Churches must intensify action on the climate emergency

**A message from the conference “Churches contribution to a sustainable society”, Oslo, May 25-28 2019.**

The conference, organised jointly by the Church of Norway and European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN), gathered representatives from Churches and ecumenical organisations from eleven countries across Europe.

The challenges we face are overwhelming. Climate change, accelerating decline of biodiversity, pollution of water sources and overconsumption of the resources on earth are destructive to life itself. Our present lifestyle is a threat to millions of people today and for generations to come. There is an urgent need to turn away from our current path and seek to follow a new one together.

As the Green Capital of Europe 2019, Oslo is providing a good example of how to create a sustainable lifestyle in a healthy environment. But this is not enough. Other cities should follow, and governments and countries alike.

We hear the call from those who suffers from environmental destruction and climate change. We hear the call from children and youth for urgent action. God, the creator calls us to take responsibility, and care for creation and our neighbour.

We have benefitted during the conference from sharing experience of a number of activities that Churches all over Europe are involved in to take care of creation, advocating for climate justice and demonstrating their need and aspiration for a sustainable lifestyle. In order to be relevant to the challenges of this world, we must do more. We must repent our inaction in the past and react to the current state of emergency. The responsibility is greater for those who are able to do more.

We encourage the Church of Norway to step up its efforts to call the Norwegian government and oil-extracting industry to appropriate action as advocated in the report “Norway’s fair share”[[1]](#footnote-1). This report also aligns with the demands of the children and young people who demonstrated worldwide in March and May.

We call upon the Churches in Europe for further urgent action, speaking out against injustice, choosing the side of the poor and oppressed and the young generation who are calling for a sustainable future. This action may include:

* Participating actively in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.
* Questioning the ideology of unlimited economic growth.
* Providing leadership in transforming our lifestyles to sustainable ones.
* Actively contributing to the discussion in the public demanding urgent and concrete action to combat climate change and ecological destruction.
* Cooperating in these efforts with other churches and other faith communities.
* Reducing the ecological footprints of churches.
* Divesting from fossil fuels and reinvesting in sustainable alternative solutions.

We call upon Churches in particular in this time of climate emergency to work prayerfully towards these goals.

1. <https://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/globalassets/lanserte-rapporter/2018/norways-fair-share-2018_web.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)