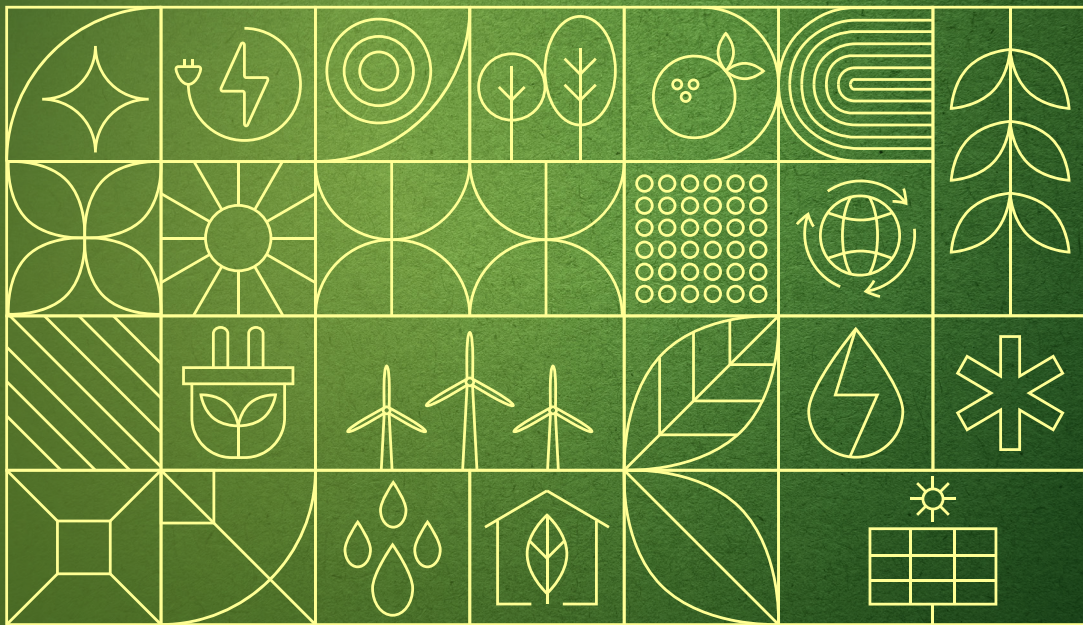


Manifesto of the churches of the global south for our common home



*Towards peace with creation: an urgent call for
“a just transition beyond fossil fuels.”*



«Joint Manifesto of the Continental Catholic Episcopal Bodies from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia, together with representatives of the Catholic Church in Europe and Oceania, as a result of joint discernment at COP30 and in preparation for COP31.»

MANIFESTO OF THE CHURCHES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Towards peace with creation: an urgent call for
“a just transition beyond fossil fuels.”

PREAMBLE: THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND THE POOR

Gathered as members of Catholic communities from the Churches within the Global South and Europe, we raise our voices at this pivotal moment in history. Our collective stance, rooted by our joint journey at COP30 in Belém, Amazonia, expressed in the document “A Call for Climate Justice and the Common Home: Ecological Conversion, Transformation, and Resistance to False Solutions”, and guided by the prophetic writings of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* (LS) and *Laudate Deum* (LD), aims to continue the commitment forged there. We recognize, with sorrow and urgency, that “the world that welcomes us is crumbling and perhaps approaching a breaking point” (LD, 2). Together with Pope Leo XIV, we affirm that “it is vital to turn words and reflections into choices and actions based on responsibility, justice, and equity to achieve lasting peace by caring for creation and our neighbors”.¹

The signs of the times are undeniable: the last three years have seen record global warming, a robust indicator of the intensification of human-driven warming of the climate

1 Pope Leo XIV, Message from His Holiness Pope Leo XIV delivered by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin at the Thirtieth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) in Belém. <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20251107-messaggio-cop30.html>

system. According to leading climate analysis centers², this trend of sustained warming reflects the transition to a new energy state of the Earth system, characterized by persistent radiative imbalances, positive feedbacks, and an increasing frequency of climate extremes, both in intensity and occurrence. From a scientific perspective, these data confirm that the planet is approaching critical thresholds that compromise the stability of ecosystems, socioeconomic systems, and governance structures, exacerbating the suffering of the most vulnerable, even in countries of the Global North.

As pilgrim Churches in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia, we witness that climate change is not only an environmental crisis, but also a consequence of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and an “economy that kills,”³ which is expressed as a social, cultural, and spiritual crisis that threatens human dignity and peace. The science is clear: the primary cause of this imminent collapse is the large-scale and continuous burning of coal, oil, and gas, which account for 86% of carbon dioxide emissions over the decade 2010-2019.⁴

Therefore, guided by the preferential option for the poor and the care of creation described in the Catholic Social Teaching, we declare our unwavering support for a just transition and strongly call on the governments of the world to adopt a treaty to stop proliferation and abandon fossil fuels as a moral and political imperative.

2 For example, “[Copernicus Climate Change Service](#)” in the European Union, “[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \[NOAA\] - Climate at a glance](#)” in the US, or “[Berkeley Earth, Global Warming](#),” among others.

