

**CATHOLIC, BUDDHIST, HINDU AND ISLAMIC  
DECLARATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

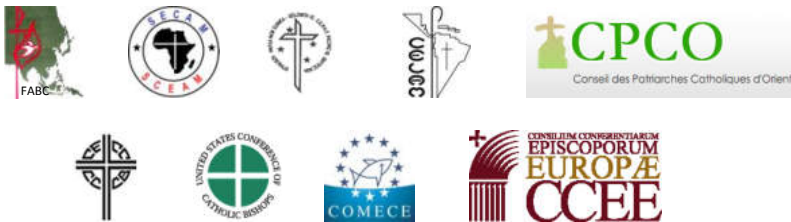
*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
Twenty first session Conference of the Parties (COP 21)  
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*Edited by  
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FABC Central Secretariat*

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## I. APPEAL TO COP 21 NEGOTIATING PARTIES



*The following appeal is issued by Cardinals, Patriarchs and Bishops from across the globe representing the continental groupings of national episcopal conferences. It is addressed to those negotiating the COP 21 in Paris and it calls on them to work toward the approval of a **fair, legally binding and truly transformational climate agreement.***

Representing the Catholic Church from the five continents, we Cardinals, Patriarchs and Bishops have come together to express, on our own behalf and on behalf of the people for whom we care, the widely-held hope that a just and legally binding climate agreement will emerge from the negotiations of the COP 21 in Paris. We advance a ten-point policy proposal, drawing on the concrete experience of people across the continents, and linking climate change to social injustice and the social exclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable of our citizens.

### **Climate Change: challenges and opportunities**

In his encyclical letter, *Laudato si'* (LS), addressed 'to every person living on this planet' (LS 3), Pope Francis claims that '*climate change represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity today*' (LS 25). The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all (LS 23). The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone (LS 95).

Whether believers or not, we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. For believers, this becomes a question of fidelity to the

Creator, since God created the world for everyone. Hence every ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged (LS 93).

Damage to climate and environment has enormous repercussions. The problem arising from the dramatic acceleration of climatic change is global in its effects. It challenges us to re-define our notions of *growth* and *progress*. It poses a *lifestyle* question. It is imperative that we find a solution that is consensual, because of the scale and global nature of the climate's impact, it invites a solidarity that is universal, a solidarity that is '*intergenerational*' and '*intragenerational*'. (LS 13, 14, 162)

The Pope defines our world as '*our common home*' and, in the exercise of our stewardship, we must keep in mind the human and social degradation which is a consequence of a damaged environment. We call for an integral ecological approach, we call for social justice to be placed centre stage '*so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*' (LS 49).

### **Sustainable development must include the poor**

While deploring the dramatic impact of rapid climate change on sea levels, extreme weather events, deteriorating ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity, the Church is also witness to how climate change is affecting vulnerable communities and peoples, greatly to their disadvantage. Pope Francis draws our attention to the irreparable impact of unrestrained climate change in many developing countries across the world. Moreover, in his address to the United Nations the Pope said the misuse and destruction of the environment are also accompanied by a relentless process of exclusion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Address of the Holy Father, United Nations Headquarters, New York, Friday 25 September 2015.

## **Courageous Leaders seeking enforceable agreements**

The building and maintenance of a sustainable common home requires courageous and imaginative political leadership. Legal frameworks are required which clearly establish boundaries and ensure the protection of the ecosystem (LS 53).

Reliable scientific evidence suggests that accelerated climate change is the result of unrestrained human activity, working to a particular model of progress and development, and that excessive reliance on fossil fuels is primarily responsible. The Pope and Catholic Bishops from five continents, sensitive to the damage caused, appeal for a drastic reduction in the emission of carbon dioxide and other toxic gasses.

We join the Holy Father in pleading for a major break-through in Paris, for a comprehensive and transformational agreement supported by all based on principles of solidarity, justice and participation.<sup>2</sup> This agreement must put the common good ahead of national interests. It is essential too that the negotiations result in an enforceable agreement that protects our common home and all its inhabitants.

