

The Church of England's lead bishop on the environment, the Bishop of Salisbury, has condemned President Trump's decision to revoke the United States' ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which has been signed by 194 other countries.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury, said: "I am, frankly, very disturbed by President Trump's decision to revoke the United States' commitment to the Paris Agreement, which was a global commitment made in good faith.

"Climate change is one of the great challenges of our times. There is a moral and spiritual dimension with a strong consensus built among the faith communities about the care of our common home. The scientific, economic and political arguments point in the same direction.

"How can President Trump look in the eye the people most affected, including the world's poorest in the places most affected by climate change now, and those affected by increasingly frequent extreme weather in parts of the USA? The leader of what used to be called 'the new world' is trapped in old world thought and action.

"President Trump has not recognised the economic potential of renewable energy which represents a paradigm shift capable of generating sustainable prosperity. What will our children and grandchildren say to us about the way we respond to this extreme carelessness?

"Ours is the first generation which cannot say we did not know about the human impact on climate change.

"For the US government to withdraw from taking responsible action in keeping with the Paris agreement is an abject failure of leadership. The USA emits nearly a fifth of global CO2 emissions. This step is particularly disappointing at a time when China, the world's other mega-emitter of CO2, has committed to deep and sustained cuts in emissions to protect its own citizens as well as the rest of the world.

"In challenging President Trump's decision, 'We the people', including churches and other faith leaders, must speak clearly: this decision is wrong for the USA and for the world. I commend those American churches and faith leaders who are speaking out and organising against this decision.

"How out of touch President Trump is with many of his own people was shown yesterday, when the Church of England helped lead a consortium of shareholders with \$5 trillion of assets under management at the ExxonMobil AGM. A motion was passed overwhelmingly forcing the company to undertake and disclose analysis of what limiting climate change to 2C would mean for its business.

"Shareholders can make a difference. So can citizens and electors.

"I warmly welcomed our UK government's rapid ratification of the Paris Agreement and I trust that the UK cross-party consensus that climate change is a real and urgent problem will remain committed and strong throughout the Brexit process."

