



UN HOUSE SCOTLAND - 27 APRIL 2018

SCOTLAND'S PATH TO CLIMATE JUSTICE

CONFERENCE REPORT





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INTRODUCTION

On the 27th of April 2018, UN House Scotland (UNHS) hosted the conference 'Scotland's Path to Climate Justice' in the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation. The intention was to create an additional – perhaps alternative – narrative to that embedded in the Climate Change Bill being published by the Scottish Government.

The audience was welcomed by UNHS Executive Director Dr. Gari Donn. Opening comments were given by Scottish Labour MSP Claudia Beamish. The conference programme started with Teresa Anderson, Policy and Communications Officer of ActionAid International, who discussed the Paris Agreement and climate justice from a human rights perspective. This was followed by a session chaired by Maurice Golden MSP of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party. The presentation from Mathieu Munsch, of Strathclyde University Department of Politics, focused on the correlation between current climate politics and climate science. The panel discussion on environmental racism, gender and environmental justice, intergenerational justice and just transition in the afternoon consisted of four panellists and was chaired by Alison Johnstone MSP for the Scottish Green Party. The afternoon continued with breakout sessions facilitated by each of the four panelists. A summary of the key findings of the day and closing comments were given by Claudia Beamish MSP.

BACKGROUND

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report evidences a very significant relationship between human activities and climate change¹. Impacts of climate change are currently happening worldwide (0.9 degrees increase of the

global average temperature in the last centuries, rising sea levels, radical weather changes)². The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report warns about the potential of irreversible impacts of climate change if action is not taken³. IPCC reports suggest that an increase of 1.5 degree of the global temperature would impact on losing ecosystems and damage caused by weather events; an increase of 2.5 degrees would imply a high risk of severe economic and environmental impacts such as irreversible ice sheet loss; and a 4.5°C increase would cause very severe impacts and jeopardize food security². Millennium Ecosystem Assessment highlights the severe impacts of climate change on ecosystem loss and its severe impacts on land and ocean^{4, 5}.

Furthermore, the IPCC report highlights the connection between sustainable development and climate change. It points out that there are constraints to adaptation which become bigger as the climate change problem increases over time. Thus, the adoption of sustainable development strategies is key for the effectiveness of adaptation measures³.

International Level – Milestones^{1, 5}:

1992	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ⁶
1997	Kyoto Protocol ⁷
2000	First Climate Justice Summit in The Hague ⁸
2002	The Earth Summit or Rio+10, the Bali Principles of Climate Justice ^{9, 10}
2015	Sustainable Development Goals adopted by UN Goal 13: Climate Action: “Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning” ¹¹ .
2015	The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in the context of the UNFCCC aims to reduce emissions to achieve a 2°C goal below 1990 levels and zero global emissions by 2100 (EU targets are a 40% emissions reduction by 2030) ¹²
2015	The OHCHR “Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change” to the COP21 ^{13, 14}
2015	Geneva Pledge for Human Rights in Climate Action ¹⁵

The UN notes the importance of the implementation of the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change and to reach the Sustainable Development Goals¹¹. The Human Rights Council (HRC), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) assert the close relationship between climate change and human rights. The Preamble of the Paris Agreement explicitly refers to the relevance of human rights on climate change. International and human rights law principles and particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should guide policies on climate change action to assist the most endangered due to the climate change consequences¹.



CLIMATE JUSTICE ON A LOCAL LEVEL THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

The Scottish Government has declared its commitment to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Particularly, in order to achieve the climate action sustainable development goal 13, the Scottish Government aims to become a world leader on climate change response to move towards a low carbon economy and has recognised the importance of all sectors of the society to respond to climate change¹⁶.

Scottish Milestones to address Climate Change^{5, 16}:

2009	Climate Change (Scotland) Act ¹⁷ : Emission reduction targets of 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. Establishes the Scottish Committee of Climate Change (CCC) to advise the UK Government on climate change policies.
2017	The Scottish Energy Strategy: “2030 all-energy target”, 50% of energy consumption on heat, transport and electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030. Adoption of a Just Transition Commission to inform MSPs
2018/19	The 2nd Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme
2018	The Climate Change Plan (the Plan) Later in 2018 Climate Change Bill will establish more higher emission reduction targets: Current emission reduction target of 66% by 2032 and 80% by 2050 ¹⁸ . Proposed targets 66% by 2030 and 90% by 2050.

