



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2020/0020, 3 February 2020

Climate justice

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall at 2.30pm on Tuesday 4 February 2020 on climate justice. The debate will be opened by Nadia Whittome MP.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Climate justice

1.1 Overview

Climate justice is a movement which sees climate change and its solutions as an issue which should focus on human rights, development and equity. It also has a strong focus on the historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions.

The Mary Robinson Foundation explains climate justice as follows:

Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly. Climate justice is informed by science, responds to science and acknowledges the need for equitable stewardship of the world's resources.¹

In September 2013 the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) published a briefing [Climate justice and international development: policy and programming](#) which summarised the term as follows:

Climate justice recognises the development paradox that those who contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions will be most affected by climate change.

Governments need a sound and workable theory of climate justice that draws on the political theory of justice, on antecedents in environmental and social justice, and on how climate justice links to ideas of developmental justice.

Environmental justice has three components: equitably distributed environmental risk; recognition for people's diverse needs and experiences; and participation in the political processes that create and manage environmental policy.²

There are a number of international organisations and groups campaigning on climate justice. For example, Friends of the Earth Europe [campaigns for climate justice](#) and Greenpeace International [campaigns for climate justice](#). Each of these organisations may have a slightly different interpretation or definition of what "climate justice" means.

Within the UK, a [climate justice fund](#) was launched by the Scottish Government in 2012 and ran until 2017. More recently, there has been discussion on ensuring a "just transition" to a low carbon / net zero future and the Welsh Government has set up a "Climate Just Advisory Group" to focus on this issue;³ while the UK Government has announced that HM Treasury will lead a review into the costs of decarbonisation to look how such costs are distributed in the longer

¹ Mary Robinson Foundation, [Principles of Climate Justice](#) [accessed 3 February 2020]

² IIED Briefing, [Climate justice and international development: policy and programming](#), September 2013

³ Welsh Government, [Written Statement: Committee on Climate Change advice on long-term emissions target](#), 2 May 2019

term. More information on this is available in the [Library Briefing Paper on Net Zero in the UK](#) (16 December 2019).

1.2 Brief history

In 2000, the first Climate Justice Summit took place in the Hague at the same time as the [Sixth UNFCCC Conference of the Parties](#) (COP6) in the Netherlands.⁴ Following this, the [Bali Principles of Climate Justice](#) were launched at the Earth Summit in Bali in June 2002, and endorsed by a [range](#) of environmental, development and indigenous organisations. The Principles included the recognition of the “ecological debt” of developed countries for their greenhouse gas emission; holding fossil fuel companies liable for greenhouse gas and local pollutants; the right of all to access to affordable and sustainable energy and a call for affected communities play a leading role in national and international processes to address climate change.⁵

In 2004 the [Durban Group for Climate Justice](#) was formed and in 2007 the global coalition [Climate Justice Now!](#) was founded.

In 2010, the [Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice](#) was set up with the vision that “by 2020 global justice and equity will underpin a people-centred, developmental approach to advancing climate justice and more effectively addressing the impacts of climate change”.⁶

In 2012, the Scottish Government launched a [Climate Justice Fund](#) in which it defined the climate justice as follows:

Climate justice is a people-centered, human rights approach, which shares the benefits of equitable global development and the burdens of climate change fairly, and builds trust between developed and developing countries

More information on the fund, its achievements and funding allocations is available on the [Scottish Government webpage on the Climate Justice Fund](#).

The Joseph Roundtree Foundation (JRF) brief on [Climate Justice: The science and the evidence](#) published in 2014 also provides further background and history, and discusses the evidence base supporting the concept. It concluded that this was an issue that needed to focus equally on current and future generations:

Climate justice is not only a question of ensuring that nobody is unfairly impacted by climate change now: it also requires recognition that future generations have rights too. This is a concept that remains unacknowledged in prevailing legal systems and demands a comprehensive rethinking of the balance between risks, rights and responsibilities.

Mandy Meikle, a researcher with the Centre for Climate Justice, pointed out that assessing the detrimental effects of climate change on vulnerable groups involves making projections about the future. For this reason, such effects are not considered

⁴ Guardian, [The first climate justice summit: a pie in the face for the global north](#), 16 April 2014 [accessed 18 July 2019]

⁵ [Bali Principles of Justice](#), 29 August 2002

⁶ Mary Robinson Foundation, [Mission and vision](#) [accessed 18 July 2019]

violations of human rights within current legal systems: the people whose rights are infringed might not yet have been born.

This prompted one participant to suggest there should be an 'ombudsman for future generations' to act as an advocate for those most at risk from environmental crisis.

For a more detailed review the JRF published a [Climate Change and Social Justice: An Evidence Review](#) in February 2014.

In December 2018, the [People's Demands for Climate Justice](#) (signed by 292,000 individuals and 366 organisations) called upon government delegates at COP24 in Poland comply with a list of six climate justice demands:

- Keep fossil fuels in the ground.
- Reject false solutions that are displacing real, people-first solutions to the climate crisis.
- Advance real solutions that are just, feasible, and essential.
- Honour climate finance obligations to developing countries.
- End corporate interference in and capture of the climate talks.
- Ensure developed countries honour their "Fair Shares" for largely fuelling this crisis.

A [World Forum on Climate Justice](#) was held in Glasgow in June 2019 (organised by Elsevier in partnership with the Glasgow Caledonian University Centre for Climate Justice), including an address from Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP.