We, Cardinals, Patriarchs and Bishops, issue a general call and make ten specific policy proposals. We call on COP 21 to forge an international agreement to limit a global temperature increase to within those parameters currently suggested from within the global scientific community to avoid catastrophic climatic impacts, especially on the poorest and most vulnerable communities. There is, we agree, a common but also differentiated responsibility of all nations. Different countries have reached a different stage on the development spectrum. The need to work together in a common endeavour is imperative.

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<sup>2</sup> Address of the His Holiness Pope Francis to the Environment Ministers of the European Union, Vatican City, 16 September 2015.

Our ten calls:

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. to accept that climate and atmosphere are global common goods that are belonging to all and meant for all.
3. to adopt a fair, transformational and legally binding global agreement based on our vision of the world that recognises the need to live in harmony with nature, and to guarantee the fulfilment of human rights for all, including those of Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and workers.
4. to strongly limit a global temperature increase and to set a goal for complete decarbonisation by mid-century, in order to protect frontline communities suffering from the impacts of climate change, such as those in the Pacific Islands and in coastal regions.
  - to ensure that the temperature threshold is enshrined in a legally binding global agreement, with ambitious mitigation commitments and actions from all countries recognising their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDRRC), based on equity principles, historical responsibilities, and the right to sustainable development.
  - to secure that the emissions reductions of governments are in line with the decarbonisation goal, governments need to undertake periodic reviews of the pledges they make and of the ambition they show. And to be

successful these reviews need also to be based on science and equity and shall be mandatory.

5. to develop new models of development and lifestyles that are climate compatible, address inequality and bring people out of poverty. Central to this is to put an end to the fossil fuel era, phasing out fossil fuel emissions, including emissions from military, aviation and shipping, and providing affordable, reliable and safe renewable energy access for all.
6. to ensure people's access to water and to land for climate resilient and sustainable food systems, which give priority to people driven solutions rather than profits.
7. to ensure inclusion and participation of the poorest, most vulnerable and impacted at all levels of the decision-making process.
8. 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.
9. to recognise 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.
10. to provide clear roadmaps on how countries will meet the provision of predictable, consistent, and additional finance commitments, ensuring a balanced financing of mitigation actions and adaptation needs.

All this would call for serious ecological awareness and education (LS 202-215).

## **Prayer for the Earth**

God of love, teach us to care for this world our common home. Inspire government leaders as they gather in Paris to listen to and heed the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor; to be united in heart and mind in responding courageously to seek the common good and protect the beautiful earthly garden you have created for us, for all our brothers and sisters, for all generations to come. Amen

### ***BISHOP SIGNATORIES TO THIS DECLARATION:***

#### **HIS EMINENCE OSWALD CARDINAL GRACIAS**

*Archbishop of Bombay, India  
President of FABC (Asia)*

#### **HIS EMINENCE PÉTER CARDINAL ERDŐ**

*Archbishop of Esztergom –Budapest  
President of CCEE (Europe)*

#### **HIS EMINENCE REINHARD CARDINAL MARX**

*Archbishop of Munich, Germany  
President of COMECE (Europe)*

#### **HIS EMINENCE RUBEN CARDINAL SALAZAR GÓMEZ**

*Archbishop of Bogota, Colombia  
President of CELAM (Latin America)*

#### **HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL MBILINGI**

*Archbishop of Lubango, Angola  
President of SECAM (Africa)*

#### **HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH KURTZ**

*Archbishop of Louisville  
President of USCCB (USA)*

#### **HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP JOHN RIBAT**

*Archbishop of Port Moresby, PNG  
President of FCBCO (Oceania)*

**HIS EXCELLENCY BP. DAVID DOUGLAS CROSBY OMI**  
*Bishop of Hamilton, Canada*  
*President of CCCB-CECC (Canada)*

**HIS BEATITUDE BECHARA BOUTROS CARDINAL RAI**  
*Patriarch of Antioch (Maronite)*  
*President of CCPO (Council of Catholic Patriarchs of the Orient)*



*Written in collaboration with our Catholic networks CIDSE and Caritas Internationalis and with the sponsorship of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.*

*Editorial Note: On 10 December 2015, it was made public that the Holy See joined the call of the overwhelming majority of countries to include the below 1.5°C temperature target to be enshrined in the Paris accord.*



## II. BUDDHIST CLIMATE CHANGE STATEMENT TO WORLD LEADERS



Global Buddhist  
Climate Change Collective

October 29th, 2015

(Signatures amended: November 29th, 2015)

We, the undersigned Buddhist leaders, come together prior to the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, in order to add our voices to the growing calls for world leaders to cooperate with compassion and wisdom and reach an ambitious and effective climate agreement.

