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Pope's message for the 22nd meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change (COP22): the fights against climate change and poverty are linked

Pope Francis has sent a message to the Moroccan minister for foreign affairs, Salaheddine Mezouar, who will chair the 22nd meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change (COP22), taking place in Marrakech, Morocco from 7 to 18 November. In the text, the Holy Father recalls that the Paris Agreement has set out a clear path requiring the collaboration of all the international community, and he quotes extensively from his encyclical *Laudato si'*, exhorting the promotion of a culture of care for the environment, and reiterating that the fight against climate change is closely linked to the war on poverty.

The following is the full text of the message:

"The current situation of environmental degradation, closely connected to the human, ethical and social degradation that unfortunately we experience every day, calls upon all of us, each with his or her own role and competences, and leads us to meet here with a renewed sense of awareness and responsibility.

The Kingdom of Morocco hosts the COP22 a few days after the entry in force of the Paris Agreement, adopted less than a year ago. Its adoption represents the important awareness that, faced with issues as complex as climate change, individual and / or national action is not enough; instead it is necessary to implement a responsible collective response truly intended to 'work together in building our common home'. On the other hand, the rapid entry into force of the Agreement strengthens the conviction that we can and we must employ our intelligence to guide technology, as well as to cultivate and also to limit our power, and to 'put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral', able to put the economy at the service of the human person, to build peace and justice and to safeguard the environment.

The Paris Agreement has traced a clear path on which the entire international community is called to engage; the COP22 represents a central stage in this journey. It affects all humanity, especially the poorest and the future generations, who represent the most vulnerable component of the troubling impact of climate change, and call us to the grave ethical and moral responsibility to act without delay, in a manner as free as possible from

political and economic pressures, setting aside particular interests and behaviour.

In this regard I convey my greetings to you, Mr. President, and to all the participants in this Conference, along with my strong encouragement that your work in these days be inspired by the same collaborative and constructive spirit expressed during COP21. After this latter there began the phase of implementing the Paris Agreement: a delicate moment of exchange, entering in a more concrete way into the formulation of rules, institutional mechanisms and the elements necessary for correct and effective implementation. These are complex aspects that cannot be delegated solely to technical expertise but which require continual political support and encouragement, based on the recognition that we are ‘we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalisation of indifference’.

One of the main contributions of this Agreement is that of stimulating the promotion of strategies for national and international development based on an environmental quality that we could define as fraternal; indeed, it encourages solidarity in relation to the most vulnerable and builds on the strong links between the battle against climate change and that of poverty. Although there are many elements of a technical nature involved in this field, we are also aware that it cannot all be limited solely to the economic and technological dimension: technical solutions are necessary but they are not enough; it is essential and proper to take into careful consideration also the ethical and social aspects of the new paradigm of development and progress.

Here we enter into the fundamental fields of education and the promotion of lifestyles that favour sustainable models of production and consumption; and we are reminded of the need to promote the growth of a responsible awareness of our common home. In this task, all the States Parties are called to give their contribution, along with the non-party stakeholders: civil society, the private sector, the scientific world, financial institutions, sub-national authorities, local communities, indigenous populations.

In conclusion, Mr. President and all participants in the COP22, I convey my best wishes that the works of the Marrakech Conference be guided by that awareness of our responsibility that must drive each one of us to promote seriously a ‘culture of care which permeates all society’, care in relation to creation, but also for our neighbour, near or far in space and time. The lifestyle based on the throwaway culture is unsustainable and must have no place in our models of development and education. This is an educational and cultural challenge which must respond also to the process of implementing the Paris Agreement if it is to be truly effective. While I pray for the successful and fruitful work of the Conference, I invoke upon you and all the participants the Blessing of the Almighty, which I ask you to convey to all the citizens of the countries you represent”.