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Calling for immediate and comprehensive action to combat the climate crisis

Resolution adopted by the XXVI FIMCAP General Assembly, Westmalle (Belgium), 31 August 2019

“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. [...] There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy” (Laudato Si’ 25; 26).

Pope Francis reminds us about the urgency to step up and by far increase our efforts to protect the creation and preserve our environment to keep our planet livable for our and future generations. Catholic youth movements have already been at the forefront of those warning about the existential threat caused by the effects of human action on the global climate. FIMCAP represents millions of young people from all parts of the world. Our members have been discussing and reflecting the recent climate crisis in the local groups, at regional and at national levels. Best practices how youth work and our way of living can become more sustainable have been developed. However, as the biggest polluters are the industrial, transport, energy and agricultural sectors, especially big businesses, and not the youth work sector, and the options to consume responsibly and affordably are limited, our personal scope of influence for reducing harmful emissions is small. We still believe that policy-makers world-wide have the regulatory power to adopt measures that are sufficient to counter the existential threat we are all confronted with. Therefore, using the experience and creativity of our membership and referring to the findings of the scientific community, we have collected the following list of demands toward the world’s decision-makers. We consider them essential to meet our common goal to save our living space:

- Future generations will be most affected by the consequences of climate change, which is why listening to young people is crucial for related political processes. We therefore call for the inclusion of young people in all political processes related to climate change.
- Climate change is a truly global challenge; both its causes and its consequences are and will be global. Therefore, an effective solution to the issue also has to be global. We therefore call for all political decision makers on national and subnational level to increase collective efforts in order to achieve change for our collective future. We ask all nations to

commit to the COP¹ process, value this commitment and push for further progress within the COP framework.

- According to scientists, the current pledges under the Paris Agreement are still far from sufficient to reach the 1.5°C target. We therefore call on all nations to intensify their commitments and to bring their individual pledges in line with this target, taking both their historic responsibilities and their economic and political abilities into account to change their models of economic development.
- Climate change is expected to have especially grave consequences in developing and small island nations. In order to combat such consequences for people living in those countries, we therefore ask the industrialized nations to provide further technical and financial support for adaptation efforts. We furthermore ask the industrialized nations to increase support for mitigation efforts in industrializing nations to make their model of economic development more sustainable.
- In order to achieve more stringent mitigation measures, political decision makers have to change economic incentives in their societies. We therefore call for increased national policy incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, foster technological progress and promote transitions in the energy and mobility sectors. For this task, a range of tested policy tools are already available, for example carbon taxes or carbon trading schemes. We call for their introduction or, in countries where such tools are already employed, the expansion and strengthening of these systems.
- Climate change threatens crucial ecosystems around the world and thereby endangers biodiversity and people's livelihoods. In order to avoid the collapse of such ecosystems, we ask for increased funding of related research as well as for projects seeking to protect such ecosystems.
- In our work we have to make daily choices between the affordability of events for our members and the events' sustainability. In order to overcome this, targeted funding of sustainable practices in youth work is necessary.
- We see the increasing connection of the global society as crucial for a better and more peaceful world, while also acknowledging that increased air travel contributes harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore we call for increased funding of sustainable transport networks, e.g. trains, and of research focused on sustainable transportation.
- Effective and fast progress in climate change mitigation is only possible if whole societies are aware of the problem and work together to overcome it. We therefore call for more support of climate change and sustainability education.

While formulating these demands, we also acknowledge that the fight against climate change is one that must be fought by everyone. We therefore vow to advocate the topic within our member organizations and to increase the cooperation between our member organizations. Our goal is to share related experiences and best practice examples in order to formulate a FIMCAP sustainability strategy to do our part in the fight for our common future.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>