



**COVID - 19**  
Vatican Commission

# PREPARE THE FUTURE

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VATICAN COVID-19  
COMMISSION

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Prepare the future

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# I. OUR MISSION: PREPARE THE FUTURE

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth an epochal change. In light of this situation, as disciples of Jesus, we are called upon to follow the path of **hope** that is *bold*, and of **love** that is *political, social and ecological*, to emerge from this crisis better than before.

*"I am thinking of what comes after; of the future and of the social and economic consequences. The future has a memory. I ask you to prepare the future in two ways; with science and imagination, to rise above the challenge in front of us" (Audience with the COVID-19 Commission, Feb. 2020)*

As we move through the "recovery", we must ensure the cures and/or policies for the immediate crises are steppingstones to a more just, inclusive, and integrated set of systems, capable of enabling an integral, global healing for the long term. We do not wish to return to a "normality" that was unjust and unsustainable, but rather to *regenerate* a fairer, healthier and more caring world, offering the best of our faith and our gifts to this mission.

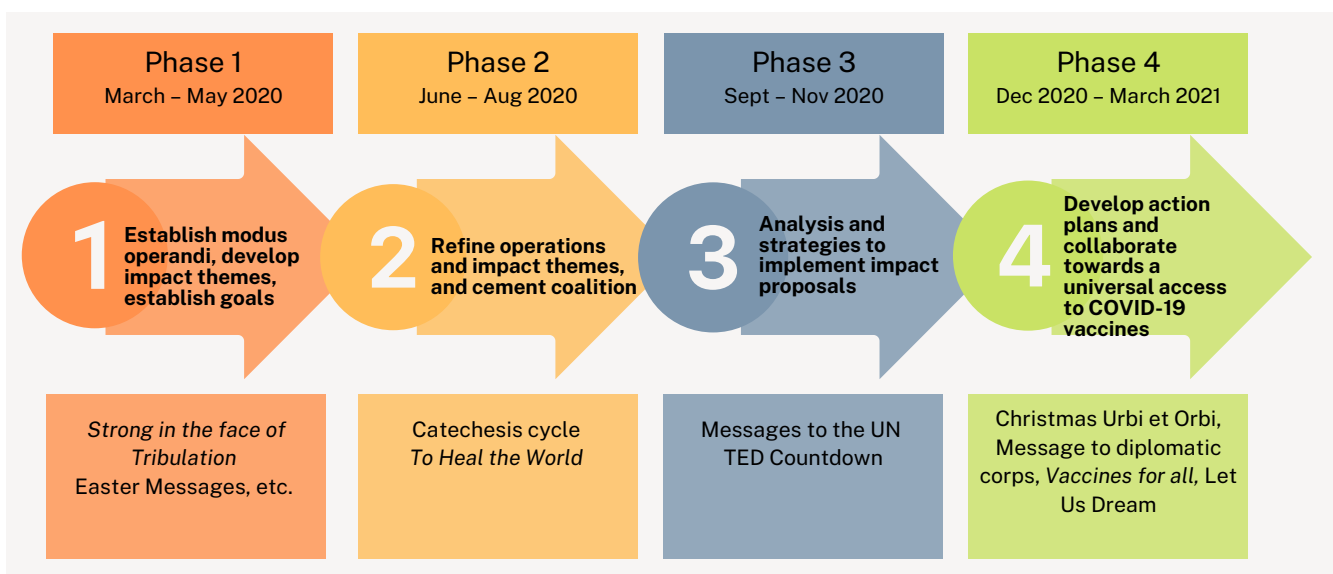
Inspired by *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, the Commission enacts Pope Francis' call to *prepare the future* through science, theological reflection, and collaboration with others, while prioritizing the least among us. Drawing on the experiences of local communities, academic experts and global platforms, the Commission seeks to *alleviate immediate suffering*, and *usher forth the transformation* of hearts, minds, and structures towards a better future for all.



The Vatican COVID-19 Commission consists of 5 Working Groups. Its collaborative and inter-dicasterial design makes use of the individual and collective experience of its members, to foster a new imagination of the possible, and to achieve what can only be done together.

