

Statement of the Participants of the General Meeting of the Council of Christian Churches in the Barents Region, CCCBR

Inari, Finland
10.10.2018

It is time to act now!

In our letter to the President of the Arctic Council in the summer 2017 the CCCBR asked the Council to see the Arctic in a much wider context than simply as a potential energy source. After the special report issued by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018, we are even more convinced that the world has to move to clean energy and sustainable lifestyles. We understand that hard decisions are necessary. Therefore, we urge our political leaders to act now, not later.

We, members of the CCCBR remind our political leaders that all of us but in particular the Sami and other indigenous peoples living in the Arctic already suffer from the effects of climate change. The effects of the climate change both destroys indigenous peoples' possibility to continue with their traditional livelihoods and the living conditions for those who are already living in poverty in the global south, amid drought, floods and rising sea levels; in short, those who have contributed least to the problem. Now they, too, must be included in finding sustainable solutions for all. We all need hope and willingness to change.

As Christians, we consider it our duty not only to take care of Creation, but also to bless it as members of the Royal Priesthood (1 Peter 2,9). For us it is a matter of spiritual effort to avoid the temptation of individual, corporate, national or continental selfishness. Christianity is primarily about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ "... for the life of the world" (Orthodox liturgy). Accordingly, we are called to sacrifice ourselves, our lives and our material property for the sake of the future generations.

The Sami, who are the indigenous people of this part of Europe and whose representatives are part of this meeting, live close to nature and have a special relation with it. The views, knowledge and experiences from indigenous peoples are valuable in our common work to meet the effects of climate change. All of us have much to learn from these perspectives.

Bishop Olav Øygard
Diocese of Nord-Hålogaland, Norway
President of the Council of Christian Churches in the Barents Region

The Council of Christian Churches in the Barents Region is an ecumenical network which brings together Lutheran and Orthodox Churches in the northernmost dioceses of Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland.