

## WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM OXFAM SCOTLAND

### Executive Summary

- Oxfam Scotland is a member of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) coalition. This grouping of development, environmental and faith-based NGOs, trade unions and community organisations has the support of over 1.5m million Scottish citizens and is campaigning to try to avert dangerous climate change. Our response compliments that of SCCS, available at [www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland) and lists ten key priorities for the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill.
- These priorities include: an 80% reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, statutory annual emission targets of at least 3% year-on-year reductions, the inclusion of aviation and shipping emissions in targets and the establishment of a Scottish Climate Change Commission in the primary legislation.
- Oxfam Scotland believes, along with SCCS, that strict limitations on the accounting of international trading of emissions credits must be imposed on Scottish Ministers to ensure a **minimum of 80% of mitigation action takes place domestically**.
- Internationally Oxfam is calling for a **just, honest and urgent global deal** to address the climate crisis that is already claiming thousands of lives annually, especially in the poorest areas of the world. If Scotland can produce a truly world leading bill it can be used as a global example - not just as a blueprint for other developed nations but as a signal to developing countries of the commitment of the global north to meet climate responsibilities. With the critical Copenhagen negotiations taking place in December 2009 this is the moment to set that example.
- The current international financial crisis and the global recession should not be used as an excuse to take no action or to push back in the medium to term the transition to a low carbon economy that is required in order to meet long term targets. Indeed, this moment of global change is **an opportunity to re-model our economy to meet broader societal needs, combating both climate change and domestic poverty**.

### Introduction

#### Oxfam and Oxfam Scotland

Oxfam exists to combat poverty across the world. For nearly 70 years we have operated internationally, now in over 100 countries and with over 3000 partner organisations, to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice. Oxfam has operated in Scotland for over 60 years. Through our shop network, our development education and youth development programmes, our campaigning and grassroots activism in communities across the country, through our UK Poverty Programme, tackling social exclusion in Scottish towns and cities.

## **Oxfam and Climate Change**

For the most vulnerable in the world, climate change is not a coming crisis; it is already an existential threat. Excessive greenhouse emissions are – with scientific certainty – leading to floods, droughts, hurricanes, sea-level rise and seasonal unpredictability. These impacts are undermining millions of people's rights to life, security, food, water, health, shelter and culture. The poorest in the world do not have the resources, human or financial, to meet this growing challenge. External shocks impact upon people in developing countries with a ferocity from which they can often never recover. The injustice of climate change is multiplied by the fact that those most affected are those least involved in causing the crisis. It is the rich, developed world that has for two centuries burned ever more fossil fuels bringing us to this critical juncture. Scotland has an undeniable historical role in the genesis of this crisis. As a cradle of the industrial revolution and the birthplace of the enlightenment thought that has spread a model of reckless consumption across the global North, Scotland has a duty to help create a climate for change.

## **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland**

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is a coalition of more than 30 organisations campaigning together to tackle climate change. The coalition members include environment and development NGOs, faith groups, trade unions, community councils, student societies, women's organisations, a mental health charity, and many others. In Scotland, the members have a combined supporter base of over 1.5 million people.

The Stop Climate Chaos Coalition Scotland priorities for the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill are that it must:

1. Set out a framework that will achieve *at least* an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
2. Establish in statute annual emission reductions of *at least* 3% year-on-year from the start, not just from 2020, compatible with a fair and safe cumulative budget identified by the advisory body (see 4).
3. Include emissions from all sectors in the framework and targets set out in the Bill, including those from international aviation and shipping, from the very start.
4. Establish a Scottish advisory body, a Scottish Climate Change Commission, in the primary legislation to support delivery of the Bill when it is enacted.
5. Ensure that at least 80% of the effort to cut emissions takes place in Scotland.
6. Establish duties on all public bodies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national target.
7. Set in place robust, transparent reporting measures so the Scottish Parliament is well informed on progress in meeting targets and Government is held to account on mitigation and adaptation.
8. Ensure that strong enforcement measures are set in place in statute.
9. Ensure Scotland counts all its emissions and reports on those produced by products and services we consume as well as emissions produced domestically.
10. Be explicit that sustainable development is core to the purpose and delivery of the statute in relation to mitigation and adaptation.

## **Oxfam Scotland's Response to the Call for Views Questions**

Our responses to all questions are in line with the SCCS response. To save duplication, for answers to questions 1, 2, 5-10, 12-17 and 19 please refer to the SCCS document. The following answers are for emphasis and to provide the direct context of Oxfam's experience.

