



## **UNANIMA International at COP28: Position Paper**

UNANIMA International is a Coalition of 25 Communities of Women Religious, serving in over 100 countries with 25,000 members. For over 20 years our focus has been on women, children, and girls – groups that are consistently most left behind. Our mission is to educate and influence policymakers at the global level on the areas of homelessness/displacement, migration, gender equality, and climate change. In our years as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) accredited by the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), we have closely followed the ramifications of climate change and the efforts of the international community to address them.

The climate crisis has only grown more acutely as emissions continue to rise at an alarming rate. There were many reminders this past year of the increasingly severe and irreversible consequences that will ensue if we allow the world to continue warming past 1.5C. As climate change becomes more apparent, it also becomes apparent that those most impacted by climate change are the ones least responsible for its perpetuation, creating new global injustices and exacerbating existing global inequalities. Climate change poses the greatest threat to already vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls who commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change. At COP27, UNANIMA International collaborated with a variety of stakeholders to address the gender inequalities exaggerated by the climate crisis and confront the needs of vulnerable communities in the transition to a post-coal, post-carbon future.

We at UNANIMA International are guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its pledge to “leave no one behind, especially those furthest left behind.” The prospects for achieving every one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are impacted by climate change. At the Fourth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (17th July 2023), Li Junhua, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, outlined the enormous challenges the world is facing. He noted that halfway to the deadline for the 2030 Agenda, only 12% of the SDG targets are on track. Speaking on behalf of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, he urged for a Rescue Plan for People and Planet, and called for “unprecedented ambition and action,” stating that “maximizing synergies between climate action and the SDGs has never been more critical.”

Today it is clear that despite the proliferation of environmental advocacy, policies, and agreements in recent decades, and the progress made at each COP over the years, the action that has been taken has been unsuccessful in mitigating against global environmental destruction and the inequities that are intertwined with and exacerbated by it.

We need dramatic actions for the good of our climate and humanity, and we need them now. The urgency of this moment makes COP28, being held this year in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, that much more important. COP28 is the world's chance to act decisively and confront our global reality in order to change the course of history, and there is no time to spare.

In solidarity, UNANIMA International advocates for lasting systemic change to achieve a more sustainable and equitable world. We believe the following recommendations are essential to reaching this goal.

### **The Global Stocktake**

The first Global Stocktake took place in 2022 at a technical level, and the GST Technical Synthesis Report released in September 2023 asserted that the world is off-track to meet its goals and curtail the climate crisis. The GST concludes at COP28, where policymakers will come together to decide on a political course of action and set new goals based on the evaluation.

We are not doing enough to implement the Paris Agreement agenda and avoid the worst impacts of climate change, and changing course requires transformative collaboration across the economy. Governments cannot do it alone, nor the private sector, nor civil society. We need an economic transformation to end nature loss by 2030, reach net zero emissions around 2050, and build resilience to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. All this must be done while developing sustainability and eradicating poverty.

The GST is not only an opportunity to assess the shortcomings in the world's mitigation efforts, but also the progress made. The GST serves as a valuable opportunity for the international community to glean insights and exchange best practices in climate mitigation, fostering collective learning and enhancing the effectiveness of global efforts to address the pressing challenges of climate change.

### ***Recommendations***

- Implement a rapid response plan to the Global Stocktake that initiates transformations across all sectors and contexts to advance climate justice and improve people's lives, especially for women, children and girls.
- Collaborate on initiatives related to finance, adaptation and resilience, and nature in a comprehensive and balanced way which leaves no one behind.
- Make progress and deliver on several existing finance commitments that developed economies have failed to thus far deliver, including the \$100billion in financing to developing economies that was pledged in 2020.

### **End the Era of Fossil Fuels**

A global initiative to phase out fossil fuels is gathering new momentum for COP28, underscoring the imperative to stop burning not just coal, but also oil and gas. We must bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 or earlier and chart a course at COP28 for an urgent and just transition to renewables, a more climate resilient world, and climate justice for all. We need systemic transformations across all sectors, driven by an urgent phase out from fossil fuel production and use within this decade.

## ***Recommendations***

- Stop any new developments of coal, oil, and gas within our own countries.
- End all funding of fossil fuels - including coal, oil, and gas - abroad.
- Scale up of investments in clean and safe forms of energy such as wind and solar power, prioritizing energy access for the poorest communities.
- Fast track the energy transition, slashing emissions before 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial levels.