## Stages of the Commission

### Our path



## II. OUR OUTREACH IN 2020



### **Listening and Responding to Local Leadership**

**Working Group 1** supported COVID-19 relief initiatives in the poorest regions of the world through the Caritas Internationalis network. It also held a series of dialogues with local churches to better understand their needs and offer support best-fitted to the local reality.

Supported over **40** COVID-19 prevention and preparedness projects around the world, through Caritas and Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD) networks.

Conducted **49** videoconferences with local church leaders, 35 of which with episcopal conferences

Mobilized over **3.8M€** in support of local initiatives aimed at guaranteeing food and personal protective equipment supply, offering psychological and spiritual support, and repurposing Catholic facilities to treat COVID-19 patients.

**+200** reports from local churches collected

Additional Caritas-supported projects totalled **18M€**, helping more than **17.3 million** people through DPIHD and Caritas activities combined

#### **Key challenges identified in 2020:**

- Food insecurity and economic uncertainty.
- Increased poverty, unemployment, and unequal access to social protections, education and public health services.
- Deterioration of mental and spiritual health.
- Reduced educational and social development opportunities for children.

#### **Local initiatives and good practices were mitigating the impact of the pandemic:**

- Information campaigns by local churches to combat misinformation.
- Church infrastructures repurposed for quarantined populations and as COVID-19 treatment centres.
- Chaplains providing spiritual support and trained to monitor communities and assist treatments.
- Local churches engaged in political advocacy vis-à-vis national governments.



### **Co-Creating Integral, Creative Solutions**

**Working Group 2** brought together a diverse set of disciplines to *analyse* systemic challenges, *discern* creative and integral solutions, and *elaborate* guidelines for action. The goal has been to equip and support decision-makers to build a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.

- Built partnerships with over **50** organizational partners, and **75** individual contributors, organized into four specialized task forces – health, security, economy and ecology.
- Completed over **150** multidisciplinary analysis papers. Some were translated into newsletters and published on the Commission's website, while others were offered as guidelines for action to political, economic, community and local church leaders, among others.
- Formulated action plans around four impact themes:
  - **Dignity** in work and jobs of the future, today
  - From one to many, new structures for the **common good**
  - Governance, peace, and security, at the heart of global **solidarity**
  - **Rebalancing** social systems with nature, in the wake of COVID-19

## Some examples of action plans

### **Vaccine for All: Promoting universal vaccine access**

- *Vaccines for all: 20 points for a fairer and healthier world*. Developed alongside the Pontifical Academy for Life, this document examines the stages of vaccine development and distribution in light of social ethics and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, with the aim of clarifying moral implications and suggesting guidelines for action to promote equitable and universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.
- *Vaccine Resource Kit*. Published on the Commission's website and written in simple and accessible language, this guide provides accurate information about pressing clinical and ethical questions surrounding COVID-19 vaccines. It also includes a family guide, messages to be adapted in local parishes, and suggested resources to integrate into homilies. It is currently being translated into different languages in order to be circulated to Bishops around the world.
- *Webinar with the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*. A collaboration between WG2 and WG4 to advance the goal of universal access to vaccines, before approximately 40 government representatives.

### **Food for all: Analyzing food security through a holistic lens**

Drawing on expertise from *World Resources Institute*, *Economy of Francesco*, *Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité* (CIDSE), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Program (WFP), among others, this analysis seeks to uncover the root causes of the deficits in global food systems (exacerbated by the pandemic), and propose a new agricultural food-production system that brings the poor to the centre and contributes to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2: *Zero Hunger*.

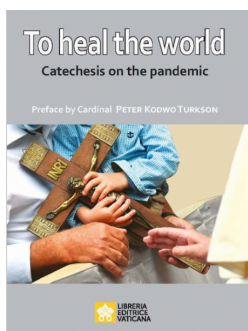
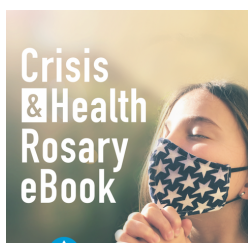
### **Laudato Si' Business Roundtables: Building a regenerative, inclusive and sustainable economy**

Inspired by the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the notion of an integral conversion, this series of videoconferences brought together leaders from global private sectors, academic institutions, and social movements to discuss the measures and policies that are necessary to reform the global economy in the post-COVID-19 era.



