



World Council of Churches

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**UN Climate Change Summit
New York - 22 September 2009**

**Message from the General Secretary
Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia**

Climate change is one of the greatest if not the greatest challenge of today's world. Member churches of the World Council of Churches continuously report the consequences of climate change in their most vulnerable communities.

We need a strong commitment from political leaders. Indeed what is needed is a shift of paradigm. The prevailing economic strategy of promoting endless growth and production of goods and a seemingly insatiable level of consumption, specially among the high-consuming sectors of our societies. We need to change from this to a society where the main principles are justice, equity, solidarity, human development and care for the whole creation.

Climate change is a matter of justice because those who are mostly affected are the impoverished and vulnerable communities who have contributed the least to global warming and have no means to adapt to climate change. A climate debt has been accumulated over the centuries against these vulnerable communities, against the future generations and against the whole creation.

Therefore, rich countries have the responsibility to drastically reduce CO₂ emissions in order to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius. At the same time, they should implement specific support packages to contribute to the adaptation of developing countries to the effects of climate change. These payments must not be taken from existing aid budgets but should be added to the 0.7 %, in recognition of the historical and ongoing responsibility rich nations must bear for the impact of their actions on the developing world.

An ambitious, fair and binding agreement should be reached in COP 15 in Copenhagen in December this year. To reach it, industrialized countries need to lead the global effort, first of all by living up to the commitments already made under the Kyoto Protocol on climate finance, technology transfer and emission reduction targets.

We as Christians join with our prayers and voices with those of other faith communities so that through this Summit and on the way to Copenhagen, there will be renewed hope for humanity and for the endurance of life on planet earth, which indeed is our common home.