

5th. plenary



FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

a non-governmental organization at the United Nations

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FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - COP 4
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Madame Chair, members of the Assembly, and colleagues from the NGO community, the Franciscans International COP 4 delegation is grateful for this opportunity.

We recognize all creation as a manifestation and extension of God's gift and goodness. By tradition, we are peacemakers, recognizing the goodness and dignity of all peoples with fairness and equality, especially the marginalized.

Connecting to the theme of this Conference we affirm it is imperative we reduce greenhouse gases in respect to the integrity of creation. Last year alone it has been reported that the temperature rose ½ degree Celsius. In regards to recent weather events, China is left with 50 million homeless from flooding of the Yangtse River, and in Bangladesh 25 million are left homeless from flooding, while there are 10,500 dead in Central America and 4,000 dead in the Dominican Republic from recent hurricanes, and the list continues.

Compared to other world problems, global warming is not nearly as complex. There is consensus that the problem exists, and agreement on the cause and solution. We also have the knowledge and technology to make significant greenhouse gas reductions at all levels of society. Leadership and commitment are urgent. However, in placing economic and political ambition ahead of ethical and spiritual principals, a feeling of distrust has emerged. It is indeed regrettable. The sharing of ideas is beneficial, but not for the sake of diverting accountability and responsibility. Flexible mechanisms, especially the trading of emission limits, voluntary reductions, and joint implementation should not be allowed to be used as excuses for doing as little as possible. We regard these mechanisms as diversionary, and without meaningful and just equity. In addition, we find it discriminatory to suggest that impoverished countries conform to measures of "adaptation," while rich nations seek non-committal concessional mechanisms. There is far too much nationalism and self interest being expressed without meaningful concern for others. It is also alarming that the nuclear industry, a dangerous alternative, tries to identify itself as saviour of the day. It is equally disappointing that the fossil fuel industry remains in denial, while oil rich nations seek compensation for future pollution the Protocol hopes to prevent.

We wish to make the following proposals.

- A.) To recognize the positive and immediate importance of implementing the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gases as a joint venture for the purpose of supporting world peace.
- B.) To devote special and preferential concern to ecological systems, and those countries immediately impacted by climate change, especially the Alliance of Small Island States, and

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other low lying regions. Most of us have the choice to either commit or not to commit, but for the AOSIS, that choice means to be or not to be. We must join to ensure the survival of the weakest.

- C.) To propose that the World Bank and other international financial institutions credit the debt of impoverished countries equal to their expenditure for developing and introducing clean renewable energy technologies.
- D.) To initiate and promote financial incentives to encourage the development and expansion of renewable technologies, and consider the levying of carbon taxes to subsidize conservation programs. In addition we propose these programs call attention to the connection between consumerism and global warming, utilizing computer networks in schools
- E.) To establish caps or goals for the purpose of defining national and local guidelines and priorities for meeting those objectives. Plus, establish international, national, and local award programs to encourage incentives to meet those goals.
- F.) To phase out and prohibit the transfer of 'dirty' technologies.
- G.) To recognize nuclear power as an experiment of the past, whose time has come and gone.
- H.) To continue seeking solutions for the inclusion of bunker fuels under the Protocol so to allow for every opportunity for responsible parties.
- I.) To establish "carbon sinks" which emphasize total ecological restoration, and not reforestation programs that conform to commercial tree farming concepts, but concentrating on mixed native species, with additional consideration to all creatures, animate and inanimate, as inherent inhabitants of the interdependent earth community.

In addition we recognize the term, "developing countries," as an elitism of the north. We call upon and encourage all countries to recognize the value, diversity, and attributes of their own local cultures and economies, and not be so eager to adopt to ways of the north. As earth based cultures continue to be converted into market based cultures, resultant consumerism will only compound global warming, in addition to other environmental, economic, and social problems. It is also imperative that economists relinquish their view of the air as a 'free good' to pollute, and not a 'public good' to protect.

We are concerned that some here may not yet be convinced of the urgency global warming imposes. If not convinced ourselves we will not convince others. To suggest the citizenry of our respective countries take action, we must first express and exemplify care and commitment ourselves.

Eight hundred and fifty years ago a rich young businessman, son of a cloth merchant in Italy, noticed that as the world converted from a system of bartering to one of capitalism, a few like himself were becoming richer causing the majority to become impoverished. It was then that Francis of Assisi radically changed his lifestyle. He started a movement to live simply using only what he needed, sharing everything else with others, and became noted for it.

Today, St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, asks all his followers to revere all creation and preach by example. In response, Franciscans International is proposing that the entire Franciscan family around the world, including all its members, affiliates, and institutions, including 800,000 Secular Franciscan family homes, worldwide, commit to a 20 percent reduction of emissions. We propose energy audits; converting to energy efficient lighting and appliances; fans in place of air conditioners when possible; the adoption of simple lifestyle changes, to include the use manual tools and appliances; the use of carpooling, bicycles, and public transportation; to increase recycling efforts, and encourage the purchase and use of recycled products; tree plantings; and conservation awareness programs. This is our sincere commitment to you, and we ask you, Delegates of COP 4, for your sincere commitment, as well. Thank you