



In our reflection on the issues of climate and water, it is evident that we are extracting and using Earth and its common goods as if they are infinite. Pope Francis states in *Laudato Si'* that we are "faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." (#139) Addressing climate change is the greatest moral imperative of our time. Climate justice and social justice must be realized.

To halt extreme weather and mitigate the negative impact of climate change on the future sustainability of this planet and on the entire community of life, governments must acknowledge and address the root causes and systems underpinning climate change. Market-based remedies that promote false solutions to climate change, including the commodification of nature, must give way to sustainable and just solutions for both peoples and Earth. Overconsumption and production and the extractivist economy must cease.

We oppose: neoliberal capitalism, patriarchal structures that oppress women, racism, colonialism, unlimited extractivism in the service of an unsustainable form of production and consumption, anthropocentrism, increasing industrialization, and unsustainable development and agricultural methods.

These systemic failings and injustices have directly caused:

- An increase in market based consumption and production focused on the market instead of life: for example plastics
- The commercialization and privatization of water, poor water governance, water pollution and shut-offs which hinders access to fresh water
- Marginalized racial, indigenous and ethnic groups to be disproportionately impacted by toxic dumping, deforestation, landfills and polluting industries
- Extraction of common goods, such as oil and gas drilling, hydroelectric dams, transnational corporate agriculture, mineral and coal mining
- Poor health and failed livelihoods
- Drought and desertification
- Food deprivation and shortages
- Gender inequality
- Loss of, and damage to biodiversity
- Rising sea levels that are forcing communities in coastal areas and small island nations to plan for relocation
- An increase in carbon dioxide causing more extreme weather events, leaving wildlife, agriculture, water supplies, forests and ecosystems vulnerable

These grim realities violate the most basic human rights and dignity of the marginalized and land rights. They strip vulnerable communities of development opportunities for good living and escalate desertification, fresh water depletion, biodiversity loss, and extreme weather.

Members and partners of the Mercy World live and minister in forty countries working closely with those who are excluded and or rendered poor. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the deep level of systemic change needed to bring forth transformation in our communities. We urge world leaders and governments to place at the center and core of the climate negotiations the necessary and urgent global transformation that can safeguard the wellbeing and sustainability of the community of life.

The Mercy Global Action Task Force on Climate and Water stands for :

- The Rights of Earth and People
- The Protection of Earth for the sustenance of spiritual and cultural wellbeing of the communities
- An Economics centered on well-being and good-living
- Flourishing for all life
- Inclusivity
- Anti-Racism and non-violence
- Respect
- Equity
- Integral ecology recognizing that “Everything is interconnected” (*LS #240*)
- Diversity
- Community involvement and participation in decision-making processes
- The Rights of women and girls who have a strong and distinct physical and spiritual relationship with the environment and have traditionally been tasked with caring for it
- Opposition to the extraction and commodification of common goods.
- A paradigm shift. Affirming [CIDSE](#) in its call for “a different system as a whole. This requires new narratives, a different cultural approach – putting sufficiency at its heart – and of course, transforming our political and economic systems – away from the destructive growth imperative that lies at the heart of the current system.”

COP 26 presents an opportunity to move forward with an economic transformation. Governments have the opportunity to start a just transition and put in place a new economic system that serves the Earth community. To shape an environmentally resilient and just future, we must include the voices of those most vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an unique opportunity to use the economic revitalization effort to build environmental protections into the “new normal” that will emerge after the pandemic. All efforts to recover economically and socially after COVID-19 must include an intergenerational and “ambitious, measurable and inclusive framework because keeping nature rich, diverse and flourishing is part and parcel of our life’s support system.” ([Hope In A Time of Pandemic](#)) We can no longer afford to miss any opportunities to protect the health and stability of Earth.

As we approach COP 26 in November, Mercy Global Action continues to support and urge nations to significantly boost climate ambition in line with the Paris Agreement.

Climate actions undertaken by governments around the world must:

- Reject false solutions that displace real solutions to climate justice and agree on a robust, fair and cohesive set of implementation guidelines to solidify the Paris

agreement and a roadmap to finalize outstanding issues that contain solutions that are human rights-based and gender-just;

- Address the urgency and deliver on the ambition to answer to the 1.5°C target within the Paris Agreement and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, enhancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (climate plans for GreenHouse Gas emissions reductions) by 2021 in line with climate science;
- Actualize climate finance commitments, agree to robust accounting standards and concrete ways to enhance predictability of funds from the higher income to lower income countries. Recognize that the climate emergency is fuelling the accumulation of debt in lower income countries.(Mercy Global Action has signed onto No Climate Justice without Debt Justice)
- Incorporate local and indigenous knowledge, in particular the expertise of women and girls, taking into account their human rights, responsibilities, and ensuring conservation benefits are just and inclusive;
- Ensure that young people, particularly girls and young women, are meaningfully included in the development, review, implementation and monitoring of all climate policies;
- Encourage ecosystem-based approaches and systems to aid waste reduction, address loss and damage of biodiversity, sea level rise, and promote sustainable consumption and production;
- Support efforts, including finance, technology and capacity-building, in order to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change, at all levels, namely the community, national, regional and international levels;
- Place people over profit. We oppose misuse of resources that damage the environment, including large scale extraction, deforestation and exploitation of the land and its people. We support the work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights who work towards holding corporations accountable for their human rights abuses under international law.
- Recognize the human right to water and address unjust systems that limit access to, the protection of, and preservation of sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water and sanitation which enable people to maintain their dignity and well-being. Prevent the commodification and privatization of water, increase public financing for water and sanitation services and empower local communities to protect watersheds (SDG 6 and 12). We promote “Water and Sanitation”: A People's Guide to SDG 6 a rights-based approach to implementation” as a strong advocacy tool to achieve the Human Right to Water and Sanitation in our communities, nations, and world.

This COP must deliver concrete actions, not empty promises. The time is now. Leaders must maximize coming together in person at COP26, the first time in two years, to finalize the rulebook of the Paris Agreement, raise their collective ambition to reduce emissions, address loss and damage, and center those most affected in all decisions and discussions.

This is the call for all of us globally, to let go of any illusion that we as human beings are separate from the planet and to respond with moral integrity to the degradation of earth and displacement of persons, recognizing that we are one with the earth community. ([Angela Reed, Mercy Global Presence](#))

About the MGA Climate and Water Task Force

The MGA Task Force on Climate and Water consists of members of the Mercy World from Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Ireland, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Aotearoa New Zealand and the United States.

The MGA Task Force on Climate and Water came together to raise a voice about climate change and water ahead of COP 26 and provide direction and leadership to the Mercy World on justice issues related to the impact of climate change and water, and recommendations moving forward. We have been called together to evaluate: where are we, where do we want to go, and how do we get there?