



# Second Laudato Si' International Conference

**International Conference on the 4th Anniversary of the Encyclical Letter Laudato Si', and the 5th Anniversary of the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)**



**July 15th-16th at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya**

*With support from:*



# Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
<b>Conference Objectives .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key Issues Discussed .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Climate Change.....	1
Ecosystem Restoration and Biodiversity .....	2
Role of Youth in Care for Creation .....	3
The Place of Africa in Care for Creation .....	4
Interfaith Engagement on Care for Creation .....	5
Application of Indigenous Knowledge in Care for Creation .....	6
<b>Key Messages .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>List of Conference Speakers .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Distinguished Delegates .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Organizing Team .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Conference Organizers.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Supporting Partners .....</b>	<b>17</b>



## Executive Summary

The Second International Conference on Laudato Si' was held on July 15-16, 2019 at the UN Office at Nairobi to commemorate the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the encyclical, Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home, and the 5<sup>th</sup> official anniversary of the [Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa \(CYNESA\)](#). The theme of the conference was, *Laudato Si' Generation: Young People Caring for our Common Home*. The conference brought together around 300 participants from 50 countries around the world and representing diverse religions and faiths (including Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus), spiritual institutions such as the Brahma Kumaris, governments, intergovernmental entities, students, scientists, politicians, and indigenous people.

The conference was graced by representatives from the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development led by Monsignor Bruno Duffè, Secretary of the Dicastery who read the keynote message from His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson. The UN Environment's Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Joyce Msuya was also present with other UN Environment staff. The Holy See Mission in Kenya was represented by a delegation led by His Excellency Archbishop Hubertus Matheus Maria van Megen. Youth leaders present included CYNESA's Founder & Executive Director, Mr. Allen Ottaro.

The diverse composition of the conference delegates reflected on the status of earth, our common home particularly with regards to challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and the multifaceted intergenerational gap. The conversation was informed by recent scientific findings such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), indigenous knowledge from Africa and the Pacific, and guided by Catholic social teaching and the teachings of other faith

traditions on care for creation. This Laudato Si' conference also had a special focus on Africa, which is home to many indigenous communities, rich ecosystems, one of the biggest carbon sinks in the world, and whose largest fraction of the population are youth and people of faith. Conference proceedings were quite participatory, with liturgy, short plenary inputs, speakers' presentations, discussions of scientific reports, and group discussions.

Conference delegates discussed the urgent environmental needs and opportunities in Africa, drawing hope and lessons from success stories and best practices presented by the strategic groups present. All faiths represented agreed on the urgent need to jointly care for our common home. The conference also created an opportune platform for different faith actors to network and collaborate with each other and work with scientists to cap the global temperature rise at 1.5<sup>o</sup>C and integrate indigenous knowledge, which has been effective in the sustainable conservation of ecosystems in Africa. The great potential of youth was reaffirmed and young people committed to engage more in advocacy and action for environmental sustainability, working together and harnessing their talents and innovativeness to protect their future. To demonstrate the impact of climate change, Ms. Jessica Chiveto dos Santos Gimo from Beira, Mozambique shared her story of caution, courage and hope after surviving Cyclone Idai, which wiped out their entire village.

Schoolchildren from St. Dominic Savio Primary School, Mwiki led the opening prayer, seeking God's help and guidance for older generations to play their role in caring for the earth that they are going to inherit. They lamented the damage to the planet and injustice perpetrated by the human race, but also expressed hope for a better tomorrow. In part, they prayed:

*“Merciful God, we do not understand science even when it is our favourite subject. But we do understand breathing... and living. We want to breathe; we want to live. Teach us to value life and to love it indeed. We want to hope for a tomorrow; however, it will be... For that is our tomorrow, even as much as this is our today. We pray that our tears will turn into cheers; their jeers of denial into steers of renewal; our folly into jolly.”*



