



*Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, Czech Republic, President of the European Council
President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso
Commissioner for the Environment, Stavros Dimas
President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering*

Brussels, 17th March 2009

Your Excellency,

Time for reaching a new global climate change agreement is quickly running out. As you prepare to meet with European Union (EU) leaders at the forthcoming Spring Summit, CIDSE, CARITAS and APRODEV – networks of more than 70 Catholic and Protestant development agencies across Europe – jointly urge you to exercise leadership by ensuring the adoption of a position by the European Union that will move the international community towards an effective and equitable agreement in Copenhagen in December.

Each day, our agencies work with communities already experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change. We witness the steady erosion of progress made in poverty reduction and towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We hold the strong conviction that a fair and equitable solution to the global threat of climate change, with justice at its heart, is a moral, ethical and political imperative. While industrialised countries, including the Member States of the EU, have the resources and the resilience to mitigate and adapt to climate change, this is not the case for many poor and vulnerable countries. An equitable solution to the climate challenge must be based on actions that explicitly safeguard the right to holistic human development for the poorest and most vulnerable people – those who have contributed least to the problem we now face.

As a major historical polluter, a previous climate champion and a global leader in development cooperation, the EU can and must play a key role in raising international expectations and in creating the political will and momentum necessary to achieve an agreement. EU action must include adequate mitigation as well as significant financial, technical and capacity support so that developing countries will be enabled to establish low carbon development pathways and to adapt to the impacts of climate change without substantial additional costs that would undermine their development aspirations.

We therefore call upon the European Council (EC) to:

- **Commit to enhancing the UN process and to ensuring that the COP remains the primary intergovernmental decision-making and governing forum on climate change.**

Champion and adopt an approach to effort-sharing founded on evidence-based responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions and capability to pay for climate protection measures. The indicators used to calculate responsibility and capacity should ensure adequacy of effort while safeguarding the right of poorer counties to develop in a sustainable manner.

- **Commit to domestic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% from 1990 levels, by 2020, and to the top end of 80-95% by 2050 and to developing detailed plans to achieve these reduction targets;**
- **Commit to paying its fair share of the levels of financing necessary for climate action by supporting financing mechanisms that will ensure secure, sufficient, accessible financing for climate action in developing countries, and by indicating concrete figures the EU will provide. These are likely to be a minimum EU commitment of €35 billion each year by 2020;**
- **Commit to ensuring that climate financing will be additional to existing aid targets, and to any purchasing of carbon credits that offset EU emissions;**
- **Promote the creation of a multilateral financial mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to support adaptation, clean energy and forest protection in developing countries;**
- **Commit to releasing all funds already pledged for climate action, and to providing incremental increases in financing between 2009-2012 when the new international framework should be in place;**
- **Recognise that financial and technological support to developing countries must target the most vulnerable people by using a rights-based approach including a gender-sensitive analysis and in cooperation with civil society actors.**
- **Recognise the importance of the further development, enhancement and dissemination of clean development and adaptation technologies and measures that benefit and are accessible to the poor and those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and to commit to ensuring these are supported in the post 2012 agreement;**
- **Commit to a fundamental reform of the Clean Development Mechanism which strictly limits offsetting and secures sector-wide approaches, better regional distribution, and ecological and social integrity.**

The economic downturn must not be used as an excuse for inaction. Further delay risks human and environmental costs of a proportion we cannot yet comprehend. The year ahead offers the international community the opportunity to address the inequitable and unsustainable nature of our current models of growth, production and consumption and set current and future generations on a new path. We trust in your commitment to work constructively with European Union leaders to ensure that this opportunity will not be missed.

We look forward to further dialogue with you on these important issues.
Sincerely,



Rob van Drimmelman,
APRODEV Secretary General



Bernd Nilles,
CIDSE Secretary General



Marius Wanders,
Caritas Europa
Secretary General