



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

## **EXPO 2017**

International Recognized Exhibition of Astana

### **HOLY SEE THEME STATEMENT**

**THEME: FUTURE ENERGY**

**SUB-THEME: ENERGY FOR ALL**

Holy See Pavilion:

**Energy for the common good:**

**“Caring for our common home”**

The Vatican<sup>1</sup> pavilion, entitled “**Energy for the Common Good: Caring for our Common Home**”, seeks to make the point: **Future Energy** is energy that serves the wellbeing of all humanity and of its world, *our common home!*

### Summary

The pavilion will offer visitors the following experiential, intellectual and spiritual itinerary, providing a deeply human, ethical framework different from other pavilions.

**Step 1. *Energy at the origins of man:*** The cosmic display of energy and light at the origins of humans and their world was also the beginning of God’s creation out of *love!*

**Step 2. *Energy in the life and hands of man:*** Energy meant for all, has been harnessed, distributed and employed in ambiguous ways in history and today, for good and for bad, wasted in wars and injustice by humans.

**Step 3. *Making energy and its use human:*** In support of *integral human development*, and *caring for our common home*, energy can be produced and put to ethical, sustainable use – and there are good examples!

**Step 4. *The Energy within us:*** In conclusion, energy is also within us, tapped in *awe, prayer, meditation* by people of faith for virtuous and holy living.

On the way out visitors will see that the Vatican (Holy See) is supporting a humanitarian energy project in a disaster area.

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<sup>1</sup> While “Holy See” is the accurate designation, nevertheless “Vatican” is better-known and easier to recognize and will therefore be used throughout to designate the Holy See.

# HOLY SEE THEME STATEMENT

## Energy for the common good: “Care for our common home”

### A. INTRODUCTION: A WELCOME OPPORTUNITY

The Vatican regards international events such as Universal Exhibitions and International Recognized Exhibitions as privileged moments for reflection, discovery and dialogue with visitors and with the other official participants about major world issues.

Consistent with its participation in recent EXPOS on water (Zaragoza 2008) and food (Milan 2015), the Vatican is eager to contribute to reflections about the most urgent concern of energy, which affects all countries and the many disciplines - including education, economics, science, politics and diplomacy - that are called to “care for our common home”. This phrase, taken from the title of the environmental Encyclical of Pope Francis, will adorn the Vatican’s pavilion, to be named “Energy for the Common Good: Care for our common home”.

### B. FUNDAMENTAL POSITION: A UNIVERSAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

The distinguishing mark of the Vatican’s pavilion will *to set energy matters within a universal ethical framework*. We anticipate that other pavilions will display startling, impressive innovations in energy science and technology, enticing advances in consumer products, and proud explanations of the energy policies and strategies of States and of major industrial interests. Within this progress, Pope Francis asks, “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?”<sup>2</sup>

This is the core of the ethical framework for energy. How can energy be made truly to serve the common good? Energy is meant to be a collective good with a universal destination: for our entire generation and for all generations to come. This derives ethically from the human dignity that we all share equally. We all share the same rights – in relation to our needs – and the same duties, both to each other and to the natural world. Recognizing that everything is interconnected, we must all exercise our rights and fulfil our responsibilities in an integral perspective: “development of the individual necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of the human race as a whole”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’* § 160. Hereafter, LS.

<sup>3</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical letter *Populorum progressio*, § 43.

### C. FIVE COMPONENTS OF AN ETHICAL VISION OF ENERGY

The **first tenet** of an ethical framework or vision for energy is to acknowledge that the Creator fashioned the universe and all its glorious features for everyone. **The world's energy is meant for all of humanity.** We have not created the earth and its resources: we have received them as gifts to be cherished. But selfishness interferes with the divine intention. There is deep inequality with regard to energy at every level – among individuals and communities, nationally and internationally – in the forms of unequal distribution and consumption of energy and unequal access to related technology. The consequences of energy poverty can be dire in the extreme. The negative impacts of energy production and consumption are also unequally distributed.

The **second tenet** of an ethical framework adds the perspective of responsibility. **All humans are responsible for contributing to the world's energy.** Some people are directly involved in producing and distributing energy and applying it in myriad forms of manufactured goods and vital services. All people are involved in the wise and careful use of energy: we must conserve energy, apply it to worthwhile activities, and not waste it. Decision-makers must see to it that energy is wisely managed for the good of the whole human family. But today's energy situation shows an increasing demand for energy, due in part to scandalous waste: in senseless and hate-filled conflicts, in food wastage at each stage from harvest to distribution and consumption, in the increasing consumption of energy for unnecessary gadgets and harmful, even addictive and vile recreational items. While these might maximize profits, an unsustainable energy paradigm is maintained, which allows a minority to use plenty of energy, while many others lack the minimum energy needed for a decent life.

Pope Francis combines these first two ethical tenets in these words: “Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations” (LS § 67).

