



Submission by Charles Cardinal Maung Bo

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Archbishop of Yangon Archdiocese, Myanmar (Burma)

Your Eminence,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Myanmar, Burma. Coming from a small country in South East Asia, I am honored to present our people's views to this August Assembly.

The world is crossing through a now or never moment. The Paris agreement and COP 21 performed a diplomacy master class. The resolve of the world leaders pulled the world from what one said "ecological suicide". The world, I do hope, is passing through its pivotal moment in history urged by the moral voice of our Pope through "Laudato Si". From the tunnels of despair, the world community has boldly climbed the first mountain, hoping to reduce the global warming by 2°C. We do hope tempo of the Paris will be accelerated in the COP22.

I stand here the representative of Myanmar people. For the last six decades, man made disasters created IDPs refugees and unsafe migration. Millions of our youth were driven to modern forms of slavery.

But in this orgy of oppression by man-made disasters, sadly nature is contributing heavily. Pope has brought to the world notice the dangerous cognac of economic injustice and environmental injustice.

Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to Global warming and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and eco system services like agriculture, fishing and forestry.

("Laudato Si" Chapter 1, Para 25).

This is our first great challenge to my people in Myanmar.

German Watch: Myanmar ranks at a very dangerous Global Risk Index (GRI) among the countries most affected by climate change (1994-2013). We are one of the poorest countries in the world but our risk index is climbing dangerously in the last ten years.

We have had three cyclones, the first one Nargis (2008) killed more than 150,000 and impacted the livelihoods of 2.8 million people. We have had earthquakes, land slides and historic floods that destroyed town after town in 2015 impacting the lives of 1.6 million people.

We never had a cyclone for 75 years before the tropical storm Nargis attacked us. Our people are very poor, their shelters are miserable and when nature attacks them, our poor die silently. World has recognized that our suffering is a man made disasters, through its violent intervention into nature. We are near Bangladesh, a country that has been regularly attacked by nature. Both the countries are very poor.

Unless rich countries agree to reduce the global warming, more people will die. This to me is a criminal genocide, when the poor and the weak are exposed violent nature created by unrestricted use of fossil fuels by rich countries.

So we ask COP 22 to build on the good will of the COP 21 to help poor countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh and Honduras with the carbon credit. AS the Pope as indicated this is a moral crisis – the casualness with which we deal with the death of poor in natural disasters. Rich countries need to pay their penalty to the poor countries where millions have lost their livelihood. This is even in selfish interests of the rich countries. Apart from the conflict refugees, we are increasingly meeting environmental refugees. They will soon start knocking at the doors of the rich countries if their livelihood is destroyed. This could be done through establishing monitoring institutions strengthened as the Pope Francis as indicated:

Because the stakes are so high, we need institutions empowered to impose penalties for damage inflicted on environment. (*Laudato Si'*, Ch: 6 Para 214).

My last plea is this: the most affected people are the indigenous people. I come from a rainbow nation of 7 major tribes and 135 tribes. They live one of the most beautiful natural biodiversity areas but increasingly looted by modern capital. This is not only the nature is destroyed. For the ethnic people the ecosystem is sacred, every tree, every rivers, every land mass is animated by spirit and they worship nature.

Myanmar lost 30percent of the forest last five years, making thousands of ethnic people traumatized. Nature is deeply spiritual to the indigenous people. Market economy has destroyed their meaning system, forcing many to seek succor in drugs. Myanmar is the second biggest producer of Opium, since natural forests are destroyed.

I urge COP 22 to urge countries to sign the UN protocols and conventions on indigenous people. The indigenous people own the resources. Returning the resources to these people will promote greater environmental protection. Indigenous people and the first people are to be our co pilgrims in this great challenge.

COP22 I hope will undertake seriously the role of indigenous people in environmental protection. I also urge countries that have taken resources from the indigenous people pay penalties and restore the eco system.

In summary: We are a nation at the brink. A poor nation, now having Global Risk Index of 2. We have suffered under man-made disasters. We have become refugees, IDPs not only because of war, but because of the destruction of nature. Kindly compensate this poor country, kindly make the world powers to recognize that indigenous people and their rights over resources.

Thank you