### **Communicating Hope and Shining a Light on Good Works**

**Working Group 3** promoted the analyses and messages prepared by the Commission, by contributing its professional communications expertise and the Vatican's media infrastructure. Its primary goal has been to inform and connect the Holy Father, the global Church, and the world, and communicate hope in the midst of the crisis.



- Produced daily and weekly press reviews, informing global audiences about the evolution of the pandemic, the work of the Commission, and the personal testimonies of COVID-19 victims.
- Published three books through Libreria Editrice Vaticana: *Strong in the Face of Tribulation*, *Life After the Pandemic* and *To Heal the World: Catechesis on the Pandemic* in five languages, alongside the eRosary Click to Pray: Crisis & Health.
- Authored and published thousands of media pieces about the pandemic in 36 languages.
- Disseminated Papal messages of hope in the midst of crisis.
- Produced podcasts, interviews, newsletters to spread the Commission's messages.
- Collaborated with WG2 to share content.

Photo: Vatican News



### **Supporting Diplomacy & Global Relations**

**Working Group 4** acted as an interlocutor with States and Intergovernmental Organizations, receiving information, elaborating reports and communicating the research, dialogues, initiatives, and reflections produced by the Commission.

- Revised and provided feedback on the work done by WG2.
- Produced weekly country-level reports on the status of COVID-19 and its impacts.
- Prepared reports and reflections on specific topics of global relevance (e.g. debt, work, sanctions and migration).
- Incorporated the Commission's messages into the official interventions of Holy See Permanent Representatives.
- Hosted the webinar "*Caring for persons, peoples and the planet in times of pandemic*" for diplomatic corps accredited before the Holy See, which advanced the Commission's call for greater international solidarity and collaboration, to guarantee universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.

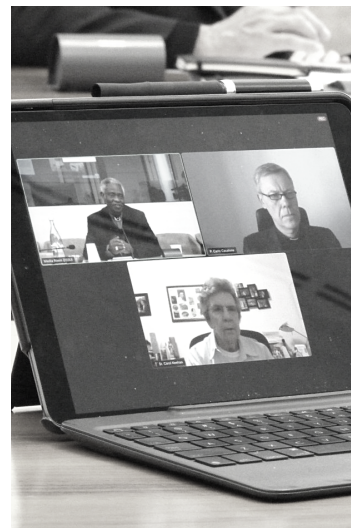


Photo: humandevlopment.va



### **Building a Pipeline of Resources**

**Working Group 5** built relationships and resource streams to financially support the Commission's work and its assistance to local churches.

Refurbished the Fondazione Buon Samaritano to fund the Commission.

Secured **+6.5M€** for grants and donations to local Churches (5M€ disinvested, 1.5M€ donated by the DPIHD).



## **Let us Pray**

***For all those that still suffer today***

***For the 2,714,517 deceased from COVID-19***

***For the 114 million who lost their jobs in 2020***

***For all those who are no longer with us, but accompany our mission...***

*"Holy Mary Mother of God, you who carried Jesus in your womb, help us to trust that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, we can participate in the Kingdom your own Son inaugurated in this world, a kingdom of light amid darkness, of justice amid so much abuse, of joy amid so much suffering. Saint Joseph, you who cared for the Holy Family, intercede so we can care for others and all of creation, so we can become the manger, and therefore cherish within us the Saviour of the world."*

- (eRosary: Crisis and Health, 2020)



### III. PRIORITIES FOR 2021

*"In times of crisis and tribulation, when we are shaken out of our sclerotic habits, the love of God comes out to purify us, to remind us that we are a people." (Let Us Dream, 2020)*

The Vatican COVID-19 Commission is a vessel through which Pope Francis expresses the Church's solicitude and care for the whole human family as it continues to face the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it responds to his call for a Church that *goes forth*; a Church that is open to listening to the real-life experiences of its people and accompanies their suffering through a loving dialogue, starting from the last.

