



Climate Justice Policy

Biblical and Theological Background¹

The Salvation Army's response to environmental issues and the climate is based on the following:

- God is the creator, governor and preserver of all things. The Earth belongs to the Lord and everything in it (Psalm 24). As people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) we have been entrusted with the care of the Earth's resources (Genesis 2:15). God invites us to share responsibility for the care of creation and participate in his work of healing the world (Genesis 1:28-29, Romans 8:19-22).
- The relationship of God to his creation is one of loving care and concern. Humanity's stewardship of the earth is a reflection of that care, as human beings are made in the image of God. The world was made to praise God and reveal his glory (Psalm 19); our stewardship of it furthers that end.
- The degradation of the earth is, in part, the result of human activity (Isaiah 24:5-6) and is therefore our responsibility to work for its healing. The biblical command to humanity to 'subdue' and 'rule' should be interpreted as a requirement to be good stewards rather than understood as justifying abuse of the Earth's resources (Genesis 1:28).
- The disproportionate effect that climate change and environmental degradation has on the poorest parts of the world creates additional responsibilities to defend the cause of those who are vulnerable by restoring a sense of justice to the global community (Micah 6:8).

Climate change

The climate is changing in a way that affects the way we are living, putting both ecosystems and humans at risk. The change can be traced to the global temperature rising both on land and in the seas. This change has been evident because of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. About two thirds of the world emissions of GHG derive from burning fossil fuel (oil, coal and natural gas) and the carbon dioxide that is released in the process. Whilst fossil fuel is found in different parts of the world, the majority consumers of the products and services that need its energy are high income countries.² The goods and services today that are run on fossil fuels are transport (nationally and internationally) energy and electricity, industry, commercial and residential, agricultural and land use and forestry.³

Science estimates that if the global temperature (a combined estimation of the temperature on land and in the seas) would exceed 2 degrees there would be irreversible consequences which

¹ Salvation Army International Headquarters policy: taking care of the environment
https://issuu.com/isjc/docs/caring_for_the_environment?e=18664572%2F15220279%2522

² CO₂ and Greenhouse Gas Emission 2012 Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

³ United States Environmental Protection Agency Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>



International Development

Salvation Army

will put humans at risk. The sea levels would raise affecting cities close to the oceans and the rising temperature in the seas would make natural disasters such as storm, wildfires and drought more prevalent. In a report from IPCC Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change⁴, it is stated that holding the global temperature at 1.5 degrees would as well have major effects on the planet causing rapid and far-reaching unrepresented changes in all aspects of society but not to the same extent as the 2 degrees threshold.⁵ Global warming and its effects would affect low income countries the most. This is mainly because they do not have the capacity to handle natural disasters and therefore the consequences would hit them the hardest. Furthermore, these regions are already at risk because of their locations such as warmer regions and tropical areas that already have a higher amount of natural disasters and a harsher living environment.

Current effects of climate change

Today, the effects of climate change are already evident. Mostly this can be seen in rapid rising temperature on the Antarctic causing glaciers to melt. Because the oceans are getting warmer the marine life is being especially affected with coral reefs dying and species going extinct. The warmer parts of the world, especially the South Sahara region, have had longer droughts, heat waves and more failing crops over the last century.⁶ Disasters caused by natural hazards such as hurricanes and floods in, for example, South East Asia and Central America have been more common in the last decade.⁷

The validity of climate change

International agencies and organisations such as the United Nations and IPCC, the World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation and the European Union recognise the issue of climate change and that it is mankind's actions that is the leading cause. Governments from each continent have created policies and laws to combat climate change. These practical actions to combat climate change are prompted by research from scientists working for universities, agencies and other researched based institutions. 2019 11 000 scientists came together to clearly state that climate change is happening, it is because of GHG emissions and that it has irreversible effects on the planet. They dated back research from 1979 that showed the same results.⁸

The UN addresses the issue of Climate Change in the Sustainable Development Goals.⁹ Goal number 13 aims to combat climate change. Other SDG goals do also address the issue of sustainable use of the earth's resources to reduce the climate change. The UN is trying to harmonize the efforts to combat climate change through multilateral treaties to reduce GHG

⁴ IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.

⁵ Special Report IPCC Global Warming of 1.5 degrees. AR5 Climate Change report 2015 IPCC.

https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_Chapter1_Low_Res.pdf

⁶ United Nations Africa Renewal 2018 Global warming severe consequences for Africa

<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2018-march-2019/global-warming-severe-consequences-africa>

⁷ Oxfam International 5 natural disasters beg climate tag beg for action <https://www.oxfam.org/en/5-natural-disasters-beg-climate-action>

⁸ World Scientists Warning of a Climate Change

⁹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>



International Development

Salvation Army

omissions. The Kyoto Protocol¹⁰ and the Paris agreement¹¹ are the leading agreements to set out common goals between states.