The Committee for Climate Change (2017) highlighted the need for “strong and well-designed policies to meet the 90% emission reduction target”. The CCC’s UK Climate Action report shows that to meet the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5°C Scotland would need to achieve a 89%–97% emissions reduction followed by a zero CO₂ emissions reduction by 2050².



OPENING COMMENTS

BY CLAUDIA BEAMISH MSP

Scottish Labour MSP Claudia Beamish reminded all participants that the focus of the conference is to develop clear actions on climate justice in Scotland and beyond. In particular, she noted, UNHS is hosting this conference on Scotland's Path to Climate Justice to hear voices which are usually confined to the margins. Most frequently, we hear 'nothing can be done', but of course it can. We need to clarify where power resides on policies for climate justice and exert pressure accordingly. This day will help us to do that and to encourage everyone to realise there are opportunities for better futures. Let us not be fearful of challenging fossil fuel industries and interest groups: Let us help to shift debate and the narrative to sustainable energy, community and cooperative solutions towards climate justice.

Claudia Beamish said she recognises that people fear change and they do so, also, in the Labour Movement. Caution is understandable, she noted; but we have to understand that

climate justice starts at home, here in Scotland.

A Just Transition is necessary for working people to become involved in the shift to low carbon in an equitable way. Emmanuel Macron recently stressed the need to transform our economies to meet global challenges, stating:

"(...) what is the meaning of our life, really, if we work and live destroying the planet, while sacrificing the future of our children?

What is the meaning of our life if our decision, our conscious decision, is to reduce the opportunities for our children and grandchildren?

By polluting the oceans, not mitigating CO2 emissions and destroying our biodiversity, we are killing our planet. Let us face it: there is no Planet B."¹⁹

SESSION 1

Why is the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal so important, and what does it mean for climate justice?

TERESA ANDERSON, ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL

Teresa Anderson, Policy and Communications Officer on climate and resilience for ActionAid International, explained the relevance of the Paris Agreement, the concept of climate justice as well as the risk of relying on technologies to solve our problems.

Teresa acknowledged that the 2015 Paris Agreement with the goal of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5°C was and still is of great political importance. However, scientifically and socio-economically and thus, in terms of climate justice it is a rather weak framework. The voluntary character of the agreement is based on a bottom up approach where there are no consequences for not meeting the targets. With the impact of climate change and in the attempt of mitigation, this is by far not enough.

According to Teresa, a key problem is that the agreement does not calculate the used and remaining global carbon budget (GCB). The GCB refers to the estimation of the amount of emissions that can still be emitted without reaching a turning point. Further, it does not allocate the emission cuts required for each country to meet the target. This means the agreement puts less obligations on polluting

countries and transfers these to others. After all developed countries have been contributing to climate change much longer and more gravely than developing countries. Even today 50% of the global CO₂ emissions come from 10% of the world population. Climate justice can only be applied after calculating the carbon budget as well as the per capita historical responsibility.

Teresa warned that instead of making bigger efforts in emission reduction strategies, the policies rely on non-existent technologies such as Bioenergy Carbon Capture Storage (BECCS). However, there are massive technological, social, environmental and economic limits to this technology. It is highly unlikely that it could ever be implemented at a scale to solve climate change. Twice the size (3 billion hectares) of the land that is currently used for crop production would be needed to grow enough biomass for this operation. Thus, the proposed technology would merely lead to a lose-lose situation. If it is feasible, massive land grabs will occur, if not, climate change will continue.

Further Teresa pointed out that despite the agreement and the increase in climate change induced catastrophic events such as desertification, sea level rise and irregular rains, no major actions have been taken in the past 2.5 years since the Paris Agreement was signed. Therefore, it is now on the people to make it reality.

There are already communities especially in developing countries living with climate change consequences, Teresa reminded the audience. Thus, the moment to act is now. The developed countries need to recognise their privilege and the fact that their fortune has harmed others. A radical vision must be built with radical changes at all levels to ensure climate justice. From restoration of eco systems and stopping deforestation to drastic changes in consumption, life style, policies, transport and agriculture.

