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As Pope Francis has made clear that neoliberal economics and greed are behind environmental destruction, global warming and climate change, Stewards of Creation stands with peoples around the globe in defense of Planet Earth. The environment and the poor call for justice as the impacts of climate change continue to hammer our long-neglected, abused, and marginalized ecosystems and communities.

We urge decisive actions from world leaders now gathered at Paris for the 21st Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will last until Dec. 11, 2015. As environmental defenders who stand in solidarity with the ordinary people, an integral part of Creation, we amplify Pope Francis' exhortation that we must, "Safeguard Creation because, if we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us."

We call for comprehensive, relevant and daring agreements that reflect long-term global climate solutions to address the root causes of the rising global-temperatures—which are wreaking havoc on Earth's ecosystems, threatening the existence of some species, and intensifying storms and other climate events.

We join our voices with that of ailing Nature, calling for a respite from a global system of unabated production and consumption of goods and services that depend heavily on fossil fuels and mineral resources. Large-scale industrial production by wealthy economies is responsible for the massive emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Pope Francis describes this as "selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity" that is propelling environmental degradation and causing increased suffering for the poor.

It is imperative that we speak truth to power: Governments and corporations from developed and highly industrialized countries are the topmost producers of greenhouse gases. The United States, the European Union, Canada, Russia, Japan and China, from which come the highest greenhouse gas emissions, must be made responsible for making decisive actions to address climate change and global warming.

Affirming our belief that the desecration of Creation is also an attack on human dignity and existence, we add our voices to the cries of the environment and the cries of the poor. Specifically, we urge world leaders to ratify a climate change agreement that puts a cap on greenhouse gas emissions, and redresses the historical debt and injustice that marginalized peoples and communities have suffered because of environmental abuse.

The fight for the integrity of Creation is far from over. We enjoin all of humanity to walk together toward a future that nurtures the environment, life and dignity of our entire planet.

—FR. BEN ALFORQUE, MSC, convenor, Stewards of Creation, [email protected]

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