## Conference Objectives

- 1) To mobilize and create a pool of young people (**Laudato Si Generation**), ready to steer the African continent towards an equitable, sustainable and inclusive future;
- 2) To examine innovative examples and best practices in addressing key challenges and rapid shifts needed in Africa and intimated in Laudato Si', such as the shift to renewable energy, urban green spaces and service provision, care for current and future generations, considering the "universal destination of goods"/public ownership and trust, cooperatives, and all types of collaboration. We will also provide an opportunity for meaningful discussion of the scale and types of
- turnarounds needed to reach the 1.5°C goal outlined in the Paris Agreement, supported by Pope Francis and many scientists and faith leaders. Key initiatives driving this positive change were showcased;
- 3) To discuss and formulate long-term plans on climate action sufficient to the challenge at hand and protection of biodiversity, indigenous rights, and human rights, across income groups and across generations;
- 4) To provide participants with the opportunity to expand their skills and knowledge of the continent for the advancement of opportunities and solutions to solving ecological challenges.

## Key Issues Discussed

### Climate Change

#### a) Status

There has been a 1°C increase in temperature since pre-industrial times and the temperature is still rising with dire consequences.

For the first time in human history, carbon dioxide levels in our planet's atmosphere have reached 415 parts per million. The UN Environment predicts that by 2030 emissions will reach 54 to 56 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is way above the level of 42 needed if global warming is to be limited to 2°C this century.

Consequences of climate change include floods, storms, droughts, heatwaves, wildfires and rising sea levels.

The actions currently being taken are not enough to tackle climate change.

*Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, eco-nomic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal chal-lenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst im-pact will probably be felt by developing coun-tries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and eco-systemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They 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 and protection is very limited (Laudato Si 25)*

## b) Way Forward

We must not go beyond the 1.5°C temperature. We should aim to cut emissions by half by 2030 and have zero net emissions by 2050.

There is a lot we can do as humanity.

*‘We must continue to be aware that, regarding climate change, there are differentiated responsibilities. As the United States bishops have said, greater attention must be given to “the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests”. We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference (Laudato Si 52).*

Climate justice demands a faith response. Faith-based organizations and religious groups can address climate change through investment, food, forests, learning and leaders of the future.

## Ecosystem Restoration and Biodiversity

### a) Status

There is continuous degradation of soil and land due to increase in competition for land, undermining the long-term security and development of all countries.

Forest cover has also dropped in most parts of the world. In some dryland areas of South America and Africa this land degradation is leading to desertification. Land degradation is adversely affecting the well-being of 3.2 billion people (UNEP).

- Many different species have dropped drastically in population, with an increasing

number of species facing the threat of extinction. Between 1993 and 2017, the most sustained through continuous engagement and mentorship.

- Social Media is a powerful tool that can be used for sharing information, networking and organizing among the youth.

threatened groups were 63% cycads species, 41% amphibians and 33% reef-forming corals (UNEP).

The earth is in crisis because at the current rate of loss of nature, up to 1 million species may become extinct, many within several decades (IPBES).

Unfortunately, the value of biodiversity is not widely reflected in decision making yet.

### b) Way Forward

UNGA Resolution A/RES/73/284 of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) recommends adoption of suitable solutions for ecosystem restoration including strategies to “...Prevent, halt and reverse ecosystem degradation, Raise awareness of importance of conservation & ecosystem restoration”

The steps offered in the resolution include:

