



Statement by H.E. Archbishop James Patrick GREEN
Apostolic Nuncio, Head of Delegation

Before the plenary of the High-Level Segment of the
United Nations Climate Change Conference

Lima, 10 December 2014

Mr President,

At this very decisive moment in the history of climate negotiations we have to come to the point where we must overcome inaction. As Pope Francis said in his Message to our Conference, the issues we are debating “affects all humanity, especially the poor and future generations: [...] it is a serious ethical and moral responsibility [...] There is a clear, definite and urgent ethical imperative to act [...] We can only find adequate solutions if we act together”.

The longer we wait, the more it will cost; more victims will suffer from our inaction and the greatest weight will fall on the most vulnerable, the poorest peoples and future generations: what is at issue here is respect for their fundamental human rights.

Our earth is the object of our constant concern and requires our constant attention. We are not the masters of nature, but its stewards. We need to respect it, but “instead we are often guided by the pride of dominating, possessing, manipulating, exploiting; we do not ‘preserve’ the earth, [...] we do not consider it as a freely-given gift to look after” (*Pope Francis, General Audience, 5 June 2013*). “Respect for the environment, however, means more than not destroying it; it also means using it for good purposes” (*Pope Francis, Address to the European Parliament, 25 November 2014*).

The Holy See’s Delegation has repeatedly called for a clear and firm political will to agree on tangible and concrete action, and has urged the adoption of common binding measures and adequate budgets for effective and sustainable action on mitigation and adaptation, as well as on sharing technologies and know-how. The operational bases needed to facilitate this mutual responsibility are already available or within our reach.

The critical problem of global warming is inextricably bound to the search for authentic integral human development. We can achieve two interconnected objectives: combating poverty and easing the effects of climate change. As stewards of nature, we can learn a lot from the signs it is sending us. The worries and the concerns about our common home make us aware that we are part of one interdependent human family. The decisions and behavior of one member of this family have profound consequences for all others. There are no borders, no more political, social or geographical barriers behind which one can be

isolated. There is no room for the globalization of indifference, the economy of exclusion or the throwaway culture so often denounced by Pope Francis (*cf. His Eminence Card. Pietro Parolin to the UN Climate Summit, 23 September 2014*)

Pope Francis warns that “the effective fight against global warming is only possible through a responsible collective response, that overcomes particular interests and behaviors and develops itself free from political and economic pressures. A collective response that is also capable of contrasting attitudes of distrust and promote a culture of solidarity, encounter and dialogue; able to act responsibility to protect the planet and the human family”, ensuring that present and future generations have the possibility of living in a safe and worthy environment. This is the great challenge facing not only the Conference, but all human work.

Justice, respect and equity are at the basis of this culture.

If we remain inactive in addressing climate change, even before drafting a new agreement, we already violate equity, one of the core principles of the Convention. We have only one year left to the COP-21 in Paris, where the world is expecting an answer in the form of a new climate Treaty. We were unable to give that answer in 2009 when we failed to reach an agreement in Copenhagen.

The IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report, released last October, emphasizes once more that action is extremely urgent and highlights the risks of inaction. Let us work together for the common good rather than point at each other and pass responsibility to others. This requires the full, responsible and dedicated collaboration of all, according to their possibilities and circumstances.

Mr President,

Technical solutions are necessary, but not sufficient. We must also consider the central factor of education: education aimed at fostering a sense of responsibility in children and adults towards environmentally sound patterns of development, the stewardship of creation, and solidarity among people. The current lifestyle with its throwaway culture is unsustainable and should have no place in our lives. The Holy See is continuously making significant contributions in this regard. Worldwide, many Catholic educational institutions are engaged in promoting such education for environmental responsibility, which should be ever more deeply anchored in respect for “human ecology”. Moreover, Episcopal Conferences, dioceses, parishes and faith-based NGOs have been devoted to advocacy and management of ecological programs for a number of years.

The Holy See hopes that everyone will join in adopting an ambitious holistic approach to ensure the integral development of all persons, countries and creation itself.

Thank you, Mr President.



A Su Excelencia el Señor **MANUEL PULGAR VIDAL**
Ministro de Medio Ambiente de la República del Perú
y Presidente de la vigésima Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención Marco
de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático - Lima

Excelencia:

Los primeros 12 días del mes de diciembre de 2014, la ciudad de Lima y el pueblo del Perú tendrán el honor de acoger la vigésima Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el cambio climático, cuya agenda se propone verificar la marcha de la aplicación de ese instrumento jurídico, de contenido crucial en el presente momento histórico. Junto con mis saludos a Usted, Señor Presidente, y a todos los organizadores y participantes en dicha Conferencia, quiero enviarles mi cercanía y aliento, para que los trabajos de estos días se lleven a cabo con espíritu abierto y generoso. Lo que Ustedes van a debatir afecta a toda la humanidad, en particular a los más pobres y a las generaciones futuras. Más aún, se trata de una grave responsabilidad ética y moral.

No deja de ser significativo que la Conferencia se desarrolle en las costas adyacentes a la corriente marítima de Humboldt, que une en un abrazo simbólico los pueblos de América, Oceanía y Asia y que cumple un papel determinante en el clima de todo el planeta. Las consecuencias de los cambios ambientales, que ya se sienten de modo dramático en muchos estados, sobre todo los insulares del Pacífico, nos recuerdan la gravedad de la incuria y de la inacción. El tiempo para encontrar soluciones globales se está agotando. Solamente podremos hallar soluciones adecuadas si actuamos juntos y concordes. Existe, por tanto, un claro, definitivo e impostergable imperativo ético de actuar.

La lucha eficaz contra el calentamiento global será posible únicamente con una responsable respuesta colectiva, que supere intereses y comportamientos particulares y se desarrolle libre de presiones políticas y económicas. Una respuesta colectiva que sea también capaz de superar actitudes de desconfianza y promover una cultura de la solidaridad, del encuentro y el diálogo; capaz de mostrar la responsabilidad de proteger el planeta y la familia humana.

Deseo de corazón que en la Conferencia de Lima, así como en los encuentros sucesivos, que serán decisivos para las negociaciones sobre el clima, se dé un diálogo impregnado de esta cultura y de los valores que la sustentan: justicia, respeto y equidad.

Con este mensaje, Señor Presidente y señores participantes en la Conferencia, formulo mis mejores deseos para que sus reflexiones e iniciativas sean fructíferas y estén al servicio de todos los hombres. A la vez que rezo por sus deliberaciones, para que se vean colmadas de éxitos abundantes, invoco sobre Ustedes y sobre todos los participantes en este significativo encuentro la Bendición del Altísimo, que pido se extienda a todos los ciudadanos de los países que Ustedes representan.

Reciba, Señor Presidente, mi más atento y cordial saludo.

Vaticano, 27 de noviembre de 2014

Francisco