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A working group of the
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To Mr. Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on the presidency of the nineteenth Conference of the Parties (COP19) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). You are in possession of a unique opportunity to shape the future of the world in which we live. As representatives of Danish churches, we were deeply involved in the 2009 COP15 in Copenhagen. The experience of that conference inspired in us a committed responsibility to engage in the on-going negotiations on climate change. We know the challenges and the possibilities of hosting such a high level meeting.

With the international honour of hosting the conference comes an international responsibility. Your first responsibility is to the long-term wellbeing of your own citizens. As you know, climate change will impact Poland in a number of ways: mainly, prolonged days of high frost during winter and droughts in the summer. We in Denmark will experience similar consequences.

Your responsibility as president of the COP goes beyond your own citizens. As the parable of the Good Samaritan in the New Testament reminds us, we must not turn our backs when we see suffering around us, but instead react with the power and abilities we have within our reach. In churches around the world, people are raising their voices, teaching us about the current impact of climate change in their communities. Vulnerable and marginalised Christian communities and their fellow countrymen are suffering from the impact of climate change at this very moment. Food insecurity is increasing. Weather events are becoming more extreme. Science tells us that poor and vulnerable communities will be under even more pressure in the near future.

Religion gives us the moral obligation to act. We know that the problem of climate change can only be solved through international negotiations and strong, ambitious leadership.

Holding the presidency of the COP, you have the responsibility to further talks and negotiations that hinder damaging climate change. You have a responsibility toward those who will not be able to adapt to these changes. We ask that during the negotiations you remember those most vulnerable and poor people of the world experiencing climate change most dramatically.

We are aware of the Polish government's partnership with a number of companies. While we acknowledge that all sectors of society need to be involved in the transition to sustainable development, we are concerned about the government's choice to work with a number of companies that are known for their highly negative impact on the environment. We hope that these partnerships will not limit the access of others to the negotiations. The positive attitude shown to non-state actors should result in openness to civil society actors as well. How can we find a common solution if we do not involve the representatives of those who are living with the consequences of our actions?

We ask the Polish Government to take an ambitious leadership role during the COP and put differences and short term economic interests aside during the two weeks of negotiations. We urge the government of Poland to set an example for humanity and seek ambitious climate policies within Poland and the EU.

God gave humans the role of stewards to care for the integrity of creation. Our great wish as representatives of the churches in Denmark is for Poland to facilitate talks, curb conflicts, and inspire all parties to take on this stewardship role.

With sincere wishes of success,

The Climate Change and Environmental Group
of the National Council of Churches in Denmark:

Bishop Peter Fischer-Møller, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Bishop Sophie Petersen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Greenland

Keld Balmer Hansen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

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