



## Climate Justice briefing

We can't talk about climate change without understanding the implications for humanity and the planet as a whole – as a matter of justice. Climate change is often portrayed in the media as an environmental or technological problem rather than a far-reaching humanitarian and social justice issue. The most important moral issue we now face is the ecological imbalance that threatens vast areas of the Earth, and means that the future for many is under threat. As Christians, we love the Lord and all that he has made. We also love our neighbours as ourselves. We therefore owe it to current and future generations to care for God's planet and protect the integrity of ecosystems that support all life.

The accelerating rate of global warming is already resulting in extreme weather disturbance around the world, often impacting most severely on the poorer and more vulnerable communities, who are least responsible for climate change. This is unjust, and has wide-ranging implications for crisis management, increasing poverty, food security, migration of populations and the spread of disease. In the UK too, the impacts of severe weather such as flooding and storms have implications for the communities affected, including the farming community.

Climate justice links the multi-faceted issues of human rights, economics and development to environmental concerns. The Mary Robinson Foundation on Climate Justice is a centre for thought, leadership, education and advocacy on the struggle to secure global justice for those people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – the poor, the disempowered and the marginalised across the world. The Foundation has produced a set of core principles to realise its vision of a world engaged in the advancing of climate justice:

- Respect and protect human rights.
- Support the right to development.
- Share benefits and burdens equitably.
- Ensure that decisions on climate change are participatory, transparent and accountable.
- Highlight gender equality and equity.
- Harness the transformative power of education for climate stewardship.
- Use effective partnerships to ensure climate justice.

(Source: [www.mrfcj.org/pdf/Principles-of-Climate-Justice.pdf](http://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/Principles-of-Climate-Justice.pdf))

International climate negotiations over recent decades have attempted to represent the plight of nations and groups most affected by climate change. Efforts have focused on providing funding from richer nations for climate mitigation and adaptation, and addressing food and nutrition security, gender issues and access to renewable energies for all people.

An interfaith summit on climate change was held before the New York UN climate summit in September 2014, with faith leaders representing different faiths and religious traditions around the world. They delivered a statement to world leaders highlighting the disproportionate effect of climate change on the lives, livelihoods and rights of poorer, marginalised and more vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples. They called for enhanced co-operation between the nations and the creation of mutual trust, fairness and equity, and intergenerational justice. (Source: [www.interfaithclimate.org](http://www.interfaithclimate.org))

### The role of the Christian community

The Christian community is well placed to be a prophetic moral voice for change to inspire hope that a better world is possible. Environmental stewardship is also fundamentally a theological concept that refers to the responsibility that Christians have in maintaining and using wisely the gifts that God has bestowed. Churches in the UK have a long history of supporting humanitarian causes and helping people in poorer parts of the world to overcome difficulties. However, the climate movement has not been seen as a major thrust of the

Church's mission and work to date. Many churchgoers don't see the priority of addressing climate change as a Christian issue and may not have made the links with humanitarian justice concerns.

How can concerned Christians help others to connect their Christian discipleship with care for creation? How can they encourage the Church to play a far greater role in influencing public discourse and political debate regarding the changes needed to address climate change?

In this important year for the climate, with the UN climate talks being held in Paris this December to agree international carbon reduction targets, Christians more than ever need to be calling for climate justice. We need to call on world governments to keep global temperatures from rising further so that the world's poorest will not have to suffer as a direct consequence of rising carbon emissions.

For further ideas on how you can get involved and make a difference please visit our website:  
[www.operationnoah.org/get-involved](http://www.operationnoah.org/get-involved)

## **Useful resources**

Climate Change and the Gospel, Bishop David Atkinson (published on Operation Noah's website):  
<http://operationnoah.org/resources/climate-change-gospel/>

Climate Justice Dialogue Videos, Mary Robinson Foundation:  
<http://www.mrfcj.org/tags.html?tag=Climate+Justice+Dialogue+Videos>

Prophetic Voices: Calling for Climate Justice, Christian Aid:  
[www.christianaid.org.uk/images/Calling-for-climate-justice-June-2014.pdf](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/Calling-for-climate-justice-June-2014.pdf)

Song of the Prophets: A global theology of climate change, Christian Aid:  
[www.christianaid.org.uk/images/song-of-the-prophets-a-global-theology-of-climate-change-november-2014.pdf](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/song-of-the-prophets-a-global-theology-of-climate-change-november-2014.pdf)

One Million Ways, Christian Aid climate campaign resources:  
[www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/climate-justice/resources.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/climate-justice/resources.aspx)

One Climate, One World, CAFOD climate campaign:  
[www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/One-Climate-One-World](http://www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/One-Climate-One-World)

Dried Up, Drowned Out: Voices from poor communities on a changing climate, Tearfund (summary of full report): <http://tilz.tearfund.org/~media/files/tilz/research/dried%20up%20drowned%20out%202012%20-%20summary.pdf>

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) has a range of video clips on climate change and impacts in developing countries: [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8C17F446D0D91874&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8C17F446D0D91874&feature=plcp)

Declaration on Climate Justice, World Resources Institute and Mary Robinson Foundation:  
[www.wri.org/sites/default/files/declaration\\_on\\_climate\\_justice\\_0\\_0.pdf](http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/declaration_on_climate_justice_0_0.pdf)

Religions for Climate Justice: International interfaith statements 2008-2014, Globethics.net:  
[http://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/13403256/GE\\_Texts\\_3\\_Climate+Justice\\_web.pdf/6aff1dc2-18ea-47e1-885c-c2375e3cfc3f](http://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/13403256/GE_Texts_3_Climate+Justice_web.pdf/6aff1dc2-18ea-47e1-885c-c2375e3cfc3f)

Environmental Justice: rights and means to a healthy environment for all, Friends of the Earth:  
[http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/environmental\\_justice.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/environmental_justice.pdf)