

Buddhists unite on climate change

by [Lucy Schouten](#) in the [December 23, 2015](#) issue

[\(The Christian Science Monitor\)](#) The Dalai Lama and 14 other leaders representing roughly 1 billion Buddhists signed a statement expressing support for the Paris climate talks at the end of November.

Some observers believe this is the first time so many Buddhist leaders have expressed a united opinion. The signers themselves—from Japan, Mongolia, France, the United States, Vietnam, and other nations—call their climate statement an unprecedented show of Buddhist unity, according to the *Huffington Post*.

“We are at a crucial crossroads where our survival and that of other species is at stake as a result of our actions,” the leaders wrote. “There is still time to slow the pace of climate change and limit its impacts, but to do so, the Paris summit will need to put us on a path to phase out fossil fuels.”

The Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective statement received further support from Chan Khong, a Buddhist disciple at Plum Village in Vietnam.

“We must take action, not out of a sense of duty but out of love for our planet and for each other,” she wrote, as quoted in *Lion’s Roar*, a Buddhist publication.

The declaration is the product of a council of Buddhist leaders formed in September to contribute to the United Nations climate talks in Paris, according to *Lion’s Roar*. The Buddhist leaders do not set out a policy in their document; rather they described their view and called on political leaders to take action. They hope to lower the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels and phase out fossil fuels.

They end by expressing solidarity with Catholic and Muslim leaders who have already released formal statements on climate change and noted interest in an upcoming Hindu Declaration on Climate Change.

Religious leaders have been weighing in on climate change this year, but this is one of the most unified calls from a religion’s leadership. A group of Muslim leaders

published the Islamic Climate Declaration from Istanbul in August, but it was much less representative of the broader Islamic world than the statement by Buddhist leaders.

“There is no Islamic pope,” Fazlun Khalid, an Islamic environmental activist who helped draft the declaration, told the BBC. “The declaration is like a trigger to say, wake up wherever you are, wake up and take care of the Earth.”

*This article was edited on December 8, 2015.*