



## **Statement of Faith and Spiritual Leaders**

**Statement from the World Council of Churches - WCC  
On behalf of different world's Faith and Religious Traditions  
To the High-Level Ministerial Segment of the  
21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties – COP21 to the UNFCCC  
11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties – CMP11 to the Kyoto Protocol  
Paris, France  
Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

Mr. President, His Excellency Laurent Fabius,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

**We raise our voices to the governments represented at COP21 in Paris to utilize the special momentum given on this highly significant occasion:** COP21 provides a critical opportunity to benefit the whole of the human community. For the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, a global and comprehensive agreement on climate justice and climate protection – supported from all the nations of the world – can be reached.

**We as religious leaders: “stand together to express deep concern for the consequences of climate change on the earth and its people, all entrusted, as our faiths reveal, to our common care. Climate change is indeed a threat to life. Life is a precious gift we have received and that we need to care for”<sup>1</sup>.**

### **Together we confirm:**

Our religious convictions and cosmological narratives tell us that this earth and the whole universe are gifts that we have received from the spring of life, from God. It is our obligation to respect, protect and sustain these gifts by all means.

Therefore:

- **COP21 is the right moment to translate ecological stewardship into concrete climate action.**

Our religious convictions and traditions tell us of the ethical rule of reciprocity: to treat others as we would like them to treat us. This includes future generations. It is our duty to leave this earth behind to our children and grandchildren to ensure sustainable and acceptable living conditions in future for all.

Therefore:

- **COP21 is the right moment for showing inter-generational responsibility.**

Our religious convictions, social codes and customs tell us about concern for the vulnerable: climate change is leading to unprecedented ecological degradation, affecting in particular the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations. It is an irrefutable moral duty for all governments to agree on concrete and measurable steps towards global climate justice and partnerships for climate resilience.

Therefore:

- **COP21 is the right time for ensuring climate justice.**

Our religious convictions and ancestral sources tell us human life is open to the possibility of change and renewal: we are convinced that human life is not doomed to self-destruction, but can exist in respect and harmony with nature. By forging good relationships with each other and with nature, we enhance our capacity for peace and transformation. Avoiding dangerous climate change is still possible if we accept the required fundamental shift away from a carbon-centered economy, unsustainable consumption and infinite economic growth and if we promote the phasing-out of fossil fuels by the middle of the century.

Therefore:

- **COP21 is the right time to initiate an unprecedented individual and structural transformation.**

Our religious convictions and traditions point to the relevance of theology for informing new models of development with social and ecological justice. Aware that governments and political agreements alone are not sufficient for the immense challenges ahead – our faith communities can provide solid grounding, moral support, ethical education and value-based sustainable development models which are needed for the global transformation process. As representatives of the majority of the global population who live with religious affiliations and values, we will not only hold leaders to account, but will also support politicians working towards an ambitious global climate agreement in Paris and beyond.

Therefore:

- **COP21 is the right moment for real and visionary leadership.**

### **We call for a fair, ambitious and binding global deal applicable to all countries:**

- A long-term goal to phase out greenhouse gas emissions and phase in 100% renewable energy by the middle of the century in order to stay below 1.5/2°C of warming above pre-industrial levels.
- The firm commitment of all states to constantly improve their nationally determined climate action, in accordance with the Rio principles.
- A rules based system, applicable to all, ensuring transparency, accountability, and a strong review and scaling up of climate action at least every five years.
- A climate resilience goal to ensure adequate support to those countries and people being threatened by climate risks and losses. This would strengthen their resilience and adaptive capacity to the impact of climate change (accompanying the extension and intensification of the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism).

- The provision of necessary financial support, technology transfer and capacity building, with a reliable pathway ensuring the mobilization of at least \$100 billion of international climate finance. This must be provided every year to developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable countries like small developing island states and least developed countries to support low carbon and climate resilient development.

**We call on all governments, and in particular the G20, all OECD members, high income countries and other major emitters:**

- to commit to nationally binding, ambitious short term emission reduction targets.
- to commit to national climate risk management measures.
- to commit to the provision of bold support to those countries and people who have less resources and capacity, starting with the most vulnerable.

