

Facing the Challenge of Climate Change

A shared statement by Quaker groups

September 2014

“It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing in the Creation of it. For how could [they] find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part of it?”

William Penn, 1693

As Quakers, we are called to work for the peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole Earth, in right sharing with all peoples.¹ We recognize a moral duty to cherish creation for future generations.

As we gather at events surrounding the UN Climate Summit, we call on our leaders to make the radical decisions needed to create a fair, sufficient and effective international climate change agreement.

As Quakers, we understand anthropogenic (due to human activities) climate change to be a symptom of a greater challenge: how to live sustainably and justly on this Earth.

We recognize that current and unprecedented rates of greenhouse gas emissions, if left unchecked, will likely lead to global mean temperature rises of extreme detriment to human beings.

We recognize that catastrophic anthropogenic climate change is not inevitable if we choose to act.

We recognize a personal and collective responsibility to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable peoples now, and all our future generations, do not suffer as a consequence of our actions. We see this as a call to conscience.

¹ Kabarok Call to Peace and Eco-Justice, 2012, p. 1

We recognize the connections between climate change and global economic injustice as well as unprecedented levels of consumption, and question assumptions of unlimited economic growth on a planet with limited natural resources.

We recognize that most greenhouse gas emissions are created by fossil fuel combustion. We recognize that our increasing population continues to pursue fossil fuel-dependent economic growth. We recognize that the Earth holds more fossil fuel reserves than are safe to burn, and that the vast majority of proven fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground if we are to prevent the catastrophic consequences of climate change. We therefore question profoundly the continued investment in, and subsidizing of, fossil fuel extraction.

We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritizes the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationship with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems.

This week, we join the People's Climate March as members of this beautiful human family, seeking meaningful commitments from our leaders and ourselves, to address climate change for our shared future, the Earth, and the generations to come.

We see this Earth as a stunning gift that supports life. It is our only home. Let us care for it together.

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)
Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)
Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Quakers in Britain
Living Witness

Please contact Lindsey Cook at lfcook@quno.ch if you need more information, or wish to add your Quaker group.