



CLIMATE JUSTICE: TIME TO ACT!

Cattle farmer in Mali. Photo: Raymond Rutting.

CLIMATE JUSTICE IS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Cordaid and its partners are working in fragile and conflict-affected areas, tackling the impacts of the climate crisis through our programs. Our mission is also to advocate for climate justice, to limit global warming and to combat the adverse effects of climate change, side by side with those who are affected most. Together, we can act.

“We have to realise that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on climate change and on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

Pope Francis, Encyclical Laudato Si’, p. 49

Climate change concerns and affects every single person on the planet. But its causes and effects are unevenly spread. The people who are contributing least to climate change suffer the most. They live in poverty-stricken and fragile parts of the world. Confronted with natural hazards and disasters, they bear the brunt of the world’s most polluting economies – and with fewer means to respond and adapt to climate change. It is not only morally right to support these people; it is also mandatory under international law, as declared by the UN Human Rights Council in October 2021. Having a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is a human right.

Climate change is accelerating globally. This crisis destroys livelihoods, especially in developing countries, and exacerbates inequalities, fragility and conflict. The IPCC Report 2021 predicts that, with high confidence, disadvantaged and vulnerable populations face a much higher risk of experiencing the negative consequences of climate change.

Taking the needed climate action is a matter of justice. Climate justice entails the moral responsibility to take care of our planet for the well-being of current and future generations. It also means that those who contribute most to global warming – i.e., the industrialized economies – bear most of the responsibility to reduce carbon emissions, to counteract the adverse effects of climate change, and to support communities and countries who are least capable to adapt to climate change.

Policies driving climate action

The UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Paris Agreement is an international treaty to address climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP21 in Paris in December 2015. Its goal is to limit global warming (climate change mitigation) to well below 2°C and preferably to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. It also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change (adaptation). The Parties recognized the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with climate change.



The global community is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. SDG 13 on Climate Action commits to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”. Climate action refers to both climate change mitigation (reducing CO2 emissions) and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Our commitment to climate justice

Cordaid’s commitment to climate justice is expressed in the following strategies:

- Our program work on supporting viable and inclusive climate change adaptation and mitigation activities, based on risk analysis and action planning by local actors (communities, government, private sector) in areas affected by climate change.
- Our advocacy work in the Netherlands, in Europe, and globally with like-minded organisations and networks (see below).
- The effort to reduce Cordaid’s own carbon footprint and to compensate for our remaining carbon emissions by investing in fair, inclusive, and sustainable climate action projects developed via FairClimateFund.
- Involving our constituency of more than 300,000 donors in our work and inviting them to make sustainable lifestyle choices that help tackle climate change.

Climate change and food (in)security

According to the 2022 Global Food Policy Report “Climate Change and Food Systems” of IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) climate change threatens our global food systems and the multiple development goals linked to sustainable food system transformation. Action is urgently needed, both to increase adaptation and resilience and to achieve major emissions reductions. Current efforts must be stepped up and greatly expanded to ensure food security, nutrition and well-being for all in the years to come. The report showcases opportunities for accelerating innovation, reforming policies, resetting market incentives, and increasing finance for sustainable food systems transformation, as well as promoting healthy diets and building resilience.

Cordaid’s plea

Cordaid has stepped up its climate action lobby and advocacy. We join citizens, social movements, faith groups, and local and international civil society organisations in a call on world leaders to do what it takes to tackle the climate & ecological crisis and the deepening social inequality. To achieve climate justice Cordaid advocates for firmer international climate action.

Our plea includes the following topics and advocacy messages:

■ Promote climate-resilient agri-food systems

To face the current challenges of climate change and food & nutrition insecurity, Cordaid calls for the transformation towards climate-resilient agri-food systems globally. In these food systems, smallholder and family farmers are at the heart of change. They need support to shape agricultural systems that feed the people while being adapted to the changing climate and contributing to cooling the planet. To achieve this, different stakeholders must work in partnerships to promote synergies and encourage innovation. Investment in climate resilient agriculture through climate and agri-finance must be more accessible at the local level. [More information can be found here.](#)