We are at a crucial crossroads where our survival and that of other species is at stake as a result of our actions. There is still time to slow the pace of climate change and limit its impacts, but to do so, the Paris summit will need to put us on a path to phase out fossil fuels. We must ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, through visionary and comprehensive mitigation and adaptation measures.

Our concern is founded on the Buddha's realization of dependent co-arising, which interconnects all things in the universe. Understanding this interconnected causality and the consequences of our actions are critical steps in reducing our environmental impact. Cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion, we will be able to act out of love, not fear, to protect

our planet. Buddhist leaders have been speaking about this for decades. However, everyday life can easily lead us to forget that our lives are inextricably interwoven with the natural world through every breath we take, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Through our lack of insight, we are destroying the very life support systems that we and all other living beings depend on for survival.

We believe it imperative that the global Buddhist community recognize both our dependence on one another as well as on the natural world. Together, humanity must act on the root causes of this environmental crisis, which is driven by our use of fossil fuels, unsustainable consumption patterns, lack of awareness, and lack of concern about the consequences of our actions.

We strongly support “The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change,” which is endorsed by a diverse and global representation of Buddhist leaders and Buddhist sanghas. We also welcome and support the climate change statements of other religious traditions. These include Pope Francis’s encyclical earlier this year, *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, the *Islamic Declaration on Climate Change*, as well as the upcoming *Hindu Declaration on Climate Change*. We are united by our concern to phase out fossil fuels, to reduce our consumption patterns, and the ethical imperative to act against both the causes and the impacts of climate change, especially on the world’s poorest.

To this end, we urge world leaders to generate the political will to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges and ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels. We also ask for a common commitment to scale up climate finance, so as to help developing countries prepare for climate impacts and to help us all transition to a safe, low carbon future.

The good news is that there is a unique opportunity at the Paris climate negotiations to create a turning point. Scientists assure us that limiting the rise in the global average temperature to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius is technologically and economically feasible. Phasing out fossil fuels and moving toward 100 percent renewable and clean energy will not only spur a global, low-carbon transformation, it will also help us to embark on a much-needed path of spiritual renewal. In addition to our spiritual progression, in line with UN recommendations, some of the most effective actions individuals can take are to protect our forests, move toward a plant-based diet, reduce consumption, recycle, switch to renewables, fly less, and take public transport. We can all make a difference.

We call on world leaders to recognize and address our universal responsibility to protect the web of life for the benefit of all, now and for the future.

For these reasons, we call on all Parties in Paris:

1. To be guided by the moral dimensions of climate change as indicated in Article 3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
2. To agree to phase out fossil fuels and move towards 100 percent renewables and clean energy.
3. To create the political will to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges so as to ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.
4. To make a common commitment to increase finance above the US\$100 billion agreed in Copenhagen in 2009, including through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to help vulnerable developing countries prepare for climate impacts and transition towards a low-carbon economy.

The time to act is now.

Yours sincerely,

*Global Buddhist Leaders*

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso**, 14th Dalai Lama

**Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh**, Patriarch of the Plum Village International Community of Engaged Buddhists

**His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa**, Head of the Karma Kagyu Tradition

*Eminent Buddhist Monastic Leaders.*

*Alphabetically By Country*

**His Holiness Dr. Dharmasena Mahathero**, The Supreme Patriarch (Sangharaja) of the Bangladesh Sangha, Bangladesh

**Ven. Lama Lobzang**, Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), India

**Most Ven. Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo**, President of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women, India

**His Eminence Jaseung Sunim**, President, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, Korea

**Most Ven. Myeong Seong Sunim**, President Emeritus of the Korean National Bhikkhuni Association, Korea

**Ven. B. Sri Saranankara Nayaka Maha Thera**, Chief Adhikarana Sangha Nayaka of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**His Eminence Rev. Khamba Lama Gabju Demberel**, The Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists, Mongolia

