



Simon Kirkland
Acting Senior UK
Political Adviser
skirkland@christian-aid.org
020 7523 2164

Briefing for MPs

Climate change and international development

June 2017

We would like all recently elected Members of Parliament to ask:

- The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to reaffirm the UK's role as a global climate leader, working with international allies to implement the Paris Climate Agreement.
- The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure that all government departments work together to produce an ambitious Clean Growth Plan to transform the economy in line with the Climate Change Act 2008.
- The Secretary of State for International Development to avoid locking poor countries into a dirty energy future and instead boost access to clean energy by:
 - increasing UK aid spending on access to clean energy for the world's poorest communities.
 - insisting that the World Bank shifts more funds towards local renewable energy.

Summary

A new government brings new opportunities to refresh the UK's approach to climate change. We can embed climate commitments across all government departments and renew the UK's role as a global leader in international efforts to tackle climate change.

From 1-9 July 2017, Christian Aid will join The Climate Coalition and Community Energy Fortnight to ask MPs to take a lead.

We want to see local action on climate change to equip the UK for the challenges of the future, and we want to see this linked to national action and global leadership. This means shifting to a fairer, cleaner and more secure economy at home, a transition that will require low-carbon green growth to be at the heart of

the government's Clean Growth Plan and industrial strategy. We are calling on the government to produce an ambitious and comprehensive plan that includes measures to prevent heat wastage from our homes, tackle air pollution and promote community energy generation. We are also calling for more ambitious action overseas – pressing the UK, for example, to increase its support for access to clean energy worldwide.

- The UK's proud record of action on climate change can be a major pillar of its new relationships with the wider world, from the UN to the Commonwealth. This builds on the UK's pivotal role in the Paris Climate Agreement and the world's first Climate Change Act.
- Climate change is now the biggest factor shaping the future for the world's poorest people, affecting everything from harvests to clean water, extreme floods and storms, and the spread of diseases.
- We are already witnessing 1°C of average warming which is having serious impacts on the world's poorest, leading to increasingly severe typhoons, heat waves, crop failures and rising sea levels.
- The next fifteen years offer huge opportunities to eradicate poverty, avert dangerous climate change and put the world on a pathway to sustainable development as enshrined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Now is the time to speed up the UK's climate ambition with a comprehensive plan. In recent years, the UK has made good progress in reducing emissions in line with the Climate Change Act, but the Government's own analysis shows that policies have not been ambitious enough to stay on track. All Ministers and Departments should take responsibility for correcting this in the new Parliament.
- 1.1 billion people around the world have no access to electricity – that's 1 in 6 people.
- Britain can continue to show leadership on climate change by using its aid (both bilateral UK aid and UK

aid channelled through the World Bank) to move away from dirty fossil fuels and secure clean, renewable energy access for the world's poorest communities.

The UK should continue demonstrating leadership on climate change by supporting access to clean energy

There are two global energy crises which often seem to have contradictory solutions: the urgency of tackling climate change through a rapid global shift to low-carbon energy and the fact that more than 1.1 billion people lack the electricity they need in their homes, schools, clinics and businesses¹.

Christian Aid believes these two problems can and must be solved together by investing in a sustainable energy future. Access to energy improves people's wellbeing: it enables safe drinking water to be pumped and medicines to be refrigerated. It provides light to enable study at home after the sun has set, powers computers and charges mobile phones. Modern energy for cooking reduces the amount of time women spend gathering firewood, curbs deforestation and cuts indoor air pollution.

The good news is that all countries have committed to a new set of UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Goal 7 commits to 'ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.'² The UN has also agreed to reform finance so that there are more resources – both public and private – for low-carbon development. The UK Government has an opportunity to play a big role in achieving Goal 7 and help ensure this finance materialises. This would be a worthy continuation of our global leadership on climate change. As the UK shifts towards decentralised, renewable and secure energy, we can unlock this opportunity for poorer countries to do the same.

DFID should do more to support clean energy access in the world's poorest communities

Between 2011 and 2015, UK aid brought nearly 5 million people access to modern energy. This includes current projects like decentralised and off-grid energy in Brazil, Bangladesh and rural areas in Africa. DFID's Energy Africa initiative will contribute to Goal 7. We welcome DFID's good progress, but believe there is much more to do. Energy spending is only 1.15% of DFID's total bilateral spending, which is about £90 million³. UK aid money should try to match the huge energy needs of the world's poorest.

The UK's role in shifting World Bank investments to local clean energy access

The largest single channel for UK spending on energy access overseas is the World Bank. The World Bank's Climate Change Action Plan has been transitioning money into renewable energy and supporting a number of energy access initiatives to get power and clean fuel to the energy poor. However, these positive steps risk being undermined by continued investment in fossil fuels. Between 2011 and 2015, the World Bank invested \$12.9 billion in oil, gas and coal. This compares to \$10.4 billion in clean energy projects over the same period.

Christian Aid believes that DFID should use its leverage as a key shareholder in the World Bank to persuade it to be part of the big shift away from fossil fuels to renewable energy. In 2014, the UK gave around £2.2 billion to the World Bank Group, saying it would 'continue to monitor closely [the bank's] performance on shifting away from fossil fuel to clean energy lending.'⁴ The time has come for progress to be seen.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Global Tracking Framework, Sustainable Energy for All, 2013*, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/energy/publication/Global-Tracking-Framework-Report>
- ² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/energy/>
- ³ devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/sector
- ⁴ UK ODA by Multilateral Organisation 2013-2014, Statistics on International Development 2015, DFID, gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/491515/table-A11.ods