

Statement by the Salesian Conference – “ENERGY FOREVER”

Inspired by the Christian humanism of Don Bosco and St. Francis de Sales, we believe in the goodness of God’s creation. God in a loving act of creation has given us a common home and invites us to be one family looking to the future with a sense of shared responsibility and realism while looking to the past with deep acknowledgment that caring for this common home is our original vocation. We acknowledge that our world is in the grips of a climate emergency and this is calling us to urgent decisions and action. Now is the time to change to clean, green, 100% renewable energy sources.

We adopt the 2030 SDG Agenda – the Global Community’s commitment to People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Participation – as the internationally agreed framework for sustainable development. Hence, it is imperative that this framework engages all our educational, pastoral and developmental initiatives worldwide. Unsustainable production and consumption are pushing our world and its ecosystems beyond their limits — undermining their ability to provide resources and actions vital to life, development, and their own regeneration.

We accept the lead given by scientific evidence, the teaching of *Laudato Si’*, the dynamism/witness of the Salesian Youth Movement, the environmental action of ‘Don Bosco Green Alliance’, and the youth voice of our times. Furthermore, the Preventive System, integral to our Salesian educative spirituality, with its four dimensions – the educative, religious, cultural and vocational – show that ecology and care for our common home are constituent parts of this approach. Thus, we put our resources at the service of the young as they learn and speak out in the name of Climate Transformation and Justice.

We recognize that, on a daily basis, everybody can adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, for example, by choosing alternative transportation systems, renewable energy sources and modifying consumption patterns in order to reduce our carbon footprint.

We invite the upcoming General Chapter 28 of the Congregation to set as a target that the Salesian Congregation moves all its Provinces to 100% renewable energy sources by 2032 at the latest. We likewise call for a commitment by the Congregation not to invest in fossil fuels.

We propose that this process puts in place an Environmental Advocate and Policy in each of our Provinces and promotes ‘Don Bosco Green Alliance’ as a movement for sharing resources and learnings. This includes developing and adopting an educational model for sustainable development in all our institutes (Schools, TVETs, Formation houses): Greening the training content, Greening the campus, Greening the workforce, Greening technology, Green research, Green energy, Waste management.

In the words of Pope Francis: *The Young wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis.*

Therefore, as Salesians, we affirm that:

Urgent action on climate change is central to delivering sustainable development. Tackling climate change through adaptation and mitigation has enormous potential to drive sustainable development outcomes on the ground. Among the projects we support and undertake will include these approaches:

- Mitigation and investment in renewable energy;

- Action on forests and land use that not only supports climate action, but also protects and builds sustainable livelihoods for communities; it safeguards the human rights of many indigenous groups and essential natural assets and the environment;
- Investment in adaptation measures can help strengthen and build resilient economies and reduce poverty. (UNDP support document to the implementation of sustainable development goal 13, 2016)

Moreover, as Salesians, we understand that:

We have a rich legacy based on the responses of our founder to the young people of the 19th century, who were disadvantaged by the early years of the industrial revolution. Don Bosco’s commitment to create a better environment for the young people of his time is the model for us today in our efforts to meet the needs of the young people of the 21st century. The 2030 Agenda pledge that no one will be left behind, and the global community’s commitment to reach first the furthest behind, are contemporary expressions of our own predilection for the “poor and the abandoned”.

Energy is central to sustainable development. It accelerates social progress and enhances well-being. Choices around energy resources, as regards their production and consumption patterns, impact the climate. In the words of Pope Francis, *“Civilisation needs energy, but energy use must not destroy civilisation.”*

In particular, energy-related issues add to the burdens of the poor. For example, the lack of access to electricity often results in a lack of access to education. Thus, in line with the UNDP sustainable support to SDG7, we identify 3 concrete Action Areas:

- Access to clean and affordable energy
- Promotion of energy efficiency
- Adoption of renewable energy practices and technologies.

Furthermore, as Salesians, we recommend that:

In order to prepare Salesians, lay people, the young, and the Salesian family, in the spirit of the recent teachings of the Catholic Church (Laudato Si, Amazon Synod, etc.), the climate emergency, and our pastoral Salesian preventive system, we shall:

- Revisit our approach to youth ministry, initial and ongoing formation, pastoral ministry, accompaniment and administration;
- Promote in our educational projects and in all our Salesian presences:
 - Greening the training content
 - Greening the instructors – green facilitators
 - Renewable energy training resources
 - Promoting e-learning
 - Waste management (WEEE & MSW) green jobs in the sector
 - Greening the campuses
 - Energy efficiency through sensors, LEDs, Energy saving stoves, biogas, and other appliances
 - Daylight promotion through designs
 - Fruits trees, flowers and grass in the campus
 - Solar as source of energy
 - Biogas and sewer bio-digester construction and application
 - Natural Resource Management
 - Waste water management
 - Rainwater harvesting
 - Solar water pumping

- Solar water treatment
- Strengthen international advocacy and lobbying efforts within both the UN and the member states that they follow through their commitments to Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Aim as part of our international collaboration to design and support projects that prioritise an increase in access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy.
- Recognise that energy and climate change responses need to be inclusive and gender-responsive in order to ensure that benefits and opportunities are equally distributed.
- Strive to work using a collaborative approach that recognises the value of solidarity and the need for subsidiarity, so as to strengthen the Provinces in their initiatives in the area of renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Work with our partners to offer support for scaling-up climate resilient livelihoods, skills and education for the poor and vulnerable. In our farms and agriculture schools, we will prioritise regreening the land and pioneer alternative green types of agriculture.
- Perform, at the Province level, an audit of how our land, our soil and other natural resources are being used/unused and whether this is in line with organic production, good practice for soil protection and healthy food production.
- Incorporate into our responses to emergencies, the management of climate-related risks and action for further reduction of disaster risk, in all stages of governance, planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Work with local people and relevant agencies to secure forest rights and land tenure for indigenous and local communities as an effective climate solution.

Finally, as Salesians, we conclude that:

All environmental actions are important, no matter how small or trivial they may seem. Individual actions, performed collectively by a large number of people in a community, add up and encourage behavioural change and create new, more sustainable attitudes to energy consumption and lifestyle choices.

“In the simplicity and hard work of daily life they transform him into an educator who proclaims to the young ‘new heavens and a new earth’...” (C63)