

18 April 2016

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the High-level Interfaith Event: Handover of the Interfaith
Statement on Climate Change**

Faith leaders, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, I am very honored to participate in today's event and to accept this Interfaith statement on behalf of the UN General Assembly and the UN more broadly.

Your Statement serves to renew the strong commitment of the faith community to protect the environment, the world's most vulnerable and future generations.

It brings together Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic, Sikh and other faith leaders for the same and vital cause.

It shows – as we have seen on other issues such as preventing violent extremism or ending conflict – how religion can be a catalyst for the promotion of common human values.

Through this statement, you are telling your followers that you recognize the serious threat that Climate change poses to the vitality of our planet, the well being of humanity and the security of peoples and states.

You are telling them that you recognise the adverse impacts affecting rich and poor alike, the ever-increasing number of disasters, as well as the existential threats facing some Small Island States.

You are also demanding that action be taken now.

You are telling Parties to the UNFCCC who concluded the Paris Agreement that this is but the start of a collective journey towards a low-emission and climate-resilient economy, one that helps keep global average temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius.

It is great that representatives from so many religions and faiths are here to discuss the Interfaith Climate Change Statement and keep the momentum going.

We have heard some very important statements on what needs to be done in order to contribute to this global endeavour.

This interfaith Statement as well as other religious initiatives undertaken in the context of the negotiations, means that climate change is now firmly accepted as a moral issue that challenges our individual and collective consciousness and behaviours.

While governments are looking for ways to minimize the impacts of climate change, much of the climate action we need will have to come from corporations, cities, individual citizens and other relevant stakeholders.

The faith community, as part of the broader civil society movement, can play a critical role in reaching out to your followers to challenge behavior that contributes to climate change and to demand smart policy, real action.

The High Level Thematic Debate on SDGs I am convening on Thursday together with the signing ceremony will offer a space for different actors to.

The SDGs and action on climate change are, after all, deeply related.

Ending the scourge of poverty, providing everyone with a fair chance at life; addressing inequality and preserving the peace – can only be done while supporting countries to adapt to the worst impacts of climate change and to transition to an economic development model that is good for both people and planet.

The task ahead of us is enormous but with initiative like these, which bring people together and point the way forward, I am absolutely confident that we can and will succeed.

Thank you.