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Video Message from the Cardinal Secretary of State on the occasion of the “Climate Adaptation Summit” (25-26 January 2021)

On behalf of Pope Francis, I am pleased to extend a cordial greeting to all of you and wish to assure you of his closeness, support and encouragement in these days of intense effort for a fruitful outcome to this Climate Adaptation Summit.

We all know that «climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day».[1]

The scientific data at our disposal clearly show the urgent need for swift action, within a context of ethics, equity and social justice. The transition to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is a problem not only of the domain of technology, but also a question of consumption patterns, education, and lifestyles.

By the way, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation activities are necessary but not sufficient. These initiatives are complementary to those commitments focused on strengthening adaptation and resilience. This is a moral and humanitarian imperative, especially since the greatest negative consequences of climate change often affect the most vulnerable: the poor and future generations. While the poor are the least responsible for global warming, they are the most likely to be affected, since they have the least adaptive capacity and often live in geographical areas which are particularly at risk.

Complementarity mitigation and adaptation activities require coming up with a global and shared long-term strategy based on precise commitments, capable of defining and promoting a new model of development and built on the synergistic bond between the fight against climate change and the struggle against poverty.

Nothing can be accomplished by working alone. The Covid-19 pandemic teaches it very well. As stated by Pope Francis at the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) last September: “we are faced with a choice between two possible paths. One path leads to the consolidation of multilateralism as the expression of a renewed sense of global co-responsibility, a solidarity grounded in justice and the attainment of peace and unity within the human family, which is God’s plan for our world. The other path emphasizes self-sufficiency, nationalism,

protectionism, individualism and isolation [... which] would certainly be detrimental to the whole community, causing self-inflicted wounds on everyone. It must not prevail".[2]

Mitigation and adaptation activities are strongly connected with this two-fold perspective. They ask for a stronger international cooperation committed to a low-carbon sustainable development, as well as to investing in strengthening technologies and resilience, and transferring them under fair conditions, particularly to the most vulnerable countries. May we make the response to climate change an opportunity for improving overall living conditions, health, transport, energy and security, and for creating new job opportunities. This task is difficult and complex, but we know that we have the freedom, intelligence and capacity to lead and direct technology and to put it at the service of another type of progress: one that is more human, social and integral. We should show also that we have the political will and motivation to advance this forward-looking endeavor.

We are standing before a momentous challenge for the benefit of the common good. We have no alternative but to make every effort to implement a responsible, unprecedented collective response, intended to work together to build our common home.

On behalf of His Holiness, Pope Francis, I express my best wishes for the work of this Climate Adaptation Summit, hoping that it will be fruitful and successful.

Thank you for your attention.

[1] Cfr. Pope Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'*, on care for our common home, 24 May 2015, n. 25.

[2] Pope Francis, *Video-Message to the 75th Meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations*, 24 September 2020.
