

# FINAL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT

Phase 1

2023-24 YEAR 4



# DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

This year stands as a significant milestone for the *Every Second Counts* initiative, as I am delighted to report that, as we conclude its first phase, we have reached our four-year target of £5 million of emergency funds. I write this with gratitude to the generosity of you all, who have partnered with us, to provide vital emergency assistance when the need has been greatest.

Over the past four years, your donations have enabled CAFOD to support 108 projects in 18 countries, reaching many thousands of people in times of crisis, particularly when it seems as though much of the world has remained ignorant of, and unresponsive to, their situation.

We have been able to respond swiftly to many unreported and protracted emergencies, providing livelihood support, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), food assistance, essential non-food items, shelter and protection. We've worked with local partners to strengthen their capacity to respond to emergencies when faced with conflicts, hurricanes, adverse effects of COVID-19, floods and droughts. Last year alone, projects supported by *Every Second Counts* reached 52,320 people.

As you'll read in the report, we've also gone beyond immediate assistance and influenced the wider humanitarian sector through our advocacy work — bringing partners and their expertise to the forefront of humanitarian discussions at regional, national and international levels. This ensures that the voices of those who experience these crises are at the heart of decision making and can influence the changes needed. As well as your generous donations at a philanthropic level, we've also helped our global partners to access funding from institutions, ensured that they remain safe, and have provided short-term staffing support to our partners as they step into these most difficult circumstances.

## **But we can't stop there.**

Devastatingly, more people are displaced now than at any other time since the beginning of the century, with 1 in 73 people worldwide forcibly displaced and 1 out of 5 children either living in or fleeing from conflict. We are living in increasingly precarious times.

And around the world, the need for humanitarian assistance grows. This year alone, it is estimated that 300 million people around the world will need

emergency assistance and protection. For example, since the start of the conflict in Sudan in 2023, the number of people in need has nearly doubled; rising from 15.8 million to 30 million.

This year marked thirteen years since the start of the Syrian Civil War which has displaced more than 13 million people and killed approximately 300,000 civilians. It also marks one year since the devastating earthquake which killed over 55,000 people. To compound this further, cholera outbreaks and climate-induced crises have meant that communities continue to require humanitarian assistance just to meet their basic health, infrastructure and sustenance needs.

Through the *Every Second Counts* initiative, and working with our local partners, we have been able to provide vital assistance to communities in Syria, Sudan and other countries, through food, hygiene kits, counselling, cash assistance and shelter.

As we conclude Phase 1 of the *Every Second Counts* initiative, we celebrate all that has been achieved, and continue to be thankful for the generosity that has enabled us to continue to stand alongside our partners and so many communities in times of crisis.

We now look ahead to launching Phase 2, which I am delighted will continue until 2028. As we enter this second phase, we give thanks for all we have achieved together, but we also pray that perhaps, one day, we are no longer needed. We hope and pray that our common home is transformed to reflect the Kingdom of God, with social, economic, political and cultural systems and structures that put 'the last first', so that all people, communities and the earth, may flourish. But until then, we know we stand together alongside so many in need.

**Thank you for all the support** you have provided, and continue to provide, for this vital work. We look forward to partnering with you this year and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, there is a thin black line that starts under the 'C' and ends with an arrowhead pointing to the right.

Christine Allen, CAFOD Director



BURQA

SERVICE POINT STORE

SAF+D DROUGHT EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR DISTRICT

HOUSE  
ATED: 10

LOYALTY

# GLOBAL REACH, LOCAL PRESENCE

Cover page: A mobile health unit travels between villages affected by floods in Pakistan.  
© Community World Service Asia (CWSA)

Page three: Christine Allen, CAFOD Director (left) meets with Andrea Arigelle from Caritas Marsabit (right) at a visit to a food distribution centre in northern Kenya.

As part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church's global humanitarian and development network with a presence in 200 countries, we are uniquely placed to support people in the most difficult circumstances where no other assistance is available. Through our network of partners and our experienced humanitarian teams, CAFOD has both the reach, expertise, and ability to be alongside communities when they most need it.

