

Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP) Urgent Appeal for COP 28

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is now taking place in Dubai, UAE, with leaders from 198 countries and regions discussing measures to address global warming. The main focus of the conference is to establish a concrete path toward the international goal of limiting the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This is because there is concern that if the 1.5°C threshold is exceeded, the devastating effects of climate change on humanity, the earth and its ecosystems will result.

However, the current average surface temperature is already 1.1 degrees Celsius higher than it was in the late 1800s and is approaching the 1.5 degree C threshold. On November 17th. of this year, it was also reported that the temperature increase exceeded 2 degrees Celsius, albeit temporarily. The world is now witnessing the irreversible and catastrophic effects of unprecedented global warming of the planet.

This year, when the world's average temperature reached an all-time high, extreme high temperatures and their effects, also known as global boiling, have occurred in many parts of the world. Large wildfires broke out frequently in Canada, and the Brazilian Amazon experienced an unusual drought. In Libya, flooding caused extensive damage. More than 40% of the world's population live in environments vulnerable to climate change, and the adverse effects are becoming more severe, especially in Asia and Africa. Climate change is having a strong impact on people in poorer and more vulnerable regions.

On December 1, at COP 28, a document entitled "Global Stocktake" was released to assess the world's progress in combating global warming and to encourage countries to strengthen their measures. It was clearly pointed out that the 1.5-degree target cannot be achieved with the current measures, and called for urgent action and support at all levels of society to prepare for the climate crisis of the next decade. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his strong sense of urgency about the delay in global warming countermeasures by countries, saying, "Earth's vital signs are failing". However, the current discussions at COP28 have also highlighted differences in countries' perspectives on fossil fuels, and it remains to be seen whether they will be able to agree on the phase-out and reduction of fossil fuels, which are key to global warming countermeasures.

At this very moment of COP28, we, religious leaders of Asia, express our deep concern over the current climate crisis and our earnest requests to the world's political leaders for the sustainability of the Planet and humanity as follows

Global efforts to address climate change remain so dreadfully far off track. Render the measures effective by providing specifics on who will implement what reduction measures and when, rather than just political calls.

All countries must abandon narrow-minded self-centeredness and excessive profit-seeking, and unite for the common good of humanity as a whole.

Last year, carbon dioxide emissions reached a record high. Countries should set more ambitious reduction targets to reduce emissions by 48% by 2030 compared to 2019.

The climate crisis is a human rights issue across many dimensions. Countries, especially developed countries, should commit to and strengthen more practical support for those affected by climate change.

As a result of climate change is an increasing concern and all countries must secure for food security for their populations.

We, ACRP, together with the political leaders of COP 28, are determined to fulfill our commitment to a sustainable world. We reaffirmed the social responsibility of religious communities at the 9th ACRP Assembly in 2021 to jointly build a community of all life on earth to achieve a world where "no one is left behind" and to leave a clean world for future generations.

We support the call for "transformative action to keep 1.5C within reach and serve affected and vulnerable communities" in the Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28 released on November 7, 2023. Together with the world's religious leaders, we offer our sincerest prayers that COP28 will provide impetus to promoting the sustainability of the earth and humankind. At the same time, we hereby renew our pledge to make untiring efforts to fulfill our own responsibility toward peacebuilding.