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*The Saint-André House (Dianova Canada) provides housing solutions for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Montreal area*

# Social & Humanitarian Support

## Position Paper

**M**any countries have established social safety nets and assistance schemes that play a critical role in protecting their citizens. In spite of these, inequalities are on the rise, adding to the weight of problems that the poorest people face: housing, employment and training, education, health, illiteracy, access to leisure and culture, etc. These problems create the potential that they can become even more socially vulnerable.

Hundreds of thousands of people are homeless and face the dangers of the streets every day. Foreign undocumented workers are exploited in makeshift jobs and housed in slum dwellings paying excessive rents. Millions of people live in substandard housing and are unable to feed themselves properly. They cannot provide clothing or recreational opportunities to their children, or take time off from work. People in these circumstances do not suffer the extreme poverty that afflicts people living in emerging countries. Nonetheless, they live in a social vulnerability that is destructive and threatens social cohesion.

Dianova is committed to seeking and promoting greater distributive justice and social fairness, acting to reduce barriers and expand choice and potential for all persons,

with special regard for those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable, or have exceptional needs. Dianova understands social justice to encompass:

- The satisfaction of basic human needs;
- The equitable distribution of resources to meet these needs;
- Fair access to public services and benefits to achieve human potential.

### **Migrations**

**Dianova recognizes a duty to solidarity, civic commitment and social justice**

In general, migrants and/or refugees give far more than they receive. They are consumers of the goods and services of the countries that welcome them. Many migrants are already well qualified, and they work, pay taxes and create wealth. They contribute to national pension systems and add energy and demographic diversity to their host countries. Dianova therefore believes that migration plays a vital positive role in the cultural wealth and development of host countries. OECD studies have shown the positive impact of immigration on public finances, economic growth and labour markets.

However, the current migratory crisis poses a new challenge, particularly for European countries. To meet this short and long-term challenge, coordinated reception and integration policies for migrants and refugees must be implemented. Countries must also work to counter the rising popular opposition to immigration within host populations. We need to counter more precisely the extremist arguments that immigration threatens employment, social protection, and the national identity. We also cannot deny the local problems that result from excessive concentrations of newly arrived populations.

We believe people must first recognize the interdependence of nations. They can then understand that migration is inherent in human societies and enriches all countries, including the ones hosting migrants today. Dianova believes that all of us, at every level (acting as citizens or organizations, advocating to governments, welcoming migrants, or supporting development projects

in their home countries), can help build a world in which migration is no longer considered a threat, but as a resource and an opportunity for development.

Finally, we understand that migratory flows must be controlled by regulatory policies. These policies must, however, complement development aid to countries that migrants are leaving. Governments must apply migration policy with discernment and humanity, and avoid stigmatizing immigrant populations. Finally, governments must ensure that migrants are received and integrated in the best possible conditions.

