



DAY 11

COP26 ECUMENICAL DELEGATION

News from the UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021

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The COP26 Ecumenical Delegation, led by *For the Love of Creation* and the United Church of Canada, will be bringing you highlights, impressions, stories, and hopes each day of the UN Climate Change Conference.

Day 11 Highlights

Notable quotes

"WHEN YOU ARE ON THE VERGE OF THE ABYSS, IT'S NOT IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS WHAT WILL BE YOUR FOURTH OR FIFTH STEP," GUTERRES SAID. "WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS IS WHAT WILL BE YOUR FIRST STEP. BECAUSE IF YOUR FIRST STEP IS THE WRONG STEP, YOU WILL NOT HAVE THE CHANCE TO DO A SEARCH TO MAKE A SECOND OR THIRD ONE."
ANTONIO GUTERRES, UN SECRETARY GENERAL

The theme of the day is Cities, Regions, and Built Environment (or buildings). As with each day, there have been many activities, some on the theme, and some on other topics.

I got ahead of myself yesterday, as today was the launch of the Beyond Oil and Gas (BOGO) initiative, which is co-led by Costa Rica and Denmark. The initiative commits to the end of oil and gas production and exploration. Other countries/regions who were part of the launch were Ireland, Wales, Italy, Sweden, Greenland, New Zealand, Quebec, and California, with an indication that talks with others to join are ongoing. This is an effort to take leadership on the transition from fossil fuels, which continues to be a hesitation at COP26, despite the goals of the conference and targets being set for emissions reductions.



Day 11 Highlights

Sessions today highlighted the important roles of cities, urban areas, and sustainable buildings mitigation and adaptation. 70% of total greenhouse gas emissions come from cities. In the city of Toronto, for example, 40% of its emissions are from buildings due to things like inefficient energy use (lack of energy retrofiting), use of fossil fuels for energy, and unsustainable building materials. As well, pollution and poor building design and development already impact health and safety, particularly of urban Indigenous and racialized communities, and children. The climate crisis will increase those impacts significantly. It is essential, then, that cities start taking the lead in energy efficiency, sustainable buildings, and city and community design that incorporates nature and community-level inclusion.

On another note, yesterday saw a great session called “Catholics at COP26” with an informed panel to discuss how COP26 looks to them, what some of the Catholic and other faith initiatives have brought to the event, and some theological framing for this moment. Faith communities certainly showed up at COP26, and it’s wonderful to see their leadership and global reach. Dr. Lorna Gold from the Laudato Si’ Movement stated that there are really two COPs – the negotiated outcomes COP and the People’s COP – and there is such a disconnect between the two. However, witnessing to hope, as Dr. Carmody Grey shared, is part of our faith, and the Church must refuse to settle for a poor outcome to COP26.

Stories, Impressions, Reflections

“It’s hard to believe business and finance leaders when they haven’t delivered before. We simply don’t believe it. But I am here right now to say: prove us wrong. I am actually here to beg you to prove us wrong. God help us all if you fail to prove us wrong. God help us.” Vanessa Nakate, Ugandan youth activist.
I feel like sitting with these words, even though they are painful to take in.

Today, our delegation listened to the voice of another young woman, Indigenous poet Tanaya Winder speaking the poem “Stone Mother.” She speaks of tears creating a lake and words as seeds to be planted with care. “Follow our lead, for we have always been well versed in survival.” A speaker today from Nigeria said you don’t need much to survive. Why can’t we do with less and live with the earth and each other in ways that we all have enough?

Hope and lament certainly run through this event and through this moment. We pray that they both carry us forward as we continue to work for climate justice.

To follow COP26 online go to the COP26 Youtube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/c/UNClimateChange>

