

SECOND
EDITION

CLIMATE CRISIS



OXFAM

WHAT IS THE CLIMATE CRISIS, WHY IS IT
HAPPENING, HOW DOES IT AFFECT US ALL,
AND WHAT CAN YOU DO?



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WHAT IS THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

WHAT IS THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND WHAT HAS CAUSED IT?

We can all see that weather patterns are changing, which we refer to as ‘climate change’.

Climate change has caused a worldwide climate crisis. Heatwaves, unpredictable and intense rain, and more powerful tropical storms are devastating lives.

We know that it’s mainly human activity that causes climate change and that the resulting crisis poses a real threat to the planet and human life.



Wealthy countries grew rich on fossil fuels, using them to power homes, transport, industries and agriculture. But burning coal, oil and gas produces greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. The increasing level of these gases in the atmosphere trap heat similarly to the glass roof of a greenhouse. The effects are devastating. Heatwaves, floods and droughts are wrecking lives, homes and livelihoods.¹

If we don't do something about the climate crisis now, the future of humanity and our planet is under threat. More glaciers will melt, sea levels will rise, and crops and wildlife will be endangered. Many parts of our world will be uninhabitable, with less land to grow food.² The climate crisis is threatening humankind – it will push people deeper into poverty, and they'll struggle to find ways to survive.





**THE WORLD'S RICHEST 10%
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR**


50%

OF ALL CO₂ EMISSIONS

**3.5
BILLION**

people living in poverty – who only contribute 10% of carbon dioxide emissions – are most affected by the climate crisis.³

Extreme weather events are forcing people to **leave their homes, lose their source of income, and go hungry.** This is a grave injustice.

 **FIND OUT MORE:** Climate Equality: A planet for the 99%


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HOW DOES THE CLIMATE CRISIS AFFECT US?

IS THE IMPACT THE SAME FOR EVERYONE?

Though the climate crisis is a reality that affects the entire planet, we are not all affected equally.

A prolonged drought is less likely to create widespread hunger in richer areas of the world. This is because wealthy countries can import food, and people have higher incomes and state benefits. But rural communities in poorer parts of the world rely on local harvests for both their food and income. A severe drought can cause widespread hunger.




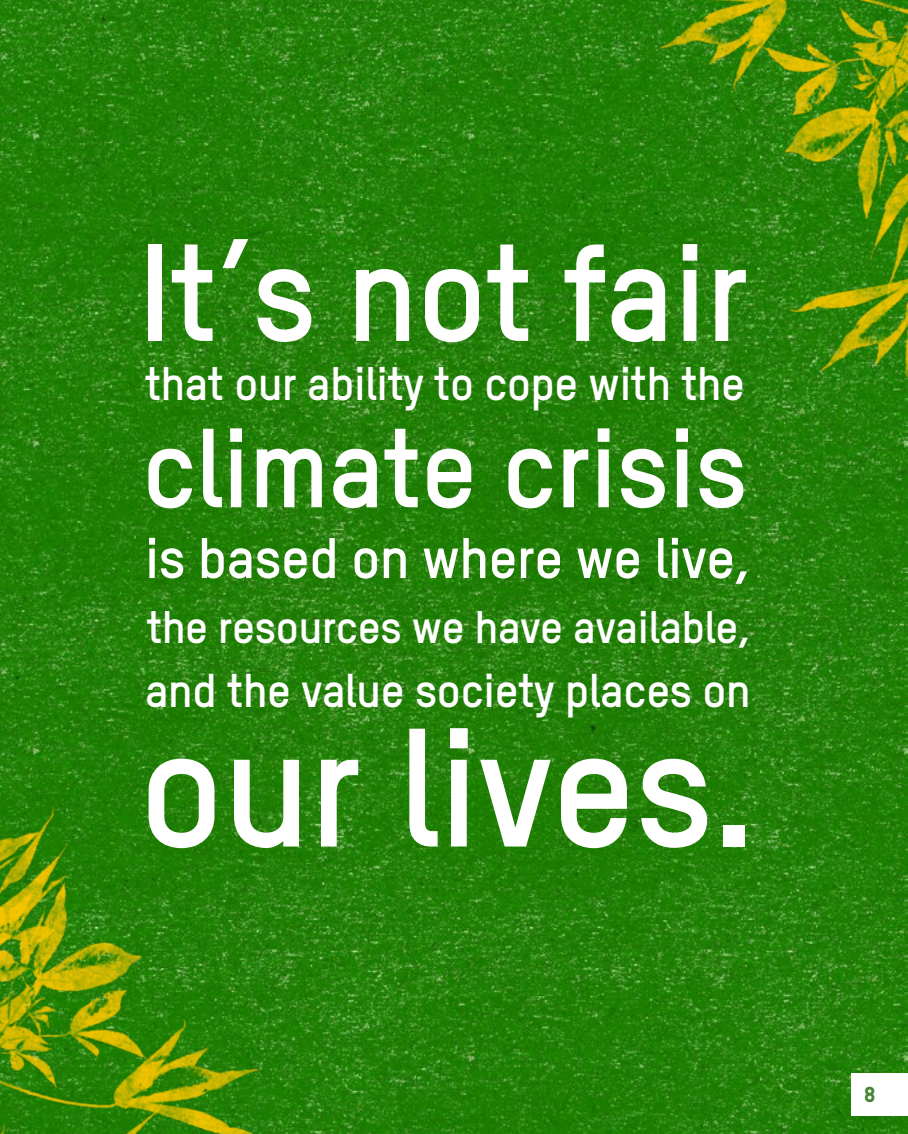
So although the climate crisis is affecting us all, it's hitting some communities harder than others. And it's the people who've done the least to cause it who are suffering the most.