#### Inspired by our faith

##### **Novelty and Concreteness:**

*"new wine, new wineskins" (Mk 2:22)*

Responding in a **concrete** and **novel** way to the interconnected crises (health, economic, ecological, socio-political), promoting a new way of being church and amplifying the Kingdom of God.

##### **Realism of the Gospel :**

*"fixing our eyes on Jesus" (Hb. 12:2)*

Promoting a new imagination of what is possible, with the **realism of the Gospel**, rooted in our **faith** and the principles of **Catholic Social Teaching**.

##### **Synodality in Action:**

*"to emerge from this crisis better than before, we have to do so together" (General Audience, 2 Sept. 2020)*

*Listening, connecting and inspiring people*, and world and church leaders, so that they may become **promoters of change** and **regenerators** of a more just society.

##### **Healing and Salvation:**

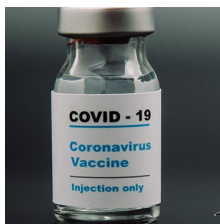
*"Jesus, who renews and reconciles every creature [...], gives us the gifts necessary to love and heal as he knew how to do" (General Audience, 30 Sept. 2020)*

Being close to the **hearts** of people and serving their needs.

##### **Integral Conversion:**

*Accompanying and being part of the process of change*. Allowing ourselves to be **enriched** by the exchange and collaboration with others.

After a year of experience in listening and accompanying to local churches, analysing the multiple dimensions of the pandemic and its impacts across the world, the Commission has identified three priority topics to orient its future action plans. These are priorities close to people's hearts, interdisciplinary and interconnected, and require personal and spiritual conversion, alongside systemic change.



## Health, food, and jobs for all

*"We need to set to work urgently to generate good policies, to design systems of social organization that reward participation, care and generosity, rather than indifference, exploitation and particular interests" (General Audience, 30 Sept. 2020)*

### Health for all

There will be no true healing until *all* are healthy. Today, access to health services and treatments is obstructed by underfunded health care systems and widespread displays of nationalism and individualism. Starting with universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, in 2021 the Commission will elaborate proposals to reformulate and rebuild public health systems in a more integral, resilient and inclusive way. It will address the economic, ecological, political and legal obstacles to universal health.

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*"Frequently no measures are taken until after people's health has been irreversibly affected" (Laudato Si', 21)*

### Food for all

There is enough food to feed the world, yet millions of people still go to bed hungry. In 2021, the Commission will take advantage of the opportunities created by the present crisis and the global attention generated by the upcoming *UN Food Systems Summit*. It will seek to reformulate current global food systems, with a view to ensuring that the cost of universal and equitable access to food does not fall on the poor nor the planet.

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*"... millions of people suffer and die from hunger. At the same time, tons of food are thrown away. This constitutes a genuine scandal. Hunger is criminal; food is an inalienable right" (Fratelli Tutti, 189)*

### Jobs for all

Millions have lost their jobs and businesses are closing around the world, bringing grave social consequences. In 2021, the Commission will promote a spiritual and economic revaluation of work, suggesting actions and policies to promote the jobs of the future (dignified, fulfilling and sustainable), today.

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*"... the creation of jobs as an essential part of [the] service to the common good." (Laudato Si', 129)*

## Priorities for each Group

### 1 *Listening and Responding to Local Leadership*

- Continue to dialogue with local churches and support their initiatives. Adapt questionnaires to the evolution of the pandemic and respond to new challenges presented by the virus.
- Enrich the dialogues:
  - **See:** achieve a thematic organization of dialogues and explore the possibility of their publication alongside WG3.
  - **Judge:** identify trends and prevailing challenges across regions and discern the new face of poverty alongside WG2 and WG4.
  - **Act:** elaborate holistic proposals to support churches in their service, in light of the new situation of the pandemic.
- Inform local churches around the world about proposals elaborated by WG2 – especially those relating to health for all (eg. Vaccine Resource Kit), food for all and jobs for all.
- Identify and support local, people-centered and sustainable food production initiatives.

