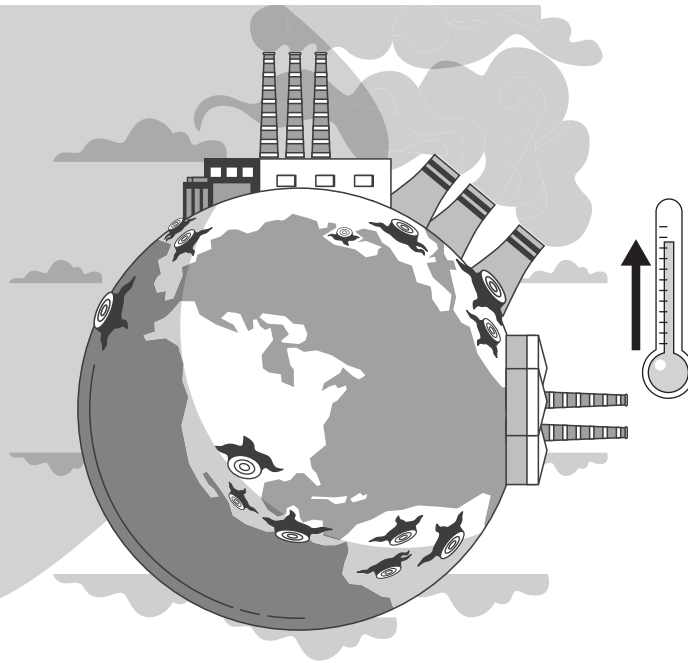


# Climate Change



## BACKGROUND

The climate crisis is the biggest challenge facing humanity. Its effects are laying waste to lives and livelihoods across the globe, particularly in the poorest communities. Meanwhile the natural world, upon which life on earth depends, is being slowly destroyed.

The great injustice behind the climate crisis is that it is those who have historically contributed least to global greenhouse emissions that are suffering the most. This is why wealthy countries have a moral responsibility to support low-income nations to adapt and respond to the climate crisis.

Pope Francis echoes this in his recent document on the climate crisis, *Laudate Deum*, which calls on us to see the increasing number of natural disasters as “cries of protest on the part of the earth.”<sup>1</sup>

Scientists have made clear that if global temperatures rise more than 1.5°C above pre-Industrial Revolution levels, we face an ‘irreversible tipping point’, leading to more severe droughts, rainfall, and heatwaves. Regrettably, we are way off track to meet this target. According to the UN’s most recent projections, we are heading towards a catastrophic 3°C.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

The UK has influence in international climate negotiations, in part due to measures taken by successive governments to set legal requirements to reduce emissions.<sup>3</sup> The UK, like other rich countries, has a special responsibility to rapidly cut emissions as one of the largest historic emitters of the greenhouse gases driving the climate crisis.<sup>4</sup> However, steps announced by the Government that weaken measures aimed at reaching the UK’s net zero target have put into question the UK’s commitment to cut emissions fast enough.

Our sisters and brothers in communities around the world are losing livelihoods and loved ones to climate disasters that don’t respect national borders. As Pope Francis reminds us, we have an obligation to raise our voices to demand action.

With a general election coming up, we have an opportunity to influence the next government to act in the following ways:

- 1. End the use of fossil fuels, both at home and abroad:** This means no more investments in or subsidies for domestic oil, gas and coal, and an end to funding overseas projects. Instead, investment must be made in a just and green transition to renewable energy sources.
- 2. Ensure low-income countries have the resources they need to deal with the climate crisis:** This must include unlocking more climate finance through debt relief and taxing polluters, as well as contributing meaningfully to the Loss and Damage Fund with grants from new money. This fund is intended to support communities suffering irreversible destruction due to the climate crisis.

## CASE STUDY

*“We need to change this culture of causing harm to our environment. We must make sure that we generate a network so that our voices from every corner of the world are heard... Our common home concerns us all.”*<sup>5</sup> **Jenny Garzón Saavedra, youth worker at Colombian CAFOD partner FUNVIPAS**

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CANDIDATES

1. We need to transition away from fossil fuels if we are to have any chance of halting the climate crisis. How would you work to ensure that the UK finally ends all new oil, coal and gas projects and phases out existing ones?
2. Some of the world’s poorest communities are facing the greatest burden of the climate crisis. With millions of people already displaced as a result of extreme weather events, how would you support working with other countries to raise new taxes from the most polluting industries such as shipping, aviation and fossil fuels to support countries suffering the impacts of climate catastrophes.

## MORE INFORMATION

- In 2009, wealthy countries promised<sup>6</sup> to provide \$100bn of “new, additional, predictable, adequate, and accessible” international climate finance per year by 2020. This pledge has only just been met.
- So far, less than a third of climate finance has gone to low-income countries, as much of it ends up going to middle-income countries.<sup>7</sup>
- Even if all 193 countries who signed the 2015 Paris Agreement and committed to lower emissions were to meet their climate pledges, we’re still predicted to hit 2.5°C by 2100.<sup>8</sup> We need bolder action – and fast!
- Food production is responsible for up to 30%<sup>9</sup> of all greenhouse gas emissions, yet only around 4%<sup>10</sup> of global climate finance is spent on food systems (and just a tiny fraction of that goes to smallholder farmers).

1 [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html)

2 <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43922/EGR2023.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

3 *The Labour government passed the Climate Change Act in 2008, while the Conservative government set in law the UK’s net zero target in 2019.*

4 <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change/>

5 <https://cafod.org.uk/news/international-news/colombia-the-earth-is-crying-out-to-us>

6 <https://www.oecd.org/climate-change/finance-usd-100-billion-goal/>

7 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/286dae5d-en.pdf?expires=1701688599&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=1B2BDD1F5BF8EC624BC0A9301B27E74B>

8 <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-plans-remain-insufficient-more-ambitious-action-needed-now>

9 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00225-9>

10 <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/press-release/new-study-reveals-vast-and-critical-climate-finance-gap-for-global-agrifood-systems/>