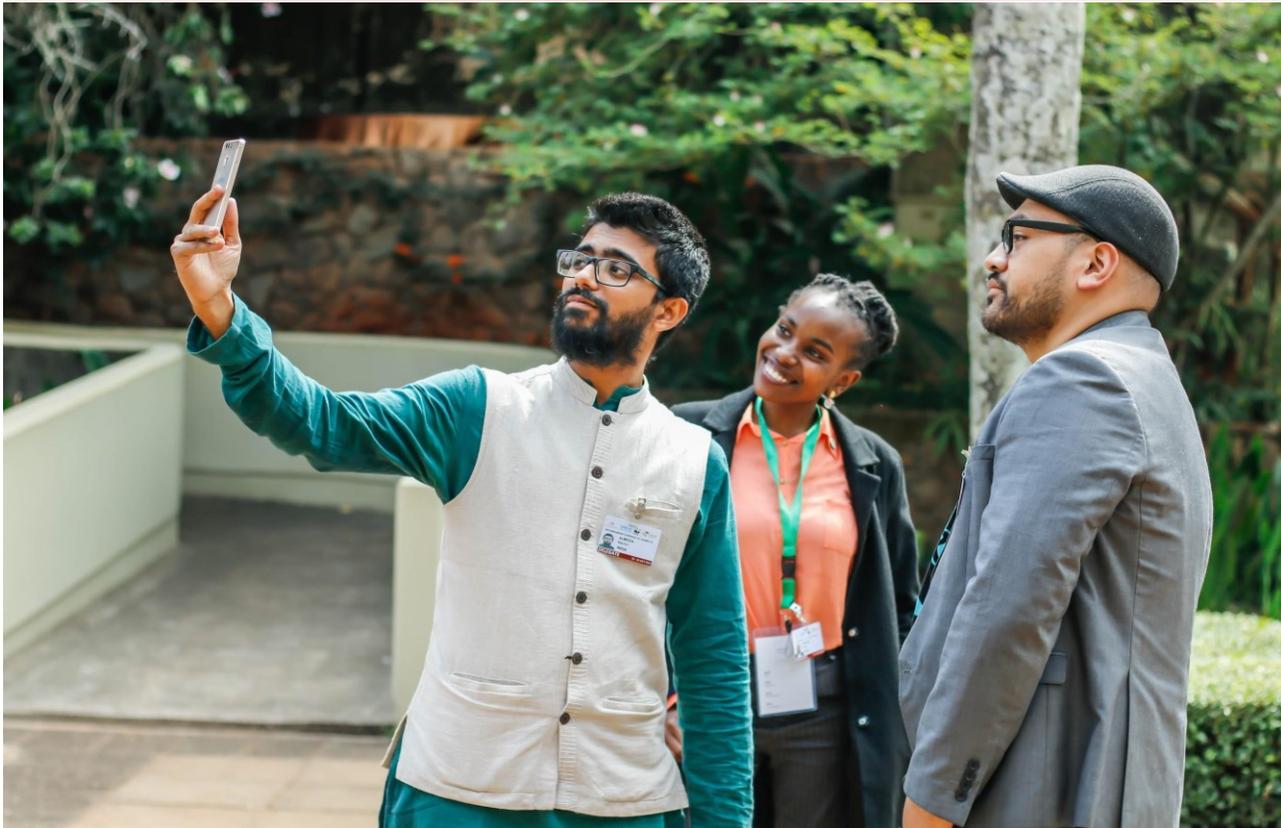
- Drawing lessons from previous decades
- Awareness raising & stakeholder consultations
- Implementation & communication strategies
- Monitoring system
- Technical assistance & knowledge sharing platforms
- Investment opportunities

The **New Deal for Nature and People** that is being championed by WWF and other partners envisions reverse to the loss of nature, and

protection and restoration of nature by 2030 for the benefit of people and the planet. It strengthens the CBD and supports efforts towards climate and development, working

with youth and civil society for the attainment of the 2030 agenda and supporting the Paris agreement.

## Role of Youth in Care for Creation



### a) Status

- Young people are slowly getting recognition though their voice is not heard in some parts of the world. However, they still have huge untapped potential.
- Young people are also coming together to stand up against environmental degradation and engaging more in advocacy. This is done quite passively and mostly on social media.
- Unemployment among the youth has increased in the past years and especially in developing countries. This sometimes

forces youth to disregard care for creation in their search for economic empowerment.