1.3 Use in UK Government / Parliament

Sustainable Development Goals

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) were approved at the UN in September 2015 and include 17 goals to be achieved by 2030. [Goal 13 relates to climate action](#): to *take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* although does not specifically reference "climate justice". The [UK's national review of the sustainable development goals](#), which is a report on the implementation on the SDGs by the UK so far, provides the following information on action taken across the UK in relation to the topic of climate justice:

- The very poorest are likely to be hit hardest and first by the impacts of climate change. The UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) directs resources to both adaptation and mitigation to reduce vulnerability to shocks while reducing global emissions. Under the International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 the UK will prioritise the needs of women and girls in its development spending.
- The Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund has provided 1,097 grants totalling more than £101 million to 658 communities to support their move to low carbon living. The projects themselves cover activities that help deliver Goal 13 such as increasing the energy efficiency of community buildings, food growing, cutting waste, and the expansion of active and sustainable transport options.

Projects aim to improve the climate literacy of their communities and must have a measurable carbon emissions reduction.

- The Welsh Government will establish a climate justice advisory group to explore how the transition away from a fossil fuel-based economy to a low carbon future could impact on Welsh industries and the communities, to collectively develop measures to decarbonise to a low carbon economy that is fair and maximises well-being opportunities for all.⁷

Further information on the Sustainable Development Goals is available in the Library Insight: [SDGs: how is the UK performing?](#) and the Library briefing paper: [UK Voluntary National Review on the SDGs \(6 June 2019\)](#).

Select Committees

The International Development Committee published a report on [UK aid for combating climate change](#) (May 2019) which included a section on *Climate Compatible Development and Climate Justice*. The Report quoted the then Energy Minister (Claire Perry) responding to the question of whether the UK Government had considered adopting a “climate justice” approach:

The language that governs us more is “leave no one behind”, because there are issues of transition in developed countries too; you have tens of thousands of coalminers in Poland who are worried about what they will do as the country moves away from coal.⁸

The Committee went on to conclude and recommend:

In terms of developing policies and designing programmes, the concepts of climate compatible development and climate justice provide helpful guidelines for ensuring that climate finance brings maximum benefits for addressing both the causes and impacts of climate change whilst promoting sustainable development. *The Government should explicitly adopt these approaches and be guided by them in policy development and programme design.*⁹

The Government response was published on 1 August 2019 and “partially agreed” with the Committee’s recommendation as follows:

Government response: Partially agree

The UK aid supports sustainable development that is compatible with tackling the causes and impacts of climate change. The Prime Minister committed at the G20 to aligning all UK ODA with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Trying to disentangle and address the precise contribution various factors make to poverty and the challenges faced by the poor however—as sometimes implied by those who argue for the concept of climate justice—is difficult, and the point is to provide effective help. Effective sustainable development is best done in partnership with governments and communities, producing strong

⁷ HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), June 2019

⁸ Para 67

⁹ Para 69

development strategies that take account of all factors and risks, including climate change.

This is why we prefer to frame this as a commitment to leave no one behind, in line with the UN led 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

When disasters strike, the UK has demonstrated that we are ready to help. The UK is the world's second largest humanitarian donor, doubling funding for humanitarian assistance from £484 million in 2009 to £1.1 billion in 2014, rising to £1.4 billion in 2017. Finding ways to cut the impact and costs of disasters is a major stream of work in DFID including in the run-up to the UN Climate Action Summit in September. We are pleased to be co-leading work on building resilience, recognising how important that is, especially for the poorest communities most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Where appropriate ICF programmes also seek to incorporate nature based solutions For example, programmes which protect mangrove systems or promote sustainable forestry can not only increase the resilience of local populations to extreme weather events, but also preserve and enhance biodiversity and provide stable, environmentally sustainable jobs for the future.¹⁰

¹⁰ International Development Committee, [Twelfth Special Report, UK aid for combating climate change: Government Response to the Committee's Eleventh Report](#), 1 August 2019

2. News items

Ecologist

We need climate justice

8 January 2020

<https://theecologist.org/2020/jan/08/we-need-climate-justice>

Independent

Landmark ruling that Holland must cut emissions to protect citizens from climate change upheld by supreme court

21 December 2019

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/holland-emissions-climate-change-supreme-court-urgenda-dutch-co2-a9256346.html>

Independent

Fossil fuel firms 'could be sued' for climate change

Filipino human rights committee finds world's biggest oil companies have legal and moral responsibilities to act, as Greta Thunberg says children's rights being violated

9 December 2019

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/cop25-madrid-climate-change-greta-thunberg-fossil-fuel-lawsuit-a9239601.html>

Guardian

'Racism dictates who gets dumped on': how environmental injustice divides the world

Five luminaries explain the concept of 'environmental justice' and reveal why, alongside the climate crisis, it is one of the most pressing issues of our time

21 October 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/21/what-is-environmental-injustice-and-why-is-the-guardian-covering-it>

Guardian

Why the world needs an IMF for the climate crisis

Just like after 1945, a new dawn of international bodies is required – this time to protect and empower the global south

4 October 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/04/imf-climate-crisis-global-south>

Telegraph

Worldwide climate strike led by group demanding Britain pay 'reparations' for being first to industrialise

20 September 2019

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/09/20/climate-strike-led-group-demanding-britain-pay-reparations-first/>

3. Press releases

Climate Action Network International

‘Immediately shift investments from fossil fuels into renewables and nature protection and restoration,’ civil society said to the World Economic Forum (WEF) participants.

January 23, 2020

Immediately shift investments from fossil fuels into renewables and nature protection and restoration, civil society said to government, bank and business leaders convening in Davos for the World Economic Forum (WEF).

For the first time, the latest edition of the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) [Global Risk Report](#) identifies failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change as the greatest risk the world faces in the short and long term (10 years).

It took the destruction of forests, farmland, animals and peoples’ livelihoods in Australia and the Amazon and a devastating year of extreme weather events including typhoons and cyclones that killed thousands and ravaged Africa and Southeast Asia for the Forum’s network of business leaders, academics and NGOs to join the chorus in sounding the alarm on the climate emergency.

