

Notes, Catholic Climate Covenant webinar, Jan 10, 2023
Lindsey Fielder Cook
Quaker United Nations Office Representative for Climate Change

Appreciation –

- Jose - cherished colleague
- And for Laudato Si, which was a landmark for all faith voices in climate and cherishing nature.
- Thank you Catholic community, for your support and commitment to social justice

Speak for 15 minutes

1. Some brief lessons I have learned as a faith voice in climate advocacy
2. COP 27 – achievements and frustrations
3. Next steps in faith advocacy – for us all

Brief lessons

- US born and raised, UK educated. Baptised a Presbyterian, began worshipping with Quakers in my 20s.
- A former UN humanitarian/human rights officer in conflict zones.
- Returned to graduate work 2009 - climate change and SD
- QUNO since 2013 – Human Impacts of Climate Change – multilateral efforts
- Climate change as a peace and justice concern.
- UNFCCC, HRC, IPCC – quiet diplomacy, climate science, advocate for urgent, transformative, healthy and rights-based climate action.

Lessons:

- The faith voice in climate advocacy is more powerful than we realize – it is less political and more genuine in concern for all people and nature.
- The faith voice can speak of a moral call to conscience
- Moral call is critical – we know what is happening and what human activities are driving climate and ecological destruction.
 - Climate is a SYMPTOM of a greater challenge – how to live sustainably and justly on earth.

- Connected - unprecedented RATES of rise – climate change, species extinction, land degradation, ocean warming and acidification, fresh water etc – SHARED ROOT CAUSES
 - Fossil fuels, unsustainable economic and agriculture systems (consumption, diet, growth), tipping points
- Every 0.5C rise counts
- Insufficient action – 1.5C to +4C – manageable to unmanageable/unimaginable.
- That what we do now defines our children and future generations' lives – sustainable and livable planet
- This is about TRANSFORMATION and we can do it well or badly – we can do it grounded in social justice and nature protection, or with technical fixes that fail to address root causes and delay needed transformations.
- MONEY and POWER

This is my 9th COP.

4. COP27 - Framing

- 'new start' COP – after a six-year period where countries (Parties) focused primarily on negotiating guidelines for implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- The Guidelines were effectively finalized at the COP26 in Glasgow;
- COP 27 - **implementation**
- Developing country COP
- African COP - Egyptian Presidency **prioritize financial and practical challenges facing implementation of climate action**, and on preparation for the 2023 **Global Stocktake**.
- Africa – **Loss and Damage** – build on advocacy from COP26 – strong faith voice.

5. achievements and frustrations

Achievements: DEVELOPING COUNTRIES COP

- Commitment to a:
 - global adaptation goal (work programme)
 - work programme on just transition to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement

- Moral and courageous decision to create a funding arrangement for L+D, after years of **refusal by developed** countries, especially the US and its concern for 'compensation'.
 - Example - not giving up – L+D recognized in 2013, in the Paris Agreement in 2016, then Glasgow intense rise in L+D advocacy and political movement at the COP27.
- More honest engagement on:
 - multilateral development bank reform - practices and priorities
- progress towards operationalizing the Santiago Network on loss and damage
- Sovereign Debt crisis – debt crisis - Pakistan 44 B/ 18B – and Jose webinar – Changing nature of debt.
- Consumption – sustainable living.
- Growing recognition of human rights, rights-based approaches and the right to a healthy environment.

Frustrations

- Uncourageous on FF
- Limited Egyptian Presidency preparation and guidance during the COP.
- NDCs still way off – and current NDCs – 3.2C and current GHG +4C by 2100.
- Lack of urgency to act – mitigation and money
- **Wealthy FF extraction countries** (Gulf) but US/Canada/UK – no mention of oil and gas – a push for expensive, inefficient and not-proven to scale technologies to maintain/increase FF infrastructure. 'FF okay'
- Hypocrisy - former UK COP Presidency - stronger mitigation action - at home licenses for new oil, gas and coal drilling, ban onshore wind farms in England, imprisoning environmental defenders, and calling solar panels is fields 'paraphernalia'.
- Call to include new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change findings - peak global emissions before 2025 to limit warming to 1.5°C did not make it into the final cover decisions.

YET: Also a Reality check – IMPLEMENTATION – then engage in the challenges:

- Technology transfer
- Lack of promised climate finance (100B a year by 2020)
- Majority loans in increasing sovereign debt crisis – crippling debt repayments

- Private sector finance defining what may not be public priorities (everyone wants to make money, grants for decentralized solar panels do not make money).

Faith advocacy – next steps:

- **Laudato Si** remains a powerful grounding, spiritually, scientifically, ethically and politically.
- **Spiritually** – honesty in how we as Christians have viewed nature as our domain. Asks us not to fear, but to witness and act. Para 9 - It is liberation from fear, greed and compulsion.
- **Scientifically** – written with climate scientists - engages honestly with the root causes driving climate change, and focuses on transformation of these activities. Engages openly with what most of us try to avoid, including that current forms of economic growth are the main drivers of CO2 emissions.
- **Ethically** – because it talks honestly about **responsibility** and **accountability**, what the USA negotiations spend most energies avoiding. Yet: (IPCC)
 - The 10% of households with the highest per capita 29 emissions contribute 34 –45% of global consumption -based household GHG emissions, while the bottom 50% 30 contribute 13 –15%. Individuals with high socio -economic status contribute disproportionately to emissions 31 and have the highest potential for emissions reductions.
 - 58% of total cumulative net CO 2 emissions occurred between 1850 and 1989 (pre China boom)
- **Politically** – “all of the above” - grounding faith-based advocacy. The faith voice is the hardest to dismiss. They will degrade and arrest the climate activists, the youth, the protesters, but arresting faith communities goes at the heart of communities.

Post COP27 –

- USA audience – the highest developed country and one of the highest historical emitter. Responsibility, accountability.
- **Ground in social justice** – loss and damage – USA support for payment through polluters pays – taxation at extraction, not users
- urgent, rapid and transformative action on **root causes – not just symptoms**
- **NET ZERO – beware – rapid reduction of GHG emissions/CO2 – carbon offsets –**
- **Few denying climate change, just denying we have to really change.**
- human rights based approaches (list a few) – equitable sharing resources – benefits

- i.e.: decentralized RE benefit (Germany)
- question promotion of Geo-climate engineering – technical fixes that avoid transforming root causes – and usually maintain power/money structures.
 - CCS to make FF okay, glass on the arctic, SRM – i.e.: CCS is not ready to scale, expensive, inefficient, locks in FF infrastructure and loses us time – pushing us into ‘overshoot’ –
 -
 - Slower action – overshoot – people and ecosystems die
- Spiritual strength – inspire the story – a **right to a healthy environment**.
 - The way we live now will destroy our ability to live.
 - From sustainability to regenerative, restorative, sufficiency.
- Overcome fear – powerlessness – each of us can help in different ways, personal **witness/political action**.
- **COP27 – making fossil fuels ‘okay’** – question narratives on CCS or CDR – these should only be for ‘hard to abate emissions’.
- bodies to oversee NDC/Paris Agreement implementation
 - **The real work is at HOME** – influence before – once at the COP, mandates rigid.
 - Political pressure on governments to act – none will sufficiently.
 - Organize and Empower –
 - IPCC 6th Assessment Report (Synthesis in March)
 - Every 0.5C, every 0.1C counts –
 - Hold ourselves and our decision makers to account:
 - What we do now defines how bad this will be
 - Manageable or unmanageable, unmanageable