Climate Justice

With this background the term climate justice has been brought up in the discussion about climate change. The effects of passing the 1.5 degree mark will have a bigger impact on low income areas making already existing challenges more difficult to achieve. These new circumstances will aggravate the poverty deduction actions taking place, especially food security and access to clean water. Already vulnerable groups will be especially targeted by the effects of climate change such as women and children. These areas are also dependant on basic agriculture practices and therefore a bad harvest has a bigger impact that it would have had in high income country.

Low income countries have not contributed to the climate change to the same extent as the high income countries and therefore there is an injustice in that they will suffer the consequences because of it. High income countries also have the most resources to reduce their GHG omission and therefore these countries bears the biggest responsibility in reducing their climate change impact. European Economic and Social Committee has stated that there will be a greater responsibility put on the developing world on combating climate change and reduce the effects of climate change for low income countries therefore promising financial aid to reduce the effects of climate change in low income countries.¹²

The Salvation Army and Climate Justice¹³

The Salvation Army believes that we have a responsibility to use the resources of the earth in a way that ensures that neither the present nor future generations suffer from poverty and injustice. It is part of our responsibility as stewards of the earth. In the modern world, Christian stewardship must include large-scale and permanent changes in our attitudes and our actions towards the earth, and we maintain that there is no exploitation that is justified. The right and privilege to have access to nature's resources also include obligations and responsibilities.

Given the world's finite resources and growing population, in combination with industrialism and the larger cities, development must take into account the need to preserve the land - an exercise in responsible stewardship. We believe that sustainable development should strive to "meet today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The Salvation Army believes that poor people are marginalized not only because of their lack of material resources but also because of their lack of power and influence over their own

¹⁰ Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 1998

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

¹¹ Paris Agreement United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2015 1 December FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.

¹²

European Economic and Social Committee 2017 Climate Justice (own-initiative opinion)

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/climate-justice>

¹³ Salvation Army International Headquarters policy: taking care of the environment

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International Development

Salvation Army

lives, their society and their environment. We therefore believe that efforts that strengthen people's ability to make a positive impact on their society and take a long-term responsibility for the environment not only help their own lives to improve, but also improve their local environment, and that these two things go hand in hand. The Salvation Army sees the importance of understanding the connection between the environment, climate change, poverty reduction, economic growth and development.

We should, through efforts to reduce poverty, try to restore the people who have fallen victim to our failure as stewards of God's creation, and to ensure that these efforts do not in themselves harm the environment in the long run.

The Salvation Army therefore follows the following principles:

- Care and respect for all life forms, not just human lives
- The pursuit of a more responsible lifestyle to do less harm to the environment
- Investing in growth, having a long-term perspective, rather than thinking, acting and looking for profits in the short term
- Caring for those who fall victim to a lack of environmental stewardship
- Decisions regarding environmental issues are made in close consultation with those most affected by the development process
- Renewable resources are managed in a sustainable way
- Profits from the resources available are distributed fairly
- Extraction of non-renewable resources should yield long-term benefits to society as a whole, and should not be seen as a strong precedent for extracting related renewable resources
- Measures should be taken for areas affected by the extraction of natural resources
- Endangered species are protected in their natural environment

Climate justice affecting Said-Sweden's partnerships

Said-Sweden recognises climate justice as an issue that affects the poverty reduction work. Said-Sweden has, because of the issue with climate justice, decided that our focus areas are; sustainable agriculture and WASH. One of the aims with having these focus areas are to create long lasting agricultural practice and water conservation so that food security and access to water can be secured as far as possible throughout changing circumstances. Besides the overall benefits with these focus areas the project has built resilience to shocks and stressors that may have been caused by climate change. The projects are tailored to the regions circumstances and uses mostly local resources to create sustainable practices for the community.

Actions by Said-Sweden

Because of the reality of climate change and the climate injustice that follows we take responsibility to alter and control the actions of Said-Sweden to reduce our GHG omissions. We will take any opportunity to share the reality that our international partners face because of climate change. Communicating that climate justice is an issue that high income countries can address and correct for the benefit of others. We aim to do this through advertisement campaigns and networking opportunities so that the full effect of climate change is fairly



International Development

Salvation Army

presented. If we don't take actions to address the root cause of climate justice we only treat the symptoms but do not cure the disease.

We stand by the Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change for COP25 Madrid 2019, which includes the following statement, "We have no time to wait. As faith communities we seek to offer a positive and empowering voice of hope over fear, of compassion over indifference, and urgent and fair action as a moral obligation. We encourage personal and political responsibility, immediate and just climate action, sufficient climate finance, and a positive transformation of societal structures as well as a change in mindset. We have faith and hope that as humanity we can come together to address the severe climate crisis and open windows to a better future."