



19th January 2022

Message of Solidarity with young activists

From Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) Rome, I appreciate the courage and determination of the young German activists who are raising their voices in a peaceful, non-violent way calling for civil disobedience towards climate emergency action. I do believe that these youngsters, though may sound unrealistic, the EU leaders and all of us must listen to their voices from the scientific facts that are there for everyone to see. We know how the shifting weather patterns, rising sea levels and more extreme weather conditions are disproportionately affecting the poor and the vulnerable. But let us remember that it is not only the poor in Asia or somewhere else in Latin America getting affected by them. Such calamities are at our doorsteps in Europe now. Remember the flash flood in Germany, Belgium and Netherlands in July 2021 and later in November in Calabria, Italy. Remember the increasing number of hurricanes and flash floods in US in the recent years. For some, blocking motorways may seem to anticipate disruptions which will arise in the foreseeable future for all due to climate change and which are already a day-to-day reality in other parts of the world.

I sincerely hope that the voices of these young German activists are heard at the portals of power at EU and the non-violent *satyagraha*, advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, keep resonating in everyone's ears. Let us take bold measures in the coming years at all levels to prevent further climate crisis and crossing tipping points.

In Solidarity,

Xavier Jeyaraj SJ
Secretary, SJES



Justice and Ecology Office

We at Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network Africa (JENA) welcome and support the courageous actions of so many young people across Germany in support of climate justice. By their activities today, motorists have been interrupted. They are encountering heavy traffic due to the blockades of young climate activists and many of them will arrive to their destinations late or not at all.

At the same time, the disruptions caused by these justified acts of civil disobedience pale in comparison to those caused by climate change. Despite contributing a tiny portion of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, we in Sub-Saharan Africa are among the most vulnerable to the climate crisis. In recent years we have witnessed rainy and dry seasons become increasingly unpredictable, making it much more difficult for farmers and pastoralists to produce food for themselves and their communities. Droughts have led to the loss of livestock, groundwater, and crops in East Africa and the Sahel while floods have had similarly tragic consequences in Central and West Africa. In the south-eastern portion of the continent, the annual cyclone season has become more intense, spawning storms that are increasing in severity and frequency.

The climate crisis on this continent is already measured in lives lost, communities abandoned, and families undernourished, all as a result of consumption patterns that we have not contributed to or benefited from.

Germany and the European Union must take urgent action. Our lives depend on it. The young people blocking German roads today are standing up for us. We hope the German public and government will follow suit.

Fr. Charles Chilufya, S.J.

Director
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Conference of Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar

Statement of Solidarity from the Ecology Coordinator of the Jesuit Conference of India/South Asia

To be published at the beginning of Motorway Blockades by the Uprising of the Last Generation

We express our solidarity with the young people and their supporters in Germany, who are determined to alert the world about the climate emergency.

In South Asia, we are caught up in a maze of climate threats to which definite solutions are required. By 2050, one in every 7 persons in Bangladesh will be displaced by climate change, and up to 18 million people may have to move due to sea level rise. With 25% of its population living in low-lying areas, Sri Lanka is facing threats of sea level rise, and extreme weather events are severely impacting the country's ecosystem, life and livelihood of people at large. Pakistan has been experiencing recurring heatwaves and droughts, riverine and flash floods, landslides and cyclones affecting lakhs of its people. In India, the severe rains, flash floods and landslides in which hundreds died are proof of the reality of the climate crisis we are in, and 25 of 35 States and Union Territories are highly vulnerable to climate-induced floods and drought. Climate change-led agrarian distress and vulnerabilities have accelerated farmer suicides by 35% in 2020 in the country.

We are alarmed by the deepening climate crisis and endorse your commitment to save posterity.

We do recognise that radically and immediately transforming our relationships at all levels are required for placing people, their lives and livelihood, before profits. We are committed to working together to identify concrete solutions to achieve the goal of securing a global system that values our work, our families, our communities, and our environment.

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STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

From Southeast Asia and the Pacific, we welcome these peaceful actions of the young activists in Germany that express their courage and commitment to challenge Germany and the European Union to take bold measures immediately and prevent the breaching of decisive climate tipping points while struggling to stay below 1.5°C increase in global temperature.

In our part of the world, the changing climate is most felt through more frequent extreme rainfall events and stronger typhoons that cause massive flooding and landslides, especially in high-risk coastal and upland communities and informal urban settlers. The extended drought season upsets food security and thus extends the hunger season for the vulnerable. The Pacific Ocean is a key determinant in the global climate system where most immediately the large ocean states are impacted by increasing sea level rise, as well as overfishing and mining. All these are happening as land, water, and ocean degradation is increasing through unrelenting global resource extraction, unsustainable practices and lifestyles, food waste and food loss, and destructive land use conversion that lead to forest and biodiversity loss. These realities feed the climate emergency and human suffering that COP26 failed to change in the coming decade.

The pandemic plunged 75-80 million more Asians into extreme poverty, with low skilled and those living in rural areas facing greater poverty. These are the massive margins that the wealthy countries have to reckon with, while often being more concerned with economic growth, issues of wealth preservation, and over production of food in and for the Global North contributing to environmental degradation, migration, and exacerbating a worsening climate system.

We sincerely hope that the courageous activities of these young activists engage the German public in addressing the climate emergency that is already tangible and real, and from across the lands and seas, we are happy to echo the youth's hopeful engagement in peaceful protest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pedro Walpole".

Pedro Walpole SJ PhD
Director for Research

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE