



Contributions to COP26

Let us Build a Planetary Community that
Cares for All Life on Earth:

Ecclesial Networks Alliance for
Integral Ecology (ENA)



Introduction

There is an urgent need to develop a creative dialogical space in an adequate environment in order to respond to the appeals made in *Laudato Si'* and to enact the structural transformations it put forward. The Amazon Synod, and the concrete experience of REPAM (Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network), together with the evolving processes in other territories and biomes including the Congo Basin (REBAC), the Asia and Oceania region (RAOEN – River above the Ocean Ecclesial Network), Mesoamerica (REMAM), the Gran Chaco and the Guaraní Aquifer territory, as well as those in Europe (ELSiA and CIDSE) and North-America (Canada and the US), with the support of the *Laudato Si'* Research Instituto (LSRI) and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, offer an opportunity to join hopes and strengths to accompany some of the key territorial processes which serve the reforms led by Pope Francis to respond to the cries of the world's poor and of our common home.

To respond to this mission, a platform (under construction) called the Ecclesial Networks Alliance for Integral Ecology has been created, which seeks to integrate the different territorial ecclesial networks to generate common reflections and actions, and to strengthen the particular work of each of the networks that comprise it. In this sense, we present a simple, but significant contribution, in which we offer the concrete voices of the representatives of communities, peoples or ecclesial organizations in the diverse biomes and territories of the planet, seeking to provide with testimonies as a contribution to the urgent reflections and decisions that will take place at the next COP26. May these voices help to present concrete faces which might help all leaders to understand what's at stake in this summit.

A call from the Ecclesial Networks' Alliance for Integral Ecology towards COP26

In November this year, the upcoming 26th global climate summit called 'Conference of Parties 26' (COP 26) will be held in Glasgow, United Kingdom. It is in this space where up to 190 world leaders will meet and discuss policies that could give an answer to our current global climate change crisis. In light of this critical context, the Ecclesial Networks Alliance for Integral Ecology –representing Church structures and communities together with community and territory representatives from diverse regions of our world have decided to come together to voice our concerns regarding the climate emergency our world is suffering.

"[I expect the COP26 summit to] carry out structural and constitutional reforms to grant autonomy and self-determination, strengthen dialogue mechanisms so that no governmental or private action is unilateral, but rather with the communities of native peoples; eliminate the extractive economy (open pit mining, unconventional oil exploitation) from indigenous territories."

Alvaro Salgado, México (Mesoamerican region – REMAM)

We are facing the greatest planetary crisis that our world has ever seen. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on Climate Change published in August this year confirmed it. Sweeping scientific facts have established the unequivocal man-made nature of the climate change crisis: our world is burning, melting, flooding, suffering extreme droughts and impacts across multiple domains of society. Humanity's responsibility for climate



change on our planet is now a fact. The system that sustains our way of life on Earth is making our planet ill. If we do not radically change the policies and practices responsible for our climate change crisis but also for our world's most daunting injustices, then our planet has no possible future. Governments and corporations need to deeply listen to people and the planet.

"There is no planet B, we have no alternative. We have to act now. For me, thinking about a fairer and more equitable transition means that all communities, more than anything, the most disadvantaged, have to participate in decision-making, the peasants, women and indigenous peoples, who are the ones who are suffering firsthand the environmental consequences."

Yanina Justet, Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina (Guaraní Aquifer and Gran Chaco)

- We, as communities and Church structures in territories from all over the world gathered as part of the Ecclesial Networks Alliance for Integral Ecology, hold realistic hope for change, in communion with the Social Teachings of the Church, and with Pope Francis's appeal for an urgent socio-ecological conversion.

"As church communities and organisations that accompany indigenous peoples, climate change impacts us deep in our hearts. These two cries, the cries of Mother Earth coming from the destruction of the territories, the lands, the forests, the death of the bees, the animals of the mountain, the oil, the lithium, the mining, the contaminated waters they all hit hard on everyone."

Fr. Francisco Nazar, Argentina (Guarani Aquifer and Gran Chaco)

- We believe COP26 gives an opportunity like no other to shift direction and transition to a new social, economic and cultural system that stops our unjust ways and structures toward people and nature.

- We see it everyday in the plight of our communities and territories at the receiving end of climate and social injustices. Humanity and every thread of life in our planet are all interconnected and suffering deep existential threats. Social and ecological tsunamis of injustice are rocking our planet and our communities.