Yet, key speakers at the meeting came across completely out of tune with the WEF’s main topic this year: ‘Climate change and building a cohesive, inclusive and sustainable economy’. Although the USA is the second largest global emitter of greenhouse gases, President Donald Trump delivered a re-election speech instead of focusing on what his government will do to tackle climate change, the world’s greatest threat.

Additionally, Greenpeace International highlighted in a [new report](#) that 24 banks, regularly represented at Davos, have provided US\$1.4 trillion to the fossil fuel industry since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 through to the end of 2018.

The report also looks at how pension funds and insurance companies, whose CEOs go to Davos, have been propping up fossil fuels. In response to President Trump’s speech, Greenpeace International Executive Director Jennifer Morgan said, “It seems to escape the President that no money can be made on a dead planet - there can be no jobs, no economic growth.”

Against this backdrop, 2019 marked a series of summits that exposed the brazen lack of political will by large emitters to listen to the rising calls from scientists and people to act on the global emergency. These include the UN Secretary General’s Climate Action Summit in New York and the UN Conference (COP25) in Madrid.

Despite the highest ever carbon pollution by fossil fuels in 2018 and 2019 and three scientific reports in the last two years, delivered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), highlighting the best and newest science on potentially devastating impacts on nature and people, governments of rich nations try to muddle through. Added to that, millions of people, particularly youth flooded the streets of many cities, demanding climate and social justice to transform the present system. Yet highly polluting and rich governments still failed to deliver commitments to raise climate ambition and action to limit dangerous climate impacts.

While in 2018 the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C stipulated that limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all spheres of society, the [UN Production Gap report](#) released in December 2019 showed that governments are not committing to what they signed up for in Paris in 2015. They are, in fact, planning to produce about 50% more fossil fuels by 2030 than would be consistent with limiting global warming to 2°C levels and 120% more than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C.

The report makes clear that participants in Davos hold direct responsibility in tackling the climate crisis as it says that the “continued expansion of fossil fuel production is underpinned by ambitious national plans, government subsidies and other forms of public finance.”

Ironically, in the days leading to this year’s WEF where VIPs, royalty and others flocked in private jets to celebrate the Forum’s 50th anniversary and discuss climate change in Davos, Oxfam released its [“Time to Care” report](#). The report makes clear that global wealth is increasingly founded on inequality. It concludes that just over 2,000 individual billionaires control more money than 60 percent of the world’s poorest population. This wealth is generated through the unpaid labor of the poorest women who are also on the front line of climate impacts in vulnerable countries.

In light of all this, civil society, supported by Greta Thunberg and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney, demands that the world’s most influential business and political leaders convening in Davos immediately halt investments in fossil fuel exploration and extraction, end fossil fuel subsidies and completely divest investment in fossil fuels.

Representatives of banks, companies, governments and other institutions currently participating in the WEF must respond to the emergency they acknowledge and build a cohesive and sustainable economy by investing in the energy transition and supporting the sustainable management of nature to achieve resilience.

The wealth owned by only just over 2,000 people is equivalent to 30 times the global annual investments into renewables. This shows how easy it would be to triple investments in renewables annually and start responding to the emergency.

Climate Action Network (CAN) Executive Director Tasneem Essop said:

In what is a first, the WEF Global Risk Report this year identifies climate change as the greatest global risk. This is encouraging, but we would need to see real and meaningful actions to address this risk. This would require the powerful elite; political leaders, CEO's and other decision makers who gather in Davos, to take actions in line with the science, to heed the UN Production Gap Report, listen to the call of the people and immediately stop all investments in fossil fuel exploration and production. The WEF needs to take a stand and end the social license of the fossil fuel industry or risk losing credibility.

Members of Climate Action Network (CAN) said:

May Boeve, Executive Director, 350.org:

Those most responsible for the climate crisis in the first place were gathered at the World Economic Forum. Because of the power and the money represented at Davos this week, we've seen increasingly devastating climate impacts every year. These same wealthy people have stood as a wall separating governments and any real climate action. The climate movement is breaching that wall. It is because of the power of millions of people who took to the streets that these few billionaires are now feeling the urgency of tackling climate breakdown. As we enter the new decade, we need the world to know that the fossil fuel era is over. The financiers and industry leaders would be wise to see the writing on the wall and get out of this toxic industry in their own self-interest, if not in the interest of the planet as a whole.

Gavan McFadzean, Climate Change and Clean Energy Manager, Australian Conservation Foundation:

Australia is the third largest exporter of fossil fuel emissions, behind only Russia and Saudi Arabia. The emissions from these fuels are turbo-charging climate change, which has contributed to our unprecedented bushfire season. If we don't urgently stop digging up and burning coal, oil and gas, future bushfire seasons will be even worse than this year's devastating Australian summer.

Sven Harmeling, Global Policy Lead on Climate Change and Resilience, CARE International:

The climate crisis is a harsh daily reality for hundreds of millions of people, particularly women and girls, a fact which the leaders gathered in Davos must put at the center of their actions. The increasing risk of failure to prevent a complete climate breakdown is a direct threat to us all, but particularly the poorest and most vulnerable. 2020 must become the year where true and meaningful action on emission cuts and climate adaptation substitute lukewarm rhetoric and empty promises.

Dr Kat Kramer, Global Lead - Climate Change, Christian Aid:

WEF participants represent those businesses and interests that have brought the world to its knees. Both the climate and biosphere are in a state of crisis and we have failed to tackle poverty. These powerful participants have the choice to break the world through continuing with business-as-usual malevolent practices. Alternatively, they can help to make a new future, one that respects planetary limits and the rights of all to thrive. This visionary future will require a rapid phase out of all fossil fuels – gas included – electrification of the global economy through clean renewable technologies and access to energy for all. It will require the rich to consume less. It will require the conservation of

remaining wild places, and restoration of ecosystems that have been destroyed or degraded in rapacious search of profits. The fate of the planet and its people is in the hands of WEF participants. Will they choose to destroy or to create hope?