People facing poverty rarely have access to the money and support needed to survive and recover. This includes things like clean water on tap during a drought or house insurance to help rebuild homes destroyed by floods.


Since 2000, extreme weather-related disasters have affected about 3.94 billion people in low- and middle-income countries.⁴

In 2017, Oxfam found information that revealed a concerning trend over the last ten years. There have been more weather-related disasters, and this has become the number one reason for internal displacement. This has resulted in more than 20 million people being forced to leave their homes every year. **That's like one person every two seconds.**

 **FIND OUT MORE: [Uprooted by Climate Change report](#)**



It's not fair
that our ability to cope with the
climate crisis
is based on where we live,
the resources we have available,
and the value society places on
our lives.




We need to join together to stop this injustice. We must collectively change course and prevent global warming from becoming a global catastrophe. Let's act now to protect people and our planet.

Leaders of wealthier countries have a big part to play. In 2022 countries in the Global South, supported by civil society, achieved a monumental win at COP27. Here, governments agreed to set up a 'loss and damage fund' to help the people worst hit by the climate crisis to recover from its impacts. It's now up to richer nations and companies that are contributing to pollution to provide funding that matches the needs of the people most affected.

WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND INEQUALITY?

The climate crisis is not just an environmental crisis. It's an inequality crisis. We live in an unequal world, and people living in low-income countries are suffering the most.




The crisis is making inequality worse by putting people in lower-income countries in an even more vulnerable position. It also risks undoing the progress made in recent decades to fight poverty.

Extreme weather events like droughts, hurricanes and floods are getting worse too. And some are happening more often.⁵

These disasters seriously threaten many people around the world, such as those in rural and indigenous communities, that rely heavily on natural resources. Crops aren't growing and rain isn't falling. These communities lose income and are then more vulnerable to poverty and disease.

Systems of race and gender oppression and discrimination can also force people further into poverty. This makes them even more vulnerable to the climate crisis.⁶

 **FIND OUT MORE: Survival of the Richest**



For example, women commonly face unfair expectations that mean they're often suffering disproportionately.


Women are more likely to go hungry when food is short, and to fall back on unsafe work when harvests fail.

They're likely to be the ones walking further to collect water when it's scarce because of more frequent and harsher droughts, often putting their own safety at risk.

Sifiso reads a text message detailing weather conditions in central Zimbabwe. An Oxfam-supported weather station was installed at a school nearby to provide community members with important weather reports to help them make decisions about their crops and lives.



