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Catholic Bishops' statement in Lima on the road to Paris

Introduction – from COP20 to COP21

We Catholic Bishops from all continents have come together in Lima on the occasion of COP20 to join the efforts of world leaders as they work towards signing a just and legally binding climate agreement in Paris in 2015.

Following the evangelical option for the poor, we work closely with the most vulnerable communities and the excluded and as such are closely attuned to how the problem of climate change is affecting them. Our message to political leaders and all people of good will is rooted in the experience and suffering of these poor communities.

Humankind on the Planet Earth is ordained to live in equity, justice and dignity, peace and harmony in the midst of the order of Creation. Humankind is ordered to treat respectfully Creation, which has a value in itself. We Catholic Bishops recognize the atmosphere, rainforests, oceans and agricultural land as common good that require our care.

Climate Change and Climate Justice today

We recognize that much good has happened on Earth through the rightful and responsible intelligence, technology and industry of humankind under God's loving care. And yet in recent decades many grave adversities such as climate change, with its devastating impact on Nature itself, on food security, health and migration, led to a great number of suffering people worldwide.

We express an answer to what is considered God's appeal to take action on the urgent and damaging situation of global climate warming. The main responsibility for this situation lies with the dominant global economic system, which is a human creation. In viewing objectively the destructive effects of a financial and economic order based on the primacy of the market and profit, which has failed to put the human being and the common good at the heart of the economy, one must recognize the

systemic failures of this order and the need for a new financial and economic order.¹

We note with appreciation that, in our times, States, Religions and Groups of Civil Society and individuals at all levels are recognizing more and more the natural as well as the ethical concerns of this matter. We wish to see therefore a deepening of the discourse at the COP20 in Lima, to ensure concrete decisions are taken at COP21 to overcome the climate challenge and to set us on new sustainable pathways.

We recognize that in line with truly democratic principles the poor and the poorer nations, who are many and are more affected by climate change impacts, are also agents in the development of nations and human life on earth. They also give us a voice and a sense of hope in our times as we face crises such as climate change. We hope their gentle, meaningful and active participation will encourage decision makers to develop more mixed systems instead of “one size fits all” modern technological-industrial approaches.

We as Bishops call on all parties

1. to keep in mind not only the technical but particularly the ethical and moral dimensions of climate change as indicated in Article 3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).²
2. To adopt a fair and legally binding global agreement based on the universal human rights applicable to all in Paris in 2015.
3. to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degree Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels, in order to protect frontline communities suffering from the impacts of climate change, such as those in the Pacific Islands and in the coastal regions.
4. to build new models of development and lifestyles that are both climate compatible and bring people out of poverty. Central to this is to put an end to the fossil fuel era, phasing out fossil fuel emissions and phasing in 100% renewables with sustainable energy access for all.

¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 53-58

² Equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, precautionary principle, right to sustainable development

5. to ensure that the 2015 agreement delivers an adaptation approach that adequately responds to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable communities and builds on local alternatives. They should ensure that 50% of public funds go to meeting their adaptation needs.
6. to recognize that adaptation needs are contingent on the success of mitigation measures taken. Those responsible for climate change have responsibilities to assist the most vulnerable in adapting and managing loss and damage and to share the necessary technology and knowhow.
7. to adopt clear roadmaps on how countries will meet predictable and additional finance commitments and establish robust and transparent accounting methodologies.

Our commitment

We Catholic Bishops believe that Creation is life offered, is a gift for one another and that all will have the needed “daily bread”, providing sustainable food security and nutrition.

We Catholic Bishops commit ourselves to developing the sense of ‘gratuitousness’³ to contribute to a lifestyle which frees us from a desire of appropriation and enables us to be respectful of the dignity of the person and the harmony of creation.

We Bishops want to accompany the political process and seek dialogue to bring the voices of the poor to the table of decision-makers;

We are convinced that everyone has a capacity to contribute to overcome climate change and to choose sustainable lifestyles.

We Bishops call on all Catholics and people of good will to engage on the road to Paris as a starting point for a new life in harmony with Creation respecting planetary boundaries.

BISHOP SIGNATORIES TO THIS DECLARATION:

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