



Public Statement for the first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1) during the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22)

This Statement was signed and endorsed by AYM Presiding Clerk Jo Jordan on behalf of Australian Quakers at the NCCA Assembly, Sydney 27 October 2016.

The drafting and dissemination of the Statement and the related handover event is a joint collaboration with representatives from more than 30 faith-based organisations from across the world.

A full list of signatories of this letter can be found at [here](#)

10 November 2016

At this historic moment, as the Paris Agreement enters into force, an unprecedented global consensus has produced a universal framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to build greater resilience to climate impacts. We are profoundly grateful for the leadership that produced this Agreement and are mindful of the challenges and complexity ahead. Now it is time to move to urgent action.

Across all faiths, we share a moral obligation to not harm others, to be fair and to care for the vulnerable. Climate change is already having global impacts, disproportionately affecting poor and marginalized communities and we grieve for their loss and suffering. How we turn the corner to harness the worst impacts of climate change depends on the work we do in the next ten, five, even two years. Each and every one of us must act on the reality of the climate crisis, so that the damage we inflict upon our sacred Earth ceases and the ecosystems on which all



life depends can heal.

At this critical juncture, as governments implement the Agreement, we must deepen our awareness and discern what it means to be in the right relationship with one another, our Earth and all living beings. Our desire for limitless growth and power is having devastating consequences - leaving our Earth community polluted, impoverished and vulnerable. We respectfully ask those who make decisions on how energy systems are financed, sourced and distributed to ground their decisions in a humble and compassionate reverence for the interconnectedness of all life.

If we continue to damage our vital support system through over-exploitation, contamination and destruction of the climate that protects us, the life-giving minerals, soil that feeds us, the oceans and freshwater sources that sustain us, we do so at our own peril. We must take swift action, guided by our faiths and work in service together as a global Earth community.

Global society's continued use of fossil fuels and other extractive industries, while knowing the damage they cause, is ethically untenable. We must deliberately turn away from investing in fossil fuels and we stand together, to call for a collective shift by sovereign wealth funds and public sector pension funds from fossil fuels towards climate solutions. This will send a necessary and transformative signal to public and private borrowers and investors worldwide and will help end the fossil fuel era.

We appeal to States to be bound by ethical decency and good faith to honour their commitments made in the Agreement. We therefore ask, for the safety of all, in an urgent increase in climate action and ambition by all Governments, with rapid emission reductions in line with limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

In addition to focusing on the substantive articles of the Agreement, we call on all States, when taking action to address climate change, to uphold the obligations

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contained in the preamble of the Agreement. We appeal to States to uphold their obligations on human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, a just transition, food security and intergenerational equity. We stress that the full and equal participation of women, indigenous societies and youth in addressing climate change will accelerate efforts towards a low carbon economy and significantly contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7, that aims to end energy poverty by 2030.

We strongly request for global financial flows to be increased and consistent with the 1.5C° goal and be coordinated more closely with the SDGs to recognise the intrinsic relationship between climate change, poverty eradication and equitable sustainable development. More finance is needed to provide greater support for the poorest and particularly the most vulnerable communities affected by climate change. We find it deeply unjust that Least Developed Countries (LDCs) will spiral deeper into debt in paying for a problem they have inherited. We therefore strongly urge governments to support an equitable increase in global financial flows to provide for greater human and ecological adaptation, especially to compensate for loss and damage, technology transfer and capacity building.

At the same time, we are concerned by trade agreements that may undercut urgently needed climate action. We request stricter controls on the dispute mechanisms within trade agreements that contain provisions that empower corporations to challenge government policies in extrajudicial tribunals.

As we appeal to world leaders to embrace new policies to protect our precious climate, many faith communities have already committed to divest from fossil fuels as part of the fastest-growing divestment movement. Faith groups are also investing in climate solutions and we work shoulder to shoulder with people in impoverished communities across the world to minimise the impacts of climate change and build resilience. We thus ask our own faith communities for more commitments to divest from fossil fuels and invest into renewable energy and targeted engagement with companies on climate change. We need to ground this work in pursuing a just transition to renewable energy.

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Throughout history, our religious traditions have provided support and inspiration during times of great challenge or transformation. We must commit to new ways of living that honour the dynamic relationships between all forms of life to deepen awareness and the spiritual dimension of our lives. We must draw on courage, hope, wisdom and spiritual reflection to enable our young and future generations to inherit a more caring and sustainable world. This is the time to step forward and act as trustees to Mother Earth. Together, by supporting each other's progress we can go further and faster.

We therefore:

- Urgently ask States to rapidly increase pledges to reduce emissions, in line with the 1.5°C goal;
- Call for a collective shift by sovereign wealth funds and public sector pension funds away from fossil fuels into renewables and other climate solutions;
- Strongly request an increase in global financial flows to end energy poverty with renewable energy and to provide for greater support for human and ecological adaptation, particularly to compensate for loss and damage, technology transfer and capacity building;
- Appeal to all States, when taking action to address climate change, to ensure the commitments contained in the preamble of the Agreement related to human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, a just transition, food security, intergenerational equity and the integrity of all ecosystems are effectively reflected in any decision adopted at the COP22;

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- Request stricter controls on the dispute mechanisms within trade agreements that utilize extrajudicial tribunals to challenge government policies;
- Ask, including within our own faith communities, for more commitments to divest from fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy and targeted engagement with companies on climate change. We need to ground this work in pursuing a just transition to renewable energy.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.R. Jordan".

Jo Jordan
Presiding Clerk
Australia Yearly Meeting