**Climate action must not be limited to governments alone.**

**It is the responsibility of all of us to share the efforts.**

**We as faith and spiritual leaders commit to:**

- Follow the example set by faith based communities who are joining the global pilgrimage for climate justice<sup>2</sup> and those participating in regular acts of fasting for climate justice.<sup>3</sup>
- Be responsible for the Earth, our common home, in our lives as individuals and in our faith communities.
- Look at our consumption patterns and move towards sustainable practices and lifestyles, assessing the carbon footprints of our organizations and institutions as well as means to reduce them, explore and implement zero carbon strategies, and where appropriate, divest from fossil fuels.
- Assess climate risks affecting our communities, prepare for the prevention and reduction of these risks, encouraging the communities to set climate resilience targets by 2025 and take the actions needed to adapt to the impact of climate change.
- Undertake a constant effort to raise climate awareness within our communities, as an expression of our care for the Earth, deepening our understanding of the interconnectedness of human beings and nature, building capacity, and advocating for climate justice with our governments.

1 See Statement from the Interfaith Summit in New York, 21-22 September 2014, by the World Council of Churches Geneva and Religions for Peace, New York: <http://interfaithclimate.org/the-statement>

2 [https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/pilgrims-for-climate-justice-plan-to-impact-cop-21-in-paris?set\\_language=en](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/pilgrims-for-climate-justice-plan-to-impact-cop-21-in-paris?set_language=en)

3 <http://fastfortheclimate.org/>

<b>Name/Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title/Role</b>	<b>Country/Continent</b>
Rev. Dr Karin Achtelstetter	World Association for Christian Communication	General Secretary	Global
Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit	World Council of Churches	General Secretary	Global
Nduna John	ACT Alliance	Secretary General	Global
Rev Dr Martin Junge	Lutheran World Federation	General Secretary	Global
Mattias Söderberg	Avisory Group on Climate Change Advocacy (ACT Alliance)	Co-Chair	Global
Mary Ann Swenson	United Methodist Church	Bishop	Global
Dr William Vendley	Religions for Peace	Secretary General	Global
Dr Agnes Abuom	World Council of Churches	Moderator of Central Committee	Africa
Archbishop Gabriel Anoyke	Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)	Vice-President	Africa
Michel Jalakh	Middle East Conference of Churches	General Secretary	Asia
Bernd Nilles	Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE)	Secretary General	Europe/ North America
Floris Faber	ACT Alliance Europe	Director	Europe
Martyn Goss	European Christian Environmental Network	Chairperson	Europe
Sister Jayanti Karplani	Brahma Kumaris	Representative for Europe	Europe
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Rev Gloria Ulloa	World Council of Churches	President for Latin America	Latin America
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François Pihaatae	Pacific Conference of Churches	General Secretary	Oceania
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Frank de Nully Brown	Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Argentina	Bishop	Argentina
Carlos A. Duarte Voelker	Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata	Pastor Presidente	Argentina
Daniel Favaro	Vida y Misión Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Argentina	General Secretary	Argentina
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Stuart McMillan	Uniting Church in Australia	President	Australia
Joyanta Adhikari	Christian Commission for Development Bangladesh (CCDB)	Secretary General	Bangladesh
Rev Ashin Baroi	Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha	General Secretary	Bangladesh
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<b>Name/Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title/Role</b>	<b>Country/Continent</b>
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Henrik Stubkjær	Bishop of Viborg		Denmark
Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen	DanChurch Aid	General Secretary	Denmark
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Rev. Heikki Huttunen	Finnish Ecumenical Council	Secretary	Finland
Björn Vikstrom	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	Bishop	Finland
Mgr Yves Boivineau	Bishop of Annecy	Ecclesiastical Assistant of Justice and Peace France	France

<b>Name/Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title/Role</b>	<b>Country/Continent</b>
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François Clavairolly	French Protestant Federation	President	France
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Mgr Marc Stenger	Bishop of Troyes	President of Pax Christi France	France
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Dr. Ludwig Schick	Archbishop of Bamberg	Archbishop	Germany
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Martín Girón	Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras	President	Honduras
Tamas Beres	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary		Hungary
Siddhartha	Fireflies Ashram	Director	India

