



Towards COP26: Advocating for Climate Justice
A Commitment from the Ignatian Family

When representatives of nearly 200 countries gather in Glasgow this November for the 26th UN Summit on Climate Change (COP 26), the world will have reached a critical juncture. COP26 is the “the last best chance” that we have to save our planet and avoid a climate catastrophe.¹ This meeting will decide what kind of planet we share with present and future generations.

In 2015 the Paris Climate Agreement was hailed as a milestone on the path to reducing carbon emissions, limiting global warming, and creating a sustainable future. It was an agreement in principle, but faltered in the steps to implementation. Former UN Secretary for Climate Change, Christiana Figueres and climate lobbyist Tom Rivett-Carnac warn if temperatures continue to rise at their current rate, “it is clear that by mid-century human misery would be high, biodiversity would be decimated, and that we and our children would live in a world that is constantly deteriorating with no possible recuperation.”² By 2030, 700 million people will be at risk of being displaced because of drought and land degradation.³ Further still, 95% of earth’s land areas could be degraded by 2050.⁴

Pope Francis teaches that, while climate change affects everyone, it is hurting most the poorest and most marginalised people. That this is true we know from our very own work experience and shared life with the poor. Our engagement, therefore, demands a process which draws upon **our experience in community accompaniment, science, and faith**. We are guided by Ignatian spirituality, the call of the Papal Encyclicals *Fratelli Tutti* and *Laudato Si’* for solidarity and integral ecology and the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs). The UAPs call for greater discernment, alignment with the poor, sharing of a new generation’s vision of hope, as we care for our common home, this being the context where we can live out the needed changes.

Our own discerned commitment to act is a source of hope, calling us to deeper accompaniment and collaboration. We are calling upon all governments and all people to act now.

COP 26 must be a forum for making decisions especially on these five key points:

1. Finalise the Paris Agreement in full, so implementation of the Rulebook can begin.⁵
2. Find solutions that respect human rights and allow all nations to achieve net-zero targets by 2050.⁶
3. Mobilise US\$100 billion yearly in climate finance to developing countries⁷ and shift to policies that promote more sustainable economies like the European Green Deal.
4. Ensure business is accountable for their emissions and negative impact on the environment and communities.⁸
5. Integrate *nature-based solutions*⁹ (NBS) in finalizing the Paris Agreement Rulebook.

As a community, the Ignatian family and collaborators commit to:

1. Change consistent with the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement with no giving up or backing out.
2. Work with other advocates for change to enable full participation of developing countries in the COP26 process and its subsequent implementations.
3. Practice servant leadership that listens, shares what is heard, and then seeks to collaborate.
4. Encourage the many people who engage with the global Jesuit and Church efforts to accompany and act in solidarity with the world's marginalised by listening to and learning from their experiences.
5. Promote the contributions of Indigenous Peoples in devising nature-based solutions that protect forests, oceans, ecosystems, biodiversity, and biomes.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis states that "Many things have to change of course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change"¹⁰ continuing that "we need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family".¹¹ COP26 is a meeting of the leaders of this family and it is our duty to engage in the process that seeks to heal our fragile earth.

We invite you to link with Ecojesuit as a way of tracking initiatives and learning how to engage as we identify who is participating locally. Do share your actions and collaborate through joining Ecojesuit initiatives globally at <http://cop26.ecojesuit.com>.

¹United States Special Envoy for Climate, John Kerry (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/will-2021-be-the-year-of-living-dangerously/>)

²The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis (2020) by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, p. 19

³World Health Organization (www.who.int/health-topics/drought)

⁴Global Environment Facility (www.thegef.org/topics/land-degradation)

⁵Confirming the Carbon Trading rules, Article 6 in the Paris Agreement Rulebook, for a global carbon market and avoiding the problem of double counting.

⁶https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/FairShareUK_Infographic.pdf
https://demandclimatejustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NOT_ZERO_How_net_zero_targets_disguise_climate_in_action_FINAL.pdf

⁷As large as \$100 billion sounds, it may still be far less than what is needed due to the added impacts of the pandemic. 54% of low-income countries are in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress as of September 2020

⁸Enabling means for 'Loss and Damage' through the Warsaw International Mechanism

⁹Nature-based Solutions, <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/44/11645.full.pdf> NBS has the potential to deliver up to 37% of the cost-effective mitigation required by 2030.

¹⁰*Laudato Si'* (2015) by His Holiness, Pope Francis, p.149.

¹¹*Ibid*, p.39.



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