



Gathering in Rome October 27-29, 2021

For all who are part of the Global Solidarity Fund community, our gathering in Rome was a wonderful time to be able to finally meet again in person, and to take significant steps forward toward our shared vision. Over the three days, we convened an extraordinary collection of leaders: from the Vatican and from congregations of women and men religious, from the worlds of business and philanthropy, and from governments and international organizations.

In all, it was an exciting affirmation of the growing, dynamic community that GSF is becoming. The dialogue is too rich to capture fully, but here are a few high points of our time together.

We were deeply grateful to begin our time together with an inspiring and touching **private audience with Pope Francis**. The Holy Father has been an inspiration and an encouragement to us during our audiences throughout GSF's journey, and this time was no exception. Reflecting on the Global Solidarity Fund's name, he focused on the call to solidarity, particularly in a time where indifference is widespread. He called on us to let three powerful words drive our action: tenderness, compassion and closeness. He encouraged us – displaying real passion – to be courageous and go ahead in our work, which is to catalyze partnerships for the most vulnerable in our world. We were deeply moved to receive his heartfelt blessing for our work. The mission of solidarity we have embraced is indeed a challenge, and with his blessing, we will indeed be courageous and go ahead in a spirit of tenderness, compassion and closeness.

Later that day we gathered for an exciting **roundtable on the Innovation Lab for Job Creation for Migrants and Refugees**, the

new global-level platform led by GSF, in collaboration with Tent Partnership for Refugees and Goal 17 Partners. We explored the Innovation Lab's potential to catalyze employment solutions for migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) through connecting the innovation of the private sector with on-the-ground knowledge and experiences of faith-based service providers. With the help of Jesuit Refugee Service, the Salesian Sisters and the Diocese of Addis Ababa, we drilled down together to understand the realities faced by those helping migrants to access jobs. What was clear was that private sector engagement is critical to ensure this talent is integrated into local economies to create thriving and sustained economic growth – and to benefit the companies themselves. We were encouraged by the participation of leaders of companies like DHL, EAT, and CleanChoice Energy, as well as development organizations such as UNHCR. The dialogue was a practical, solutions-oriented one, with great willingness to work together to create actionable solutions quickly, because the need is urgent.



We benefited greatly from **meetings with GSF partners:** Tomás Insua of the Laudato Si' Movement, Sr. Gabriella Bottani of Talitha Kum, and Fr. Petros Berga of the Inter-congregational network in Addis Ababa. This opportunity to understand the significant progress that each partner has been able to take with GSF support, and the challenges still ahead, was invaluable as we seek to deepen these relationships and increase our impact. With our meeting taking place on the eve of the COP26 summit, Tomás described the GSF support for advocacy action to influence decision-makers at COP26, as well as the upcoming Laudato Si' documentary (see the teaser [here](#): password Laudato2020). Sr. Gabriella previewed the Care Against Trafficking call to action to the development community on human trafficking that will be launched on November 25. Fr. Petros offered a view of the impressive growth of inter-congregational collaboration to create jobs for migrants (you can watch short videos on this work [here](#) and [here](#)). All our partners are unanimous in highlighting our unique partnership, through which we have started a transformational journey together. Together we have the courage to stretch beyond our limits to transform our world into a more inclusive and fairer place.



The closing event was a **high-level reception** to celebrate what we have achieved so far, and to look to the future with GSF's partners and friends – leaders across different sectors of society coming together to advance holistic, inclusive, and sustainable human development for all. We were particularly honored to be joined by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who offered words of inspiration and exhortation. We were also grateful for the presence of Cardinal Silvano Tomasi and Cardinal Peter Turkson, as well as Church leaders such as Sr. Alessandra Smerilli of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Sr. Patricia Murray of the International Union of Superiors General, Sr. Neusa de Fatima Mariano of the Scalabrinian Sisters and others. From the private sector, participating leaders included Matt Higgins, who serves as co-chair of our Leaders Council, and Luca Pezzi of ENI. Development community participants from missions to the Holy See included UK Ambassador Chris Trott, and US Charge d'Affaires Patrick Connell. It was encouraging to see such diverse communities energized by our vision.

Our time together in Rome affirmed that GSF has been able to catalyze innovative new collaborations based on the moral leadership of Pope Francis and the UN Sustainable Development Goals to build a better world, based on solidarity, charity, and equality. We look forward to our next steps – together.



The gathering was also an excellent opportunity for the official members of the Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Leaders Council to meet and further progress in GSF work.