FIND OUT MORE: [Gender Inequalities and Food Insecurity report](#)

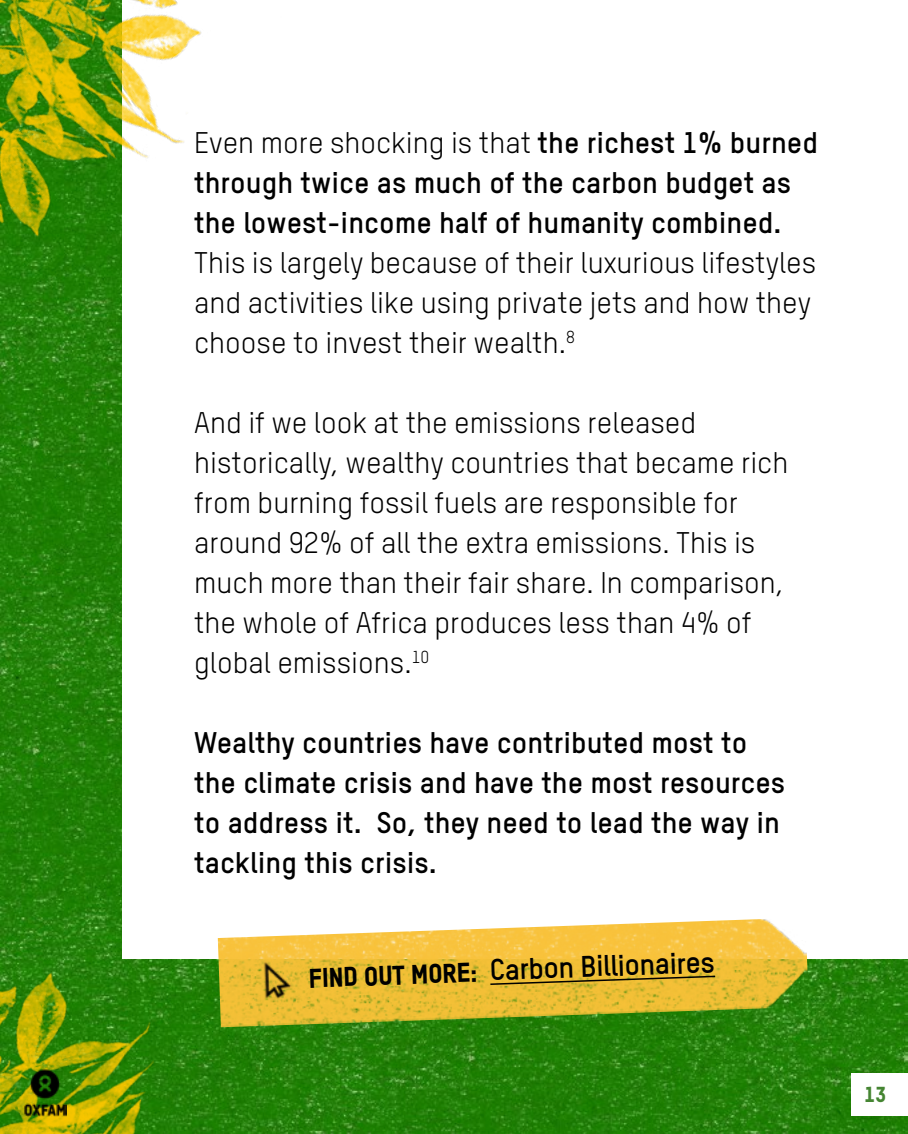


And many of the people negatively affected by disasters are children. Climate-related disasters can damage systems that are designed to protect children. They can also make existing tensions and conflicts worse. This leaves children susceptible to violence, abuse, child labour, trafficking and other forms of exploitation.⁷

People living in poverty are often the first and worst affected when crises strike. They're also the last to be protected. In other words, the climate crisis is making poverty and inequality worse.

On top of this, inequality is one of the biggest reasons why the climate crisis is getting worse. It's a bit of a vicious cycle.

Shockingly, in 2019, the SUPER-RICH 1% were responsible for 16% OF GLOBAL CARBON EMISSIONS, which is the same as the emissions from 66% of lowest-income people, or 5 BILLION PEOPLE.



Even more shocking is that **the richest 1% burned through twice as much of the carbon budget as the lowest-income half of humanity combined.**

This is largely because of their luxurious lifestyles and activities like using private jets and how they choose to invest their wealth.⁸

And if we look at the emissions released historically, wealthy countries that became rich from burning fossil fuels are responsible for around 92% of all the extra emissions. This is much more than their fair share. In comparison, the whole of Africa produces less than 4% of global emissions.¹⁰

Wealthy countries have contributed most to the climate crisis and have the most resources to address it. So, they need to lead the way in tackling this crisis.