The world is made up of countless communities and interests. The **third tenet** asks how they are to relate to each other in this realm. **Energy management must support peace, not lead to conflict.** “Peace is a gift of God and at the same time a task which is never fully completed”<sup>4</sup>, a task and a responsibility for the whole human family. Peace must be built and maintained unceasingly by all, for all; it is the fruit of a delicate and multi-level process. Sadly, energy can readily become a threat to peace. However, energy can and must become part of the solution: energy for peace, peaceful energy, energy for the common good of the whole human family.

Beyond the deep human desire for peace, a **fourth tenet** touches on the ethically preferred application of energy resources. Energy fulfils its destiny by **supporting full, genuine human development.** This is clear, for example, in health and education. With proper

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<sup>4</sup> Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Peace 2011*, § 15.

energy supply, clinics or hospitals can function properly, fragile medicines can be refrigerated properly, urgent surgical procedures can proceed as scheduled, women and infants in complicated childbirth can be saved. In the education sector, if the energy infrastructure is reliable, schools continue to be lit in the rainy or monsoon seasons, and children have proper lighting at home to study and do their homework assignments. *Future energy* requires a broad reflection that encompasses questions such as “what will we use energy for?”, “how will we share the benefits?”, “according to which criteria will we prioritize the access to energy?” and, finally, “how will everyone be involved?” What will build a proper human future will be the values of collaboration, solidarity and social justice – or, in one word, fraternity.

A further, **fifth tenet** complements the first four. **Cooperation among people of all faiths and belief systems** is essential to achieve a shared, viable energy future. Pope Francis addresses all of humanity, not exclusively the adherents to the Catholic faith, when he asserts: “Any technical solution which science claims to offer will be powerless to solve the serious problems of our world if humanity loses its compass, if we lose sight of the great motivations which make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices and to treat others well” (LS § 200). All of us have the same human dignity, and in “mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race”<sup>5</sup>. How encouraging it is to such cooperation put to work – sometimes modestly, nevertheless effectively – “by a countless array of organizations which work to promote the common good and to defend the environment, whether natural or urban. ... Around these community actions, relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges” (LS § 232). Indeed, “the majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity” (LS § 201).

#### **D. THE VISITORS’ JOURNEY IN THE PAVILION**

##### ***“Energy for the Common Good: Care for our common home”***

The following sequence of areas suggests an itinerary of questions and commitment to the visitor. Each visitor will be invited to meditate on the universal destination of energy, how it unfortunately can be abused, its contribution to peace, and how *Future Energy* can be assured for all through everyone’s contribution and collaboration.

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<sup>5</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical letter *Populorum progressio*, § 43.

### ***First area***

On entering the pavilion, images of Pope John Paul II during his 2001 visit to Kazakhstan, of Pope Francis and other Church representatives will welcome the visitors. Their first steps into the exhibit will help them to understand that the universe was created by God, and Creation is a mighty and beautiful act of energy, love and light. “God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). A short cinematic show will explain that our universe is not a pointless chaos but the result of an orderly progression from light / energy to the formation of matter in all its forms. This proceeded according to the Big Bang whose laws are described by modern science<sup>6</sup>. This orderly beginning expresses the universal action of a Creator who finds his creation Good. Just as one God, one law, and one act of creation hold true universally, energy resources are and remain constitutively intended for a universal purpose, and they must be husbanded as such. Light and astronomy will be major elements of the show.

### ***Second area***

Visitors will proceed to an area with photos, videos and texts plus special effects (sound and light) that convey the negative aspects of how energy is generated, distributed and used today. How is the gift of energy being abused and wasted?

### ***Third area***

The visitor will next observe energy-related initiatives that contribute to energy for all and are organized, funded and/or managed by the Catholic Church. Ground-breaking initiatives in remote and poor areas will be included, highlighting today’s efforts of the Catholic institutions and NGOs, including the Church in Kazakhstan, to bring sustainable energy to marginalized and remote communities and homes.

### ***Fourth area***

Complementing and concluding the third area, there will be an area of inspirational, spiritual elements such as art masterpieces (original or high-quality copies). There will be testimonies and photos about the interreligious engagement of the Catholic Church. Finally, the Church’s particular contribution to scientific research, e.g. the Vatican Observatory and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, will also be displayed.

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<sup>6</sup> The Belgian priest-scientist Father Georges Lemaitre, professor of astronomy, was the first to formulate this theory of the origins of the universe. He served as president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

## **E. POSSIBLE SIDE EVENTS**

We shall schedule two conferences to be held during EXPO 2017: a conference on *Laudato si'* along with a concert on the same theme, and an inter-religious conference on spiritual energy. Other events and celebrations could be held at the EXPO site, in the city of Astana, and in other Dioceses of Kazakhstan. Possible dates:

- the second anniversary of the publication of *Laudato si'* (18 June)
- the Dormition or Assumption of Mary, Queen of All Creation (15 August)
- the feast day of Saint Teresa of Calcutta (4 September)
- 2 September: we propose this day as the Vatican's National Day within EXPO 2017

Some events will involve other religions, as the host Country is well known for its efforts towards interreligious dialogue, cooperation and understanding.

Vatican City, 3 August 2016