Jennifer Morgan, Executive Director, Greenpeace International:

The banks, insurers and pension funds here at Davos are culpable for the climate emergency. These money men say they support the Paris Agreement, but since its signing they have been actively undermining the accord by propping up the fossil fuel industry to the tune of US\$1.4 trillion dollars. The finance sector is leading us into another financial crash in the midst of this climate emergency. The regulators must do their jobs before it is too late and financial actors have to start acting now on the scientific and economic warnings.

Harjeet Singh, Global Lead on Climate Change, ActionAid:

Global elites in Davos are trying to disguise their lack of real climate action to reduce emissions and shift away from fossil fuels. They are trumpeting weak and false solutions such as tree planting initiatives and technologies that don't yet exist.

Meanwhile, across our dangerously warming planet, people are already experiencing the agonising effects of the climate emergency. Bushfires continue to rage in Australia, while 45 million people in Southern Africa are facing severe food insecurity brought on by the worst drought the region has seen in 35 years.

It's time for the rich countries and polluting industries that have caused climate change to meet their obligations to those least responsible, but who are suffering the most. We need transformational system change and finance to tackle the crisis, not business as usual and greenwashing.

Sriram Madhusoodanan, Deputy Campaigns Director, Corporate Accountability:

Impacts of the climate crisis are endured daily by people on the global frontlines -- young people, communities of color, people in the Global South, women, and indigenous people. The global movement to demand climate justice is growing and inescapable — and the latest report from the World Economic Forum in Davos further forces the recognition of the grave societal impacts of the climate crisis.

But, the cheap words and greenwashing ploys that some of the world's dirtiest corporations have issued are unacceptable. It is high time that the those most responsible for the global climate crisis be held accountable for the devastations they are knowingly driving, and high time for finance that addresses climate impacts and paves the way for real solutions. People around the world are demanding it. And we are resolved to make it a reality.

Ronan Palmer, Director, Clean Economy, E3G:

It's hard to believe how tone deaf and out-of-tune Davos has been this year. It should have been a gathering of leaders to actually lead change and development, cohesion and sustainability. It turns out to be lots of words, that are just not up the scale of the real horror that has unfolded in Australia, or the creeping destruction of habitats and of livelihoods caused by Climate Change. In a year where there was at last a real political space opened up by crowds of people, of voters, of consumers on

the streets looking for change, we just got more words. In the year we really need to act to save our economies and standards of living, we got no action. Davos should be better than this. The fact that it isn't is a serious indictment of world business leaders.

Sue Willsher, Senior Policy Advisor for Climate Change at Tearfund, said:

The fact that climate change has been highlighted as a key risk facing the world today at Davos is hugely encouraging. But the sheer lack of inaction, disguised in 'green policies' by the businesses, leaders and governments represented there, is astonishing.

If we are to have any chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees (in line with the Paris Agreement) we need sharp and urgent cuts in emissions from governments and businesses in 2020. This includes an end to investments in fossil fuels and a switch to renewable energy.

Young people hitting the streets in their hundreds of thousands have shown us they want action on climate change and are willing to make changes in their own lifestyles, but as individuals we can only do so much. How will history judge all of us on what we have done to combat climate change?

Friends of the Earth International

COP 25: Resurgence of carbon markets threatens people, politics and planet

2 December 2019, Madrid, Spain

As the international climate talks open today in Madrid, Spain, the world faces the re-emergence of a threat that could derail urgent action on the climate crisis: [Carbon Markets](#) are back on the table as a proposed 'solution' to reduce emissions.

Dipti Bhatnagar, Climate Justice and Energy Programme Coordinator for Friends of the Earth International, from Mozambique, said:

Big polluters must be rubbing their hands in glee that carbon market mechanisms, which further dilute the already weak and inadequate Paris emissions targets, are back on the agenda. We will fight them tooth and nail. The climate crisis is already devastating lives. Emissions are still rising. Now is not the time to offer an escape route to polluting Northern country governments and big oil.

Tackling the climate crisis requires a total, radical and immediate shift away from fossil fuels and a huge flow of finance from the global North to the global South. This is needed to repay the ecological debt, for a just transition and for loss and damage. We need an economic and political system which serves the needs of people, not profit - nothing less than radical system change.

Bhatnagar continued:

Carbon markets fail to deliver emissions reductions or adequate climate action and impact horrifically on Indigenous Peoples and

local communities. They only serve to strengthen corporate power and impunity, deflect responsibility from rich historical polluters and prevent urgent and equitable action on climate change.

With an abrupt change of location a month ago, COP25 becomes the third of four consecutive UN climate conferences to be held in Europe. As a result, Southern participation continues to be undermined. Northern governments and corporations will be hoping for less scrutiny from communities in the South so they can try and push through dangerous false solutions. Friends of the Earth International and our allies in the climate justice movement will be watching.

Meanwhile, the world's attention will likely focus on European concerns and not on the repression experienced in Chile and across Latin America. While talks are underway in Madrid, civil society movements are meeting in Chile to march against neoliberal policies and climate injustice - their concerns must not be forgotten.

Karin Nansen, Chair of Friends of the Earth International, from Uruguay, commented:

We stand in solidarity with the people of Chile in their struggle against neoliberalism, inequality and violent repression. This COP must not allow President Piñera's government to build a positive reputation abroad while oppressing his people at home. Chile should not be the COP Presidency.

COP25 talks come hard on the heels of massive global mobilisations on 29 November. Greater numbers are expected on 6 December in Madrid as well as Chile.

