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Letter to Members of Development and Peace

March 26, 2009

Montreal

Dear Friends:

I am writing today as your new President to share with you some reflections on the events of the last two weeks. As you may know, it has been alleged on some internet sites recently that Development and Peace has been funding pro-abortion groups in Mexico. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Let there be no mistake:

1. Development and Peace has never supported abortion services anywhere, at any time, and can NOT ever support such projects;
2. Development and Peace has never and will never enter into a partnership with any organization offering such services. Should any current partner change its mandate and begin offering abortions, they would be immediately cut off from our partnership support and funding;
3. Development and Peace is committed to remaining vigilant regarding any partner's actions that would place us –by association- at variance with Church teaching. Should we fail to act on this information, we would lose our raison d'être and the support of our Canadian bishops and our Catholic supporters and donors.

These allegations have attacked our very being- the trust and close relationship we have fostered over the past 41 years- with our bishops and our supporters. The timing of these attacks on the eve of our annual Share Lent collection is also troubling.

In response, our National Council and Management Team have put in place the following:

- 1) An immediate denial of these allegations posted on our website;
- 2) A continuing dialogue with the CCCB (Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops) which is the official voice of our Canadian bishops;
- 3) An immediate inquiry with the five Mexican partners to get to the bottom of these allegations; it should be noted that none of them had been contacted by the writer concerned to verify the story. In short, inferences had been made and a "rush to judgment" had occurred which then made Development and Peace "guilty by association";
- 4) Development and Peace then asked for and received written assurances from these five partners that confirmed our understanding of the situation;
- 5) Development and Peace then released a statement addressing these allegations;
- 6) National Council (our governing board) at our meeting March 20-22, 2009 has initiated a process to develop a policy re-affirming our compliance with

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the teachings of the Church, including respect for all human life- including the unborn; this will make explicit what we always took for granted- our faithfulness to our Catholic roots, the teachings of the Church in general and Catholic social teaching as the foundation of all our work.

Other recent activities:

- 1) ShareLife and the Archdiocese of Toronto have put out a communication to all parishes in the area to re-assure them that all allegations would be fully investigated;
- 2) The CCCB issued a message to the Catholics of Canada regarding Development and Peace and expressing their support for the 2009 Share Lent Collection;
- 3) In the meantime, as a result of the publication of these allegations, many Catholics- including our own Development and Peace members- were continuing to express concern to us and to their bishops.
- 4) We have decided that an additional measure of re-assurance and due diligence is required and have decided:
 - a) to temporarily suspend funding to all five Mexican partners and
 - b) to send a delegation of senior staff to Mexico to meet with our partners for further consultation and dialogue. This measure is also supported by our bishops.

I encourage you to visit our website for more information as it becomes available.

On behalf of National Council, I wish all our members success on Solidarity Sunday, March 29, 2009 and the blessings of Easter.

In Solidarity,
Pat Hogan
President of National Council



Development and Peace is the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada and the Canadian member of Caritas Internationalis.

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