- Education systems and teachers are not able to fully convey the message on care for the environment to the youth.

### b) Way Forward

- The youth need to realize their role in care for creation and mobilize fellow youth, including indigenous youth to take up this role.
- They have to use their passion and talents to sensitize others in their communities on

climate change and environmental degradation.

- Youth also need to do proper research on organizations working on climate change to know where they can make contributions.

- Governments and institutions need to fully utilize the innovativeness, confidence and the commitment of the youth.

- Care for the environment needs to be taught to children from early stages of life.

## The Place of Africa in Care for Creation



### a) Status

- Africa is rich in terms of natural resources, with vast lands and large ecosystems. Unfortunately, these resources are used unsustainably and they are getting depleted.
- Many Africans are preoccupied with the western technologies and way of life.
- African youth are vulnerable and have become easy to manipulate, especially for financial gain since most of them are unemployed.
- Africa relies heavily on agriculture and its natural resources. It is therefore getting hit hard by climate change and its effects.
- There is a gap for action towards caring for the earth.

### b) Way Forward

- Africa should not embrace new technology and modernity blindly just because they promise higher yield and productivity.

- Africa should develop its own policies and be committed to its existing laws.

- There is need for equity among citizens and a sense of brotherhood.

- It is crucial to link environment with the economy.

- Africans need to support each other politically and push the environmental agenda with a united voice

- Tax pollutants to discourage the vice.

- Use social media should to spread the message on key environmental issues.

- Africa should establish strong leadership.

- There is a need to go to the grassroot communities and share the scientific findings and predictions with them. This can be done through faith institutions such as churches and schools.

- Africans should also take action at individual level.

## Interfaith Engagement on Care for Creation



### a) Status

- All religions represented call for care for creation.
- There is a growing tendency for the recognition of the role of faith leaders and communities in care for creation.
- Faith groups are still wasting a lot of time trying to convert individuals to their religions and competing instead of collaborating and speaking one language on ecological sustainability and protection.
- Many young people are not interested in faith matters. They are sometimes forced to take part in activities in which they have no interest.

### b) Way Forward

- For an ecology that can heal the damage we have done, all branches of science and all forms of wisdom must be embraced, including all religions and languages.
- Young people too must embrace each other in the care of our common home in spite of differences in faith convictions.

- Real change in any social or environmental systems must begin and be sustained in the minds and hearts of human beings. People of faith must accept and believe in themselves first.
- Faith communities must hold the hands of the youths in interfaith groups, and acknowledge the changing times by integrating themes and issues that are more relatable to the youth.
- Faith communities must also stop judging each other and work jointly for the betterment of the environment.
- Environment protection should be part of the morals taught to children and youth in effort to raise a generation that is environmentally conscious.
- Churches and other faith-based organizations should not allow their financial resources to be geared or used in activities that are destructive to our common home.

## Application of Indigenous Knowledge in Care for Creation



### a) Status

- Indigenous people's livelihoods depend on natural resources. Their very identity is inextricably linked with their lands, which are located predominantly at the social-ecological margins of human habitation — such as small islands, tropical forests, high-altitude zones, coasts, desert margins and the circumpolar Arctic.
- With climate change and other modern-day challenges, indigenous communities are now living in some of the most fragile ecosystems.
- Many in indigenous communities still lack of awareness on what climate change is.
- They possess intimate knowledge about their landscape and are uniquely capable of adapting and mitigating climate change. For example, nomadic lifestyle enables access to and regeneration of ecosystems because resources are scarce in space and time.
- Unfortunately, traditional knowledge is disappearing at an alarming rate with the migration and lack of interest of the youth and the passing of the elders.
- The world has recognized the role of the indigenous people in care for creation.

