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Faith in Action for Climate Justice: Catholic Voices Raising Moral Urgency Following Week One of SB64

Catholic organizations, faith leaders, and frontline communities call for greater ambition on climate finance, adaptation, food security, just transition, gender justice, artificial intelligence governance, and Loss and Damage

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As the first week of the 64th Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB64) concluded in Bonn, members of the Network of Catholic Climate and Environment Actors (NCCEA) called on governments to match the urgency of the climate crisis with bold, equitable, and people-centered climate action.

During a press conference entitled "[Faith in Action for Climate Justice: Catholic Voices Raising Moral Urgency Following Week One of SB64](#)", representatives from Catholic organizations, faith-based networks, and frontline communities reflected on progress and gaps in the negotiations and highlighted priorities for the second week of talks and the road to COP31.

Grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and inspired by *Laudato Si'*, *Laudate Deum*, *Fratelli Tutti*, and *Magnifica Humanitas*, NCCEA members emphasized that climate action must prioritize human dignity, ecological justice, solidarity, and the protection of the most vulnerable.

Climate Finance, Frontline Communities, and a New Multilateralism

Representing the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM), **Juan Felipe Martínez** emphasized that climate finance must directly support Indigenous Peoples, peasant communities, and Afro-descendant communities who are protecting some of the world's most important ecosystems.

"Climate finance must reach people on the ground. It cannot remain limited to international commitments and mechanisms disconnected from local realities. Communities must participate directly in the design and implementation of climate solutions."

Martínez warned that poorly designed climate finance and energy transition policies risk creating new forms of extractivism in the Amazon.

"The growing demand for critical minerals must not create new forms of extractivism and colonialism in the Amazon. We cannot allow the transition to a low-carbon economy to be built upon new injustices imposed on Amazonian peoples."

He also called for a renewed multilateralism rooted in participation and shared decision-making.

"Consultation alone is not enough. Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities, and local communities must have a real voice in decision-making and implementation."

Climate Finance, Debt Justice, and Faith Leadership

Liz Cronin of CAFOD described the opening week of SB64 as a difficult start for climate finance discussions, highlighting deep divisions that continue to characterize negotiations between developed and developing countries.

She noted that concerns raised by the G77 and China at the outset of the Climate Finance Work Programme reflected broader frustrations regarding the direction of the discussions and echoed tensions previously seen during negotiations on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG).

"We're seeing a lot of the familiar divides between Global South and Global North emerge that we saw in the NCQG process, and familiar dividing lines between the Global North mostly wanting to talk about mobilisation of finance, especially private finance, and developing countries wanting to talk about provision of public finance and especially grant-based and accessible finance."

Cronin also pointed to the difficult geopolitical context surrounding climate finance negotiations.

"We've seen the U.S. withdraw entirely from the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC, which is making it even more difficult for countries like the EU and the rest of the Umbrella Group to contribute that finance as well."

While acknowledging growing discussions around greening financial flows, she warned that insufficient attention is being paid to ending financial support for fossil fuels.

"There's a real elephant in the room. A lot of countries want to talk about greening financial flows, and that's fantastic, but we're not seeing nearly enough attention on stopping non-green financial flows in terms of investments in things like coal, oil, and gas."

Cronin called on developed countries to demonstrate leadership and highlighted the role that faith institutions can play in driving change.

"The Church and faith actors can also lead the way on this."

She pointed to the Austrian Bishops' Conference as a positive example of climate leadership, noting that it has mandated Catholic institutions to divest from fossil fuels and established monitoring mechanisms and implementation timelines.

"This is a real global effort, and it's something that faith actors in the Global North in particular can really show leadership on."

In closing, Cronin emphasized that climate finance must address the realities of growing debt burdens faced by many developing countries.

"In a world of abject debt crisis and indebtedness around the world, the absolute priority for countries must be Article 9.1, which is the provision of finance, and it must be majority grant-based, i.e. non-debt-creating, and accessible to the local communities who are particularly climate vulnerable, who both need it most but also have done the very least to cause this climate catastrophe."

NCCEA reiterated that climate finance must be understood not merely as an economic obligation but as a matter of justice, solidarity, and responsibility toward vulnerable communities and future generations.

Adaptation, Food Security, and Agroecology

Speaking on behalf of Caritas Internationalis, **Musamba Mubanga Mtonga** expressed concern that the urgency of the climate crisis is not being reflected in the pace of negotiations.

"Communities across Africa and many other regions are already facing droughts, floods, cyclones, and increasing food insecurity. This calls for urgent strengthening of adaptation action and support."

She urged Parties to move beyond technical discussions on adaptation indicators and focus on implementation.

"Adaptation indicators should not simply measure progress. They must help deliver finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building support that enables communities to build resilience."

Mtonga also called for stronger commitments to agriculture, food security, and agroecological approaches.

"Farmers and local communities need continued support, investment, and policy attention to ensure resilient and sustainable food systems."

As negotiations continue, NCCEA calls for adaptation finance, food security, and agroecology to remain at the center of climate action and implementation efforts.

Gender Justice and a People-Centered Just Transition

Addressing the Gender Action Plan and the Just Transition Work Programme, **Daniela Alba of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES)** stressed that climate justice cannot be achieved without confronting structural inequalities.

"The Gender Action Plan is not a secondary instrument. It is a central framework for ensuring that climate action is effective, inclusive, and just."

She emphasized that women, children, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized communities remain disproportionately affected by climate impacts and extractive economic systems while continuing to be excluded from decision-making spaces.

"There can be no ecological justice without gender justice. And there can be no genuine just transition without meaningful participation, equity, and dignity for all."

Alba also expressed concern that discussions on just transition are increasingly being weakened by the unwillingness to move away from extractivist development models.

"It is deeply concerning to see discussions on just transition being weakened because of insufficient commitment to move away from extractivist approaches. The time is not later—it is now."

NCCEA reiterated that a just transition must be adequately financed, gender-responsive, and grounded in human rights, participation, and the realities of communities in the Global South.

Artificial Intelligence, Human Dignity, and Ecological Responsibility

Offering a theological perspective, **Fr. Vincent Anes of the JPIC Commission of USG and UISG** reflected on the ethical implications of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, in the context of climate justice.

Drawing from Pope Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, Fr. Anes warned that AI presents both opportunities and significant risks.

"Technology must serve humanity, not dominate it. The benefits of AI must be shared equitably, and decisions affecting humanity's future must involve workers, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and vulnerable nations."

He highlighted the growing environmental footprint of artificial intelligence through its demand for energy, water, critical minerals, and infrastructure.

"Technological progress must advance hand in hand with ecological responsibility and social justice. Artificial intelligence must remain a tool for the common good and never become an instrument of exclusion, domination, or war."

Fr. Anes emphasized that both the climate crisis and the human crisis require participation, solidarity, and ethical governance.

"The human crisis and the climate crisis require participation, solidarity, and a commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind."

Drawing inspiration from *Magnifica Humanitas*, he called for a model of development rooted in human dignity, shared responsibility, and care for creation.

Loss and Damage and Solidarity with the Most Vulnerable

In her closing remarks, **Winnie Nalubowa of CIDSE**, who moderated the press conference, expressed concern that Loss and Damage received insufficient attention during SB64 despite its growing importance to vulnerable communities worldwide.

"Nearly 100 million people each year are displaced or affected by climate-related impacts and require support to recover and rebuild. Yet discussions on Loss and Damage remain inadequate."

She called on governments and the incoming COP31 Presidency to prioritize the issue and ensure adequate funding for affected communities.

"More than USD 800 million has been pledged to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, but only around USD 400 million has been received. This demonstrates the urgent need for greater ambition and stronger political commitment."

Nalubowa also emphasized that communities experiencing irreversible climate impacts cannot wait any longer for meaningful support.

NCCEA Calls to Action

As negotiations continue into the second week of SB64, NCCEA calls on Parties to:

- Deliver adequate, predictable, and accessible climate finance, with a strong emphasis on grant-based public finance;
- Strengthen adaptation support and implementation;
- Secure the future of agriculture, food security, and agroecology within the UNFCCC process;
- Fully capitalize the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage;
- Advance gender-responsive climate action and meaningful participation;
- Promote a truly just transition that protects people, livelihoods, and ecosystems;
- Respect and strengthen the rights, knowledge, and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and frontline communities;
- End support for fossil fuel expansion and align financial flows with climate goals;
- Ensure that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, are governed ethically and serve the common good.

Faith communities remain committed to accompanying vulnerable communities and advocating for climate action rooted in justice, solidarity, human dignity, and care for our common home.

Full NCCEA SB64 Key Messages:

<https://www.cidse.org/2026/06/03/sb64-catholic-actors-urge-parties-to-recommit-to-solidarity-shared-responsibility-and-the-common-good/>

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