3 Cf. Francis (2023, 6 de octubre). Message of the Holy Father to the participants in the Fourth Annual Meeting of “The Economy of Francesco”. The Holy See. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2023/documents/20231006-messaggio-economy-of-francesco.html>

4 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] (2023). Climate Change 2021. The Physical Science Basis, Cambridge University Press, p. 687 (cf. Technical Summary, 80). <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157896>

I. THE TREATY: A NECESSARY COMPLEMENT TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT

We acknowledge and celebrate the Paris Agreement as an essential framework for global climate action, while simultaneously recognizing its inherent limitations. Although it sets the temperature target at 2°C, or better, 1.5°C, which requires the rapid phasing out of fossil fuels, the agreement does not explicitly name fossil fuels as the core problem or restrict their production.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its 2025 advisory opinion, underscored that States have obligations to prevent significant harm to the climate system and that inadequate action on greenhouse-gas emissions—including in relation to fossil-fuel production and subsidies—may entail international responsibility.⁵ Nevertheless, current government plans project that production of fossil fuels compatible with the 1.5°C limit will be more than double by 2030.

We need a clear plan. We believe that the Fossil Fuel Treaty (FFT)⁶ can be the specific tool that complements the Paris Agreement, addressing the root of the problem through three fundamental pillars that we fully support:

1. **Non-proliferation and phase-out:** Immediately cease all new exploration and production of coal, oil, and gas. Authorizing new fossil fuel infrastructure is unethical and locks us into outdated practices. A global, legally binding framework is needed to stop new projects and to manage the decline and phase-out of existing production.
2. **Equitable phase-out:** Equitably phase out current production based on each nation's historical responsibility and capacity. This must prioritize the common good and protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations.
3. **Global just transition:** Ensure a fair and inclusive shift to renewable energy, leaving no worker, community, or country behind. This requires supporting economic diversification, the large-scale deployment of renewable energy, and re-skilling and employment opportunities, as well as social protection for men and women in the new economy, and the inclusion of impacted men and women in transition planning.

5 International Court of Justice. (2025). Obligations of States in respect of climate change: Advisory opinion of 23 July 2025 (General List No. 187). <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/187/187-20250723-adv-01-00-en.pdf>

6 See [/fossilfuel treaty.org/](https://fossilfuel treaty.org/)

To ensure accountability, it is necessary to create an open-source Global Fossil Fuel Registry as a fundamental tool for a just and equitable transition, enabling the monitoring of production and reserves so that all members of the energy ecosystem are held accountable.

A significant reduction in energy consumption by the wealthiest nations is essential, as they must assume their historical responsibility through concrete actions. This must be accompanied by deep reflection: for what and for whom is energy available, and what are the costs? Caring for our common home is not just a technical matter of replacing the energy matrix with renewables, but also the recognition of the limits to consumption accompanied by a fair distribution of the earth's goods.

We live in a time that urgently demands a Fossil Fuel Treaty. The return to policies of “energy dominance,” that is, the aggressive expansion of oil and gas, environmental deregulation, and the use of force to secure resources, continues to fuel conflicts and forms of petro-imperialism. When energy security takes precedence over international law, the sovereignty of peoples, and commitments to creation, cooperation between nations is weakened, and a just transition becomes more difficult. Moving beyond fossil fuels is not only an ecological imperative: it is a condition for peace, fraternity, justice, and the protection of those who suffer most.

We also urge our governments to take part in the upcoming First International fossil fuel phase-out conference, organized by Colombia and the Netherlands this year. This participation should aim to identify legal and socio-economic pathways for phasing out fossil fuels and to strongly advocate the conference's outcomes to governments, the fossil fuel industry, and other key actors at the national and regional levels, in partnership with strategic collaborators.

II. PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST TRANSITION WITHOUT FALSE SOLUTIONS

Our faith requires us to abandon the “throwaway culture” and the “technocratic paradigm” that seeks only profit. A truly just energy transition, illuminated by the Social Doctrine of the Church, must be guided by the following values:

- Happy sobriety and a dignified life: We advocate for a cultural shift toward “happy sobriety,” in which “less is more” (LS 215), and “good living,” reducing voracious consumption in rich nations to allow all inhabitants of the planet to have access to clean energy and a dignified life. Energy must be a right, not a commodity, to guarantee a dignified life in this century. We must combat energy poverty, which keeps more than 650 million people in the dark (without electricity), especially on the African continent.⁷
- Rejection of neo-extractivism and “false solutions”: We oppose “green capitalism” and the “green marketing” that perpetuate exploitation. The transition cannot be based on creating new “sacrifice zones” for the extraction of critical minerals in the Global South, nor on the financialization of nature through carbon markets that do not reduce real emissions.
- Equity and differentiated responsibility: Rich countries, whose wealth has been built upon the exploitation of fossil fuels, bear an ecological debt to the Global South. Therefore, they must assume a leadership role in the transition away from fossil fuels. This transition requires rich nations to provide the necessary financial assistance and technology transfer to enable developing countries to adopt clean energy pathways without compromising their development. Furthermore, alternative plans and compensation funds must be established to support countries that currently rely on fossil fuels as they phase out their use.
- Democracy, participation, and the defense of rights: The just transition to clean energy requires strong, participatory processes. There will be no climate justice without transparent institutions, states that care for the common good, and decisions that give affected communities a voice. We must listen to and protect indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, traditional communities, and the most impoverished people in particular. When rights are curtailed, environmental protection is weakened, and the defense of territory is criminalized; inequality grows, and a model that puts profit before human dignity is imposed. A truly just transition requires strengthening democracy, guaranteeing fundamental human rights, and ensuring that no one is left out of the process of change.