### b) Way Forward

- Traditional knowledge needs to be recognized and respected as important, just like 'western' science and its institutions.
- Adaptability and balance are key in the shift from traditional to modern societies and systems. Know that technology and science will not stop. How we adapt to them is key.
- Ecosystem based approaches and innovation in land use work best for indigenous people in addressing climate change and other environmental challenges.
- Traditional knowledge needs to be documented. It involves all groups in the community and fosters intergenerational learning in which the involvement of children and youth is key.
- Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) are one strategic way of understanding and protecting indigenous communities with their wisdom and heritage. With BCPs, these communities are able to document their ways of live including norms, leadership structure, resources and knowledge such that they have clear understanding of what they have within their boundaries and what challenges are

affecting them. BCPs also help them to develop solutions and structures for engagement with external stakeholders and governments.

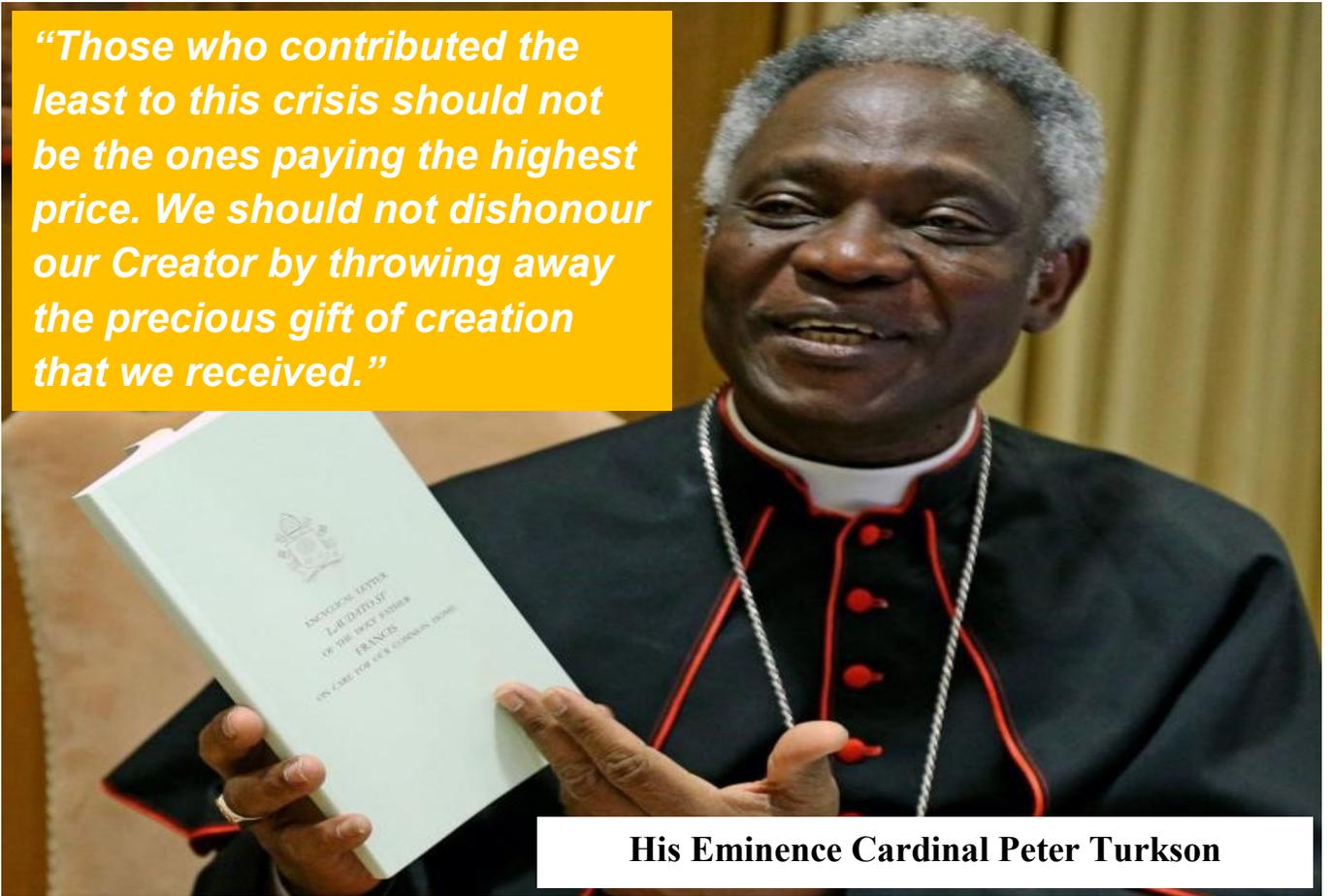
- Exchange visits are also a strategic way to support networking, capacities and