Blanca Ruibal from Friends of the Earth Spain said:

Peoples are rising up across the world, from Spain to Chile and beyond. We say to governments and political decision makers: ignore this wave of people power at your peril. The future of our planet is at stake. We will continue fighting for it and stand with the peoples who are most affected.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

New report offers details on how to maximize efforts to achieve both climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals

12 November 2019

With the global challenge of climate action threatening progress made on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new report from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) offers ways to better serve both the world's efforts to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the SDGs to ensure better lives for all people.

The new analysis, entitled "Maximizing Co-benefits by Linking Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Action," is an extended summary report of the first [Climate and SDGs Synergy Conference](#)—formally the "Global Conference on

Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”—held from 1-3 April at UN City in Copenhagen. The new summary report expands on the key immediate action areas identified by Conference participants and aims to promote coordinated implementation of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, across all levels and sectors.

According to the report, the cooperative implementation needs a multi-level, bottom-up integration of climate action and the SDGs, aligned with human rights. This would tackle the climate emergency and ensure that the world’s most vulnerable groups—women, persons with disabilities, older persons, youth, refugees and migrants are not left behind.

Progress towards low-carbon, climate-resilient societies and economies is already happening, as seen in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) of the Paris Agreement and the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the SDGs put forth by countries. Also promising is that there is growing awareness of climate change among governments and other stakeholders, and adaptation and mitigation mechanisms are more deeply embedded in governmental structures. On the other hand, there are still gaps in many developing countries and progress remains slow.

The development of low-emission economies requires deep structural changes to global energy, transport, water and food production systems in order to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth. Achieving these will be even more difficult with the effects of climate change that we are already seeing, including more severe temperature variations, sea level rise, floods and droughts. These hazards make the world’s water, agriculture, health and forestry sectors more vulnerable.

Furthermore, implementing specific SDGs would be directly beneficial in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Particularly, speeding up the energy transition (SDG 7) and more sustainably managing forests and other terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) would directly and positively affect greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, sustainable industrialization (SDG 9), sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices (SDG 2) and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) contribute to low emission pathways and sustainable development.

In addition, limiting global temperature increase to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius would be beneficial to the SDGs related to resilience and disaster risk reduction, such as poverty (SDG 1), infrastructure (SDG 9) and urban settlement (SDG 11).

Climate change is already causing extreme weather conditions, leading to human and socioeconomic costs and reversing development gains. Therefore, the actions indicated in NDCs and NAPs, as well as the targets of SDG 13 on climate action, should be integrated into policies, programmes and budgets across all sectors.

Read the full report online

here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/climate-sdgs-synergies2019>

House of Commons International Development Committee

16 July 2019

The International Development Committee (IDC) identifies serious failings in the preparation and presentation of UK's first Voluntary National Review of progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Government's Voluntary National Review casts doubt on its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

- [Read the Report Summary \[HTML\]](#)
- [Read the Report's Recommendations and Conclusions \[HTML\]](#)
- [Read the Report \[HTML\]](#)
- [Government response: UK's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Voluntary National Review](#)

Report findings

- The UK has taken a long time to get around to producing a VNR (some countries have produced two since 2015) and so expectations were naturally that much higher, and the disappointment that much greater.
- The Government had 19 months between committing to a VNR and producing it. Despite this, the timeline was squeezed and most of the work – and virtually all of the engagement activity – was left to the last few months, preventing stakeholders from meaningfully engaging in, or influencing, the final report.
- The engagement activity recommended by the UN – consultation with stakeholders like human rights institutions; trades unions; business and industry; NGOs; parliamentarians and UK academia – was not only late but also 'ad hoc' and superficial.
- The VNR itself was selective and partial, relying on cherry-picked data, context-free snapshots and positive vignettes, to present a 'good story'. It skirted discussion of some serious issues, for instance: food security, poverty trends and EU withdrawal. The Secretary of State for International Development told the Committee there was "nervousness" around the Government "marking [its] own homework".
- The implications of these failings of process and substance in the VNR is that the UK is not taking the SDG initiative seriously – as integral to, and coherent with, the Government's overall agenda. This is also evident in making DFID the lead coordinating department, as opposed the Cabinet Office, whose role is "supporting collective government, helping to ensure the

effective development, coordination and implementation of policy". The IDC will return to this matter later in the year.

In consequence, today's IDC report calls for:

- Steps to implement the UK's commitment to the SDG agenda (such as: a convincing statement at today's UN High Level Political Forum; giving overall responsibility for SDGs to the Cabinet Office; building the Goals into cross-government planning, spending review and reporting processes), and
- A commitment at the HLPF to: producing a further Review in three years' time, with a more collaborative, consultative and comprehensive VNR process; and delivery of a more rigorous, data-driven, contextualised evaluation of the UK's performance against the SDG targets next time.

Chair's comments

Stephen Twigg MP, Chair of the Committee, said:

Today, the UK will present its first Voluntary National Review to the UN. This should have provided a clear indication of how far the UK has progressed towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, a global agenda which includes the most crucial challenges facing the world today, across the full spectrum of social, economic, political and environmental issues. However, we have found both the preparation and the presentation of the VNR to be gravely flawed.

We fear that the priority and resources committed to the VNR process – and the whole SDGs agenda – reflect a lack of engagement and understanding at the heart of, and throughout, the UK Government.

We do welcome the progress the UK is shown to have made, and signs of some efforts made to incorporate sustainable development across government departments. But this progress has been uneven, and knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals across Government remains limited. Our sincere hope is that the Government has learned important lessons from this first VNR process and that, at today's presentation at the HLPF, will kickstart a fresh commitment to the SDGs.

The Climate Emergency: "...this year the answers are different."

[Speech by Sir James Bevan](#), Chief Executive of the Environment Agency.

Royal Holloway University, London, 24 October 2019

4. Parliamentary material

Debates

Commons petition debate: Amazon Deforestation

HC Deb 07 October 2019 | Vol 664 c425WH-

<http://bit.ly/2LXNG2k>

Commons debate: Climate Change, the Environment and Global Development

HC Deb 10 July 2019 | Vol 663 c363-

<http://bit.ly/32l5xGQ>

Commons debate: Economic Growth and Environmental Limits

HC Deb 10 July 2019 | Vol 663 c177WH-

<http://bit.ly/2Sf8x2Y>

Commons debate: Climate Change

HC Deb 24 June 2019 | Vol 662 c506-

<http://bit.ly/2X61yix>

on the [*Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019*](#)

Commons debate: Sustainable Development Goals

HC Deb 11 June 2019 | Vol 661 c592-

<http://bit.ly/2WF4dzc>

Commons debate: Environment and Climate Change

HC Deb 01 May 2019 | Vol 659 c225-

<http://bit.ly/2GOzuoj>

Commons debate: UN Climate Change Conference: Government Response

HC Deb 16 January 2019 | Vol 652 c439WH-

<http://bit.ly/2Dejgoq>

PQs

[Climate Justice](#)

Asked by: Angela Crawley

What recent meetings he had with his international counterparts on climate justice at the UN General Assembly.

Asked by: Deidre Brock (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP)

What recent meetings he had with his international counterparts on climate justice at the UN General Assembly.

Answered by: The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Zac Goldsmith)

Climate change and biodiversity were top priorities for the Government at the recent UN General Assembly. The UK played a leading role, with the Prime Minister announcing a doubling of our international climate finance to £11.6 billion and a major focus on backing nature-based solutions to climate change.

Angela Crawley

The International Development Committee has specifically recommended that the UK Government should adopt the concept of climate justice to guide their climate spending, but this Government seem scared to even utter the words: not a single International Development Minister has ever said the words “climate justice” in this Chamber. Why are this Government so intent on ignoring this recommendation?

Zac Goldsmith

Given what we know about the science in relation to climate change and what we know about what is happening to biodiversity, habitat and species loss, it is absolutely right that this Government’s focus should be on tackling and preventing climate change, both through technology and by doing everything we can to protect and restore the natural world. If we do not do that, no amount of money from this or any other aid Department will properly compensate poorer countries for the devastation that will follow.

Deidre Brock

I am afraid that the Minister failed entirely to answer my hon. Friend’s question. Will he tell the House when he will follow Scotland’s lead and the recommendation of the International Development Committee and explicitly adopt the concept of climate justice to help to guide climate mitigation spending?

Zac Goldsmith

I thank the hon. Lady for her question, but I do not agree that I did not answer the previous one. We provide £5.8 billion for climate finance at

the moment, and that will double to at least £11.6 billion. The whole basis of that programme is, in a sense, climate justice. It is about helping developing countries to prepare for climate change, to adapt to the inevitable changes and to fight the causes of climate change to minimise the impact.

Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con)

By 2030, the destruction of the world's important habitats and the threat of climate change could force more than 100 million people into poverty. Does my hon. Friend agree that urgent action is needed to tackle deforestation throughout the world?

I commend my hon. Friend for all her work on this issue. She is absolutely right, and that is why, when the Prime Minister spoke at the UN, he emphasised the importance of investing in nature as a means of tackling climate change. She mentions forests, and they are an obvious example. About 1 billion people depend on forests for their survival, and protecting and restoring forests alleviates poverty, tackles climate change and helps to reverse the biodiversity loss that we have seen over recent years.

James Gray (North Wiltshire) (Con)

First, may I welcome my hon. Friend to his well-deserved place at the Dispatch Box? The environmental world rejoices that he is there, and I know he will do an outstandingly good job. Does he agree that it is a perfectly legitimate use of aid funds to spend money on climate change reduction and climate change battling as well as on the mitigation of the worst effects of climate change? That helps in a global sense, and it also helps to mitigate the worst effects for the poorest people in the world.

Zac Goldsmith

I thank my hon. Friend for his kind words. He is exactly right to say that we will have no hope at all of tackling poverty globally if we do not take a bigger interest in preventing climate change and the annihilation of the natural world that we have seen in recent decades. The people on the frontline in relation to nature destruction are the world's poorest people. They are the people who depend most directly on the natural world, so he is absolutely right.

Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab)

I welcome the Minister to his post. I am sure he will agree that the food and farming system has a major impact on climate change in developing countries, from deforestation to water use and mountains of food waste, but that is not really talked about in DFID terms except for some small livestock programmes. Can he assure me that it will be at the top of his agenda as a Minister in this Department? [912510]

Zac Goldsmith

As we heard from the Secretary of State in his first answer, we have committed serious sums of money to enabling smallholders around the world to adapt to climate change. We have also launched an initiative at

the UN called the Just Rural Transition, which is about shifting the way subsidies are spent around the world on land use, away from unsustainable use towards sustainable use, just as we are doing in this country. The OECD tells us that the 50 top food-producing nations spend £700 billion a year subsidising land use, on the whole very badly. If we can shift even a fraction of that, it will have a much bigger impact than all the world's aid departments put together.

HC Deb 02 October 2019 | Vol 664 cc1209-1210

Climate Change

Asked by: Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)

What support his Department provides to help developing countries manage the effects of climate change. [911986]

Asked by: Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con)

What steps his Department is taking to prioritise (a) tackling the effects of climate change and (b) protecting the environment in developing countries. [911991]

Asked by: Rachel Maclean (Redditch) (Con)

What steps his Department is taking to prioritise (a) tackling the effects of climate change and (b) protecting the environment in developing countries. [911996]

Answered by: The Secretary of State for International Development (Rory Stewart)

The distinction traditionally made between development, environment and climate is a false distinction. Unless we tackle climate change, there will be 100 million more people living in poverty in the next 15 years. I returned this morning from New York, where I have been discussing with the Secretary-General of the United Nations our commitment to greening our development spending to ensure that everything that we spend is Paris-compliant, to double the amount the Department for International Development will spend on environment and climate, and to double the effort we are putting into this subject.

