

2025-2026

CAFOD MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT



Image credit: Amit Kumar
Hawa - Project
participant, Bangladesh

Organisational structure, its business and its supply chains

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is an international development charity and the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. We are part of the global Caritas confederation.

CAFOD is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (No. 1160384), and as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, with Companies House (09387398). The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees and led by our Executive Director, Dr. Christine Allen.

The bulk of CAFOD's income comes from donations and legacies from the Catholic community in England and Wales, supplemented by funding from institutional and other donors. In the financial year 2025-26, CAFOD's income was £52.8 million.

Our work since 2020 has been guided by our Strategy, Our Common Home, which challenges us to 'focus on the interconnected cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, prioritising those who experience poverty, especially women and girls.'

Our mission statement is:

Inspired by Gospel values and as part of the Catholic community, we come together in partnership with others, locally and globally, of all faiths and none:

- To reach those in greatest need, save lives and relieve suffering
- To support and enable people, communities and our local partners to be artisans of their own destiny
- To challenge and transform the structures and behaviours that drive poverty, vulnerability, inequality, injustice and exclusion, and which harm the natural world
- To educate, enable and inspire the Catholic community of England and Wales to act in solidarity for the common good.

We are headquartered in the UK and operate through partners – locally based civil society organisations – in 32 countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, Latin America and Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. Alongside supporting our partners to deliver our international programmes, our activities also include advocacy and campaigning, and supporter engagement work, primarily with Catholic schools and parishes in England and Wales.

Our approach to tackling modern slavery

Grounded in principles of human dignity, solidarity and justice, we believe that every person has inherent worth and should be treated with dignity and respect. Modern slavery is a grave violation of these principles. We are committed to working with others, with compassion and determination, to help create conditions in which people, communities and the environment can flourish, free from exploitation.

CAFOD takes an integrated approach to tackling modern slavery, encompassing the following activities:

Working towards an end to poverty and injustice

Modern slavery is at the end of a spectrum of violations of human rights and labour rights, and often it is people from poor and marginalised communities who are most at risk of exploitation. We are therefore very concerned to note that the most recent [global estimates](#) of the numbers facing modern slavery continued to rise to 50 million in 2021 – one in 150 people globally – an increase of 10 million between 2016-2021.

Our work on tackling slavery sits within a broader mandate of working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – of which ending modern slavery is a key part ([goal 8.7](#)), and of addressing a wider range of human rights and environmental harms linked to an organisation's business activities and supply chains, in line with the [UN's Guiding Principles for Human Rights Due Diligence](#).

CAFOD's programme work includes supporting partners working with workers at risk of forced labour – for example, migrant workers in Bangladesh who often migrate to the Gulf states for work, and garment workers in export processing zones in Sri Lanka – as well as local communities adversely impacted by industries including mining and agribusiness – for example, indigenous people defending the Amazon rainforest, whose health, local environment and livelihoods have been harmed by pollution from nearby mines. We also support partners responding to humanitarian crises in places such as the DRC, Ukraine, Occupied Palestinian State and South Sudan.

Campaigning for changes to law and policy

CAFOD campaigns to change the economic systems and structures that allow modern slavery and human trafficking to continue, alongside other human and labour rights abuses and environmental harm. We also recognise that the adverse impacts of climate change are contributing to increases in Modern Slavery, as traditional agricultural livelihoods are undermined, driving people to consider migrating in search of safety and security.

CAFOD successfully lobbied for the 2015 Modern Slavery Act in the UK, to incentivise corporate action on modern slavery in supply chains. Through the Corporate Justice Coalition, we helped to write guidance materials, to help companies report effectively on their actions. In recent years CAFOD has joined with other organisations to call on the UK government to strengthen the Modern Slavery Act and to go beyond its limited reporting requirements, to protect the world's poorest people and our planet from the wide range of human rights and environmental harms caused by [British businesses operating overseas](#).

For many years, CAFOD has supported calls for a Business, Human Rights and Environment Act in the UK, and for a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, to help the UK fully realise its commitments to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises.

Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking

CAFOD is committed to preventing modern slavery, human rights abuse and environmental harm in our supply chains and other private sector engagements and partnerships, as part of our organisational approach to institutional integrity, and in line with our existing commitments under the UN Global Compact.

CAFOD has been a signatory to the UN Global Compact since 2019, committing to abide by their 'ten principles' in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. We published our first Modern Slavery Statement in 2019, as required under the Modern Slavery Act.

