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Message of the Holy Father to participants in the International Conference “The Common Good on our Common Seas”, taking place in Copenhagen

From 3 to 5 May, the International Conference “The Common Good on our Common Seas” is taking place in Copenhagen, organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Apostleship of the Sea and the *Global Catholic Climate Movement*.

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father to His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, for the participants in the International Conference:

Message of the Holy Father

*To my Venerable Brother,
Cardinal Peter Turkson,
Prefect of the
Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*

On the occasion of “The Common Good on our Common Seas” Conference taking place in Copenhagen from 3 to 5 May 2019, I would ask you to convey my cordial best wishes to all the participants, and to assure them of my prayers for a fruitful meeting.

Your gathering brings together representatives of different religious traditions and international organizations, and from the fields of business, science and education in order to explore the challenges and opportunities facing our seas, oceans and coastal areas, and those whose livelihoods depend on them. As you focus on this vital issue, two elements seem particularly important, namely intergenerational justice and dialogue.

First, I would encourage you to consider “intergenerational solidarity” (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 159-162) as a key moral imperative in responding to the problems of our time. By placing the needs of our contemporaries, especially

young people, and also of generations yet to come, at the heart of efforts to care for creation, then the common good of all may be promoted and protected, “since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us” (cf. *ibid.* 159).

On the basis of intergenerational justice, and of the integrity of life which embraces time as well as space (cf. *Lumen Fidei*, 57), I hope that the solidarity and fraternal concern that extends the hand of friendship and compassion to the poorest of our brothers and sisters will find concrete expression in support for coastal communities and for all those who work on our seas, who so often are disproportionately affected by climate change and the injustices of unsustainable models of development.

Second, I am confident that in considering the threats caused by unjust management of our seas and criminal manipulation of maritime industries – not least among them the scourge of human trafficking – an increasingly interdisciplinary and dialogical approach will foster an ever more effective set of responses to the complex challenges we face.

Dialogue is not a mere method or strategy for achieving results, rather it reflects the very nature of the cosmos itself, for God creates the world and all it contains not in an abstract or distant way but through *speaking his word*: “God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures’” (*Gen* 1:20). Reflecting the essential quality of the created order, dialogue is thus not only desirable but essential: dialogue between religions, dialogue between nations, dialogue between believers and non-believers, dialogue between the sciences, dialogue between rich and poor, dialogue for all! Certainly this is no easy task, but “the gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity” (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 201).

As you consider these important questions, I willingly offer these thoughts as a contribution to your deliberations, which I entrust to the intercession of Our Lady Star of the Sea. Upon all those taking part in this international conference, I invoke the divine blessings of wisdom and fortitude.

From the Vatican, 16 April 2019

FRANCIS
