

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 171116a

Thursday 16.11.2017

Message of the Holy Father to the President of the 23rd Session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-23)

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to H.E. Mr. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Fiji Islands, President of the 23rd Session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-23), taking place in Bonn from 6 to 17 November 2017, which was read during yesterday's session:

Message of the Holy Father

To His Excellency Mr. Frank Bainimarama

Prime Minister of the Fiji Islands

President of the 23rd Session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-23)

Bonn, 6-17 November 2017

Excellency,

Nearly two years ago, the international community gathered within this UNFCCC forum, with most of its highest government representatives, and after a long and complex debate arrived at the adoption of the historic Paris Agreement. It saw the achievement of consensus on the need to launch a shared strategy to counteract one of the most worrying phenomena our humanity is experiencing: climate change.

The will to follow this consensus was highlighted by the speed with which the Paris Agreement entered into force, less than a year after its adoption.

The Agreement indicates a clear path of transition to a low- or zero-carbon model of economic development, encouraging solidarity and leveraging the strong links between combating climate change and poverty. This transition is further solicited by the climatic urgency that requires greater commitment from the countries, some of which must endeavour to take a leading role in this transition, bearing in mind the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

These days you are 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. In such a path, it is necessary to maintain a high level of cooperation.

From this perspective, I would like to reaffirm my urgent call to renew dialogue on how we are building the future of the planet. We need an exchange that unites us all, because the environmental challenge we are experiencing, and its human roots, regards us all, and affects us all. [...] Unfortunately, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis are often frustrated for various reasons ranging from denial of the problem to indifference, comfortable resignation, or blind trust in technical solutions (cf. Encyclical *Laudato si'*, 14).

We should avoid falling into the trap of these four perverse attitudes, which certainly do not help honest research or sincere and productive dialogue on building the future of our planet: denial, indifference, resignation and trust in inadequate solutions.

Moreover, we cannot limit ourselves only to the economic and technological dimension: technical solutions are necessary but not sufficient; it is essential and desirable to carefully consider the ethical and social impacts and impacts of the new paradigm of development and progress in the short, medium and long term.

From this perspective, it is increasingly necessary to pay attention to education and lifestyles based on an integral ecology, capable of taking on a vision of honest research and open dialogue where the various dimensions of the Paris Agreement are intertwined. It is useful to remember that the Agreement recalls the “grave ... ethical and moral 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 COP-22*). This means, in effect, propagating a “responsible awareness” towards our common home (cf. Encyclical *Laudato si'*, 202; 231) through the contribution of all, in explaining the different forms of action and partnership between the various stakeholders, some of whom do not lack to highlight the ingenuity of the human being in favour of the common good.

While I send my greetings to you, Mr President, and to all the participants in this Conference, I hope that, with your authoritative guidance and that of the Fiji Islands, the work of these days will be inspired by the same collaborative and prophetic spirit manifested during the COP-21. This will enable an acceleration of awareness-raising and consolidate the will to make effective decisions to counteract the phenomenon of climate change while at the same time fighting poverty and promoting true human development as a whole. This commitment is supported by the wise providence of God Most High.

Vatican City, 7 November 2017