### 2 *Co-Creating Integral, Creative Solutions*

- **Vaccines for all.** Continue collaborating with global experts and actors involved in achieving universal access to vaccines, developing interdisciplinary and integral proposals to overcome obstacles and propose integral health.
- **Food for all.** Continue the multidisciplinary analysis of food insecurity, developing proposals in favour of more resilient, inclusive and sustainable food production systems. Deepen the analysis of the cultural, ecological and spiritual aspects of food.
  - Collaborate with WG4 on three preparatory webinars, in light of the pre-UN Food System Summit, “Food for health, food for life, food for all”:
    - 17 May: Role of women in guaranteeing food security (hosted by Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture)
    - 26 May: Role of jobs, innovation and finance in promoting food justice (hosted by the DPIHD)
    - 31 May: High-level panel discussion about food and integral human development (hosted by Holy See Secretariat of State)

- **Jobs for all.** Continue collaborating with the International Labour Organization in its Future of Work after Laudato Si’ initiative.
- **Catholic actors towards COP26.** Continue coordinating catholic actors and organizations including Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), Ecclesial Networks for Integral Ecology (REPAM, REBAC, REMAM, RAOE), Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE), Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), among others, to create a joint narrative and action plan in light of the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow.



### **3** *Communicating Hope and Shining a Light on Good Works*

- Continue assisting the Holy Father in the diffusion of his messages of hope in the context of the pandemic (e.g. Catechesis)
- Continue the production of daily and weekly press reviews to inform global audiences about the evolution of the pandemic, the Commission's activities, and the personal testimonies of people affected by the pandemic.
- Collaborate with WG1 to find trends in the dialogues with local churches, and with WG4 in to discern trends in bilateral and multilateral dialogues.
- Continue assisting WG2 in the communication of its proposals, analysis and initiatives, including spiritual messages (e.g. eRosary).
- Continue adapting and communicating the Commission's messages through diverse formats and platforms.
- Continue communicating hope amidst the crisis

### **4** *Supporting Diplomacy & Global Relations*

- Continue incorporating the Commission's messages into the interventions of the Holy See's Permanent Representatives.
- Continue collecting information about the pandemic, based on the reports received from apostolic nunciatures and national and international organizations.
- Continue to analyse the work of WG2 work and conduct reflections of the current global scenario, in light of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Collaborate with WG2 on areas of common interest and share results through diplomatic channels (e.g. "Food for health, food for life, food for all" seminars).

