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Press Release of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

On behalf of the Holy Father, aid to the populations of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, affected by flooding caused by the cyclone Idai

During this last week the floods caused by the cyclone Idai have devastated entire areas between Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. The toll of victims – constantly rising – is currently at least 300 confirmed, thousands of injuries, and hundreds of thousands of displaced people. At least a million people have been affected by the disaster. There has also been enormous structural damage: the week of intense torrential rains has razed to the ground tens of thousands of houses and public buildings, and has blocked the most important roads. The city of Beira, in Mozambique, has been razed to the ground and many urban centres and villages have been destroyed in all three countries. Water and electricity supplies have been compromised, as well as the effectiveness of healthcare structures. There are concerns regarding the risk of epidemics, and the rescue services struggle to reach the areas devastated by the cyclone.

The Holy Father, at the end of last Wednesday's general audience (20 March), expressing his sorrow and closeness to the afflicted populations, entrusted "the many victims and their families to God's mercy" and implored "comfort and support for those afflicted by this disaster". Pope Francis, through the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, has established that a first contribution of 150,000 euros will be sent (50,000 for each country) for aid to the populations in this first emergency phase.

This sum, intended as an immediate expression of the sentiment of spiritual closeness and paternal encouragement on the part of the Holy Father with regard to the people and territories affected, will be distributed – in collaboration with the apostolic nunciatures – among those most touched by the catastrophe and will be used for aid works and assistance to people and the territories. The contribution of this Dicastery for the populations of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi is part of the aid that is being activated in all the Catholic Church and which will involve, aside from various episcopal conferences, also several charitable entities.

For information, contact the Press and Communication Office of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development: *Roberto Paglialonga* (r.paglialonga@humandevlopment.va), *Pamela Fabiano* (p.fabiano@humandevlopment.va), *Claudia di Lorenzi* (c.dilorenzi@humandevlopment.va).