

Seeds are undoubtedly the most important agricultural input, as without seeds there is no harvest. They are a fundamental pillar of agricultural and food production

and the need for integrated seed system laws rather than prohibiting the use and sale of traditional varieties and breeds cannot be overstated.

*Chibesa Ngulube Ngwira*  
*Knowledge Management Officer*  
*Caritas Zambia*



*Caritas Zambia team wins best seed exhibition award*



## Reducing the impact of crisis

### on affected people

## Sierra Leone

### Explosion of a tanker: very heavy toll

*On Friday 5 November 2021, at about 9.10 p.m., in Wellington Industrial Estate, East End Freetown Municipality, a tanker loaded with 15,000 litres of fuel spilled its contents onto the road, attracting unemployed youths, squatters, passers-by and pedestrians who rushed to the scene with their empty cans to collect their share of the spilled fuel. A few minutes later, a huge explosion ensued, causing loss of life and extensive material damage.*

This tragedy, which occurred at a time when traffic was heavy in this area that offers no other way around, plunged the whole country into great sadness.

A bus loaded with passengers was literally cut in half in the explosion and no passengers survived. Night traders, Okada drivers and others were caught in the middle of the blaze. Passers-by and residents intervened to save lives and take the injured to various hospitals for medical treatment. It is estimated that over 80 people lost their lives and over 100 were seriously injured.

Caritas Sierra Leone quickly dispatched a team of clinical staff and volunteers with medical supplies, including PPE, syringes, gloves and water, to the scene of the disaster to complement the efforts of other rescuers.

The tankers are designed to carry huge quantities of fuel to service stations. A week ago, Freetown and other provincial towns experienced a 24-hour fuel shortage that pushed the price per litre to 15,000 leones instead of the legal price of 10,000 leones per litre. According to a witness, it was this situation that led many people at the scene to rush to the tanker to get free fuel.

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Freetown



## Niger

## PASAN: raising the vulnerable populations

*The Programme d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle PASAN is a 4-year national project funded by Caritas Norway and Norad (Norwegian government). It is implemented by the National Executive Secretariat and the two diocesan offices of Niamey and Maradi of CADEV Niger. The objective of the programme is to improve the livelihoods of agro-pastoral households affected by food and nutrition insecurity crises, through a series of actions aimed at increasing production and responding to the needs of local communities to adapt to climate change.*



*Mr Ousmane Karimou in his field in Guidan Zaroumey*

*"My name is Ousmane Karimou, 56 years old, I live in Guidan Zaroumey. I thank PASAN for this invaluable support. I have 2 wives and 13 children. Before, at the end of the rainy season (which lasts 3 months out of 12) we were without any productive activity. To be away from the suffering of our families, we would leave for neighbouring countries. Since CADEV Niger came to our village with this programme in 2018, I have not gone into exodus anymore. They have built us boreholes, they have given us equipment for off-season crops with training and regular monitoring by their animator who is always present. I say thank you to God who put CADEV on our path for this initiative to support the farmers. Today I walk with my head held high because I have*

*enough to work all year to feed my family. I have built another well in my other field with what I got last year. My yields have increased."*

*"My name is Salamou Moumouni, 35 years old, I live in Dollé, a village in the commune of Birnin Konni, Taboua region. I am in a polygamous household. We have suffered a lot in recent years from the drought and lack of rain in our village. It was very difficult to feed my children. Since PASAN came to our village, I really thank God. I personally received a kit of 2 goats and 1 billy goat that I raised. Today I have a herd of 10 goats. I am able to provide for myself and my children."*



These testimonies come from 2 of the 33,915 PASAN beneficiaries from the 4,846 vulnerable households targeted by the programme, in a rural area of south-west Niger. The direct beneficiaries are male and female farmers, livestock breeders living in poverty, young people and farmers' organisations.

PASAN operates in the communes of Dogondoutchi, Makalondi, Konni and Illéla, which have similar socio-economic characteristics. Indeed, for several decades, these localities, like other regions of the country, have been suffering from the weight of several factors, both structural and conjunctural (climate change, anthropic actions, use of inappropriate production techniques, lack of appropriate access to production factors), the consequences of which on production potential are creating the impoverishment of the populations.

Agriculture, the main activity of more than 80% of Niger's population, is today faced with numerous challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation due to human activities, occupation of arable land, pest pressure and irregular rainfall.

To overcome these constraints in its area of intervention, the PASAN programme carries out actions to improve agricultural production systems through the use of drought-resistant seeds and the training of farmers in sustainable agroecological techniques.

Through this programme, CADEV Niger, with the support of its partner Caritas Norway, is making its modest contribution to the human promotion and improvement of the lives of the Nigerien population.

*Abraham Komi DJAGNIKPO  
Communication Officer  
CADEV-Niger*



*Mrs Salamou Moumouni and her goats in her village in Dollé*



*2,260 households, with 3,390 agricultural workers (family producers), 51% of whom are women, in the territory of Kasangulu, in the Province of Central Kongo, have been supported since 2018 by Caritas. This support is part of the Programme d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire et renforcement des capacités économiques des ménages ruraux, otherwise known as PQ SECAL II.*

The programme, financed by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation (NORAD) through Caritas Norway, with an envelope of 25,983,583 Norwegian Kroner, or about 2.5 million Euros, for a duration of 4 years (2018-2021), is implemented in the provinces of North Kivu, Maniema, Central Kongo and Tanganyika, in favour of 7,200 households and has obtained very encouraging results.

