

Share and Advocate: October 2012 Climate Justice

Our changing climate is hitting the world's poorest the hardest, through increased drought, flooding, and extreme unreliable weather, directly threatening the homes and livelihoods of millions of people. The world's poorest people are being hit the hardest by climate change, even though they have contributed least to the problem.

You may wish to begin by watching this video (vimeo.com/16963713) by climatejusticeonline.org

In Tearfund UK's new report, *Dried Up, Drowned Out 2012*, communities across Africa, Asia and Latin America describe what it means to live with climate change. They first heard from these communities in 2005, and in 2012 re-visited them to see what has changed.

Climate change is having an increasingly dramatic and harmful effect on communities in developing countries. An estimated 325 million people are seriously affected by the changing climate every year. This number is set to double within 20 years.

Africa will be the continent hardest hit by climate change because it faces more severe climatic effects than other regions, its economies rely on climate-dependent sectors such as agriculture and its capacities to cope and adapt are generally limited.

The World Bank estimates that Africa's average annual temperatures will likely rise 3-4 degrees by 2099. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, by 2020, 75-250 million people across sub-Saharan Africa could face water shortages and rain-fed agriculture could contract by 50% in some African countries. United Nations Development Program

Despite the devastating impact of the changing climate, we are not without hope. On the contrary, we believe that as ordinary people — individuals and communities — we can all take action to change our attitudes, lifestyles and speak up for justice — we become co-workers with God to restore creation and bring about a just and compassionate world.

We, with our partners, say that the time for talking is over. Now is the time for world leaders, communities and us to step up, and put the needs of the world's poorest people first.

Fast Facts and Quotes

- People tend to focus on the here and now. The problem is that once global warming is something that most people can feel in the course of their daily lives, it will be too late to prevent much larger and potentially catastrophic changes. **Elizabeth Kolbert**
- All across the world, in every kind of environment and region known to man, increasingly dangerous weather patterns and devastating storms are abruptly putting an end to the long-running debate over whether or not climate change is real. Not only is it real, it's here and its effects are giving rise to a frighteningly new global phenomenon: the man-made natural disaster. **Barack Obama**
- Climate change affects all of us, but it is the world's poor who contribute least to the problem and who have the least capacity to adapt to a changing climate. The world's poor are already suffering the most from its devastating impact. That is why, at its heart, climate change is a matter of justice.
- By 2050, two-thirds of my country will go under water and about 30 million people will be displaced and have no place of their own to live on this planet Earth if we do not deal with this issue of global warming and climate change urgently and seriously. **Rt Rev Michael Baroi, Bishop of Dhaka, Bangladesh**
- One recycled bottle saves enough energy to power a washing machine for 10 minutes or a light bulb for 1 hour.
- African forests absorb 20 percent of the carbon that is absorbed by trees across the world.
- The World Health Organisation estimates that climate change is already causing over 160,000 deaths per year.
- While climate change is not proven to be caused by 'man-made' greenhouse gases, it would seem prudent to act with urgency to transform to a low-carbon society, preserve non-renewable resources for future generations and accrue benefits to human health and the environment. Given the time lag between cause and effect, the severe long term impacts, the possibility of irreversible damage and catastrophic events — a path of caution would be wise. Inaction would increase risk to environmental, social, industrial and economic systems and ultimately human life.

Advocacy

Now is the time for world leaders, communities and us to step up, and put the needs of the world's poorest first.

- Gather your friends and watch the video summary at www.tearfund.org/driedupdrownedout/

- Download full or summary reports at tilz.tearfund.org/Research/Climate+change+reports/

In this report Tearfund UK conclude and recommend the following:

“So, rich nations and their leaders are being urged to support initiatives aimed at tackling both the causes and effects of climate change. They are also being called upon to address more overarching, structural problems that exacerbate poverty and hinder communities from being able to adapt to climate change. Tearfund partners urge rich nations to tackle injustice, both at a national and international level, in the following ways:

- Consider how our lifestyles, industry and livelihoods are impacting the rest of the planet
- Ensure delivery of climate finance at the scale needed for poor countries who are not directly responsible for carbon emissions but are living with their consequences
- Work to combat the values of consumerism that destroy the environment
- Consider that power is not for self-enrichment, but for serving others”
- Invite a TEAR Speaker to your church to talk about ways you, your friends and church can support Poor communities and reduce your own impact.
- Use the new TEAR Rep Resources:
Creating Sustainable Events Checklist
Greening you Church – How to get started
www.tear.org.au/getinvolved/tear-reps/
- Explore being good stewards of God's creation
www.arochoa.org/int-en/12665-DSY/version/default/part/AttachmentData/data/CEAR%205%20GOOD%20STEWARDS.doc
- Encourage your church to get involved in Hope for Creation – a day of prayer to be held early in 2013.
www.hopeforcreation.com.au

TEAR Projects

Surrender to Sustainability: One man's mission to return his land to subsistence

In the midst of a changing climate, one of TEAR's Indian partners, the Mussoorie Gamin Vikas Samiti (MGVS), is helping local farmers adapt their agricultural practices, enabling them to sustain not only their farms, but also their culture. They work in the foothills of the Himalayas, training local farmers in organic techniques and have helped establish several Organic Farming Cooperatives through Self-Help Group activities.

Mr Surender Singh is the Coordinator of the program and he has literally surrendered his life to his work, the land and the Himalayan people. You are invited to explore his story...

- Watch a video of Mr Singh talking of his experience on vimeo.com/27708244
- Read more about his story at www.tear.org.au/target/articles/surrender-to-sustainability/2011-3
- Download a copy of his story at www.tear.org.au/downloads/target/target2011-3.pdf



Bagchand Ramola has transformed his fields from unproductive cash crops to sustainable organic harvest. Photo by Hailey Bartholomew



Surender Singh is a passionate advocate for organic farming. Photo by Hailey Bartholomew