

Statement by Catholic leaders in G20 Countries on Consigning Fossil Fuels to History

“Investments in fossil fuels continue to rise, even though scientists tell us that fossil fuels should remain underground...We continue along old paths because we are trapped by our faulty accounting and by the corruption of vested interests. We still reckon as profit what threatens our very survival.”¹ (Pope Francis)

The voices from the communities we work with are ringing out. Climate change is a present reality that is affecting our brothers and sisters around the world, particularly those in poor and climate vulnerable communities who have contributed to this issue the least. We see increasingly severe and frequent droughts and floods, loss of crops, and destruction of land.

We cannot and must not be quiet in the face of such suffering and injustice.

The science is clear. The world needs to keep fossil fuels in the ground if we are to limit global warming to a below 1.5 degrees temperature rise by the end of 2030.

We therefore call on our governments to use the G20 meetings in October to consign fossil fuels to history by:

1. Stopping any new developments of coal, oil and gas within our own countries.
2. Immediately ending all funding of fossil fuels – including coal, oil and gas – abroad.
3. Massively scaling up investments in clean and safe forms of energy such as wind and solar power, that prioritise energy access for the poorest communities.
4. Making good on promises to provide climate finance to support communities already affected by the impacts of climate change.

Our moral duty is unquestionable. Advanced economies must act first to tackle climate change and must act quickly to protect current and future generations and our common home. We must face our historic responsibility and act with justice, standing in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in our own countries and around the world.

We need to act now. We do not have the luxury of time on our side.

Signed (Bishops and Heads of Religious Communities in G20 countries)

11th October 2021

¹ Climate Change and New Evidence from Science, Engineering, And Policy”, Meeting with Finance Ministers from Various Nations, 27 May 2019, Rome.

List of signatories

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