



KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Statement on the UN Conference on Climate Change – Executive Summary
Durban, South Africa, 28 November - 9 December 2011

We stand in awe of the goodness of our Creator who has endowed the Earth with the capacity to provide life in abundance for human and non-human species. We believe that it is possible to transform our economic system into one that is just and sustainable for all, living within the bounds of Earth's biophysical limits, where all people share in the Creator's gifts of clean water, nutritious food, adequate shelter and opportunities to care for one another, engage in creative work and deepen their spiritual lives.

Yet we note that human-induced climate change is now causing more severe storms, floods, heat waves, and droughts and accelerated loss of polar ice. We mourn the people who perish and the species that go extinct. We confess our complicity in an economic system that values the accumulation of money and material goods at the expense of the wellbeing of humans and life-sustaining ecosystems.

We have heard the calls from our ecumenical partners in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America to take responsibility for the sizeable ecological debt we in the global North owe to the peoples of the global South and to the Earth. We have heard the warnings from our Inuit, First Nation, and Métis sisters and brothers who testify to changes already occurring in Northern Canada where temperatures are rising faster than the global average, endangering their cultures and livelihoods.

We must continue to do more as a society. Scientists warn that unless we substantially reduce our greenhouse gas emissions we risk extremely dangerous climate change that would displace millions of people, deny sufficient water to hundreds of millions of people and risk extinction for 15% to 40% of Earth's plant and animal species. Significant widespread action is needed. To this end, we call on the members of our KAIROS churches and all people of good will to join us in urging the government of Canada to champion the following three goals at the November-December 2011 UN Conference on Climate Change at Durban, South Africa:

- Keeping the increase in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, by renewing the legally-binding Kyoto Protocol for the period beyond 2012 with adequate emission reduction commitments.
- Reducing our own emissions to 40% to 50% below 1990 levels by 2020 in order to make restitution for the ecological debt we owe to the peoples of the Global South and to the whole Earth community. As a first step towards this goal, Canada should immediately redirect the \$1.4 billion in annual federal subsidies to the oil and gas industries to development of renewable forms of energy.
- Cancelling the financial debts of the nations of the Global South and providing sufficient funds for climate adaptation and mitigation measures through a United Nations body independent from international financial institutions such as the World Bank. This would be a further step in making reparations for the ecological debt we owe the Global South.

This is our hope for Durban, and for the world.

See also our briefing paper [*Is Durban the World's Last, Best Hope to Avoid Climate Disaster?*](#)



KAIROS unites 11 churches and religious organizations in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights.

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