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"For the good of our common home, of all of us and of the future generations, in Paris every effort should be directed toward mitigating the impact of climate change and, at the same time, to curb poverty and to bring human dignity to flourish. The two choices go together. Stop climate change and curb poverty so that human dignity flourishes.

—Pope Francis
Comments following The Angelus,
December 6, 2015



COP21: A Show of Cooperation Among 196 nations on the Environment

The 2015 *United Nations Climate Change Conference*, COP 21 or CMP 11 was held in Paris, France, from 30 November to 12 December 2015. It was the 21st yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 11th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

The aim of the conference was to finalize an international 196-nation agreement to reduce global emissions of carbon dioxide, and to address issues such as deforestation and climate finance. Carmelites Andrea Ventimiglia and Eduardo Agosta Scarel represented the Carmelite NGO at the event as "observer delegates," splitting their time to attend the whole two weeks.

The first thing you could appreciate when entering the COP21 was the huge size of the event. It covered several large exhibition halls, housed 40,000 delegates, including media from around the world. We were certainly glad to be wearing comfortable shoes! Overall, the organization of the event has been fantastic with superb logistics, even with the high security, airport-style scanning and very visible armed police presence.

COP21 started on November 30 with the leaders of 147 nations, each offering their thoughts on the process in three minute speeches, which almost inevitably ran over the time limit. Their warm words dominated the media news that day.

The real work started the following day, on December 1, when the negotiators set to work on the 50-page draft text to turn it into something which the national ministers could haggle over in the second week. There were late nights, concessions, hugs, and tears before an agreement was reached. What form it took was still open for further negotiation during the second week.

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During that first week we saw that the developed world was delighted to keep to less than 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures, whereas many of the small island nations want a stricter 1.5°C target. A key sticking point seemed to be the money offered by richer nations to help the poorer nations mitigate and adapt.

There were individual events organized by Governmental Organizations that have really taken on an important role in coming to an agreement: leading the way were France, Indonesia, the United States, India, Morocco, and Japan. On Action Day, France presented a very relevant project proposing financial aid worth two billion euros to help African and other French-speaking countries extend electricity into rural areas with systems that do not require fossil fuels but run on solar, wind or other energy sources. Two positive developments result: the economic development of territories without CO² pollution. The position taken by these countries set a benchmark throughout the process of discussion. In turn the US, Germany, and UK delegations shared in specific side events and scientific data about global warming, the causes and strategies to influence climate policy.

During the second week of COP21, one sticking point was that the negotiators this time seemed determined to get a strong agreement, hardly working past midnight each evening. The process of the negotiations seemed to be much improved from previous COPs, with small groups doing much of the hard work. These subgroups were created to discuss particularly contentious issues, as well as very small 'informal Informals' to edit particular sentences or paragraphs.

The Carmelite "observer" delegates helped their national-fellow negotiators some times in such a process, especially concerning aspects of emission reduction targets. The attention to every detail of the wording was extraordinary, but rather tedious for those not directly involved. It is quite hard to get an overall picture of what was going on. There were dozens of small meetings, most of them apparently discussing particular paragraphs of text on "response mechanisms." It is noteworthy that they had started arguing about these paragraphs long ago, at various times over the past two COPs, and this time they spent about 45 minutes arguing about whether it should be inserted into the draft agreement with or without a bracket (the brackets denoting decisions still needing to be made about then exact choice of words).

Andrea Ventimiglia's job, as a lawyer, was to present our Carmelite NGO position on climate change from a political, social, and scientific perspective at the Plenary Assembly session on December 4th. We also had the opportunity to disseminate and hand out our Carmelite position statements on *Climate Change* and *Sustainable Development* during the side event organized by the Holy See on Dec 9th. On that occasion, Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the delegation of the Holy See and president of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, gave a summary of the Pope's encyclical *Laudato Si*. We also had the opportunity to speak and share our position paper with him.

Eduardo Scarel's job, as a scientist, was to communicate the science to the negotiating teams, interested observers and media, discussing the record breaking temperatures of the recent past years, the increase in risk of southern South America heatwaves and floods, the likely carbon budgets to meet the 2°C target, as well as detailed interactions on the ground in Argentina's Senate to help decision makers.