In 2026 CAFOD implemented a new Modern Slavery Policy, this was approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2026 and additional training on Modern Slavery risks and reporting processes will be added to our existing Safeguarding training module, which is mandatory for all staff.

This year we have taken steps to implement our commitment to ethical sourcing, by updating and strengthening our Procurement processes by amending our supplier questionnaire, supplier code of conduct and our standard terms and conditions. We also made changes to our bid matrices and contracts for goods and services and consultancies.

CAFOD now has a detailed Supply Chain Manual and a Procurement Intranet Site, which together provide guidance on procurement of goods and services across the organisation, alongside complementary guidance relating to our International Programme, covering CAFOD's grant making with civil society partners in the global South.

The organisation remains resolutely committed to reducing this risk, and to responding promptly to situations where modern slavery is identified, to provide remediation for those affected. Our Modern Slavery statement is signed off each year by our Board of Trustees and is led by CAFOD's Director of Finance, IT and Infrastructure, who is a member of the Executive Team.

Risk assessment and management

CAFOD's approach to Modern Slavery is based on the principles of 'human rights due diligence' as set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human rights, which extends beyond forced and bonded labour to include the full range of human rights abuses linked to business operations. The UNGPs require companies and other organisations to firstly to map their supply chains, then to identify and prioritise potential risks within them, and to take action to mitigate those risks, starting with those assessed to be most 'salient'. Further stages involve a commitment to ensuring remedy for negative impacts on workers or communities harmed by CAFOD's activities (including procurement), to monitoring the effectiveness of this due diligence process and to transparent reporting and continuous improvement.

Although CAFOD has always been committed to behaving responsibly and ethically, its procurement processes are not centralised, and as a result it is not currently possible to

document all its supply chains in a systematic way. In addition, the organisation is committed to buying goods and services directly within the countries or regions that we work whenever possible, to maximise the secondary benefits of our procurement to the local economy. This commitment to local procurement is an important ethical principle, but it also adds an extra layer of complexity to the task of documenting our supply chains.

To further strengthen our process and reduce our risks, our dedicated Modern Slavery working group has begun exploring options to embed an approved supplier list. This would better help us to identify suppliers that meet our standards on labour practices, safeguarding and ethical procurement, and support more consistent decision-making across the organisation. Over time, we expect this to strengthen oversight of higher-risk purchasing and make it easier for colleagues to select suppliers that align with our values and due diligence requirements.

Overview of CAFOD's Expenditure

CAFOD spent £xx million in the financial year until 31st March 2026, £ million of which was spent directly on grants to our partner organisations, £ million on CAFOD staff salaries, and £m on products and services purchased in pursuance of our charitable work and objectives including raising funds.

We work with over 163 local implementing partners in 32 countries, through which CAFOD delivers its programme work, supported by over CAFOD staff operating from countries.

CAFOD is committed to operating to high standards; we follow [Caritas Internationalis' management standards](#), which were updated in 2026, and our humanitarian and development work is accredited by the [Core Humanitarian Standards](#) and the [Grand Bargain](#) to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

Across our initiatives, colleagues continue to carry out screenings against sanctions lists, participate in numerous audits and facilitate partner safeguarding and financial and organisational health check assessments. In the UK, we follow [the Fundraising Code of Practice](#), ensuring that fundraising practices are ethical, transparent, and accountable to the public. We welcome feedback and complaints, providing clear instructions on our website for raising concerns, including anonymous reporting.

Our grant making process involves a comprehensive Partner Assessment and Due Diligence process, managed through an online database, Webpromise. This process verifies that each CAFOD partner is a legitimate organisation with the skills and capacity necessary to deliver the project CAFOD is funding. A brief overview of our programme spend, including development activities and budgets of largest programmes (note: some data is excluded for safety and security purposes) is uploaded each quarter onto the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) registry ([accessible via d-portal](#)).

Our partner assessment process seeks to ensure that our civil society partners share our commitment to poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and justice and peace. It also includes due diligence covering their organisational status, governance, people management, financial management and safeguarding systems and their environmental responsibility. CAFOD's SADI programme framework (Safe, Accessible, Dignified and Inclusive programming) is an integral part of this process, and our Partner Safeguarding Profile already includes a question about 'trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse, including child abuse.' The people management and financial management sections of

the assessment include specific criteria that address specific modern slavery risks. We will review this process in the coming year, with a view to strengthening it in future years.

