



HOLY SEE

HOLY SEE SUBMISSION TO TRANSITIONAL COMMITTEE ON LOSS AND DAMAGE

The Holy See welcomed the decision at COP27 to establish «new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in responding to loss and damage»¹ as an important way of recognizing the severe impacts suffered by those communities who often «have historically contributed the least to current climate change [and] are disproportionately affected»².

The issue of *loss and damage (L&D)* is inherently related to *justice*. «In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters»³.

For that reason, the Fund should be operationalised under the principles of *solidarity* and *subsidiarity*. The decision-making process should involve local communities and ensure a proper response to community needs. Adopting the perspective of the people impacted by climate change will help the Fund to take into consideration the *human face of L&D*. Indeed, we must not only ask ourselves how we support these communities but also how we can learn from and integrate their knowledge. «Ignoring Indigenous communities in protecting the earth», for example, «is a grave error — it is extractive functionalism — not to mention a great injustice. On the contrary, valuing their cultural heritage and their ancestral techniques will help to embark on pathways for better environmental management»⁴.

In addition, the Holy See recommends that the Fund be governed by the principles of *equity* and *common but differentiated responsibility*, using the resources available towards initiatives that respect *human dignity*, are person-centred, and foster a *true integral human development*, which considers the whole person, including their material, social and spiritual needs.

Furthermore, the Holy See is particularly interested in the Fund taking into consideration both the economic and *non-economic aspects of L&D*. Land lost to rising sea levels or made uninhabitable by the climate crisis has more than just economic consequences: communities forced to leave their land lose more than their economic livelihood. They also lose their home, their cultural identities and social connections, not to mention their cultural and natural heritage.

¹ UNFCCC COP27, Decision 2/CP.27, FCCC/CP/2022/10/Add.1, 20 November 2022, para 2.

² IPCC Sixth Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers, 2023, A.2.

³ Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, n. 158.

⁴ Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the Indigenous Peoples Forum*, Rome, 10 February 2023.

Finally, the Holy See wishes to recommend the following concerning the *L&D* Fund, namely that it should be:

- 1) *comprehensive*: supporting both responses to economic and non-economic losses and damages, including initiatives that support cultural preservation, guarantee safe, orderly and dignified migration, and promote *education* and *public awareness*, as well as biodiversity protection. Funding should also be available for responses to disasters and long-term recovery from the negative effects of environmental phenomena that are worsening;
- 2) *truly accessible to communities*: sub-national actors such as communities in vulnerable situations, indigenous people or civil society organisations should have direct access to resources. For instance, the establishment of micro-grants to enable small, locally-led responses to losses and damages should be provided;
- 3) *restorative*: providing *grants* that allow the restoration of loss and damage through the use of new and supplementary resources.