

# Statement of International Catholic Youth Organisations (ICO)

The following statement is a reflection from Youth ICO's (International Catholic Organisations) on their experiences, reflections and visions of the world and the Church in the light of World Youth Day 2005.

## Global Reality

In today's world we can see an increase in information and communication technologies, greater opportunities for exchange between cultures and peoples, and more possibilities to meet others virtually and in person at gatherings and events that bring people together. Through these spaces there is a growth in global awareness and global interconnectedness. At the same time, the political and economic developments that have accompanied the phenomena of globalization have resulted in a closer relationship between governments in the world and a number of multilateral initiatives that have tried to address the world's challenges. Sadly, however this has not resulted in an awareness of a global solidarity of interdependence. We can clearly see in the world today a significant increase in poverty, human rights violation, environmental derogation, and a rise in acts of violence and terrorism.

The lack of awareness of global solidarity is accompanied by an increase in individualism which favors a self-centered approach to addressing personal issues, rather than collective responsibility and solutions to the challenges facing the world. The economic and political policies which coincide with these social trends are marked by privatization and deregulation and are negatively influencing governments worldwide. One manifestation of this can be seen by the approach of the international financial institutions in addressing the debt problems of developing countries. Often, these programs involve the opening of markets, the cuts of investments and subsidies for social services, education and employment possibilities. This has the potential to further aggravate the inequalities between the rich and the poor within countries and between nation-states.

These global inequalities are one of several root causes to an increase in conflict, fundamentalism and intolerance in our world. This was witnessed in the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and has continued to be manifested in various forms worldwide. Some of the responses of governments and societies have only added to fundamentalism and intolerance. Short term solutions and militaristic interventions cannot solve all the problems. What is needed is long-term solutions which require the examination of the core problems of inequality and poverty and the strengthening of multilateral frameworks.

