

Expediting the Implementation of UN Climate Agreements A Renewed Focus on the Most Vulnerable

Caritas Internationalis, the Confederation of Caritas organizations worldwide working on emergency relief and integral human development, looks forward to the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22), which will soon convene in Marrakesh. We salute the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on November 4th and we expect the outcomes of COP22 will contribute to sustaining livelihoods, food security, poverty eradication, increasing climate resilience, steady reduction of GHGs, equitable growth and finance, and sustainable development for the most vulnerable¹.

We renew the message of Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si’”, whereby humankind has to redefine its relationship with the environment, of which we are part and not the masters; we echo his call for a new social covenant involving the environment, present and future generations by adopting an **integral ecology** paradigm, which “includes our unique place as human beings in this world and our relationship to our surroundings.”² Climate change is the latest evidence of our failure to exercise proper stewardship and constitutes a critical opportunity for us to do better (Gen. 1:26-28). The Encyclical invites to an “ecological conversion” and calls upon humanity for responsible action at individual, community and political level. Governments, businesses, churches, and individuals all have a role to play in addressing climate change. As Caritas organizations, we recognize both the opportunity and our responsibility to offer a biblically based moral witness that can help shape public policy, therefore contribute to the well-being of the entire world and in particular of its poorest and marginalized inhabitants. Human ecology is inseparable from the search for **common good** and the **preferential option for the poorest**³.

COP22 will be a **COP on implementation**: however indispensable, the entry into force of the Paris Agreement (PA) is just the pre-condition for the reform of the entire international climate regime. **Most of the work needs to be done to implement the new rules at national level**, in particular through adequate funding, legal and policy frames. For this, several key issues have to be decided by State Parties during COP22, in particular the adoption of operational rules such as on the Transparency Framework (Art. 13), preparation and modalities of the Global Stocktake (Art. 14), accounting methods and the information to be included in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs, Art. 3-4). Parties must demonstrate their readiness to raise their objectives and step up efforts to reduce at the soonest their GHG emissions, preparing as of now towards 2018, the timeline where their contributions will be reviewed. The world needs to see the ramping up of ambition that delivering on the Paris Agreement demands, moreover State Parties and other actors have to

¹ «I am gratified that (...) in December 2015, [the nations of the world] approved the Paris Agreement on climate change, which set the demanding yet fundamental goal of halting the rise of the global temperature. Now governments are obliged to honour the commitments they made, while businesses must also responsibly do their part. It is up to citizens to insist that this happen, and indeed to advocate for even more ambitious goals.» *Show Mercy to Our Common Home*, Message of His Holiness, Pope Francis, for the Celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, 1 September 2016.

² LS, Chapter V.

³ LS, 156, 158.

enhance action prior to 2020: this is an absolute condition to keep global warming to 1.5°C⁴. **And time is running out.**

At COP22 CI wants to **represent the concerns of African countries and give voice to their most vulnerable communities**⁵. Africa still remains vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite her been the least contributor to it. Official reports⁶ document benefits arising from adopting low-emission technology and development paths are far greater than the costs entailed by keeping warming below 2°⁷. Yet such reports are least factored into national or international policies so far⁸. **Climate adaptation policies in Africa are insufficient to tackle adverse effects of climate change.** Africa's leaders need to implement more robust environmental policies, increase local human capacity and encourage renewable energy entrepreneurship. Lack of predictable financial resources, weak institutional capacity and settings, poor coordination and implementation of existing environmental legislations, absence of foresight in national development planning and climate resilience, unfavorable global settings⁹ to enhance Africa's capacity to pursue climate change adaptation and mitigation continue to undermine the continent's adaptation strategies. On the other hand, limited human resources to produce, analyze and disseminate climate data - as a result of poor investment in scientific research on climate change impacts, adaptation, and mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystems - and weak governance and surveillance of natural resources further compound Africa's inability to adapt. It is imperative that policy-makers in Africa consider complementing general adaptation policies by specific measures on water and coastal resources, forests, ecosystems, and agriculture. These measures would enhance adaptation and have net benefits greater than costs.

Among vulnerable groups in Africa, **women, in particular women farmers** are especially suffering from climate change impacts. Women make up, on average, 43% of the agricultural workers in developing countries; yet, strong inequalities persist between women and men in rural areas. Another category in need of protection is **youth**: Caritas considers adaptation very vital in order to respond to climate change impacts that are already happening, while at the same time prepare for future impacts. In the context of climate justice, we need a differentiated approach to adaptation i.e. reflecting the different impacts climate change adverse effects have on men, women, girls and boys in the African continent.

