

Statement – 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si’ Partners Gathering/ Encounter

Date: Friday, 16th May 2025

Location: Munyonyo Martyrs Shrine

Dear brothers and sisters, friends of creation, gathered here today,

We come to the close of this meaningful two-day Encounter and celebration of the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si’* with hearts full of gratitude to God for what has been, what is and the new that is emerging as we come together for the good of our common home.

We thank God for the gift of the life and ministry of Pope Francis. His vision, leadership and the legacy of care for creation through his Encyclical, *Laudato Si* changed perspectives on ecology and motivated new initiatives in the entire world.

As partners gathered here today, our journey began yesterday with a reflective opening prayer and an introduction to *Laudato Si* by the Kampala Archdiocese Pastoral Coordinator, Fr. Ambrose Bwangatto, grounding us in faith, purpose, and unity.

We were reminded of the deep wisdom embedded in *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ powerful 2015 encyclical calling on all people of good will to embrace ecological conversion. Its title “*Praise be to you*” echoes the Canticle of the Sun by St. Francis of Assisi and reminds us of our interconnectedness, inter-dependence and inter-relatedness with all of creation.

We reflected on the misinterpretation of dominion over the earth, as outlined in Genesis, and the urgent need to correct course by embracing care, justice, and responsibility for our common home. The encyclical's message is not just theological it is profoundly practical, calling for action at all levels of society.

Over the last two days, we have seen remarkable examples of this call in action as different partners shared their diverse involvements in the fight against climate injustices and in their struggle to restore and heal our common home, reminding us that ecological justice begins with people and communities. With this gathering, a great **Consortium** has emerged, comprising of 17 organizations/ groups who were all present, namely:

1. Kampala Archdiocese
2. Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU)
3. John Paul Justice and Peace Center (JPIIJC)
4. Laudato Si Movement (LSM)
5. CARITAS Kampala
6. Laudato Si Center Comboni
7. Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability Africa (CYNESA)
8. Medical Mission Sisters (MMS)
9. Laudato Si Youth Initiative
10. Franciscan Family
11. Center for Citizens conserving the environment
12. Climate Justice Africa
13. Katanga Ghetto Development Link
14. Eco Brix

15. Bakhita Anti-Human Trafficking Network
16. Radio Maria Uganda
17. The Unlimited Youths (TUY).

For a start, we are taking note of the urgent appeal that Uganda cannot continue to be defined by its dependence on ever increasing plastic use. The time for change is now, each one of us must champion sustainable practices, from saying no to disposable plastic bottles to holding our institutions accountable. And as a network, we have demonstrated today and we will continue to do so, that a plastic free Uganda is possible. We have resolved that in all our meetings and gatherings; we shall carry our own water dispensers and water bottles to limit on littering.

This gathering has not only deepened our understanding of *Laudato Si'*, but also opened new possibilities for collaboration. We leave here today with renewed strength to continue this journey together and with a shared vision of establishing a common mission under this new consortium.

We commit to carry forward the spirit of this encounter with regular dialogues, joint actions, and inclusive movements that are rooted in care for both people and the planet.

In the words of *Laudato Si'*, **“Everything is connected.”** May our actions reflect this truth.

Thank you all, and may we go forth as stewards of creation, change-makers in our communities, and guardians of justice for future generations.