

PHILIPPINE INTERFAITH DECLARATION ON ADDRESSING CLIMATE EMERGENCY

We, the representatives from different religious and faith denominations of the Philippines, express our solidarity in recognizing the imbalance that envelops both natural ecosystems and human societies today. This imbalance has led to the immeasurable degradation of our environment and the unjust suffering of billions of people, placing current and future generations at an unimaginable unprecedented risk.

Taking care of all life on Earth is integral to all religious doctrines. Climate crisis is as a matter of fact, a moral crisis. Humanity is not meant to treat nature as its property; rather, we are meant to be a part of it, to be its caretaker, live with it, and maintain its health and well-being. Yet through our pursuit of our current notion of development, we have neglected our connection with others in favor of fulfilling self-interests. This has resulted in a system where the relentless wants of a few are frequently prevailing at the expense of the needs of the many.

We acknowledge the science of the climate crisis, caused by excessive greenhouse gas emissions from harmful human-induced activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels. These gases are creating a more unpredictable global climate system that will trigger more extreme weather events and increase the likelihood of disasters. They also worsen slow onset events, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, droughts, and land degradation, whose damages on ecosystems and societies could be truly irreversible. There is, indeed, a climate emergency, an ecological crisis.

We recognize that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of this crisis. We emphasize that this crisis affects everything and everyone, and that it could further worsen other manifestations of environmental degradation. These effects have disproportionate impacts on the poorest, marginalized, and most vulnerable sectors of our society, all of whom have contributed the least to this crisis.

We also acknowledge the link between solving the climate crisis and eradicating poverty. We have heard the cries of our brother and sisters, including indigenous peoples, during times of catastrophic events. It is unjust that these peoples are not only deprived of the necessary resources and opportunities to realize their right to a healthy and prosperous life, but also bear the brunt of climate change, environmental degradation, and harmful human practices. As faith leaders, we call for justice to be at the forefront of all actions taken to address climate change, that for every solution we plan and implement, no one is left behind.

To address the climate crisis, we, the leaders of our faith and religious groups, commit to supporting all efforts in forging a path towards low-carbon development. We commit to hold up the surge in religious calls to support climate action. We support endeavors for strengthening climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk

reduction management, in line with the goals of the Paris climate agreement, especially limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. We call for an urgent reduction of our use of fossil fuels, especially coal, and a rapid development of cleaner renewable energy.

We call on the policymakers to repeal laws and policies, such as the Mining Act of 1995, which contributes to the worsening impacts of the climate crisis, violates the patrimony and sovereignty of the country with the expropriation of the people's land for foreign corporations which lead to the destruction of forests, siltation of river systems, land, air and water pollution and displacement of communities. The ecology and environment must be protected from the destruction of widespread deforestation, mining, dam projects, big plantations and corporate farms. The land, forests, air, ocean and damaged bodies of water, pollution, negligence and natural calamities must all recover. It is also important to protect the ones that have not been damaged yet.

We also commit to inspiring within our respective constituencies a behavioral change as a response to the climate crisis. We commit to educating our peoples about the importance of human values, responsibilities, and rights at the center of our current and future actions for economic and social development and environmental conservation. We pledge to become living examples of sustainability by not only empowering our communities on living an eco-friendlier lifestyle, but also ensuring that our operations and financial resources comply with the principles of sustainable development.

Moreover, as we face the greatest existential threat of our time, we emphasize the need to renew and strengthen our connection to nature and our fellow human beings. We recognize that addressing the climate crisis also requires dealing with issues such as poverty eradication, access to clean water and electricity, good health and education, decent work, economic growth, and peace and justice.

Thus, we call on our political and economic leaders to uphold the principles represented by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris climate agreement, and other international and national policies and laws on climate action, economic growth, environmental conservation, and social justice.

We also call on our government to develop cost-effective and inclusive strategies for enacting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures that are participatory, inclusive, and driven by the needs of communities and organizations. We further demand countries and corporations responsible for the climate crisis and other forms of environmental degradation for proper compensation to the communities most affected by the impacts of these phenomena, with a focus on addressing loss and damage.

Lastly, we call upon everyone in this world to accept the reality of the common threat we face, the responsibility and the need for urgent and decisive action, and the imperative to change and unite with others to overcome this challenge. Faith communities must best exemplify the rising tide of actively supporting urgent climate action, and now!

Signed,