



General Board

Pension and Health Benefits



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Women
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A Letter from General Agencies of The United Methodist Church to COP21

As you gather in Paris for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we write on behalf of our agencies in support of an ambitious agreement to address the climate crisis. The ministries of the agencies we serve are grounded in the Gospel and the social teachings of The United Methodist Church that call us to care for one another and for the whole of creation which sustains all life.

God's Creation in Crisis

Today, God's creation is in crisis as the impacts of climate change become increasingly apparent. Events that previously may have been considered a patchwork of environmental anomalies affecting disconnected, specific populations are now recognized as an interrelated system threatening our very existence. The earth groans in travail as we acknowledge a difficult truth and remember the words of our United Methodist bishops in their 2009 pastoral letter, *God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action*, "We cannot help the world until we change our way of being in it."

These words of our United Methodist bishops echo the wisdom contained in Scripture, "The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it," (Psalm 24:1) and the UMC's Social Principles, "All creation is the Lord's and we are responsible for the ways we use and abuse it." (¶160) As a church we witness the interrelationships of climate change, poverty, disease and violence and know that to effectively mitigate these threats, they must be simultaneously addressed.

An International Agreement

Our experience in ministry around the world confirms what science tells us about our changing Earth: our brothers and sisters are being impacted by extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and the effects of climate-related disease and hunger. As you gather in Paris for the 21st Conference of the Parties, we urge you to support a binding international agreement with ambition that matches the urgency of the climate crisis. We believe an agreement that reflects our shared principles of justice, stewardship and sustainability must:

- Establish a long-term goal to limit warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius providing a clear and certain path that supports a global transition to clean energy sources and the development of low-carbon technologies.
- Require each party to submit national mitigation targets that reflect both historic responsibility and current development needs. Periodic reviews are also necessary to ensure the collective ambition remains transparent and in line with scientific recommendations.
- Provide robust financial support to drive climate action, encourage climate-resilient development, and assist less developed nations as they struggle to adapt to a changing climate and confront losses and damages caused by climate change.

While we recognize the challenge of forging consensus for such an ambitious, binding agreement, we believe a transparent process that prioritizes the voices of impacted communities and allows participation by civil society will build the trust needed for a successful outcome.

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Commitment to Create Positive Change

Just as global leaders pursue policies that address the structural causes and impacts of climate change, United Methodists remain committed to modeling justice in our own lives and institutions. Each of our agencies, in keeping with our distinct missions and mandates, are working to address climate change through investment strategies, missions, education and advocacy—building a hope-filled future and resilient communities. We envision a healthy planet that can continue to sustain life for all of God’s children and we look forward to supporting an agreement in Paris that brings to the forefront the renewal of creation.

We hold you in our thoughts and prayers as you begin this important summit.

(signature)

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