

MEDIA ADVISORY

STATEMENT BY CHRISTIAN INSPIRED AND OTHER FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO 'THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY', ROME 3-5 JUNE 2008

Over 250 faith-based organisations are calling on the Conference to launch an effective, long-term multi-stakeholder process of discussion and action, at national, regional and international level s- based on fundamental spiritual values - in which civil society, including faith organizations, will play a full role.

Published in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian the statement has been circulated to all delegations and submitted to the CSO/NGO Forum of 3 June. The signatory organisations (list posted at with statement texts at www.ipicpassionist.org) includes Roman Catholic religious orders and NGOs, a number of them with Consultative Status at the UN Economic and Social Council, churches members of the Anglican Communion, ecumenical inter-church aid networks. The signatory list remains open and its web edition updated daily.

The statement starts with a spiritual message: *“Every faith tradition invites us both to feed the hungry and care for our environment and its myriad life forms. As people of faith, we recognize the moral imperative without exception to change our lifestyle in keeping with the carrying capacity of the earth and the protection of its climate. We also recognize the need to ensure that policies enacted by elected representatives and relevant international organizations contribute to an improved quality of life for every human person, each made in the image and likeness of God, and to the sustainability of ecosystems on which every living creature depends.*

We believe that the challenges to be addressed at this conference present a huge opportunity to build a new human society, rooted in our loving reverence for and responsible stewardship of all Creation.

The statement then addresses key issues relating to the conference: human rights, climate change, transgenics, right to food, empowerment of communities and women, biofuels, transport, sustainable agriculture and rural development, education, policies: coherence and implementation, civil society participation.

We advise caution against ‘short-term’ solutions. A clear focus, respecting the integrity of creation, must be kept on eliminating poverty and unjust social structures, the root causes of hunger, through a multiple options approach.

On future strategies for climate change the statement says *“We cannot accept proposals involving the eventual removal of at least one billion small farmers in developing countries to towns, leaving future food production predominantly in the hands of large agro-industrial enterprises.”*

Signatories declare their strong support for the key role of small farmers and their need to be free the exchange seeds and innovations amongst each other. Signatories also advocate policies based on the right to food, food sovereignty, while warning of the need for a highly precautionary approach to transgenics-based biotechnology as well as to the further development of biofuels.

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