

Public call to world leaders on the occasion of the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development, September 2015

We, world citizens unite in a common call to all governments of the world gathering in New York 25-27 September 2015 for the United Nations Summit to adopt new universal goals for sustainable development, just 70 days before the critical twenty first Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris.

We are all in agreement:

We can close the glaring gap between the few that own almost half of global wealth and the rest.

We can ensure full equality between men and women.

We can ensure the right to food for billions of people, particularly small producers who produce most of the world's food, yet whose right to food is most pervasively violated.

We can keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We can ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable are protected and supported in their struggles to adapt to climate change and realise a more just and equitable global society.

We can end our exploitative relationship with the earth and the limitless extraction of natural resources.

We can transform the culture of domination, consumption and extractivism into a culture of sufficiency, caring and solidarity.

We can ensure a just transition to economies where decent work is guaranteed for all and care work is valued.

We can create a world where women and men can live, think, express themselves and move in freedom and peace.

At many times in history, the international community has proven it can overcome divisions in a common effort to respond to significant threats and pursue a world of peace, environmental, climate, economic and social justice, and gender equality. Now is one of those moments.

Over the past four years we have seen unprecedented levels of discussion, consultation and mobilisation in the preparation of the new global goals. Debates were characterised by a clear hope that the international community would rise to the challenge to do the right thing rather than continuing to do what is economically advantageous and politically viable.

“Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” seeks to respond to many of today's most pressing challenges. It sets out a vision of a world where all life can thrive. It rightly proposes a universal agenda, recognising the interdependence of economic, social and environmental goals. It is built upon explicit recognition of human rights and contains valuable goals to end poverty, achieve gender equality, reduce inequality, realise sustainable consumption and production, and combat deforestation and climate change. Implementation of these goals and accountability towards people around the world will determine its ultimate value in responding to today's crises.

But responding to the crises means recognising and addressing the limitations, gaps and inconsistencies in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular the SDGs do not overcome contradictions in seeking harmony with nature while prioritising sustained growth for all nations. The goals imply continued competition for limited natural resources and, hence, further rises in greenhouse gas emissions. The goals do not tackle unjust global rules of finance, taxation, trade and investment, essential to realise the

structural transformation needed to address the root causes of poverty and inequality. **We need more ambition in these critical areas for a real transformation of our world!**

We stand in solidarity with individuals and communities who are developing solutions and living alternatives based on notions of well-being, a culture of care and shared prosperity. They are delivering the world that we should all aspire to create! From small-scale producers practising agroecology and building localised food systems, to communities organised into social solidarity economies; from empowered women who have transformed their communities, to communities that use decentralised and community-based renewable energy production; we are inspired by the innovation and vision of people around the world.

We are inspired by the growing number of religious leaders from all over the world who continue to speak out on climate change.¹ In his Encyclical Letter ‘Laudato Si’ on Care for our Common Home,’ issued in May 2015 Pope Francis calls for an “ecological conversion.” He provides an action agenda for a thorough transformation of our relationship with the environment, and the way we organise our social, economic and political life. Hearing the calls for a change in lifestyle, people are demonstrating their eagerness to take up this challenge. People-led initiatives are blossoming world-wide including the campaign “Change for the Planet-Care for the People,” where people commit to sustainable consumption and political action. They demonstrate that people are willing to change.

We, therefore, call upon those gathering at the United Nations for the Sustainable Development Summit: go further to support the common quest to protect our shared planet and humanity. We ask you to:

- Set limits on natural resource extraction and agree to equitable natural resource-sharing. Strengthen grass-root efforts to protect biodiversity. End investment in industrial agriculture. Support and strengthen local food systems and agroecology.
- Resist the influence of entrenched interests whose profit-seeking prevents the transformation of our societies. Set limits on the power of transnational corporations to influence public policy. Require transparency of transactions, private and public. Adopt a global treaty to enforce the human rights responsibilities of business!
- Remove and redirect finance from dirty energy to decentralised community-based renewable energy production. Acknowledge that there is an ecological debt for which reparations are long due.
- Transform the financial system to support the emergence of genuinely sustainable alternatives. Reform fiscal policy to redistribute wealth.
- Reform the systems that exclude the majority of the world from determining global rules on tax, trade and in other areas that have a great impact on them. Enable and empower food producers, workers, indigenous peoples, migrants and local community leaders to organise and speak for themselves at the negotiating table. Empower women who experience discrimination and barriers to participation.