**His Holiness Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa**, Sangharaja, and  
Chairman State Sangha Maha Nāyaka Committee, Myanmar

**His Eminence Agga Maha Panditha Dawuldena Gnanissara  
Maha Nayaka Thera**, Mahanayaka Thero, The Supreme Prelate  
of the Amarapura Maha Nikaya, Sri Lanka

**Dharma Master Cheng Yen**, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation,  
Taiwan

**Most Ven. Aryawangso**, Vice President of the World Fellowship  
of Buddhists, Thailand

**His Holiness Thích Phổ Tuệ**, Supreme Patriarch of All Vietnam  
Buddhist Sangha, Vietnam

**Most Ven. Thích Nữ Tịnh Nguyên**, President of Vietnam  
Bhikkhuni Sangha, Vietnam

**Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi**, President, Buddhist Association of the  
USA

**Ven. Tathaloka Theri**, Founder, North American Bhikkhuni  
Association, USA

*Eminent Buddhist Leaders,  
Alphabetically By Country*

**Her Royal Highness Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuk**, Bhutan

**Rev. Olivier Reigen Wang-gen**, President, Buddhist Union of  
France (UBF), France

**Rev. Hakuga Murayama**, President, All Japan Young Buddhist  
Association (JYBA), Japan

**Yoshitaka Oba**, General Director, Soka Gakkai International  
(SGI), Japan

**Rev. Sensei Amala Wrightson**, Buddhist Climate Change Leader,  
New Zealand

**Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne**, Founder of Sarvodaya Shramadana, Sri  
Lanka

**Jamie Creswell**, President of the European Buddhist Union, UK

**Rev. Roshi Dr. Joan Jiko Halifax**, Deputy Secretary General of  
the International Buddhist Confederation, USA



### III. BHUMI DEVI KI JAI! A HINDU DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

“Mātā bhūmi putro aham pṛthivyāḥ! The Earth is my mother and I am her child!”

– Atharva Veda (12.1.12)

Six years have passed since the first Hindu Declaration on Climate Change was adopted by spiritual leaders at the Parliament of the World’s Religions, in Melbourne, Australia. “Rapacious exploitation of the planet [has] caught up with us,” it warns. “A radical change in our relationship with nature is no longer an option. It is a matter of survival. We cannot destroy nature without destroying ourselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, since then little decisive action has been taken. Global temperature increase, sea level rise, and ocean acidification have all worsened<sup>2</sup>. Ice in the Arctic<sup>3</sup> and Antarctic<sup>4</sup> continues its rapid melt. Yet we are still without a comprehensive global treaty on climate change. Climate change is a stark symptom of the deeper problem of humanity living out of balance with what Bhūmi Devi, our shared planet, can renewably provide.

Today, with the 2015 Paris Climate Conference nearly upon us, members of the global Hindu community again urge strong, meaningful action be taken, at both the international and national level, to slow and prevent climate change. Such action must be scientifically credible and historically fair, based on deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through a transition away from polluting technologies, especially away from fossil fuels. A transition towards using 100-percent clean energy is desperately needed, as rapidly as is possible in every nation. Doing so provides the only basis for sustainable, continued human development. It is the best hope for the billions of people without electricity or clean cooking facilities to live better lives and reduce poverty.

We cannot rely on governments alone to act, however. Each one of us has a part to play in reducing climate pollution, by changing our inner and outer behaviour. As Mahatma Gandhi posited, “If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. We need not wait to see what others do.”

The Mahābhārata (109.10) tells us, “Dharma exists for the welfare of all beings. Hence, that by which the welfare of all living beings is sustained, that for sure is dharma.”

Today we call on all Hindus to expand our conception of dharma. We must consider the effects of our actions not just on ourselves and those humans around us, but also on all beings. We have a dharmic duty for each of us to do our part in ensuring that we have a functioning, abundant, and bountiful planet.

