



## PRESS RELEASE

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**29th October, 2015**

### **Top Buddhists sign landmark statement on climate change to global leaders**

Fifteen of the world's most senior Buddhists have issued a landmark call to political leaders to adopt an effective climate change agreement at the UN negotiations in Paris starting 30 November.

"We are at a crucial crossroads where our survival and that of other species is at stake as a result of our actions" the Statement's initial section warns. Eminent Signatories (*full list below*) include His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, His Holiness the 17th Karmapa, as well as Supreme Heads of Buddhism in Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), President of the Buddhist Association of the USA, President of the UBF (l'Union Bouddhiste de France) and Her Royal Highness Princess Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuk of Bhutan.

This urgent call for action on climate change, from leaders representing over a billion Buddhists worldwide, is unprecedented. This is the first time so many Buddhist luminaries have come together on a global issue to speak with one voice.

The Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders (*text and list of signatories in annex to this release and at [www.gbccc.org](http://www.gbccc.org)*) urges the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to act with wisdom and compassion, and agree to phase out fossil fuels and move towards 100 percent renewable and clean energy.

The Statement also calls on world leaders to find the political will to close the emissions gap left by national climate pledges tabled with the UNFCCC Secretariat, to ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels. To help vulnerable, developing countries address the cost of mitigating climate change (reducing emissions) and adapting to its devastating impacts, Buddhist leaders have asked for finance to be increased above the currently promised US\$100 billion per year as from 2020 through the Green Climate Fund amongst other instruments.

"Everyday life can easily lead us to forget that we are inextricably linked to the natural world through every breath we take, the water we drink and the food we eat," Lama Lobzang stated, Secretary of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). "Humanity must act on the root causes of this crisis, which is driven by greed, thoughtlessness and a lack of concern about the consequences of our actions."

"When we harm the earth, we harm ourselves," according to Sister Chan Khong, of the Plum Village International Community of Engaged Buddhists. "The earth is not just our environment. The earth is our mother. We are all children of the earth, and we must help one another as brothers and sisters of one big



planetary family. We must take action, not out of a sense of duty but out of love for our planet and for each other. The Buddha has shown us that we can all live simply and still be very happy.”

The Buddhist Leaders Climate Statement amplifies “The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change,” which has been endorsed in 2015 by more than 300 eminent Buddhist leaders and teachers representing the main schools and traditions of Buddhism from 37 countries, as well as thousands of Buddhist practitioners. It also welcomes and supports the climate change statements of other religious traditions. Buddhists are encouraged to show their support and join the conversation online using #Buddhists4Climate.

### ENDS ###

### NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Founded in September 2015, the Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective (GBCCC) is a coalition of Buddhists and interfaith organizations: Buddhist Climate Action Network (BCAN), Buddhistdoor Global, Dharmagiri, Ecobuddhism, Eco-Friendly Volunteers, GreenFaith, International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), Inter-Religious Climate & Ecology (ICE) Network, Plum Village, One Earth Sangha, OurVoices, Shambhala, and Sokka Gakkai International. Our purpose is to respond to, and to facilitate a Buddhist contribution to the crucial 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and beyond. Further information can be found at [www.gbccc.org](http://www.gbccc.org)
2. *The Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders* is an initiative of Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective (GBCCC). See below the *Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders* and its signatories ([www.gbccc.org](http://www.gbccc.org)). The text of the Statement is available in many languages on the website including: Burmese, Chinese, French, German, Hindu, Korean, Sinhala, Thai, and Tibetan.
3. In addition to the above Statement to World Leaders, in 2009, *The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change* was endorsed by HH Dalai Lama, HH Karmapa and Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, Sixty-five Dharma teachers & over 5000 Buddhists co-signed it ([www.ecobuddhism.org](http://www.ecobuddhism.org)). In 2015, the GBCCC has facilitated it being signed by more than 300 ([www.gbccc.org/signatures-2015](http://www.gbccc.org/signatures-2015)) highly respected Buddhist leaders and teachers representing the main schools of Buddhism from 37 countries.

**For photos see this [link](#)** (or [www.gbccc.org](http://www.gbccc.org))

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## Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders

October 29th, 2015

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We, the undersigned Buddhist leaders, come together prior to the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, in order to add our voices to the growing calls for world leaders to cooperate with compassion and wisdom and reach an ambitious and effective climate agreement.

