

CARITAS REGIONAL EVENTS IN 2020

JANUARY-DECEMBER 2020

International Conference on Trafficking and Unsafe Migration (23 – 26 January 2020, Yangon, Myanmar)

Together with KMSS-Caritas Myanmar, Caritas Asia co-hosted this global conference, organized by the Santa Marta Group and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar. The Conference was primarily aimed at outlining the root causes and main challenges concerning trafficking and unsafe migration; reviewing the role of international law and international organisations; and learning from the experiences of Myanmar. A total of 67 participants joined the event.

Regional Forum on Localization and Safeguarding (27 – 28 January 2020, Yangon, Myanmar)

As a follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the participants at the localisation session of the 2019 Caritas Asia Regional Partners' Forum, the region held another forum to review the earlier decisions and concretise further the plans and action points made at the previous year's forum. Both Asian Caritas MOs and global Caritas Partners participated in the event. A representative from ICVA, who provided a general overview of the global discourse on localization, was also present. The forum attracted a total of 43 participants.

FABC 2020 Preparatory Workshop

(31 January - 3 February 2020, Siem Reap, Cambodia)

Caritas Asia joined this workshop initiated by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences - Office of Human Development - Climate Change Desk, as part of its series of consultations, leading up to its 50th anniversary celebration in November 2020. Both the Regional President and the Regional Coordinator presented the works of Caritas Asia at the workshop. The main purpose of the workshop was to gather the reflections on vital questions concerning the Church in Asia, particularly on how the Church can continue to be the bearer of Good News in the present realities of the region. The results of the workshop would be integrated into the results of the other consultation workshops held earlier by FABC.

PEACH 2 Closing & Evaluation

(20 – 23 and 28 & 29 April 2020)

Caritas Asia attended this 6-day online meeting, which was organized by Caritas Austria to review the learning of PEACH 2 project after its 2 years of implementation. The meeting was also attended by the PEACH 2 implementing partners from the Caritas MOs of Bangladesh, Czech Republic, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Romania. The online meeting highlighted the achievements and challenges of the project implementation, as well as explored future opportunities and collaboration to put the project results into practice and to include more Caritas Members Organizations in Asia.

Responding to COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific Region (14 May 2020)

This webinar was organized by The Future of Work, Labour after Laudato Si (FOWLS) global initiative, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and Caritas Asia. Participants from more than ten countries represented organizations such as the Scalabrini Migration Center, the Vatican's Migrant & Refugee Section, Caritas Thailand, Caritas Philippines, Caritas New Zealand, IYCW Asia-Pacific, Indian Social Institute, International Organization for Migration (IOM), MIJARC, Caritas Nepal, Caritas Malaysia, University of Hong Kong, North-South Initiative, among others

Virtual Regional Commission Meeting (19 May 2020)

As an alternative to the face-to-face meeting, which was cancelled from its original schedule of 19-20 March in Bangkok, a virtual meeting was held by the Regional Commission in May. As it was held only virtually, each agenda item was only allocated with a few minutes for discussions or deliberation by the Commission. In lieu of the more lengthy and detailed discussions in a face-to-face meeting, the members of the Commission restricted themselves into briefly and concisely pointing out only their salient points on each agenda item. Eom not having to discuss them very lengthily at the virtual meeting.

Asia Regional Webinar on Safeguarding (29 May 2020)

Caritas Asia, in collaboration with Caritas Internationalis, organized this training, which is Asia's implementation of the Safeguarding commitments of the Caritas Confederation. The training is also a concrete realisation of the discussions during the Asia Regional Partners Forum in October 2019, and the Safeguarding Forum in January 2020. Of the total 80 registrants to the webinar, 77 participants were able to successfully log in and attend the virtual training via Zoom. (22 out of the 25 MOs in Asia registered to the webinar). The interactive webinar was facilitated by the trainers from SCIAF, Caritas Australia and Caritas Internationalis.

Virtual Meeting of the Anti-Trafficking Task Force at the Greater Mekong Sub-region (4 June 2020)

This virtual meeting of the Caritas Asia AT GMS Task Force was organised to provide a venue for the task force members to share their challenges and initiatives related to COVID-19, and its impact to safe migration and anti-trafficking initiatives. The sharing would then be used for carving the next steps of the Task Force.

