



**Friends of
the Earth
Scotland**

Demand Climate Justice!

The Road to Paris and Beyond

Friends of the Earth Scotland supporter briefing, September 2015

2015 is a crucial year in the fight against climate change. This December world leaders will meet at the UN climate change talks in Paris to negotiate a new global deal on climate change, at what's known as COP21. So far, 20 years of international negotiations have failed to bring about an agreement in line with climate science or climate justice, but a fair and ambitious agreement has never been so desperately needed. This briefing will tell you more about what's at stake, what Friends of the Earth Scotland are demanding and how you can get involved.

What Climate Science Says

Every year we're seeing the effects of climate change grow. In Scotland and worldwide, 2014 marked the warmest year ever recorded. Meanwhile, floods, droughts and other extreme weather are all becoming more frequent and more severe.

Last November the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its Fifth Report: the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of climate science we have. While world leaders have agreed that we must avoid 2 degrees of warming from pre-industrial levels, the science suggests that staying below 1.5 degrees is what we should be aiming at to avoid catastrophic impacts. However, if 'business as usual' continues, we will commit the planet to at least 4 degrees of warming and extremely severe impacts.

But it is not too late to avoid 1.5 degrees of global warming! To do this, global emissions need to peak by 2020, electricity production should be virtually carbon pollution free by mid-century and global fossil fuel use should be cut by 2/3 by 2050.

What Climate Justice Demands

It is a cruel irony that the countries and people who have contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions will be the worst affected by climate change. For example, even at 2 degrees of warming, small island states like Tuvalu are at risk of disappearing under water as a result of rising sea levels. Meanwhile, indigenous peoples are already facing threats to their

traditional ways of life, such as access to traditional food and adequate water.

Climate justice demands not only that we rapidly and drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but that the transition is a just one. This means that while all countries have a responsibility to cut emissions, industrialised countries have a particular responsibility, based on their far greater levels of historical emissions. At the same time, developing countries of the global south are entitled to resources and technology to make the transition to a low-carbon economy and to finance necessary climate adaptations. Already many are reaching the limit of what they can bear with their limited resources.

The UN Process and the Paris Climate Conference

In order to achieve such ambitious targets and to protect the world's most vulnerable people and nations, a fair, binding, global agreement is needed. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main international treaty for achieving this, with decisions taken once a year at the Conference of Parties (COP).

This December COP21 will take place in Paris. Government ministers from 195 countries are meant to agree on a new global climate deal, taking effect in 2020. Currently, there is no globally binding deal, after COP15 in Copenhagen failed to reach an agreement.

Unfortunately, things aren't looking too good for Paris either. Powerful countries are fighting tooth and nail to weaken any potential

agreement. For example, rich countries are trying to erode the core principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” – denying they should have more responsibility for cleaning up the mess we’re in, than the developing nations who are stuck with the most drastic effects. Industrialised countries have also been pushing for carbon cutting targets to be voluntary, rather than binding. Moreover, the voluntary cuts being proposed would not bring us anywhere near avoiding catastrophic climate change. All the while, corporations and lobbyists are increasing their influence on the climate talks, proposing false solutions like carbon markets¹, carbon capture and storage,² biofuels³ and other techno-fixes⁴.

Our Campaign: The Road to Paris and Beyond

Politicians must ensure a new international climate agreement that commits to deep emission cuts at home, while providing adequate finances and technology transfers to help developing countries reduce their own emissions.

The outcome of Paris is not set in stone - there is still time to influence the process. If we make enough noise in the coming months, we can still have an impact. However, we know our fight won’t end in Paris. COP21 is only one moment in years of climate action. It is a galvanising moment in rejuvenating and building a movement that can keep up the fight **against** dirty energy and **for** community energy, long after Paris.

As a country that has already committed to taking ambitious action on climate change, including a Climate Justice Fund for developing countries, Scotland has a key role to play in the movement for climate justice. The 2009 Climate Change Act is some of the most ambitious climate change legislation in the world. We want Scottish civil society to have a strong presence in Paris, so we can take that ambition to the heart of the negotiations.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to keep the pressure on politicians at home. So far, Scotland has not reached any of its

climate targets. With a new First Minister in office and a moratorium on fracking, now is an important time to ensure the Scottish government keeps climate change at the top of its agenda. Scotland is a country that has benefited from decades of pumping CO₂ into the atmosphere. As a country that has abundant renewable energy potential and yet produces seven times more hydrocarbons than we consume, to show true leadership on climate we must start to leave the fossil fuels in the ground and focus on the transition to a clean, renewable energy future.

Get Involved

Together with the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition (SCCS), we are planning a 2015 full of action on climate change, to build the climate movement, show politicians that we demand strong and urgent action, and prepare for the years ahead.

- Stay in touch. Sign up for regular email updates about our Road to Paris campaign: http://foes.do/Climate_Activists
- Write to or visit your MPs and MSPs, telling them you want them to act on climate change.
- Join the Energy Revolution to stop dirty fossil fuels and bring power to people through community-owned renewables: <http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/energy-rev>
- Get trained up to fight for climate justice and learn about inspiring solutions to climate change during a weekend of workshops and skillsharing around Scotland on 26th-27th September: <http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/paris-training-weekend>
- Join us on 28th November in Edinburgh for Scotland’s Climate March – show your colours for climate, justice and jobs. <http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/march>
- Come to Paris! FoE Scotland are taking at least 100 people to Paris. On 11th-12th December we’ll join inspiring, international mass mobilisations to mark the peak of two-weeks of civil society action. <http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/come-to-paris-2015>
- Stay involved in 2016! In early 2016 we’ll hold a day of workshops and discussions designed to further the fight for climate justice in Scotland – more details coming soon.

¹ <http://www.foeeurope.org/carbon-trading>

² http://ccs-info.org/onewebmedia/cumulative_co2.pdf

³

http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/biofuels_change_course.pdf

⁴ <http://gebe.foei.org/2014/09/11/techno-fixes-and-false-solutions/>

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