FIND OUT MORE: [Carbon Billionaires](#)

OXFAM IS CALLING ON WEALTHY COUNTRIES TO:

➔ **Make the biggest and wealthiest polluters pay the highest price for their climate-wrecking behaviour, not those already facing poverty.** They can start by taxing high-polluting luxuries like super yachts and private jets to help pay for their climate destruction.

➔ **Reduce their greenhouse emissions the fastest and furthest,** particularly by replacing fossil fuels with cleaner energy sources, as they are historically responsible for the crisis and have the resources to do so.





Provide financial and technical support to low-emitting, low-income countries that have contributed the least to the crisis and lack resources. This support should:

- Help the most affected people adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis.
- Help them benefit from new renewable energy technologies.
- Pay for losses and damages caused by the climate crisis.



SIGN THE PETITION: [Make Rich Polluters Pay](#)



// The climate is changing.
The high tides are unpredictable,
and they wash away our crops.
Rains are erratic. It used to be
easier to work outside, but now
with the heat it's much harder."

With help from Oxfam partner JAGO NARI, Mossamat Dulu Begum has become a community leader in Barguna, Bangladesh, which has been profoundly affected by the climate crisis.

3

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

The climate crisis is a global problem and we all need to be part of the solution. We need both systemic and individual change.

If we take urgent action now, we can stop the devastating effects of the climate crisis. We can prevent a global catastrophe from going beyond repair.

HOW ARE GOVERNMENTS ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

Governments have known about the challenges that the effects of the climate crisis cause for some time now. By the 1970s, we began noticing changes in our planet's environment. This led the international community to take action, including the first climate conference in Geneva.



CLIMATE MILESTONES

1970s

Began noticing changes in our planet's environment

1980s

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) created

1992

United Nations created the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

1997

Several countries signed The Kyoto Protocol



2000

European Climate Change Programme launched

2005

Kyoto protocol came into force, marking the beginning of a joint commitment to stop global climate change

2015

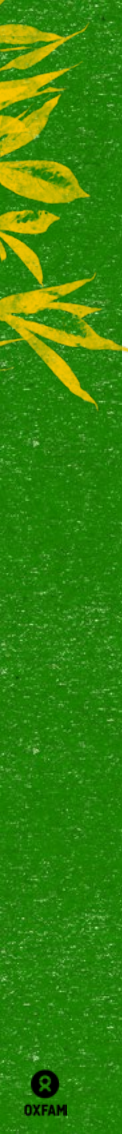
The Paris Agreement was adopted during the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21)

2022

At COP27, governments agreed to set up a 'loss and damage fund' to help people in the Global South worst hit by the climate crisis

2050


We're still waiting for all EU member states to commit to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050



But it was not until the 1980s that we adopted the first real measures, like creating the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This was created to give policymakers regular scientific assessments on climate change. The assessments included implications, potential future risks, and option for how to respond.

In 1992, the United Nations created the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was designed to try to stop climate change. It's been adopted by nearly all countries, and encourages governments to track and control their greenhouse gas emissions.

In 1997, many countries signed the Kyoto Protocol, which was an extension of the UNFCCC. The Protocol was an international agreement that aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 5% compared to 1990 through climate protection measures. The Protocol came into force in 2005, marking the beginning of a joint



commitment to stop global climate change. But at that point, the world was still far from taking any concrete action.

THE PARIS AGREEMENT, ADOPTED DURING THE 21ST CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP21) IN 2015, HAS THREE KEY OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Limit global warming to 1.5°C** to prevent the global crisis from going beyond repair.
- 2. Help communities** vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis to adapt.
- 3. Make sure wealthy countries give funding** to lower-income nations to support sustainable development.

Unfortunately, the targets set by most countries that adopted the Paris Agreement are not enough to stop temperatures from getting higher than 1.5°C. As it stands, with the carbon reduction pledges from governments, we're looking at the global temperature rising by up to 2.9°C before the end of the century.¹¹

The money needed to support lower-income countries to address escalating climate impacts is also lacking. We saw some progress at COP26 in 2021 from the Scottish Government. Scotland was the first wealthy country to commit to finance for countries most affected by the climate crisis. This led to an agreement at COP27 to create a dedicated loss and damage fund, but governments are still discussing the “how”.



