



STAND FOR GLOBAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE:

Priorities for the 33rd Dáil Eireann

trócaire

Trócaire is urging the Irish Government and Irish political representatives to:

1. Urgently champion the Paris Agreement, avert climate catastrophe

- Specifically, one of the very first legislative priorities must be enactment of an amendment to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, to enshrine a target of net zero emissions by as early a date as possible, and introduce legally-binding five-year national carbon budgets to get us there.
- Immediately join the group of EU Member States that are calling for an increase in the EU's 2030 climate targets, to at least 55%, aiming for 65%, in line with the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and deliver an 8% a year annual reduction in emissions in the lifetime of the next Government.
- Trócaire also supports and is seeking endorsement of the 'Fossil Free Election Pledge' for Irish political representatives, and the '**Faster and Fairer Climate Action: One Planet, One Climate, One Future**' campaign

2. Hold Corporations to Account for Land and Human Rights Violations

- Specifically, work to ensure that Ireland supports the UN legally binding Treaty on business and human rights to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and also work to ensure mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation is enacted in Ireland.

3. End impunity for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories

- Specifically, work to ensure the swift enactment of *The Occupied Territories Bill 2018*, which would ban trade in goods and services between Ireland and illegally occupied territories, including Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank.

4. Advance a healthier and sustainable agricultural and food system based on agroecological approaches

- Specifically, actively support international processes, including those at the Committee on World Food Security, designed to deliver sustainable and transformative food systems in support of the 2030 ambition of zero hunger.

5. Commit to public financing to meet the ODA target of 0.7% of GNI target and ensure the EU Multiannual Financial Framework delivers on the Paris Climate Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian response needs

- Specifically, work to ensure the ODA target of 0.7% of GNI* is met by 2025 in order to help reach the Sustainable Development Goal by 2030, and also work to ensure that the EU budget is fully aligned with the SDGs and used to advance environmental sustainability, human rights, gender equality, and wellbeing

1. Urgently champion the Paris Agreement, avert climate catastrophe

We risk a 'climate apartheid' scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger and conflict, while the rest of the world is left to suffer.

Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, 2019¹.

Ireland and much of the rich world have yet to experience the extent of the devastating impacts of climate change that are a persistent reality for the poorest people in the world. A crisis they played no part in creating. In his Report on Climate Change and Poverty in 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston, highlighted the profound inequality in which developing countries would bear an estimated 75% of the cost of the climate crisis, despite the fact that the poorest half of the world's population, mainly residing in these countries, are responsible for just 10% of historical carbon emissions².

Trócaire has been responding to the impacts of climate change in the poorest countries of the world for more than a decade. We support communities to pick up the pieces when disasters strike. As climate impacts see disasters increase in frequency and intensity, however, the ability of people to bounce back is being severely eroded. There is a limit to what the poorest people can be expected to adapt to.

The landmark report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2018, 'Special Report on Warming of 1.5°C' set out unequivocally that the planet will face severe consequences if we fail to limit global greenhouse gas emissions to 1.5°C above pre industrial levels³. Beyond the 1.5°C limit, the direct and indirect impacts of climate change would be catastrophic and increasingly unpredictable for all of us, but the poorest will suffer most. Despite the warnings of the IPCC, current national commitments are projected to lead to warming of approximately 3°C. This means current government plans and policies pose fundamental risks to their own citizens, the whole of humanity and much of the natural world. It is clear that a radical increase in ambition at all levels is needed.

The IPCC also made clear that even if governments step up action swiftly and dramatically to limit warming to this more ambitious target in the Paris Agreement of 1.5°C, poverty and inequality, food insecurity and water stress will increase as a result of climate change impacts. At 1.5°C, five-hundred million people may still be exposed and vulnerable to water stress, 36 million people could see lower crop yields, and up to 4.5 billion people could be exposed to heat waves⁴.

Political debate on the island of Ireland on climate change has increased in recent years largely as a result of increased public concern. However, Political Parties and State institutions as a whole have yet to respond at the scale and pace that science, survival and justice demand. The IPCC have called for a reduction of 50% in global emissions by 2030, achieving net zero globally by 2050. As rich States with a high level of responsibility per capita for historical and current emissions, Ireland and Northern Ireland

¹ Alston, Philip. 'Climate Change and Poverty: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights'. (2019).

² Ibid.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 'An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty'. (2018)

⁴ Ibid. Page 453.

have a moral responsibility to cut emissions in half in advance of 2030, achieving net zero in advance of 2050. Climate Action Network Europe estimate that, in response to the latest IPCC science, the EU should revise its current 2030 emissions reductions commitment from 40% to 65%, as its fair share of the global effort. Ireland remains among the EU Member States refusing to endorse an increase in the EU's 2030 target to even 55%, as proposed by the European Commission and supported by eight Member States.

