

**'Any implementation of climate solutions must be anchored  
on the following three pillars:  
justice, equity, and solidarity.'**

Statement from 13 Catholic institutions present at COP27

***Catholics present at the COP 27 gathering had this to say . . .***

"Being officially part of the [U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change] process, we will be assured as a synodal and inclusive church that our ecological and social concerns are articulated and acted upon," **Cardinal Pietro Parolin** said.

1. "If governments stick to paving the way for a future with good intentions and aspirational declarations while widening the gap with the implementation and follow-up needed, they will indeed lock us up on pathways to disaster," read a statement from **CIDSE**, an umbrella organization for Catholic development agencies from Europe and North America. They called the loss-and-damage fund "a very important first step in recognizing historically unfair differences between those who have **caused** the climate crisis and those who have been **paying** for it."

2. While the agreement on loss and damage represented a milestone, the inability to reach a decision on ending fossil fuels made COP27 "a lost opportunity," **Comboni Missionary Sr. Paola Moggi**, who attended the conference on behalf of the faith-based NGO VIVAT International, said during a debriefing webinar Nov. 22 hosted by the International Union of Superiors General. "We can cure the symptoms but not address the causes. And this was for me the failure of this COP," she said.

3. The major deal on loss and damage excited religious leaders, civil society groups and climate activists who for years have been pushing wealthy countries not only to take concrete actions to reduce their emissions, but also provide financing for climate-related destruction, especially in the global south. "This is a huge achievement," said Fr. Leonard Chiti, a member of the **Society of Jesus** in southern Africa.

4. Sr. Durstyn Farnan, an Adrian Dominican sister from Michigan, said the deal to establish a loss-and-damage fund revived the spirits of climate activists who had given up on government representatives for failing to commit to fighting climate change and find solutions to mitigate its repercussions. The final outcome document is hopeful.

5. David Munene, Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa, said 'My worry is that many things have been agreed on before but have never been implemented,'

6. Fr. Vitalis Anaehobi, the secretary general of the Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa, said "the agreement brought hope to the world that one day it would be able to eradicate the effects of climate change by preserving the environment. . . . With this decision, I can rightly say that COP27 has achieved what many others failed to do."

7. Rodne Galicha, executive director of Living Laudato Si' Philippines, told EarthBeat he hopes the lessons the Catholic Church learns from the synod on synodality can be incorporated into how it engages in future climate conferences, especially including the voices and stories from the peripheries where climate change is often felt the fiercest.

8. Some Catholics traveled to Mount Sinai, where God is believed to have appeared to Moses and given him the Ten Commandments. There, the group prayed for God's intervention to change the hearts of world leaders to fully commit to fighting climate change. "Our going to Mount Sinai was our opportunity to claim our roots as Christians. To touch the source of our faith and the source of our hope from the top and to pray that COP27 would be a game changer for climate change," said Sr. Durstyne Farnan.

### Other leaders in Climate Change said . . .

9. Fletcher Harper, executive director of **Green Faith**, added that the agreement was a good sign and a motivation for climate activists. "The final negotiations represent a modest step forward."

10. "Despite the difficulties and challenges of our times, the divergence of views, level of ambition or apprehension, we remain committed to the fight against climate change."

11. "The work that we've managed to do here in the past two weeks, and the results we have together achieved, are a testament to our collective will, as a community of nations, to voice a clear message that rings loudly today, here in this room and around the world: that multilateral diplomacy still works," **COP27 president** Sameh Shoukry said during the closing plenary. He added, "Despite the difficulties and challenges of our times, the divergence of views, level of ambition or apprehension, we remain committed to the fight against climate change."

### Conference Participation of Catholics

Catholic and faith-based actors were among the estimated 45,000 participants at COP27, which began Nov. 6 in the coastal city of Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. COP27 was the **first for the Vatican** as a formal party to the U.N. Framework. The new status meant the Holy See delegation had a seat at the negotiating tables and a vote on the final outcomes, which under U.N. rules require unanimity.

Participants spent the 15 days under the Egyptian sun praying, lobbying national delegations, hosting presentations and demonstrating on the streets outside of the Sharm el-Sheikh International Convention Center, site of the global climate conference. They pressed world leaders on a host of issues, especially around climate financing and a commitment to a broad phasedown of coal, oil and natural gas to prevent catastrophic warming of the planet.

Catholic sisters were among thousands of activists raising concerns about the slow progress of COP27 United Nations climate talks, saying that negotiations on the financial aspect — specifically a loss and damage fund — risks the likelihood nations will deliver and build upon climate commitments made last year.

The **Holy See delegation**, led by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, on several occasions met with fellow Catholics to discuss priorities and strategies. On Nov. 18, the conference's final scheduled day, 13 Catholic institutions present at COP27 issued a statement to the Holy See delegation expressing their concerns with the global response to climate change.

The statement outlined key asks for a final document, including the loss-and-damage fund, a **rapid and just transition from fossil fuels** to renewable energy, and more inclusive participation, such as expanding the Vatican delegation in the future. "We emphasize that any implementation of climate solutions must be anchored on the following three pillars: justice, equity, and solidarity," the statement said.

### **With COP over, time for action**

Nations like **Brazil**, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo reached new alliances to protect rainforests critical for absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Over the past year, the U.S. and the European Union, two of the largest historical sources of emissions, have passed major climate legislation, and voters in Australia and Brazil have replaced leaders resistant to climate action with new heads of state who have vowed to make climate change a priority.

And the final text included the first-ever reference for a COP to the "right to a clean, healthy and **sustainable** environment," which followed a similar resolution passed by the U.N. general assembly in July.

With COP27 concluded, many religious leaders and Catholic actors are now urging world leaders to implement the issues that they agreed to in Egypt to save lives and livelihoods.

[Climate Change Summit 2022](#)

