

Brussels, 20th June 2013

To: Mr. Donald Tusk

Prime Minister

The Republic of Poland

Dear Prime Minister,

As Catholic Church leaders working together with CIDSE (an international alliance of Catholic development agencies) to raise awareness about the climate crisis and its impacts on humanity, and prayerfully wishing all nations and people to act diligently and successfully towards this task, we wish to congratulate Poland on its selection as host of the next round of international climate negotiations in the framework of the UN COP19 Climate conference. In the coming months your country will have a pivotal role to play, not only among diplomats and world leaders, but also for people all over the world, particularly the most vulnerable ones who are already suffering the effects of climate change.

Holding the presidency of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Poland will lead the UN climate talks. But with this great honour also comes great responsibility. The lack of ambitious agreements in recent years demonstrates the great challenge encompassed by this task. The presidency has an important responsibility to facilitate talks, to compose conflicting interests and inspire parties to engage actively and constructively in order to deliver significant results.

In 2012, many extreme weather events hit countries around the world. These are evident signs that we need to take climate change seriously, and that global solutions and concerted actions are urgently needed to avoid catastrophes.

As international Church leaders we are well aware of the effects of climate change. Our congregations and Southern partner organisations face the challenges of drought, flooding, heavy storms and, ultimately, of climate-induced food insecurity. In our churches people voice their concerns and fears for the future. They often turn to their parishes for help in a desperate search to maintain human dignity. Thinking of the Bible, we recall the words of the book of Genesis where God gives human beings the role of stewards, to care for the integrity of creation. As Church leaders we take this role seriously, and we therefore follow the climate debates with great attention and concern.

Poland has been criticised for not engaging sufficiently in Europe to tackle climate change. However, knowing the perseverance and faith of Polish people, we trust that your country can

become a climate leader, positioning itself at the forefront in creating sustainable and low-carbon societies.

We therefore appeal to you, Prime Minister, to take a strong lead from the beginning. We urge you to call for increased resolution by all UNFCCC Parties, and to ensure Poland sets the right example by actively seeking ambitious climate policies both within Poland and the EU. An integral role of the COP presidency is to inspire all parties, and to show how political will and spirit of solidarity can lead to the change we need for a more equal and environmentally just world.

Our great wish is that the COP19 climate summit in November 2013 will be remembered as a meeting in which countries agreed on ambitious action for the sake of humanity and the planet. Poland can make this happen.

With blessings and sincere wishes for every success,

Mgr. Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimeno, s.j., Metropolitan Archbishop of Huancayo - Peru and
President of the Department of Justice and Solidarity, Latin American Episcopal Council
(CELAM)

Mgr. Dr. Werner Thissen, Archbishop of Hamburg, Germany

Mgr. Bernt Eidsvig, Can Reg, Bishop of Oslo, Norway

The Most Reverend Bishop Felix Gmür, Bishop of Basel, Switzerland

Mgr. Theotonijs Gomes, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mgr. Bernard Housset, Bishop of La Rochelle and Saintes, President of the Council for
Solidarity, France

Rt Rev Peter Moran, Bishop-Emeritus of Aberdeen, President of the Scottish Catholic
International Aid Fund, Scotland