From a global justice perspective, the IPCC report also clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of global pathways modelled by the Panel that succeed in limiting warming to 1.5°C degrees, depend on international cooperation. Increasing support to the poorest countries to enable them to take action is not only a moral imperative and a political and legal obligation under the Paris Agreement, it is also a practical necessity if global climate goals are to be achieved. Importantly, the IPCC also highlight the importance of aligning mitigation response with the SDGs to support the design of equitable mitigation that protect human rights⁵. Unless radically scaled up climate action is pursued hand in hand with the SDGs and human rights, climate action risks exacerbating poverty and inequality, compounding the disproportionate burden of climate change on people living in poverty, globally, and at national levels.

Trocaire calls on the Irish government and Irish political representatives to work to advance the following:

Faster and fairer climate action

- One of the very first legislative priorities must be enactment of an amendment to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, to enshrine a target of net zero emissions by as early a date as possible, and introduce legally-binding five-year national carbon budgets to get us there.
- Enact the recommendations of the Report of the Joint Committee on Climate Action Climate Change, 'A Cross-Party Consensus for Action' as a matter of urgency.
- Deliver an annual emissions reductions rate of at least 8% a year within the lifetime of the next Government.
- Immediately join the group of EU Member States that are calling for an increase in the EU's 2030 climate targets, to at least 55%, aiming for 65%, in line with the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- Commit to increase Ireland's contributions to international climate finance (finance to support countries least responsible and worst affected by climate impacts) to a level commensurate with the State's responsibilities and capacities, alongside ODA commitments.
- Endorse the priorities identified by the **Faster and Fairer Climate Action: One Planet, One Climate, One Future** campaign
- Speed up the phase out of fossil fuels, ensuring a just transition for workers, households and communities (we urge all Irish political representatives to commit to the 'Fossil Free Pledge' See <https://nothere-notanywhere.com/pledge/>)

⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 'An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty'. (2018). Page 460.

2. Support the development of a landmark UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights and adopt mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence legislation in Ireland and the EU

Trócaire is leading a campaign on business and human rights in response to widespread reports of corporate human rights abuses in the communities in which we work, including the displacement of communities, violent evictions, pollution of land and destruction of livelihoods, with a disproportionate impact on women and indigenous communities.

Killings of land, environmental and indigenous defenders are increasing year on year and human rights defenders are increasingly being labelled as terrorists and criminals. Since 2015, more than 2,000 attacks on activists working on human rights issues related to business have been documented.⁶ In 2018, 321 human rights defenders were murdered, 77 per cent of whom were working on land, indigenous peoples and environmental rights.⁷ In 2019, 304 HRDs in 31 countries were targeted and killed for their work according to data collected by Front Line Defenders.⁸ The Trócaire campaign has focused on corporate activities in Honduras, Guatemala, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Myanmar and Palestine.

For example, in Myanmar, 7000 people risk being displaced due to the planned construction of dams on the Tanintharyi River, with a further 22,000 peoples' livelihoods at risk, along with the catastrophic environmental impacts of destroying some of South East Asia's largest remaining intact forest and biodiversity. The communities have not been consulted and yet their lives will be irreversibly impacted if the transnational corporations proceed with these developments. 7 community members in Guapinol, in Honduras, are facing years of jail for trying to protect their river from a mining company. These human rights activists are from a small town in Honduras, who are resisting the mine because the initial work of the mining company dried up the river that they depend on for water. The town has now been heavily militarised and community members criminalised. In another part of Honduras, the Tolupanes community are facing relentless threats and attacks for protecting their forest from logging companies. In February 2019, Salomón Matute and his son Juan Samael Matute were murdered. This community has lost over 100 human rights defenders in the protection of their lands.

Despite the adverse human rights impacts that corporations can have in communities, there is a major gap in the regulation of corporate activities by states and in access to remedy for victims of human rights violations. Without legally binding mechanisms to protect the rights of people impacted by the actions of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, millions of people are at risk of human rights violations with little or no recourse to justice. Stronger regulation is needed both nationally and internationally to provide a legal framework to ensure corporations do not violate human rights in their operations.

⁶ See Business and Human Rights Resource Centre database. See Trócaire <https://www.trocaire.org/news/making-killing-policy-report>

⁷ Frontline Defenders [2019] 'Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2018'.

⁸ https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2019_web.pdf

Trócaire calls on the Irish government and Irish political representatives to work to advance the following:

- Ireland adopts mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation to ensure businesses respect human rights across their activities and value chain and to establish a corporate duty to respect human rights.
- EU mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation.
- Ireland supports and contributes to the development of a UN binding treaty on business and human rights to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, which will complement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

3. End impunity for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT – I)

Trócaire has worked in Israel and the OPT since 2002. Trócaire seeks to build a lasting and just peace in the region based on respect for human rights, international law and the dignity of all. Trócaire works together with both Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations to support people affected by conflict and human rights violations. We provide emergency aid, support communities and advocate for Ireland and the EU to take stronger action to protect the rights of Palestinian communities and for Israel to uphold international law and end to its ongoing military occupation of Palestinian land.

