



PRESS RELEASE

The Fight on Loss and Damage Continues!

Faith Leaders Submit Powerful Statement at COP28 on the *Moral Case for Action* on Loss and Damage

Dubai, 2nd December 2023.- Today, senior faith leaders have developed a powerful call to action at the UN COP28 climate conference) in Dubai for continued momentum on Loss and Damage, following the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund on the first day of the conference earlier this week.

Delivering the statement entitled '[*Loss and Damage: The Moral Case for Action*](#)' at the Faith Pavilion at COP28, signatories emphasized that the achieved progress may be a false victory without further concrete action.



The statement was signed by more than 600 faith leaders worldwide from every continent, including Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, Priests, Brothers, Deacons, CEOs of faith based organisations, Professors, Students, Cardinals, and almost 200 Sisters. It set out a series of

criteria for the Loss and Damage Fund to meet, many of which faith leaders said were still outstanding and requiring further attention before the end of COP28.

Alistair Dutton, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, said: *“Agreeing the Loss and Damage Fund so early into COP28 is a remarkable achievement. But we cannot rest on our laurels. The fund must be capitalised quickly with billions to meet the scale of the need. This must be new and additional finance, not robbing Peter to pay Paul. Only with increased finance can the Loss and Damage Fund genuinely fulfil its purpose and deliver remedies for injustice”*.

Josianne Gauthier, Secretary General of CIDSE, said: *“Loss and Damage is ultimately a moral issue. It is about addressing the deep injustice at the core of the climate crisis where those who have contributed the least suffer most. The responsibility for funding Loss and Damage must sit with the countries with historical responsibility. COP28 must make this absolutely clear.”*

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, President of SECAM and Archbishop of Kinshasa, said: *“Pope Francis calls on us to hear the cry of the earth at the cry of the poor. COP28 must do both. By delivering an effective Loss and Damage Fund, we are responding to the needs of the poor now, who are already suffering climate impacts. But we must also hear the cry of the earth, delivering action to rapidly get on track to achieve the Paris Agreement targets. Each degree of global warming means more Loss and Damage.”*

Sr. Susan Nchubiri, Maryknoll Sisters representative to COP28, said: *“It is crucial to remember that Loss and Damage is not just economic. You can calculate the cost of damages to houses or infrastructure, but you cannot ever put cost to the loss of cultures, heritage, land or the loss of loved ones. The new board of the Loss and Damage Fund must make sure Non-Economic Loss and Damage is a major cross-cutting priority, and that communities can access remedies which can go towards recovering from invaluable losses and damages”*.

Background

The [Faith Leaders Statement on Loss and Damage](#) was produced following an online dialogue in June 2023 between experts and people with lived experience of Loss & Damage from government, faith-based organisations and civil society. This dialogue, comprising a mix of technical input and recommendations with theological and moral reflection, produced a rich body of thought on this topic. The statement was circulated internationally and endorsed by faith leaders across the world and presented at an [online Press Conference on 23 November](#).

As of 17 November, it has been signed by 639 people across the world in 58 countries representing every continent. Signatories include numerous Bishops, Archbishops, Priests, Brothers, Deacons, CEOs, Professors, Students, Cardinals and almost 200 Sisters. 84% of those who have signed on to the statement are faith leaders from the Global North.

COP28 is tasked with agreeing on the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund. The statement sets out 5 key elements that this fund must adhere to in order to achieve climate justice and ensure support gets to the people suffering from climate impacts as quickly as possible:

- The fund must be **accessible**, ensuring that communities in need across the Global South get the money they require to recover, and be masters of their own future

- The fund must be **comprehensive**, supporting both responses to economic as well as non-economic losses and damages, for extreme weather events and slow-onset events such as sea-level rise and desertification
- The fund must be **restorative**, providing grants not loans on the basis of the polluter pays principle
- The fund must be **representative**, underpinned by human rights and the principle of subsidiarity, and governed by an equitable board acting in the common good
- The fund must be **efficient** and **effective**, providing rapid response when disasters strike, long-term support to protect from future damages, and acting as the flagship global fund to address losses and damages alongside other funding arrangements.

There are risks that COP28 will not agree to a fund which meets these key tenets, and that the fund agreed will not be fit for purpose. This must not happen. Delivering a fully functional Loss and Damage Fund which meets the needs of communities and delivers climate justice is a moral priority.

Media contact on site:
contreras(at)cidse.org