

10 FACTS ABOUT CLIMATE JUSTICE



NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

”Leave no one behind” is a core principle of Agenda 2030. It is vital to the United Nations (UN) climate efforts and the pursuit of climate justice, highlighting the necessity of including everyone in the path to sustainable development. To truly ensure that no one is left behind, the most vulnerable countries and communities must be prioritized and provided with the support they need to adapt to the rapidly changing climate.

FROM GLOBAL WARMING TO GLOBAL BOILING

UN Secretary-General António Guterres warns that climate change is now an existential threat. The world is facing widespread droughts that lead to famine and desertification. To prevent a catastrophe, we must limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. According to the UN’s climate panel, emissions need to be reduced by at least 43 percent by 2030 to meet this critical target. Urgent and decisive action is required now – before it’s too late!

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE UNEQUAL BURDEN

Twenty-three of the world’s wealthiest countries have historically been responsible for over half of all global emissions, yet it’s the developing nations that bear the brunt. Climate change deepens economic disparities, leaving vulnerable communities even more exposed to its harsh impact. The resources and ability to manage these consequences are unevenly distributed. Climate justice demands that those nations most responsible for the crisis take the greatest responsibility – by cutting their emissions and financing the transition for poorer countries.

WOMEN AND GIRLS BEAR THE BRUNT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Globally, women rely more on natural resources but have less access to them. In many regions, women are primarily responsible for securing essentials like food, water, and fuel. Agriculture, a key livelihood for women in low-income countries, is particularly vulnerable to climate change. When agriculture collapses, women and girls are often forced to flee. Alarming, nearly 80 percent of the estimated 26 million people displaced by climate change are women.

CLIMATE CHANGE FUELS THE RISE IN CHILD MARRIAGES

Climate change intensifies the vulnerability of girls by destroying livelihoods, worsening food insecurity, and imposing heavy rebuilding costs. Child marriage, more prevalent among those with limited resources – especially in rural areas – is often used as a desperate strategy to cope with economic shocks. According to UNICEF, for every 10% deviation in rainfall levels, the incidence of child marriages increases by 1%.

A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT IS A HUMAN RIGHT

In July 2022, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution that recognizes a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right. Although not legally binding, the resolution urges member states to protect and uphold this right, potentially leading to stricter laws against environmental harm. Furthermore, governments that have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child are now obligated to recognize and protect children’s right to a clean and sustainable environment. The UN General Assembly also adopted a resolution that links climate justice to international legal obligations.

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THE UN'S COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE JUSTICE

Since the 1972 Stockholm Conference the UN has led the fight against climate change, establishing the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. These initiatives paved the way for key agreements like the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Over the years, climate justice has become a priority, leading to the creation of the UN Green Climate Fund in 2010. This fund supports climate adaptation projects in developing countries, with a focus on vulnerable communities such as least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), and African nations.

CLIMATE JUSTICE IS CRUCIAL TO ACHIEVING AGENDA 2030

By 2030, the global goals of Agenda 2030 are to be achieved. Today, only 17% of the sub-goals are met or on track. The consequences of climate change, such as droughts and floods, threaten several goals in Agenda 2030, including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), and Goal 2 (zero hunger). Intensified efforts and increased focus on action are required to reverse this trend. Climate justice is crucial to achieving Agenda 2030, as the goals are interdependent.

YOUTH LEADS THE CHARGE FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Young people are spearheading the movement for climate justice and a sustainable future. Greta Thunberg has brought global attention to climate issues with her activism. Rebecca Prince-Ruiz's Plastic-Free July has inspired over 100 million people in 190 countries to reduce single-use plastics. Meanwhile, Boyan Slat, founder of The Ocean Cleanup, has developed an innovative method to remove plastic from the oceans, with a goal to eliminate 90% of ocean plastic by 2040.

THE URGENT NEED TO PRIORITIZE YOUTH RIGHTS

Climate change has created a profound generational injustice. Today's youths, who have contributed the least to the climate crisis, are facing the most severe consequences. The decisions made by previous generations have put the future of young people at risk. It is imperative that the well-being of youth is placed at the heart of all climate action and policymaking. The future of the next generation is on the line, and we must act decisively to safeguard it!

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