information sharing between grassroots indigenous peoples and others.

- Indigenous peoples should also have secure tenure rights to lands and territories.

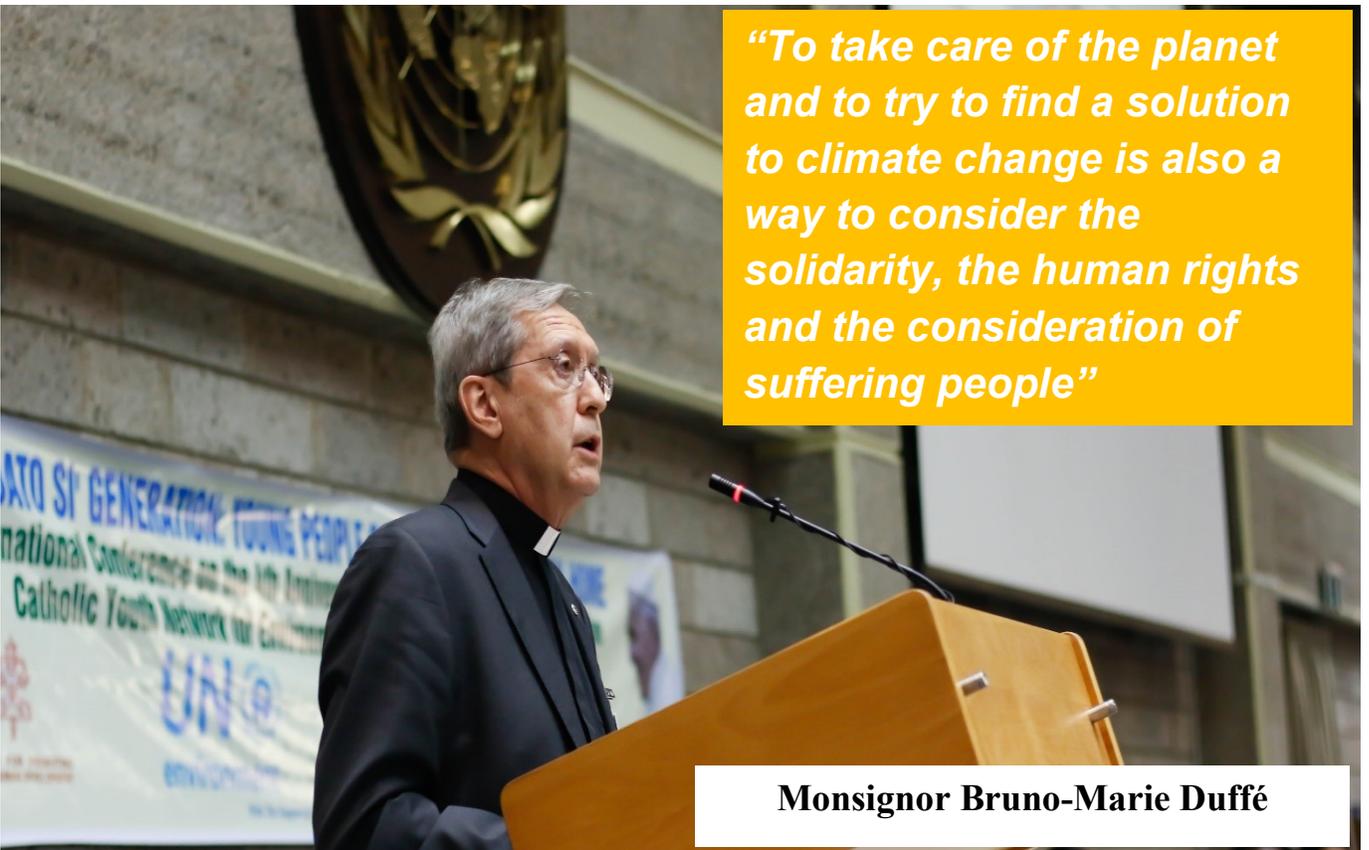
# Key Messages

*“Those who contributed the least to this crisis should not be the ones paying the highest price. We should not dishonour our Creator by throwing away the precious gift of creation that we received.”*



**His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson**

*“To take care of the planet and to try to find a solution to climate change is also a way to consider the solidarity, the human rights and the consideration of suffering people”*



**Monsignor Bruno-Marie Duffé**

*“The youth is the hope of the church, the hope of the society, the hope of the world. Because the future is yours. Any action undertaken now will benefit especially you, the youth, as you are the next generation of persons taking responsibility for the wellbeing of our human family”*



**H.E. Archbishop Hubertus Matheus Maria van Megen**

*“I find hope in the millions of churches, mosques, synagogues and temples around the world that can embrace sustainability in their investments, buildings and teachings – and thus serve as powerful models for the people in their communities.”*



**Ms. Joyce Msuya**

*“Legislations and policies must be based on values, morals and ethics”*



**Dr. Iyad Abumoghli**

*“Our children and our grandchildren should not pay for our irresponsibility”*



**Fr. Joshtrom Kureethadam**

*“Today any little wind that blows scares us all the more, we have to build our lives though our lives have been damaged and are never the same”*



**Jéssica Chiveto dos Santos Gimo**

**Iyad Abumoghli**  
UN Environment

*“Dig deep. Ask daring questions. Make bold decisions!”*



**Macson Almeida**



*“Young people here, come to the table as we make space for you, step up and become a champion for the Africa you want! We are ready to walk with you to a more sustainable future.”*

