

RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS CALL TO CLIMATE ACTION

21 SEPTEMBER 2009*

We, representatives of diverse religious traditions from around the world gathered on the International Day of Peace, reflect in story, song and prayer about humanity's collective responsibility in the climate crisis. We are entrusted with the well-being of people around the world. There is more than an agreement at stake.

WE RECOGNIZE particularly that indigenous peoples have a profound stewardship of Creation and affirm their worldview, which sees the connectedness of all living things and our collective interdependence. This is a view that we need to adopt in fighting the effects of climate change. With dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions, destabilizing earth's climate, acidifying the oceans, threatening the living systems on which all life depends, both humanity and all living creatures now face unacceptable risk.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE our collective responsibility for the climate danger and suffering faced by the most affected and marginalized among us, those in extreme poverty, the disabled, older persons, those in coastal communities, on small islands, who are bearing the worst impacts of the climate crisis while contributing least to it.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE that while climate change affects everyone and everything, it does not affect all equally, disproportionately affecting women and people of color. Without appropriate and urgent action, plant and animal species, as well as people and cultures, will increasingly continue to suffer and to die. This concerns us.

WE FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE that although governments can mold policy and commitments, which can be global in effect, governments alone cannot make the change of heart and mind that will turn the human-earth community into a global culture of ecological responsibility. This task belongs to all of us.

WE URGE you therefore to take bold action that demonstrates the attitudinal shift that will mark the Copenhagen negotiations in December 2009 as the time when humanity came together to avert a climate crisis and we unite our diverse voices in the following Call to Action. There's more than an agreement at stake.

CALL TO CLIMATE ACTION

Our religions stand united in their **call** to care for the Earth and her peoples. We stand united in our insistence that those most affected by this crisis, with fewest choices, have a just hearing and recourse.

Recognizing that climate change is not merely an economic or technical problem, but at its core is a moral, spiritual and cultural one, we therefore **pledge** to join together to teach and guide the people who follow the call of our religions. We must all learn to live together within the shared limits of our planet.

We **commit** ourselves to action: to *changing* our habits of consumption, our choices about what makes for a life of wellbeing, and the way we see the world; to *learning*; to *teaching* our families, friends and faiths; to *conserving* the limited resources of our home, planet Earth, and to *preserving* the climate conditions upon which life depends, while continuously *working* to develop practices of sustainable development, where the fundamental rights to health, housing, food, decent work would be available to all.

We **call** for global leaders boldly to adopt strong, binding, science-based targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases in order to avert the worst dangers of a climate crisis based on a climate justice framework.

We **call** upon the industrialized nations to act responsibly in mitigation efforts, by making the largest cuts in carbon emissions, showing leadership in their ethical behavior.

We **urge** all nations of Earth to ensure that those who will be most affected under climate-induced changes such as more severe storms, floods, droughts and rising seas, be given what they need to adapt, survive and equitably prosper.

We **call upon** industrialized nations to acknowledge their higher level of responsibility for creating development models that have caused this unintended but tragic consequence for much of climate change. We ask that therefore they contribute a higher proportion of their GNP to those countries suffering the worst effects of climate change.

We **call upon** industrialized nations to place a priority on building just and sustainable development models in both the North and South, where all are ensured of food, housing and healthcare according to the traditions of our religions and the collective compassion, wisdom and leadership of humanity.

We **urge** those making decisions at the tables of governmental power to insist that the voices of those nations and peoples most affected by climate change and with the least choice be at their deliberations to serve as a visible witness that the climate crisis is now.

We **call upon** our leaders to recognize the crucial stewardship role of indigenous peoples the need to cooperate with and to support their adaptation initiatives, and to strengthen their vital contributions to climate change mitigation. We **call** for an immediate stop to mitigation measures adversely impacting indigenous peoples, causing displacement, environmental degradation of traditional lands and serious human rights violations.

We further **urge** that the natural world itself be considered a partner at the table and not a commodity to be used solely for human pleasure or gain.

We **call** upon our leaders, those of our faiths and all people of Earth to accept the reality of the common danger we face, the imperative and responsibility for immediate and decisive action and the opportunity to change.

There's more than an agreement at stake.

* The call is inspired by the Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change, <http://www.interfaithdeclaration.org/>, and further developed by the organizing committee of the Global Interfaith Gathering and Call to Action, September 21, 2009. This call is posted on www.religionsforpeace.org. Contact Andrea Louie, alouie@religionsforpeace.org for further information.