FIND OUT MORE: [Footing the Bill](#)

// As students, the floods have affected us badly... I am worried about my future. All my books, school desks, and learning materials have been washed away”

Amina* is a student in Bardhere, Somalia

***name changed to protect identity**





WHAT MORE COULD GOVERNMENTS DO?

Wealthy polluting countries and industries, and richest individuals must cut emissions further and faster. But they must do so in a way that's fair for everyone. And in a way that improves lives and reduces poverty and inequality, for everyone.

This means ensuring the responsibilities, costs, and benefits of action are fairly shared. Together with front-line communities and activists worldwide, we must keep up the pressure on the wealthiest and biggest polluters to reduce greenhouses the fastest and furthest. This means reducing the use of fossil fuels, and reducing the use of luxury, high-polluting goods by super wealthy people. Governments should promote clean and renewable energy while improving energy efficiency.



In December 2022, the UK Government approved plans to open a new coal mine. **This is a complete betrayal of the country's commitment to limit global warming to 1.5°C.¹²**

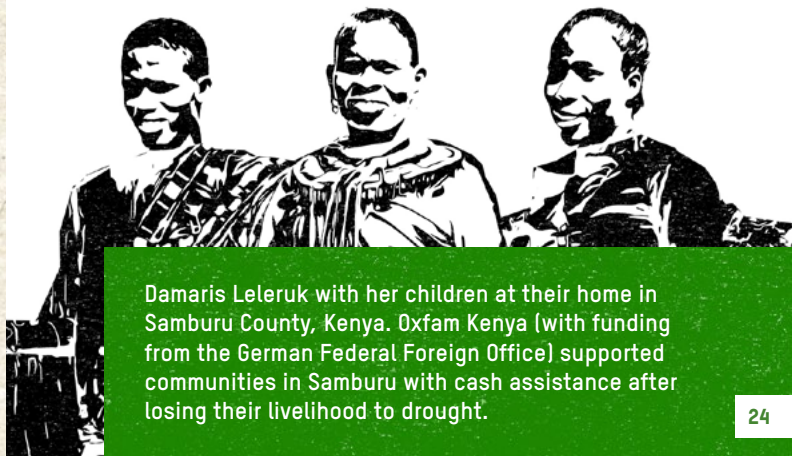
Just before COP28 in 2023, where countries agreed to transition away from fossil fuels, the UK also licensed the development of largest undeveloped oil field in the North Sea, **which will fuel the climate crisis further.**

🖱️ **FIND OUT MORE: [Payment Overdue](#)**

We also need to focus on making life better for people and reducing poverty and inequality.

All policies and projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gases must be designed with the needs of women, low-income people and marginalised communities in mind. That means creating new jobs, protecting people from rising energy bills, and improving people's health.

To make sure governments get this right, they need to have meaningful consultations and an understanding of existing and past injustices and inequalities to make things better for everyone.



Damaris Leleruk with her children at their home in Samburu County, Kenya. Oxfam Kenya (with funding from the German Federal Foreign Office) supported communities in Samburu with cash assistance after losing their livelihood to drought.



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PEOPLE AND THE PLANET?

Governments and companies need to change their systems to manage the impact of the climate crisis. They need to make green lifestyles cheaper and easier for us all. But we can all play our part to stop the climate crisis in its tracks and help build a fairer, greener and kinder world. Every fraction of a degree of warming that we can prevent is vital.

There are lots of ways to take action at work, at home, in the community, and with organisations that are striving for change.



**ADVOCATE AND
CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE**



**CONNECT AND
COLLABORATE
WITH YOUR LOCAL
COMMUNITY**



**MAKE GREENER
CHOICES**



ADVOCATE AND CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE

One of the most important things we can do is press governments, investors and companies to take urgent action on the climate crisis and provide finance to communities on the front line of the climate crisis. We must publicly hold them to account to see real change.

Here are some other things we can do to raise our voices:

- Form and/or join groups that raise awareness of the climate crisis at events like conferences, screenings and festivals.
- Write to and/or meet our local MPs to tell them our concerns and what we would like to see happen.
- Sign petitions and take other campaigning actions with organisations like Oxfam, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.



