

Questions for your Candidates

FOOD SYSTEMS

The issue: Global hunger levels have been on the rise in recent years with over 2.4 billion people without regular access to food. The global food system urgently needs transforming. For too long it has been dominated by a few multinational companies who have pushed for only an industrialised approach to agriculture. This has negatively impacted the diversity of crops available, sidelined small-scale farmers in low-income countries, accelerated the climate crisis and polluted natural resources.

We would like to see a commitment to a new agricultural model that supports small-scale farmers who are practicing sustainable techniques, including agroecology.

Questions to ask:

1. Ten percent of the world's population regularly go to bed hungry. We urgently need to transform the way we grow, distribute and consume food to ensure everyone has enough to eat, regardless of where in the world they live. If elected, will you work towards ensuring an end to hunger both in the UK and globally?
2. Given that we are currently facing both a global hunger crisis and a climate crisis, would you work to ensure that small-scale farmers across the world who are practising sustainable techniques, such as agroecology, receive support from the UK?

MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

The issue : Every year thousands of people tragically die crossing borders as they try to find safety for themselves and their families. In recent years it has become even harder for people who need safety to reach the UK. For many that are able to reach the UK, recent changes in the law make it almost impossible for them to apply for asylum and find sanctuary here. Instead, they face the possibility of being indefinitely detained and deported to a third country, such as Rwanda.

We would like to see an asylum system based on principles of compassion, humanity and dignity.

Questions to ask:

1. Every year, people tragically die as they attempt to cross borders to reach safety. If elected, will you champion the right to safe and legal routes for people needing to flee their homes, rather than leave vulnerable people prey to people smugglers?
2. If elected, will you ensure the country is a welcoming one to refugees and migrants, including ending the unjust deportation of people who haven't even had their asylum applications heard?

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The issue: The cost of living crisis is pushing increasing numbers of people into poverty. Almost two million people used a food bank last year, the highest number yet. Meanwhile, six in ten low-income households are not able to afford an unexpected expense, and over seven in ten families are going without essentials.

We would like to see better support for the growing numbers of people living in poverty in the UK, including a welfare system that supports people in need, whether they are in work or not.

Questions to ask:

1. With almost two million people using foodbanks in the UK, the highest number on record, what are your plans to tackle the cost of living crisis in our area and nationally?
2. If elected, would you commit to improve our social security system by raising the basic rate of Universal Credit so that people can meet their essential needs?

CLIMATE

The issue: The climate crisis is one of the biggest challenges facing humanity. It is already causing mass displacement of people across the world and destroying the natural world, upon which life on earth depends. The UK is one of the largest historic emitters of greenhouse gases driving the climate crisis, so it has a particular responsibility to take action to keep temperatures rises below 1.5C.

We would like to see an end to all spending on fossil fuels both at home and abroad and ensure significant financial support for those countries who are hardest hit but least responsible.

Questions to ask:

1. We know that we need to transition away from fossil fuels if we are to have any chance of halting the climate crisis. 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?

DEBT CANCELLATION

The issue : Many of the world's poorest countries have been plunged into a new debt crisis. Due to the economic crisis, high interest rates and the fall-out from the pandemic, many countries have been left with unsustainable debt burdens. This means money that could be spent on health, education or tackling climate change is instead going to big banks, who are making millions in profit while populations suffer. The vast majority of lower-income country debt contracts are governed by English or New York law. This means that the UK could pass legislation to ensure that creditors cannot sue countries who are struggling to pay. There is growing support for this legislation, and the UK Parliament's International Development Select Committee has recommended this option is explored.

We would like to see the cancellation of unsustainable debts owed by low-income countries, including the introduction of new legislation to prevent private creditors from suing low-income countries in UK courts

Questions to ask:

1. Given that over 50 of the world's poorest nations are currently struggling with a debt crisis, are you supportive of the idea that the UK should champion debt cancellation for those low-income countries who need it so that they can properly fund their essential public services?
2. Many of the world's poorest countries are in debt crisis meaning money they could spend on health, education or tackling the climate crisis is instead going to big banks and wealthy nations. If you were elected, would you support a new legislation that could prevent private creditors such as Blackrock or HSBC from suing low-income countries in UK courts?

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES & TACKLING REGIONAL INEQUALITIES

The issue : the UK has some of the highest regional inequalities in Europe, and this is leaving many people behind. Research shows that the UK is the most regionally unbalanced large, advanced economy, with growing rates of poverty in particular regions. This leaves millions of people below the poverty line and without the support they need to thrive. Tackling this issue requires ongoing investment in community assets and leadership as well as the creation of good quality employment.

We would like to see a solid plan to tackle regional inequalities and help improve social and economic outcomes for left-behind areas.

Questions to ask:

- 1 If elected, what will your party do to address regional inequalities & help communities thrive?
- 2 Will you commit to working more closely with local groups AND communities, including faith groups such as the St Vincent de Paul Society to identify the best policies to support left behind areas?

BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS

The issue : British businesses are some of the biggest and most powerful in the world, often with supply chains that span many countries. It is vital that the goods they produce are not done so at the expense of either human rights or the natural environment, which is why the UK needs to legislate for greater oversight of business practices throughout their supply chains.

We would like to see the introduction of a new 'Business, Human Rights & Environment Act' to tackle corporate abuses to both people and nature through UK supply chains.

Questions to ask:

- 1 Many of the things we consume in the UK are produced via supply chains that span the world. Throughout these global supply chains, it is too often the case that workers are exploited and/or the environment is damaged. Would you support the introduction of legislation for greater oversight of business practices through these supply chains?
- 2 If elected, what steps would you take to ensure businesses are held responsible for their operations, both at home and abroad to ensure workers' rights are upheld, affected communities are safeguarded and the natural environment is protected?

AID & INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The issue : Despite the commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on overseas aid being enshrined into law, the UK has slashed its aid budget, and now only spends 0.5% of GNI on overseas aid. In addition, increasing amounts of that aid is being spent in the UK rather than overseas, meaning that compared to 2020 there has been a whopping 40% reduction in aid spending overseas.

We would like to see restoration of the UK aid budget to 0.7% of GNI and a commitment to tackling the root causes of global poverty, injustice and climate change

Questions to ask:

- 1 The UK has slashed its aid budget, turning its back on the fight against global poverty. Will you, if elected, agree to restore the aid budget to 0.7% of national income, as agreed in the International Development Act, and show that we are a country committed to making the world a better place for all?
- 2 Our overseas aid budget has not only been cut, but the Department for International Development has been shut down, and much of the remaining aid money has been redirected to domestic spending. Can you let me know what you will do to ensure Britain restores its aid budget and supports people across the world experiencing poverty?