We draw the attention of UN negotiators in Marrakesh on the following key themes:

▪ **Ensuring respect and protection of Human Rights throughout climate actions**

Climate change has implications for the full range of human rights, particularly for people living in situations of poverty, marginalization and vulnerability¹⁰. Protection and promotion of human rights can indeed foster combating climate change. Measures adopted toward the full enjoyment of human rights such as the rights to food, safe drinking water, sanitation, health, housing and a healthy environment lead to more effective climate action outcomes, while also combating the negative consequences of climate change on those rights. The virtuous cycle that arises when human rights guide climate change policies also enhance the ability of States and communities to adapt, even in cases of insufficient climate action.

⁴ CAN, Marrakech: Galvanizing Ambition, Annual Policy Document, pp.11-12.

⁵ Such as those living already in extreme climatic conditions such as semi-arid or arid regions.

⁶ Such as the World Bank Series on 'Turn Down the Heat'.

⁷ World Bank, 2013.

⁸ According to the **Sixth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa** (CCDA VI, Oct. 18-20, Addis Ababa), an analysis by the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) revealed that most African NDCs are vague in their adaptation and mitigation aspirations. CCDA V1 emphasized on lack of cost estimates, no indication of sources of funding and pledges of mitigation commitments by the African Governments on Climate Change. Climate adaptation is a priority for Africa, hence there is an urgent need for immediate and adequate support for the implementation of adaptation measures.

⁹ At global level, Africa Growth Initiative (AGI) observes that African delegates are often marginalized, underrepresented and ineffective in influencing policies favoring the continent (Anesu 2013). The implication is that African interests are not adequately taken into account.

¹⁰ See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alyssa-johl/the-growing-climate-right_b_12550544.html

International Human Rights principles and obligations have been recognized in the PA as cross-cutting considerations in all actions to address climate change. The realization of human rights for all is closely and virtuously related to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty; on the other hand, the latter stand in “intrinsic relationship” with climate change (Preamble of the PA). It is thus indispensable to also ensure virtuous synergies between climate action and human rights. This can be achieved in concurring ways, among which by duly **integrating human rights principles and obligations into the operational modalities of the PA to ensure just and effective climate policies**¹¹.

We particularly stress the importance of **public participation and access to information** in the implementation of climate actions (Art. 6 UNFCCC; Art. 12 PA sets the Parties’ duty to cooperate in this area). Effective participation is key to democracy and public support. Outreach to most affected communities and vulnerable groups, the poor and marginalized who bear the effects of climate change - including through the involvement of organizations directly working with them - would ensure a rights-based approach leading to non-discriminatory and more inclusive policies. Over time, more and more people will migrate as a consequence of climate change. The **rights of migrants** (explicitly mentioned in the Preamble of the PA) must also be part of such cross-cutting considerations, especially when addressing Adaptation and Loss and Damage issues.

▪ **Food Security and Agriculture**¹²

Food security and agriculture depend on women and men smallholder and peasant farmers. Yet one of the weakest areas of focus in climate discussions has been on **how vulnerability and livelihood concerns of smallholder farmers will be addressed**. Smallholder farmers constitute a significant proportion of the farmers worldwide (about 85%); small-scale agriculture is vital to food security, poverty alleviation and employment. Yet, often the poorest households live on small-scale farms to supplement their nutrition and income. The increasing extreme weather events affecting smallholders highlight that this kind of agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate change and disaster impacts. Under future climate conditions their capacity to adapt will be impaired¹³.

The agricultural sector is key in addressing climate change. So far, agriculture has been discussed with a primary objective of protecting food production from the adverse effects of climate change (Art. 2 UNFCCC). Today, the Paris Agreement recognizes **safeguarding food security and ending hunger** as a “fundamental priority” in the response to climate change¹⁴. This entails that not only food *production*, but all components of food security (*access, availability, utilisation, stability*) need to be mainstreamed, in two ways: as key objectives of adaptation strategies related to agriculture and by ensuring that mitigation strategies do not threaten food security¹⁵. COP22 is an opportunity to

¹¹ The following chapters of this paper address specific ways to ensure synergies between human rights principles and obligations and climate action. Further strategies have been suggested by the Human Rights & Climate Change Working Group, “Briefing Note: Marrakesh COP22” and “Submission to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement”.