This is why the Norwegian Ambassador to the DRC, His Excellency Jon-Age Oyslebo, and his deputy in charge of Development Knut Arne Oseid, the Director of the International Department of Caritas Norway, Marit Sørheim, and the DRC Advisor at Caritas Norway, Heidi Solheim Nordbeck, made a field visit to the territory of Kasangulu on Saturday 27 November 2021. The delegation was led by the Executive Secretary of Caritas Congo Asbl, Boniface Deagbo, to his diocesan structure, Caritas-Développement-Santé Kisantu, which implements this food security project.

"We are here to find out how Norwegian-funded programmes are implemented on the ground, and how they contribute to increasing food security for communities. We could never have done this without good partners like you (Caritas)," said the Ambassador.

After greeting the Kasangulu authorities, the Ambassador and his entourage visited a stand displaying the beneficiaries' food products, before the presentation of a model hut garden to meet the personal needs of households without access to agricultural land. This was followed by a tour of fish ponds with a demonstration of artificial insemination of fish and the community reforestation site in the village of Selo, 62 km from Kinshasa. This sample confirmed the results and effects of the SECAL programme presented shortly before to the beneficiaries, three of whom happily testified to the impact of this programme on the improvement of their living conditions and their know-how.



*The ambassador visiting the exhibition stands of agricultural products*

## Satisfactory results

With the 2,260 peasant households supported, the programme reaches approximately 28.1% of the total number of families in the area visited, which consists of 8,071 households, or 32,286 people. In front of the representatives of all the Axes, Caritas-Development-Health of Kisantu presented the effects produced by this programme:

Firstly, **"households in the target communities have improved their income and their access to the market"**. Thus, 830 tonnes of products from community fields were marketed, including 25.5 tonnes through federations. 61.4% of accompanied households have an average annual income of US\$1,507.80 or more. The average income for women increased from US\$451.00 to US\$667.20, compared to US\$840.60 for men. In addition, 13.7% of women beneficiaries have access to trade credit.

Secondly, **"households in the target communities are food secure and have improved their nutrition"**. Here, it is worth noting the production of 890 tons of products of six main crops in the community fields as well as 29,134.6 tons of products of nine crops in the household fields. 62% of households are self-sufficient in seeds of 4/9 domestic consumption crops. And 65% of supported households have adopted large-area agro-ecological practices. With this, 100% of the supported households have at least 2 meals a day.

Thirdly, **"the target communities have strengthened their resilience to the effects of climate change"**. 526 hectares of forest have been protected, with the integration of 25,783 seedlings of various species on 29 hectares.

Fourthly, **"Civil Society Organisations are Agents of Change"**. Thus, 1,900.71 ha of cultivable land were conceded to households for family exploitation, and 63.9 ha to the community fields of the VDCs, thanks to the advocacy carried out with the landowners (concessionaires and landowners). It is also worth noting the dissemination of agro-ecological practices and cassava cuttings among the population by the beneficiary households.

It should also be noted that the Norwegian government and Caritas Norway finance many other projects in the DRC, through the national network of Caritas Congo Asbl. This support concerns the areas of forest protection, the fight against child labour (in the mines), and the prevention and mitigation of the effects of Covid -19.

*Guy-Marin KAMANDJI  
Communication Officer  
Caritas Congo Asbl*



*Visit to the fish ponds*



*His Eminence Antoine Cardinal Kambanda urged not to despise the poor, under the pretext that they are responsible for their poverty, but to help them in their needs.*

*He was addressing the congregation in Kibeho on 14 November 2021, after the mass celebrated on the occasion of the World Day of the Poor.*



*His Eminence Antoine Cardinal Kambanda after the mass on the occasion of the International Day of the Poor*

His Eminence Antoine Cardinal Kambanda said in his message: "In the eyes of God, we are all poor because we are in need of his mercy. When the poor come to you, asking for help, remember that it is the same as when you stand before God to ask for help. So, just as you want God to receive you, hear your plea in his power and help you, so receive them humbly and help them. What you want God to do for you, do for your poor brother. "

He went on to explain that the poor are cared for differently depending on their poverty and situation. He cited the Church's help through Caritas, saying that there are those who are poor because of illness or old age who are taken care of and receive all possible care to help them. There are also those who are helped by various projects, who are trained in various activities that help them to get out of poverty and who are accompanied to implement them.

In Kibeho, there was a gathering of the poor from all the Catholic dioceses of Rwanda, where many thanked God for the opportunity to visit Kibeho, the holy land, for the first time, and to be in the presence of His Eminence Antoine Cardinal Kambanda.

André Ntambagiza from the diocese of Kibungo said that poverty is not something you choose.

"It is like being born in a family and one of the children becomes president! It's not that others don't want to be president of the country. My advice to those who despise the poor is to recognise that we are all equal in God's eyes."