In the Assisi Declarations on nature (1986), Dr. Karan Singh writes, “Hinduism believes in the all encompassing sovereignty of the divine...[humanity] is not seen as something apart from the Earth and its multitudinous life forms... [Man] is there integrally linked to the whole of creation.”<sup>5</sup>

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.41) states, “Ether, air, fire, water, earth, planets, all creatures, directions, trees and plants, rivers and seas, they are all organs of God’s body. Remembering this a devotee respects all species.” Knowing this, Hindus strive for ahimsā, to minimise the harm we cause through our actions in our ordinary, day-to-day lives. As Hindus we revere all life, human, non-human, plant, and animal. Our rivers are all goddesses; our mountains are gods. The landscape as a whole is seen as being full of divinity. The planets and stars are physical objects, but they are also celestial beings, they and the space between them full of divinity. When we embody this, we move beyond just caring for our fellow beings as stewards of a divine creation. We become servants of the Divine, all our actions,



including those in protection of the world around us and all the beings therein, becoming acts of worship.

We must base our response to climate change on a number of central principles, expanding on the truism that the Divine is all and all life is to be treated with reverence and respect: Internalising *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (the family of Mother Earth), promoting *sarva bhuta hita* (the welfare of all beings), and acting with an understanding of karma and the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Climate change creates pain, suffering, and violence. Unless we change how we use energy, how we use the land, how we grow our crops, how we treat other animals, and how we use natural resources, we will only further this pain, suffering, and violence. On a personal basis, we can reduce this suffering by beginning to transform our habits, simplifying our lives and material desires, and not taking more than our reasonable share of resources. Adopting a plant-based diet is one of the single most powerful acts<sup>6</sup> that a person can take in reducing environmental impact.<sup>7</sup> In doing all of this, we help maintain the ecological and cosmic order, an order that allows life and existence to flourish.

More than 5000 years ago the scriptural foundation of Hinduism, Sanātana Dharma, was laid down in the Vedas, the start of millennia of continuous spiritual exploration. Today, Sanātana Dharma consists of myriad lineages and teachers, each with a different perspective on humanity's relationship with the ultimate reality. Hinduism extols this pluralistic ethos through the R̥g Veda verse "Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti. Truth is one, the wise call it by many names." There are many paths of yoga one can use to achieve Realisation, whether it be karma (action), bhakti (devotion), jñāna (knowledge), or rājā yoga, now followed throughout the world. There is a wide spectrum of belief and practice which enables Hinduism to be beautifully diverse and welcoming.

This diversity, though, shouldn't distract from the underlying unity of belief. Three words in Sanskrit, from the Īṣopaniṣad, broadly characterise the Hindu outlook: "Īśāvāsyam idam sarvam. This entire universe is to be looked upon as the energy of the Lord."

Today, each of us must ask ourselves, "How can I be of service? How can my service become an act of worship to honour and protect Bhūmi Devi?"

Through this combination of meaningful action, personal transformation, and service done selflessly and as an act of worship we will be able to make the sort of inner and outer transitions that addressing climate change requires. In doing this we are acting in a deeply dharmic way, true to our Hindu ethos, philosophy, and tradition.

Aum, śānti, śānti, śāntiḥ.

1. [http://www.hinduismtoday.com/pdf\\_downloads/hindu-climate-change-declaration.pdf](http://www.hinduismtoday.com/pdf_downloads/hindu-climate-change-declaration.pdf)
2. <http://ar5-syr.ipcc.ch>
3. <https://www.nasa.gov/content/goddard/2015-arctic-sea-ice-maximum-annual-extent-is-lowest-on-record>
4. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/stable-antarctic-ice-is-suddenly-melting-fast/>
5. <http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/THE%20ASSISI%20DECLARATIONS.pdf>
6. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jul/21/giving-up-beef-reduce-carbon-footprint-more-than-cars>
7. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25795-going-vegetarian-halves-co2-emissions-from-your-food/>

#### **IV. ISLAMIC DECLARATION ON GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

*Editorial Note: Islamic leaders from twenty countries launched a bold Climate Change Declaration to engage the world's 1.6 billion Muslims on the issue of our time. The declaration combines Qur'anic scripture, moral responsibility to ourselves and our planet, and actions that can be taken by people, nations leaders, businesses corporations and the finance sector, and of course, Muslims everywhere.*

The Declaration

*In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate*

#### **PREAMBLE**

- God – Whom we know as Allah – has created the universe in all its diversity, richness and vitality: the stars, the sun and moon, the earth and all its communities of living beings. All these reflect and manifest the boundless glory and mercy of their Creator. All created beings by nature serve and glorify their Maker, all bow to their Lord's will. We human beings are created to serve the Lord of all beings, to work the greatest good we can for all the species, individuals, and generations of God's creatures.
  
