

## EMBRACING OUR COMMON FUTURE

### AN INTERFAITH CALL TO ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

#### Parliament of the World's Religions

*This is a consensus statement and call to action that can be endorsed by adherents of diverse religious and spiritual traditions and convictions. It is not a detailed policy document. It intentionally leaves out language that is religiously particular and cannot be accepted by all traditions. Its content relies on existing and published statements by interfaith and religious groups, and eminent individuals such as the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Pope Francis. It is rooted in the values expressed in the documents adopted by the Parliament of the World's Religions, "Towards a Global Ethic" (1993) and "A Call to Our Guiding Institutions" (1999).*

*The statement does not spell out the specific effects of climate change (sea level rise, drought, food shortage, species extinction and so forth), as these are now well known and scientifically verified. It also does not reflect on our spiritual failures.*

*In the interests of consensus and brevity, it does not address specific measures such as carbon pricing, cap and trade, who should provide assistance to developing countries or those affected by climate change, use of different technologies, changes in our economic and governance systems, and so on. On the other hand, this document is compatible with calls for many such specific measures.*

Earth's atmosphere and oceans are warming. The chief cause is human use of fossil fuels releasing greenhouse gases. Deforestation is also a cause, as is pollution of oceans. These facts are accepted by the vast majority of the world's scientists.

The damaging impacts of climate change are already extensive. Many of them appear irreversible. If human behavior does not change, these impacts will become far more extreme, resulting in turmoil and suffering on an enormous scale with immense harm to both humans and other forms of life.

People affected are, and will be, disproportionately the poor, marginalized and vulnerable, including women and children – those who have done least to create this crisis. This is a massive injustice.

Earth is one interconnected whole. What we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves.

Earth is our home. We have nowhere else to go – and time is running out.

But we can pass through the climate crisis to a new and better future. This problem can be solved with the technology and resources that we already have, coupled with wiser choices as we consume resources. Significant progress has been made, in which religious and interfaith groups have been an important factor.

What is needed now is heartfelt commitment and effective action by every one of us.

Effective action today needs to be focused on two imperatives:

- To keep Earth livable by reducing and then ending emissions of greenhouse gases, moving to the post-carbon global economy based on clean, safe, and renewable energy.
- To do this while achieving fair access to energy for all, fulfilling basic needs and ending poverty for all people in all countries.

Because the climate crisis is unprecedented in its scale and complexity, no single government, institution or religion can bring about the urgently needed solution. Action is needed at all levels: personal, local, national, regional, and international.

As members of religious and spiritual communities, we affirm these values and principles, which are taught by all our traditions and will guide our actions:

- We are profoundly interconnected with nature, on which we depend for our existence.
- We must respect and care for nature and all life.
- We assert and defend the dignity and rights of every human being.
- We must provide for the needs and well-being of all people.
- We must act with love and compassion, and for justice and fairness.
- We are morally responsible for our chosen actions.
- We have duties to future generations, who will bear the consequences of our action or inaction.

We commit ourselves to take action and to act together, as one human community.

We pledge to do all that is necessary to achieve the following goals with the speed that the crisis demands.

- To take all possible measures to reduce greenhouse gases, including the full and aggressive implementation of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement.

- To transition to clean, safe and renewable energy in developed countries.
- To adopt a green energy path of development in developing countries, with needed financial support and technical assistance.
- To greatly increase energy efficiency at all levels.
- To stop deforestation and pursue re-forestation worldwide.
- To cease pollution of oceans and damage to their ecosystems.
- To make necessary changes in our consumption and lifestyles.
- To end poverty and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe that the opportunity to make a difference entails the responsibility to make a difference. We will act as individuals and as communities, knowing that each action makes a difference. Our common commitment through the interfaith movement will give us strength and effectiveness.

We will call on our governments and other guiding institutions to also act swiftly to achieve these goals, including the full and rapid implementation of the Paris Agreement, and its progressive strengthening of national commitments.

The future we embrace will be a new ecological civilization and a world of peace, justice and sustainability, with the flourishing of the diversity of life.

We will build this future as one human family within the greater Earth community.

*Adapted by acclamation,  
Plenary on Climate Change,  
Salt Lake City Parliament of the World's Religions, 13 October 2015  
Amended, Trustees of the Parliament, November 2016*