

Statement from Colombo: Agreeing To Sustain Life: Our Ecological Conversion Colombo, Sri Lanka - January 2016

Our Earth is changing rapidly due to human interventions. The climate is becoming unstable due to the release of fossil carbon. We humans are disturbing the atmosphere and polluting the world. Life is unraveling due to us. We are disturbing and threatening all lives on Earth, now and for generations to come.

We have violated the right to life of billions of life-forms on Earth. Science calls this depletion of bio-diversity and environmental degradation: the Sixth Mass Extinction. This is now what we want. We must act now to protect future generations and our mother Earth.

Scientists have alerted us to the grave risks and threat to our species and many other species. With all this science our global leaders have failed to act wisely and in time to protect the planet. Instead of focusing on saving life, our world leaders argue about economics, profits, and political dominance – they set their short-term agendas ahead of the well-being of creation and all humanity.

Without a healthy environment, there is no economy, no wealth and no life. It is time for what Pope Francis has called our Ecological Conversion. It is time to set our priorities in order, to put life and well-being ahead of politics and growth-based economic doctrines.

We who have gathered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 22 January 2016, representing many different faiths from 20 countries declare that:

- Recognizing the need for a paradigm shift from destructive development to sustainable development was agreed at the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals summit;
- Observing that world leaders agreed in Paris at UNFCCC COP21 in December 2015, to avoid emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and to keep global warming far below 2 degrees against pre-industrial levels;
- Highlighting the science recommendations of 100% shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy well before 2050 by all countries;
- Insisting on toxin-free agriculture and elimination of persistent pollutants worldwide;
- Noting that we are wasting time and money without achieving a binding decision or sufficient actions to address the causes of this crisis;

- Envisioning sustainable systems that will be universally accepted, protecting life, agro-biodiversity, diverse ecosystems, as well as human dignity and well-being;
- Understanding the need to change the way we govern the planet, to grow a culture of solidarity, and to transform selfish negotiations into generous cooperation within a new global social contract;
- Stressing the need for a set of universal common values to which human beings as one family can subscribe within our great culture diversity;
- Noting that all spiritual traditions hold that greed and accumulation are unjust and unwholesome; and that happiness arises through wholesome generous co-existence, in accordance to our scriptures and collective wisdom.

We call on all world leaders, faith leaders and all peoples of this planet:

- To unite for our common good, to collectively embrace a new paradigm where economics and politics serve life and sustainability; where our differences enrich us to live as one human family, mindful of what is needed now and those generations yet to be born.
- To abandon growth-based economics; to commit to the Great Turning towards sustainability, total elimination of fossil fuels, healthy and toxin-free agriculture, moral and physical wellness, and a life-centered approach to sustainability.

May we be rigorous in our efforts, respecting all life-forms and embrace the opportunity of this Ecological Conversion. Let us be guardians and champions of these changes; let us have faith in our common destiny.