- Our planet has existed for billions of years and climate change in itself is not new. The earth's climate has gone through phases wet and dry, cold and warm, in response to many natural factors. Most of these changes have been gradual, so that the forms and communities of life have adjusted accordingly. There have been catastrophic climate changes that brought about mass extinctions, but over time, life adjusted even to these impacts, flowering anew in the emergence of balanced ecosystems such as those we treasure today. Climate change in the past was also instrumental in laying down immense stores of fossil fuels from which we

derive benefits today. Ironically, our unwise and short-sighted use of these resources is now resulting in the destruction of the very conditions that have made our life on earth possible.

- The pace of Global climate change today is of a different order of magnitude from the gradual changes that previously occurred throughout the most recent era, the Cenozoic. Moreover, it is human-induced: we have now become a force dominating nature. The epoch in which we live has increasingly been described in geological terms as the Anthropocene, or “Age of Humans”. Our species, though selected to be a caretaker or steward (*khalifah*) on the earth, has been the cause of such corruption and devastation on it that we are in danger ending life as we know it on our planet. This current rate of climate change cannot be sustained, and the earth’s fine equilibrium (*mīzān*) may soon be lost. As we humans are woven into the fabric of the natural world, its gifts are for us to savour. But the same fossil fuels that helped us achieve most of the prosperity we see today are the main cause of climate change. Excessive pollution from fossil fuels threatens to destroy the gifts bestowed on us by God, whom we know as Allah – gifts such as a functioning climate, healthy air to breathe, regular seasons, and living oceans. But our attitude to these gifts has been short-sighted, and we have abused them. What will future generations say of us, who leave them a degraded planet as our legacy? How will we face our Lord and Creator?
- We note that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (UNEP, 2005) and backed by over 1300 scientists from 95 countries, found that “overall, people have made greater changes to ecosystems in the last half of the 20th century than at any time in human history... these changes have enhanced human well-being, but have been accompanied by ever increasing degradation (of our environment).”

“Human activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of the earth that the ability of the planet’s

ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted.”

- Nearly ten years later, and in spite of the numerous conferences that have taken place to try to agree on a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, the overall state of the Earth has steadily deteriorated. A study by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) comprising representatives from over 100 nations published in March 2014 gave five reasons for concern. In summary, they are:
- Ecosystems and human cultures are already at risk from climate change;
- Risks resulting from climate change caused by extreme events such as heat waves, extreme precipitation and coastal flooding are on the rise;
- These risks are unevenly distributed, and are generally greater for the poor and disadvantaged communities of every country, at all levels of development;
- Foreseeable impacts will affect adversely Earth’s biodiversity, the goods and services provided by our ecosystems, and our overall global economy;
- The Earth’s core physical systems themselves are at risk of abrupt and irreversible changes.

We are driven to conclude from these warnings that there are serious flaws in the way we have used natural resources – the sources of life on Earth. An urgent and radical reappraisal is called for. Humankind cannot afford the slow progress we have seen in all the COP (Conference of Parties – climate change negotiations) processes since the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was published in 2005, or the present deadlock.

- In the brief period since the Industrial Revolution, humans have consumed much of the non-renewable resources which have taken the earth 250 million years to produce – all in the name of economic development and human progress. We note

with alarm the combined impacts of rising per capita consumption combined with the rising human population. We also note with alarm the multi-national scramble now taking place for more fossil fuel deposits under the dissolving ice caps in the arctic regions. We are accelerating our own destruction through these processes.

