



FABC Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences

CCD Climate Change Desk

A Summary Report of FABC 1st Climate Change Regional Seminar - South Asia Mumbai, India - March 3-4, 2015

The Church in Asia is becoming increasingly aware and concerned regarding the ecological problem and its ethical implications. Local churches are collaborating with civil society to care for the integrity of creation. The local concerns of polluting the atmosphere, indiscriminate mining or use of pesticides, dumping of e-wastes now extends to the macro issue of global warming and climate change as well as the need for intergenerational justice. Though the impact of Climate Change has been felt in various countries in Asia the awareness seminars organized by Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) in October 2011 and October 2013 in Bangkok served as an enlightenment and incentive to set up a Climate Change Desk and a Climate Change Committee to focus and follow up this crucial issue at the Asian level. One of the recommendations of the second FABC Climate Change seminar was to organize regional seminars throughout the FABC territory to create a greater awareness especially of the scientific findings related to Climate Change and the urgency for a Church response.

“The purpose of these regional seminars that will all take place in 2015 across Asia is to create a broader awareness as a lead up to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) in Paris in December 2015 where it is hoped that a global binding agreement can be reached to reduce green house gasses in order to keep global warming from increasing in excess of 2 degrees Celsius,” stated Fr Raymond O’Toole Secretary General FABC, in his welcome address.

In this context the FABC and the Climate Change Desk (FABC) hosted the first two day regional seminar on 3rd and 4th March 2015 titled ‘From Lima to Paris’ – Church’s Response at the Janssen Hall in Holy Spirit Hospital in Mahakali, Andheri (E) Mumbai on 3rd and 4th March 2015.

Delegates to this seminar included Archbishops, Bishops, other clergy and interested individuals and experts from across Asia from countries representing Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, totaling approximately 40 participants.

The seminar included an Inaugural Address by His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, a presentation on the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report on the Physical Science Basis of the Climate System and Climate Change by Walter Mendoza from Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change (INECC) who gave us a scientific but laypersons insight into the political implications of Climate Change and its impact from micro to macro level. A panel discussion presenting position papers on Climate Change from countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal and the response of the Church in those respective countries. Other sessions included – ‘Major Issues related to Climate Change moving from Lima to Paris’ addressed by Mrs. Nafisa Goga D’souza of INECC who traced the outcomes of Climate Change negotiations over the years and presented the major concerns for the upcoming Paris meet namely equity, a space for southern community voices to put forth their specific concerns, funding for low carbon transition for developing countries among others. Aux Bp. Emeritus of Dhaka Most Rev. Theotonius Gomes shared about the Church Response to Climate Change thus far and

his personal journey in participating in the various International Climate Change meetings from The Earth Summit in Rio to the recent one in Lima. Dr. Priyadarshini Karve, Director of Samuchit Enviro Tech Pvt. Ltd, Pune and Ms. Deepika Singh, Institute for Community Organisation Research Mumbai, shared grass root experiences of Green Audit among institutions and individual level with college and confirmation students in Mumbai and lastly Dr. Vibhuti Patel Head of Post Graduate Dept of Economics, SNTD Women's University, Mumbai had a discourse on the importance of the gender perspective understanding Climate Change and its impact on women.

The deliberations on the second day included a template for Climate Change Education by Mr. Dominic D'Souza, Associate Director of Laya, Vishakapatnam who has revisited and redefined his template after many field trials over the years , followed by a workshop on 'The Church's Response to Climate Change' animated by Fr. Allwyn D'Silva Secretary of Climate Change Desk-FABC and host organizer of this seminar who then summarized and presented the reports of the groups in the plenary moving towards an action plan. The concluding message to this seminar was given by His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias of Mumbai who has been the supportive backbone to this event and who rightly stated that "our Catholic Spirituality should not be human centered but creation centered" He also urged that Bishops Conferences could set up a Climate Change Desk (CCD) so that it can further facilitate the objectives of the CCD. The framework of this seminar will be used as a template to organize the remaining four seminars in Philippines, Bangkok, Korea and Kazakhstan in the months to follow.

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