Towards COP26: Advocating for Climate Justice

A Commitment from the Ignatian Family

When representatives of nearly 200 countries gather in Glasgow this November for the 26th UN Summit on Climate Change (COP 26), the world will have reached a critical juncture. COP26 is the “last best chance” that we have to save our planet and avoid a climate catastrophe. This meeting will decide what kind of planet we share with present and future generations.

In 2015 the Paris Climate Agreement was hailed as a milestone on the path to reducing carbon emissions, limiting global warming, and creating a sustainable future. It was an agreement in principle, but faltered in the steps to implementation. Former UN Secretary for Climate Change, Christiana Figueres and climate lobbyist Tom Rivett-Carnac warn if temperatures continue to rise at their current rate, “it is clear that by mid-century human misery would be high, biodiversity would be decimated, and that we and our children would live in a world that is constantly deteriorating with no possible recuperation.” By 2030, 700 million people will be at risk of being displaced because of drought and land degradation. Further still, 95% of earth’s land areas could be degraded by 2050.

Pope Francis teaches that, while climate change affects everyone, it is hurting most the poorest and most marginalised people. That this is true we know from our very own work experience and shared life with the poor. Our engagement, therefore, demands a process which draws upon our experience in community accompaniment, science, and faith. We are guided by Ignatian spirituality, the call of the Papal Encyclicals Fratelli Tutti and Laudato Si’ for solidarity and integral ecology and the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs). The UAPs call for greater discernment, alignment with the poor, sharing of a new generation’s vision of hope, as we care for our common home, this being the context where we can live out the needed changes.

Our own discerned commitment to act is a source of hope, calling us to deeper accompaniment and collaboration. We are calling upon all governments and all people to act now.

COP 26 must be a forum for making decisions especially on these five key points:

1. Finalise the Paris Agreement in full, so implementation of the Rulebook can begin.
2. Find solutions that respect human rights and allow all nations to achieve net-zero targets by 2050.
3. Mobilise US$100 billion yearly in climate finance to developing countries and shift to policies that promote more sustainable economies like the European Green Deal.
4. Ensure business is accountable for their emissions and negative impact on the environment and communities.
5. Integrate nature-based solutions (NBS) in finalizing the Paris Agreement Rulebook.
As a community, the Ignatian family and collaborators commit to:

1. Change consistent with the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement with no giving up or backing out.

2. Work with other advocates for change to enable full participation of developing counties in the COP26 process and its subsequent implementations.

3. Practice servant leadership that listens, shares what is heard, and then seeks to collaborate.

4. Encourage the many people who engage with the global Jesuit and Church efforts to accompany and act in solidarity with the world’s marginalised by listening to and learning from their experiences.

5. Promote the contributions of Indigenous Peoples in devising nature-based solutions that protect forests, oceans, ecosystems, biodiversity, and biomes.

In Laudato Si’, Pope Francis states that “Many things have to change of course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change” continuing that “we need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family”. COP26 is a meeting of the leaders of this family and it is our duty to engage in the process that seeks to heal our fragile earth.

We invite you to link with Ecojesuit as a way of tracking initiatives and learning how to engage as we identify who is participating locally. Do share your actions and collaborate through joining Ecojesuit initiatives globally at http://cop26.ecojesuit.com.

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1United States Special Envoy for Climate, John Kerry ([https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/will-2021-be-the-year-of-living-dangerously/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/will-2021-be-the-year-of-living-dangerously/))

2The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis (2020) by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, p. 19

3World Health Organization ([www.who.int/health-topics/drought](http://www.who.int/health-topics/drought))

4Global Environment Facility ([www.thegef.org/topics/land-degradation](http://www.thegef.org/topics/land-degradation))

5Confirming the Carbon Trading rules, Article 6 in the Paris Agreement Rulebook, for a global carbon market and avoiding the problem of double counting.

