Testimony of Bishop Callon Holloway
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Good morning Chairman Markey, Congressman Upton and members of the committee. Thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am Callon Holloway, Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). I am here today representing both the ELCA, the largest Lutheran denomination in the United States representing nearly 5 million people, and the National Council of Churches (NCC), an organization that represents 35 Christian denominations, 100,000 congregations and approximately 45 million people in the United States.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to discuss the perspective of the faith community on global climate change with you. Specifically, I will address the need for US legislation to address the challenges that the poorest people in the world are already facing due to the warming of our earth's atmosphere. As you may know, a broad and diverse coalition of faith communities, including Evangelicals, Protestants, Catholics and others, stand united in the conviction that the U.S. Government must aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring that any climate change legislation provide for the most vulnerable here at home and around the world. As you draft climate change legislation in the coming weeks, I urge you to include language supporting mechanisms for international assistance for moral, economic and security reasons.

For many people of faith, the conviction to be good stewards of the earth is grounded in God's command in Genesis to keep and till the earth (Genesis 2:15). We do not view the riches of our earth simply as material to be exploited, but rather as treasure we are called to protect, preserve and utilize in sustainable ways for the well-being of God's people and God's creation. The Christian community also approaches the issue of global climate change through the lens of justice. Just as Christ worked for justice on behalf of the marginalized and impoverished, we are also called to serve those most in need and add our voices to the chorus of those living in extreme poverty who had the least to do with causing global climate change but will be most severely affected by the subsequent changes.

In its most recent report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that by 2020 – in just eleven years – rising temperatures caused by global warming may reduce yields of rain-fed agriculture in Africa by up to 50 percent. As the climate grows warmer, food insecurity will increase in places where food is already scarce, like many countries in Africa, and will also rise in parts of the world that have seen progress in the fight against hunger like Latin America. One to two billion people will face water scarcity this century and by 2020 approximately 250 million will face water scarcity in Africa.

Millions of individuals around the world will be at greater risk of contracting diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and West Nile virus because of climactic changes and increasing ranges for the insects that carry these disease vectors.

Other impacts predicted by the IPCC and others include increased migration, both within and outside of national borders, due to increases in natural disasters such as storms and long-term drought. In addition, predicted rising sea levels will likely lead to the permanent displacement of entire communities and even entire nations in the case of small islands. The cultural impact of these displacements, together with the impact that they have on the economic security of the displaced, lend a sense of urgency both to efforts to mitigate climate impacts now and to efforts to provide adaptation assistance that may enable people to stay in their own communities. In addition, large numbers of environmental migrants, coupled with increased competition for scarce resources among people and nations, are potentially destabilizing forces that cannot be ignored.

A 2008 report by the National Council of Churches outlines the impact that many of these changes will have on people living in poverty around the globe and also on the ministries of U.S. churches and our global partners. For example, the ELCA supports relief, disaster response and development work in many countries through our World Hunger Appeal, which provides financial assistance to the work of our global communion, the Lutheran World Federation; to national Lutheran churches in developing countries; and to U.S. based development agencies, Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service (CWS).

I have been privileged to see the results of the Churches response to global climate change though my synod's companion relationships with Lutheran churches Tanzania and Brazil. In Tanzania, I met farmers struggling to cope with extreme weather patterns and unpredictable rain falls. Lutheran ministries are working with pastoralist groups to diversity their livelihood by supplementing traditional animal grazing, threatened by desertification, with cultivation of drought resistant crops like cassava. And, as the glaciers and ice caps melt on Mount Kilimanjaro, reducing flows in rivers that supply water to nearby communities and endangering a major source of tourism dollars to the region. The Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service is working with local villages to increase alternative household waters supplies through rainwater harvesting and sand dams. Our work in Tanzania is only one example of how our ministries are already confronting the effects of a changing climate; there are many more.

While Churches and other non-governmental organizations are working assist communities in ongoing development and adaptation measures, the reality, as the NCC report concludes, is that the challenges are just too great for us to manage alone. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Development Program estimate that the cost for developing countries to adapt to climate impacts could be up to $86 billion per year. Governments of both developed and developing nations must play a role in addressing these needs.

The U.S. must assume a leadership role in an effort to help developing countries prepare for the impacts of climate change that we can no longer prevent. While our great nation represents a mere five percent of the global population, we are the world's largest historical emitter currently responsible for approximately a quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. This reality is a justice issue.

The U.S. also has tremendous economic and security incentives for acting now. In today's global economy, the United States relies on other nations to be stable and prosperous. International adaptation assistance will be vital to ensure the economic and political stability of dozens of developing nations throughout the world, many of which are also hardest hit by the current global economic crisis. This assistance is critical to help countries manage the societal strains that will result from floods, drought, famine and migration. It will also provide emergency relief assistance for disasters that are inevitable as a result the earth's warming. Lastly, international adaptation assistance can help mitigate the emissions of developing countries, helping to ensure they develop in a sustainable, low carbon manner.

A number of proposed bills in the House during the 110th session included international adaptation assistance in the form of financial support to developing nations. Congressman Markey's 2008 iCAP bill (H.R. 6186) included significant assistance for those living in poverty around the world in the form of $185 billion over the life of the bill. Congressman Doggett also included international adaptation assistance in his 2008 bill, Climate MATTERS (H.R. 6316), with more than $33 billion dollars going to developing countries from 2012-2018. In addition, Congressman Waxman also included the need for international assistance in his climate principles that were endorsed by 152 members of the House of Representatives. The faith community also worked closely with Senator Warner last year in developing international adaptation assistance language for the Climate Security Act (S. 2191) that was voted on last June. This bill included more than $320 billion dollars over the life of the legislation for those in developing countries.

Building on this clear precedent to address the international concequences of global climate change, I urge the Committee to include the following legislative objectives related to international adaptation assistance in any climate bill:

(1) The funds should be appropriately targeted in terms of recipient countries; they should go to the "most vulnerable developing countries" (with the legislation including an agreed-upon definition of what that means) and no more than 10% should go to any one country in any single year.

(2) Local communities must be engaged in a participatory process through transparent mechanisms with adequate monitoring and evaluation.

(3) The funds provided should be in addition to current funding levels of official development assistance (ODA).

(4) The funds should be appropriately targeted to adapting to climate impacts, including impacts related to drought, natural disasters, diseases, refugees, etc.

(5) Legislation should also address the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing nations by reducing emissions from deforestation and providing for transfer of clean energy technologies.

The US must acknowledge its responsibility for this global crisis and should commit to providing substantial financial support reaching between $7 and $21.5 billion a year by 2030 and further increasing with time.

Some will say we cannot afford to make this sort of investment at a time of global economic turmoil. I would counter that we cannot afford *not* to.

As a matter of justice, adaptation assistance for vulnerable communities abroad must be a part of any climate policy. We look forward to working with the committee as you develop legislation that protects God's good creation and all of God's people. Thank you.