- Leading climate scientists now believe that a rise of two degrees centigrade in global temperature, which is considered to be the “tipping point”, is now very unlikely to be avoided if we continue with business-as-usual; other leading climate scientists consider 1.5 degrees centigrade to be a more likely “tipping point”. This is the point considered to be the threshold for catastrophic climate change, which will expose yet more millions of people and countless other creatures to drought, hunger and flooding. The brunt of this will continue to be borne by the poor, as the Earth experiences a drastic increase in levels of carbon in the atmosphere brought on in the period since the onset of the industrial revolution.

1.8 It is alarming that in spite of all the warnings and predictions, the successor to the Kyoto Protocol which should have been in place by 2012, has been delayed. It is essential that all countries, especially the more developed nations, increase their efforts and adopt the pro-active approach needed to halt and hopefully eventually reverse the damage being wrought.

## **WE AFFIRM**

- We affirm that Allah is the Lord and Sustainer (*Rabb*) of all beings

Praise be to Allah, Lord and Sustainer of all beings

Qur'an 1: 1

He is the One Creator - He is al-Khāliq

He is Allah – the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form

Qur'an 59: 24

He Who has perfected every thing He has created

Qur'an 32: 7

Nothing that He creates is without value: each thing is created bi 'l-haqq, in truth and for right.

And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play. We have not created them but in truth

Qur'an 44: 38

- We affirm that He encompasses all of His creation – He is *al-Muhit*

All that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah.

Allah encompasses all things

Qur'an 4: 125

- We affirm that –
  - God created the Earth in perfect equilibrium (*mīzān*);
  - By His immense mercy we have been given fertile land, fresh air, clean water and all the good things on Earth that makes our lives here viable and delightful;
  - The Earth functions in natural seasonal rhythms and cycles: a climate in which living beings – including humans – thrive;
  - The present climate change catastrophe is a result of the human disruption of this balance –

He raised the heaven and established the balance

So that you would not transgress the balance.

Give just weight – do not skimp in the balance.

He laid out the earth for all living creatures.

Qur'an 55: 7-10

- We affirm the natural state (*fitrah*) of God's creation –

So set your face firmly towards the (natural) Way

As a pure, natural believer

Allah's natural pattern on which He made mankind

There is no changing Allah's creation.

That is the true (natural) Way

But most people do not know it.

Quran 30: 30

2.5 We recognize the corruption (*fasād*) that humans have caused on the Earth due to our relentless pursuit of economic growth and consumption. Its consequences have been –

- Global climate change, which is our present concern, in addition to:
- Contamination and befoulment of the atmosphere, land, inland water systems, and seas;
- Soil erosion, deforestation and desertification;
- Damage to human health, including a host of modern-day diseases.



Corruption has appeared on land and sea

Because of what people's own hands have wrought,

So that they may taste something of what they have done;

So that hopefully they will turn back.

Qur'an 30: 41

- We recognize that we are but a miniscule part of the divine order, yet within that order, we are exceptionally powerful beings, and have the responsibility to establish good and avert evil in every way we can. We also recognize that -
- We are but one of the multitude of living beings with whom we share the Earth;
- We have no right to oppress the rest of creation or cause it harm;
- Intelligence and conscience behoove us, as our faith commands, to treat all things with care and awe (*taqwa*) of their Creator, compassion (*rahmah*) and utmost good (*ihsan*).

There is no animal on the earth, or any bird that wings its flight, but is a community like you.

Qur'an 6: 38

The creation of the heavens and the earth

Is far greater than the creation of mankind,

But most of mankind do not know it

Qur'an 40: 57

- We recognize that we are accountable for all our actions -

Then he who has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it;  
and he who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.

Qur'an 99:6-8

2.8 In view of these considerations we affirm that our responsibility as Muslims is to act according to the example of the Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and blessings be upon him) who -

- Declared and protected the rights of all living beings, outlawed the custom of burying infant girls alive, prohibited killing living beings for sport, guided his companions to conserve water even in washing for prayer, forbade the felling of trees in the desert, ordered a man who had taken some nestlings from their nest to return them to their mother, and when he came upon a man who had lit a fire on an anthill, commanded, "Put it out, put it out!";
- Established inviolable zones (harams) around Makkah and Al-Madinah, within which native plants may not be felled or cut and wild animals may not be hunted or disturbed;
- Established protected areas (himas) for the conservation and sustainable use of rangelands, plant cover and wildlife.
- Lived a frugal life, free of excess, waste, and ostentation;
- Renewed and recycled his meagre possessions by repairing or giving them away;
- Ate simple, healthy food, which only occasionally included meat;
- Took delight in the created world; and
- Was, in the words of the Qur'an, "a mercy to all beings."