<b>Name/Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title/Role</b>	<b>Country/Continent</b>
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Hans Jurgen Ulrich	Iglesia Evangélica de habla alemana en México	President	México
Cora Antonio Matamoros	Iglesia Morova de Nicaragua	President	Nicaragua
Roberto Jose Baltodano Leiva	Convenion Bautista de Nicaragua	President	Nicaragua
Victoria Cortez	Lutheran Church in Nicaragua	Bishop	Nicaragua
Walter Oliver Hodgson	Iglesia Morova de Nicaragua	Bishop	Nicaragua
William Webster	Iglesia Morova de Nicaragua	Bishop	Nicaragua
Ingeborg Midttømme	Church of Norway	Bishop of Møre	Norway
Erling Pettersen	Church of Norway	Bishop of Stavanger	Norway
Imam Ibrahim Saidy	Islamic Council of Norway		Norway
Imam Mian Tayyib	Islamic Council of Norway		Norway
Merylene Chitharai	Hindou Youth Network of South Africa & KwaZulu Natal Interreligious Youth Council	Representative	South Africa
Most Rev Thabo Makgoba	Anglican Church of South Africa	Archbishop	South Africa
Eun-hae Kwon	Lutheran World Federation	Vice-President for Asia	South Korea
Archbishop Emeritus Anders Wejryd	Church of Sweden		Sweden
Antje Jackelén	Church of Sweden	Archbishop	Sweden
Pat Gleeson	ECLOF International	Executive Director	Switzerland
Somboon Chungprampree	International Network of Engaged Buddhists		Thailand
Sivaraksa	International Network of Engaged Buddhists	Ajarn	Thailand
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Wim Hart	Interchurch organization for development cooperation (ICCO)	Member of the Executive Board	The Netherlands
Evert Jan Hazeleger	Kerk in Aktie	Program Manager	The Netherlands
Davorka Lovrekovic	International Fellowship of Reconciliation	President	The Netherlands
Tom Mikkers	Remonstrant Church	General Secretary	The Netherlands
Kees Nieuwerth	Council of Churches in the Netherlands	Vice-President	The Netherlands
Jannie Nijwening	Mennonite Church in the Netherlands	Minister	The Netherlands
Peter Nissen	Remonstrant Church	Professor of Spirituality Studies & Minister	The Netherlands
Awraham Soetendorp	Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values	Rabbi	The Netherlands
Henk Stenvers	Mennonite Church in the Netherlands	General Secretary	The Netherlands

<b>Name/Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title/Role</b>	<b>Country/Continent</b>
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Jeanne van Hal	Salvation Army	Minister	The Netherlands
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Wessel Verdonk	Bond van Vrije Evangelische Gemeenten	Moderator	The Netherlands
Marinus Verweij	Interchurch organization for development cooperation (ICCO)	Chair of the Executive Board	The Netherlands
Polycarpus	Syrian Orthodox Church in the Netherlands	Archbishop	The Netherlands
Rev. Tafue Lusama	Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu	General Secretary	Tuvalu
Bishop Richard Cheetham	Church of England	Bishop of Kingston	United Kingdom
Rev Torbjørn Holt	Norwegian Church in the UK	Rector and Chairman of Lutheran Council of Great Britain	United Kingdom
Rev. Sally Foster Fulton	Church of Scotland	Convenor of the Church and Society Council	United Kingdom
Bishop Nick Holtam	Church of England	Bishop of Salisbury	United Kingdom
James Laing	Lutheran Council of Great Britain	General Secretary	United Kingdom
David Lin	Lutheran Church in Great Britain and the London Chinese Lutheran Church	Chair	United Kingdom
Rt Revd Dr Martin Lind	Lutheran Church in Great Britain	Bishop	United Kingdom
Bishop Graham Usher	Church of England	Bishop of Dudley	United Kingdom
Revd Eliza Zikmane	London Latvian Lutheran Church	Reverend	United Kingdom
Sheena Wurthmann	Eco-congregation	Chair	United Kingdom
Sundance Bonnie	Our Sacred Earth	Executive Director	United States of America
Rev Elizabeth A. Eaton	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Presiding Bishop	United States of America
Rev John McCullough	Church World Service	President and CEO	United States of America
Dr Rajwant Singh	Sikh Council On Religion and Education/EcoSikh	Chairman/President	United States of America
Nathanael Symeonides	Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America	Archimandrite and Ecumenical & Interfaith Officer	United States of America
Oscar Bolioli	Iglesia Metodista en El Uruguay	Presidente	Uruguay
Jorge Fajardo	Iglesia Pentecostal Naciente	Auxiliary Bishop	Uruguay
Gustavo Gómez Pascua	Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida	Pastor Presidente	Uruguay
Diego Higueta	Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia	Secretario General	Uruguay
Oscar Oudrí	Iglesia Evangélica Valdense del Río de la Plata	Moderador	Uruguay
Hugo Armand Pilón	Federación Uruguaya de Iglesias Evangélicas	Presidente	Uruguay
Michele Pollesel	Iglesia Anglicana del Uruguay	Bishop	Uruguay
Archbishop Serafim Kykotis	Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Zimbabwe	Archbishop	Zimbabwe