

Protecting Our Common Climate System, Earth Governance for a Sustainable Future:

An interfaith appeal to the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 29)

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“Humanity must reach beyond nationalism to build fit-for-purpose global governance for managing the Earth’s atmosphere - our common climate system,” according to over 400 religious, faith and values-based individuals and organizations [who have endorsed](#) an interfaith appeal [Protecting Our Common Climate System: Earth Governance for a Sustainable Future](#), presented today to the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 29) in Baku, Azerbaijan.

“With global temperature rise already causing wide-spread and devastating disasters, and with the tipping points for a global climate catastrophe imminent, it is evident that relying on national commitments in a competitive economic and political environment is not working,” says **John Vlasto** (Humanist, UK), co-founder of [Mobilizing an Earth Governance Alliance](#), who presented the appeal to COP 29 at the Faith Pavilion today.

“God gave us one planet to live on and last time we checked, emissions, pollution and temperature increases do not stop at national boundaries,” says **Rev Fletcher Harper** (Christian, USA), Executive Director of [GreenFaith](#), who joined in the appeal presentation to COP 29. *“If we want a future in which millions are not cooked to death, a binding global governance system is imperative.”*

The appeal highlights principles and values shared across the world’s major religions, faiths and philosophies that are relevant to governing the environment for a sustainable future. These include the principles of protection of creation (the Earth’s global ecosystem), reciprocity/equity, justice/fairness, social responsibility and Guardianship/Earth Trusteeship. The appeal then draws from those principles to support a number of governance proposals including for;

- adopting [UN Declaration of Planetary Emergency](#) and convening a Planetary Emergency Platform;
- establishing a [UN Special Envoy for Future Generations](#) and similar [institutional representatives for future generations at local, national and regional levels](#);
- supporting the [International Court of Justice case on climate change](#) currently before the court;
- adding the [crime of ecocide](#) to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court;
- establishing a dedicated [International Court for the Environment](#);
- negotiating a [Fossil Fuel Treaty](#);
- adopting [Earth Trusteeship](#) governance approaches at local, national, regional and international levels including establishing a UN cooperative trusteeship mechanism for better governance of

the global commons, inspired by the [UN Secretary-General's proposal for the UN Trusteeship Council](#).

- creating an [Earth System Council](#) as a fourth pillar of the UN.

“These environmental governance mechanisms would ensure fair and effective implementation and enforcement of climate obligations,” says Mr Vlasto.

“Mahatma Gandhi once said that we should learn to live in a way that we are a part of nature and not apart from nature,” says **Ela Gandhi** (Hindu, South Africa), granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi and Chairperson of the Gandhi Development Trust and Phoenix Settlement Trust. *“We must remain alert to the many ways in which we as Humans are responsible for the deterioration of our environment, the obliteration of other species on earth, and the degradation of our earth and its atmosphere,”* says Ms Gandhi who also serves as Co-president of Religions for Peace.

“It is time for people of diverse backgrounds and communities around the world to work together to fashion sensible governance to protect the life support systems on our magnificent common home, planet Earth,” says **Maja Groff**, (Baha'i, Netherlands), Convenor of the [Climate Governance Commission](#) which has researched and helped develop many of the environmental proposals recommended in the interfaith appeal.

“The statement [Protecting Our Common Climate System: Earth Governance for a Sustainable Future](#) tells us with clarity and compelling urgency what we must do now to engage the climate emergency,” says **Nitin Ajmera** (Jain/Interfaith, USA), Chair, Board of Trustees, Parliament of the World's Religions. *“As an international interfaith organization, we especially affirm values shared by the world's traditions: protection of creation, reciprocity, justice, responsibility and guardianship of the Earth. Recognizing the right to a healthy environment and the rights of Nature – and enshrining with our actions our responsibility to future generations – are fundamental to creating the future we owe our children.”*

“To address the climate crisis increased by a group of industrialized countries with impacts on the most impoverished sectors of the Global South, affected in their livelihoods and culture, we advocate for the full implementation of intergovernmental instruments, accompanied by National Action Plans,” says **Martha Inés Romero** (Catholic, Colombia), Pax Christi International Secretary General. *“But these Plans are often more rhetorical than the result of transformative political will and must be contrasted with increasingly serious realities for ecosystems and the communities that inhabit them.”*

“We, as custodians of our shared planet, carry the profound responsibility to protect and restore our climate, which transcends borders and beliefs,” says **Erick W. Githaiga** (Christian, Kenya), Ambassador of Partnerships for Future Generations in Africa. *“By uniting diverse faiths and values, this appeal is a powerful call for Earth-centered governance, reflecting our collective commitment to a sustainable, just, and resilient future for all generations.”*

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See next pages for Additional (full) quotes from endorsers

Additional (full) quotes from endorsers

"Protecting the climate system is a collective responsibility, and the sustainability of the Earth is an urgent necessity that requires everyone to work together to achieve climate justice and ensure human rights for future generations."