Teresa supported the imperative need of revolutionary transformations in the understanding of what it will take, the way climate action is talked about and what is asked from the policy makers. Despite the severity of the situation with the help of people power it is economically, technologically and politically feasible to achieve the 1.5°C goal.



Figure 1: First conference session with Teresa Anderson from ActionAid International. Artist: Sarah Gittins.

SESSION 2

Is Scotland on the path to climate justice?

MATHIEU MUNSCH,

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS, UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

Mathieu Munsch, PhD student from the Department of Politics of the University of Strathclyde, gave insight into the science and politics of climate change and described the concept of climate justice, by giving different frames to look at the crisis. On a local level Mathieu assessed the new Scottish Climate Bill.

The excitement about the Paris Agreement comes from it exceeding what was expected as politically possible. However, it is blind to the ecological requirements and issues of justice. Climate politics and climate science do not coincide. The 2°C that the parties committed to is an arbitrary target and the aspirational target of 1.5°C will still have devastating impacts such as extreme heat waves, food production losses and most coral reefs will be at risk. Furthermore, with a current global emission rate of 40Gt/year it will merely take 15 years to cross the 2°C. Global emissions need to reach zero by 2040 in order to prevent devastating unpredictable climate changes. Yet, hopes to delay the inevitable are put on the concept of negative emissions that are to be achieved with non-existent technologies.

The more the emission peak is delayed the more drastic action is needed. Thus, it is undeniable that states need to radically review their level of ambition now. Mathieu claims that there are obvious inequalities in the international system and therefore this burden be shared fairly between the countries. Currently, the top three emitting countries (China, USA and EU 28) account for more than half of the global emissions whereas the bottom 100 countries only account for 3.5%. However, looking at the issue from this perspective does not recognize the legacy of the past and it is blind to internal inequalities. Also, this perspective inadequately draws comparisons between very different entities and does not consider the responsibility of non-state actors, such as corporations.

Regarding the per capita historical responsibilities that have resulted from centuries of exploitation of a global commons for the benefit of the few the distribution looks very different. The adaptation options of developing countries are limited by rich countries expending more than their fair share. By now, rich countries have already used 2 to 6 times their fair share at the expense of the development space of other countries.

