



**Islamic Climate Change Conference  
Istanbul, 17-18 August 2015**

**Message from the UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC)  
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The UN Climate Change Secretariat welcomes your efforts to apply the essence of Islam to one of the defining issues of our time.

I will attempt to convey to you what the Paris Climate Conference in December is seeking to achieve and how that relates to the moral imperatives you are discussing.

The objective of the Climate Convention is to manage the global risk from climate change. It is designed, as stated in its ultimate objective, to limit climate change to a level which avoids “dangerous interference with the climate system”.

Decisions on what constitutes “dangerous interference” with the climate system are not for any one nation to make given the global implications. Such decisions have profound moral implications given that climate change has greatest impacts for exposed and vulnerable nations and on vulnerable populations within all nations.

The Climate Convention is the global platform for collective decision making on the Earth’s climate with all nations at the table.

Parties to the Convention have agreed to set an upper limit on acceptable warming at 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level by the end of this century. This decision was based on political judgment informed by science. There are significant risks associated with any level of warming and many Parties call for stabilisation well below 2 degrees Celsius aiming to be as close to 1.5 degrees Celsius as possible.

The science is clear. Due to the fact that warming from carbon dioxide persists for many centuries, any upper limit on warming requires net carbon dioxide emissions to eventually fall to zero. Avoiding dangerous climate change therefore requires fundamental economic transformation, not fine tuning of existing systems, leading to deep, and later full,

decarbonisation of energy supply. This transition will bring multiple other benefits and open up huge opportunities. So the moral and economic imperatives are therefore fully aligned.

The objective of Paris is to significantly accelerate this transition and to ensure that it can be sustained over time to ensure that warming will be limited to well under 2 degrees Celsius this century.

The outcome will be a new legal instrument under the Climate Convention, which is an international treaty with universal membership, to come into effect in 2020. The Conference of the Parties in Paris will also adopt a series of decisions with immediate effect.

The Paris Agreement will establish frameworks around:

- National commitments and plans for the post-2020 period
- Transparency and accountability
- Cooperation and finance
- Global emission trajectory and long-term direction

But the fundamental transformation needed to build a low-emission, climate resilient societies and economies takes more than international obligations of States, as important as they are.

This is where the global mobilization of all actors in society and all levels of government comes in.

Last year Tony de Brum, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands, expressed his wish that Paris would bring about the “greatest alliance the world has ever seen”. The French hosts have taken on this challenge and called for the formation of a Paris Alliance with the Paris Agreement at its core.

2015 has seen an unprecedented year of pledges to act on climate change from governments, cities, regions, business, civil society and religious leaders.

To sustain this transformation over time there is a need for strong and deep moral motivation for change. Religion can become a powerful part of the solution if we tap into this source of divine guidance through study and reflection and if this motivates us to act differently. The encyclical from Pope Francis is a profound example of such efforts.

This makes faith-based climate engagement essential, considering that 84% of the world’s population is religiously affiliated, according to the Pew Research Center.

Islam has been the motive force behind civilization through history. The declaration you are concluding here can help to channel the spiritual and moral force of Islam towards the aspiration to build a low-emission climate resilient future.

Islam counts amongst its faithful 1.6 billion people. Many of them, perhaps the majority, are in countries which are most vulnerable to climate change and therefore need success at Paris.

I hope you will reach out to your fellow Muslims in all regions to share the narrative you have developed. This will motivate them to act.

We have been encouraged by how many faiths and denominations are calling on governments to take bold action and are resolving to make their own contributions.

Climate change has also triggered a dialogue among religions. This effort has demonstrated a high degree of commonality when one looks deeper and considers the essence of the religious guidance.

To conclude let me say a few words about time.

The climate challenge is both long term and urgent. We are in a race against time. The window for economically feasible solutions with a reasonable prospect of holding warming to 2 degrees Celsius or less is rapidly closing.

At the same time we need to be ready for sustained effort over a long period of time. This is why it is so essential to set our moral compass for that journey.

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