- Take part in demonstrations and other large events like climate marches and peaceful protests.
- Listen to and speak with people who are creating or suggesting alternative solutions and help spread them.
- Volunteer in an Oxfam shop to support the charity's work.
- Share our belief that a more equal, sustainable and united world is possible. This can help inspire hope in others.

At COP27 in 2022, an amazing 141,500 people signed climate activist Elizabeth Wathuti's letter asking world leaders to create a loss and damage fund. This was part of an incredible effort from climate activists and civil society to make sure the commitment to the fund was secured. It's amazing what we can achieve when we act together.



FIND OUT MORE: [Influencing for Impact Guide](#)



ONLINE COURSE: [Make Change Happen](#)



CONNECT AND COLLABORATE WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

As well as pressuring politicians, governments and companies to act on their promises and push them to do better, we can join together with others in our community to reduce local carbon emissions.

For example, we can:

- Learn from each other how to save energy and reduce carbon emissions in our homes and personal lives.
- Help run and use swap shops to reduce waste.
- Plant trees and protect green spaces.
- Ask our local council to reduce the emissions they produce, take their pension funds out of fossil fuel investments, change local buses to run on electricity, and make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
- Campaign to get local businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, install solar panels, stock sustainable products and provide cycle racks.



MAKE GREENER CHOICES

We can also all take steps in our everyday lives to limit our personal carbon footprints. It doesn't let governments or big polluting companies off the hook, but it sends a powerful message about the kinds of changes we want to see from them.

For example, we can:

- Buy less stuff, reuse and repair items or buy second-hand from charity shops.
- Reduce meat and dairy and shift to more plant-based diets, eat local seasonal produce and reduce food waste.
- Where possible use public and active transport, avoid flying where possible and reduce car journeys.
- Insulate our homes and begin using more energy efficient appliances.
- Look for renewable energy suppliers.
- Shift your pension and savings, if you have them, to green, ethical funds to power positive change.

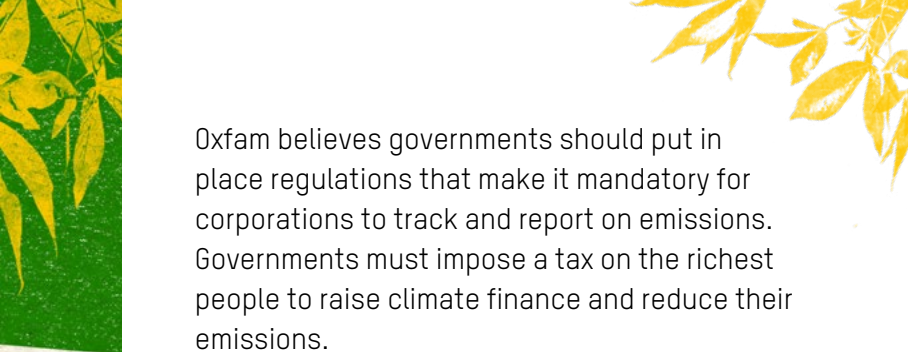
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SO, WHAT NOW?

The climate crisis affects the entire planet, and we are in this together. So we must act in solidarity with people worldwide to have an impact.

It's not fair that the world's richest people produce so much carbon, while communities in low-income countries that are hit the hardest by tropical storms, pollution and rising sea levels suffer the consequences.

We need to protect these communities on the front line of the climate crisis. Those who have benefited from fossil fuel development, including governments, corporations and individuals, should be the ones to foot the bill for the climate devastation they are causing. And we must make sure that the way we reduce greenhouse gases contributes to a fairer and greener world.



Oxfam believes governments should put in place regulations that make it mandatory for corporations to track and report on emissions. Governments must impose a tax on the richest people to raise climate finance and reduce their emissions.

We need to demand action now. Together, we must continue to act in solidarity with the global community and speak out for worldwide climate justice.

We can support communities with resources and innovative solutions needed to adapt to the ever-changing climate that protect both people and the planet (such as solar-powered water pumps to make sure everyone has a sustainable supply of clean water). We can reduce the effects of the climate crisis by stopping using fossil fuels, reducing emissions and planting trees. And we can support the worst-hit communities around the world to build resilience to the impacts of the crisis.



We have the opportunity
to create a **better**
and **fairer** way to live.



Let's **work together**
to make it a reality.



Donate to Oxfam to continue
supporting the charity's work



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