

## Council of Canadians Statement on Climate Justice



With the launch of our “*Climate Justice: Take Action for People and the Planet*” campaign, climate justice has become an important part of the Council of Canadians’ energy work. While this focus is relatively new, many of the principles that have long-guided our organization such as achieving greater equity for people, reclaiming “the commons,” and resisting corporate control, are central to achieving climate justice. *What does climate justice mean?*

### ***Climate justice is about the repayment of climate debt.***

With less than one-fifth of the world’s population, the global North (the world’s wealthy countries) is responsible for emitting more than two-thirds of historic greenhouse gas emissions into an atmosphere that all life shares. Meanwhile, small island communities in the Pacific, communities in the Arctic and in the global South, are being hit first and hardest by the ecological and social impacts of climate change including rising sea levels, increased floods and droughts.

Climate debt places a moral imperative on global North countries to not only make deeper emission reductions (in order to repay an emissions debt), but also help pay the bill for climate mitigation (actions that reduce emissions) and adaptation (actions that help people adapt to current and unavoidable impacts of climate change) in the global South.

### ***Climate justice is about system change, not climate change.***

There is no doubt about the links between our current fossil fuel, export-oriented global economy and the climate crisis. Over-production, consumption and trade driven by for-profit interests have helped create the climate crisis. Climate justice calls for revisioning economies and societies based foremost on meeting human needs and respecting the environment, including reclaiming ecological “commons” – the shared areas of life including air, water, land and forests.

There are real, concrete, solutions to the climate crisis that help set us on this path. These include examples such as keeping fossil fuels in the ground, just transition programs, improved conservation and energy efficiency measures and the expansion of public and community-owned renewable energy. There are also false solutions to the climate crisis – “green” actions that, in reality, disguise a “business as usual” approach – and which distract from the more systematic changes needed and do little to reduce emissions and help build greater equity. These include examples such as carbon offsets and carbon trading as well as carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology as a means to “green” the tar sands.

### ***What does this mean for the Council of Canadians?***

The Council of Canadians will work as an active member of the global climate justice movement, as well as at the community and national level in Canada to promote climate justice. We will develop new analysis and educational materials on climate justice and campaign strategies to challenge false solutions and instead promote real solutions to the climate crisis.

We will participate in the upcoming People’s Summit on Climate Change in Cochabamba Bolivia (April 2010), mobilizations for the G8 and G20 meetings in Toronto (June 2010) and the UN climate conference in Mexico (November 2010). We will continue to work with allies to call on the Canadian government to account for its shameful record on climate change, including demanding a tar sands free future, and climate debt repayment with deep emission cuts and climate financing for the global South. We will oppose false solutions such as carbon offsets and cap and trade systems, particularly the proposal for a North American cap and trade system. We will continue to demand real solutions such as a Canadian Energy Strategy based on the principles of energy security and ecological sustainability and public and community ownership of renewable energy expansion. Communities have a vital role to play in achieving the objective of building more equitable and sustainable economies and societies.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Andrea Harden-Donahue, Energy Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.