¹² See Chandra A, McNamara KE, Dargusch P, Damean, B, Rioux, J, Dallinger, J and Bacudo, I. 2016. Resolving the UNFCCC divide on climate-smart agriculture. *Carbon Management*. doi: 10.1080/17583004.2016.1235420

¹³ Smallholder farmer engagement in policy-making has been particularly weak on issues such as adaptation, finance and investment, market linkages to climate programs, and climate risk management (e.g. insurance) across agricultural value chains. Perhaps the biggest push to put agriculture on the Convention’s agenda has come from the strong focus countries have directed to agriculture and forestry as priority areas for future actions to strengthen climate resilience under their INDCs. Indeed agriculture is the foremost priority in adaptation actions, and its adaptation and mitigation potential was clearly recognized by almost all parties involved. See Chandra et al., above.

¹⁴ Preamble to the Paris Agreement.

¹⁵ See French organizations, “Creating a joint work programme (WP) on agriculture & food security in SBSTA and SBI”.

further the negotiations on agriculture and meet adaptation and mitigation commitments by ensuring the right linkages between climate change, agriculture and food security.

Discussions around agriculture under the SBSTAs 42-44 have, up until recently, been focused on what issues should be targeted in global climate policy and what issues should be excluded from negotiations¹⁶. Parties at COP22 need to move away from general discussions and focus their attention on building the resilience of smallholder farmers, including by promoting agroecology and indigenous knowledge. Substantial inclusion of agriculture in SBSTA 45 must be pursued in a manner that **supports the livelihoods and rights of marginalized smallholder farmers**. SBSTA 45 must emphasize adaptation as a key priority for vulnerable farmers, with likely co-benefits for global food security and reduced emissions. SBSTA 45 should focus on consolidating various components of agriculture under the different UNFCCC mechanisms and processes (e.g. finance, technology, capacity building and science) through a dedicated **work programme on agriculture (AWP)**. The AWP should provide a coordinated approach to adaptation, mitigation and food security. Such a coordinated approach would help to leverage resources and integrate agriculture in the National Adaptation Programmes of Action and National Adaptation Plans. In addition, it would foster policy coherence and synergies with other UN bodies like the **World Committee on Food Security**.

▪ **Tackling the unfinished work on Climate Finance**

The Roadmap to US\$100 Billion report presented at the Pre-COP is a welcome first step to increasing clarity on climate finance. At COP22, it will be important to build on this progress to **clarify how climate finance is accounted for and reported**. The roadmap shows an expected doubling of adaptation finance by 2020, but there remains an imbalance between adaptation and mitigation finance. In addition, the level of adaptation finance indicated, which should be provided in the form of **grants**, and not loans that may be tied to conditionalities, is inadequate against the scale of need. **COP22 should ensure that developed countries significantly increase adaptation finance and lay out concrete steps for doing so.**

Climate finance should be accessible, predictable, sustainable and additional to overseas development assistance, to support developing countries undertake climate actions based on their national priorities and needs. For sustainability and predictability, it is important that funds come mainly from public sources. 50 per cent of public finances should be allocated to adaptation for communities already affected, and in particular to smallholder farmers. Money from private markets should be only supplementary and should leverage public finance. Effective measurement, reporting and verification of climate finance is key to building trust between Parties and external actors.

▪ **Define form and contents for Nationally Determined Contributions**

At COP22 the adoption of guidance on the features and information of NDCs will be discussed (para. 26-28 of decision 1/CP.21). NDCs are fundamental to materialize the Paris commitments; it is thus crucial for every State to ramp up its level of ambition and credibility for its current NDC, and anticipate to further increase both for the next round. NDCs should be based on national

¹⁶ Developing countries such as Chile, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Philippines, Sudan and Uruguay have consistently highlighted the increasing vulnerability of agricultural systems to climate change, due to the increasing severity of extreme events, low adoption of climate-resilient technologies, infrastructure and supply chain constraints, and the limited capacity of traditional farming systems to adapt to new challenges within the Convention agenda. Chandra et al., *ibidem*.

circumstances and, in particular for developing countries, they should be made **in synergy with national actions towards sustainable development and the eradication of poverty** (as recognized by the Preamble and Art. 4 of the PA, and in connection with the Agenda 2030 and the implementation of the SDGs). They should identify win/win solutions – such as actions on forestry – that can reduce emissions while enhancing climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods. Developing countries' NDCs should provide information on the financial support needed in order to achieve their pledges. They should be supported by developed country Parties and international organizations, in accordance with para. 5 of Art. 4 PA.

