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COP28: Global Faith Leaders Concerned About Grave Challenges

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By Ramesh Jaura

BERLIN | 26 November 2023 (IDN) — In the lead-up to the UN Climate Change Conference ([COP28](#)) that will take place in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December, the Global Faith Leaders Summit has warned that we “stand at the precipice of history, considering the gravity of the challenges” ahead, and expressed concern for “the escalating climate impacts that imperil our cherished planet”.

Two hundred participants, including the Tokyo-based [SGI](#) (Soka Gakkai International), endorsed an [interfaith statement](#) at the summit on 6-7 November in Abu Dhabi—one of the seven constituents (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah) of the United Arab Emirates.

They stressed the need for urgent responses by fast-tracking energy transitions, ensuring fairness and equity and what’s morally right, regarding Mother Earth as a source of life that must be protected, urged businesses and policymakers to adopt a rapid, just transition away from fossil fuels, embracing clean energy sources that nurture the Earth and safeguard its inhabitants unconditionally.

“We need to bring back hope for future generations. Together, we extend our open arms to all people, inviting them to embark on this journey toward a future of resilience, harmony, and flourishing for all life on Earth.”

“COP28 UAE will be a milestone moment when the world will take stock of its progress on the [Paris Agreement](#),” states the Presidency on the Climate Summit Website. It continues: “COP28 UAE will offer the first 1.5° C-aligned menu at a COP conference, as part of its objective of making the conference carbon-neutral.”

However, a new report from [UN Climate Change](#) finds that national climate action plans remain insufficient to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Even with increased efforts by some countries, the report shows much more action is needed now to bend the world's emissions trajectory further downward and avoid the worst impacts of climate change, the UN organization [reported](#).

“Today’s report shows that governments combined are taking baby steps to avert the climate crisis. And it shows why governments must make bold strides forward at COP28 in Dubai, to get on track,” said the Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change, Simon Stiell. “This means COP28 must be a clear turning point. Governments must not only agree what stronger climate actions will be taken but also start showing exactly how to deliver them.”

Against this backdrop, the Global Faith Leaders call on governments—to promote sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems that respect local cultures and ecosystems while ensuring food security for all, to enhance services to address the burden of climate change on human health, especially in the most vulnerable and fragile communities—acquires added significance.

Call for Action

They Global Faith Leaders:

Urge governments, especially those endowed with greater resources, to lead in curbing emissions and supporting climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in less privileged nations. Beseech financial institutions, IFIs, private sector, companies, and governments to adopt responsible investments and business practices aligned with climate, environmental and social standards.

Call on governments and stakeholders to recognize the inseparable link between the human-made crisis affecting the climate and biodiversity and adopt comprehensive actions that harmonize the restoration of both systems.

Call on governments to establish accountability mechanisms for the fulfilment of global and national commitments to inclusive climate action.

Call on policymakers to ensure inclusivity in Climate Transition: As we collaborate for a sustainable future, no one must be left behind. The needs of all people, especially children, vulnerable communities facing disaster and conflict, young people, women, and Indigenous Peoples, as well as animals and nature, must be at the centre of our endeavours.

Implore governments to commit to the operationalization of new financial mechanisms that address loss and damage, especially in the most vulnerable regions, and ensure that this fund is interdisciplinary, effective, and inclusive and directly reaches the most vulnerable or the affected communities.

Encourage an inclusive dialogue, during and beyond COPs, with faith leaders, vulnerable groups, youth, women’s organizations, and the scientific community to forge alliances that strengthen sustainable development.

Commitment

As representatives of respective faith, Indigenous, and wisdom traditions, the Global Faith Leaders acknowledge their collective duty to:

Honour the threads of Interconnectedness and Interdependence that weave us into the intricate fabric of life, reminding us of our shared destiny.

‘Herald the dance of Balance and Harmony, seeking equilibrium within us and with the natural world that cradles us.

Encourage a paradigm shift in our relationship with Earth and all its inhabitants, fostering a profound sense of reverence and responsibility.

Champion the development of a faith-based ecological narrative, continuous learning, and the integration of ecological teachings and values within educational, religious, and cultural institutions, nurturing a holistic understanding of our interconnectedness.

Actively participate in public discourse on environmental matters, guiding our congregations and institutions to foster resilient and just communities.

Lead the pursuit and reimagining of sustainable lower carbon lifestyles and social progress rooted in harmony with the Earth and respect for its resources.

Embrace Frugality, Resource Efficiency, and spiritual and wisdom-oriented Lifestyles, forging pathways of minimal waste and mindful living which fosters giving back to Mother Earth what we take from it.

Change our consumption patterns, ensuring that we are mindful that our purchases and services reflect our ethical commitment to accelerate the energy transition and achieve net-zero by 2050, as called for in the Paris Agreement.

Align financial investments with ethical standards, embracing responsible and inclusive financing that supports a thriving planet and its inhabitants.

Commit ourselves to be attentive, intelligent, and responsible, knowing that we must be the first to strive for development and justice.

Support the Faith Pavilion at COP28, the first of its kind, and continue to convene in future COPs to commission a message of hope and action at COPs.

Work together with communities, governments, individuals, families, corporations, and the whole of society to deliver on our commitments and inspire others to do so.

Pledge ourselves to Justice, cause no Harm, and Peace with all Sentient Beings, including Nature, fostering a harmonious coexistence that enriches both humanity and the planet.

Raise our voices for Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation.

Extend our hands in Doing Good, Charity, and Returning to Nature, nurturing the cycle of benevolence and transformation that sustains all existence.

Champion Equality, dismantling human-made barriers to ensure inclusivity, equal participation, and empowerment for all.

Uphold the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, defending the ancestral wisdom that is entwined with the Earth's well-being.

The Faith Leaders point out that multifaceted global challenges can only be tackled if we work together, people of all faith communities, supporting an effective multilateralism to tackle the triple planetary crisis.

“As people of hope and faith, we unite in Divine Wisdom bestowed on us, guided by an unwavering commitment to a sustainable future for all. Attention to the suffering of many and the engagement among faith leaders in climate action will allow us to achieve these commitments and results for the good of all,” the Global Faith Leaders declared. [IDN InDepthNews]

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image source: Global Faith Leaders Summit, Abu Dhabi.
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