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Letter of the Holy Father Francis to the President of the Republic of Colombia on the occasion of the World Environment Day

The following is the letter sent by the Holy Father Francis to the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, on the occasion of World Environment Day, which takes place every 5 June and which this year will be hosted virtually by Colombia, on the theme of biodiversity:

Letter of the Holy Father

To His Excellency

Iván DUQUE MÁRQUEZ

President of the Republic of Colombia

I am pleased to greet you, the organizers and the participants in the World Environment Day, which would have been held in person this year in Bogotá, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic will be held virtually. This challenging situation reminds us that in the face of adversity, new paths always open in order for us to be united as a great human family.

The protection of the environment and respect for the biodiversity of the planet are issues that affect us all. We cannot pretend to be healthy in a world that is sick. The wounds inflicted on our mother earth are wounds that also bleed in us. Caring for ecosystems demands a look to the future, one that is not concerned only with the immediate moment or that seeks a quick and easy profit, but rather one that is concerned for life and that seeks its preservation for the benefit of all.

Our attitude toward the present state of our planet should indeed make us concerned for and witnesses to the gravity of the situation. We cannot remain silent before the outcry when we realize the very high costs of the

destruction and exploitation of the ecosystem. This is not a time to continue looking the other way, indifferent to the signs that our planet is being plundered and violated by greed for profit, very often in the name of progress. We have the chance to reverse course, to commit ourselves to a better, healthier world and to pass it on to future generations. Everything depends on us, if we really want it.

Recently we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, which drew attention to the cry that mother earth lifts up to us. I would also invite all of you to participate in the special Year that I have announced to reflect in light of that document and, together, to become more committed to the care and protection of our common home, and of our most vulnerable and marginalized brothers and sisters in society.

I encourage you in this task that lies before you. I trust that your deliberations and conclusions will always foster the building of an increasingly habitable world and a more humane society, where all of us have a place and no one is ever left behind.

I ask you, please, to pray for me. May Jesus bless you and the Blessed Virgin watch over you.

From the Vatican, 5 June 2020

FRANCIS