In addition to increasing clarity, transparency and comparability of the NDCs (Art. 4, para.8 PA, according to decision 1/CP.21) international guidance should ensure that NDCs also **incorporate and implement at national level human rights principles and obligations. They should effectively pursue food security for all, follow a development-centered and pro-poor approach.** They should include information on relevant institutional arrangements, allocated budgets, the programs and measures envisioned and planning processes (para. 27 decision 1/CP.21), which must be participatory. **NDCs should be prepared with the participation of civil society**, in particular of affected local communities, indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups such as women and youth (see below).

▪ **Capacity-building and community engagement**

Public participation was already foreseen under Art. 6 UNFCCC. According to Art. 11 of the PA, capacity-building should facilitate, inter alia, “the transparent, timely and accurate communication of information” (para.1) and be “country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, foster country-ownership (...) including at national, subnational and local levels (...)” effective and participatory (para.2). CI believes community engagement and involvement in the planning system is essential for communities to develop their vision for the future of their living area, to provide means (for areas and country-wide) to decide on priorities for investment, to tackle the challenges of climate change, sustainable economic growth, and social inequity altogether. To gauge the community's understanding of and engagement in local climate change matters, follow-up surveys should be undertaken. CI members will continue to work with Governments, the Catholic Church, development partners and communities to ensure that the right mechanisms and spaces are in place to facilitate **successful community engagement in the planning of climate resilience policies.**

▪ **Loss and Damage**

Loss and damage is the consequence of non-adaptation to climate change impacts such as droughts and floods, and thus is mostly suffered by the poorest and most vulnerable. Caritas draws attention on this serious problem and welcomes the advancement made by the Paris Agreement: Article 8 provides a legal basis for long-term action and anchors the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) to the Agreement. The international community must be ready to address the worst effects of climate change with a spirit of solidarity with the most affected¹⁷. **Loss and damage should have its own mechanisms to receive proper response.**

The WIM will be reviewed, including its structure and mandate, at COP22. The WIM should become a coordinating body under the UNFCCC that is able to mobilize a much larger body of work. It should

¹⁷ “[The poor] have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services or protection is very limited.” LS, 25.

be a catalyst for both planning and action. Approaches proposed by the WIM should range from supporting pre-emptive action to developing future contingency plans equipping the world for different climate change scenarios. By so doing the WIM can help the world's governments and communities reduce risks of loss and damage and guide them on how to deal with situations in which loss and damage cannot be avoided.

In line with the concerns of developing countries, and in particular of Africa, we therefore advocate for **Loss and Damage to be treated separately from adaptation**. COP22 should adopt a decision inspired by justice and solidarity with the most vulnerable. Such a decision should provide a direction for enhancement of work, building on the recommendations of the review of the WIM.

We recommend to COP22 negotiators:

- To **address human rights and continue doing so beyond COP22**, providing guidance to Parties in order to foster respect, promotion and protection of human rights in their national climate policies, especially their NDCs.
- To adopt an **Agriculture Work Programme (AWP)** providing a comprehensive platform for smallholder farmers, civil society, the scientific community and governments. The AWP should prioritize the vulnerability of marginalized smallholder farmers, particularly food security policies, rural livelihoods and agriculture adaptation.
- To clarify accounting for and reporting on **climate finance**; to ensure that developed countries **significantly increase adaptation finance** and detail how they will do it.
- Adaptation strategies need to reflect the **different impacts climate change has on men, women, girls and boys, indigenous communities**. The disparities that make women most susceptible to climate change must be addressed, as well as their disadvantage in accessing up-to-date information on climate change and adaptation strategies, extension services on appropriate technological innovations, improved storage facilities and resource management.
- **Loss and Damage** to be treated separately from adaptation and have its own mechanisms to receive proper response.

Africa needs to have an effective voice at COP22 to **ensure that development and poverty reduction agendas are mainstreamed in the outcome and follow-up action**.

We call on UN negotiators to:

- **Address climate change as a development issue** and recognize its major impacts on human development and equitable growth, **and the crucial link with poverty**;
- **Enable African governments to develop more capacity** for research and data collection, including meteorological infrastructure, to monitor climate change impacts, to formulate and implement policies to protect natural resources including forests, and save energy based on clean low carbon technologies;
- Innovations in global governance on Climate Change, necessary to solve this pressing public problem, should secure **equity** between those most responsible for climate change and those who have contributed the least but bear the brunt of the problem.
- Provide **more technical assistance and capacity-building support to Africa** through existing institutional and partnership arrangements¹⁸ which aim to help African countries build their climate resilience.

¹⁸ A regional example of addressing loss and damage associated with climate change impacts is the African Risk Capacity established as an African Union Specialized Agency, created to help Member States of the AU improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters.