

# Recovering together

**A call for global solidarity in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis**

The pandemic has put our human family in crisis. Severe malnutrition and extreme poverty are increasing around the world as people get sick and jobs are lost. Refugees, women and Indigenous peoples face the worst impacts of the pandemic, as the challenges of the virus add to their extremely vulnerable situation. The pandemic began while we were already facing another threat—the global climate crisis. Even as COVID-19 continues to disrupt our lives, our jobs, our economies and our countries, the impacts of climate change are further intensifying with devastating forest fires in the Amazon, extreme weather events, and rising temperatures around the world. Both COVID-19 and climate change have exposed the deepening inequalities in our country and around the world.

The people who were already living on the frontlines of the climate crisis, especially in the Global South, are also the most vulnerable to the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic, and they have the fewest resources to recover. Without basic infrastructure, such as housing, clean water, and food security, a lockdown is impossible for many people in the Global South. Some of us find safety and security in our homes and have food on our tables, while others can only dream of self-isolating and seeking health care if needed.

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the deep inequalities in our economic and social structures. In order to rebuild in a way that ensures justice for all people and care for our common home,

we must put the most vulnerable and the most marginalized first, as we are called to do by the principle of the preferential option for the poor. The virus has reminded us that we are all interconnected, and that we must ensure that all of us are part of the solution.

The response to the pandemic has also shown how fast and powerfully governments can respond when there is an emergency. We know that it is possible to have a just recovery that will reduce global inequality, while respecting our planet's limits by dramatically reducing carbon emissions.

How we respond right now as one human family will determine the future of life on our planet. This critical moment is our opportunity to create the greener and more just world that we have always dreamed of.

- **265 million people** could face starvation by the end of 2020.
- The economic fallout from COVID could push an additional **half a billion people** into poverty.
- **Only 1/5 people** in low-income countries are covered by safety net programmes.

## **Covid-19 and the climate crisis: Affecting the most vulnerable first**

Some people are facing the worst impacts of these crises. Low incomes, dense housing conditions, threats to land, and food insecurity make some groups much more vulnerable to both COVID-19 and the impacts of climate change.



### **Women on the frontlines of the pandemic**

Women are disproportionately impacted by climate change, and now they are on the front line of the coronavirus response as well, providing both paid and unpaid health care, while looking after children and the elderly. Women are more likely to work in precarious, part-time work, which are the first jobs to be lost in a pandemic. United Nations secretary-general António Guterres said that there has been a “horrifying global surge in domestic violence” since the start of the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Development and Peace is [empowering and supporting women in the Global South](#) to face the pandemic. In Haiti, Caritas Haiti provides food aid and prevention and care information on COVID-19 to women who must travel to buy and sell food and supplies at markets. And in the port town of Jacmel in southern-Haiti, Development and Peace’s partner Fanm Deside protects women and girl victims of domestic violence and advocates for their rights. As confinement and the fear of transmission make women more vulnerable to partner violence, Fanm Deside continues ensuring that they have safe spaces in which to self-isolate.

### **Overcrowding makes isolation impossible for refugees and displaced people**

In refugee camps and informal refugee settlements in Bangladesh, Lebanon, and other countries hosting refugees, COVID-19 prevention measures are nearly impossible to respect. Overcrowding makes physical distancing impossible, access to clean water to wash hands is limited, and health care is inaccessible. Refugees do not have access to their own land, and often live in coastal areas which are prone to flooding and other extreme weather events caused by climate change.

In Somalia, Development and Peace is working with Trocaire, the Irish Caritas agency, to provide [internally-displaced people in the Jazeera camp in Somalia](#) with fertile land to sustainably grow food for their families and to sell as a source of income. In addition, Development and Peace is helping Trocaire provide health

care services to host communities and displaced people, one of the few organizations to do so in the outer region that are hundreds of miles from the COVID-19 testing centre in Mogadishu.

### **Indigenous people dying at much higher rates from COVID**

In the Amazon and other parts of Latin America, Indigenous communities are putting their lives at risk to protect their territories, which is helping to prevent climate change and preserve our common home. Yet, the Indigenous peoples of Latin America are contracting COVID-19 and dying at much higher rates, and some groups may even disappear. Without decent healthcare services, clean water, and other basic human rights, they are taking steps to protect their communities, when their governments have not done what is needed to protect them from the virus. In some regions, including in Brazil and Peru, mining and oil companies have profited from the pandemic lockdowns to increase their extractive activities, which further threaten the health and lives of Indigenous peoples and our planet. [Development and Peace has partnered with REPAM](#), the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network, which is supported by the Latin American Bishops’ Conference, to ensure justice for Indigenous communities who are facing both the pandemic and loss of their territory at the same time.

**The spread of Covid-19 around the world, and its disproportionate impact on those whose basic needs are not met, illustrates how inequality puts the health of the whole world at risk. Self-isolation is not an option for those whose housing, food supply, access to healthcare, and income are not stable and secure.**

In order to recover from the current pandemic, and to take a new path to reduce the existential threat of climate change, we need to address the discrimination, violence and lack of human rights that women, refugees, and Indigenous peoples face every day.

## The leadership of Pope Francis

Our 2020-2021 campaign, Recovering Together, is a response to Pope Francis's call for a renewed commitment to the preferential option of the poor and global solidarity in the face of the pandemic. In a catechesis series about COVID-19, he focuses on the need to heal from both the physical and social ills of this pandemic, and this can only be done together.

**"The pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable and interconnected everyone is. If we do not take care of one another, starting with the least, with those who are most impacted, including creation, we cannot heal the world."** (Catechesis 2 – August 12, 2020)

Pope Francis encourages us, and especially world leaders, to respond in two ways: by doing everything we can to eradicate the virus, but also to respond to the social injustice that has been revealed and worsened by its spread.

