



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is CAFOD campaigning on climate?

Climate is the single biggest threat to reducing poverty. Whether it is typhoons or floods destroying entire communities, damaging homes and property or unpredictable seasons for farmers leading to harvests growing smaller or failing, leaving millions hungry, climate change is undoing years of our work together to improve people's lives.

If CAFOD is serious about tackling poverty, we need to take climate change seriously. The world's poorest people are already being hit hardest by climate extremes. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) project that climate change is expected to significantly increase and intensify extreme climatic events, putting those most vulnerable at even greater risk.

2. What's CAFOD's new campaign asking for?

One Climate, One World calls on all UK party leaders to protect the most vulnerable people from dangerous climate change and to support the transition from polluting fossil fuels to sustainable energy for all.

At the same time it will invite each of us as individuals to commit to playing our own part by taking action and living as sustainably as we can. By doing this we're showing politicians how much we care and that we expect them to act too.

3. Why now?

The UK is already respected globally for taking the lead on tackling climate change in 2008 – when, partly thanks to your campaigning, it passed the ground-breaking Climate Change Act. But we need to build on this. We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 if we are to avoid dangerous climate change.

There are some important opportunities ahead where we must persuade our leaders to tackle this worldwide problem:

**The run up to the 2015 UK general election;
United Nations climate conference in Paris in 2015;
The setting of new long-term international development goals in 2015**

Climate change is a long-term problem that needs long-term solutions. We need leaders who can look beyond a single parliament, and put the needs of our vulnerable sisters and brothers – those suffering most from the changing climate – at the heart of any decisions made. This is why we're calling on party leaders to commit to action before the UK general election.

4. Why energy?

The global energy system – power and transport – is currently responsible for over 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions, rising to over 80% in developed countries like the UK. This makes it the global energy sector a major contributor to climate change. Globally, energy emissions are set to double by 2030 if we keep up our current demand for energy continues as demand for countries that are industrialising rises too.



To achieve the emissions cuts required to tackle climate change, we have to urgently shift away from using polluting fossil fuels to more sustainable sources of energy, such as wind, solar, water and geothermal, along with making our use of all energy more efficient. In addition, our current energy system is not delivering for everyone. Investing in sustainable energy is vital not just to tackle climate change, but so everyone can light their homes, their schools and hospitals, and so they can produce food and run businesses.

Billions of people around the world still do not have access to electricity or clean ways to cook. 1.2 billion – 1 in 5 - do not have access to electricity, and 2.8 billion use polluting fuels to cook and heat their houses.

Pollution from cooking smoke is a major cause of illness and death, particularly for woman and girls.

Therefore supporting access to safe, sustainable energy is essential for tackling poverty and improving health and wellbeing as well as tackling climate change.

5. What do we mean by, 'climate change', and 'sustainable energy'?

Climate change - When we talk about climate change, we are referring to changes in the global climate beyond those which we would expect to see due to natural climate variations. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as a '*change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.*'

Sustainable energy - Energy that does not harm the climate or local environment and does not prevent future generations from meeting their energy needs. Sustainable energy should also be affordable, safe, and reliable for all.

6. What are the links with our faith?

Nature reveals God to us. The world is a gift from God and its future is intimately bound up with our own lives and choices. Climate change not only threatens the natural world, but also the lives and livelihoods of our global neighbours, especially the world's poorest communities. Our faith calls us to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with people who are poor. So doing our bit to tackle climate change is a fundamental part of expressing our faith.

7. How can I, and my parish, make a difference?

Although each change we make might seem small in itself, together it all adds up. It's a sign that we want a much bigger change, and our actions can encourage others to get involved. It also strengthens our campaigning. If we are calling on politicians to cut emissions and support sustainable energy, then our words will be much stronger if we commit to achieving the same goals in our own lives. . By committing to live more sustainably ourselves we can demonstrate our support for people living in poverty, living with climate extremes and expected to be significantly adversely impacted by climate change.

