

## Statements on trade

The Church's social doctrine holds that economic growth must be integrated with other values, so as to become a qualitative growth. As a result it must be just, stable, respectful of cultural and social individuality, as well as ecologically suitable. It cannot be separated from an investment in people, and in the creative and innovative capacity of the individual, who is the basic resource of any society.

*Pope John Paul II, May 2001, Address to the members of the foundation for ethics and economics*

---

The integration of the poorer economies into an equitable world trade system is in the interest of all. The enhanced development of the poorer countries is a contribution to global progress, international security and peace. In a globalised economy no one can be insensitive to the situation of those who are lingering on its margins. Inclusiveness is both a moral and an economic value.

*Mons. Diarmuid Martin, Doha, 2001*

---

Every perspective on economic life that is human, moral, and Christian must be shaped by three questions: What does the economy do *for* people? What does it do *to* people? And how do people *participate* in it? ... The economy is not a machine that operates according to its own inexorable laws, and persons are not mere objects tossed about by economic forces.

*© US bishops, 1986 "Economic Justice for All"*

---

Countries cannot emerge from poverty on the basis of debt relief and international aid, in the absence of just trade relationships. Despite all the efforts made to transform the situation, the economic and trade relationships between the wealthy and the poor countries of the world remain deeply unjust.

*Catholic Bishops of England, Scotland and Wales, "Trade and Solidarity" # Summary*

Yet the current imbalances in world trade are dramatic. Africa, the poorest continent, with 10 % of the world's population, accounts for just one % of the world trade, a proportion that has halved in the last twenty years. The majority of Africa's people, especially those south of the Sahara, live on less than a dollar a day. Their overwhelming concern is sheer survival for themselves and

their families. Most would not think of themselves as exporters or importers. Yet even the poorest Africans eat food made from imported grain and wear second-hand clothing from developed countries....if trade is fundamentally important yet is marked by such dramatic disparities, the issue needs urgently to be addressed.

*Trade and Solidarity # 4*

---

We believe that 'fairness' is not enough, and that it is not always just to treat all parties strictly alike. In our case, the Church's "preferential option for the poor" leads us to believe that the rules governing global financial and economic systems, including trade, must be guided also by principles of solidarity and compassion. We therefore hold that the notion of "trade justice" must embody measures to benefit the poorest, to counterbalance the enormous disadvantages that weigh them down from the start.

*Trade and Solidarity # 5*

---

The poor and the hungry, the sick and the persecuted are still with us, not because it was unavoidable, but as a result of economic and political decisions. These decisions are made consciously by governments and multinational companies. They are also sustained by our way of life and unconscious consumer habits – the things we buy to eat, drink, wear and use – which can have a devastating effect on the economics of faraway countries.  
*Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, 1995, as quoted in Trade and Solidarity # 12*

---

No system, however universal and complex, functions without the element of human choice. It is part of Christian witness in this matter to insist that personal lifestyle and the global economy are not separable realms of reality.  
*Trade and Solidarity # 12*