Neil Gray

I thank the International Development Secretary for his answer and appreciate his focus on the importance of tackling climate change, but does he accept that it needs to be in addition to traditional development support? To that end, will he examine the Scottish Government's climate justice fund, which seeks to support those who have done the least to cause climate change but who are to be hit first and hardest by its effects?

Rory Stewart

It is clearly true that many of the people who are suffering most are from some of the poorest countries in the world that emit very little carbon, which is why a great deal of our emphasis is on the question of

resilience. I have just returned from Kenya, for example, where we are working with pastoralists whose grassland is being eliminated and with people in Lamu who are losing mangrove swamps. Such countries are not emitting carbon but are suffering from its effects.

Alex Chalk

On that precise issue, what is being done to improve resilience in water security, to ensure that that does not become a source of conflict, or indeed disease, in future?

Rory Stewart

The question of water security is absolutely central. It poses the danger of conflict, for example in the Indus valley and along the headwaters of the rivers that flow into Egypt on the Nile. It is also an area where technology can help, however. We have become much better at preventing water waste. In many developing countries, 50% of the water is wasted; technology is part of the answer to this problem.

Rachel Maclean

My right hon. Friend has made it clear that some of the poorest countries in the world will be the most affected by climate change. I hope to visit Bangladesh in September as part of a delegation; what will his Department be doing to help countries such as Bangladesh mitigate the effects of severe weather, including the monsoon season?

Rory Stewart

The Department for International Development has partnered the Government of Bangladesh for many years, particularly because of the very severe impacts of flooding. We should pay tribute to the improvements in Bangladesh. In floods in the 1970s, more than 100,000 people could be killed in a single event; a similar event today would kill only a few hundreds. That is a huge tribute to Bangladesh's improvement in resilience and also in emergency management.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting) (Lab)

I have worked with flood victims in refugee camps around the world; the despair is palpable and tragic, and it is simply inhumane that these same people will be hit the hardest by further extreme weather conditions. This House declared a climate change emergency; will the Government today outline how they will financially support the world's most vulnerable and plan for dealing with future tragedies?

Rory Stewart

We will be doubling the overseas development fund, which will be spent particularly on climate resilience, and Britain will be co-hosting with Egypt the UN summit on climate resilience in September. That was the focus of my discussions with the UN Secretary-General yesterday, and indeed at the Abu Dhabi summit two weeks ago.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op)

Does the Secretary of State agree that if we are truly to tackle climate change we need to ensure that the money that we give—the vital

money that we give—goes to the right place where it matters? Will he look at innovations such as digital currencies, especially blockchain, which enables the money to be tracked to make sure that it does not go into a dictator's slush fund or to train Spice Girls in Nigeria?

Rory Stewart

Blockchain technology has very interesting potential. I recently saw in World Food Programme distribution in camps in Jordan how blockchain is dropping the price by tens of millions of dollars a year. However, there are still some risks attached to such technology.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP)

The right hon. Gentleman is perhaps the most diligent and committed Secretary of State for International Development that I and my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee West (Chris Law), who is still in New York with the Select Committee, have had the opportunity to question at the Dispatch Box. What steps is the right hon. Gentleman taking to solidify and embed the new priority of climate change in his Department? Will he commission a Green Paper or a White Paper to keep the Department moving in that direction, irrespective of what happens under a new Prime Minister in the coming weeks?

Rory Stewart

There are three things that we hope will embed the priority. First, this is a whole of Government approach. The Prime Minister announced at Osaka that we would be the first major international development agency to be fully Paris-compliant. Secondly, we have now announced from this Dispatch Box and inserted into our planning that we will double our spend on climate and the environment. The third thing is to ensure that we have the experts on the ground. In Kenya, for example, the focus is on environmental experts, and in Ethiopia it is on forestry experts. It will be funding, Government strategy and staffing that will make the difference.

Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire) (Con)

Does my right hon. Friend agree that agricultural practice and land use are key to mitigating the effects of climate change? Will he say something about the training programmes that DFID pays for and that are doing such good work in helping people to understand the way forward?

Rory Stewart

DFID is doing an increasing amount of work on that issue. For example, its agricultural extension work is helping farmers to work out how to produce crops without depleting the soil or using excessive water. Perhaps the biggest challenge in agriculture is the relationship between pastoralists, particularly people herding cattle and oxen, and sedentary communities right the way across Africa, where climate change and agricultural practices are leading to conflict from Nigeria to South Sudan.

Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab)

The UK is the largest contributor to the World Bank's climate investment funds, yet civil society groups say that, compared with UN funds, those funds are undemocratic, opaque and dominated by donor countries. The Secretary of State has committed to doubling DFID's climate spending, but does he think that the World Bank's climate investment funds are fit for purpose?

Rory Stewart

The shadow Secretary of State is absolutely right to say that there have been significant issues around some of the climate funds. We feel that a lot of progress is being made, and the most important thing is to find real investable projects on the ground. A lot of that relates to issues of governance.

Dan Carden

I am grateful to the Secretary of State for that answer, but the truth is that the World Bank knows that it was supposed to phase out its climate investment funds once the United Nations green climate fund was up and running. Labour is clear: we believe in climate justice and we are committed to withdrawing the UK's support for the World Bank's climate investment funds and to redirecting climate finance to the UN green climate fund, in which developing countries get a real say. Will the Government now do the same?

Rory Stewart

No, we will not. The reason is that there are issues of capacity in both the World Bank and the UN. The key point here is not the ideological choice of the channel through which we pass the money but the capacity to manage these projects responsibly.

