

fact sheet two: the equity of climate change

Brazil running half its cars on ethanol from sugar cane, and St. Lucia 100% powered by green electricity. This green electricity comes from non-CO2 emitting sources, such as wind power, and thus has no impact on climate change.

Development is at different stages. It is thus unjust for the rich to force the poor to suffer for a crisis they did not create, and which will hit them harder than those responsible.

JUST SOLUTIONS

We need a just solution. This must begin with the acknowledgement of the debt owed by the global north to the developing world, both in terms of their past use of fuels, and the massive impact it will have on them.

To fit with necessary cuts in emissions to stabilise CO2, rich countries need to cut their emissions by 80% of 1990 levels. If we are all to have equal rights to use our common atmosphere, then a per person share of that emissions budget must be calculated based roughly on population. Equal shares must be a basis for future emissions allowances. The equitable and sustainable model suggested to achieve the repayment of the global north's 'carbon debt' and stabilise emissions is known as 'contraction and convergence':

1. Contraction: the world must gradually reduce its emissions of CO2 to a sustainable level.
2. Convergence: we must converge emissions towards an equal shares model, where everyone has the same right to pollute at the sustainable contracted level.

There are many different ideas for how this kind of sustainable end model can be reached, or best created. What is non-arguable is that the solutions to the climate change crisis must rest upon an equitable framework that acknowledges both the heavy impact upon the developing world, and the debt owed to them by richer countries for creating that. Without that recognition, and the acceptance that we have exceeded our right to use the atmosphere while the developing world have mostly yet to approach that limit, a sustainable future is impossible.

COPING WITH THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

While we need to cut our emissions of greenhouse gases, measures are needed to help communities adapt to the local impacts that are occurring from past emissions. Adaptation is the term used to describe changes in

lifestyles, infrastructure, support networks, agriculture and industry necessary to help those who will suffer most from that impact. This has already begun with small successful projects across the world, but massive scaling up is necessary.

In Vietnam, the Red Cross invested in re-planting 110 km of coastal mangroves, at a cost of just \$1 million. The mangroves act as 'shock absorbers' and this has had a real impact upon cyclone deaths, with none reported from those since. In Bangladesh, cyclone shelters and early warning systems are estimated to have saved 2.5 million lives in the 1990s. Harvesting of rainwater in India has ensured supplies continue even in times of severe drought. In Western Sudan, tree trunks from the *Adansonia digitata* tree are used to purify and store water, allowing irrigation to continue and providing a base for supply renewal.

Similarly, in Sudan, the agricultural technique of planting selected food crop under certain trees, such as gum Arabic stands, increases stable food supplies and diversifies income sources for the people, while reducing deforestation. These methods must be expanded on and research funded to allow large-scale adaptation for the world's most vulnerable areas.

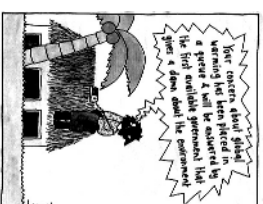
ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES and REDUCING CONSUMPTION

A range of alternative sources for energy have been created and proposed. What is needed is massive investment. The west must switch its subsidies from the fossil fuel industry to those investigating and creating clean alternatives, from solar power to wind and tidal sources. An international commitment to green energy is necessary, and action on that commitment.

Further, we need a major rethink about how much energy we consume. The massive increases in air-conditioner use in Australia is a significant irony - as the planet warms, people use more air-conditioning, which warms the planet. Major changes to force new buildings to be in line with natural heat and ventilation need to happen, and people in general need to consume less. By switching homes and workplaces in the west to sustainable clean energy sources, and lobbying the government to support them, real change is possible.

(altered from <http://www.peopleandplanet.org/climatechange/>)

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In the 1990s, there were an average 22 deaths per natural disaster in the developed world.

In the same period, there were an average 1,000 deaths per disaster in the developing world.

The US has 4% of the world's population but is responsible for 36.1% of CO-2 emissions.

India has 17% of the world's population, and is responsible for just 4.2% of CO-2 emissions.

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE HITS THE POOR HARDEST

The irony of climate change is that it will hit those least able to cope the hardest. Whereas relatively sophisticated development patterns in the global north have created infrastructure better able to withstand the likely impacts of climate change, this is not true of the global south.

Unsustainable development patterns have led to filthy mega cities where 25-40% of the population of the developing world live in urban slums that will multiply the impact of health and weather difficulties brought on by climate change. In addition, over reliance on natural resources, single crop exports and tourism have led to built up coastal areas with a high concentration of population in one area, a small number of economic sectors and thus high vulnerability to changes in weather patterns or crop failures. Crop yields have already fallen by 20% in those areas of Sub-Saharan Africa most affected by drought, and for those already living on the margins, this will have a far greater impact than those of us with better access to food sources.

Poor resource bases, inequalities in income, weak institutions, and limited technology limit the capacity of the most

vulnerable to deal with the impact of climate change, and means that they will suffer most from its effects.

CARBON DEBT

20% of the world's population live in the developed world. They create 90% of fossil fuel emissions.

Climate change is an issue of social justice, as it is not only the most vulnerable, but also those who have contributed the least to climate change who will suffer most from its effects.

The global north's addiction to fossil fuels drove their successful development. The transport and industrial revolutions created the developed world as we know it today, and that creation rested upon fossil fuels. It is thus manifestly unfair to expect the developing world to share the burden of dealing with the effects of our development and restrict their own. Although the Kyoto Protocol has some major social justices problems, it does recognise this by allowing less developed nations to increase, rather than decrease, their emissions.

If we see the atmosphere, which everybody shares and everybody needs, as a global commons, with all humans having an equal right to use it, then the global north have been encroaching upon that commons for 200 years. Our reckless use of fossil fuels for our own development has thus seriously endangered the future development of the other 80% of the world's population. We owe them a massive debt.

Instead of acknowledging that 'carbon debt', and making good on it, some in the west have been refusing to act without emissions cuts from those countries who actually have miniscule impact on climate change, and who cannot currently develop further without some kind of rise in emissions. In addition, most of the global north has continued to offer massive subsidies to the fossil fuels industry. \$30 billion a year in the USA, with no regard for how this feeds climate change. The gap between supply and demand for oil is likely to widen in future years as supplies run out, and yet the rich nations are determined to hang on to the lion's share of those scarce resources, as well as the right to use them with reckless abandon.

The developing world is already far more efficient than the global north in terms of emissions and development, with

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