



DICASTERO PER IL SERVIZIO  
DELLO SVILUPPO UMANO INTEGRALE

### Press release

**In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, a charitable gesture by the Pope:  
the *Populorum Progressio* Foundation  
finances 168 projects in 23 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

The complex crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Populorum Progressio Foundation, held on 29 and 30 July 2020 in telematic mode, during which, in addition to analyzing the consequences caused by the coronavirus pandemic in the Latin American and Caribbean region, 138 of the numerous social development projects presented were selected, focusing mainly on those aimed at helping to mitigate its effects in the short and medium term, developed by the communities and regions most in need.

In addition to these, another 30 food aid projects, already in operation, were approved by the Board of Directors in June, in response to a request by Pope Francis, in virtue of the collaboration between the Foundation and the Vatican Commission COVID-19, established by the Pontiff in the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development, in collaboration with other Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and other agencies, in order to express the Church's concern and love for the entire human family in the face of this pandemic. Consequently, the total is 168 projects involving 23 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The meeting was chaired by Bishop Javier del Rio Alba, Archbishop of Arequipa, Peru, as president of the Board of Directors. Fr. Luis Ferney López and the operative team of the Secretariat assured the perfect development of the meeting.

The President of the Foundation itself, Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development, to which the Foundation is entrusted, intervened in the meeting to thank and encourage its members to continue working with dedication and enthusiasm on behalf of those who need their support in this difficult situation. Very significant was also the participation of the Secretary of the Dicastery, Monsignor Bruno-Marie Duffé, who in his message stressed that "it is not a question of preparing for the future, but of preparing for the future", quoting Pope Francis and that "the charity of the Church must be a testimony of faith and hope and solidarity must help us to transform fear into hope".

As usual, this annual meeting was actively attended by representatives of the Committee for Charitable Interventions in favour of the Third World of the Italian Episcopal Conference, which finances most of the projects approved. Also present were delegates from Cross Catholic Outreach, an American charity that has been funding a significant number of them since 2018. A special welcome was given to the project coordinator for Latin America of the

Spanish organization Manos Unidas who, for the first time, was present at the meeting in order to lay the foundations for a joint commitment between the Foundation and the development NGO of the Catholic Church and volunteers who from Spain promote thousands of initiatives around the world. No less significant was the presence of Father Paulo César Barajas, from the Archdiocese of Guadalajara, Mexico, who has worked in the Dicastery for many years and will be collaborating with the Foundation.

In the face of this crisis of global proportions that we are experiencing, these projects are intended to be a tangible sign of the Pope's charity, as well as an appeal to all Christians and people of good will to practice the virtue of charity and solidarity ever better, ensuring that during this pandemic "no one is left behind", as the Holy Father Pope Francis has asked.

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