

Adopted from New York Times Article by GAIA PIANIGIANI

About 60 mayors from around the world gathered here on Tuesday and pledged to combat global warming and help the poor deal with its effects, at a conference swiftly organized by the Vatican barely a month after Pope Francis' sweeping encyclical on the environment.

The two-day conference, which also focused on fighting forms of modern slavery, was not the first time that the Vatican had organized a meeting on the issue. But it was the first time that it specifically invited local officials, hoping to mobilize grass-roots action and maintain pressure on world leaders for action ahead of a global summit meeting on climate change scheduled for December in Paris.

In Tuesday's declaration, the mayors pledged to urge world leaders to pass a "bold climate agreement that confines global warming to a limit safe for humanity, while protecting the poor and the vulnerable from ongoing climate change that gravely endangers their lives."

Welcomed with great excitement, and some silence, Francis took the stage on Tuesday to thank the mayors for coming as protagonists from the "peripheries," in his usual emphasis on the world's forgotten areas and their people.

"We can't say that the person is here, and the care for the environment is there," he explained in Spanish during his brief appearance to salute the conference attendees. "This is what I was trying to express in the encyclical 'Laudato Si', " We can't separate man from all else. There is a mutual impact."

"It's not a green encyclical; it's a social encyclical," Francis said, commenting on his own much-debated work and explaining that creation and humanity are deeply intertwined.

Francis told the audience he was worried about the uncontrolled growth of poverty belts around expanding cities with no care for the environment, and the ensuing suffering for those who inhabit the areas.

He also expressed his concern about the "rebound effect" for human beings of the deforestation of the Amazon in Brazil, and for how the trafficking of people, forced labor and prostitution thrive in poor areas. And he urged the mayors sitting in front of him to pay increasing attention to the problem of environmental destruction.

The mayors had, in fact, taken their task very seriously.

"His Holiness did not convene us here to ratify the status quo, but in fact to upend it," Bill de Blasio, mayor of New York, said in his 10-minute speech. "It's increasingly clear that we, the local leaders of the world, have many tools, more than we may have in fact realized, and we must use them boldly even as our national governments hesitate."

In most countries, mayors can impose regulations to make buildings more energy efficient, encourage public transit and promote a green culture among residents, all crucial components of the larger challenge to combat climate change.

"Political and business leaders are not taking climate change seriously enough," Gov. Jerry Brown of California said in an interview before the conference. "The hope is that local government leaders can create pressure on the national leaders."

On Tuesday, some leaders recounted their cities' experiences with natural catastrophes worsened by environmental degradation. Others spoke of social emergencies, like the mayor of the smallest town invited, Lampedusa, the tiny Italian island close to Tunisia where migrants crossing the Mediterranean have arrived by the thousands in recent years.

The mayor of Stockholm, Karin Wanngard, took the opportunity to urge climate negotiators to eliminate the use of fossil fuels and switch to renewable energy sources.

Some of those invited announced new measures for their cities, like Mr. de Blasio, who pledged to reduce greenhouse emissions in New York by 40 percent by 2030.

Put the above article on the Projector. Students compete in teams to find the words.

Teacher's Script:

Find exactly these words:

1) audience

2) town

3) fossil fuels

4) attention

5) debated

Find synonyms of these words:

6). worry [Answer: concern]

7). lecture [Answer: speech]

8). global warming [Answer: climate change]

9). get ride of [Answer: eliminate]

10). poor [Answer: poverty]

The following are paraphrases. Find the word.

11). The person who is the leader of a city or town {Answer: mayor}

12). To live in a place. {Answer: inhabit}

13). A group of people who make the laws for a country [Answer: government]

14). The twelfth month of the year [Answer: December]

15). people who move to another country to live there permanently [Answer: migrants]