

Playing our part to turn the tide on climate change

Your Holiness, Esteemed Faith Leaders, Scientists and Minister.

It is an honour to receive this Appeal.

And I look forward to hearing today from so many inspiring faith leaders from across the world.

Daniele [Guadagnolo] and Federica [Gasbarro] have spoken with great passion, and their energy and sense of urgency echoes so clearly the sentiment I heard throughout the Youth4Climate event in Milan last week.

The climate crisis we face is grave. And entirely of our own making.

A crisis built by human hands.

And it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the challenge.

By the injustice of the situation, where the poorest are suffering the most, having contributed the least to climate change.

But today shows us how we can, and will, turn the tide.

Doing so requires us all to play our part.

Every country and every part of society, mounting a global effort led by those most human qualities, reason and morality. The head and the heart.

Through science we understand the damage we are inflicting on our planet, and its people.

Through morality we comprehend our responsibility to restore the planet and nature.

The Hindu tradition, into which I was born, teaches that nature is divine, and that we must promote the welfare of all living beings.

Religions around the world contain similar teachings.

So we need our youth to continue to call for change, with the passion we have heard today.

We need scientists, with their academic authority, to amplify further their voices in the public debate, and faith leaders to use their moral leadership to make the case for action.

This Appeal does just that, with immense clarity and power.

Forty faith leaders have come together, and working with scientists, have

created a powerful call to action for the world.

I thank you for the months of hard work that have gone into this Appeal.

For the commitments you have made to take action.

And for the strength of your message to governments at COP26.

Our priorities are shared.

I too am committed to keeping the 1.5 degree limit alive, to following the science, driving action in vital areas like power and deforestation, and to delivering for developing nations, including vitally on finance, as justice requires.

This Appeal is a powerful call in support of these efforts.

And I commit to working with you all to spread its message to Ministers, world leaders, and all at COP26, in Glasgow where the world will decide the future of our planet and its people.

And I request you to do the same.

Please spread the message of this Appeal far and wide.

As individuals and collectively, you have a very powerful set of voices.

I am very well aware of the scale and the gravity of the task ahead in Glasgow.

But the strength of purpose I have witnessed here today gives me great hope for our collective future.

So I thank all of you for your work, His Holiness and his team for hosting this gathering, and the Hon. Luigi Di Maio and Italy, our partners for COP – and partners in this initiative, thank you.