**"The pandemic is a crisis, and we do not emerge from a crisis the same as before: either we come out of it better, or we come out of it worse. We must come out of it better, to counter social injustice and environmental damage. Today we have an opportunity to build something different."** (Catechesis 3 – August 19, 2020)

He also insists that the vaccine for COVID-19 should be made available for all those in need and a transformation of our economic system is required or our ills will continue to propagate. Ultimately, it is solidarity that must urgently guide our actions for change.

**"Diversity in solidarity also possesses antibodies that heal social structures and processes that have degenerated into systems of injustice, systems of oppression (cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 192). Therefore, solidarity today is the road to take towards a post-pandemic world, towards the healing of our interpersonal and social ills. There is no other way."** (Catechesis 5 – September 2, 2020)



## Canada's response to the global pandemic

As Canada prepares to join other countries around the world in announcing enhanced climate action plans, the Government of Canada faces a historic opportunity to transform our society and our economy through a greener and more inclusive recovery. The government can also fulfill its promises of increasing international aid, because as we know, we are facing the pandemic and the climate crisis as a planet, and our response needs to be global. Several increases of international aid have been announced by the federal government, but it is still far from the 0.7% of GDP recommended by the United Nations.

Canada's economy has been dependant on extraction of fossil fuels, which are a leading cause of climate change. In the Global South, extractive companies are abusing human rights and destroying the land and water of communities. The COVID-19 response is an opportunity to transfer government support for fossil fuels to renewable energy. The tax money of Canadians should be invested in a just and clean energy economy that will support workers and ensure a future for our children.

Here in Canada, climate change, development and social justice organizations, including Development and Peace, have come together to define **Six Principles for a Just Recovery** to guide the response to the complex crises we face, by putting people and the planet first. Now, we must ensure that the Canadian government respects and implements these principles with the policies it puts forward to address the crisis are still in.

Canadian churches and faith-based organizations, including Development and Peace, have launched an ecumenical initiative for climate justice called **For the Love of Creation**. This summer, the initiative collected nearly 2,500 signatures on an e-petition that calls the Government of Canada to:

1. Reduce Canadian GHG emissions by 60 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 while investing in a just transition to a green economy that promotes the well-being of all;
2. Respect the rights of Indigenous peoples, including the right to free, prior and informed consent and enact the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canadian law;
3. Support climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the Global South, with funding for loss and damage, scaling up to a fair-share contribution of at least US\$4 billion per year;
4. Respond to the pandemic in the Global South through multi-lateral **debt cancellation** and increased grant-based support for Canadian international development NGOs.

**This petition** creates the framework for a green and just recovery in Canada and sustained partnerships with organizations in the Global South that support the poorest and most vulnerable people. Such a holistic approach, at once local and global, is essential for **recovering together**.

## Tell your MP how to build back better after the pandemic

You can help keep up the momentum on these demands by calling or emailing your MP to reiterate the importance of building back better here in Canada and in the Global South. Members of Parliament have a duty to listen to their constituents. Your input can have a big impact on their party's positions. At a time when the federal government is spending billions to address the health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic, your MP needs to know that Canadians don't want to go back to the old "normal" of poverty, inequity, climate change and Indigenous rights violations.

### How to contact your MP

[Find your MP's contact information](#) and get in touch. You can leave a message with their office, or request a longer in-person, phone or online meeting, depending on the options in your region. If you are meeting the MP, you could go with other Development and Peace members. Also consider inviting your local priest, bishop or a member of a religious community. That would show how concerned faith-based community leaders are about caring for creation and the preferential option for the poor.

### What to say to your MP

Here is a sample script for your phone call or email to your MP. Please adapt it to reflect yourself and your concerns:

*I am Joanne Smith, a resident of your riding. I have three children and five grandchildren. I care deeply about their future and I know that you do, too. I am very concerned about the pandemic and climate change. I know that the worst impacts of these problems are on poor people, refugees, women and Indigenous peoples.*

*Thankfully, I have a safe home, a full belly and free healthcare. But I know that many Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. I also know that millions around the world don't have the luxury of safe isolation and affordable healthcare. I want our government to do more for them.*

*Canada is investing billions in responding to the pandemic. These investments should benefit the most vulnerable people in Canada and around the world.*

*I want you to insist on a green and just recovery. I want Canada to respect its climate commitments and the rights of Indigenous people. I want Canada to cancel the debts of the poorest countries. I want Canada to increase international aid for climate change adaptation and pandemic recovery.*

*Like many Canadians, I have dreamt of a greener, more just world. I am asking you, as my representative, to do everything you can to make this dream a reality.*

*Thank you for listening. You can reach me by email at (spell your email) or by phone at \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*Have a great day!*

Need more help talking to your MP? Talk to [your local animator](#)

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### Join the campaign

As we campaign to rebuild a stronger, healthier, and more just world, we can show that Canadians wish to take a new path. Our vision of a more just and green future requires slashing our greenhouse gas emissions by reducing our consumption and extraction of fossil fuels, reducing inequality by honouring the rights of Indigenous peoples, and enabling countries in the Global South to respond to the pandemic in their countries by cancelling debts and increasing international aid.

We are at a critical juncture for our common home. We must come together to support a global recovery to the pandemic that moves us towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Join our *Recovering Together* campaign to support a green and just recovery that will build the resilience of communities and address the global climate crisis. Watch the [campaign launch webinar](#) and visit the [campaign webpage](#) to learn how to raise awareness and funds. You will also find several [campaign resources](#), including the [Campaign Guide](#).



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