## **Support Adaptation and Resilience Efforts**

The latest climate science from the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is clear: millions of people are already exposed to acute climate-fueled food and water insecurity, and progress in adapting to the impacts of climate change is uneven, fragmented, and insufficient to prevent human suffering and loss of life in the face of increasing compacts. Adaptation work is crucial to ensuring that communities survive and thrive in the face of cyclones, droughts and other consequences of the climate crisis. Adaptation efforts vary according to the extent of impacts in the communities. Efforts must be led by people on the ground, and backed by international finance, expertise and resources.

Part of the challenge in addressing these impacts has been a lack of financing for resilience, as available finance is roughly 10% of what is needed and is not reaching those on the front lines of climate change. An effective global goal on adaptation would help the world to measure its progress and put the issue on more equal footing with mitigation.

## ***Recommendations***

- Formalize an agreement that countries should set targets for each step of the adaptation policy cycle, from planning through implementation.
- Adopt a process for setting targets for issues such as food security, health and infrastructure and cross-sectoral issues.
- Erect buildings and infrastructure that are safe and solid and more sustainable.
- Replant forests and restore damaged ecosystems.
- Diversify crops so that they are better able to adapt to changing climates.

## **Transform Climate Finance**

After decades of advocating for dedicated funding to help vulnerable countries cope with the impacts of the climate crisis many of them did little to cause, developing economies and partners finally succeeded in making a unified push for progress on the issue. At COP27, countries gave themselves a year to establish this new Loss and Damage facility and to organize other avenues and channels of funding. While progress was made, this continues to be a contentious and unresolved issue as Member States disagree on the scale and the sources of funding, and some wealthy countries still refuse to acknowledge the costs incurred by developing countries.

We ask that old promises are actualized and the framework for a new deal on finance is set. Climate finance must be affordable, available, and accessible to developing countries. If their debt burden is not dealt with, these developing nations are left unable to invest in climate change mitigation or adaptation. Not only has the US\$100 billion a year from richer nations failed to materialize in full, it has also become clear that the most vulnerable countries are receiving little

of what is available. Meanwhile, developing nations continue to go further into debt, as they are forced to spend vast sums of money to deal with the impact of climate change, further hampering investment in emissions reduction and adaptation.

Finance needs to increase and be made accessible to those most vulnerable (women, children and girls) to the impacts of climate change, without exacerbating their debt load. Implementation needs to happen “on time and at scale” and be “specific, measurable and impactful.”

### ***Recommendations***

- Urge Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to provide for low- and middle-income countries with a 1% interest rate, a 10-year grace period, and a 20-year repayment for financing projects that boost resilience to climate change.
- Introduce credit-enhancement and credit-guarantee schemes to attract the debt instruments private sector involvement through co-financing and risk sharing and scale sustainability-linked sovereign.
- Suspend and reduce the debt burden for low- and middle-income countries. This would enable emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) to invest in biodiversity protection and climate action to adapt to extreme weather events such as drought and floods, including nature-based solutions.
- Form a facility to accelerate projects and programs that preserve nature and help EMDEs.
- Adopt science-based target-setting and disclosure frameworks, including carbon and nature accounting standards to assess, manage and disclose nature and climate-related impacts, risks and dependencies.

### **Center the Human and Social Dimension**

Climate change affects people in every country no matter their location or economic status, in a diverse number of ways. As we prioritize a transition to clean energy sources, we also must confront the needs of vulnerable communities and the impact of this transition in particular contexts. Climate change is called a “risk multiplier” because whatever background risks people are facing (i.e., housing insecurity, extreme poverty, gender inequity, etc.) will be multiplied in the face of climate change. Women and girls experiencing homelessness, the elderly, and the poor have the highest risk of experiencing the negative effects of climate change and the fewest options to recover. For COP28 to be the most inclusive COP yet, decisions, discussions, and the implementation of solutions must be done in collaboration with those disproportionately impacted by climate change.

### ***Recommendations***

- Place people, lives, and livelihoods at the heart of climate change action by supporting the most vulnerable communities to adapt to the change that’s already occurring.
- Recognize the necessity of animal and plant species’ survival to human health and wellbeing, creating protections and initiatives for their restoration and preservation.
- Amend educational curricula to include education on sustainable production and consumption ensuring knowledge around emissions and pollutants, waste disposal and degradation of Indigenous and other lands.
- Include vulnerable and affected populations in the policy and planning surrounding disaster management, mitigation, adaptation, and impact reduction.

