

Central Committee of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), 16-19 December 2009

Climate change: a call from the churches to act
Public statement responding to the outcomes of the UN climate meeting in Copenhagen

The outcome of the UN Climate meeting in Copenhagen is a cause for disappointment of many people in the world. The Central Committee of the CEC meeting in Geneva from 16 to 19 December 2009 expresses the deep regret that the summit did not result in an ambitious and legally binding agreement adequately responding to climate change.

The Central Committee deeply regrets the missed opportunity, in which state governments failed to deliver the necessary response to the challenge of climate change. The lead up to Copenhagen demonstrated one of those rare occasions when people from different nations, different continents and races and religions had come together to raise their voice, demanding visible results from their elected representatives. The outcome does not reflect expressed ambitions, needs and expectations.

Christians from around the world demonstrated their support and hope for a just, equitable and binding outcome of the talks in Copenhagen, with church services, marches and the ringing of bells, to which the churches in Europe were invited jointly by CEC and CCEE.

In responding to the outcomes of Copenhagen the Central Committee of the CEC calls upon developed nations to recognise their historic responsibility in the continuing climate change and to act. We call upon European countries and in particular upon the EU to step up their efforts in driving the way forward to a satisfactory conclusion of the negotiation process. The EU needs to work much more vigorously within its member states as well as with partners from outside. We call upon the European countries and the EU to act in a spirit of generosity towards its partners from the developing world.

Meeting the Climate change is not only about finance and mitigation targets. At the same time it is an opportunity to make a step towards global community, respecting and sharing burdens. Earth must not be reduced to an object to be plundered for capital and financial gains. The earth must be respected as the shared home for all humanity.

The Central Committee recognises that climate change is a call to act for all of us. Neither politics, nor economy alone is able to deliver needed results. We are each called to act in his and her place by changing our habits and changing our lifestyles. We therefore invite CEC member churches, church communities at the grassroots level and individual Christians to continue their efforts which are already visible in many places in Europe in reducing our ecological footprint, limiting energy consumption and in our efforts for climate justice. God's creation needs to be protected, cultivated and sustained for future generations. In following this aim the CEC is committed to intensify its work in this area.

Climate negotiations and the threat of climate change is a call for recognising the Earth as God's gift of creation. As we celebrate God's gift of His presence among us at Christmas, we invite churches in Europe and each individual Christian to demonstrate in our daily acts, in our churches, local communities and families the joy from this gift.