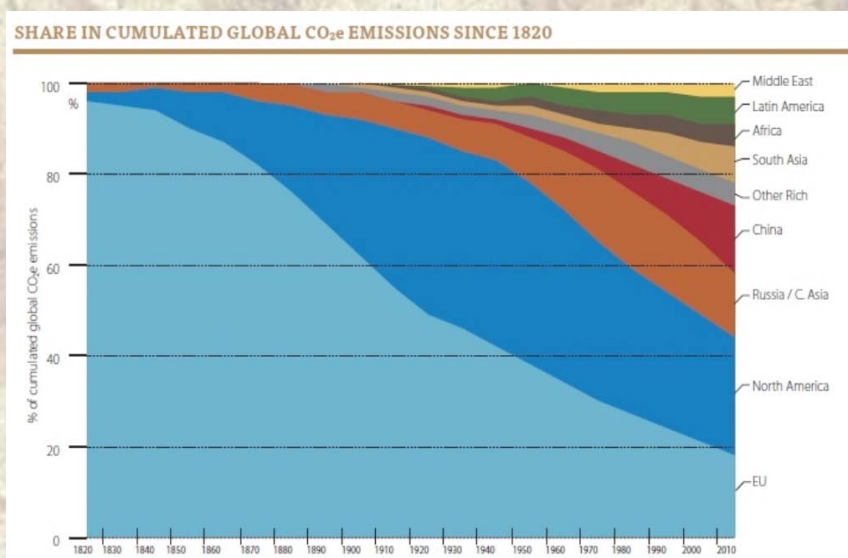


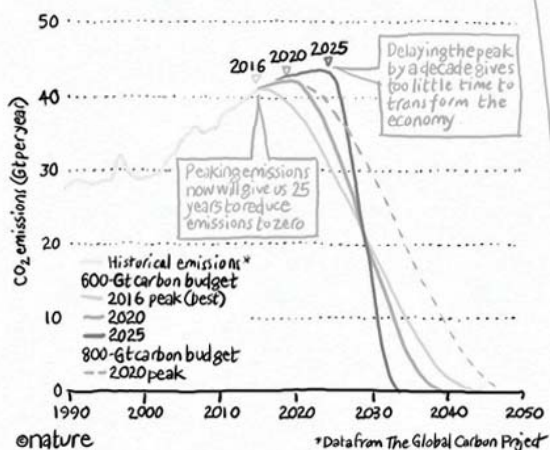
Figure 2: Cumulated global CO2 since 1820.

Assessing Scotland's ambition

- New proposed targets: emission reduction of **66% by 2030**, and **90% by 2050**.

CARBON CRUNCH

There is a mean budget of around 600 gigatonnes (Gt) of carbon dioxide left to emit before the planet warms dangerously, by more than 1.5-2°C. Stretching the budget to 800 Gt buys another 10 years, but at a greater risk of exceeding the temperature limit.



An insufficient target

Need	Ambition
• Zero carbon by 2040 globally	• 90% by 2050 for Scotland
• Grounded in global carbon budgets	• Measured against an inadequate policy pathway
• Drastic mitigation rates of -10%/year before 2025	• Gradual emission reductions of 2.7%/year all the way to 2050



Mathieu Munsch, Dept. of Politics, University of Strathclyde

Figure 3: Session 2 with Mathieu Munsch, PhD student from the University of Strathclyde. Artist: Sarah Gittins.

Reflecting on international climate justice, climate change is seen as a colonial legacy and the perpetuation of Northern violence against the South. Even if all countries were given a clean slate the current actions ultimately lead to the same injustice. By failing to recognise the fact that the lifestyle (driving cars, flying, meat consumption) of the richest 10% is responsible for half of all global emissions or that the poorest 50% only emit 10%, the idea that climate change is an unfortunate consequence of our inevitable day-to-day activity will restrict our search for solutions.

Mathieu pointed out that there is a corporate social responsibility for climate breakdown as well. Of all emissions since 1988, 51% can be attributed to the 25 highest-emitting entities (i.e. ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Chevron, Peabody, Total and BHP Billiton). These and other corporations have spent a lot of money on climate denial, mainly through lobbying that hinders policy implementation from acting fast enough. At the EU level the Gas lobby spends 30 times as much as public interest groups on getting access to politicians. This leads to diversion of public funding G20 nations hand out \$72bn a year to the fossil fuel industry, whereas only \$19bn go to renewables projects.

Regarding the local level and taking all this into account, the Scottish Government's new Climate Bill sets insufficient targets that do not correlate with the actual needs. The target of 90% reduction of CO2 emissions by 2050 for Scotland does not add up to the zero carbon emissions by 2040 globally that are necessary. Drastic mitigation rates (~10%/year) before 2025 are needed, yet the SNP's Bill proposes gradual emission reductions of 2.7% per year up to 2050. With regard to Scotland's fair share of the global carbon budget the new Climate Bill would only delay Scotland's carbon expense by 2 years.

Mathieu concludes that climate change is an immediate and existential threat. A radical transformation of society is unavoidable. However, those with power to induce change refuse to face their responsibility and cling to naïve hopes of technological salvation.

“Inadequate hopes to correct inadequate ambition to complete inadequate plan to fulfil inadequate goal.”

SESSION 3

Environmental Racism, Gender and Environmental Justice, Intergenerational Justice, Just Transition

PANEL DISCUSSION

NATASHA NKONDE

[BLACK LIVES MATTER]
ON ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Natasha Nkonde defined environmental racism as the issues of climate change and the disproportionate impact it has on poor, black and brown people. Primarily responsible for environmental racism are the legacy of colonialism and capitalist structures. Thinking through the lens of historic responsibilities of the countries that have benefited the most is an important part of climate justice. Thus, at a local and global level the past and its unfairness are directly connected with current environmental inequalities.

