

Our call to action on Global Resilience, Sustainability & Solidarity with Climate Vulnerable People

The moral and ethical imperative to address climate change

As faith leaders and faith-based organisations from all across the world, we acknowledge that our wellbeing as human beings depends on and is closely intertwined with the wellbeing of our planet and the whole of creation. As people of faith, we are called to care for creation and share the resources of the earth in a sustainable and equitable way.

We acknowledge that human greed and consumerism are violating planetary boundaries and have led to the environmental crisis we are facing. We call for a change from the current model of development and economics to one that is sustainable, equitable and prioritises intergenerational justice and the rights of the most vulnerable, including indigenous people.

We have once again come together on the occasion of the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23) to call for clear steps forward in the elaboration of the key elements of the Paris Agreement, including the rulebook, climate finance, and setting the foundations for accountable dialogue and cooperation at all levels. The outcome of COP23 should not only set a positive tone for COP24, but also serve as a strong signal and a commitment to combat climate change.

COP23 is the first climate summit hosted by a small, climate vulnerable island state, Fiji. This COP comes after the sad declaration by the U.S.A, the country with the highest cumulated and per capita carbon emissions, of their intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. We regret this unfortunate step and affirm our full commitment to multilateral climate action and policies as an important way to protect and preserve the planet and its people, including future generations. We call on all other nations to step up their ambitions and not hide behind the inaction of USA.

The need for ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement

The successful implementation of the Paris Agreement depends on ambitious elaboration and implementation of the Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Long-term Strategies (LTS), enabled by increased international cooperation and support.

The goal of keeping global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius requires much deeper emission reductions than what the aggregate NDCs so far submitted by governments account for. It further requires the political will to eliminate fossil fuels, invest in renewable energies, and build more resilient and transformative communities. In addition, countries must agree to use the Facilitative Dialogue in 2018 as an opportunity for a mandatory revision of each country's climate change commitments.

Climate finance is the critical tool for meeting the challenge of climate change and for achieving the global transformation to a low-greenhouse gas emission economy and for building a resilient global society that protects all creation. It is important to ensure accountability and transparency around the provision of support, including clearly defining what constitutes climate finance. We call for the inclusion of clear modalities, procedures and guidelines on the financial support provided to developing countries in the transparency framework of the Paris Agreement.

Climate induced loss and damage is a reality that vulnerable communities all over the world are facing. We call for the reaffirmation of loss and damage as a critical pillar for climate action that requires financial support and further call for the recognition of ecosystem, economic and non-economic loss and damage, particularly those related to loss of territories and cultural and spiritual heritage. As people of faith, we are alarmed at the extent to which the poorest and most vulnerable people, for example in the Pacific, are affected and displaced. Climate change is a matter of social and economic justice.

The centrality of human rights, equity and gender justice

Climate change and its impacts affect the full enjoyment of human rights and dignity. Both from the perspective of our belief in God as the Creator, Liberator and Sustainer, and from the perspective of justice and human rights, Climate Change is a matter that must be urgently addressed by human beings in our age. The world has experienced some of the worst extreme weather events in recorded history in recent months, ranging from the record-breaking hurricane Irma to severe droughts in the Horn of Africa, from unprecedented wildfires in Europe

and North America to extensive flooding in Asia. These impacts drastically inhibit the efforts of communities to address poverty and to live dignified lives. In all these, the poor and most vulnerable are hit the hardest. As per the Paris Agreement, we call on states to “respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights” when taking action to address climate change.

We affirm the full and meaningful participation of women and men in climate change related decision-making and actions at all levels. In a climate resilient society, women and men should have equal access to power, information and resources. Having an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making processes from the local level to the global UN climate negotiations is essential. The competence and experience of women and men of all groups must be incorporated equally to shape climate and development interventions, to ensure that these meet everyone’s basic needs and strategic interests.

The traditional lifestyles of the indigenous people from the Arctic to the Pacific are threatened and already affected by climate change. Indigenous voices, sharing their cultural and spiritual understandings, must be included in the dialogue on climate change, helping to transform our world to a more sustainable future.

Similarly, youth must be in the midst of our discussion. Young people bring their ideas, energy and passion to the table. They are the future, but they are also part of the world now, and must be included in our work. Intergenerational justice must be a part of the climate agenda.

We affirm the principles of the UN climate change convention and call on the countries with the highest responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions and the greatest wealth to take the lead and to support others, and in particular the most vulnerable and poorest, in climate protection, resilience building and sustainable development. Accordingly, G20 and especially G7 countries have a historic responsibility and opportunity to lead by example in transforming their economies and helping others to do the same.

Our commitment and responsibility

As faith leaders and faith-based organizations, we commit ourselves to address climate change, including partnership with our governments and other stakeholders. We further commit ourselves to encourage and support our grassroots and global networks as well as to mobilise our

various faith resources to contribute to a resilient and sustainable life for this generation and generations to come.

We will work with our communities and partners to contribute to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement in close alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

We stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable and seek to ensure that their voices are heard.

Bonn, Germany, November 17, 2018

Signatories

actalliance

