**ARMENIAN CARITAS**



**ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

**2017**

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# Introduction

“It is not science and technology, or the increasing means of economic and material development, but the human person, and especially groups of persons, communities and nations, freely choosing to face the problems together, who will, under God, determine the future”.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Armenian Caritas (AC) shares the Vision of Caritas Internationalis in promoting the values and principles of Environmental Justice and has the Vision of a world in which our environmental interdependence “is met by joint responsibility, our common destiny by solidarity”[[2]](#footnote-2); where the goods of the earth are shared by all; and where all creation is cherished and held in trust for the common good of future generations.

AC sees itself as a strong and significant role player in consolidation of social justice and social protection in the Republic of Armenia. Armenian Caritas is aiming to develop sustainable communities. UN World Commission on Environment and Development in “Our Common Future” report had defined sustainable as “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainability is reached based on the following pillars:

* **Economic sustainability** is the ability to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely,
* **Social sustainability** is the ability of a social system, such as a country, to function at a defined level of social well-being indefinitely,
* **Environmental sustainability** is the ability to maintain rates of renewable resource harvest, pollution creation, and nonrenewable resource depletion that can be continued indefinitely.

Armenian Caritas is committed to be responsible for its impact both positive and negative, including impact on environment. Armenian Caritas acknowledges possible footprint on the environment caused by its operations and aims de minimize it.

AC follows Guidelines on Environmental Justice of Caritas Internationalis and in addition to it is following this Environmental Ethics for its operations.

# Purpose and scope of Environmental Ethics

The aim of this Environmental Ethics is to fully integrate environmental justice with the principles of human dignity and sustainable development in AC’s work at all levels through minimizing the negative environmental footprint of its own operations, as well as working with other bodies that share the same vision.

Practicing this will result in:

* helping maintain the positive image of AC – taking accountability as an environmentally responsible organisation,
* serving as a set of guidelines/recommendations for AC’s everyday operations,
* helping AC to stay coherent and true to organisation’s values,
* serving as a guideline for the environmentally-friendly management of office and projects.

Environmental Ethics is recommended for use by all staff members of AC, by its partner organizations and through all operations.

# Thematic Areas and Suggested Actions as highlighted by CI Guidelines on Environmental Justice

**A) Climate change - future planning and decision-making**

i. Climate change considerations are to be mainstreamed into policies, planning processes, and decision-making within AC.

ii. Advocacy for good governance in climate change management activities at national level is to be strengthened.

iii. Adaptation measures to deal with the adverse effects of climate change are to be developed and integrated into AC’ programme planning, and particularly into sustainable development strategies.

iv. Greenhouse gas reduction measures are to be included in national level plans, and advocacy undertaken nationally on this issue.

**B) Climate change - training and awareness**

i. AC is to ensure it is well-informed on climate change issues in Armenia and region.

ii. Human capacity to monitor and assess environmental, social and economic risks and effects of climate change are to be strengthened.

iii. Assessment of environmental impact of programmes is to be expanded to include climate change impacts.

**C) Advocacy for resources for adaptation and global greenhouse gas reduction**

i. AC is to promote energy efficiency in their programmes and, if possible, in their countries, as part of its response to climate change.

ii. AC is to carry out advocacy on climate change issues, including logging, at national and local level.

**D) Climate change - alliances and cooperation**

i. Alliances and cooperation are to be fostered nationally with other appropriate Church bodies, other faiths and organisations.

# In addition to this Framework below are the areas of possible improvements in everyday practice

Office operations have its negative impact on environment. Optimizing heating and cooling of the space, printing, usage of appliances, and produced waste are some of the directions that can decrease environmental footprint and save resources of the organization. Conserving energy, reusing and recycling, switching to electronic filing, and working with environmentally responsible businesses are effective ways to decrease environmental footprint.

More specifically AC should:

* Print on both sides of the paper and using recycled paper whenever possible,
* For all documents possible use/keep electronic versions instead of paper versions,
* Separate and recycle paper and any other waste possible,
* Choose energy efficient appliances. Energy efficiency ratings can help in selection,
* Replace all bulbs with LED bulbs. This will decrease energy usage and save money spent for electricity,
* Use energy efficiency heating and cooling systems. Consider replacing outdated systems with energy efficient once,
* Use programmable thermostat for decreasing energy use in hours when the building is not in use,
* Consider better insulation of the building and/or replacing windows if they are not insulating effectively,
* If possible use renewable sources of energy for heating and cooling of the buildings, e.g. using solar, geothermal, or wind energy,
* Use water saving taps,
* Procure products and services from local producers whenever possible,
* Consider purchases from suppliers/producers with strong environmental policy,
* Avoid using products packaged or made of plastic.

Armenian Caritas will seek to decrease negative impact on environment caused from travel. Environmental footprint cause from travelling can be decreased by:

* Decrease travelling for meetings. In case of possibility use ICT technologies for communication and meetings. Web 2.0 technologies provide wide range of possibilities for collaborative work on distance,
* Travelling in groups / sharing transportation,
* If possible combine few trips into one,
* Use online purchases or delivery services instead of travelling for purchase,
* Avoid using airplanes for short distances,
* Use public transportation, since it has lower impact than individual car or taxi.

Events organized by AC also have environmental footprint. In order to minimize it AC should:

* Choose a location that is closer to most of attendees to decrease their travel,
* Arrange group transportation for the events,
* Consider venues that have/practice strong environmental policies, e.g. are using renewable energy,
* Order meals made of products from local producers and with lower environmental footprint (e.g. fruits and vegetables),
* Minimize meat in the offered meals. Production of meet required more resources than many other products. Having a more plant/vegetable based meals can have strong decrease environmental footprint,
* Minimize wasting food,
* Avoid using small packages of products, e.g. beverages. Purchase in larger packaged products, e.g. 2l bottles of water instead of 0.5l,
* Minimize usage of products made of plastic.

# Implementation Strategy

AC admits its primary responsibility for own development and response to this issue. The role of regional and national policies, development strategies and the allocation of dedicated financial resources cannot be overemphasized.

# Monitoring Progress and Updating this Framework

Targets and indicators are established within the Action Plan linked to the AC Strategic Planning document, and set at the appropriate levels for each year. The Framework itself will be subjected to a mid-term review to determine overall progress.

Evaluating progress towards achieving the outcomes of this Framework will be measured every two years against the agreed indicators.

1. Pope John Paul II (1985), Address at United Nations Centre, Nairobi, Kenya. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Pope Paul VI, Message to the Stockholm Conference (1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)