**Q3 The Bill provides that from the year 2020, the annual emissions targets must be set so that each is at least 3% lower than the target for the previous year. Prior to 2020, the Scottish Government has indicated that it intends to set annual targets which build towards delivering emissions reductions of at least 3% each year.**

**What are your views on this approach or any possible alternative approaches?**

If dangerous climate change is to be avoided and long-term targets contained within the bill are to have any real meaning, action to reduce climate impact must take place urgently. The window that the bill currently leaves open until 2020 is unacceptable and unwise. It is not just the trajectory towards meeting 2050 commitments that must concern us. We must also look at the amount of greenhouse gases that are being produced on the way. Leaving meaningful change for another decade will result in significantly higher emissions overall. Given that the evolving science of climate analysis is pointing more and more towards the hazard of dangerous tipping points being reached over the coming decade it is grossly irresponsible to leave action until later.

The open window that the bill allows also ignores the human urgency of the situation. As we have stated, people in developing countries are losing their lives today. They do not have a decade to wait.

Scotland must also take account of the global political processes towards a new post-Kyoto deal that must be struck in December in Copenhagen. Scotland has promised world-leading legislation. If the Scottish Parliament succeeds in producing such a bill then it will be a signal to developing countries that the rich North are prepared to take the urgency of the situation seriously. Failure to take urgent action will be equally noted by the developing countries who showed resistance to a deal in Poznan last year in the face of weak commitments and a failure to recognise the urgent nature of the problem from the North. Building this trust is critical and Scotland needs to play a responsible part.

**Q.4 The Bill introduces the concept of a “net Scottish emissions account” as a point of reference against which the target for reducing greenhouse gases can be measured. It is defined as the net Scottish emissions plus or minus any carbon units credited to or debited from the account. Any units purchased may be used to offset Scottish emissions. Any carbon units generated in Scotland and sold to customers outside Scotland, count as emissions made in Scotland.**

**What are your views on the proposals in the Bill relating to the net Scottish emissions account, and should there be a limit on the number of carbon units which Scotland can purchase?**

The net Scottish emissions account serves as a useful model to account for Scotland’s impact on climate change. But accountancy is not the goal of this bill. The net Scottish emissions account should only be applied if it allows for the urgent incentives for change, in all sectors, required in order to meet urgent and ambitious government targets.

The interaction of devolved climate change legislation with reserved competences in trading systems and internationally agreed trading rules are deeply complex. Oxfam is not opposed to carbon trading either conceptually or, in some cases, in practice. Yet current systems of trading outwith the ETS are becoming increasingly discredited through the exposure of corrupt practices and perverse iniquities between rich beneficiaries and poor losers. It is essential that any trading that the Scottish Government takes account of in meeting targets is of the highest certified standard.

As the bill currently stands there is no limit set on the use of trading whatsoever. Ministers have stated publicly that they wish the bulk of mitigation to take place in Scotland, that Scottish money should be spent in Scotland to make the necessary changes to our economy and means of production domestically. Such assurances are welcome but are in no way binding, whether on this current administration or the next. The bill needs a statutory limit that will ensure a just distribution of responsibility. Oxfam strongly supports the SCCS position that a minimum of 80% of targets must be met domestically. An open door for ministers to meet targets through trading will do nothing to set the certainty of market conditions the private sector craves, will fail to provide the incentives for public sector action that Scotland needs or the honest appraisal of culpability that the developing world demands.

**Q11 The Bill will allow modification by order of the functions of the Forestry Commissioners to enable the Forestry Commission in Scotland to play a greater role in tackling climate change. The immediate intent of the Scottish Government is to take forward proposals relating to renewable energy development on the National Forest Estate and the release of capital from the National Forest Estate for woodland creation.**

**What are your views on this proposal?**

Oxfam Scotland takes no direct position on the forestry proposals in the bill. We have however been greatly disappointed that such a controversial measure has distracted from the central and crucial thrust of the legislation in terms of political discussion and media attention and are unclear about the value these measures bring to the principle purpose of the bill.

**Q18 Does the Bill raise any equalities issues you would wish to highlight?**

Oxfam knows that those most likely to live in poverty globally are women and girls. Females in developing countries are most vulnerable to the external shocks of climate change that threaten safety, livelihoods and health. Climate change has a gendered impact in the same way that poverty does.

**Q20 Do you have any other comments on the Bill?**

The Scottish climate change legislation has emerged at a time of great international turmoil when the economic model so dominant in the global north and so damaging to the global south has begun to be questioned for the first time in many years. There will be those who contend that this is not the time to take action on 'environmental concerns', that the re-floating of the economy requires our full attention and the stimulus of all of our financial resources. It is precisely this kind of thinking, the fanciful and wilful divorce of finance and environmental consumption, which has led us to this perilous economic condition. Oxfam Scotland would caution all MSPs from the perversity of this negativity. This legislative agenda and the actions our Government and Parliament must take in implementing it are opportunities to help rebuild a productive economic model that is sensitive to consumption and that serves people first. We are keen to engage any and all politicians in how the now common change of phrases such as 'green new deal and "green collar jobs' can be made real to help address poverty both in Scotland and abroad.