

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2016

Contacts:

Shantha Ready Alonso, executive director, Creation Justice Ministries

Mobile: (760)408.0688 shantha@creationjustice.org

Chloe Schwabe, director of the faith-economy-ecology project, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mobile: (202)549-1696 CSchwabe@Maryknoll.org

Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobbs, chair, Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and Rabbi, Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation

301/767-3333 x113

fred.dobb@adatshalom.net

Jose Aguto, legislative secretary, sustainable energy and environment, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Mobile: 202-553-7202 jose@fcnl.org

Faith Communities Respond with Joy to the Release of U.S. 2016 Contributions to the Green Climate Fund

WASHINGTON, DC – A broad coalition of [more than 80 national and regional faith-based organizations](#) has been standing together to urge the U.S. Congress and Administration to invest in the Green Climate Fund. Today, they have a reason to celebrate. President Obama has allocated \$500 million to the Green Climate Fund via the State Department. This fund will support critical projects for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and will help vulnerable people in developing countries address the impacts of climate change. The Green Climate Fund will ultimately will prevent climate loss and damage, and save lives.

Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobbs, chair of Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, said of the funding: “Our uncontrolled carbon emissions have a huge and immoral impact on poorer communities. People of faith and morality must respond in two immediate ways: with needed reductions in society’s carbon footprint, and with adaptation assistance to those most challenged by what we’ve wrought. We commend the U.S. decision to fund our initial share of the international Green Climate Fund -- and ask all people of conscience to support this as a first necessary step in our return to climate morality, and global sustainability.”

Chloe Schwabe, director of the faith-economy-ecology program for the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, expressed concern about the communities Maryknoll serves in Asia, Africa, and Latin America: “For many years, Maryknoll Sisters, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and Maryknoll Lay Missioners have witnessed the overwhelming disruption climate change brings to the lives of smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, and the urban poor around the world. We are especially concerned about impoverished families in Honduras, Myanmar, Cambodia, Haiti, Bangladesh, and the Philippines who face the devastating impact of extreme weather events and sea-level rise. Many extremely poor communities are facing an existential crisis. The U.S. government’s

contribution to the Green Climate Fund will help to slow climate change and change millions of people's lives for the better."

Jose Aguto, legislative secretary on sustainable energy and environment for the Friends Committee on National Legislation, said: "Our nation's first payment to the Fund today is an encouraging reflection of one of Martin Luther King's aspirations when he said, "Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies."

Barbara Weinstein, director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism and associate director at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said: "Jewish tradition teaches us to be responsible stewards of the earth; we are commanded to "till and to tend" God's Creation (Genesis 2:15), and that "if there is a needy person among you...you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient" (Deuteronomy 15:17). We take great pride in the faith community's ongoing advocacy in support of the Green Climate Fund. Today, those efforts are bearing fruit to and strengthening the global response to climate change."

Jasmine Huggins, senior policy and advocacy officer for Church World Service, said: "This is a critical contribution which will send encouraging signals to developed and developing countries alike that Climate Change is a global priority that requires swift, urgent action, and unflinching commitment to the world's poorest, most climate vulnerable communities. As a faith based organization working in more than 30 countries worldwide, CWS has witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, on women and children, and on communities in conflict. CWS is deeply concerned that access to water is increasingly difficult. We are very worried that food security everywhere is being eroded by dramatic change in climatic patterns. The most climate vulnerable communities did not create this problem. They need the solidarity, technical assistance and funding to find solutions. The Green Climate Fund can do this. Funds invested today in preparedness and adaptation can save millions later in disaster relief. US support to the GCF is as strategic as it is morally sound. In the year ahead, US leadership will continue to be critical. We hope that this will be the beginning of a long term, positive and much needed US assistance."

Shantha Ready Alonso, executive director of Creation Justice Ministries, emphasized the moral importance of rectifying climate injustice: "As Christians we are called to love our Creator and love our neighbors as ourselves. In our globalized world, loving our Creator means showing reverence for the whole planet's ecological integrity, and loving our neighbor includes caring for the wellbeing of all God's people across the world. As an industrialized nation that has disproportionately contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, we are morally called to love our neighbors by rectifying climate injustice with tools such as the Green Climate Fund."

###