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, former UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

Likow Isak Sedow, an internally displaced person at Dhuyuleh camp in Somalia. Much of Somalia has suffered from almost continuous dry spells since 2011 due to climate change. Photo: Amunga Eshuchi.

Climate Justice at COP26: The world must act

2021 was a year of unprecedented climate impacts compounding the existing health, poverty and inequality crises. Unfortunately, the millions of vulnerable people in developing countries who have contributed least to climate change are impacted the most.

The 2021 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying. The UN Secretary General has called it a 'code red for humanity'. The Emissions Gap Report 2021 shows that new national climate pledges combined with other mitigation measures put the world on track for a global temperature rise of 2.7°C by the end of the century. The IPCC report states that without immediate, consistent, and massive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the Paris Agreement's objective of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will be impossible to reach, but the window to keeping global warming to 1.5°C is still open.

Whilst the developed world is primarily responsible for climate change, it is people in developing countries who are suffering its worst effects. 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 emissions.

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 these disasters increase in frequency and intensity, however, the ability of people to bounce back is being severely eroded. Poverty and inequality, food insecurity and water stress will continue to increase as a result of climate change impacts. There is a limit to what the poorest people can be expected to adapt to. Developed countries have a responsibility not only to dramatically reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions, but also to provide financing for adaptation efforts in the South by way of compensation.

The IPCC has called for a reduction of 50% in global emissions by 2030, achieving net zero globally by 2050. The equity principle means that developed nations should move faster than the average. Developed countries such as Ireland and other EU member states have an obligation to make greater efforts at mitigation on the grounds of their current high emissions per capita, historical emissions, higher incomes, and capacities. 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.

Trócaire's work across the world has given us first-hand experience of the unequal impact of climate change and addressing global climate injustice is core to Trócaire's positioning in advance of COP26. We have prioritised three areas to be addressed:

1. **Ambition:** The recent IPCC sixth assessment report has shown that the window to limit temperatures below 1.5°C is closing rapidly. Success at COP26 can only be achieved if high-emitting countries show genuine leadership and signal credible commitments to closing the gap and keeping global temperatures below 1.5°C. COP26 is the last opportunity to keep the 1.5C goal alive.

2. **Deliver on climate financing commitments:** Developing countries on the front line of the climate crises are being subjected to more frequent and severe droughts, storms, flooding, and typhoons. There is an urgent need for international support to help them not only reduce their own emissions in line with the Paris Agreement, but also to allow them to adapt to the ever more unstable and unpredictable climate. Climate Finance must be urgently scaled up and made more accessible. A roadmap must be adopted by developed countries to meet their existing $100 billion annual climate finance commitments, which they have not delivered on.

   It is critical that adaptation is seen as an equal priority at COP26. Progress on adaptation is essential for those countries least responsible for creating the climate change problem but experiencing the worst of its impacts like sea level rise, floods and droughts. The majority of climate finance is currently directed towards mitigation projects. This must be rectified and finance for adaptation must be increased and constitute 50% of all climate finance.

3. **Loss and Damage:** Developing countries and civil society have also been advocating strongly for the inclusion of Loss and Damage as a core concept within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – for the simple reason that global mitigation has been taking place far too slowly. As a result of the slow and inadequate response to date,

climate change impacts are already today resulting in loss and damage that are beyond the current or conceivable adaptive capacity of developing countries. COP26 must adopt Loss and Damage as a permanent agenda item while also establishing a loss and damage finance facility with new and additional loss and damage finance.

1. Ambition

- The combined ambition of all Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) currently falls short of achieving the 1.5C target set out in the Paris Agreement and the next moment for increasing ambition under the UNFCCC does not come until 2025. The current lack of ambition risks irreconcilably putting us off course.
- By failing to put forward NDCs of sufficient ambition and kicking the can down the road our leaders are risking the lives of the most vulnerable people on our planet today who are dealing with catastrophic consequences. The wellbeing of our children into the future, who are inheriting a world facing climate breakdown, is also threatened.
- Success at COP26 is contingent on high-emitting countries, including Ireland as part of the EU, showing genuine leadership and making firm commitments to close the gap and keep global temperatures below 1.5C.
- Historical polluters bear the greatest responsibility and have the greatest means to rapidly reduce emissions. COP26 will be an opportunity for Ireland to show credible commitment to transformative change.