HC Deb 17 July 2019 | Vol 663 c815

[Global Warming](#)

Asked by: Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab)

If she will make reducing global warming a strategic priority of her Department.

Asked by: Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (City of Durham) (Lab)

If she will make reducing global warming a strategic priority of her Department.

Asked by: Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab)

If she will make reducing global warming a strategic priority of her Department.

Answered by: The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Harriett Baldwin)

Climate change is a major threat to achieving the sustainable development goals, and tackling it is a strategic priority for the Government and for my Department. The Government are delivering

£5.8 billion in international climate finance to help developing countries to reduce emissions and to manage the impact of climate change.

Christian Matheson

Last Friday, thousands of children took to the streets, including in my own constituency, because they know that we have only 12 years left to make a difference on climate change. So why is the Department still spending money through its prosperity fund on expanding the oil and gas sectors in several countries where that fund is active?

Harriett Baldwin

I welcome the opportunity that the interest young people are showing in climate change gives us to highlight the important work that we are doing. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that we do not provide any bilateral assistance for coal-fired power generation, and that CDC, our private sector investment arm, has made no new net investments in coal-fired power since 2012.

Dr Blackman-Woods

Will the Minister update the House on what DFID is doing to follow through on the agreement made at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 2018 to support urgent action to address climate change and to increase resilience to prevent 100 million more people from being pushed into poverty by 2030?

Harriett Baldwin

The hon. Lady is absolutely right to highlight the importance of commitments that were made last year at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. There is an extensive programme of work to follow through on those commitments, not least the £5.8 billion of international climate finance that we have announced so far, which has already helped 47 million people to increase their resilience to climate change. We will be leading that strand at the United Nations summit in September.

Jeff Smith

The Minister said that there is no net investment from DFID and the CDC. I would be interested to know what she means by that, because we surely need a greater priority on disinvestment in oil and gas extraction. Is she not worried, as I am, about the possibility of stranded assets as a result of investments we have made in the global south?

Harriett Baldwin

We have an important role to play in working with our international bilateral partners to encourage the use of clean growth and clean energy. For example, the week before last, we held an event here in support of sustainable development goal 7 to which we invited African Energy Ministers from developing countries to meet some of the people we have in the UK with expertise on renewable energy.

Michael Fabricant (Lichfield) (Con)

Solar energy is a relatively clean way to generate electricity. What steps are we taking in Africa to help not only people who are off-grid but those who are on-grid, too?

Harriett Baldwin

My hon. Friend is absolutely right that solar energy, particularly in sunny places, is a very good idea. Indeed, there is some very windy coastline where offshore wind energy would also be very helpful. In addition to the event that we held for African Energy Ministers the week before last, we have come up with some remarkable inventions using some of our overseas development assistance—for example, a solar-powered fridge.

Antoinette Sandbach (Eddisbury) (Con)

Will the Minister outline the steps the Department is taking to improve biodiversity and habitat enhancement, particularly through the recent investment in the Darwin initiative?

Harriett Baldwin

My hon. Friend will be glad to know that I work closely with my counterparts at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to join up the work we are doing to tackle biodiversity, specifically the contribution we have made to the global environment fund.

Robert Courts (Witney) (Con)

Mangrove forests are one of the most effective habitats at storing carbon dioxide that might otherwise be released. What are the Government doing to help reduce mangrove forest loss?

Harriett Baldwin

We have rebranded them blue forests. We think they are incredibly important, and not only as a way to store carbon; recently it was proven that they also improve resilience to cyclones. They are an important part of the work and have been championed vigorously by the Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk Coastal (Dr Coffey).

Chris Law (Dundee West) (SNP)

Last Friday, on the same day that 1.4 million children went on climate strike across the world, more than 1,000 people were killed in Mozambique and Zimbabwe during Cyclone Idai. Does the Minister agree that young people and those living in the developing world are the least responsible yet will bear the brunt of the climate crisis? If so, does she agree that the UK Government must make climate justice a key part of their climate change strategy?

Harriett Baldwin

That is exactly why the UK is proud to be stepping up our work on international climate finance. We have committed £5.8 billion to work with some of the poorer countries in the world, including those affected by this cyclone in Mozambique. There will be an urgent question later,

when I will be able to elaborate on the work that the UK has done to help with the situation there.

Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op)

Our thoughts are with all those affected by the devastation of Cyclone Idai across Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, and I would like to share with the House the thoughts of—*[Interruption.]*

Mr Speaker

Order. There are a lot of noisy private conversations taking place. It is rather discourteous to the hon. Lady, who is highlighting very grave matters.

Preet Kaur Gill

Our thoughts are with all those affected by the devastation of Cyclone Idai across Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, and I would like to share with the House the thoughts of Anabela Lemos, a woman at the forefront of the climate justice movement in Mozambique. She says:

“The people of Mozambique need emergency response and support right now to survive this crisis. But this is also a harsh reminder that the climate crisis is upon us and developed countries need to urgently reduce their emissions and stop funding fossil fuels.”

I welcome the relief package for the region issued by DFID, but it is a tragic irony of climate change that those least responsible are the ones who pay the highest price. A key component of the—

Mr Speaker

Order. This simply is not on. I do not wish to be unkind to the hon. Lady, but I need one sentence with a question mark at the end of it. My apologies for interrupting, but this is far too long.

Preet Kaur Gill

Will the Minister confirm whether the Government have plans to offer any additional climate finance to support vulnerable communities and countries to cope with the consequences of climate change?

Harriett Baldwin

I can confirm that we are already committed to spending £5.8 billion over this spending period, which will involve us being able to increase our finance over the next spending review period. There will be an urgent question later, when we can talk about the specific situation in Mozambique. The report from the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recently said that UK international climate finance is showing a very convincing approach, with some good emerging results in terms of influencing others. We aim to continue with that work.

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