Eduardo was one of the climate experts in charge of elaborating the Third National (Argentine) Report on Climate Change before the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He also met Monsignor Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (Holy See), sharing a lunch and fractious talk together. The chancellor manifested his gratitude to the Carmelite Order for being committed to the issue of climate change. Eduardo also attended a Climate Change Academic Meeting "University Intellectual Social Responsibility" at the ESSEC

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Related Websites This Issue:

COP 21: Sustainable Innovation Forum 2015
www.cop21paris.org

Financial Times: COP21: Paris Climate Talks
http://www.ft.com/paris-climate-talks?ftcamp=traffic/sem/indepth_cop21/us_google/essence_sem/aud-dev&

Twitter: COP21- Paris 2015
[@COP21](https://twitter.com/COP21)

Franciscans International: What is COP 21? Why are Franciscans Engaging?
franciscansinternational.org

NGOs Outline Position on Paris Agreement
climate-liisd.org/news/ngos-outline-position-on-paris-agreement/

COP21: The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
newsroom.unfccc.int/paris/



Pope Francis, for the first time in Church history, devoted an entire encyclical to the environment, insisting that limiting the impact of climate change is a moral and spiritual issue. Pope Francis called for strong action at the *United Nations 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21)*, warning that failure would be "catastrophic."

The year 2015 is important because of the efforts to transform the world's energy system from a carbon-intensive system that is threatening to destabilize the planet to a low-carbon system that can slow the rise of the planet's temperature.

"The ecological crisis, and the large-scale destruction of biodiversity, can threaten the very existence of the human species," Pope Francis said. "Consequently, the defense of the environment and the fight against exclusion demand that we recognize a moral law written into human nature itself."

People of all ages, all incomes, whether rich or poor, developed or underdeveloped countries and all parts of our planet are recognizing that significant

Climate Change: the Moral Issue of Our Time

changes are occurring in our ecosystem, and they want to do something about it. People are learning how to act as low-carbon consumers and are demanding an end to the fossil fuel age. They are turning this threat into a moral cause that demands an immediate response from business and political leaders.

Moral causes take time to develop. They tend to match the concerns people have and the places affected. Climate change is such an issue, not only in a few parts of the world, but in nearly every part of the planet. People sense that the Earth is in trouble and that means trouble for all species including humans. This is the basis of the moral cause of climate change, and why Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*, has the potential to catalyze a great deal of action to transform our energy system to low-carbon energy across the world.

"We Christians, together with the other monotheistic religions, believe that the universe is the fruit of a loving decision by the Creator, who permits man respectfully to use creation for the good of his fellow men and for the glory of the Creator; he is not authorized to abuse it, much less to destroy it," Pope Francis.

Changing the way we use energy will have an impact on the global economy. However, the fact is that climate change is the greater threat. We must not forget that the natural world underpins everything we do. Climate change will disrupt every sector of the global economy from agriculture and transportation to energy. To prevent this disruption, a fossil fuel-based economy will need to gradually transition to a clean energy economy.

Pope Francis argues for a clear "right of the environment," premised on the idea that "we human beings are part of the environment" and must abide by its "ethical limits." He connected the fate of the human body – shaped as it is by physical, chemical and biological elements – with the fate of the earth.

by Jane Remson, O. Carm.

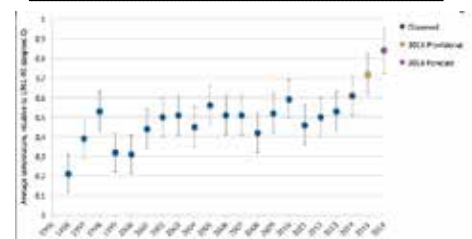


Which Countries Sent the Most Delegates to COP21?

More than 38,000 delegates attended the recent COP 21 climate talks in Paris, France. They represented countries as well as UN agencies, charities, campaign groups, universities, companies and media organizations.

Around 15,000 participants were there on behalf of a particular country with 8,000 more as "party overflow" (last minute additions or unofficial delegates). Brazil brought 800 people, however, only 319 of them are in the official delegation.