**Your generous support to *Every Second Counts* this past year has meant that we have been able to support 26 projects in 17 countries.\***

“

***Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”***

(Romans 5:2)

**£937,695**

**26 projects**

**10 in Africa**

**11 in Asia and Middle East**

**4 in Latin America**

\*Due to security and confidentiality, some countries are not disclosed.

## ASIA & MIDDLE EAST:

Armenia  
Bangladesh  
India  
Israel and the occupied  
Palestinian territories  
Lebanon  
Pakistan  
Syria.



COLOMBIA

GUATEMALA

BRAZIL

## LATIN AMERICA:

Brazil  
Colombia  
Guatemala

MOROCCO

ISRAEL AND  
PALESTINIAN

LEBANON

ARMENIA

PAKISTAN

INDIA

BANGLADESH

SYRIA

SUDAN

SOUTH  
SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

DRC

KENYA

## AFRICA:

Democratic Republic of Congo  
Ethiopia  
Kenya  
Morocco  
South Sudan  
Sudan

# A YEAR OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE



Nevado del Ruiz volcano

## Nevado del Ruiz volcano, Colombia: An emergency preparedness story

### The context

Since 24th March 2023 there has been a significant increase in the seismic activity of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in north-west Colombia. On the 30 March, the Colombian Geological Service changed the alert level from yellow to orange, indicating that there was a risk of an eruption larger than any seen in the previous ten years, in the coming weeks. The Government and hospitals later issued a red alert, preparing those in the nearby areas for a possible catastrophe; an eruption in 1985 produced a landslide which caused 25,000 deaths, the deadliest in recorded history.

### Our response

Thanks to *Every Second Counts* donors, we were able to provide our partner, Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral

Social-Caritas Colombia (SNPS-CC), with £25,000. SNPS-CC made an assessment of the area and found that the ash fall and expulsion of toxic gases had recently contaminated water sources. They also discovered that local communities did not have emergency kits and lacked sufficient information about safe evacuation routes and what to do in case of volcanic activity.

This project was tailored to the needs and context of local communities with them playing a central role in the decision-making process. It reached 370 of the most vulnerable families, incorporating **providing emergency and first aid kits** to families, **improving coordination and collaboration** among communities and local authorities, and **increased public awareness** through communications from local media and workshops on safe evacuation routes. Hygiene training was also organised to improve water quality and mitigate the risk of transmitting disease through contaminated water.

The local population is now ready to respond to the risks that they are exposed to and know how to work together to reach safety in case of an eruption.



**CAFOD is keen to respect human dignity and be sensitive to crises that receive less attention"**

Abbe Jean-Luis, Director of Caritas Bukavu, DRC.



**EMERGENCY AND FIRST AID KITS**



**REACHED 370 VULNERABLE FAMILIES**



**RAN WORKSHOPS**



Scan to hear from our Colombian partner on how they're preparing for emergencies.

## Emergency preparedness and helping local partners to access more funding

With thanks to your donations to *Every Second Counts*, our partners can respond quickly and effectively to emergencies and are in a better position to secure humanitarian funding from major institutions such as the UN, EU, and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Some funding is only available for rapid responses, requiring partners to complete the entire project — from proposal to delivery — within 45 days of receiving the funds.

To prepare for emergencies, we work with partners by allocating funds for staffing capacity; collecting data to properly assess community needs; setting up contracts with suppliers; accessing vehicles and implementing

pilot projects. These preparations ensure partners can meet the strict requirements of major humanitarian funders and reduce their project start-up costs.

This type of support has enabled partners in countries such as Ukraine and Yemen to access significant, long-term institutional funding to support their essential work.

When partners apply for this institutional funding, they can present a strong proof of concept and evidence of their experience, knowledge and capacity to deliver. In some cases, CAFOD is also able to commit co-funding to projects. This all significantly increases partners' success rate in securing funding.



# El Niño and flooding in Guatemala

## What is El Niño?

El Niño is the warm phase of the complex global weather phenomenon known as the 'El Niño Southern Oscillation' (ENSO). It creates a periodic heating and cooling of surface temperatures in the southern Pacific Ocean. The cool phase is known as La Niña, which is expected to arrive later in 2024.