**Rose Thuo**



*“Don't be scared because you are young”*

**Helena Funk**

*“Dig deep. Ask daring questions. Make bold decisions!”*



**Joseph Sapati Moeono-Kolio**

*“Dig deep. Ask daring questions. Make bold decisions!”*



**Allen Ottaro**

## List of Conference Speakers

- His Eminence Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson - Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- His Excellency Archbishop Hubertus Van Megen - Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya and South Sudan & Permanent Observer for the Holy See Mission to UN Environment and UN Habitat
- His Lordship Bishop John Oballa Owaa –
- His Lordship James Maria Wainaina – Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Ngong, Vice Chairman and Principal Administrator at the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), & President of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) at the KCCB.
- Fr. Joshtrom Kureethadam - Coordinator, Sector on Ecology and Creation, Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- Ms. Joyce Msuya - Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment
- Gary Lewis - UN Environment Director of Policy and Programme Division
- Allen Ottaro – Founding Executive Director, Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA).
- Mr. Joseph Sapati Moeono-Kolio – Pacific Climate Warriors (Samoa).
- Mr. Macson Almeida – Don Bosco Green Alliance (India)
- Ms. Priya Parrota – Music and Earth Project (Puerto Rico)
- Ms. Helena Funk – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany
- Ms. Jessica Chiveto dos Santos Gimo - Beira, Mozambique
- Dr. Hassan Omari - Young Muslim Association
- Mr. Dennis Andaye Murefu - Organic Farmers Market
- Lanoi Parmuat - Executive Director, Ewang'an Nadede Advocacy Initiative (ENAI – Africa)
- Susan Gardner - UN Environment Director of Ecosystems Division
- Ms. Kaptoyo Edna - GEF SGP Indigenous Peoples Global Fellow for Climate Change
- Mr. Daniel Batachoka Mastaki – Country Director, CYNESA DRC
- Fr. Emmanuel Kakule Vyakuno – Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- Mr. Tebaldo Vinciguerra – Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- Ms. Rose Thuo - Head of Communication & Marketing, WWF Africa
- Mr. Tafara Ruvimbo Dandadzi - Deputy Executive Director, CYNESA
- Mr. Jackson Shaa - Narasha Community Development Group (NCDG)
- Mr. John Ngige – CYNESA Kenya Core Team Member & Youth Coordinator, Catholic Diocese of Nakuru
- Irene Sebastian Waweru - Green Anglicans Kenya
- Mr. Don Mullan - Consultant to the UNCCD and Communications Officer, Society of African Missions (SMA)
- Mr. Benoit Musabyimana - Country Director, CYNESA Rwanda
- Mr. Rodne Galicha - Founder and Co-Lead Convenor, Living Laudato Si' Philippines
- Dr. Iyad Abumoghli – Principal Coordinator, Faith for Earth Initiative – UN Environment
- Dr. Musonda Mumba - Interfaith Rainforest Initiative
- Sr. Pratibha Patel - Brahma Kumaris
- Cicilia Githaiga - Natural Justice
- Sr. Caroline Wangeci – Headteacher, St. Dominic Savio School

## Distinguished Delegates

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Mulu, OP  
Rev. Fr. Innocent Wefon Akum  
Hon. Pamela Simon Maassay

Mill Hill Missionary, Cameroon  
Member of Parliament at East Africa Legislative Assembly  
for the United Republic of Tanzania  
Partnerships for Change  
Partnerships for Change

Jacqueline Miller  
Dr. Laurie Ann Levin

## Organizing Team

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Mulu, OP  
Allen Ottaro  
Ann Kirori  
David N. Munene  
Hellen W. Mugo  
May Wambui  
Mercy Wambui Munene  
Alphonse Muia  
Abner Wachira  
Dennis Muchira  
David M. Kimani  
Moses Munene Wangari  
Martina Lippuner  
Dr. Iyad Abumoghli  
Alexander Juras  
Sajni Nikita Shah  
Lynda Chimwana  
Alex Ogoro  
Nathan Majwa  
Maria Rosés Giralt  
Moses Osani  
Fauziya Hyder

Holy See Mission, Kenya  
CYNESA  
WWF Regional Office for Africa  
UN Environment Programme  
UN Environment Programme

## Conference Organizers

The Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development -

<http://www.humandevlopment.va/en.html>

UN Environment- <https://www.unenvironment.org/>

Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA) -

[www.cynesa.org](http://www.cynesa.org)

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Africa -

[wwf.panda.org/wwf\\_offices/regional\\_office\\_for\\_africa](http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_offices/regional_office_for_africa)

## Supporting Partners

Catholic Climate Covenant – <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org>

Partnerships for Change – [partnershipsforchange.org](http://partnershipsforchange.org)

Photo Credits:

Calvin Ombogo

+254 737 231 353 | [cjombogo@gmail.com](mailto:cjombogo@gmail.com)

&

George Muriama

+254 729 926 850 | [george.muriama@gmail.com](mailto:george.muriama@gmail.com)

Kindly follow the following links to access:

[Conference presentations](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page)

The conference [video interviews](#)

The conference [photos](#)

©2019 Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)

Upendo House, Mountain View off Waiyaki Way, Nairobi.

P.O. Box 37434-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.

[www.cynesa.org](http://www.cynesa.org)

Tel: +254 205 254 131

Mobile: +254 700 047 240

Email: [info@cynesa.org](mailto:info@cynesa.org)

 [CYNESA](#)

 [CYNESA](#)