



**Justice and peace must prevail:
We must not betray life!**

**Statement from the World Council of Churches, WCC
To the High-Level Ministerial Segment of the
19th Session of the Conference of the Parties – COP19 to the UNFCCC
9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties – CMP9 to the Kyoto Protocol
Friday, 22 November 2013**

Mr. President, His Excellency Marcin Korolec,
Distinguished Participants,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God"
Mathew 5:9

Five years ago while at COP14-CMP4 that took place in this same country, Poland, the World Council of Churches as well as the Ecumenical Family stressed the urgency to adopt more radical steps to cope with climate change. Climate change is not one more issue to be added to the list of points to worry about. May be it is the most urgent issue that humankind is facing at present. Climate change is happening now!

We are receiving formidable messages from nature telling us to wake up and make the transition to a more ethical society based on justice, equity and sustainability without more dilation.

Life is the most precious gift given to human beings. Life is beautiful, and the beauty of the natural world cannot be compared by anything created by the human genius. But what is human life if it cannot be lived in full dignity? How would be our future if there were no pure fresh water, clean breathable air, green forests and blue oceans to absorb and purify the atmosphere from the polluting carbon dioxide?

We fully know what causes climate change and we know how to at least ameliorate the damage. We must have ambitious goals while at the same time manage its consequences for as long as it takes to minimize the threat.

Just a few weeks before COP19-CMP9, leading climate scientists have once more warned the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for the first time unfold how much more carbon dioxide humans can introduce into the atmosphere without triggering critical levels of climate change.

They clearly state that to hold warming to 2°C, total emissions cannot exceed 1,000 gigatons of carbon dioxide and moreover they alert us that by 2011 more than half of that total allotment had already been emitted!

Life in all its forms must be kept enjoying the perfect natural equilibrium of the natural world, which has its own laws and rhythm. Contemporary life is menaced by factors unknown in past centuries: today we speak of food insecurity, of water insecurity, of energy insecurity. Is this the scenario we are preparing for the generations to come? Is this the world we shall leave to our descendants? Are we so isolated from the present reality, from the menace of peoples whose territory will disappear under the oceans' waters, whose habitat will be not only jeopardised but ultimately destroyed by the advancing desertification? Shall all the remaining species disappear leaving the world we live in without its rich and life-sustaining biodiversity?

Human beings have started a war against the natural world, against its waters, its natural resources, and its atmosphere, the latter having been named our "*global commons*" in past years. We are already in war against other human communities; we have started a war against our planet earth, which will end in the destruction of all forms of life, starting with the degradation and lack of dignity in the life of human societies. And we are still in search of a sustainable world, turning apart our faces, hearts and minds, not accepting the reality we are immersed in.

The World Council of Churches believes that all people are created equal and have the same rights to benefit from the bounties of creation. Equitable development for all is possible while maintaining the ecological integrity of the biosphere.

Justice and peace are needed: we must not remain unmoved to the pain, to the loneliness, to the injustice, and to the effects of the war against nature, without having done the utmost to save innocent people around our beautiful world from the consequences of our present indifference to the future.

This is what we, people of faith, people of firm convictions, have been claiming from you in your capacity as International Negotiators, in all the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since Berlin in 1995.

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which met in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, fervently "*Calls upon churches and ecumenical organizations to insist that governments look beyond national interests in order to be responsible towards the creation and our common future, and particularly those present at COP19 in Warsaw, Poland, to urge the Polish COP presidency to increase the ambitions of the Warsaw outputs.*"

Do not deceive us, do not deceive yourselves and your families, and do not deceive the world of the future:

Act and act now!

The future is here, the future is today.

The world cannot wait: climate change is happening

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