



# Christian Conference of Asia

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## CCA's Statement on World Environment Day–2022

**Let us re-commit ourselves to the care of creation, of our 'Only One Earth'**

It is an irrefutable fact that climate change continues to be one of the most systemic environmental threats that humankind has ever faced. In the quest for rapid growth, it is the environment that is usually compromised the most. The adverse effects of environmental damage are borne by already-vulnerable populations, such as those living in poverty, ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous peoples, internally displaced peoples and migrants, people with disabilities, older persons, and children. Such communities, which have already been historically subject to discrimination, suffer the brunt of pollution, environmental degradation, and climate change. Over 40 percent of the world's civil wars in the last seven decades have been linked to control over natural resources such as land, oil, and water, and this is only set to become worse as climate change exacerbates the scarcity of such precious resources.

The right to a healthy environment must be at the centre of decision-making processes that relate to achieving a just and sustainable future. A right to a healthy environment includes clean air, safe and sufficient water, sanitation, healthy and sustainable food, a toxins-free environment, a safe climate, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. It also includes the rights to environmental information, participation in decision-making processes, and access to justice with effective remedies.

World Environment Day, which falls on 5 June each year, is an opportunity to remind people and communities across the world to recall and emphasise the need of an important mechanism through which worldwide awareness of the environment is stimulated and social action and attention is mobilised. The theme for 2022, 'Only One Earth', is a sobering call to the need for more respectful behaviour as we strive to create a just balance among the economic, social, and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) reminds its member churches and councils that the environment in which we reside is God's gift, intended to fulfil the needs of all God's creation. In God's perfect love and goodness, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). The environment is thus not a space or property to be possessed and exploited by the privileged and powerful, but a gift to be received with gratitude with a sense of responsibility for the care of creation. The Biblical message reminds us to be mindful of the impact of degradation on the environment as described in the prophetic appeal posed as a set of rhetorical questions: "Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?" (Ezekiel 34:18) Here we are reminded that there is no place for unchecked abuse of the environment; all of God's given gifts are to be used with gratitude and with a great sense of responsibility.

The call of World Environment Day-2022, 'Only One Earth', is a call for urgent transformative actions to protect the environment in conjunction with our concerns on human rights violations in various forms, climate disruption, toxic pollution, biodiversity loss, and the rapid transmission of zoonotic diseases to humankind, such as COVID-19. We are in a race against time that will require political will, innovation, inclusion, tolerance, values and ethics, financing, and partnerships. Today, the world possesses the scientific understanding, technical capacity, and financial means to combat climate change and establish safe and healthy environments for all human beings. As Christians who are called to be better stewards of God's creation we must model our sense of stewardship of the earth as part of our worship to God and our love for our fellow beings. The challenge is not that we do not know what is to be done, but has to do with how quickly we can achieve it. Let us, on this World Environment Day, re-commit ourselves to the care of creation, the care of our unique planetary home, the 'Only One Earth' that we have.

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General Secretary, CCA