



The voices of the earth as well as of the young, poor and marginalized are crying for more urgent climate action around the world

Executive Summary

Pressure on the land and the world's most vulnerable communities is intensifying at an alarming rate, with severe impacts of the climate crisis observed globally. The burning and clearing of the Amazon rainforest, and other large forest ecosystems around the world from California to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Siberia, undermines the sacredness of the land and it diminishes the earth's capacity to absorb the increasing emissions in the atmosphere. We've also witnessed the worst cyclones in generations in Southern Africa, Idai and Kenneth, which devastated many communities in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa, destroying roads, bridges, homes, livelihoods and taking away the lives of people who could not escape their path, thereby increasing poverty and inequality in those areas that were least prepared and hardest hit. We have now reached dangerous limits of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and this is a climate emergency.

It is time to re-evaluate our relationship with people and the earth and envision a sacred life and living earth. Recently, the Catholic Synod sent out a strong message to world leaders that inaction is a crime towards humanity and nature. Our faiths, therefore, compel us to a call for climate justice, accountability, peace, and the integrity of creation in its fullness.

Context

Water, air, the land and food are sacred! The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Reports on 1.5°C and land have demonstrated how human development has exploited both people and planet. Most of this destruction exists because of our current unsustainable and wasteful economic system. Immediate, rapid and extensive transformation in our energy, land, and urban infrastructure, and growth-based, linear industrial systems is mandatory in keeping 1.5°C of warming above pre-industrial levels. The scientific and moral case for prioritizing radical action on climate change is clearer and louder than ever before!

On 2 - 13 December 2019, the twenty-fifth session of the UN Conference of the Parties (COP25) will take place in Madrid, Spain under the Presidency of the Government of Chile. The aim of the conference is to finalise the necessary measures that are needed to implement the Paris Climate Change Agreement from 2015 in its fullness. This include the call for all countries to revise and increase ambition in their national commitments and action plans ahead of 2020. **Ahead of COP25, SAFCEI makes the following recommendations on what we should be seeing governments commit to:**

1. Divestment from fossil fuels and increased reinvesting in safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable energy systems in a just and equitable manner is crucial in addressing carbon emissions reductions. We recognize that nuclear power is a false solution because it is unsustainable, expensive and its waste is unsafe. We



urge governments and business corporations to take brave and ambitious actions towards addressing climate change while accelerating a just energy and development transition.

2. We also recognize that climate adaptation alone is not enough. Therefore, parties should effectively review the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM on L&D) to ensure that it is fully operationalization and prioritization in the negotiations to deliver the necessary financial flows for support, especially, to the poor and marginalized communities.
3. The IPCC land report highlight the damages caused on our ecosystems owing to the current unsustainable agricultural practices from producing food for the growing population. Governments and corporations should promote sustainable food production such as agro-ecology farming systems that guarantees the right to food, proper nutrition and to a healthy environment instead of genetically engineered solutions.
4. Indigenous communities are humanity's chief stewards of the earth and many have laid their lives for the climate justice cause. The rights, cultures, knowledge systems, lives of the indigenous people and the land must be respected and protected.

We are aware of the massive global mobilization of people on the ground, including indigenous people and the youth. The time for climate action is now! Failure to act urgently will increase the cost to adapt and the likelihood of the severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for our diverse and rich ecosystems as well as on people on the planet, our only common home. These erratic impacts are threatening the chances of eradicating poverty and achieving a sustainable development for the current generation and future generations.

The Southern African Faith Communities' Environmental Institute (SAFCEI) is a multi-faith organisation committed to supporting faith leaders and their communities in Southern Africa to increase awareness, understanding and action on eco-justice, sustainable living and climate change.