At the political level, the situation in Palestine has deteriorated significantly in the last two years with the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem; the UNRWA financial crisis and the withdrawal of US funding for Palestinians; and significant legislation being passed by the Israeli Knesset (such as the Nation-state law which stipulates: *"Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it"*, effectively reducing Palestinians and other religious groups in Israel to second-class citizens).

Excessive use of force by the Israeli military against civilians in the Gaza Strip participating in the Great Return March has led to hundreds of fatalities; while the ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip is increasing the economic hardship faced by its inhabitants. Women often bear the brunt of the socioeconomic hardships directly or indirectly caused by human rights violations that seek to make it impossible for Palestinians to generate a livelihood and live a dignified life.

Prospects for Peace undermined by illegal Israeli Settlement Expansion: There are around 600,000 Israeli settlers in approximately 250 illegal settlements in the West Bank, 200,000 of whom are in East Jerusalem. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and connected demolitions, seizures of Palestinian-owned land, structures and natural resources by Israeli authorities, movement restrictions and settler violence violate international law and are an obstacle to peace. As stated in the recent EU Missions Report in Jerusalem and Ramallah, the settlement expansion and army checkpoints have turned the West Bank into "an archipelago" of Palestinian "islands", which bodes ill for a two-state solution to the conflict.

Business and Human Rights: Israeli and foreign businesses involved in activities related to the settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory support, maintain and sustain Israel's illegal settlement enterprise and thereby contribute to violations of international law. In March 2016 resolution 31/36 of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) requested the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (HC) to produce a database of all business enterprises involved in certain activities benefitting the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) that raise particular human rights concerns. The resolution requested the HC to publish the database as a report in March 2017 and to keep updating it annually. The publication has been repeatedly deferred as the HC requested more time to complete the database and to ensure fair process for the companies in question.

Closing Civil Society Space: In Israel, legislation such as the NGO Transparency Law contributes to a climate in which their activities are increasingly delegitimised. Many of the concerted attacks against NGOs and individuals are being led by groups who work hand in hand with the Israeli government, which is using its resources to curtail and undermine the work of critical civil society organisations and anyone dissenting with the government policies.

The Palestinian authorities have intensified their clampdown on freedom of expression by arresting journalists and shutting down opposition websites and adopting the Electronic Crimes Law, which criminalises dissent in the cyber sphere and violates international law and the State of Palestine's obligations to protect the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy. In Israel, initiatives are taking place in a hostile atmosphere of incitement against human rights organisations.

Trócaire calls on the Irish government and Irish political representatives to work to advance the following:

- Enactment of *The Occupied Territories Bill 2018* which would ban trade in goods and services between Ireland and illegally occupied territories, including Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank.
- Seek accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in oPt-I. Failure to ensure effective accountability for lives lost, homes destroyed and damage wrought fuels a culture of impunity that can lead to further violations. With regard to violence at the Gaza border, the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 Protests in the oPt published in March 2019 must be enforced.
- Demonstrate support for the UN database and its speedy publication as a transparency mechanism that is fully in line with EU policy on settlements, UNSCR 2334, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Continue to politically and financially support civil society organisations and humanitarian response in oPt and Israel. They should also ensure that their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts allow civil society organisations to continue their work, free from political interference and pressure and longstanding campaigns of intimidation and harassment.

4. Advance a healthier and sustainable agricultural and food system based on agroecological approaches

Ireland has a strong history of leadership in working to eliminate global hunger. Despite the progress in reducing hunger over recent decades, since 2015 the prevalence of undernourishment has stagnated with the absolute number of people living in hunger again rising. In addition to the more than 820 million people living in hunger, the 2019 *State of Food and Nutrition Security* report looks at moderate levels of food insecurity and concludes that more than a quarter of the world's population, some 2 billion people, do not have regular access to nutritious and sufficient food.⁹

On this evidence, the current global agricultural food system will not deliver on the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger by 2030. It is clear that current agricultural and food policies are leaving a large number of the world's poorest people behind. Furthermore, industrial agricultural systems are contributing to climate change, biodiversity loss and soil erosion. For these reasons, there is an urgent need for a global transition towards more sustainable and equitable agriculture and food systems.

