

The Interfaith Talanoa Dialogue Call to COP26 - 11 November 2021

At the opening of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), more than 200 people from many faith traditions and different parts of the world gathered at the Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow, physically and virtually. We listened to each other's stories and reflections on what climate change means from our faith perspectives; we prayed together; and we shared a meal. Using the Talanoa Dialogue methodology from the Pacific we discussed: Where are we now? Where do we want to go? And how do we get there?

Our faith institutions, organisations and members are witnesses to the devastating effects of climate change on our communities. We are alarmed over the lack of response to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that point to an unequivocal truth: the climate is warming and poses an existential threat to life on our only planetary home. Moreover, we are concerned there is much apathy and reluctance to change, especially by those who are in more comfortable circumstances.

As people of faith, we believe that we humans are called to take care of our neighbours and of the Earth. We together envision a planet that secures good health, dignified livelihoods, and a future for all living beings including coming generations. Though we represent diverse faith traditions, we are united in calling upon the COP26 to act now on the climate emergency before it is too late.

Advocacy

As many of our sisters and brothers have been excluded from COP26 because of vaccine inequality and COVID-19 restrictions, those of us present bring the voices of the most impacted by climate change: the poor, future generations and the Earth herself. If the climate crisis is to be addressed, the different faith traditions must be included in climate negotiations. Faith of all kinds can help to foster a sense of understanding an Earth community of all creatures.

We call on COP26 to

- ***include faith groups as a constituency in the climate talks.***

We invite people of faith to

- ***advocate by example and highlight different ways of living with a smaller ecological footprint.***

Resilience and empowerment

Climate change demands the end of unsustainable lifestyles. People of faith can contribute to the solution by reclaiming traditions that promote a more sustainable future.

We invite people of faith to

- *create time and spaces for meditation, prayer and silence for people to gain the perspective of working for the whole of the natural world, of which humanity is one part.*
- *create programmes for empowerment of people mentally, physically and materially at all levels to respond to the urgency of the present time.*

Finance

Finance plays a critical role in exiting from a fossil fuel society. Yet financial resources are inequitably distributed and wealthier nations have not kept their finance pledges.

We call on COP26 to

- *provide more grants rather than loans and erase climate debts.*
- *move from “aid” to “just compensation” for the Global South.*
- *deliver climate finance at scale and meet the USD 100 billion finance target.*

Loss and damage

The most vulnerable to climate change are the ones who contributed least to it. In the transformation to a sustainable future, resources must be made available for those whose livelihoods, homes, cultures and identities are destroyed by climate catastrophes.

We call on COP26 to

- *effectively address loss and damage in a spirit of solidarity between the Global North and Global South.*
- *provide new, additional and necessary finance to help poorer and more vulnerable countries to address loss and damage.*

Gender Inclusive Climate Action

Climate change and gender equality are closely linked. To achieve climate justice, the gender dimension must be considered.

We call on COP26 to

- *monitor and ensure that the Gender Action Plan is implemented nationally, and in international cooperation, including through climate finance.*
- *ensure that a holistic, intersectional, and transformative lens is clearly incorporated into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Action Plans.*
- *develop proposals and processes in consultation with grassroots women’s organisations.*

Adaptation

Climate related disasters are more often occurring due to climate change, increasing the exposure and vulnerability of people. Adaptation is essential. To get there, capacity building, finance and resources are needed.

We call on COP26 to

- ***ensure adaptation is at the centre of the climate agenda.***
- ***make 50% of the annual \$100 billion commitment for climate action available for adaptation, and available now.***

Human rights

To have a liveable planet is nothing less than a human right for all, including for our children and children's children. Climate change is threatening many human rights such as the right to health, water, and food.

We call on COP26 to

- ***promote accountability among the parties of the UNFCCC for their climate actions, in particular in proving that their climate actions do not infringe on human rights.***
- ***ensure policy coherence between climate change, development and human rights.***
- ***uphold human rights principles in the NDCs.***

Just Transition

There is a need for a swift transition to a new economy fuelled by clean renewables. This transition must be equitable and secure decent livelihoods for all, regardless of class, gender, and race.

We call on COP26 to

- ***develop spaces for social dialogue.***
- ***ensure that the costs of transitioning to a post-fossil fuel economy do not fall on the already vulnerable, including by providing training, compensation, and social protection for workers.***

Climate science

The science is clear: the 1.5C limit could be breached within two decades and the only way to halt further warming is through drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We need to act on what science tells us. Science plays an important role in raising awareness and faith can mobilize people to action.

We call on COP 26 to

- ***take decisions that align with climate science delivered by IPCC reports.***
- ***involve faith-based organisations and their traditions that promote a more sustainable lifestyle.***

Indigenous people

Indigenous people are caretakers of nearly 50 percent of the land and 80 percent of the Earth's biodiversity. Indigenous people and local communities are key to a sustainable future.

We call on COP 26 to

- ***protect indigenous peoples' rights when taking action on climate change.***
- ***take notice of the Indigenous wisdom and worldviews.***

Youth

Climate change is the reality now and even more for those who are young today. Intergenerational justice must be taken into account when decisions are made to set the planet on a more sustainable path. Climate justice includes intergenerational justice.

We call on COP 26 to

- ***incorporate an intergenerational perspective in every decision made to halt greenhouse gas emissions.***
- ***ensure the representation of young people in climate discussions.***

Global Governance

Our climate governance and collective action must be founded on the principles of humility, justice, global listening and inclusion. Embracing the vital importance of the local, and an ethic of caring for all, with a clear commitment to take care of each other, across the whole of the human family.

Current global governance structures and commitments made therein are inadequate to confront the urgency and gravity of the climate crisis.

What is missing is action and an adequate grounding in the necessary values.

We call on COP 26 to

- ***start a process to design and build new global institutions and initiatives based on an ethic of caring for all, with a clear commitment to take care of each other, across the whole of the human family***
- ***foster a spirit of ethical leadership and accountability in the UNFCCC decisions***
- ***close the gap between word and deed in the climate decisions made under UNFCCC***

The ILC works as a platform for faith-based organisations to facilitate dialogue and action. The ILC meets during the annual UN climate negotiations and regularly online to collaborate on faith advocacy for climate ambition, embracing all the pillars of the UNFCCC and of the Paris Agreement.