Direct Procurement of Products and Services

As mentioned above, less than 20% of CAFOD's expenditure goes through our direct procurement process, which covers goods and services purchased by CAFOD staff, both for activities directly related to our mission (e.g. advocacy and campaigning, development education), and those related to support services (e.g. finance and governance functions), as well as fundraising.

These costs include CAFOD's expenditure on infrastructure (e.g. office costs) and IT (e.g. laptops and mobile phones for staff, running a website etc). We also buy resources (e.g. banners and posters) used for fundraising, supporter engagement and development education activities, alongside a limited range of products sold in the UK.

CAFOD recognises the importance of comprehensive supply chain mapping that enables an organisation to publish its supplier list, which in turn, makes it possible for workers or communities who have been negatively impacted by their supply chain activities, to contact the parent company. The process also makes it possible to identify and prioritise potentially risky areas of procurement, and thus to move to the next stage of due diligence – taking action to mitigate these risks. CAFOD is committed to improving transparency in relation to our supply chains and to steadily increasing the amount of related information we publish, whilst taking account of any data protection and security considerations.

Access to Remedy

In the UN Guiding principles on Business & Human Rights, access to remedy is included as a key stage of the due diligence process. This is clearly crucial in ensuring the victims of a harm or damage can raise their concerns and seek remediation, but also because in receiving complaints, a company is also made aware of previously hidden risks and can take further action to address these.

CAFOD has in place an independent reporting system - CAFOD EthicsPoint - that is available on our website, for use by anyone connected to CAFOD's work: this includes, but is not limited to, suppliers, staff, volunteers, consultants, supporters, partners' staff and volunteers and the people and communities CAFOD works to support.

CAFOD EthicsPoint is an independent system to assist CAFOD in receiving and addressing any concerns, allegations (including any reports of modern slavery or other human rights abuse), complaints, or receiving general feedback about how our values or commitments are upheld. Once a report is received it is managed in accordance with the appropriate CAFOD policy and procedures. The system is hosted by Navex Global, a third-party company and managed internally by the Ethicspoint Systems Administrator.

Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken

CAFOD has established processes to monitor and track the effectiveness of its grant making – and advocacy - processes, to understand what difference they are making and

how they could be improved. These include specific Goals on Business and Human Rights Advocacy, both within the UK and within the countries where our programme partners are working, with appropriate performance measures and KPIs to demonstrate progress towards achieving these.

CAFOD is also strengthening its existing Programme Monitoring processes; all core programmes are required to develop Monitoring Frameworks, which incorporating advocacy and influencing outcomes and measures, as appropriate.

As explained above, our procurement processes have been developed over time and are subject to further development, informed by a recent internal audit of our UK suppliers and contracts. This is helping to provide a base line for monitoring of future implementation of our processes. The findings were discussed with teams who have material UK supplier purchases, with engagement around the need for material spend areas to be further reviewed and contracts were updated to include provisions for labour standards and a section on Social and Human Rights Standards.

Our continued commitment

During 2026/2027 CAFOD commit to:

- The continuation of the Modern Slavery working group with responsibility for assessing risks and reviewing policy and process communication to the Executive Director's. Terms of reference for the group to be reviewed and refreshed with a view to the group becoming a subgroup of the Ethics Committee.
- Exploring different options to produce a more comprehensive map of CAFOD's diverse suppliers and implementing an approved supplier list for key, high risk suppliers.
- Continue to identify and develop training needs on new procurement processes, including appropriate due diligence regarding the risks of modern slavery and wider human rights issues.
- Use notes and action planning from regular meetings as a system for monitoring the progress of the measures we are taking to strengthen CAFOD's human rights due diligence.

Training on modern slavery and trafficking

CAFOD is committed to:

- Integrating ethical and environmental issues into existing programme quality/design training for programme staff
- Developing a short briefing session for all staff on human rights due diligence and Modern Slavery, to be delivered at a future CAFOD-wide online Staff meeting.

CAFOD Modern Slavery Statement 2025-2026



Review and approval

This statement has been approved by the CAFOD Board of Trustees on XX and Christine Allen, CAFOD's Director is authorised to sign on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christine Allen'. The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name 'Christine' and the last name 'Allen' clearly visible. A horizontal line is drawn under the signature.

Dr Christine Allen
Executive Director of CAFOD