



NOW THE HARD WORK REALLY STARTS

Statement from A Rocha International, 16 December 2016

The agreement reached at COP21 will go down in history as the moment the world reached a consensus on tackling climate change. The importance of this development cannot be emphasised enough.

For the first time ever, a true, global commitment was made to keep the temperature rise 'well below 2 degrees' and to 'pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees' by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That commitment, flawed as it is, is nonetheless deeply significant and represents a strong start.

It is, of course, important that we recognise the enormous efforts undertaken by so many to reach this consensus. And that we properly acknowledge and appreciate fully the contribution of the church and many other religious communities.

But now the hard work really begins and it is vital that faith groups recognise the enormous role they will have in turning the Paris Agreement into reality. This is echoed in the comments made by a US Senior State Department Official who told us ***'the faith community has been essential in making the case that confronting climate change is our moral responsibility. The Christian community has led that effort, helping to push for a strong agreement that protects vulnerable and threatened communities.'***

Most importantly, we must focus on what happens next. We must mobilise Christians around the world to keep on praying, acting and applying pressure until this goal is truly met.

Together, our efforts will be stronger. We must build on our existing partnerships and reach out to others in promoting care for God's creation and love for our neighbours suffering the impacts of environmental degradation.

We must commit to playing our part in celebrating, promoting and implementing the Paris Agreement around the world. We must challenge governments and world leaders in the months and years ahead to build on this beginning – to strengthen it in the ways still needed.

We must speak out and engage the evangelical constituency with these critical issues until humanity's relationship with God's creation has truly returned to the one of balance and restoration that God intended and the Bible envisions.

ENDS

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