## **WE CALL**

3.1 We call upon the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC) and the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Kyoto Protocol taking place in Paris this December, 2015 to bring their discussions to an equitable and binding conclusion, bearing in mind -

- The scientific consensus on climate change, which is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate systems;
- The need to set clear targets and monitoring systems;
- The dire consequences to planet earth if we do not do so;
- The enormous responsibility the COP shoulders on behalf of the rest of humanity, including leading the rest of us to a new way of relating to God's Earth.

3.2 We particularly call on the well-off nations and oil-producing states to -

- Lead the way in phasing out their greenhouse gas emissions as early as possible and no later than the middle of the century;
- Provide generous financial and technical support to the less well-off to achieve a phase-out of greenhouse gases as early as possible;
- Recognize the moral obligation to reduce consumption so that the poor may benefit from what is left of the earth's non-renewable resources;
- Stay within the '2 degree' limit, or, preferably, within the '1.5 degree' limit, bearing in mind that two-thirds of the earth's proven fossil fuel reserves remain in the ground;
- Re-focus their concerns from unethical profit from the environment, to that of preserving it and elevating the condition of the world's poor.
- Invest in the creation of a green economy.

3.3 We call on the people of all nations and their leaders to -

- Aim to phase out greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible in order to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere;
- Commit themselves to 100 % renewable energy and/or a zero emissions strategy as early as possible, to mitigate the environmental impact of their activities;
- Invest in decentralized renewable energy, which is the best way to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development;
- Realize that to chase after unlimited economic growth in a planet that is finite and already overloaded is not viable. Growth must be pursued wisely and in moderation; placing a priority on increasing the resilience of all, and especially the most vulnerable, to the climate change impacts already underway and expected to continue for many years to come.
- Set in motion a fresh model of wellbeing, based on an alternative to the current financial model which depletes resources, degrades the environment, and deepens inequality.
- Prioritise adaptation efforts with appropriate support to the vulnerable countries with the least capacity to adapt. And to vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples, women and children.

3.4 We call upon corporations, finance, and the business sector to –

- Shoulder the consequences of their profit-making activities, and take a visibly more active role in reducing their carbon footprint and other forms of impact upon the natural environment;
- In order to mitigate the environmental impact of their activities, commit themselves to 100 % renewable energy and/or a zero emissions strategy as early as possible and shift investments into renewable energy;
- Change from the current business model which is based on an unsustainable escalating economy, and to adopt a circular economy that is wholly sustainable;

- Pay more heed to social and ecological responsibilities, particularly to the extent that they extract and utilize scarce resources;
- Assist in the divestment from the fossil fuel driven economy and the scaling up of renewable energy and other ecological alternatives.

3.5 We call on all groups to join us in collaboration, co-operation and friendly competition in this endeavour and we welcome the significant contributions taken by other faiths, as we can all be winners in this race

He (God) wanted to test you regarding what has come to you. So compete with each other in doing good deeds.

Qur'an 5: 48

If we each offer the best of our respective traditions, we may yet see a way through our difficulties.

3.6 Finally, we call on all Muslims wherever they may be –

Heads of state

Political leaders

Business community

UNFCCC delegates

Religious leaders and scholars

Mosque congregations

Islamic endowments (awqaf)

Educators and educational institutions

Community leaders

Civil society activists

Non-governmental organisations

Communications and media

Do not strut arrogantly on the earth.

You will never split the earth apart

nor will you ever rival the mountains' stature.

Qur'an 17: 37

We bear in mind the words of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him):

The world is sweet and verdant, and verily Allah has made you stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves

Hadīth related by Muslim from Abu Sa'īd Al-Khudrī)

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