Institutionalised racism has been responsible for sacrificing geographical spaces and lives of poorer and underprivileged black and brown people. As an example of local institutionalised racism, is the extension of London City Airport or areas where digging or fracking has been approved with the majority of inhabitants being poor, black and brown people.

Natasha explained how environmental racism doesn't simply require destructive actions but also inaction. Reactions to the same disastrous climate induced events of the global south would be handled very differently if they were to happen in North America and Europe. Also, the voices of indigenous and marginalised people are often overheard during global summits.

Thus, Natasha concluded, environmental justice can be achieved by seeking to deconstruct western centric views and decolonisation. Indigenous, marginalised, black and brown and poor people need to be included in the process of solutions instead of excluded as it is currently happening. Further, it is crucial to support the emergence of black liberation and global south revolutionary narratives.



Figure 4: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (l). Artist: Sarah Gittins.

Intergenerational injustice is the fact that young generations are going to bear the burden of radical change. This is a direct result of the inactions of current policy makers and older generations, Louise McKeever explained. In a period of ecological destruction young people do not have the privileges of previous generations. Their future is uncertain in terms of jobs, food security or a stable world to raise children in. Young people lack core basic skills and instead are being taught how to make money for a system that is destroying the planet. Rather than training them in basic survival skills, we are educating them in careers to serve marketing and finance. Furthermore, local council pension funds in Scotland invest £1.81 billion in fossil fuel companies. The reliance of older generations to live comfortably relies heavily on the destruction of young peoples' future. Divestment campaigns asking to remove these investments are largely youth led. Young people are forced to resist a system they do not even benefit from.

Louise called for young people to resist to their own government's failure to act realistically on climate change. If the Scottish government wants to meaningfully engage with young people, they should give them a voice in parliament and not systematically force them out of the spaces where these decisions are made in. This is done through the tokenisation of "youth", creating youth parliaments, holding meetings in the daytime in parliament, and through restricted funding cycles like "the year of young people". Young people's voices are not valued in our society, despite the fact that current decisions will affect them for a much longer time.

Climate policies need to give young people confidence that the government is investing into their future. Yet the draft of the Climate Bill proposed by the Scottish Government indicates otherwise.

Louise McKeever emphasised the following 3 key points:

— "The longer the governments stall on realistic climate policy the heavier the burden on younger generations to make major changes.

— The climate movement is largely led by young people in resistance to a system they do not benefit from.

— Older generations are called upon to engage in resisting and rebuilding our society alongside with young people."

LOUISE MCKEEVER

[YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE EARTH SCOTLAND] ON INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY



Figure 5: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (2). Artist: Sarah Gittins.

SINÉAD MERCIER

[INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER
ON CLIMATE ISSUES]
ON JUST TRANSITION

Sinéad Mercier questioned the traditional idea of humans being separated from nature. Classic environmentalism tends to regard humans as beings that should be kept separate from nature. Most legal frameworks around the world today are based on this idea. This is again linked to capitalism. In capitalism, there is an idea of the individual being separate from society and the environment.

With this in mind, Sinéad reminded the audience that we need to look quite far back, to the 1500s and 1600s, in order to understand the actions that have led to the spike in emissions we have seen over the past centuries. In the 1500s and 1600s, people were separated from the land they were living on. As a consequence of these developments, people had to adapt to new ways of living away from their land. These were key factors to mass pollution. Nevertheless, it is very important to realise that humans are indeed part of nature.

The grave consequences of forcing people away from their link with their land have often not been recognised, Sinéad argued. For instance, overpopulation is a common explanation for the famine in Ireland. However, no one speaks about the role the Laissez-Faire economical mentality at the time played in creating the circumstances that lead to the famine.

Just transition is a movement that started in the 1990s. Sinéad reminded the audience of the importance of creating sustainable jobs, not just growth. In order to reach this goal trade unions should adapt their thinking and be included more in climate change negotiations. Ordinary people should not be blamed for the climate challenges the world is facing today. Rather, we should look to large companies that are willing to share the burden.



Figure 6: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (3). Artist: Sarah Gittins.

Emma Simpson claimed that the intersections between gender identity and climate are truly significant. There are great similarities in terms of the methodology that campaigns use and the ideological approach of what our world should look like.

