

## **Call from the Churches to Governments gathered in the Pre COP 26 Milan, 30 September - 2 October**

Milan in September hosts the pre-conference of the parties in the framework of the UN Convention on Climate Change (pre-COP 26), 18 years after the COP 9 which took place in Milan in 2003.

A city marked by an unsustainable development model, Milan is in the Po Valley, one of the most polluted areas in Europe where human, animal, environmental and climatic health is suffering and continues to be considered expendable.

Christian Churches and the organizations belonging to them are among the stakeholders who intend to make their voices heard on this occasion, as has been the case since the adoption of this Convention since 1992, locally and globally.

In the name of a hope that is not the fruit of easy human optimism, but originated from the revelation of a God who in Jesus Christ showed his infinite love for mankind and for our world, we want to try to have a consequent gaze on our faith. .

The Ecumenical Council of Churches (which in the 1970s helped develop the concept of sustainable communities) is part of a movement for climate justice that touches millions of people around the world.

The three European ecumenical assemblies of 1989 (Basel), 1997 (Graz) and 2007 (Sibiu) had a prophetic capacity and a strategic function in connecting peace and the safeguarding of creation to justice, providing a boost to the birth of the Network in 1998.

European Christian for the Environment (ECEN) and many national ecumenical initiatives starting from the common celebration of the time of creation between 1 September and 4 October of each year. In the Catholic sphere, the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (2015) can be considered linked to the conciliar path, from which an international movement inspired by it arose.

It is no longer time to chase the skeptics. Not only is climate change underway but the Covid19 pandemic has further highlighted the anthropogenic nature beyond doubt and action must be taken now.

The plans of national governments remain inadequate: the world is still heading towards a catastrophic rise in temperature above 3 ° C this century, well beyond the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

To avoid the damage of climate change and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, a real "conversion" must start today.

It is a time of climate justice, justice in social and economic relations and with all the other creatures whose interconnections are compromised by the extractive and deadly system of colonization of the Earth by the human species.

When creation is threatened, Churches and Christians are called to actively testify to the awareness of being part of the community of creation and therefore to act for a sustainable future in the perspective of the promise of salvation addressed to the whole of creation. For this reason, as Christians we are called to another gaze rooted to trust in God and in His plan of salvation for the entire creation.

When the crisis emerges, in fact, it is necessary to live in it by taking responsibility, making choices, making judgments for its positive resolution. The same Christian revelation transforms nature into creation, understood as the set of various creatures whose existence is interconnected. Churches in Europe are increasingly struggling to respond to the multifaceted impacts of ecological destruction and climate change.

The care of creation, in the form of numerous community projects that combine theological, spiritual and ethical aspects with practical activities, has in recent years become a visible part of their environmental awareness. As is a common voice addressed to those who bear the responsibility of governing politics and the economy.

That is why in the framework of the pre COP 26 institutional event we will be addressing the representatives of the nations gathered in Milan who will move to Glasgow in November where the Conference will be held.

Climate Justice for All  
Commission on globalisation and environment of the Federation of Protestant churches in Italy  
Council of Christian Churches in Milan  
Methodist Church in Italy (OPCEMI)

We ask them to commit to

- **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions** to align with the scientific data of the IPCC report means setting adequate, transparent and monitorable national targets;
- **Abandon complicity with economic lobbies with interests that harm life** on the planet;
- **Take courageously and without compromise the necessary measures** to prioritize the green budget included
  - direct support for zero-greenhouse gas emissions technologies and infrastructures,
  - the elimination of public subsidies to corporations that extract fossil fuels, incinerators, industrial agriculture and intensive farming,
  - the promotion of solutions compatible with natural balances, including an end to land consumption and reforestation.
- **Update the support mechanisms for the most vulnerable** by promoting sustainability that is also social;
- **Stop wars also for their heavy impact on the climate and on the destruction of natural resources** that support livelihoods and ecosystems.

It is now time to get out of the pessimist / optimistic binomial: each of us is "embarked" in the present time and is called to an effort of reflection and action to better understand what image of man he intends to build, aware that all creation is also the mirror of our conception of the human.

Between the nostalgia that regrets the mythical past and the expectation that awaits a mythical future, the word of God, his mercy and his esteem for humanity call us to responsibility.

No delay is acceptable.

Milan, September 2021

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