Internationally Ireland can renew its leadership role in combatting hunger by promoting transitions towards sustainable and resilient agricultural and food systems. Systems that deliver on the adequate right to food for all, advance social equity and address the challenges of climate change. The Committee on World Food Security's High Level Panel of Experts report on *Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*¹⁰ provides the basis for such a transformation. Realising the report's transformative potential requires political engagement in processes aimed at agreeing clear policy recommendations and subsequent support for their effective implementation.

At home, Ireland became the second country in the world to declare a climate and biodiversity emergency in 2019. This declaration needs to be followed up with ambitious policies across key sectors, including agriculture and food, which accounts for a third of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and is the largest sectoral emitter. This is not an inevitable consequence of farming but of policies which have incentivised unsustainable practices along the entire food chain.

Ambitious policies designed to mitigate agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience to climate change are necessary for Ireland to meet its international emission reduction commitments as well as securing the long-term sustainability of the natural resources agriculture depends on. According to the Climate Change Advisory Council the forthcoming iteration of the Common Agricultural Policy provides an opportunity "to help motivate the necessary changes in the agriculture sector to ensure a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, while at the same time ensuring growth in the financial well-being and security of farmers".¹¹

Trócaire calls on the Irish government and Irish political representatives to:

- Actively support international processes, including those at the Committee on World Food Security, designed to deliver sustainable and transformative food systems in support of the 2030 ambition of zero hunger.

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>

¹¹ Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review 2019

<http://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/Climate%20Change%20Advisory%20Council%20Annual%20Review%202019.pdf>

- Implement national policies across key sectors, including the agriculture and food sector that deliver the total emission reductions Ireland is obligated to meeting under international climate agreements

5. Commit to public financing to meet the ODA target of 0.7% of GNI target and ensure the EU Multiannual Financial Framework delivers on the Paris Climate Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian response needs

Trócaire welcomed the publication of Ireland's new policy on international development co-operation, "*A Better World*" in February 2019 which recommitted Ireland to reach 0.7% of GNI as official development assistance (ODA), to the achievement of the UN Sustainable development Goals (SDGs), and focuses Ireland's aid programme on four main areas - gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, climate action and strengthening governance.¹² Recent EU surveys suggest there is huge support from the Irish public for international aid, with 93% believing that helping people in developing countries is important.

In 2019, many more people needed humanitarian assistance than forecast, largely because of conflicts and extreme climate events. Compliance with international law is declining. Armed conflicts are killing and maiming a record number of children, forcing them to flee their homes. Women and girls are at higher risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Climate change is increasing people's vulnerability to humanitarian crises. The world's eight worst food crises are all linked to both conflict and climate shocks. In 2020, nearly 168 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This represents one in about 45 people in the world, and is the highest figure in decades.¹³

In this context, Trócaire welcomed the €21 million increase in official development assistance (ODA) included in Budget 2020. However, given the scale of the global development and humanitarian needs, and the imperative to meet the targets set in the SDGs, Budget 2021-2024 must be stepping-stones to the target of ODA reaching 0.7% of Ireland's Gross National Income by 2025. At present Ireland is only about halfway there so we urge the Irish elected representatives to develop a strategy to reach the target in full and on time.¹⁴

The Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) determines the budget spending of the EU for a period of at least five years. The current MFF, which ran from 2014 to 2020, is ending. The EU institutions and Member States are elaborating the new MFF for the period of seven years, from 2021 to 2027. It is vital

¹² <https://www.trocaire.org/news/trocaire-welcomes-new-aid-policy>

¹³ See UN OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2020 at https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-2020_v9.1.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy/trocaire-submission-budget-2020>

that the next MFF enables the EU to respond to multiple challenges for people and planet and deliver on the Paris Climate Agreement and the SDGs.

Trocaire calls on the Irish government and Irish political representatives to:

- Work to ensure the ODA target of 0.7% of GNI* is met by 2025 in order to help reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
- Work to ensure that the EU budget is fully aligned with the SDGs and used to advance environmental sustainability, human rights, gender equality, and wellbeing within and outside the EU for example through vital investments in urgent climate action, and through the external instrument of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027.¹⁵

About Trócaire

Trócaire was established in 1973. Our dual mandate is to support the most vulnerable people in the developing world, while also raising awareness of injustice and global poverty in Ireland.

Trócaire works in partnership with a broad range of organisations in Ireland and internationally to bring about change at individual, community, societal and institutional levels. Trócaire works with local partner organisations in over 20 countries across Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa to deliver humanitarian assistance and long-term support to communities.

With the support of the Irish public, Irish Aid and other institutional donors Trócaire's work improved the lives of 2.9 million people in some of the poorest countries in the world in 2018/2019.

Trócaire Policy and Advocacy resources are available at <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy>

¹⁵See https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy/trocaires_european_parliament_elections_2019_policy_briefing.pdf
See <https://concordeurope.org/what-we-do/promoting-civil-society-space/eu-budgetmff-2021-2027/>