Khaled Ayesh (Muslim, Yemen) Executive Manager, National Forum for Human Rights

"May we truly think in terms of seven generations ahead in governing our planet!"

Dr. Elena Mustakova (Baha'i, Bulgaria). Founder, Unitive Earth Governance Collaborative

"The interdependence of nature does not allow the limits of its existence to be overstepped, as this implies self-destruction. This means cooperating and prioritising fair resource management that respects human, natural and generational rights".

Montse Serrano (Catholic, Spain), Director of Technical Secretariat, Comisión General Justicia y Paz.

"It is a spiritual duty to protect our planet, especially the ecosystems."

Bamalum Buji Mustapha (Muslim, Nigeria), Chief Executive Officer, Hyrax Investment Company Limited

"The collective efforts of our species are required, if humans are to be successful in meeting the challenge of climate change. Few institutions are more capable of helping to impart the urgency of challenge we face, to convey the sacredness of the task we must assume, or provide the organized reach to aid in the political and moral pursuit of repair that members of the faith community."

Prof. Winston E. Langley (Christian & Buddhist, USA)

Professor Emeritus/political Science-international Relations, University of Massachusetts Boston

"Islam teaches us to care for the planet and Allah has designated us, human beings, as 'stewards of the earth'. Yet, we are witnessing today an increasingly violent and degrading world, where ethics, dignity and reverence for others are being trampled upon. If the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) were here today, He would probably shudder to see the mayhem, hubris and the multidimensional ecological crisis that we are experiencing right now. While it is almost a truism to say that the end of days is drawing near, humanity is in dire need to come to its senses and collaborate to reverse the current extreme state of unsustainability."

Dicky Sofjan, Ph.D. (Muslim, Indonesia), Vice President of Globethics, Geneva, and Core Doctoral Faculty of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), Yogyakarta.

"Humankind should pay more attention to the environment than ever as it becomes "a common space" impacting the lives and future of all peoples on the earth as strongly demonstrated through floods, drought...The consequences of these natural phenomenon are awesome."

Prof Driss Larafi (Muslim, Morocco). University Ibn Tofail

I pray that this appeal will have an impact on the powers that be.

Al McNair (Christian, Canada), Board Director, Ploughshares Calgary

Thank you for bringing this message COP 29. I pray that the global powers that be treat this as the existential threat to humanity and all life on the earth that it is.

Colleen Ring (Catholic, Canada). Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace

"Our interconnected, cooperative and biodiverse planet recognises no borders. The climate recognises no borders. How we impact the climate, and all the life upon and within it, has likewise to accept no borders. The Druid Network therefore fully supports a global evidence driven governance with the principle purpose of mitigating and reducing our impact upon the planet's ecosystems."

Jon Grundy (Druid, UK). Trustee, The Druid Network.

"The Earth is what we all have in common," and I say we must agree. Let's take care of it.

Jana Larsen (Unitarian Universalist, USA), Human Resources Deputy Director, WE, The World

"A global citizenship response for the common good is now urgent."

Frances Palmer (Christian, New Zealand)

"As the Disability Peoples Forum Uganda, we believe in the power of inclusivity and accessibility. Our commitment is to ensure that every person, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to a sustainable and equitable future. Together, we can create a world where everyone's potential is recognized and valued."

Kayanga Peter (Christian, Uganda), Director Disability Peoples Forum Uganda

"We need to do all we can to protect the earth from aggressive climate devastation through governance and sustainable future."

Josephine C. Ojiaka (Christian, Nigeria), Senior Lecturer, Imo state University, Owerri, Nigeria

"As Earth's stewards, we must harmonize humanity's footprint with nature's rhythm, ensuring a symphony of sustainability, equity, and resilience for a climate-resilient future."

Prof. Aranyam Kashyap (Hindu, India), Poet, social and environmental activist, Assam State

A healthy biosphere is the basis for all that we do. It needs to be given the top priority as everything else depends on it. Thank you to everyone involved with COP 29 and your efforts to protect our shared climate system. The environment is a central focus of the Paul Bartlett Ré Peace Prize. Thank you and nature will thank you.

Paul Bartlett Ré (Value of healing/understanding, USA), Founder, The Paul Bartlett Ré Peace Prize

"In Pax Christi we recognise the links between climate change and war and see this appeal to Protect our Common Climate System as work for peace."

Kathryn Lydon (Catholic, UK), Chair Pax Christi England & Wales

"We believe that the time is now to prevent our ecosystem from being disintegrated due to lack of political will and no release of finance to combat climate change. All hands must be on the deck."

Cecilia Ndu-Okoli (Christianity, Nigeria), Program Officer, Global Missions International

"Short-term commercial and economic considerations cannot be allowed to outweigh the future sustainability of the planet."

Andrew Patrick Lett (Christian, UK)

"Humanity must reach beyond nationalism to build fit-for-purpose global governance for managing the Earth's atmosphere - our common climate system."

Jim McKinney (Humanitarian values base, USA), Retired, American Federation of Teachers

"Speak the truth. Speak it loud and often, calmly but insistently, and speak it, as the Quakers say, to power. Material accumulation is not the purpose of human existence. All growth is not good. The environment is a necessity, not a luxury. There is such a thing as enough."

Art Koch (Quaker, USA), Clerk of the Peace and Social Concerns San Francisco Friends Meeting

"The statement "Protecting Our Common Climate System: Earth Governance for a Sustainable Future" tells us with clarity and compelling urgency what we must do now to engage the climate emergency. The Parliament of the World's Religions strongly endorses this statement. As an international interfaith organization, we especially affirm the mention of values shared by the world's traditions: protection of creation, reciprocity, justice, responsibility and guardianship of the Earth. Our signature document, the Global Ethic, also upholds these common values that inspire and guide our actions. Recognizing the right to a healthy environment and the rights of Nature – and enshrining with our actions our responsibility to future generations – are fundamental to creating the future we owe our children."

Nitin Ajmera (Jain/Interfaith, USA), Chair, Board of Trustees, Parliament of the Worlds Religions

"Mahatma Gandhi once said that we should learn to live in a way that we are a part of nature and not apart from nature. Our responsibility as thinking beings is to protect other species in the world and our environment. We must remain alert to the many ways in which we as Humans are responsible for the deterioration of our environment, the obliteration of other species on earth, and the degradation of our earth and its atmosphere. We must curb those practices that contribute to this disastrous trajectory on which human beings find themselves."

Ela Gandhi. Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi. Chairperson of the Gandhi Development Trust and Phoenix Settlement Trust, Co-president of Religions for Peace.

"To address the climate crisis increased by a group of industrialized countries with impacts on the most impoverished sectors of the Global South, affected in their livelihoods and culture, we advocate for the full implementation of intergovernmental instruments, accompanied by National Action Plans; but these Plans are often more rhetorical than the result of transformative political will, and must be contrasted with increasingly serious realities for ecosystems and the communities that inhabit them. It will not help us to describe the symptoms, if we do not recognize the human root of the ecological crisis, and if we do not press for an urgent reform of the economic system, which maintains a structural dependence on fossil fuels and poses a transition with perverse effects on communities and their territories. COP 29 must push for pacts based on Equity, Inclusion and Sustainability, from an Ecological Justice approach!"

Martha Inés Romero, Pax Christi International Secretary General

"Para hacer frente a la crisis climática creada por un grupo de países industrializados con impactos en los sectores más empobrecidos del Sur Global, afectados en sus medios de vida y su cultura, insistimos en la aplicación plena de los instrumentos intergubernamentales, acompañados de Planes nacionales de acción; pero éstos suelen ser más retóricos que el resultado de una voluntad política transformadora, y deben contrastarse con realidades cada vez más graves para los ecosistemas y para las comunidades que los habitan. No nos servirá describir los síntomas, si no reconocemos la raíz humana de la crisis ecológica y si no presionamos por una urgente reforma del sistema económico, que mantiene una dependencia estructural en combustibles fósiles y que plantea una transición con efectos perversos hacia las comunidades y sus territorios. La COP 29 debe presionar por pactos basados en la Equidad, la Inclusión y la Sostenibilidad, desde un enfoque de Justicia Ecológica."

Martha Inés Romero, Secretaria General de Pax Christi Internacional