7 Data provided by the [World Bank](https://news.un.org/es/story/2025/06/1539826). Cf. <https://news.un.org/es/story/2025/06/1539826>

III. FINANCIAL JUSTICE: DEBT AND REPARATIONS

The climate crisis and debt are two sides of the same coin, threatening the future of poor countries. We denounce the immoral financial system that forces nations of the South to pay more in debt service than they receive in climate finance.

In the spirit of the preamble to COP 30's Global Mutirão, we demand:

- That the interest and principal amounts of the Global South's debt be converted into concrete investments for a just energy transition, with clear and verifiable plans. Creditor states and multilateral organizations cannot demand payments that compromise fundamental rights and social protection. When debt servicing prevents the guarantee of a dignified life, it becomes ethically unsustainable. Transforming debt into climate action is a requirement of justice and global co-responsibility.
- That the interest and principal amounts of the Global South's debt be converted into specific, multi-year financing for a just energy transition, with simplified procedures and direct access mechanisms. These resources should prioritize the groups most vulnerable to climate impact: women, young people, impoverished urban and rural populations, indigenous peoples, and migrants, ensuring that debt conversion translates into social protection, territorial resilience, and comprehensive human development.

IV. CALL TO GOVERNMENTS AND WORLD LEADERS

Ahead of the first conference on the FFT and leading up to COP 31 in Antalya, Turkey, we urge world leaders to:

1. Join the bloc of nations pushing for the Fossil Fuel Treaty.
2. Follow the example of countries such as Vanuatu and Colombia, recognizing that international cooperation is the only path to an orderly transition.
3. Integrate the end of fossil fuels into NDCs: The next Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must include explicit targets, timelines, and pathways for phasing out fossil fuel production, aligned with science and equity.

4. Protect defenders of the Earth: Guarantee the safety and binding participation of men and women from indigenous and local communities in climate- and related decision-making, recognizing their sovereignty over their ancestral territories.

CONCLUSION: HOPE AND ACTION

As a pilgrim Church in the world, aware of our historical and moral responsibility, we reaffirm that the defense of life and human dignity requires us to act decisively in the face of the socio-environmental crisis. We cannot be indifferent when economic and financial models put human life at risk and transgress the planet's limits.

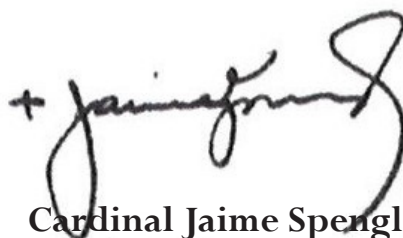
We commit ourselves to promoting a just energy transition, to reviewing our own practices, including divestment from fossil fuels, and to accompanying communities that sustain resistance and resilience in their territories with hope.

We add our voices to Pope Leo XIV's urgent call to be builders of "an unarmed and disarming peace" in the world⁸. Many of today's wars are motivated by control over sources and material goods for energy production. This production is geared toward the infinite development of the industry of war and death. An energy transition is not enough; a profound socioeconomic and cultural transformation is urgently needed to promote new lifestyles and modes of production that lead us to good living and living well.

We believe that "things can change" (LS, 13). We are ready to listen to "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS 49). We invite all people of goodwill to join a historic coalition between North and South to protect our common home. Time is short, but hope mobilizes us. A world free of fossil fuels, just and at peace, is possible and necessary.

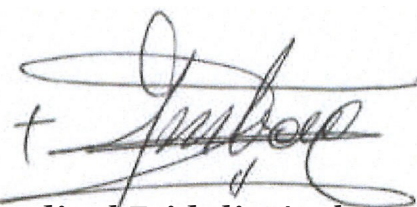
8 Leo XIV. (2025, 8 December). *Message of the Holy Father for the 59th World Day of Peace 2026: "Peace be with you all: Towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace"*. The Holy See. <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/peace/documents/20251208-messaggio-pace.html>

Global South Signatories

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Cardinal Jaime Spengler

President of the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council (CELAM).

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Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo

President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM).

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Cardinal Felipe Neri

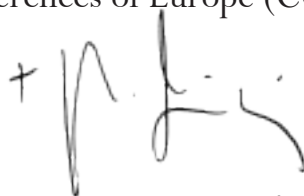
President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC).

Accompanying Signatories

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Cardinal Ladislav Nemet

Vice-President of the Council of Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE).

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Msgr. Ryan Pagante Jiménez

Vice-President of the Federation of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO).

