



Le trait d'union entre décision et action

The bond between decision and action

Statement from the Faith-Based Organisations

On behalf of the World's Faith Communities

To the High-Level Ministerial Segment of the

22nd Session of the Conference of the Parties – COP22 to the UNFCCC

12th Session of the Meeting of the Parties – CMP12 to the Kyoto Protocol

Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco

Thursday, 17th November 2016

Mr. President, His Excellency Salaheddine Mezouar,
Distinguished Participants,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In 2015 two signs of hope emerged. One was the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The other was the Paris Agreement which entered into force on 4th November 2016 following a swift ratification process. Though far from perfect, these two pivotal international instruments have the potential to direct the world toward a more just and sustainable future.

The landmark Paris Agreement obliges countries to keep global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels so as to prevent catastrophic climate change. But thus far the nationally determined commitments are insufficient to reach this target, and are even more inadequate to meet the one to stay under 1.5 degrees Celsius. Therefore it is absolutely critical for COP 22 to translate the hope generated in Paris last year into higher ambitions and concrete actions.

Climate change continues to pose one of the most urgent and serious threats to all life on Earth, triggering intense storms, longer droughts, diminishing Arctic ice, sea level rise, widespread flooding, extensive land erosion, and coral-bleaching. These events have adverse consequences for the very bases of peoples' sustenance: water and food.

As Hurricane Matthew, which struck the Caribbean nation of Haiti last October, revealed yet again, it is the impoverished that bear the brunt of climate change. The devastation in Haiti was immense: hundreds of thousands of homes and rural livelihoods were destroyed and the death toll continues to rise. With little capacity to cope with and adapt to climate change, the suffering of the poor of the world will be immeasurable, creating new refugee flows and arousing social tensions and international conflicts.

Rich, industrialized countries are historically the primary emitters and beneficiaries of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Moreover they possess the

technological knowhow and financial means to act on climate change. There is a moral obligation for these countries to act and act *now*.

The rich part of the world has to immediately initiate a transition to a decarbonized economy. They ought to address their ecological debt to low-income countries by transferring appropriate technologies, financing mitigation and adaptation, and compensating them for irreversible loss and damage caused by climate change.

At the same time poor countries must begin to carve out a different, low-carbon path to realizing economic, social and ecological wellbeing.

If we are to achieve a transition to a just and sustainable future women and Indigenous Peoples – who are often the first witnesses to the reality of climate change and yet are marginalized in climate discussions – must be involved at all levels. Women in rural Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Arctic have a particular expertise in resource management that is linked to water, food and energy. Indigenous Peoples uphold spiritual traditions and practices that could help humanity attain a deeper understanding of the sacredness and interconnectedness of all life in creation. Such an understanding – echoed in many religions – is vital to meeting the enormity of the climate challenge, which is essentially a moral one.

Fifteen years ago the UNFCCC had gathered here in Marrakech. In a groundbreaking Colloquium on Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Environment and Climate Change organized by the World Council of Churches on the occasion of COP 7, Muslims and Christians affirmed, “...*faith communities unite to make peace with the Earth.*” Since then interfaith dialogue and cooperation to tackle climate change has grown, contributing to the momentum that resulted in the Paris Agreement. This underlines the important role of religions and interfaith actions for climate justice in transforming the world.

As a fellowship of people of faith, we carry a hope that impels us to speak and act with and for the vulnerable and voiceless. The impoverished, the future generations and creation herself must be at the center of any climate policy and agreement. This hope drives us to participate in a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace on and with the Earth – a gift and a home for all of us, and whose bounty ought to be shared and enjoyed in equitable and sustainable ways.

We therefore call on COP 22 to:

- Show that the Paris Agreement is for real and ramp up the ambitions to keep global average temperature increase under 1.5 degrees Celsius;
- Initiate a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy including by ending fossil fuel subsidies and boosting investments in renewable energies;
- Ensure that the various mechanisms under the UNFCCC, such as adaptation, loss and damage, capacity-building and finance, are developed to contribute to a just and resilient society for all; and
- Secure from wealthy, developed nations, scaled up, transparent and sustained support to poor and vulnerable nations.