



Pope Francis today called on the world's 1.2 billion Catholics to join the fight against climate change. In a papal encyclical letter, Pope Francis declared that the science of climate change is clear and that the Catholic Church views climate change as a moral issue that must be addressed in order to protect the Earth and everyone on it.

The encyclical is called "Laudato Si", which translates into "Praised Be" - a reference to a prayer from the pope's namesake St. Francis, who is considered by many Catholics to be the patron saint of ecology.

Speaking to reporters in New York after the statement was issued, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that he and Pope Francis agree that climate change is a moral issue that requires collective urgent actions.

“It is an issue of social justice, human rights and fundamental ethics,” said the Secretary-General , urging the international community to “do far more to help the poorest and most vulnerable members of society, who are suffering most from climate impacts yet had least to do with causing the problem.”

Mr. Ban deeply thanked Pope Francis for taking such a “strong stand” on the need for urgent global action. His moral voice is part of a growing chorus of people from all faiths and all sectors of society speaking out for climate action.

The UN's top climate change official UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres in an official statement today remarked "Pope Francis' encyclical underscores the moral imperative for urgent action on climate change to lift the planet's most vulnerable populations, protect development, and spur responsible growth. This clarion call should guide the world towards a strong and durable universal climate agreement in Paris at the end of this year. Coupled with the economic imperative, the moral imperative leaves no doubt that we must act on climate change now."

Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme Achim Steiner and UNESCO Director General Irena Bokova both issued statements welcoming the move and hailing the Encyclical as a “call for courage and unity” ahead of the COP 21 summit in Paris later this year.