Fair Share

- Ireland continues to fall short of its fair share within the EU and has yet to achieve the ambitious action required by climate justice.
- Ireland has recently published its Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill, with a target of reducing emissions by 51% by 2030. Yet even with these increased domestic commitments, Ireland is falling short of its fair share, and we were the second-highest emitters per capita in the EU in 2019. (53% higher than average across EU).
- Under the UNFCCC, Ireland's level of ambition is determined by the EU's NDC. In December 2020, the EU submitted its updated and enhanced NDC with a target of reducing emissions by at least 55% by 2030 from 1990 level. The EU's initial nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement was the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990. Ireland will need to do more than its EU counterparts to achieve this new NDC target. While EU emissions reduced by 26% between 1990 and 2019, Irish emissions in the same period increased by 11%. Meaning that achieving the EU's NDC requires Ireland to reduce emissions by 66%.
- Given that the EU parliament has already voted for a 60% 2030 target and that the next ratchet period for NDCs in 2025 will inevitably increase ambition further, Ireland would do well to start rapidly closing the current ambition deficit between itself and the EU.
- There have been many efforts to articulate what constitutes a fair global response to climate change. Perhaps the most substantial is the Equity Reference Framework (ERF). Using the most progressive and urgent parameters within the framework, a dramatically different picture emerges for Europe and Ireland. By this, Ireland would need to achieve zero emissions by 2024 and Europe achieve the same by 2025. Along with significant support to developing countries (3,249 Mt CO_2-eq by 2030).

Negotiations

- While the climate negotiations at COP26 are the deadline for the NDCs, they will not be negotiated in Glasgow. The most material outcomes from the negotiations at COP26 in terms of ambition are related to agreement of methodological issues under the Paris Agreement, known as the finalisation of the Paris Rulebook.

- At Glasgow, parties are expected to conclude technical work on: (i) Common Timeframes for NDCs (Paragraph 4, Article 10 of the Paris Agreement); (ii) Revision of the modalities and procedures for international assessment and review including the enhanced transparency framework (ETF); and (iii) ongoing negotiations under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
- Successful outcomes under these areas would indicate a greater sense of urgency than was witnessed at COP25 in Madrid.

2. Climate Finance

- Under the Paris Agreement, nine G20 members (the G7 countries, Australia and the EU) are required to provide public and private financing to support the climate needs of developing countries. At COP15 in Copenhagen, developed countries agreed to jointly mobilise $100 billion per year for climate action by 2020, and Decision 1.CP/21 extended the goal to 2025.
- The OECD have estimated that just $79.6bn in climate finance was mobilised in 2019. Some NGOs estimate a much lower figure (Oxfam).
- According to research by the ODI, Australia, Canada and the USA contributed less than 5% of their fair share of climate finance in 2017–2018. Germany, Japan and the UK are paying 40–45% of their fair share.
- **In 2017–2018, Ireland provided an annual average of $199 million, or 33% of its fair share measured against the composite index.**
- The Green Climate Fund (stand-alone multi-lateral financing entity), the primary vehicle for the $100 billion per year commitment, has been capitalised to just over $20 billion in total. This is a betrayal of the trust of poorer countries for whom the GCF and the $100bn annual commitment were central to their consenting to the Paris Agreement.
- Access to climate finance must be improved for communities on frontlines experiencing the worst impact of climate, including women and indigenous peoples. This includes access to the Green Climate Fund, which should provide direct climate finance access to small-scale climate adaptation and mitigation projects for communities on the ground where it is needed the most.

Negotiations:

- **Rich countries must meet their promises:** A roadmap must be adopted by developed countries to meet their existing $100 billion annual climate finance commitments. They must restore trust in the negotiations.
- **Volume:** The insufficiency of the annual $100 billion to achieve a 1.5C-alliged transformation must also be recognised, and a process established to set a new climate finance goal based on science and the needs of developing countries.

Adaptation

- Increased and predictable public finance for adaptation is vital for developing countries to increase their resilience in appropriate ways to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The vulnerability of small-scale agriculture, and rural communities' livelihoods in particular, to such impacts also means that finance for adaptation is particularly important. These effects are already being experienced, and even where rapid reductions in emissions are achieved, we are 'locked in' to a certain inevitable amount of future climate change.