El Niño typically has a damaging effect on agricultural livelihoods and food security, leading to significant human suffering and economic loss. The 2015-16 El Niño episode severely affected over 60 million people, causing 23 countries to appeal for international humanitarian assistance totalling US \$5 billion. However, the impact of El Niño has been mitigated in cases where governments and communities have the tools, training, and knowledge to prepare for extreme weather events.

CAFOD monitors the effects of El Niño across our core programmes including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan, and Guatemala — as well as in a small number of identified high-risk areas where we do not have a core programme presence. We provide a set of anticipatory measures tailored to each country and region so that our teams and partners can act to reduce the risk of a disaster.

## The context

In 2023, Guatemala was identified as being at very high risk of being affected by El Niño. Seasonal forecasts for July-September anticipated above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall, which would increase risks of dengue fever, drought, and crop failures for small-scale farmers. The risk of flooding also increased as the hard, drought-affected soil is not able to absorb the moisture from the rains; causing water to pool and run-off.

In early November 2023, a sudden cold front triggered unseasonably heavy rains which affected over four million people. In the Quiché department, rains continued intermittently for the next three months. Our partner Asociacion Unidos Por La Vida (ASUVI) coordinated with authorities and community leaders to evacuate vulnerable families, gather information on access routes, and organise their move to safe places.

After three days of continuous rains, there were reports of houses being damaged due to trees falling, landslides, and river flooding. Some families were displaced and some moved to a community hall. All families were cut off for more than 30 days due to damaged access roads, blocked by landslides, and river flooding.

## Our response

Thanks to *Every Second Counts* donors' support we were able to provide ASUVI with £31,385 so they could supply **emergency food packages** to 2,340 people from 390 families across three rural communities. These food packages contained three meals a day for one month. The families were interviewed after the distribution of food kits and they expressed their gratitude. They shared how practical support like this helped them keep calm during this time, and freed them to contribute to the reconstruction of roads and their homes.



£31,385



**EMERGENCY  
FOOD PACKAGES**

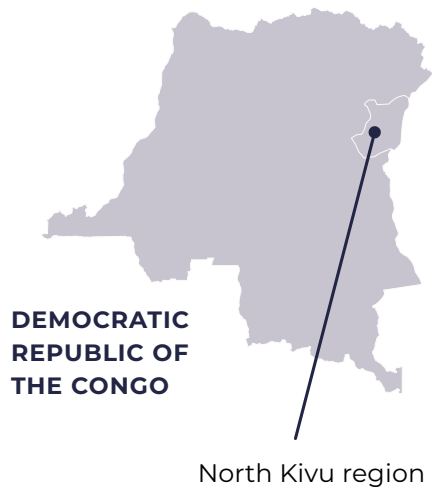


**REACHED  
390 FAMILIES**



Community members collect emergency food kits in Nueva Esperanza, Guatemala, January 2024. Asociacion Unidos por la Vida





# Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mushimiyimana, a mother-of-four, receives a one-month food ration consisting of 25kg of maize flour, 25kg of rice, 10kg of beans, 2 litres of oil, and salt.



“  
**Thanks to the food distribution I receive, I’m still hopeful that my twin daughters won’t die. I didn’t know where to go. I was just waiting for them to die because my breasts had no milk left to feed them.**

**But now I’m eating well and my children are suckling properly. What’s more, their health has already improved. May God bless the source of this aid and those who brought it to us!”**

Mushimiyimana, DRC

## The context

The resurgence of the M23 rebellion in the DRC began in 2022 and armed conflict between M23, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), and other armed groups has continued, leading to high levels of displacement among the civilian population in the North Kivu region.

Latest figures indicate that 75,687 people have been displaced, bringing the total number of internally displaced people in the North Kivu province to 2,794,179.

Many have taken refuge in regions such as Goma, Bweremana, and Sake, which were considered safe, while others crossed the border into neighbouring countries.

## Our response

Thanks to *Every Second Counts* donations we were able to provide our partner with £40,000 to respond. In March 2023 CAFOD’s team visited Lushagala Camp, located between Goma and Sake. The team reported that the camp was grossly overcrowded. Housing more than 73,505 individuals, the conditions were tough. Working with local partner SOCOAC (Solidarité Coopérative Agricole du Congo), CAFOD offered one month’s emergency support by focusing on the **distribution of food** to 450 of the most vulnerable households in the camp.

