



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

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## Public Statement - Advocacy and Action for Climate Justice

“As those who live in the resurrection hope of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, we believe we cannot stand by and ignore the impacts of Climate Change. Creation groans under the weight of human action and inaction (Rom 8:22). [...] We believe that taking global action now can make a difference.”

By recalling these words from our 2014 Climate Justice statement, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation reaffirms our understanding that climate change is a defining issue of our time, that we urgently need to address and tackle it as people of faith, and that it is not too late for meaningful and effective action.

### Background

From November 30 to December 11, 2015, the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will meet in Paris, France. It is crucial that an ambitious, fair and binding global climate agreement be adopted. This is a necessary milestone in the long-term international political process.

In the run up to Paris, we acknowledge the report presented by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to the Convention in its June 2015 Bonn session, which qualifies the 2°C limit as “inadequate”, calls to see it as a “defence line that needs to be stringently defended”, and states that “Parties may wish to take a precautionary route by aiming for limiting global warming as far below 2°C as possible”.

The LWF will be represented in key moments in the 2015 climate advocacy calendar, among which are the Bonn session in October and COP21 in Paris.

### Speaking Up as People of Faith

“God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:10

As a Lutheran Communion, we understand that climate change is an issue that impacts on justice, peace, the care for creation, and protection for all peoples everywhere. We raise a special concern for the most vulnerable, in particular the poor, indigenous people, and the voiceless.

We re-commit ourselves and encourage others to commit to a profound change in our lifestyles and in the broader system of production and consumption. We must live as responsible and accountable citizens of this planet.

We will not stand by and ignore the impacts of climate change. We remain committed to raise our voices together with those of others to ensure positive actions by our leaders that will make possible a safe and peaceful existence for all now and in the future.

We welcome the encyclical of Pope Francis--“Laudato Si’ – On the Care of Our Common Home”--as an encouragement for all those struggling for climate justice. With Pope Francis, we believe in humankind’s capacity to act and in the expression of hope for the future.

### **Call for Commitment by the World Leaders at COP21**

Based on our understanding of the climate issue as people of faith, and together with our ecumenical partner ACT Alliance, we call on world leaders to achieve a balanced global agreement at COP21 in Paris by considering the following elements:

- A post-2020 framework, enabling ambitious mitigation action in order to limit the mean global surface warming well below 2°C, both through nationally determined contributions and international initiatives.
- Commitment to ambitious pre-2020 mitigation action. We remind Parties of the decision from COP17 in Durban in 2011 for developed countries to take the lead up to 2020. This leadership must be demonstrated in the coming years.
- Inclusion of loss and damage, due to climate change, in a post-2020 agreement, ensuring that the needs of those people who can no longer adapt to the effects of climate change will be addressed both now and in the future.
- Means of implementation, including finance, to enable urgently needed climate action in developing countries. There is both need for a road map towards 2020, to ensure increased levels of climate finance that are predictable and transparent, and a long-term agreement about climate finance post-2020.

### **Investing in Our Common Future**

In our 2014 Public Statement on Climate Justice, the LWF committed to play its part by becoming carbon neutral by 2050. As concrete steps to meet that goal, and as a contribution to the transformation towards a low-carbon economy, we announce that:

- the 2016-2017 Communion Office Operational Plan (COOP) integrates the development of a Climate Justice Policy; and
- it shall be the policy of the LWF not to invest in fossil fuels.

We acknowledge that some of our member churches, as well as the World Council of Churches, have preceded us in deciding not to invest in fossil fuels companies, and that we are joining a broad global movement which is backed by the UNFCCC.

Through this decision, we seek coherence and wish to send a strong moral signal that the world needs to make a transformational change towards a low-carbon economy, phasing out fossil fuels and phasing in renewable energies by the middle of this century.

### **Call for Commitment by the Member Churches**

The LWF Council calls on upon LWF member churches:

- To advocate with their respective governments, especially those in key countries, before the next inter-sessional UN climate negotiations in Bonn at the end of August. A draft advocacy letter for Council members and church representatives will be prepared.
- Not to invest in fossil fuels and to support energy efficiency and renewable energy companies, and to encourage their institutions and individual members to do likewise.