- Currently only 14% of all climate finance is going to Least Developed Countries, just 2% is going to small island developing states. The majority of climate finance is currently directed towards mitigation projects and just 20% is going towards adaptation.
- Of the estimated $59.5bn annual public climate finance reported in 2017–2018, Oxfam estimate only $12.5bn was provided in the form of grants. Climate finance is delivered predominantly through loans and debt-creating modalities, placing the financial burden onto the shoulders of the global south already suffering from the worst impacts of climate change. Countries should not be saddled with debt to deal with a climate crisis not of their making. Countries should not have to prioritise debt repayments over public services.
- **Ireland has been a leader in this area**. Climate Finance disbursed by Ireland continues to focus predominantly on addressing climate adaptation – with 99% of finance in 2019 supporting these measures. Ireland should champion poverty focused climate action and delivery of the commitment in the Paris Agreement to achieving balance between adaptation and mitigation finance.
- Ireland should also build on the transparency of its climate finance reporting, adopting and championing higher standards for the accounting of finance flows to provide greater clarity on actual increased volumes of finance being made available.
- Ireland's climate finance should be new and additional to our commitments of ODA. It is crucial that climate finance does not displace vital spending on addressing humanitarian need.

Quality

- All adaptation finance actions must be high quality, and grounded in human rights-based and gender equality focused approaches, not only addressing immediate needs, but the underlying root causes of exclusion and marginalisation.
- Climate change is intensifying food insecurity. Innovative food systems based on agroecological approaches are identified with food system transformations that best respond to the climate and biodiversity crises. Scaling up the transformative potential of these approaches to meet the long-term goal of 1.5°C and contribute to the full realisation of the right to food requires access to adaptation funding by small holder farmers and communities.
- Donor countries must use robust transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure resources are effectively spent on quality projects.

Negotiations:

- Finance for adaptation must be increased and constitute 50% of all climate finance. A dedicated finance goal for adaptation must be agreed upon as part of the new collective climate goal commencing in 2025.
- At COP 16 in 2010, Parties decided to establish the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) to assist the COP in exercising its functions in relation to the financial mechanism of the Convention. In accordance with decision 4/CP.24, the Conference of the Parties (COP), the SCF was requested to prepare, every four years, a report on the determination of the needs of developing country Parties related to implementing the Convention and the Paris Agreement, for consideration by the COP and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA), starting at COP 26 and CMA 3 respectively. The report of the SCF will form the basis of the COP's decisions on finance.

3. Loss and Damage

- We are in the era of Loss and Damage caused by climate change. It is no longer a future threat - it is happening right now in both developed and developing countries.
- The latest IPCC report shows us that we face a severe toll from climate disasters globally, with the poorest people living in the most vulnerable situations. We must establish effective responses to climate disasters in ways that honour human dignity and protect human rights. Central to this is to provide support for those who suffer when adaptation fails.
- Loss and Damage is a highly contested topic because it reflects the harsh realities of failed mitigation and adaptation action.
- Developing countries have been resisting Loss and Damage as they felt it implied liability and compensation. The Paris Agreement makes clear that inclusion of Loss and Damage in the agreement does not imply liability or give rise to financial compensation claims. It refers to 'enhancing understanding, action and support on a cooperative and facilitative basis'.
- The Warsaw International Mechanism (or the WIM) for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts should establish a new dedicated climate finance mechanism that is capable of mobilising at least US$75Bn per year for Loss & Damage by 2023.
- We must also consider the irrevocable tragic loss of culture, habitats and human life which we cannot put a figure on - and strengthen our resolve to act.

Negotiations:

- Loss and Damage should be formalised under the UNFCCC through a decision to make it as a permanent agenda item for the SBs and COPs.
- COP26 must ensure the full operationalization of the Santiago Network on Loss Damage, meeting its mandate to provide action and support for vulnerable developing countries while also establishing a loss and damage finance facility with new and additional loss and damage finance.
- Given the support Ireland received from some of the most climate vulnerable countries in their bid for a seat at the UN Security Council, Ireland should be championing a decision to put loss and damage on a statutory footing within the UNFCCC process.

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