

Climate Justice Briefing

Lydia Mbogoro, Political and Parliamentary Officer

Imbogoro@christian-aid.org

As the UK Government prepares to host the COP26 UN climate talks in November, please write to the Prime Minister and call on him to:

- Ensure women and marginalised groups bearing the brunt of the climate crisis have the power to engage in climate negotiations.
- Broker a new deal on climate finance that matches the scale of the climate crisis and the responsibility of rich countries, (including the UK) for causing it, and ensure that at least half of global climate finance is allocated to support communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.
- Provide UK climate finance in the form of grants not loans - and persuade other richer countries to do the same.
- Secure a commitment for debt cancellation for all climate vulnerable countries and low-income countries so they are better able to tackle the climate crisis and other crises.
- Advance action at COP26 on climate-related, irreversible Loss & Damage and ensure new finance is committed to L&D.

Climate Breakdown and the Global Pandemic

Christian Aid works alongside farming communities in Malawi and Kenya, the indigenous people of the Amazon, families

living in extremely flood-prone areas in Bangladesh and with many others who have faced the devastating impacts of climate change for years.

Our [Counting the Cost](#) report reflects that, whilst Covid-19 may have been devastating, for many people the ongoing climate crisis presented an even bigger danger to their lives and livelihoods. Be they floods in Pakistan or South Sudan, storms in the Americas or locust swarms across East Africa, almost every part of the globe was touched by climate-related disasters in 2020, with catastrophic results for millions of people. These devastating events have racked up losses of billions of dollars and devastated livelihoods. The pandemic has not put the climate crisis on hold and countries on the front line are left with less money to spend on tackling Covid, strengthening health systems and responding to climate disasters.

The average person in the UK generates as much CO2 as 212 Burundians¹.

Climate Justice

The world's richest economies built their wealth almost exclusively on fossil fuels. These countries bear a huge responsibility for causing the climate crisis we now face. At the same time those in the world's poorest countries who contributed the least to the crisis are enduring its harshest effects, especially women and people of colour. This is unjust.¹

¹ <https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/top-10-hungriest-countries-contribute-just-0-08-of-global-co2-new-report/>

Successive UK governments have recognised this reality. But talk of climate justice means nothing unless the world's richer countries – including the UK – deliver on their financial commitments to poorer countries and communities to tackle this crisis.

Climate Finance

The money and resources which richer countries and inter-governmental and private institutions make available for the world's poorer countries through international agreements is a critical issue for securing global climate justice.

Over ten years ago, the world's richer countries agreed to deliver \$100bn a year in climate finance to the world's poorest and most climate-vulnerable countries by 2020. Not only has this promise been broken², it is clear that the annual figure of \$100bn is woefully inadequate, given the scale of the crisis.

The money available to the poorest countries to cover the cost of irreversible loss & damage from catastrophic climate-related events such as hurricanes and floods is equally inadequate. New Loss & Damage finance mechanisms are needed to compensate communities and to avoid countries having to take out expensive loans when these events occur.

More and better climate finance will enable countries on the front line of the climate crisis to:

- rebuild communities and restore nature after the damage caused by hurricanes, droughts,

floods and other extreme weather events linked to climate change

- adapt farming and livelihoods to deal with the devastating impacts of climate change that many communities are already experiencing
- provide clean, renewable energy to the millions around the world still living with no energy at all. In turn, clean energy will help keep global emissions under control.

Developing countries like Kenya are laying ambitious plans to cut emissions through their Nationally Determined Contribution³ (NDC) submitted to the UN. But to deliver these plans - 90% of the financing will have to come from international climate finance⁴.

Climate finance is a deal breaker for the world's poorest and most climate-vulnerable countries. Indeed, there is a risk that these countries will walk away from the COP26 UN climate talks in Glasgow this November if there is no progress on climate finance. Such a move could lead to the talks collapsing, with major consequences for the world's ability to keep climate change under control.

The Climate Finance - Debt Nexus

Prior to the pandemic, both climate vulnerable countries and the world's poorest countries were faced with crippling levels of debt. Yet 74% of the climate finance offered by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁵ countries took the form of loans which just add to countries' debts and

² <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/climate-finance-shadow-report-2020>

³ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>

⁴ https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents%20NAP/Kenya_NAP_Final.pdf

⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/climate-finance-for-developing-countries-rose-to-usd-78-9-billion-in-2018oecd.htm>

crippling interest payments, hitting women and the poor hardest⁶.

Rich countries should deliver climate finance that does not add to countries' debts. This should be based on their historically disproportionate contribution to the climate crisis.

We are not only calling for all climate finance to be in the form of grants not loans. We are also calling for debt cancellation for all climate vulnerable countries and low-income countries – i.e., not just for those covered by the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) – so that these countries are better able to confront the climate crisis and other pressing needs.

Empowering voices and ensuring justice

As highlighted in our [Black Lives Matter Everywhere](#) report, climate change is a profoundly racialised phenomenon.

[Our work](#) with diaspora communities in the UK within Black Majority Churches reveals the deep connections to, and heightened awareness of the climate crisis, faced by their families and loved ones across the Global South.

However these voices are largely excluded from the climate negotiations, and now more than ever, the Government must ensure that marginalised black and brown people from the Global South have a voice in the climate negotiations. And since women are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis in the world's poorest communities, their voice and engagement in the negotiations is also critical.⁷

Case Study: South Sudan

In South Sudan, where Christian Aid has worked on peacebuilding since 2008, more than a million people were affected by floods in 2020. The floods started last July, after intense rainfalls that caused overflows of several rivers, including the Nile. Two months later, the government declared a state of emergency. At least 138 were killed by the floods and the cost to respond to the situation has been estimated at \$81.9 million.

At the end of last year, South Sudan, along with other poor and climate vulnerable was in a debt crisis. South Sudan has a high debt per GDP ratio at 41% of GDP, spending just 12% of its budget on health, education and social protection combined; instead it [spends huge sums on debt servicing \(47%\) and the military \(18%\)](#).

As a result, South Sudan requested debt restructuring with its largest creditor Qatar National Bank (QNB), but it still has expensive oil backed loans to different international oil companies that are still payable at high rates. It is these loans that South Sudan should have the right to restructure via the G20 Common Framework.

Read more in our [Counting the Cost Report](#)

⁶ <https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2019/04/debt-and-gender-equality-how-debt-servicing-conditions-harm-women-in-africa/>