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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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The Holy Father's intervention at the meeting "Climate Change and New Evidence from Science, Engineering and Policy" (Casina Pio IV, 27 May 2019)

The following is the Holy Father Francis' intervention, delivered yesterday at the meeting "Climate Change and New Evidence from Science, Engineering and Policy" organized by the Pontifical Academy for Sciences and held at the Casina Pio IV in the Vatican:

Intervention of the Holy Father

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend a cordial welcome to each of you here: the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and Ministers of Finance from various nations. I am grateful that you have come to the Vatican to discuss an issue of great importance for humanity and the whole of creation. We live at a time when profits and losses seem to be more highly valued than lives and deaths, and when a company's net worth is given precedence over the infinite worth of our human family. You are here today to reflect on how to remedy this profound crisis caused by a confusion of our moral ledger with our financial ledger. You are here to help stop a crisis that is leading the world towards disaster.

Today's global interdependence obliges us to think in terms of one world with a common plan (*Laudato Si'*, 164). In 2015, the nations of the world joined, by mutual consent, in supporting two important agreements: the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement COP21. As the financial leaders of your nations, you have the responsibility of working to achieve the goals that your governments have adopted, for the sake of humanity today and in the future. This is a basic commitment. We must achieve what we have agreed upon, for our survival and wellbeing depend on it.

The signs today are not good. Investments in fossil fuels continue to rise, even though scientists tell us that fossil fuels should remain underground. The International Energy Agency recently reported that investments in clean energy fell again for the second consecutive year, even though experts have consistently demonstrated the

benefits to the human environment provided by clean energy from wind, sun, and water. We continue along old paths because we are trapped by our faulty accounting and by the corruption of vested interests. We still reckon as profit what threatens our very survival.

The effects of global inaction are startling. About two weeks ago, several scientific research centres recorded the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere – one of the key global causes of global warming linked to human activity – as having reached 415 parts per million, the highest level ever recorded. Around the world, we are seeing heat waves, droughts, forest fires, floods and other extreme meteorological events, rising sea levels, the emergence of diseases and further problems that are only a dire premonition of things much worse to come, unless we act and act urgently.

During your meeting today, you heard from leading climatologists and experts. Their message was clear and insistent. We need to act decisively to put an end to all emissions of greenhouse gases by mid-century at the very latest, and to do even more than that. Carbon dioxide concentrations have to decline significantly to ensure the safety of our common home. You also heard that this can be accomplished at low cost by employing clean energy and improving energy efficiency.

Reason itself makes this clear and should serve as the basis for our common action. Let us therefore resolve to work together for these ends:

- to value what is important, not what is superfluous;

- to correct our national accounts and our business accounts, so as to stop engaging in activities that are destroying our planet;

- to put an end to global dependency on fossil fuels;

- to open a new chapter of clean and safe energy, that utilizes, for example, renewable resources such as wind, sun and water;

- above all, to act prudently and responsibly in our economies to actually meet human needs, promote human dignity, help the poor and be set free of the idolatry of money that creates so much suffering.

You are your nations' financial leaders; you keep the books for your respective governments. Before all else, though, we must recognize the ledger of life itself, of human dignity and survival. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, but lose his soul? (cf. *Mk* 8:36). It is a matter of adding things up, the reckoning needed to save our world from indifference and from the idolatry of money. That is what Jesus meant when he told us that the poor in spirit are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (*cf. Mt* 5:3).

It is my prayerful hope that, as stewards of the world's finances, you will agree upon a common plan that accords with climate science, the latest in clean energy engineering, and above all the ethics of human dignity. I ask you to invite your fellow finance ministers around the world to join your efforts and plans. May your work with scientists, technicians and the peoples of your nations, especially the poorest, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Once the common plan is agreed upon by your governments, I hope that we may meet again, to thank God for his mercy that enables us to correct our path before it is too late. Time is of the essence. We await your decisive action for the sake of all humanity.

With these thoughts, I once more express my gratitude and I invoke upon all of you an abundance of divine blessings. Thank you!