■ Ensure a fair transition to zero-carbon economies

Cordaid supports the global campaign ‘A Fair Race to Net-Zero’, together with its subsidiary FairClimateFund. Industrialized countries are responsible for most CO2 emissions. However, the greatest impact of climate change occurs in developing countries. Carbon markets are instrumental to get the necessary carbon finance from the private sector to supporting the transition to a zero-carbon economy in developing countries. We aim to ensure that this transition is fair, inclusive, and gender-focused and that carbon finance really reaches people living in the world’s most vulnerable regions. [Read more on the FairClimateFund website.](#)

■ Ensure fair and balanced climate finance

Countries most affected by climate change need more funds, not only to mitigate climate change but also to adapt to the current climate. Developed countries should contribute their fair share to global climate finance. Climate finance should become more accessible for local actors in developing countries, such as civil society organizations and local governments, in order to implement activities based on people’s local priorities. Currently, most of the available climate finance is spent on climate change mitigation projects (reducing CO2 emissions); a larger part of the funding should be allocated to programs for climate change adaptation.

“As a resident of the Netherlands, it is sometimes difficult to imagine that climate change is already a daily reality in many countries, with major consequences for the people there. That is why we call on the Dutch government and the international community to do more to tackle the causes of climate change and to reduce its impacts. Now! And not in 10 or 20 years.”

Kees Zevenbergen, CEO Cordaid

■ Establish a facility to fund Loss & Damage

The world can no longer afford to stare at the frequently unfolding humanitarian crisis occasioned by the global climate change crisis! For example, in the Horn of Africa at least 36.1 million people have now been affected by the drought which began in

October 2020. This figure represents a significant growth in climate vulnerability of communities across the three most affected countries (Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya). Also the 2022 severe flooding in Pakistan is an example of loss and damage partly caused by climate change. Together with other civil society organizations we plea for prioritization of a Loss and Damage Facility Fund within the COP27 Agenda, and to recognize loss and damage as the third pillar of the global response to climate change (alongside mitigation and adaptation).

■ Better protect internally displaced people

By 2050, current numbers of over 50 million people will increase to an estimated 250 million people that will be forcibly displaced due to floods, landslides, fires, droughts, and hurricanes, among other factors. Cordaid calls for improving the protection of 'climate migrants', for humanitarian assistance for both the displaced and host communities, and for the prevention of conflict over scarce natural resources in the affected areas. Farmers among displaced and host communities need support to adapt their agriculture to climate change. Given the protractedness of the climate crisis, sufficient longer-term social services, income opportunities and local integration policies are also required in areas with displaced populations.

■ Ensure a focus on gender equality in all climate actions

The climate crisis is not 'gender neutral'. In many regions women bear a disproportionate responsibility for securing food, water, and fuel; the impact of climate change makes it harder to secure these resources. Climate change also is a 'threat multiplier' meaning it escalates social, political and economic tensions in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Therefore women and girls also face increased vulnerabilities to [all forms of gender-based violence](#). Parties to the UNFCCC have recognized the importance of involving women and men equally in UNFCCC processes and in the development and implementation of [\(inter\)national climate policies that are gender-responsive](#). We need to ensure gender equality is put into practice in all climate policies and actions.

The African Climate Dialogues

In 2022, organizations connected to the Catholic Church and secular civil society actors in Africa held a series of 'African Climate Dialogues'. Topics of the dialogues were: False climate solutions; food systems, agriculture and adaptation; climate finance; Loss & Damage and adaptation; climate-induced migration and displacement. In each session diverse stakeholders and experts came together to discuss and reflect on their experience, with a special emphasis on the moral and spiritual dimensions of the climate crisis and what action is needed at CoP27. The outcomes will be brought to the CoP27 in Egypt. [The document on the African Climate Dialogues can be found here.](#)



Improved access to water for vegetable gardens in South Sudan. Margot Loof, Cordaid

ABOUT CORDAID

Cordaid is a value-based international development and emergency relief organisation, based in the Netherlands with offices in 20 countries. We believe in a world without poverty and exclusion. We work in and on fragility and support local communities in their efforts to improve justice, healthcare, food security, education, and economic opportunities. Where disasters strike, we offer humanitarian action.

Cordaid is a founding member of Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE, and is also a member of the ACT Alliance.

FairClimateFund demonstrates that the carbon market can benefit those who are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change in a fair and effective way. Those with the largest carbon footprint invest through FCF in carbon reduction projects with high social impact that meet the Gold Standard and Fairtrade Climate Standard. FairClimateFund is a subsidiary of Cordaid.

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