People are ready to embark on a future where equality, fairness, rights and a life in harmony with nature are what matter. **We, the undersigned, commit to accompany people in this effort, taking big and small actions of our own. We ask you to walk with us and all people who are embarking on this new journey! Assume the leadership that this historic moment demands!**

¹ See <http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/resources/religious-statements-on-climate-change/> for a full list of statements according to Religion and Inter-faith declarations.

List of signatories

1. Dereje Alemayehu, World Citizen and Tax Justice Activist, Ethiopia
2. Marcia Anfield, Mariannridge Coordinating Committee, South Africa
3. Attilio Ascani, Director, Focsiv, Italy
4. Georges Bach, Member of the European Parliament, Luxembourg
5. Chris Bain, Director, CAFOD, UK/England & Wales
6. Fr. Dário Bossi, Comboni Missionary, International Alliance of those Affected by Vale, Brazil
7. Jenny Boyce-Hlongwa, Coordinator, Mariannridge Coordinating Committee, South Africa
8. Adriano Campolina, Chief Executive, ActionAid International
9. Marian Caucik, Director, eRko, Slovakia
10. Alistair Dutton, Director, SCIAF, UK/Scotland
11. Hilal Elver, Professor of law, Turkey; and UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food
12. Simone Filippini, Director, Cordaid, The Netherlands
13. Susan George PhD, President, Transnational Institute, The Netherlands
14. Patrick Godar-Bernet, Director, Bridderlech Deelen, Luxembourg
15. Mamadou Goïta, Executive Director, Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives de Développement en Afrique (IRPAD), Mali
16. Bishop Theotonius Gomes, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Dhaka, Federation of Asian Bishops' conferences, Bangladesh
17. Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director, Greenfaith, USA
18. Lieve Herijgers, Director, Broederlijk Delen, Belgium
19. Jason Hickel, Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
20. Wael Hmaiden, Executive Director, CAN International, Lebanon
21. Heinz Hödl, CIDSE President and Director, KOO, Austria
22. Archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg
23. Nicolas Hulot, Special Envoy of the President of the French Republic for the Protection of the Planet, France
24. Pa Ousman Jarju, Minister of Environment, Climate Change, Water Resources, Parks & wildlife, The Gambia
25. Bishop Aloys Jousten, Honorary Bishop of Liège, Belgium
26. David Leduc, Executive Director, Development and Peace, Canada
27. Jorge Libano Monteiro, Administrator, FEC - Fundação Fé e Cooperação, Portugal
28. Bill McKibben, Co-founder 350.org, USA
29. Eamonn Meehan, Director, Trócaire, Ireland
30. Daniel Misleh, Executive Director, Catholic Climate Covenant, USA
31. Bhumika Muchhala, Senior Policy Analyst, Finance and Development, Third World Network, Malaysia
32. Fr. Stan Muyebe, Justice and Peace Commission, Southern Africa Catholic Bishops Conference, South Africa
33. Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director, Greenpeace International, South Africa
34. Bernd Nilles, Secretary General, CIDSE, Belgium
35. Allen Ottaro, Executive Director, Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA), Kenya
36. Peter-John Pearson, Director, Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference Parliamentary Liaison Office, South Africa
37. Bernard Pinaud, Director, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France
38. Viviane Reding, former Vice-President of the European Commission and Member of the European Parliament, Luxembourg
39. Susana Réfega, Executive Director, FEC - Fundação Fé e Cooperação, Portugal
40. Cécile Renouard, Philosopher and Economist, France
41. Patrick Renz, Director, Fastenopfer, Switzerland
42. Andy Ridley, Managing Director, Circle Economy, The Netherlands
43. Michel Roy, Secretary General, Caritas Internationalis, Vatican City
44. Jeff Rudin, Secretary, Alternative Information and Development Centre, South Africa
45. Naderev "Yeb" Saño, Leader of The People's Pilgrimage for Climate Action, OurVoices, Philippines
46. Angelo Simonazzi, Secretary General, Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium
47. Colette Solomon, Director, Women on Farms' Project, South Africa
48. Pablo Solón, Executive Director, Fundación Solón, Bolivia
49. Pirmin Spiegel, Director, Misereor, Germany
50. Soledad Suárez Miguélez, President, Manos Unidas, Spain
51. Monicah Wanjiru, General Secretary, International Coordination of Young Christian Workers, Italy