The darker the color on the map above, the more delegates from that country. An interactive map, showing the size of delegations for each country is available at carbonbrief.org



2016: Warmest Year Yet Worldwide

The Met Office (UK Meteorological Office) is forecasting that the global average temperatures for 2016 "are likely to be at least as warm, if not warmer" than any year since 1850 when record-keeping began.

At 0.84C above the 1961-1990 average, the Met Office says 2016 "is likely to be at least as warm, if not warmer" than 2015.

According to their annual outlook for the year ahead, 2016 is expected to be between 0.72C and 0.96C above the 1961-1990 average of 14.0C, with a most-likely estimate of 0.84C. (*The above chart shows the last 20 years for comparison purposes.*)

The likely record warming of both 2015 and 2016 is attributed to a combination of rising greenhouse gases and a "smaller" contribution from the strong El Niño underway in the Pacific Ocean. El Niño events normally peak around the turn of the year, meaning an event tends to influence global temperatures for at least two years.

The Met Office says it doesn't expect temperature records to be broken every year, but "the current situation shows how global warming can combine with smaller, natural fluctuations to push our climate to levels of warmth which are unprecedented in the data records."



Eduardo Scarel, O. Carm., and Andrea Ventimiglia, TOC., the observer delegates of the Carmelite NGO to COP 21 held in Paris, France, November 30 - December 12, 2015.

Business School in La Défense, Paris on December 9th where Mons. Sanchez Sorondo together with Jeffrey Sacks, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, gave lectures.

After more than two weeks, on Saturday 12th December, the COP21 Climate Change Summit ended with a consensus among 196 countries to keep global average temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and with a commitment to double every effort to reach 1.5 °C by the end of the century, as recommended by scientific experts. Each country must ratify this document, which will be operational from 2020 onwards. Until then, every country is to review and provide a concrete national plan of decarbonization under the guide of science and technique according to the capacities of each country and within global framework established by this agreement.

The final text, which was introduced a day later than planned, determines a review every five years of the voluntary commitments made by each of the countries (now known as INDCs, *Intended Nationally Determined Contributions*), in order to achieve greater commitment towards decarbonization of the planet and to reach "neutrality" of emissions by the second half of the century. In terms of financing (i.e., who and how the costs of mitigation and adaptation are covered), the parties agreed the commitment of countries with higher capacity and historical responsibility to provide financial support to those countries that suffer most from the consequences of climate change. An annual base of 100 billion dollars was established for 2020 to 2025, the years in which an escalation of the financing should start, which means that financial supports must be improved in the future.

It is worth noting that the issue of Human Rights has been given little relevance in the document, at least far much less than expected by some countries and many social and civil organizations worldwide. It is only mentioned in the preamble of the agreement, recognizing the need to protect the original peoples and the most vulnerable communities in those actions which will be taken in order to combat climate change. The final document will be signed by all members who are part of the convention in April 2016 in New York, and then it will remain open for 18 months for each country to ratify at a national level.

We found that the road from Rio, through Lima, to Paris has been long and winding, though it finally arrived at a benchmark: it will now lead us forward to a decarbonized, more equitable and climate resilient future if we prepare well to walk it. We feel that Pope Francis' appeal to delay no longer in achieving a real and just commitment on the climate has been heard and acted upon. The papal encyclical *Laudato Si* did not provide technical guidance on how to allocate user rights for the atmosphere. However, Pope Francis could shed more light upon the ethical dimension of the climate problem and could provide us fundamental principles to be applied towards finding solutions: i) The preferential option for the poor, the most vulnerable of our global actions against nature; ii) Inter- and intra-generational justice; at the core of his encyclical, Francis asks: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? iii) Common but differentiated responsibility, among the nations. We are all charged with looking for solutions, but not evenly responsible. iv) The atmosphere, the oceans, the whole climate system are all oriented towards the common good in order to preserve nature and guarantee social justice.

We believe that Francis' inspirational teaching did help our national delegates to create a positive environment of hope and good predisposition throughout their discussions and debates. May we all, together take up the pilgrimage to a beautiful shared common home, our earth.

Andrea Ventimiglia, T.O.C. and Eduardo Agosta Scarel, O.Carm.

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