The World Day of the Poor was initiated by His Holiness Pope Francis at the end of the special Jubilee of God's Mercy (2015-2016).

In his closing letter of the Jubilee, entitled "God's Mercy and Misery" (*Misericordia et misera*), dated 20 November

2016, in paragraph 21, where he states, *"We are enlightened by the Jubilee of the abandoned. At a time when the doors of some cathedrals and churches around the world are closed, the so-called 'families of God's mercy', I concluded that the last sign considered as the fruit of this special Jubilee Year would be the celebration of the International Day of the Poor, which would be celebrated in the 33rd week of the ordinary week of the liturgical year."*

This time it was celebrated for the fifth time under the theme: "The poor you will always have with you" (Mk 14:7).

At the diocesan level, the World Day of the Poor was preceded by various charitable activities, including the repair of the houses of some poor people, the visit of patients and medical assistants, the care of poor students, etc. On 14 November, after the mass, the poor received food, clothes, toiletries and shared the meal of the day in joy.

*Clarisse UMUHIRE  
Communication Officer  
Caritas Rwanda*



*Food distribution to the poor*



## Partnership agreement between Caritas Africa, Caritas Italiana and Banca Popolare Etica

Caritas Africa organised a workshop to launch a multi-country, multi-stakeholder project entitled "Supporting the promotion of ethical finance through capacity building of microfinance institutions (MFIs) serving community organisations and civil society in sub-Saharan Africa". To this end, Caritas Africa has signed a partnership agreement with two Italian organisations, Caritas Italiana and Banca Popolare Etica.

As part of the implementation of this project, Caritas Africa then engaged in a dialogue with the national Caritas and MFIs (microfinance institutions stemming from the structures of the Catholic Church) of the nine sub-Saharan African countries involved in the project in order to sign a collaboration agreement.

The workshop took place at the San José Carmelo Centre in Kigali, Rwanda, at the end of the 5th African Microfinance Week in which all the actors involved in this project participated, from 18 to 22 October 2021.

The project aims to support microfinance actors/microfinance institutions - MFIs to attract more resources to strengthen their capacity to respond effectively and professionally to the sustainable development priorities of their grassroots stakeholders (beneficiaries) in terms of implementing their activities, training staff to provide quality services, communicating to donors on social impact.

National Caritas say that this partnership is of great importance as this project will promote integrated microfinance and development activities in sub-Saharan Africa by adopting an inclusive approach that takes into account all factors that reduce vulnerability, improve quality of life and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Albert Mashika, Regional Coordinator of Caritas Africa, warmly thanked the partners and promised that there will always be good collaboration as Caritas beneficiaries rely on this project.

Gabriele Giuglietti, Director of International Relations at Banca Popolare Etica, said that the only way for people to deal with crises like Covid-19 is to work together. He added that Banca Etica has a good collaboration with Caritas Italiana and is sure to have a good collaboration with Caritas Africa and its members.

Federico Mazzarella, representative of Caritas Italiana reaffirmed Caritas Italiana's commitment to the effective implementation of the project to reduce the poverty affecting the stakeholder populations on the ground.

The project will run from February 2021 to January 2023 with co-financing from the Italian Episcopal Conference (IEC).

*Clarisse UMUHIRE  
Communication Officer  
Caritas Rwanda*

*Signature of the agreement between the 3 main partners*



*Delegates from Caritas, MFIs and Banca Popolare Etica at the ASM in Kigali*



## Working visit of a SECAM delegation to the Regional Executive Secretariat in Lomé



Working visit of a SECAM delegation to the Regional Executive Secretariat of Caritas Africa (SERCAF) on 17/12. The 2nd SGA in charge of Justice, Peace and Development Father Jean Germain Rajoelison accompanied by Mrs Mavis Bonsu and Ms Viviane Amegan.



## APPROCHE programme: accompanying mission to the Comoros



*Working session on resource mobilisation with the team*



*Courtesy visit to Bishop Charles of the Vicariate of Comoros*



## TRIBUTE

### Departures



#### **Yves LEFORT, Secours Catholique Caritas France**

Tribute to this servant of the poor who was very sensitive to a mutually respectful partnership between Secours Catholique Caritas France (SCCF) and the Caritas of Africa.

Thank you Yves for your boundless dedication to the cause of the poor.

#### **Raymond YORO Younoussi, National Executive Secretary of Caritas - Development Niger**

He will be replaced in this position from 1 March 2022 by Mr. Clément ANATOVI.



**Fr. Kisito Balla ONANA 1, National Director of Caritas Cameroon and Caritas Coordinator of the ACERAC Zone, replaced by Fr. Barthélémy NKOA**



**Mrs. ATTAMA Sabine, Director of the Diocesan Caritas of Niamey, who will be replaced in this position from 1 March 2022 by Mr. Adamou Idiguine Amadou.**

### Memory

**Mr William Kelly Makhundu, former National Director of Caritas eSwatini/Swaziland, passed away in October 2021. He has been replaced in this position by Reverend Father Zweli Ngwenya, Acting Director.**

**Caritas Africa**  
**Regional Executive Secretariat**

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