



## Our social responsibility with Laudato si' and Fratelli tutti the service of IFCA AFRICA

### GHANA

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I would like to share information on three major activities that have been inspired by Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti

#### **1. THE E-WASTE PROJECT**

Following the call of Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si* and by the commissioning of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, Caritas Ghana in 2017, launched the "Care of our Common Home" e-waste management campaign in collaboration with the Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES), an NGO of the Knights of Marshall. The aim of the campaign is to strengthen environmental awareness among the population with particular reference to e-waste, to collect, dismantle and recycle them in an orderly and safe manner, to re-train the people currently engaged in the hazardous work in the professional handling of e-waste and open up future employment prospects for others.

The problem?

Thousands of sea freight containers arrive at the seaports of Ghana everyday full of used electrical appliances such as computers, mobile phones, television sets, air conditioners, and refrigerators from Western Countries. Some of these get repaired and brought back to life, but a considerable amount end up as e-waste that are dumped in the many scrap yards spread around the country. Some people have found themselves jobs by dismantling and recycling the e-waste. Unfortunately they use methods that are not only injurious to their health but also to that of nearby residents through the heavy pollution they cause to the atmosphere.

To change then situation:

- Collection points have been established in some Diocese of the Church where a recycling Company, picks them up for recycling.
- The system of collection also provides an opportunity to mobilize civic awareness and action against improper disposal of e-waste.
- Workshops on proper management of e-waste are regularly organized for interested unemployed youth in collaboration with the support of the national Environmental Protection Agency
- The project managers have organized a national dialogue with various stakeholders to enforce laws and regulations on electronic waste management as well as developing a Social Impact Business model on Electronic Waste to attract investor.

The “Care for Our Common Home E-waste Management Project” is chalking many successes in Ghana.

## **2. SUPPORTING THE ALLEVIATION OF HUNGER AND POVERTY IN SOME COMMUNITIES**

Poverty and hunger are closely linked in Ghana and constitute one of the biggest challenge to National Governance. The twin factors define nearly 90% of all civil society actions in Ghana. Again Caritas Ghana and the Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES), are active in it.

While Agriculture accounts for the livelihoods of 60% of the Ghanaian population, poverty among rural farmers overall in Ghana is increasing especially among peasant farmers who produce the bulk of the food for the country.

Actions by the Bishops' Conference's Charity Agency - Caritas Ghana and the Knights of Marshall include:

- a. Teaming up with Civil Society organizations to promote SDG 2, focusing on the family
- b. Boosting nature-positive production in fragile ecological zones in Northern Ghana supoorting Agri-ecological practices like organic farming, composting, no-burning of farm residues etc. Many success stories exist.
- c. Public awareness creation and advocacy to address the menace of Artisanal Small-Scale Mining which is destroying large tracts of farmlands, pollutiing inland water bodies, killing fish stock and impeding health of rural populations.

## **3. SUPPORTING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S GREEN GHANA PROJECT**

Background

The Government of Ghana in April 2021 announced the GREEN GHANA PROJECT to plant five million trees this 2021. Before then, the Church in Ghana had already through its Charitable agency, Caritas Ghana formulated plans inspired by *Laudato Si*, to undertake a massive reforestation project in Ghana.

Ghana's forest cover had reduced in nearly a hundred years from 8.6 million hectares to 1.8 million with an ongoing annual deforesting rate of about 0.6% due mainly to unsustainable agriculture practices, exploitation by the timber industry, expansion in human settlements and lately, indiscriminate artisanal mining for gold.

Encouraged by the Government of Ghana's GREEN GHANA PROJECT announced in April 2021, The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) at its May 2021 Plenary Conference, launched a ONE MILLION TREES planting agenda to mark the Special Anniversary of *Laudato Si*. To this end, the various archdioceses and dioceses have since taken up the challenge to plant a variety of trees in support of the Green Ghana Project.

This call to action has encourage all Ecclesial Communities at diocesan and parish levels as well as lay societies to take concrete actions towards planting trees to achieve the Bishops' one million trees target as the Church's support to the Green Ghana Project. The Secretary General of the Conference has been tasked to coordinate and provide progress report on the tree planting to serve as a source of motivation and encouragement to all.

Based on this, the Catholic Men movement in Ghana, has decided to support all its branches to plant and nurture trees along water bodies, school compounds, churches, mosques and community lands.. The target is to plant 500,000 tree to support to contribute to the "care for our common home". While this will contribute to the national effort and the *Laudato Si* inspired Catholic Bishops initiative, the Catholic Men's project on its own merit, will qualify as a response to implementing the LSAPs.

## CONCLUSION

While most of the activities here seem to lean more on inspiration from *Laudato Si*, the positive outcomes, will no doubt contribute to the upholding of human dignity and demonstrate love for neighbour, near and far, a key message from *Fratelli Tutti*.