

**Center of Concern • Columban Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office (USA) •
The Episcopal Church • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Lutheran World Relief •
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns • National Council of Churches USA •
Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office • Presbyterian Church (USA) •
Washington Office • Union for Reform Judaism • United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries •
The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society**

March 24, 2009

Dear Member of Congress,

For many people of faith, the call to be good stewards of the earth is grounded in God's command in Genesis to keep and till the earth (Genesis 2:15). We are taught to seek justice, to care for our neighbor and to provide special care and consideration for those living in poverty. Our response to climate change must reflect these principles of stewardship and justice, particularly for those living in extreme poverty around the world, who are least responsible for climate change and most likely to suffer greatly from its impacts.

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change painted a bleak picture for those in developing countries. The report details how a changing climate will increase food insecurity in places where food is already scarce, while reversing progress made in the fight against hunger in other regions. Rising temperatures will increase water scarcity in some areas and the spread of diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and West Nile virus in others. More severe natural disasters and long-term drought will lead to increased migration, and rising sea levels will likely lead to the permanent displacement of entire communities and even entire small island nations. Increasing numbers of environmental migrants, coupled with greater competition for scarce resources among people and nations, are potentially destabilizing forces that cannot be ignored. In fact, these impacts are already threatening the lives, livelihoods and communities of vulnerable people living in poverty around the world.

Although churches and other non-governmental organizations are already working to assist communities in adapting to a changing climate, the reality is that the challenges are too great for us to manage alone. The UN Development Program estimates that the cost for developing countries to adapt to climate impacts could be up to \$86 billion per year. While we are committed to play our part in meeting these needs, governments must also address these needs.

As a leader in the global community and bearing a disproportionate responsibility for contributing to the climate crisis, the United States must play a critical role in this effort. Climate change legislation developed by Congress must include international adaptation assistance and provide for those already suffering in order to protect their lives, livelihoods and communities. This is an issue of justice and a moral responsibility.

1. The funds should be appropriately targeted in terms of recipient countries; they should go to the "most vulnerable developing countries" and no more than 10% should go to any one country in any single year.
2. Local communities must be engaged in a participatory process through transparent mechanisms with adequate monitoring and evaluation.
3. The funds provided should be in addition to current funding levels of official development assistance,
4. The funds should be appropriately targeted to adapting to climate impacts, including impacts related to drought, natural disasters, diseases, and migration.
5. Legislation should also enhance developing country efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing deforestation (and encouraging reforestation) and by providing for transfer of clean energy technologies.

The U.S. must acknowledge its role and moral responsibility in this global crisis and should commit to providing substantial financial support, starting immediately and reaching up to \$21.5 billion a year by 2030 and further increasing over time.

Some will say we cannot afford to make this sort of investment at a time of global economic turmoil. However, if we hope for a peaceful, just and prosperous world, we cannot afford not to.

Sincerely,

Center of Concern

Columban Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office (USA)

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Lutheran World Relief

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

National Council of Churches USA

Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office

Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

Contact Information:

Tyler Edgar

Associate Director

Climate and Energy Campaign

National Council of Churches

202-544-2375

tedgar@ncecojustice.org