



INTER-FAITH ACTION FOR PEACE IN AFRICA

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Your Excellencies,

It is widely recognized that though Africa and its peoples have contributed least of all to the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for accelerating global climate change, they are suffering its worst effects. This is a fundamental issue of justice.

Last month, members of Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) – a continent-wide network of representatives of all the major faith traditions in Africa committed to promoting peace and development in the region – met in Gaborone, Botswana, under the theme “Envisioning a Peaceful Africa: Water For All”. Given the environmental realities in Africa, and the increasing challenge of securing water for all in the context of the current and likely future impacts of climate change in the region, it was natural that the religious leaders attending the IFAPA Summit in Gaborone should wish to address themselves to the UN Climate Change Conference commencing today in Copenhagen.

The IFAPA Summit adopted a statement on the impacts of climate change on water, poverty and peace in Africa, a copy of which I have the honour to enclose herewith.

As the statement records, the IFAPA Summit participants observed clearly how the consequences of climate change compound the realities of food insecurity, poverty and

disease in Africa. They perceived that the environmental changes exacerbated by climate change will increase competition for diminishing water resources, and will force increasing numbers of people, communities and animals to become 'climate change refugees', posing additional serious challenges to peace and security in the region.

IFAPA Summit participants acknowledged that climate change ultimately represents “a failure of our ethical, moral and religious duties”, and that it is “our indifference to the plight of other people and other species, and our continuing exploitation and destruction of creation, that has led to this crisis.”

Therefore IFAPA, “with the voices of the faith communities, the desperate poor, and the future generations of Africa”, calls upon all governments participating in the Copenhagen Conference to reach an agreement which is “legally-binding, effective, and founded upon the fundamental principle of justice”. IFAPA calls for justice for Africa as an essential outcome of the Copenhagen conference, “with commitments to funding for essential climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in this continent, not as a matter of charity, but as an ethical response to the damage already sustained and still to be suffered by Africa’s people and environment due to the profligacy of others.”

The example and leadership provided by Denmark, and by yourselves personally, will be critical to achieving what must be achieved in this conference. The religious communities of Africa, represented in IFAPA, are hoping and praying that the plight of the most vulnerable will remain uppermost in your minds as you help steer this pivotal international gathering.

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a hand-drawn oval. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'I. Noko'.

Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
IFAPA President