6[https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/FairShareUK_Infographic.pdf](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/FairShareUK_Infographic.pdf)

7As large as $100 billion sounds, it may still be far less than what is needed due to the added impacts of the pandemic. 54% of low-income countries are in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress as of September 2020


9Nature-based Solutions, [https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/44/11645.full.pdf](https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/114/44/11645.full.pdf) NBS has the potential to deliver up to 37% of the cost-effective mitigation required by 2030.

10Laudato Si’ (2015) by His Holiness, Pope Francis, p.149.

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CONFERENCE PRESIDENTS

Jerome Stanislaus D’Souza SJ
Jesuit Conference of South Asia

Antonio F Moreno SJ
Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

Timothy Kesicki SJ
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

Franck Janin SJ
Jesuit Conference of European Provincials

Roberto Jaramillo Bernal SJ
Conferencia de Provinciales en América Latina y el Caribe

Agbonkhianmeghe E Orobator SJ
Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar

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Secretary
Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES)

José Alberto Mesa SJ
Secretary
Worldwide Secretariat for Education

Michael Garanzini SJ
Secretary for Higher Education
International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU)

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Provincial
Irish Jesuit Provincialate

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Socius to the Provincial
Jesuit Chennai Province

Miguel Garaizabal SJ
Regional Superior of Thailand

Varghese Palli SJ
Provincial
Dumka-Raiganj Province

Stephen C Koitharayil SJ
Provincial Designate
Dumka-Raiganj Province

Stany Henry Pinto SJ
Socius
Dumka-Raiganj Province

Amrit Rai SJ
Region Superior
Nepal Jesuit Society

Jan Roser SJ
Provinzial
Deutsche Provinz der Jesuiten K.d.ö.R.

Fabien Gasigwa SJ
Supérieur Régional
Rwanda-Burundi Region of the Society of Jesus

Chukwuyenum Afiawari SJ
Provincial Superior
North-West Africa Province

Fulgence Ratsimbazafy SJ
Provincial
Jesuit Province of Madagascar

Dionysius Vaz SJ
Provincial
Karnataka Jesuit Province

Hermann Rodríguez Osorio SJ
Provincial
Provincia de Colombia de la Compañía de Jesús

Bart van Emmerik SJ
Assistant Major Superior
ELC – Jesuits European Low Countries

Elemér Vizi SJ
Provincial/Major Superior
Hungarian Province of the Society of Jesus

Bernhard Bürgler SJ
Provincial
ECE - Zentraleuropäische Provinz der Jesuiten (Province of Central Europe)
SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

Ted Penton SJ
Secretary of Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

Anthony Dias SJ
Secretary
Social Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Conference of South Asia

Carmen de los Ríos Baerti
Delegada Social
Delagado Redes Sociopastorales
Conferencia de Provinciales en América Latina y el Caribe

Adrianus Suyadi SJ
Secretary for Social Ministries
Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

Peter Rožič SJ
Social Apostolate Delegate
Director, Jesuit European Social Centre
Jesuit Conference of European Provincials

Charles Chilufya SJ
Social Apostolate Coordinator
Director, Justice and Ecology Office/Justice and Ecology Network Africa
Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar

IGNATIAN NETWORKS, INSTITUTIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

Denis Dobbelstein
President
World Executive Council
Christian Life Community (CVX-CLC)

Ann Marie Brennan
Vice President
World Executive Council
Christian Life Community (CVX-CLC)

Christopher G Kerr
Executive Director
Ignatian Solidarity Network

Clarisa Galeano
Coordinadora
Red Claver

Raimundo Barros SJ
President
Federación Latinoamericana de Colegios de la Compañía de Jesús (FLACSI)
(Latin American Federation of Jesuit Schools)

Vicente Marcuello SJ
Director
Centro Pignatelli-Zaragoza (Spain)

Pieter-Paul Lembrechts S.J.
Detention Visitor
Jesuit Refugee Service Belgium

Dr Kevin Hargaden
Director and Social Theologian
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice-Ireland