Participation to the Global Webinar of Caritas India (9 June 2020)

The Regional Coordinator of Caritas Asia participated as one of the speakers at Caritas India's Global Webinar on Rebuilding Lives of Migrants in Distress

Prospects of Regenerating Sustainable Agriculture in the time of COVID – 19 (11 June 2020)

Caritas Asia, in collaboration with Caritas India and Caritas Internationalis, organized this regional webinar, in line with Caritas Asia's Strategic Priority 3 on Environmental Justice and Climate Change Adaptation. Thirty two out of 48 registered participants joined the webinar, representing the Caritas MOs of Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The Caritas Global Partners from Italiana, France, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as, Caritas Internationalis were also present. The webinar talked about the issues and challenges being faced by [smallholder farmers](#) and farming communities due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the prospects of regenerating sustainable agriculture.

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Food for All: Caritas Advocacy in the time of COVID-19 (23 June 2020)

Caritas Asia, in collaboration with Caritas Internationalis, held a regional webinar on the advocacy aspect of food security and sustainable agriculture in Asia. It is a follow up of the previous webinar on the Prospects of Regenerating Sustainable Agriculture in the time of COVID-19, with speakers from Caritas MOs in Asia. Present in the webinar were 61 participants coming from, not only Caritas MOs in Asia but also, Caritas family members of Caritas Africa and Caritas MONA regional secretariats, Caritas Internationalis, and Caritas Global Partners.

Participation to the SAFBIN Virtual Meeting (25 June 2020)

Caritas Asia joined the Caritas MOs of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in participating at the virtual SAFBIN meeting, which became an alternative to the original physical meeting planned to take place in Bangkok in March 2020. Caritas Austria initiated the meeting.

The Role of Faith Communities in Accelerating Action and Transformative Pathways (7 July 2020)

Using its own Zoom subscription, Caritas Asia hosted the virtual side event of Caritas Africa at the HLPF in New York. As a technical host, Caritas Asia provided the online platform all through out the webinar. The event attracted more than 180 registrants and was attended by 95 participants coming from various parts of the world, including from the regions of Africa, Europa, North America and Asia.

Virtual Regional Commission Meeting (4 August 2020)

The Regional Commission, which has not been able to meet physically since March, held its second virtual meeting that were mostly intended for updating and informing the Commission members, regarding new developments, as well as following up on some of the previous discussions and decisions of the Commission during the previous virtual meeting on May 2020

Commemoration of the World Humanitarian Day (19 August 2020)

Caritas Asia held a virtual webinar to mark the World Humanitarian Day. With the help of the Caritas Communications Officers in Asia, as well as the Communications Unit of Caritas Internationalis, the webinar showcased the stories of various Caritas volunteers, dubbed as “local heroes” of Caritas, in the region. A campaign in the various social media of Caritas, including Twitter, Facebook, BAOBAB, website, etc, was also done to feature the “local heroes”, with the help of the Communications Team in Asia

Virtual Meeting on Strengthening Humanitarian Partnership & Exchange (SHAPE) (27 August 2020)

SHAPE is a follow-up program to continue and deepen the learning of PEACH 1 & 2 for the 25 MOs in Asia. It is being developed jointly by Caritas Austria, Caritas Romania and Caritas Asia that held their initial discussions virtually in August 2020. The highlights of SHAPE include volunteer management, online platform for capacity building, knowledge exchange and Regional Support Mechanism (RESUM).

United International Association (UIA) 2020 Roundtable (16-18 September 2020)

The Regional Coordinator of Caritas Asia was invited by the UIA and the Seoul Tourism Organisation as one of the six panel speakers at this year’s UIA Roundtable, which was originally scheduled to take place in Seoul, Korea, but was instead held virtually because of COVID-19. The Regional Coordinator presented at the Roundtable the Caritas experience on resource mobilization. More than a hundred participants from various Asian and international government agencies, international associations, non-government organisations, civil society, the academe, etc. were represented in the forum.

Development of the Models and Practices of Sustainable Agriculture Booklet (September 2020)

Caritas Asia, in collaboration with Caritas India jumpstarted the development of a booklet that provides some models and practices on sustainable agriculture by some of the Asian MOs. As of September 2020, the draft of the booklet was nearing its final stage of development. Caritas Indonesia also supported the initiative by doing the lay out and design of the booklet. The final product is expected to be completed by January 2021.

