



04 September 2023

H.E. Sri Narendra Modi

Prime Minister, Republic of India and Chair, Group of Twenty (G20)

Chair Modi and G20 leaders:

Your Excellencies:

Today we live in a world where business and financial relations have taken precedence over all other aspects of life. The logic of profit has worked to subsume all else: well-being and progress are judged first and foremost in terms of monetary and economic expansion. This thinking has elevated and disconnected prevailing economic systems from social and ecological life.

The G20 meets this year in India with the theme “One Earth, One Family, One Future”. Yet the politics of money that systematically favours the wealthy over the poor has generated immense inequality across and within countries, eroding social cohesion and undermining trust in democratic institutions. This has led to political polarisation, “democratic backsliding” and rising authoritarianism in many parts of the world where dissent and difference are being crushed.

Nature and the environment have been reduced to an “asset class” for financial gain, and the Earth is treated as a tap and a sink - a place from which unlimited resources are drawn and unlimited pollution dumped. The consequences include runaway climate change and unprecedented biodiversity loss that now pose existential threats to present and future life on the planet. Though we possess the capacity and creativity to develop solutions, growing local, national and regional tensions are making it increasingly difficult to address within a closing window of opportunity the climate emergency and broader ecological crisis.

Against this sobering backdrop, our organisations, the World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council and Council for World Mission, which together represent more than 600 million Christians in over 120 countries, continue to call for a [New International Financial and Economic Architecture \(NIFEA\)](#) that fosters just, peace-loving and flourishing societies. Such an architecture is indispensable to respond to climate change, immiserating growth, and democratic degeneration. The G20 must now resolutely commit to promote the formation of such an architecture.

As you gather in New Delhi from 09 to 10 September 2023 ahead of the UN General Assembly, SDG Summit and Climate Conference, we urge you as global leaders to take the following critical steps towards systemic change:

- **Support a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.** Global tax discussions must take place under the aegis of the UN, where there is broad participation of countries and civil society. A legally binding UN tax convention promoting fairer and more inclusive international tax rules would curb illicit financial flows and tax evasion by multinational corporations and super wealthy individuals, and better enable developing countries to mobilise domestic resources.
- **Implement progressive wealth taxes** to tackle destabilising levels of inequality. A wealth tax (of 2% on the world's millionaires, 3% on those with wealth above \$50 million and 5% on the world's billionaires) could generate US\$2.5 trillion annually - enough to lift 2.3 billion people out of poverty and deliver universal health care and social protection for 3.6 billion people.
- **Implement progressive carbon and pollution taxes** to curb carbon and biosphere overconsumption. Levying a tax on the cost of pollution and eliminating public subsidies for fossil fuels could raise an additional US\$ 3.2 trillion annually to finance urgent transformations in energy and food systems as well as costs of mitigation, adaptation and reparations for climate-related loss and damage in climate-vulnerable developing countries.
- **Release developing countries from onerous external debts.** While prudent borrowing advances development, excessive debt remains an obstacle to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals in many countries. Today, over 3 billion people live in countries that spend more on interest payments on debt than on education or health. The 2021 issue of Special Drawing Rights showed how SDRs ease liquidity constraints on heavily indebted developing countries during crises. For insolvent countries, adequate debt cancellation is needed to free up resources to combat poverty and climate change.
- **Guarantee fundamental labour rights, including the right to unionise, and assure living wages for all workers as well as recognise the unremunerated care work done predominantly by women.** These are key to reducing socio-economic inequalities and will help to protect workers and their families especially in times of crises and transition. Moreover, increasing girl's and women's access to education and training, improving maternal health and empowering women to make their own reproductive choices are critical for supporting women workers.



We pray that you will place vulnerable communities and the planet at the heart of your deliberations, and that the outcomes of the G20 Leaders' Summit will contribute towards the restoration of our only Earth, the holistic health and well-being of the entire human family, and the safeguarding of our children's future.

Sincerely,

Prof Rev Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches

Rev Philip Vinod Peacock
Collegial General Secretariat
World Communion of Reformed Churches

Rev Anne Burghardt
General Secretary
Lutheran World Federation

Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams
General Secretary
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Rev Dr Jooseop Keum
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Copies:

- H.E. Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations
- Dr Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund
- Mr Ajay Banga, President, World Bank