

Hope for the Future!

The Uppsala Interfaith Climate Manifesto 2008 Faith traditions addressing Global Warming

As religious leaders and teachers from the whole world, gathered in Uppsala 2008, we call for effective leadership and action in view of the global threat to the climate. From religious traditions, with different approaches to religious life, we come together at this time in human history to assure the world of what we have in common. We all share the responsibility of being conscious caretakers of our home, planet Earth. We have reflected on the concerns of scientists and political leaders regarding the alarming climate crisis. We share their concerns.

The world religions are a source of empowerment for change in lifestyles and patterns of consumption. Religious faith remains a powerful force for good among a considerable number of the human family. We undertake this mission in a spirit of responsibility and faith.

From wonder to change

With a sense of wonder we look at life on planet Earth. It is a miracle – and a gift! Clear nights with the sky full of stars fill us with awe. It reminds us of our role in the universe. We have many reasons to be humble. Meditating on the sea shore, in the desert or in the forest allows us to feel one with the universe, yet we are so small. Faith traditions with diverse cultures and backgrounds converge to express wonder and awe at the gift of life.

In the history of the Earth, the climate has always varied. However, we are very concerned about the huge human impact on the Earth's very complex and sensitive climate system. Today humanity constitutes a major force which changes the preconditions of life and welfare for most creatures on the planet. We know enough to realize that we need to act now in the interest of future generations. The situation is critical. Glaciers and the permafrost are melting. Devastating drought and flooding strike people and ecosystems, especially in the South.

Can planet Earth be healed? We are convinced that the answer is *yes*. Major transformations in understanding human life, lifestyles and work modes, economy, trade and technology are needed. Ethics and values are intrinsic to the development of new institutional structures and architectures of politics and finance. In the religious realm long-sightedness has always been important. More than ever before the world now needs extraordinary, long-sighted political leadership.

Our appeals to the copenhagen process

For the Earth, salvation is about more than new technology and green economy. Salvation is about the inner life of human beings. Life without hope is detrimental to human existence. The peoples of this beautiful precious planet need to dialogue about what it means to live together, with global empathy in a global village. Religions can contribute to this in a decisive way.

As people from world religions, we urge governments and international organisations to prepare and agree upon a comprehensive climate strategy for the Copenhagen Agreement. This strategy must be ambitious enough to keep climate change below 2° Celsius, and to distribute the burden in an equitable way in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities. *Greenhouse Development Rights* offers one concrete model of such burden sharing. We urge all actors concerned to find politically acceptable tools to realize this.

The Copenhagen Agreement must counteract misuse of land, of forests, and of farmland, using creative incentives for landowners, users and indigenous communities to manage growing forests as carbon sinks.

We ask the global political leadership for:

- **Rapid and large emission cuts in the rich world.** Developed countries, especially those in Europe and North America, must lead the way. In the developed countries emissions should be reduced by at least 40 per cent by 2020 and 90 per cent by 2050 against 1990 levels.
- **Binding cuts for the rich world on top of their domestic obligations.** According to the principles of responsibility and capability countries should pay for *international* cuts in addition to their own *domestic* initiatives. These payments should be obligatory, rather than voluntary.
- **Measurable, verifiable and reportable mitigation actions by developing countries,** especially countries with fast growing economies.
- **Massive transfers and sharing of important technology.** All countries must encourage and facilitate the sharing of technology that is intrinsically important to reducing emissions. Developing countries must have viable and technologically responsible opportunities to provide for their populations.
- **Economic incentives for developing countries** to foster cleaner development on a national scale.
- **Adaptation to climate change.** According to the same principles of responsibility and capability, countries must ensure that poor and vulnerable communities are empowered and supported. Adaptation to climate change must not fail for want of money or other resources.

Humility, responsibility – and hope!

We urge political and religious leaders to bear responsibility for the future of our planet and the living conditions and habitat preservation of new generations, assured in this of support and cooperation from the faith traditions of the world. The climate crisis is a fundamental spiritual question for the survival of humanity on planet Earth. At the same time, we know that the world has never before been more capable of creating sustainable development. Humanity possesses the knowledge and technology. Popular commitment to doing what can and must be done is growing.

We are challenged to review the values, philosophies, beliefs and moral concepts which have shaped and driven our behaviours and informed our dysfunctional relationship with our natural environment.

We commit ourselves to taking and sharing responsibility for providing moral leadership within our various faith traditions and for others who so desire. We call upon all who have influence over the shaping of both intellect and spirit, to commit themselves to a profound reorientation of humanity's self-understanding and of the world, whereby we acknowledge our estrangement and henceforth strive to live in harmony with Nature and one another.

We offer the gift of our various faiths as a source of empowerment for developing sustainable) lifestyles and patterns of consumption. We undertake this mission in a spirit of humility, responsibility, faith and urgency.

Now is the time to mobilise people and nations.

As people of different faiths, we make these commitments:

- To inform and inspire people in our own religious and cultural contexts to take responsibility for and to implement effective measures
- To challenge political and business leaders where we live and work to develop comprehensive strategies and action
- To focus on the struggle against global warming and draw upon our innermost religious convictions about the meaning of life. This commitment is a deeply spiritual question concerning justice, peace and hopes for a future in love and solidarity with all human beings and the whole of creation.

As religious leaders and teachers, we want to counteract a culture of fear with a culture of hope. We want to face the climate challenge with defiant optimism to highlight the core principles of all major sacred traditions of the world: justice, solidarity and compassion. We want to encourage the best science and political leadership. We commit our communities to fostering a spirit of joy and hope in relation to the greatest gift given to us all – the gift of life!