We are at a crucial crossroads where our survival and that of other species is at stake as a result of our actions. There is still time to slow the pace of climate change and limit its impacts, but to do so, the Paris summit will need to put us on a path to phase out fossil fuels. We must ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, through visionary and comprehensive mitigation and adaptation measures.

Our concern is founded on the Buddha's realization of dependent co-arising, which interconnects all things in the universe. Understanding this interconnected causality and the consequences of our actions are critical steps in reducing our environmental impact. Cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion, we will be able to act out of love, not fear, to protect our planet. Buddhist leaders have been speaking about this for decades. However, everyday life can easily lead us to forget that our lives are inextricably interwoven with the natural world through every breath we take, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Through our lack of insight, we are destroying the very life support systems that we and all other living beings depend on for survival.

We believe it imperative that the global Buddhist community recognize both our dependence on one another as well as on the natural world. Together, humanity must act on the root causes of this environmental crisis, which is driven by our use of fossil fuels, unsustainable consumption patterns, lack of awareness, and lack of concern about the consequences of our actions.

We strongly support "The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change," which is endorsed by a diverse and global representation of Buddhist leaders and Buddhist sanghas. We also welcome and support the climate change statements of other religious traditions. These include Pope Francis's encyclical earlier this year, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, the *Islamic Declaration on Climate Change*, as well as the upcoming *Hindu Declaration on Climate Change*. We are united by our concern to phase out fossil fuels, to reduce our consumption patterns, and the ethical imperative to act against both the causes and the impacts of climate change, especially on the world's poorest.

To this end, we urge world leaders to generate the political will to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges and ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels. We also ask for a common commitment to scale up climate finance, so as to help developing countries prepare for climate impacts and to help us all transition to a safe, low carbon future.

The good news is that there is a unique opportunity at the Paris climate negotiations to create a turning point. Scientists assure us that limiting the rise in the global average temperature to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius is technologically and economically feasible. Phasing out fossil fuels and moving toward 100



percent renewable and clean energy will not only spur a global, low-carbon transformation, it will also help us to embark on a much-needed path of spiritual renewal. In addition to our spiritual progression, in line with UN recommendations, some of the most effective actions individuals can take are to protect our forests, move toward a plant-based diet, reduce consumption, recycle, switch to renewables, fly less, and take public transport. We can all make a difference.

We call on world leaders to recognize and address our universal responsibility to protect the web of life for the benefit of all, now and for the future.

For these reasons, we call on all Parties in Paris:

1. To be guided by the moral dimensions of climate change as indicated in Article 3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
2. To agree to phase out fossil fuels and move towards 100 percent renewables and clean energy.
3. To create the political will to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges so as to ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.
4. To make a common commitment to increase finance above the US\$100 billion agreed in Copenhagen in 2009, including through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to help vulnerable developing countries prepare for climate impacts and transition towards a low-carbon economy.

The time to act is now.

Yours sincerely,

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama Tenzing Gyatso**, 14th Dalai Lama

**Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh**, Patriarch of the Plum Village International Community of Engaged Buddhists

**His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa**, Head of the Karma Kagyu

**His Holiness Dr. Dharmasen Mahathero**, The Supreme Patriarch (Sangharaja) of the Bangladesh Sangha

**Rev. Hakuga Murayama**, President, All Japan Young Buddhist Association (JYBA)



**His Eminence Jaseung Sunim**, President, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

**Bhante B. Sri Saranankara Nayaka Maha Thera**, Chief Adhikarana Sangha Nayaka of Malaysia , Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**His Eminence Rev. Khamba Lama Gabju Demberel**, The Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists

**His Holiness Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa**, Sangharaja, and Chairman State Sangha Maha Nāyaka Committee, Myanmar

**His Eminence Agga Maha Panditha Dawuldena Gnanissara Maha Nayaka Thera**, Mahanayaka Thero, The Supreme Prelate of the Amarapura Maha Nikaya, Sri Lanka

**His Holiness Thich Pho Tue**, Supreme Patriarch of All Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

**Venerable Lama Lobzang**, Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)

**Venerable Olivier Reigen Wang-gen**, President, Buddhist Union of France (UBF)

**Venerable Bhikku Bodhi**, President, Buddhist Association of the USA

**Royal Highness Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuk**, Bhutan

[www.gbccc.org](http://www.gbccc.org)

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