Prior to the distribution of food packs, simulation activities enabled people to better prepare for their distribution roles and provide greater support to those receiving the parcels. Suggestion boxes were also set up at distribution centres, and various awareness-raising activities were conducted throughout the camp.

Different camp committees and community leaders participated in a **workshop on the basic humanitarian standards of quality and accountability**, including feedback and complaints management. A review was held at the end of each distribution session, which increased the credibility of, and trust in, the programme. A post-distribution monitoring study among households found that they were completely satisfied with the behaviour and respect shown by the distributors of provisions, and the transparency of the selection process.

In such difficult circumstances, the dignity of those who are seeking support is respected in every aid response and in turn everyone involved recognises their own respective agency and ability to contribute and work together.



**£40,000**



**REACHED 450 HOUSEHOLDS**



**EMERGENCY FOOD PACKAGES**



**RAN WORKSHOPS**

## **CAFOD's work with Refugees and Internally Displaced People — lessons in commitment and resistance.**

Increasing levels of conflict across the world means that our work with refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) is becoming a greater feature of our humanitarian programmes.

Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh hosts the world's largest refugee camp. Our partner Caritas Bangladesh was one of the first humanitarian actors to respond in 2017 and to date, has supported over one million people. They have been continuously responding to the emergency needs of Rohingya refugees through distributing food and non-food items, and working with these refugee communities to construct shelters, plan and upgrade settlements, set up WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities, and provide community-based protection for families and children.

In other work with refugees and IDPs, community service organisations and women-led initiatives have started projects such as gyms that are safe spaces for women and children, providing training in the repair and maintenance of camps, and campaigning and advocating for the provision of hygiene and menstrual kits, and training in livelihoods. In one project in the Middle East, one woman received training on producing detergents, shared this knowledge with her husband, and together they opened a shop.

With many conflicts now continuing for over a decade, we continue to be inspired by the hope, resilience, innovation and community shown and are constantly reminded that we have so much to learn from each other.

Left page: Mushimiymana receiving food rations.  
© SOCOAC.

This page: A camp for internally displaced people following conflict in the DRC.  
© Bitita Dany/ Caritas Australia





# CAFOD's humanitarian advocacy work – local leadership of crisis response

CAFOD's local partners are often at the frontlines of crises. The church, faith-based organisations, and other local groups we support have relationships with those who are the most unrepresented and are often furthest away from established infrastructure. They work in ways that can more effectively empower communities to cope in times of crisis because they are themselves rooted in those communities.

For these reasons, we invest a proportion of your generous *Every Second Counts* donations into supporting our local partners to bring that experience to the attention of decision-makers in the United Nations, governments and other agencies responsible for coordinating the wider emergency response.

In this way, we take our practical emergency response experience and use that to influence the approach of others, which enables us to multiply the impact of our work and that of our local partners. Three priorities have been identified by our local partners and humanitarian staff:

## 1. Promoting local leadership in crises and decision-making to ensure effective response

- Most international agencies tend to centre their own role not only in how they communicate about countries in crisis, but also in terms of aid response. We believe this needs to change, and we work with our local partners to get donors, UN agencies, governments and other NGOs to deliver on commitments made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit to make humanitarian response 'as local as possible, as international as necessary'.
- In Ukraine, we have facilitated a sustained dialogue between donors, the UN-led humanitarian country team, and a new alliance of national civil society organisations working in the emergency response. This has provided a space for local leaders to present their feedback on how international organisations can better support them. This process has already led to practical changes in both how international agencies support local groups, and in how donor governments – including the UK embassy – hold international agencies accountable for this.

## 2. Securing adequate and quality funding for local organisations

- There is inadequate direct funding to local organisations, and funding that is given often does not cover their vital running costs.
- CAFOD, in collaboration with the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), developed a framework for responses that includes a mandatory funding line to cover some vital costs for local partners, including financial administration, security, and staff costs. This initiative is already driving changes in policy and



The picture shows a local medic at a National Conference involving donor governments, UN agencies and other NGOs. He is explaining how short-term funding provided by other agencies only covers the cost of medical supplies, but doesn't fund the transport or insurance for medics to deliver it.

practice among UK international agencies due to the DEC's significant influence on its own member agencies. Those DEC commitments are also now being rolled-out in DEC-funded responses in the Syria/Türkiye earthquake response, Afghanistan and Ukraine. In this way, good practices advocated for by CAFOD's local partners are now being taken up by other agencies around the world.

