

November 16, 2017

Dear President Trump and Members of the United States Congress:

As leaders of Catholic organizations in the United States, we write with one voice to urge you to reassert U.S. leadership in the global effort to address climate change. On behalf of people who are poor and vulnerable and future generations, we especially ask that you act based upon the best available climate science; fund the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; honor U.S. commitments to the Green Climate Fund; and meaningfully participate in the deliberations of the UNFCCC.

The Catholic Church has long called for a prudent approach to creation. In 1971, Paul VI [wrote](#), “Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation.” His successors, Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis have advanced the Church’s call for us to care for creation, a tenet of [Catholic social teaching](#).

Catholic leaders across the nation and world have explicitly and consistently affirmed climate change as a moral issue that threatens core Catholic commitments, including to: protect human life, promote human dignity, exercise a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, advance the common good, live in solidarity with future generations, and care for God’s creation which is *our common home*.

The Catholic Church has for years supported actions to address climate change based upon the best available science. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) expressed in its 2001 statement [Global Climate Change: A Plea For Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good](#): “In facing climate change, what we already know requires a response; it cannot be easily dismissed. Significant levels of scientific consensus—even in a situation with less than full certainty, where the consequences of not acting are serious—justifies, indeed can obligate, our taking action intended to avert potential dangers.”

We are thus obligated by our faith to act – especially now considering the November 3rd [National Climate Assessment](#) from thirteen federal agencies that concludes:

“[B]ased on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence.”

Guided by these principles and findings, we members of the Catholic Church in the United States ask that you:

1. Fund the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The UNFCCC and IPCC are indispensable institutions for the advancement of global diplomacy, action, science and knowledge on climate change. The United States has provided funding for these institutions since 1992, and we applaud the Senate Appropriations Committee’s recent bipartisan amendment to include \$10 million for them in the Senate’s FY2018 budget. We echo the USCCB in its [letter](#) urging Congress to support this amendment and call for the Administration and Congress to support future allocations to ensure US participation and leadership in the global efforts to address climate change.

2. Meaningfully participate in the deliberations of the UNFCCC

Climate change is a global problem that requires global solutions. As our nation enjoys vast resources and has been a primary contributor to climate change, justice requires that the U.S. display strong and consistent leadership within the UNFCCC. In this way, the U.S. can help secure science-based global commitments which rapidly reduce greenhouse gas pollution and avoid so-called “tipping points” towards unavoidable and catastrophic impacts.

3. Honor U.S. Commitments to the Green Climate Fund

One measure of a society’s greatness is how it treats people who are poor and vulnerable. As our Catholic tradition instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first, we urge you to honor U.S. commitments to the Green Climate Fund. The Fund helps less developed nations most impacted by climate change to build resilience to present and future impacts. Their peoples are disproportionately harmed by climate change despite often contributing least to the problem.

We heed the [call of our Church](#), which implores, “As individuals, as institutions, as a people we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.” We hope that you will accept our appeal, so that we may continue to dialogue and work together to manifest this change of heart.

Prayerfully submitted,

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