



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO MR. FRANK BAINIMARAMA,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI AND
PRESIDENT OF THE 23rd SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP23)
TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)**

[BONN, 6-17 NOVEMBER 2017]

Your Excellency,

Slightly less than two years ago the international community gathered in this forum of the unfccc, with most of its highest level government representatives and, after a long and complex debate, arrived at the adoption of the historic Paris Agreement. It saw the achievement of a consensus on the need to implement a shared strategy to combat one of the most alarming phenomena that our humanity is experiencing: climate change.

The willingness to act in furtherance of this consensus was then observed in the speed with which the same Paris Agreement entered into force, less than one year after its adoption.

The Agreement indicates a clear path for transition toward an economic development model of low or zero carbon consumption, encouraging solidarity and leveraging the strong existing ties between the fight against climate change and that against poverty. This transition is further demanded by the climatic emergency which requires greater commitment from the countries, some of which must seek to adopt a leading role in this transition, taking to heart the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

In these days you have gathered in Bonn to carry out another important phase of the Paris Agreement: the process of defining and constructing guidelines, rules and institutional mechanisms so that it may be truly effective and capable of contributing to the achievement of the complex objectives it proposes. On such a path, it is necessary to maintain a high level of cooperation.

In this perspective, I would like to reassert my urgent appeal “for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.[...] Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective [... for various reasons which] can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions” (cf. Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 14).

We must avoid falling prey to these four perverse attitudes, which certainly do not foster honest research and sincere and productive dialogue on building the future of our planet: denial, indifference, resignation and trust in inadequate solutions.

On the other hand, we cannot be limited solely to the economic and technological dimension: technical solutions are necessary but not sufficient; it is essential and appropriate to also take into careful consideration the ethical and social aspects and impacts of the new paradigm of development and progress in the short, medium and long term.

In this perspective it seems ever more necessary to pay attention to education and lifestyles characterized by integral ecology, capable of adopting a vision of honest research and open dialogue in which the various dimensions of the Paris Agreement are interwoven. It is good to remember that the Agreement “calls us to the grave [...] responsibility to act without delay, in a manner as free as possible from political and economic pressures, setting aside particular interests and behaviour” (cf. *Message to the cop22*). It is a matter, in practice, of propagating a “responsible awareness” of our common home (cf. Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 202, 231) through everyone’s contribution, in clarifying the different forms of action and partnership among the various stakeholders, some of whom do not fail to shed light on the ingenuity of the human being in favour of the common good.

As I convey my greeting to you, Mr President, and to all those taking part in this Conference, I hope that, with your distinguished guidance and that of the Fiji Islands, the work of these days may be fostered by the same collaborative and proactive spirit manifested during the cop21. This will enable the expeditious raising of awareness and consolidation of the willingness to adopt truly effective decisions to counteract the climate change phenomenon and at the same time to combat poverty and promote true integral human development. May the wise providence of the Most High support you in this task.

From the Vatican 7 November 2017

FRANCIS

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