### **3. Promoting equitable, empowering partnerships with local civil society organisations on emergency response**

- The wider international aid system remains heavily skewed towards 'upwards' accountability to donors and international agencies, rather than 'downwards' accountability to crisis-affected communities and the local organisations that represent them. CAFOD is



Distribution of seeds and tools in South Sudan. A strategy with clear measurable indicators to track progress on localisation has been implemented in South Sudan, which takes action to address opportunities or challenges arising from monitoring this.

working with local partners, and with the entry-points we have with donor governments such as the UK and other relevant funders, to make equitable and empowering partnerships with community groups a priority.

- In South Sudan, Sudan, Afghanistan and Ukraine we are working with the UN to develop country-specific localisation strategies with clear measurable indicators to track progress on empowering local responders to the crisis ('localisation'). When the local groups rooted in communities affected by the crisis have a voice and their priorities are heard, then emergency responses help to ensure more people survive.

One of the greatest strengths in our advocacy work is our membership of the global Catholic Church, which offers us a far-reaching network of Church structures from parish to Vatican levels. This network, along with our partners' strong connections with other faith actors, enhances our humanitarian coordination, communication and crisis response.

Our humanitarian advocacy work is based on the Catholic Social Teaching principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. Subsidiarity emphasises that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected and larger organisations should only intervene when necessary to address issues beyond local capacity. Solidarity promotes a commitment to the humanity of all people, irrespective of national boundaries and beliefs, and fosters partnership between people and organisations across borders. This way of working means that CAFOD's support for locally-led emergency response is respected across the wider humanitarian sector.

Compared with many other international agencies, our long-term partnerships create deeper relationships and means that CAFOD and our partners are trusted to accompany communities as they survive, rebuild and prepare for future emergencies.

Thank you for donating funds for communities in times of crisis. Please continue to raise the voices of these communities in your networks and your prayers.

“

***I ask everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values. At the same time, I cannot deny that it is necessary to be honest and recognize that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level.”***

**Pope Francis, Laudate Deum #69**

# Wellbeing and resilience support for Bedouin communities in Southern Israel

## The context

On 7 October 2023 hostilities erupted in Gaza after a Hamas attack on Israel in which over 1,400 people were killed, and around 230 were taken as hostages to Gaza. In response, Israel declared war and ordered civilians in northern Gaza to evacuate towards the south. As of June 2024, over 36,000 Palestinians have been killed and 82,000 injured, and almost two million have had to flee their homes. A concurrent rise in violence in the West Bank has made this the deadliest period for West Bank Palestinians since UN OCHA began recording casualties in 2005.

Less reported are the Palestinian Bedouin communities who live in the Negev, southern Israel. Bedouins are traditionally nomadic Arab tribes who, since 1948, began to live in a mixture of government-built townships, and Bedouin villages. The Israeli government does not recognise some of these villages, meaning that they are often left unconnected to electricity or a water supply. They are being particularly marginalised during this time of crisis, with one regional council reporting that Bedouin

are 2,200 times more likely to be killed by rocket fire having not been provided with bomb shelters or sirens to give warnings of attacks. Some have also been taken as hostages. This is in addition to Bedouin students in the Negev routinely experiencing racism and persecution.

## Our response

CAFOD has been supporting work in Israel which seeks to build trust between different communities for many years. Our partner, Sadaka Reut — which works with both Jewish Israelis and Palestinian citizens of Israel — has been working with Bedouin communities for five years. It was through the long-standing strong ties with affected communities that, in October 2023, the young people who were participating in educational programmes specifically requested help.

CAFOD is supporting a project which aims to provide groups with communal resilience. Thanks to the immediate release of £10,000 of emergency funding made possible through *Every Second Counts*, Sadaka Reut has been able to address the urgent needs of the community. This funding has provided resilience-building activities and has also led to documenting traditional history. All of this despite the challenges of working in a community facing profound insecurity.

