



Fact sheet:

Achieving Climate Justice in the Pacific

The issue

Climate change raises a number of justice related issues. Issues of justice in the climate change context arise primarily because those most likely to feel the impacts of climate change are those least responsible for causing climate change and those with the least capacity to respond to climate change.

Climate justice is a term which has emerged in response to particular justice issues that climate change raises. The fundamental purpose of a climate justice movement is to address the issues and concerns that arise from the intersection of climate change with race, poverty and pre-existing environmental risks.¹ Much of the debate on climate justice has focused on attributing responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions which takes into account the level of a country's contribution and knowledge about the climate impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.² Climate justice has also been used as a lens to promote the rights of future generations.

Small Island States, many of which are located in the Pacific are going to be vulnerable to climate change for the following reasons:

- Geographical vulnerability: sea level rise and limited scope for inland retreat.

- Food Production: change in food production and cycles and water supply challenges.
- Special relationship which communities in Small Island States have with the environment.
- Population displacement – or the creation of environmental refugees.
- Lack of economic and other resources to implement adaptation and or mitigation climate change policy.

The solution

One of the best ways to solve the issues raised by a climate justice analysis is to integrate climate justice rights and obligations into international and national climate change policy instruments.

At the Earth Summit negotiations in 2002 a range of stakeholders came together to draft *The Bali Principles of Climate Justice*³. These principles lay the foundation for developing an international climate change policy that addresses climate justice issues.

The preamble to the principles notes that the impacts of climate change are disproportionately felt by Small Island States, women, youth, coastal people, local communities, indigenous people, poor people and the elderly. The principles call for some innovative approaches in order to achieve climate justice such as:

References

¹ Maxine Burkett (2008) 'Just solution to Climate Change' (2008) 56 *Buffalo Law Review* 167, 199

¹ W Neil Adger (2001) 'Scales of Governance and Environmental Justice for adaptation p. 9.

¹ Amit Srivastava, *The Bali Principles of Climate Justice* (2002) <http://www.cbecal.org/pdf/bali-principles.pdf>



Fact sheet:

Achieving Climate Justice in the Pacific

- Principle 5 demands that communities affected by climate change play a leading role in national and international processes to address climate change.
- Principle 7 calls for recognition of the ecological debt that industrialised governments and transnational corporations owe the rest of the world as a result of their appropriation of the planet's capacity to absorb greenhouse gases.
- Principles 9 aim to protect the rights of victims of climate change and associated injustices to receive full compensation, restoration and reparation for loss of land, livelihood and other damages.
- Principle 12 aims to create a right of all people to affordable sustainable energy production.

Next Steps

The issues giving rise to climate justice are not properly recognised by the international climate change regime. Groups like Project Survival Pacific work towards ensuring that the rights and interests of countries that are affected by climate change are involved at international climate change negotiation sessions. Project Survival Pacific aims to ensure that Pacific Island delegates are present at all Conference of the Parties international climate change meetings as a means of promoting climate justice.

Issues of climate justice are relevant to everyone and more education about these issues is needed within all sectors of society. Project Survival Pacific works in a number of different avenues to promote knowledge transfer around climate issues relevant to the Pacific.

Further Reading

Rowena Maguire, et al, 'Linking Justice and Climate Change: an analysis of rights based, remedial and environmental justice theories' (In Press), (2010). Email r.maguire@qut.edu.au for copy of paper.

Amit Srivastava, *The Bali Principles of Climate Justice* (2002) <http://www.cbecal.org/pdf/bali-principles.pdf>

Eric Poser and David Weisbach, *Climate Change Justice* (2010) http://books.google.com.au/books?id=2h0dSDdKJWOC&printsec=frontcover&dq=climate+justice&hl=en&ei=gUeITNONJYTKcevtPJ4I&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CCsQ6AEWAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false

Edward Page, *Climate Change, Justice and Future Generations* (2006) http://books.google.com.au/books?id=YXGzsk4S-j4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=climate+justice&hl=en&ei=gUeITNONJYTKcevtPJ4I&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CEoQ6AEWBw#v=onepage&q&f=false

References

¹ Maxine Burkett (2008) 'Just solution to Climate Change' (2008) 56 *Buffalo Law Review* 167, 199

¹ W Neil Adger (2001) 'Scales of Governance and Environmental Justice for adaptation p. 9.

¹ Amit Srivastava, *The Bali Principles of Climate Justice* (2002) <http://www.cbecal.org/pdf/bali-principles.pdf>

Project Survival Pacific is an initiative of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition
For more information see our website at <http://youthprojectsurvival.org>