

A healthy planet



For future generations

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NGO Committee on Sustainable Development VIENNA

Challenges of Climate Change

An NGO statement to the 2021 UN climate change conference, COP 26, in Glasgow

For many years the scientific community, the Member States of the United Nations, and civil society have discussed the impact on our planet of climate change and identified measures needed to protect the world in which we live.

To date, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have convened 25 conferences. They have signed and ratified decisions, protocols and agreements on the reduction of CO₂.

Measures and actions to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change need to be taken without delay. The undersigned NGOs admitted with Observer Status by the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC and joined by other NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations thus urge the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC to act promptly on the following challenges:

1) Mitigation

The scientific community worldwide should coordinate research and innovation so as to draw up procedures to reduce CO₂ emissions. Systems need to be developed that are sufficiently robust to operate under varying conditions, e.g., excessive drought or flooding, changes in flora and fauna due to rising temperatures, and the loss of biodiversity. The ultimate aim should be to halt global warming and achieve the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

2) Adaptation

Recent months have shown that the impact of climate change is palpable on every continent and in every region, and is driven by the physical environment, such as mountains, oceans, and permafrost. Therefore, local decisions are critical to effective adaptation to changing weather and climate conditions. The regional focus should be on planning, land use, settlements and infrastructure, as well as forestry and agriculture. The global rise in temperatures and the related changes in the spread of disease pose an inordinate challenge for public health systems. Moreover, it is evident that with regard to energy systems, limiting changes to electric vehicles alone will not suffice.

3) Participation and cooperation

Action plans for adaptation may result in significant changes to regional patterns of settlement and lifestyles and may have a disproportionate effect on marginalised populations including minorities, women and children. New formats for democratic participation are thus called for. They should be so designed as to inform all stakeholders and secure their participation in the decision-making processes. Only if the consistency of such measures is

upheld can aims be reached ensuring that the most marginalised groups do not bear the brunt of the climate crisis.

On the international level, UN cooperation in particular needs to be reliable and accountable. International treaties and conventions must be respected, reports must be verifiable, obligations implemented without delay, and enforcement transparent. Matters would be improved where an international panel set up empowered to monitor progress independently and make reluctant states confront their responsibilities.

4) Financial frameworks

The costs for all necessary measures and actions will be very high, yet far lower than the costs of damages incurred in the case of “business as usual”. Countries should provide sustainable, long-term financial plans, which may require modifying tax systems. An international fund - administered by the UN - should provide assistance to the developing countries.

The challenges posed by climate change are global and cannot be successfully met by countries or regions in isolation, and even less by competition between nations. Cooperation and transparency are critical and indispensable to solving climate change.

October 4, 2021

Submitted by NGOs in Observer Status with the Conference of Parties of UNFCCC:

1. Association pour le Développement Durable (ADD)
2. Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (GFDD)
3. Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation, Inc. USA
4. International Council of Women (ICW)
5. Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc.
6. Nurses Across the Borders (NAB)
7. UNANIMA International
8. Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
9. United Methodist Church—General Board of Church and Society (UMC-GBCS)
10. VIVAT International

Endorsed by NGOs in Consultative, Associated and Observer relations with the United Nations:

1. Abraham's Children Foundation
2. African Action on Aids (AAA)
3. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS)
4. Arab Society for Academic Freedoms(ASAF)
5. Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
6. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
7. Asociación Latinoamericana para Los Derechos Humanos (ALDHU)
8. Association of Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand
9. Awaz Centre for Development Services (AwazCDS-Pakistan)
10. Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI)
11. Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO)
12. Congregations of St. Joseph
13. Congressional Black Caucus Political Education and Leadership Institute (CBCI)
14. Dianova International

15. ECPAT-USA
16. Election Network in the Arab Region(ENAR)
17. GCS International
18. Global Action on Aging (GAN)
19. Graduate Women International (GWI)
20. Initiatives of Change
21. Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Loreto Generalate
22. International Alliance of Women (IAW)
23. International Council on Environmental Economics and Development (ICEED)
24. International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW)
25. International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)
26. International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (FIFCJ)
27. International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
28. International Inner Wheel (IIW)
29. International Presentation Association, The (IPA)
30. International Progress Organization (IPO)
31. Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)
32. League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS)
33. Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)
34. Pan Pacific South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA)
35. Pax Romana
36. Servas International
37. Sisters of Charity Federation
38. Society for International Development (SID)
39. Socialist International Women (SIW)
40. Soroptimist International (SI)
41. Temple of Understanding
42. Tiye International
43. Universal Peace Federation (UPF)
44. Verein zur Förderung der Völkerverständigung
45. Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI)
46. Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO)
47. Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
48. World Association for Psychological Rehabilitation (WAPR)
49. World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ)
50. WUZDA Ghana
51. Zonta International

The statement above was drafted and finalized by the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development in Vienna and was officially endorsed by the following NGO members with ECOSOC consultative status: Graduate Women International, Initiatives of Change, International Inner Wheel, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Pax Romana, Servas International, Soroptimist International, Society for International Development, Socialist International Women, Verein zur Förderung der Völkerverständigung, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Women's International Zionist Organisation, and World Union for Progressive Judaism.