To move away from the current exploitative relationship with the Earth to a relationship of reconciliation, renewal and regeneration, we expect: recognition that Indigenous Peoples understand the laws of nature, that their worldviews are important for understanding reciprocity with the land, that all things are connected, and that all we do affects the next seven generations. That Indigenous peoples be fully consulted about using, protecting and rejuvenating all lands and waters, and that Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and deep connection to the land be part of the way forward.

Donna Naughton, USA (North American region)

- We suffer the violent impacts of climate change extremes to the skyrocketing spirals of economic inequality.

"[In view of our church, we wish] that those who really lead, can make decisions with small but forceful actions aligned with the different prophetic dimensions, where not



only human life is fully taken into account, but also animal, plant, mineral life, the very life of mother earth [who is mistreated] so many times and no one confesses to killing." Gricelda De la Cruz Luciano, Tabasco, México (Mesoamerica region - REMAM)

- We suffer the suffocating cries of the poor and the vulnerable fighting to survive hunger and social exclusion, and now also struggling to breathe as the Covid-19 pandemic rampages through our world.

- We suffer the extinguishing cries of all our ecosystems and living creatures great and small rapidly disappearing from our forests, our oceans, our rivers.

"The territory for us is life (...) We live thanks to the water, the wind, the fire, the mountains. Everything that belongs to the territory we use for the good of all, because if someone gets sick we look for plants, medicines, weeds For the fire we look for firewood, dry sticks. The territory is always respected: mutual respect, how we respect it, he also respects us (...) Only we know spiritually how much we need the territory, as he needs us (...) that's why we don't want them to destroy our mountains, water, soil, we do not want our animals or people to disappear". Indigenous leader, Perú (Amazon and Inter-Andean region)

- We suffer the ongoing pollution of our land, water, and air from plastic, fossil fuels and hyper consumerist debris.

- We suffer the ongoing deification of markets, profits, and greed, in detriment of social and ecological justice. In sum, we are all now suffer-

ing the consequences of a systemic illness that is not natural nor normal. Our dominant 'way of life', an expression of a "throwaway culture", is killing life on our planet.

Let COP26 Build a New Communion between People and the Planet

In light of this systemic crisis, as Ecclesial Networks Alliance for Integral Ecology, together with communities territorially present in different biomes of the world:

- We call on our world leaders to wake up and face this challenge with a spirit of renewal. It is not enough to use 'business as usual' approaches in this climate emergency. We must hold government and corporate powers accountable for the massive role they play in generating the tons of CO2 that have made this crisis untenable.

"Big companies only look at what they can take from us; they don't think about accompanying us in sustaining the living world where we are co-dependent. They have a very narrow view of life that disregards the welfare of the next generation.(...) It is hard to talk of reconciliation over the past wrongs when we see our communities being manipulated and divided by outside interests. We need to strengthen our solidarity as community so that we will not be completely run-over by corporate giants and traders. The security of our land, natural resources, food and water are at stake."

Jason Menaling of Pulangiyen culture, Philippines (Asia and Oceania region)



- We call on our world leaders to include the diverse global voices of those considered marginal communities around the world, who in most cases are the true guardians of the ecosystems, including the Indigenous, peasant communities, environmental and human rights defenders and the socially excluded, the poor, into the decision making spaces shaping the policies within and beyond COP26. We must all deeply listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of this Earth to act and respond radically to a planetary crisis rooted in social injustice.

"To move towards a "just transition" for our planet simply means to listen to her. Uncimakha, grandmother earth, gives so much for us to be here, yet we continue to have blatant disrespect for her sacrifice. There should not be a question on whether we are going to save the planet, the question is when are we going to start before it's too late. Therefore, I expect this summit to just listen. We spend so much of our time arguing and disagreeing with one another, but right now you just need to listen to the people who are trying to save the world. (..) We have knowledge about this world and we want to be trusted. What I want from the summit is their ability to trust the indigenous societies around the world. All we want is for our planet to be safe and to use our unique perspectives to begin healing her."

Paisley Sierra, Oglala Lakota culture, USA (North America region)

- We call for ambitious and urgent actions, which include a true and significant participation of the peoples in the territories, able to tackle the scale of the emergency as indicated by science. It is not enough to claim and promise net zero targets and policies that keep sliding towards 2050 and beyond with simply tech-

nological fixes. Clear and precise 2030 targets are essential to ensure that the upcoming decade could bring about the paradigm shift we all need.

- We call for the construction of a new culture based on solidarity, justice and nature based solutions, inspired by the testimonies of many communities, leaders, church representatives and others, who are working intensively to change the structures for the common good. A change in the economic model is needed for a balanced oikos sustaining ecological systems.

