

Climate Justice for All

**A Statement from the World Council of Churches (WCC)
to the High-Level Ministerial Segment of the
UN Climate Conference in Nairobi (COP12/MOP2)
Friday, November 17, 2006
delivered by Dr. Jesse Mugambi, University of Nairobi and
Member of the WCC Working Group on Climate Change**

Mr. President and fellow participants in this UN Climate Conference:

We believe that caring for life on Earth is a spiritual commitment. People and other species have the right to life unthreatened by human greed and destructiveness.

The World Council of Churches is present at this 12th Conference of the Parties as we have been at every other COP. Our ecumenical team includes representatives of Christian faith communities around the world and ecumenical relief and development agencies.

Science and the experiences of our members around the world confirm the reality of human-induced climate change. Pollution, particularly from the energy-intensive wealthy industrialised countries, is warming the atmosphere. A warmer atmosphere is leading to major climate changes. The poor and vulnerable communities in the world and future generations will suffer the most. Though we have concerns about all regions, we focus in this statement particularly on Africa and the Pacific.

Kenya is my home. The impacts of climate change are radically altering this land in which we are meeting. As you know, Mt. Kenya means "mountain of whiteness". The snow and glaciers that covered the mountain for generations have almost disappeared. We depend on the snow and glaciers of Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro as critical sources of water for growing our food and quenching our thirst. The rains are becoming much less predictable. Drought and severe storms alternate making agriculture less sustainable.

Faith-based organizations in Kenya are responding. We have formed a partnership through the All Africa Conference of Churches and Caritas and have sponsored a number of public awareness and advocacy events here in Nairobi during COP12. In conjunction with some of our partner ecumenical relief and development agencies in developed countries, we are working on a variety of community-based projects that address impacts of climate change, particularly water-related problems.

In the Pacific, churches and communities cannot wait any longer for the world to agree on the effects of climate change and its consequences on isolated communities and hence have taken initiatives to address the issue of climate change in their own ways and within their own means. We commend them and note with appreciation those nations that have contributed human and financial resources to address adaptation and resilience measures. The position of Australia only adds insult to injury for the Pacific as it continues to refuse to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Pacific

churches are thankful for the ecumenical solidarity of churches in Australia to look at ways of addressing the issue in the Pacific region.

Faith-based organizations in Africa and the Pacific are mindful of the link between climate change and disasters in these regions. We call for more resources to be directed at the linkages between climate change impacts and disaster preparedness, emergency relief, rehabilitation and development. We are grateful for the increasing response of ecumenical agencies working on disaster relief and development and encourage them to intensify their focus on climate change as a significant cause of disasters.

As the World Council of Churches, we issue a life-affirming call to delegates at COP12/MOP2:

1. listen to the scientists and the cry of the Earth and address the reality of climate change with the extreme urgency that it demands;
2. governments of the rich industrialised nations must keep the promise that they made in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The world is rapidly approaching the point of "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." The rich nations bear the primary responsibility for causing climate change and must adopt strategies to drastically reduce their emissions.
3. the Kyoto Protocol must be fully implemented by all those who ratified it and industrialised nations that did not ratify must meet targets at least as strict as those included in the Protocol. The emissions of some industrialised countries have risen rather than fallen since the 1990 baseline year. This means even greater reductions are required than the Kyoto Protocol targets and reinforces the urgency that actual reductions start now. We dare not wait.
4. the rich industrialised nations use far more than their fair share of the atmospheric global commons. They must pay that ecological debt to other peoples by fully compensating them for the costs of adaptation to climate change.
5. drastic emission reductions by the rich are required to ensure that the legitimate development needs of the world's poor can be met.
6. all countries must agree to and participate in a climate policy framework for post-2012 that ensures equitable development for all while maintaining greenhouse gas concentrations within limits that keep a warming of the global mean temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

The World Council of Churches believes that the whole Earth community deserves to benefit from the bounties of creation. Equitable development for all is possible while maintaining the ecological integrity of the biosphere. Faith communities are addressing climate change because it is a spiritual and ethical issue of justice, equity, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability. The situation is critical. We must all act now. We pray that you will demonstrate leadership in responding to the cry of the Earth.

Thank you.

World Council of Churches web-site: www.wcc-coe.org