Personal commitments come in all shapes and sizes. You could get an energy monitor, turn down your heating or improve insulation, or simply tell someone else about CAFOD's campaign. Have a look on our website at cafod.org.uk/campaign for more ideas on how to care for creation and live more sustainably.



8. The UK is so small; will cutting our emissions make any difference?

It's true that no single country's emission reductions will make a difference on its own, it's only if every nation agrees to limit polluting greenhouse gases emissions can we achieve the cuts we need on a global scale.

However, the UK is responsible for about 2% of the whole world's man-made carbon dioxide emissions. In 2010, the UK's net greenhouse gas emissions were estimated to be equivalent to 590.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. Reducing these emissions is a vitally important task.

However, the UK can also play an even larger role - in global climate leadership, raising ambition levels at EU, and International decision making levels, as well as in meetings such as UN Security Council and the G7. In 2008, the UK showed leadership by introducing the Climate Change Act. It became the first country in the world to introduce legally binding targets, and other countries followed suit.

9. Does campaigning work?

Yes, the UK's Climate Change Act is proof of that.

The Act was passed in Parliament with cross-party support in 2008 and it set the UK on a path to reduce its emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. MPs passed such ambitious legislation because supporters of organisations like CAFOD campaigned strongly for it. It was also backed by other faith groups, industry groups and trade unions, and helped show that the UK could be a global leader in acting on climate change.

Of course, this campaign won't be easy and progress won't happen overnight. But if we build a big enough movement of people determined to act on this critical issue, working with our partners in the Catholic Church and around the world, and with our allies across the UK, Europe and globally, we have every hope that we can bring about change.

10. How is CAFOD working with other organisations?

Yes. We are part of The Climate Coalition, which brings together over 100 organisations, from environment and development charities to trade unions, faith groups, community and women's groups. We are also working closely with other development charities, such as Christian Aid and Oxfam, who also see climate change and lack of access to sustainable energy as a major obstacle to tackling poverty. Find out more by visiting climatecoalition.org

CAFOD is also part of CIDSE, a European group of Catholic organisations, who speak with a united Catholic voice in UN climate change negotiations. CIDSE works through its members in different European countries, Bishops' Conferences and partners in developing countries. CIDSE will have a presence at forthcoming UN climate talks.

CAFOD is also an active member of Caritas International, which works with national Caritas organisations around the world, Bishops' Conferences and southern partners to speak out on global issues, in particular through their *One human family: food for all* global hunger campaign.

Myth Buster

Have you faced tricky questions on climate change from neighbours or friends? There are lots of myths and misinformation when it comes to climate change – our quick myth buster guide tackles some of the common ones.

MYTH 1. Scientists can't agree. The jury is still out.

Fact: The vast majority of scientists agree that human activity is overwhelmingly responsible – 95% - for recent warming. There is consensus among scientists that the climate is being changed by human activity, in the same way as there is consensus on the links between smoking and lung cancer.

MYTH 2. It's just part of natural change.

Fact: The climate has changed throughout the earth's history but the huge changes happening to our climate today are not due to natural causes. Natural variations happen over millions of years. Scientific research shows us that the last ice age ended around 11,000 years ago and since then the earth's climate has been relatively stable at about 14°C.

However, over the course of the last century our climate has started to change rapidly, with an unusual increase in global temperatures, accompanied by changes in extremes of weather. There is overwhelming scientific evidence from the IPCC that suggests this is due to increased amounts of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gasses occur naturally in the atmosphere but human activity such as burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil and deforestation.

MYTH 3. The globe has stopped warming.

Fact: Temperature records clearly show the world has continued to warm over the past century, and continues to do so. The intensity of this warming varies but the trend is upwards. For example, the past 30 years have been the warmest experienced by the northern hemisphere during the last 1,400 years.

This warming has started to impact upon the climate system and is projected not only to increase global temperatures, but change patterns of rainfall and increase extreme climate events. The effects are now being felt around the world.

MYTH 4. Scientists have exaggerated claims about changes in our climate

Fact: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is considered the leading authority on the science of climate change. It consists of 2,000 scientists from over 150 countries. Its latest report released in 2013/14 – the Fifth Assessment Report ('AR5') – provides the most detailed and up-to-date view of the state of our climate. The findings of the IPCC are agreed upon by all 195 countries that make up its membership.

MYTH 5. Volcanoes emit more carbon dioxide than humans possibly could.

Fact: On average volcanoes emit less than 1% of the CO₂ humans put into the atmosphere in a year. This percentage is growing smaller as emissions from human activities continue to rise.



MYTH 6. Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant; it's natural and essential for life.

Fact: 'Natural' does not always equal 'safe'. Rapidly increasing high concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases generated by human activity are causing climate change and jeopardising human survival, health and wellbeing.

MYTH 7. Far back in time, global warming episodes had nothing to do with carbon dioxide levels.

Fact: Carbon role of carbon dioxide in the planet's history is reasonably well understood. While changes in CO₂ levels are certainly not the only force at work on the climate, the current changes in climate could not be explained without an understanding of the warming impact of carbon dioxide.

MYTH 8. Some countries have always had droughts, heat waves and extreme bushfire weather. There is no link to climate change.

Fact: The effects of climate change are resulting in increasing extreme events; heat waves and droughts, which in turn affect our livelihoods and health. These climate extremes are projected to worsen over the next couple of decades

MYTH 9. Global warming is good for us!

Fact: Left unchecked climate change will make life significantly harder for the majority of people, especially the world's poor who can least afford to adapt. Climate change anywhere on the scale predicted by the IPCC will have substantial to severe impacts on food and water, economic growth, and health globally, undermining and often reversing gains made on reducing poverty.

Adapted from: <http://www.carbonneutral.com.au/climate-change/10-myths.html>

CAFOD policy positions

1. What's CAFOD's position on 'unconventional gas'?

CAFOD supports technology and policy solutions that reduce the UK's dependency of fossil fuels over the long term, whether those fuels are domestically produced or imported. For this reason, we don't believe 'unconventional', or 'shale', gas is a long-term solution to tackling climate change, as it maintains our dependency on fossil fuels and could distract us from focusing time and money on more sustainable solutions, (such as investing in energy efficiency and renewables).

2. What's CAFOD's position on 'fracking'?

As part of the Climate Coalition, we do not support shale gas extraction (known as 'fracking') in the UK. The government has failed to demonstrate convincingly that it will not compromise the UK's legally binding climate change targets, or its broader commitment to limiting global climate change to two degrees. Britain should be leading the world in shifting away from fossil fuels and towards clean and sustainable energy, rather than trying to extract ever more inaccessible fossil fuels.

The Climate Coalition is calling on the government to reconsider its support for fracking for shale gas and to focus its policy on making a rapid transition towards a sustainable low carbon energy system, so that the UK stays on track to meet its climate change commitments.

3. Nuclear

CAFOD does not have a specific position on nuclear, but when it comes to energy sources we would view them against what the science is telling us and our Catholic values. Namely that any sources should not damage the earth, that we must move away from fossil fuels and realise the potential that lies in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Our sister agencies in the Climate Coalition such as WWF and Friends of the Earth have more detail on nuclear power.

4 Population

We understand the causes of the current rates of climate change to be historic and man-made. The growing population clearly poses challenges to the global community but it is not the main driver of climate change.

For example, the average American's energy use leaves a carbon footprint that is 2,000 times larger and deeper than a poor person in Africa. And 80 percent of global emissions come from just 20 percent of the world's population.

In order to address climate change our focus should be on the industries, lifestyles and consumption habits of industrialized nations and their populations as these are the primary drivers of climate change.