Coordination Meeting on the SDG 2 National Advocacy Plan (25 September 2020)

Caritas Asia conducted a coordination meeting with Caritas Cambodia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Philippines in order to discuss the needed adjustments and revisions in the implementation of the SDG 2 National Advocacy Plan, according to the new situation and the realities brought about by COVID-19

Vetting of the National Directors (September 2020)

In line with the commitment of the CI Confederation to roll out its safeguarding mechanisms, the MOs in Asia were requested to undergo a retroactive vetting of their national directors in September. To date, however, only 13 of the 25 MOs are able to do the process. The remaining 12 have yet to do the retroactive vetting of their national directors. After the national directors, the MOs would need to do the retroactive vetting of the diocesan directors and this process is due in December 2020

World Day of Migrants and Refugees (29 September 2020)

Caritas Asia attended the celebration of the World Day of Migrants organised by Caritas Thailand in September 2020. The occasion culminated with a Holy Eucharist, attended by various migrants and refugees in Thailand.

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Virtual Launching Ceremony and National Assembly of Caritas Malaysia (6 & 13 November 2020)

The Regional President and Regional Coordinator of Caritas Asia were invited by Caritas Malaysia to join its virtual launching and national assembly in November. The president delivered his welcome and inspirational message during the opening session, while the regional coordinator presented about Caritas Asia on the second day of the event. More than a hundred participants coming from all the diocesan Caritas offices, religious congregations and church organisations in Malaysia took part in the virtual event.

Virtual Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of CHARIS - Singapore (7 November 2020)

Caritas Asia joined the virtual 10th anniversary celebration of CHARIS-Singapore. The Regional Coordinator, speaking on behalf of the 25 MOs in Asia delivered the congratulatory message of the region and shared about the important role CHARIS is playing in the Caritas Confederation, particularly in Asia. He also conveyed to CHARIS the greetings and best wishes of the many Asian MOs and other Caritas Organisations in Africa, Asia, MONA, and Oceania that sent their messages through video recording,

Virtual Launch of RAOEN (24 November 2020)

Caritas Asia, together with some Caritas MOs in Asia attended the virtual launch of the River Above Asia Oceania Network (RAOEN), a new ecclesial network formed in the wake of the Synod of the Amazon. Through RAOEN, many Church organisations are expected to have platform to collaborate in engaging in a resolute way to move beyond habits, especially those habits brought by globalisation, to rediscover and live a more human and integral way of being the whole of creation.

International Volunteers Day

(30 November - 5 December 2020)

In collaboration with Caritas Africa and Caritas Europa, Caritas Asia launched another social media campaign to thank and honour the works of all Caritas volunteers. Photos and stories of volunteers from across Asia were shared in the various social media accounts of Caritas Asia, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Website.

Participation to the Caritas Internationalis Virtual Humanitarian Forum

(8 - 10 December 2020)

Both the Regional Coordinator and the Program Officer of Caritas Asia joined the virtual Humanitarian Forum of CI, which became an alternative to the original physical meeting planned to take place in Prague in March 2020. At the forum, Caritas Asia shared about RESUM as one of the good practices of Localization. Caritas Myanmar and Caritas Bangladesh also shared their respective initiatives and experiences on Localization

Asia Regional Communication Team Online Monthly Meetings (June-December 2020)

Caritas Asia organized a monthly coordination meeting with the communications focal persons from various MOs in the region. The initiative started in June 2020 as a platform to share information related to communication, including among others best practices, challenges, capacity building, and opportunities. The meetings were also aimed at sharing information among communication officers in Asia and helping the region in other communication initiatives. The final meeting of the team for 2020 is scheduled on 18 December, wherein the team will recap its progress and accomplishments during the year, and explore possibilities for more collaboration in 2021

Development of the 2019 Caritas Asia Annual Report

(September 2020)

The communication team, through its monthly meetings and other virtual discussions, has helped the region in drafting, editing and developing the 2019 Caritas Asia Annual Report. The Annual Report had already reached the stage of having a draft lay-out by September, but works on its development had stalled since then, due to COVID-19. Some crucial elements in finalising the draft lay-out have been pending, but Caritas Asia hopes to revive the work as soon as it becomes possible.

Initial Brainstorming on Inter-regional Capacity Building on Campaigns and Advocacy (December 2020)

Caritas Asia, Caritas Europa, and Caritas Internationalis have organised an online discussion to plan about a possible capacity strengthening activity in the field of doing online campaigns. Among the activities being planned is to have a sharing of experiences between Europe and Asia, in order to showcase best practices that could be replicated by the MOs, or inspire and encourage the MOs in doing their own online campaigns. A follow-up discussion with Caritas Europa and CI will be conducted in January 2021.