Yet up till now, there has not been a meaningful conversation about impacts of climate change on trans and gender non-conforming populations, Emma explains. Climate change critically impacts the natural world and resources upon which we all depend, but those resources are not fairly and equally accessible. The lack of ability to access resources stems from a lot of factors such as class, race, religion, disability and gender. As Emma pointed out, gender is a spectrum, rather than a system of two, and whenever gender is discussed trans men and women, and gender non-conforming individuals, must be included. Looking at the world simply through a binary view of gender tends to marginalise people that struggle the most.

Trans people are constantly questioned in their existence, ridiculed and exposed to hate and criticism, Emma points out. This discrimination leads to high rates of youth homelessness, social isolation, unemployment and poor mental health. These are high risk factors amplified when in the context of exposed to unpredictable and extreme weather patterns. Therefore, contemporary climate justice must be social justice in order to be effective.

The trans rights activism can contribute to the climate rights movement. It has decades of experience in social justice campaigning. The trans community already has innovative history to climate change and it offers different ways of interacting with the environment. Emma gave an example of a community in rural India that relied upon a tradition of trans people as community orators to develop new, environmentally resilient sanitation management practices (<http://www.communityledtotal sanitation.org/resource/involvement-transgender-people-sanitation-campaigns-initiative-madhya-pradesh>). They also pointed to the innate connection some trans people feel to the natural world, pointing to figures like indigenous activist Hugo Logan.

Emma concludes that it is not possible to address certain vulnerabilities first and others later. By understanding gender in a broader scale, larger than cultural expectations, it opens our eyes to wider possibilities of change. What is the point of a better climate future if it does not work for everyone?

EMMA SIMPSON

[LGBT RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER]
ON GENDER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Figure 7: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (4). Artist: Sarah Gittins.

SESSION 4

Breakout Groups on Aspects of Climate Justice

The breakout session consisted of four breakout groups. Each group discussed one topic of the preceding panel discussion. The breakout groups came to the following conclusions:

GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Campaigns against environmental racism and gender justice have much in common, as some of these most vulnerable to climate change are both trans and people of colour.

INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

Young people want and demand change; to achieve that young people should create a sense of unity amongst different communities and learn from each other, this is very much a call for action for older generations to work with younger generations

JUST TRANSITION

Large companies need to take the biggest responsibility; to do that they need to be educated on the effects of climate change and incentivised to push for change.

Governments need to create a more defined framework to incentivise a just transition, such as allocating more funding to research on renewable energy.

Trade unions need to be included in climate change negotiations at all levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

It is very important to build the power of marginalised groups, by understanding the continuous legacy of colonialism and by taking on liberation narratives.

Share resources more equally.

**“THERE IS NOT SUCH A THING AS A
SINGLE-ISSUE STRUGGLE, BECAUSE WE DO
NOT LIVE SINGLE ISSUE LIVES.”**

AUDRE LOARD, 2007 ²⁰

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

CLAUDIA BEAMISH MSP addressed the audience with the following final comments:

What we have learnt from today:

We all need to work together to make change, without settling for policies that are not good enough.

Global emissions need to reach zero carbon by 2040, even if no one is willing to discuss that.

A just transition must happen now applying climate justice principles, such as taking into account human rights and a shared fair responsibility towards the issues.

Despite the inadequacy of the Paris Agreement in tackling this immediate existential threat, as individuals we can all radically transform our habits and lifestyles, for example by flying less, buy local fresh food, relying less on cars and walk or cycle instead.

The least developed countries, the younger generations, the poorest population, the marginalised groups, transgender people, women and girls suffer the consequences of climate change the hardest, despite having contributed the least. This is unfair and unjust and we need to change our policies accordingly.

We in the global north are in a privileged position to influence, shape and change existing policy and societal behaviour and we have the responsibility to do so.

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Figure 5: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (2). Artist: Sarah Gittins.

Figure 6: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (3). Artist: Sarah Gittins.

Figure 7: Panel discussion with Natasha Nkonde, Louise McKeever, Sinéad Mercier and Emma Simpson (4). Artist: Sarah Gittins.



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TO CLIMATE JUSTICE**

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