



DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING  
INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## **We must raise our ambitions at all levels**

[12 December 2020]

**H.E. Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson**

*(Prefect, Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development)*

On the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement and five years after the publication of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* the “cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (*Laudato Si'*, 49) rings ever more loudly and urgently in our ears. **The pandemic we all face cannot be an excuse for inaction it must be viewed as an opportunity to build back better.**

Pope Francis on setting up his Vatican Covid19 Commission invited all of us to join forces, dreaming and “**prepare the future**”. It is right to acknowledge the challenges and problems, but they are not set in stone. A renewed culture of care and an economic vision that seeks the common good, based on solidarity and care for creation, participation, equality and justice, can promote transformational change and bring humanity out of this crisis.

**We urgently need ambitious concrete targets and actions aimed at drastically reducing GHG emissions by 2030.** Long term goals reaching out 30 years to 2050 will not suffice if we are to safeguard the crucial 1.5°C limit. We look especially to Europe in which hope and responsibility for new momentum lies to step up at this time and ensure it offers a fair share of the global efforts required. Anything less by Europe or others is not an adequate response to the science, to those suffering or to the young people who will inherit our successes and failures. **The Paris Agreement is an essential, hard won achievement but it will not deliver the transformation needed without significant transformation** of politics and policies but also of our hearts, minds, lifestyle and how we encounter one another as a human family.

So I ask all political leaders how will you show the imagination and true vocation of your calling? God has entrusted us with this planet and its glorious resources, when you think of your NDC (National Determined Contribution) - do not think of it as yours but rather **how you are ensuring the common goods are protected for all, which should put those who are the poorest and most vulnerable at the centre.**

**How governments choose to spend their money in the recovery will define the future decade – it must be done with love and respect for future generations.** Why is it that the G20 countries are giving 50% more Covid19 recovery funding to fossil fuels than to clean energy? Governments must stop investments in fossil fuels. Poor communities need sustainable modern green energy; they do not want to be trapped in the past as has happened so often previously.

Promises of financial support to the poorest countries to adapt to climate change and pursue new development paths has not lived up to expectations, and the debt crises which has strangled the development of many developing countries threatens to escalate once again. **There is no sustainability without equity. The poorest among us must be placed at the centre of our thoughts, our prayers and our policies and plans.**

**As we approach this important year (2021) lets us remember we are one human family, and we can rely only on each other to care for our common home - the living earth.** “Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 8)