



Consultation response

Claire Shelley, Media &
Communications Manager
0131 240 1523
cshelley@christian-aid.org

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The Scottish Climate Change Bill

Christian Aid and climate change

Climate change poses a threat to us all. But it's the poorest people who are on the frontline – their livelihoods are often dependent on subsistence agriculture, whilst the places in which some of them live are vulnerable to drought, high winds or rising sea levels. Although they have done the least to cause the problem, poor people are suffering first and worst as the climate changes.

For many years, Christian Aid has produced research warning of the risks that climate change poses to poor people. The growing evidence points to climate change as the pre-eminent threat to the world and especially to the people and communities with whom we work.

Christian Aid launched its **Cut the Carbon** campaign in February 2007. We want to mobilise supporters and partner organisations to call for radical action to tackle climate change, both locally and globally. Last summer Christian Aid organised the longest-ever protest march in UK history to highlight the impacts of climate change and demand action.

Christian Aid welcomes the publication of proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill and endorses the proposal to cut emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 80 per cent by 2050. We also support the setting of carbon budgets as a way of meeting this target.

However, we believe that if the bill is to deliver the best possible outcomes for Scotland and the world it must meet certain benchmarks, which are outlined below.

We are calling on the bill to incorporate these key amendments:

- the bill should include not just a long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions but also **statutory annual targets of at least 5 per cent**. Annual targets were a commitment of the SNP manifesto and are a useful way of ensuring that Scotland frontloads its cuts in emissions as much as possible;
- if the Scottish government refuses to support an annual target it should seek other ways to ensure cuts are early as well as deep – for instance an **interim point target of a 40 per cent cut by 2020**
- The bill should include provision to ensure that Scotland meets the targets in the bill through decarbonising its own economy and not offloading effort on to

poor countries. **The targets within the bill should not be met through the purchase of carbon credits.**

- **Aviation and shipping** must be included in the Scottish Climate Change Bill's reduction targets.
- In recognition of the global dimension of climate change we would like to see the Scottish Government make a **financial contribution to adaptation and clean development in developing countries**. Any funding must be additional, and must not come out of existing aid budgets.

Cut early, cut deep

Keeping global warming below a 2°C rise is critical. Once the temperature increase is above 2°C, up to 4 billion people could face water shortages, millions will go hungry, and tens of millions could be at risk as diseases such as malaria spread. What's more scientists say that the risk of exceeding 'tipping points' where global warming will become catastrophic and irrevocable will dramatically increase. **Restricting global temperature rise to 2°C should be an explicit aim of the Scottish Climate Change Bill**, as it now is in the UK Climate Change Bill.

To deliver Scotland's fair share of meeting this objective, among other efforts, the Scottish economy must be significantly decarbonised. For this reason Christian Aid strongly supports the SNP manifesto commitment for an 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050. Scotland should cut by at least 80 per cent, and if possible should aim higher still. Christian Aid has called for UK wide cuts of 90% or higher by 2050.

Christian Aid also supports the SNP commitment to mandatory annual reduction targets of 3 per cent. Such a target would guarantee early and sustained action and prevent any political 'buck-passing' between different parliaments. Most important of all, as climate change is caused by the build up of GHGs in the atmosphere, and so cuts in emissions today are more valuable than cuts in emissions tomorrow, such a target would 'frontload' Scotland's emissions reductions.

Christian Aid believes that industrialised countries such as Scotland should frontload their emissions reductions as much as possible – and should aim for 5 per cent reduction year on year, particularly between now and 2020. **This means that the bill must include either a 5 per cent annual target or an interim target of reducing Scotland's emissions by 40 per cent by 2020.**

Taking responsibility

Scotland should not use carbon credits or 'offsets' from poorer nations to meet its carbon reduction commitments. Rich countries such as Scotland need to show a lead in cutting global emissions, and shouldn't seek to buy our way out of the problem through the use of offsets. If all rich countries followed this path, then not only would we shift the problem of cutting emissions to countries that are poorer and less responsible for the problem than ourselves, but we will not tackle climate change. To head off catastrophic climate change without compounding its injustices, countries like Scotland, where major industrial emissions first began, must not only cut by at least 80 per cent at home but must also help finance clean development in poorer countries on top of that.

Historically industrialised countries have emitted the vast majority of emissions currently in the atmosphere and have gained substantial development benefits by doing so. An equitable response to climate change will require rich countries to substantially reduce their emissions and on top of this, support developing countries to cut their emissions and develop in low carbon ways.

A comprehensive approach

The bill cannot be effective at reducing Scotland's emissions if it ignores sectors which are significant sources of those emissions and are forecast to grow significantly. **The bill must include emissions from international aviation and shipping.** The UK government's current proposal is that emissions from international aviation will be included in the UK climate change bill once the EU Emissions Trading Scheme has been expanded to cover this sector. On this basis alone the Scottish government's proposal to rely solely on the EU ETS is out of step with the rest of the country and insufficient. Aviation emissions are well understood and the Scottish Climate Change Bill is the ideal opportunity to provide a more robust framework to tackle Scotland's aviation emissions.

Christian Aid is a member of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition.