CALLING FOR DEBT JUSTICE

Many of the world's poorest countries are being pushed into a deepening debt crisis, forced to make huge payments owed on loans from wealthy banks and hedge funds. 34 African countries allocate more money to servicing debt than to health or education. Countries have often paid back the debt several times over but will never clear it because of extortionate interest rates imposed by banks and other powerful private lenders. They persistently refuse to co-operate in international debt relief schemes intended to help in a crisis and may even sue impoverished countries. When hit by cyclones and other disasters, they must borrow yet more and so get trapped in a vicious cycle of spiralling debt.

Senior Church leaders repeatedly call for urgent action on this global debt crisis, because of its devastating impact on millions of people.

Cardinal Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla from South Sudan says, "When debt repayment takes priority over essential services, the poorest suffer most. A debt system that prevents vulnerable nations from investing in their people undermines justice, human dignity and long-term stability". Although nearly 70% of the population rely on humanitarian aid, last year the High Court in London ordered this desperately fragile country to pay almost half of government annual revenue to a commercial bank.

The cardinal appeals to us to show solidarity with prayer, and by urging the UK government to use its unique position decisively to fix the grossly unfair global debt system. (In fact, almost 90% of debt contracts between the poorest countries and powerful private lenders are governed by English law, given the pivotal role of the City of London in global finance.)

Please sign the new petition after Mass this weekend or online:

https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/189582/petition/1

It calls on the Prime Minister to:

1. Pass a UK Debt Justice Law—without delay-

to require private lenders to participate in debt relief fairly so they can no longer profit hugely from countries struggling with unsustainable debts. This can be done at no cost to the UK taxpayer.

2. Lead urgent reform of the global debt system

Use the UK's G20 presidency to bring governments together to fix the broken global debt system and guarantee fast, fair and effective debt relief for countries in crisis.

You can find out more at **https://cafod.org.uk/news/campaigning-news/global-debt-crisis-explained**

CAFOD and its sister CARITAS organisations around the world are working together to highlight why this issue is vital to bring hope to millions of people.