

## Third Annual Laudato sì Challenge To Focus on Preventing Forced Displacement

**2019 Challenge Seeks to Empower 10 Million Families to Remain in Their Homes, by 2021, By Securing “Commitments to Impact” and Scaling Proven Enterprise Solutions**

### Final Event Set for December 5-7 in Vatican City

May 15, 2019—San Francisco, Calif.--Taking up the challenges of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter *Laudato sì*, the third annual Laudato sì Challenge seeks to prevent forced displacement by empowering one million families to remain in their homes by 2021—supporting the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals “as a human dignity narrative, that leaves no one behind.” By focusing on prevention, The Challenge addresses the root causes of forced displacement: poverty, persecution, education, conflict and environmental degradation. and will pursue its goal by selecting and supporting high-quality, later-stage enterprise solutions; and securing *new, specific and measurable* “Commitments to Impact.”

"Pope Francis' hope is to see the challenges of Laudato sì taken up in credible initiatives and actions. The Laudato sì CHALLENGE is one such bold response!" said Cardinal Turkson, Prefect of The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and patron of The Laudato sì Challenge.

Partners include Aspiration Bank, ICON, Earth Day Network, BNP Paribas and Blue Like an Orange Sustainable Capital, a new impact firm focused on the SDG's.

“Blue like an Orange Sustainable Capital shares the vision of the Laudato sì Challenge, that a new investment paradigm must emerge after the crisis to support the sustainable development of our planet and the people living on it,” said its CEO, Bertrand Badré. “We must work together and encourage more people to join this movement to make, thanks to finance, a real difference. Joining together with the first group of partners is an important next step to continue to build a solid foundation for what comes next.”

The Laudato sì Challenge calls on entrepreneurs, with proven solutions to prevent forced displacement, to apply at: <http://lsc19.org>. To demonstrate sufficient impact, traction and product market fit, applicants must have at least US\$1M in annual revenue. Judges include: Green Sands Equity CEO, Reema Khan; Blue Like an Orange Sustainable Capital CEO and former CFO of The World Bank, Bertrand Badré; Co-Founder & Managing Director at Aspect Ventures, Theresia Gouw; CEO & Founder of ID4A Technologies, Rania Hoteit; and Chairman of The Pontifical School of Business Ethics at The Vatican, Father Phillip Larrey. Finalists will be announced on September 1, and they will present in Vatican City on December 6.

On a second track, The Laudato sì Challenge will secure “Commitments to Impact.” For example, this from Andrei Cherny, CEO of Aspiration Bank: “Aspiration is proud to commit to open a socially-conscious, sustainable, Pay What Is Fair-fee deposit account for 50,000 vulnerable and displaced people in America by 2021--to help build a world that leaves no one behind. We thank the Laudato sì Challenge for recognizing the enormous power that financial institutions that are built on conscience and service can have in lifting up all those in need.”

“This is the worst refugee crisis in human history—and the private sector is on the sidelines,” says Eric Harr, Laudato sì Challenge Co-Founder & CEO. “According to the UNHCR, 68.5 million people have been forced from their homes through no fault of their own; that’s one family every eight seconds. The World Bank concludes that climate change could transform more than 143 million people into ‘climate migrants.’ Leaders from the private, public and faith sectors must support bold and innovative business solutions that can scale up against this massive, heartbreaking humanitarian crisis. Now.”

“The thematic focus of The 2019 Laudato sì Challenge is ‘home’: a universal concept that connects our global family,” says Ahmad Ashkar, Laudato sì Challenge Co-Founder and CEO of The Hult Prize, the inspiration for The Challenge. “Helping people remain where they want to be—in their homes—is good for all ‘stakeholders’: governments, local economies and the families themselves.”

Last December in Vatican City, The Laudato sì Challenge convened 80 leaders, featured 10 companies tackling forced displacement and secured 12 private sector “Commitments to Impact” that could improve the lives of 12.6 million people. Upgrades for 2019 include: an expanded program, later-stage enterprise solutions and more strategic matchmaking between members of The Laudato sì Challenge ecosystem.

### About The Laudato sì Challenge

Founded in 2017 in Vatican City, The Laudato sì Challenge is inspired by Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato sì—On Care for Our Common Home*. It is a 10-year initiative addressing the crisis of forced displacement by bringing together leaders from the public, private and faith sectors. The Laudato sì Challenge is a 501(c)3 operating foundation with its principal offices in Washington, DC, San Francisco and Rome. - <http://lsc19.org>.