As Palestinian Bedouin women face a unique set of intersectional challenges for their national, ethnic and gender identities, the programme has specifically been designed to cater to women.

## Feedback

The project aims to go beyond survival and meeting basic needs and aspires to search for hope and sources of strength within their communities as a way to process the ongoing trauma and thereby to increase their resilience.



“

***We must create spaces in which Palestinian and Jewish youth may feel equal, respected and recognised. We must help foster a new generation that will act together to bring about their vision of a shared, just society.”***

CAFOD Israeli partner —  
Sadaka Reut

The project has enabled both individuals and groups to develop a more positive outlook and greater self-esteem and has supported participants to develop skills which enable them to advocate for change.

One participant entered the group insistent that nothing will ever change but, as the sessions went on, began to express feelings of hope rather than despair. Another went from not speaking up to proudly proclaiming that she could be an example for others despite her struggles; and in learning about their history, group participants experienced a profound shift in their consciousness and self-understanding and can see the power in using art for social change.

Other institutions and communities have now approached Sadaka Reut to bring programming to their members. CAFOD hopes to continue supporting this work in the new academic year beginning September 2024.

This work is even more vital than ever, and we will continue to seek ways to contribute to a long-term, just peace in the region for all.

“

***War is always a defeat”***

**Pope Francis**

Support group learning about  
Bedouin history and culture.  
© Sadaka Reut





# DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS BY COUNTRY

This year a total of **£937,695** was raised through *Every Second Counts*.

REGION	COUNTRY	EMERGENCY	FUNDS
Africa	Democratic Republic of Congo	Conflict	£40,000
Africa	Ethiopia	Conflict and Drought	£94,213**
Africa	Kenya	Drought	£94,000**
Africa	South Sudan	Conflict Conflict Conflict Conflict Conflict	£18,063** £76,172** £18,185 £30,000** £34,144**
Africa	Sudan	Conflict Conflict	£42,201** £20,741**
AME	Armenia	Conflict	£19,000
AME	Bangladesh	Conflict	£50,000
AME	India	Conflict	£1,000
AME	Lebanon	Conflict Floods	£25,000** £25,000**

Continued >

AME	Morocco	Earthquake	£30,000
AME	Pakistan	Floods	£1,453*
AME	Israel - Occupied Palestinian Territory	Conflict Conflict	£10,000 £75,000**
AME	Syria	Floods	£24,545**
Latin America	Brazil	Drought	£25,000**
Latin America	Colombia	Volcano Emergency Preparedness	£25,000 £9,474
Latin America	Guatemala	Floods	£31,385
	Not Disclosed	Conflict	£10,000**
	Not Disclosed	Conflict	£5,000**

\* Contribution to wider appeal

\*\* Contribution to  
larger project

NB Due to confidentiality  
some countries are  
not disclosed

NEED	ACTION	FUNDS
Surge capacity	Deploying professionals and filling gaps until our partners can step in.	£41,248
Humanitarian alliances	Influencing the humanitarian sector and bringing partners' experience to the forefront of these discussions.	£20,624
Humanitarian funding	Helping partners access more funding.	£20,624
Security capacity	Ensuring that our staff and partners are safe and that they are equipped to keep others safe.	£20,624

# When disasters hit, lives are destroyed. Survivors lose homes, they lose land, they lose loved ones.

Your support has enabled people in crisis situations to be able to act fast, access emergency assistance, and rebuild their lives in a dignified way. Our partners remain in these areas long after an emergency has passed, working with communities as they rebuild their lives and ensure that they are better prepared if an emergency strikes again.

And for all of this, we are very grateful.

**Together, we make sure that  
EVERY SECOND COUNTS.**

**Thank you**

“

***Peace is primarily a gift of God, for it is he who has left us his peace (cf. Jn 14:27). Yet it is also a responsibility incumbent upon all of us: “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt 5:9). To strive for peace. A word so simple, yet so demanding and rich in meaning.”***

Pope Francis, address to members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, January 2024

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REGULATOR**



**EverySecondCounts**  
PREPARE | SURVIVE | REBUILD