Dr Antonio Gabriel La Viña
Executive Director
Manila Observatory

Sylvia Miclat
Executive Director
Institute of Environmental Science for Social Change

Nate Radomski
Executive Director
Magis Americas

Carlos Fritzen SJ
Coordinador general
Federación Internacional de Fe y Alegría

Oscar Rodríguez SJ
Coordinador
Red Comparte

Juan Eduardo Fuenzalida SJ
Director
Fundación Licán (Tirúa, Chile)

EDUCATION

Florentino Badial Hernández
Director General
Universidad Iberoamericana Tijuana
Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina (AUSJAL)

Francisco Morfín Otero
Director
Instituto Superior Intercultural Ayuuk (ISIA) AUSJAL

Javier Pérez de la Canal González
Director General
Colegio la Merced y San Francisco Javier (Burgos-España)

Felipe Portocarrerero
Rector
Universidad del Pacífico
AUSJAL
Dr Francisco José Virtuoso SJ  
Rector  
Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela  
AUSJAL

Luiz Felipe Guanaes Rego  
Diretor do Núcleo Interdisciplinar de Meio Ambiente (NIMA) da PUC-RIO  
Coordinator, AUSJAL Environment and Sustainability Network  
Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina

Jorge Urrutia Barañano  
General Director  
Jesuitak Indautxu, Bilbao

Koldo Echabarria  
Director General  
Fundación ESADE

Carlos Losada Marrodán  
President  
UNIJES

Félix Revilla Grande  
Director  
INEA-Escuela Universitaria de Ingeniería Agrícola

Dr. Ricard Santomà  
General Director - Dean  
School of Tourism and Hospitality Management  
Sant Ignasi  
Ramon Llull University

Dr Salvador Borrós  
Director General  
Instituto Químico de Sarrià - Barcelona

Consuelo Burgos Bolós  
Dirección Adjunta  
Centro Universitario Sagrada Familia

Jaume Flaquer García SJ  
Director  
Instituto de Teología Fundamental

Christian Marte SJ  
Rektor  
Jesuitenkolleg Innsbruck

GIAN (GLOBAL IGNATIAN ADVOCACY NETWORK)  
Pedro Walpole SJ  
Coordinator  
GIAN-Ecojesuit

Guillermo Otano  
Coordinator  
GIAN-Justice in Mining

Javier Cortegoso Lobato  
Leader, GIAN-Migration  
Coordinador General, Red Jesuita con Migrantes-Latinoamérica y el Caribe

XAVIER NETWORK  
Paul Chitnis  
Director, Jesuit Missions  
Chair, Xavier Network  
Advocacy Working Group

Klaus Väthröder SJ  
Missionsprokuraor  
Jesuitenmission Germany

Katrin Morales  
Managing Director  
Jesuitenmission Austria

Teresa Paiva Couceiro  
Executive Director  
Fundação Gonçalo da Silveira (FGS)

Martin Iriberri Villabona SJ  
Director  
Alboan

Ramón Almansa López  
Executive Director  
Entreculturas

Jenny Cafiso  
Director  
Canadian Jesuits International

Ambrogio Bongiovanni  
President  
Fondazione MAGIS

Helen Forde  
Chief Executive Officer  
Jesuit Mission Australia

COP26 WORKING TEAM AND DELEGATES  
Pedro Walpole SJ  
Valeria Méndez de Vigo  
Advocacy and Communication  
Coordinator, SJES  
Paul Chitnis  
Ann Marie Brennan  
Nicholas Napolitano  
Cecilia Calvo  
Ciara Murphy  
Telmo Olascoaga  
Rigobert Minani SJ  
Efa Ravelonantoandro  
Ngonidzashe Edward SJ  
Lumnesh Kumar SJ  
Sue Martin  
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Raiza Javier  
Brex Arevalo