"There is an old saying that if you do not change directions, you are likely to end up where you are heading. Generations of exploiting the earth have led us to a place where the lives of future generations are in jeopardy. A primary responsibility that the Creator has given us is to be good stewards of our common home. Sometimes to move forward we need to look back and draw on deeply founded wisdom. Indigenous Peoples the world over carry such deep wisdom about how to live well on the land which is our home. Now is the time to prioritize listening to those voices of those who can help us find a good way forward".

Bishop Donald Bolen, Canada (North America region)

- We call for adequate climate finance solutions that tackle the key causal roots of our climate crisis.

"A just transition is fair compensation for the efforts made to protect forests; fair and transparent access to minerals useful for the energy transition; peace and sincere support



for the efforts of countries in their aspirations for democracy and good governance, without torpedoing their electoral processes access to energy, development and the fight against poverty, which is dangerous for forests, biodiversity and water. It is also the accountability of multinationals that devastate forests, pollute water, grab land. The well-being of communities living in the forest and dependent on forest activities; the respect of the commitments made by the countries to fight against climate change; access to clean energy to reduce pressure on the forest; responsible access to the minerals used for the energy transition; the development of communities affected by mining projects."

Ecclesial Communities from the Congo Basin in Africa (REBAC)

- We highlight the need to create climate change policies inspired by clear common but differentiated responsibility, where there is a serious attention to the most vulnerable and excluded as well.

"A just transition for myself, my children and friends boils down to one thing; Access to land, to live on, to live from and to live with. We need drastic changes to Planning Laws so that those who want to are supported and encouraged to live in a just, ethical, and simple way that respects all life. It also needs to be affordable. We need more laws like Wales' "One Planet Policy" that does exactly that! Without a large inheritance or taking on crippling debt this is impossible for many who want to".

Ciaran Foulds, Belgium (European region)

Climate change solutions start with us. Therefore, these solutions must reflect our common

fraternal bonds with all of humanity, especially with those most vulnerable, and with nature, considered by many as a "true" life-giving mother. We must address policies that embrace social justice, solidarity and nature inspired solutions, and for that we must listen to the communities, to the people living in the territories as the true guardians and original owners of many of these biomes. The solutions to this crisis are not just about reducing tons of CO2, but start with a collective commitment to radically shift our lifestyles and stop all activities harming the environment and those that defend it. The solution must include recognition and support for Culture-based Solutions (CbS) and pay for ecological services.

"I live a simple, sustainable, island lifestyle. Working in the garden, fishing, and diving are the usual activities that we do to earn a living. Nowadays, due to the changing weather patterns, climate change, lack of proper communication and information from rightful authorities, especially in such times as the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, illegal harvesting of marine resources and by-catching, have made life seem tough and challenging for us in terms of relocating to higher grounds, reduced quality and quantity of food crops, etc. My dream for my community and country as a whole is to have leaders who will love and care for our environment and who will instill in the younger generation such discipline."

September Kelokelo, Papua New Guinea (Asia-Oceania region)

Climate change means shifting hearts and minds (a true metanoia in faith based terms), policies and practices towards a 'system change' mentality. COP26 must take the first



radical steps to build a new inclusive and socially just planetary contract beyond material 'for-profit' goals.

- Let us wake up to new types of actions that focus on integrating the social with the ecological needs of all our marginalised communities.

"This just transition must involve all people, especially the numbers favored by the type of society and the type of economy that we develop in it. Thus, this just transition must listen to the clamor of the planet and the clamor of the poorest and must promote in its actions the social inclusion of those poorest around the planet."

Johana Bellavita, Costa Rica (Mesoamerica region -REMAM)

- Let us build a new culture inspired by an integral ecology embracing the ethical, moral and spiritual compass of love and justice with people and nature in action to care for all life on our planet. We believe we can and the moment is now.

"Indigenous peoples and their relationship with Mother Earth teach us to all society, to the whole world, to take care of our common home. Regretfully, they are those who suffer the most from the consequences of the climate crisis and those who contribute least to this climate crisis, because it is not the people who generate the waste, it is not the people who cause deforestation or extractive activities. Therefore, it is with hope that we feel and firmly believe that targeting the sustainable model of life of indigenous peoples would help us learn to care for our mother earth."

Sister Rosita Silasmed, Formosa, Argentina (Guaraní Aquifer and Gran Chaco region)

For more information write to:
mlopez@caritasecuador.org



Agradecemos al CELAM por la animación de este proceso.