### **5** *Building a Pipeline of Resources*

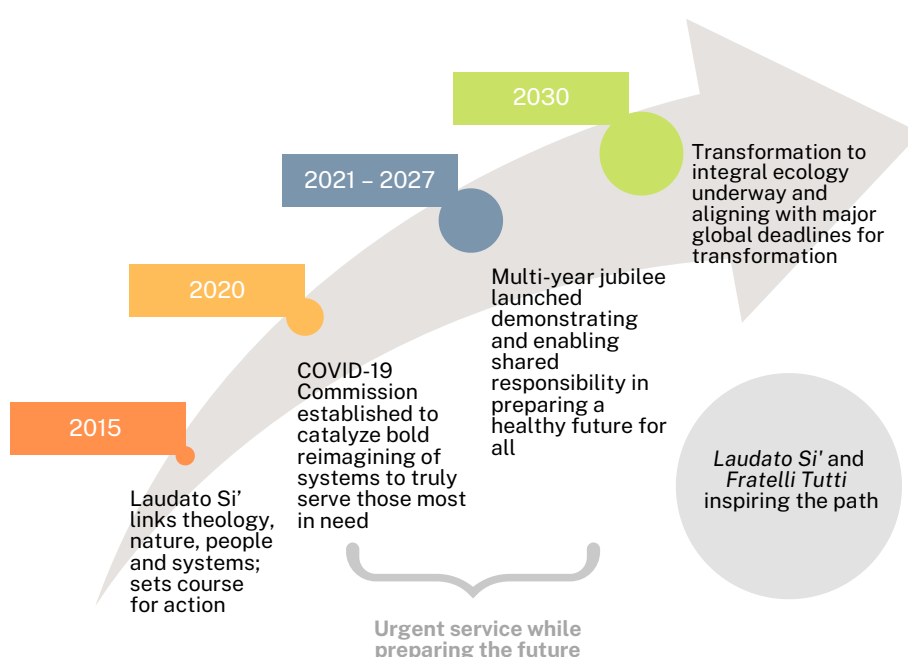
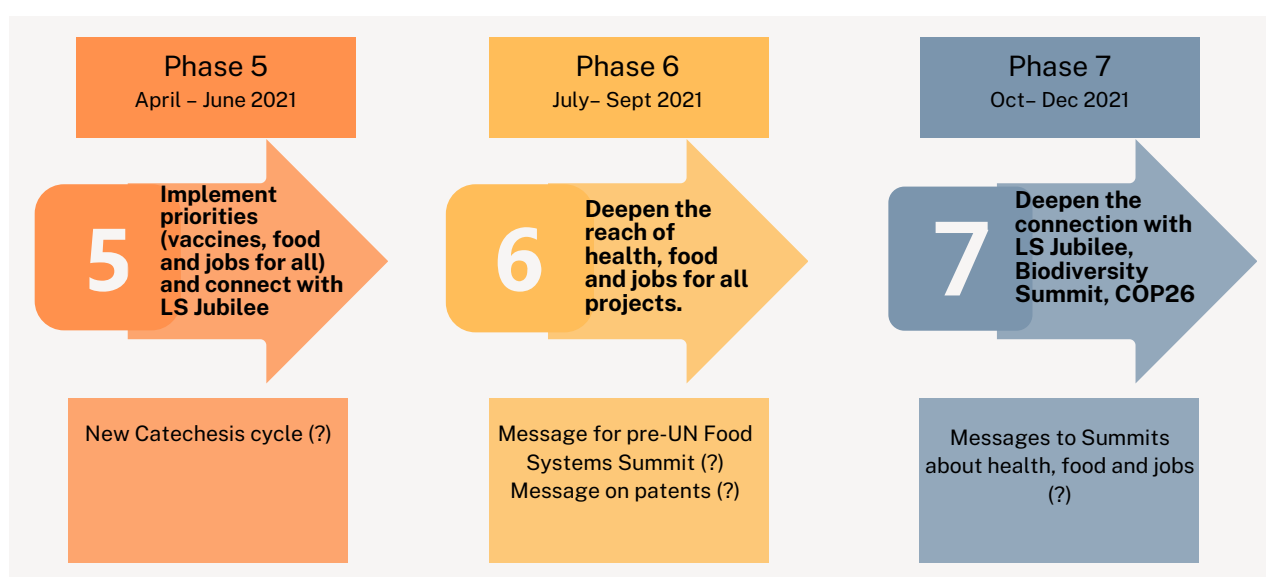
- Maintain partnerships with current donors and philanthropic organizations.
- Liaise with the Global Solidarity Fund for an incoming donation of \$500,000 for the first semester of 2021 to cover the operational costs of the Latin America task force of WG2, and other projects.
- Liaise with FADICA for an incoming donation from Simon & Schuster publishing company of \$USD 1 million for the Commission for 2021.
- Extend the pipeline of resources to continue supporting and expanding the work of the Commission.
- Produce a financial report for the Commission before July 1st, 2021.
- Continue helping the DPIHD build its capacity to fulfill its new mission, that includes the Vatican COVID-19 Commission.

***"Hope is audacious,  
and so, let us  
encourage one another  
to dream big. Brothers  
and sisters, let us learn  
to dream big!"  
- General Audience, 23 Sept.  
2020***

## IV. TOWARDS THE POST-COVID FUTURE

After the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, we must not forget the social emergencies that the virus has confronted us with, nor of the emergency of the ongoing ecological crisis. The countries of the world have aligned themselves behind the Sustainable Development Goals and have called for a *Decade of Action*.

The church, following the indication of Pope Francis, has called for a 7-year Laudato Si' Jubilee, that will commence in May 2021. The Commission intends to contribute to this action plan with its work methodology (agile, creative and synodal) and with its experience in eclesial dialogue and interdisciplinary analysis.



Palazzo San Calisto, 00120 Città del Vaticano

Twitter: @VaticanNews and @VaticanIHD

Email: [vcc@humandevlopment.va](mailto:vcc@humandevlopment.va)

Phone: +39 06 698 92767

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