

## **Presentation: Environmental Justice and Climate Change.**

Organized by the Sustainable Development Foundation under the patronage of the Vatican.

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### **Introduction**

- Thanks. It is a privilege for Oxfam to speak in this meeting.
- For Oxfam mission climate change is a priority. In our daily work in 90 countries we see its impact in vulnerable communities, the lack of food for millions, the suffering of farmers that can't cope with a manmade nightmare.
- When livelihoods are destroyed people are forced to leave their homes in search of a new beginning, risking their lives in their countries or in long journeys across Africa and the Mediterranean. They find walls, fences and too many times lack of solidarity by those states from where global warming comes. An injustice that millions of citizens in Europe are challenging in one of the struggles of our times.
- I want to thank the Sustainable Development Foundation for organizing this meeting and the Holy See for the patronage. I was overwhelmed when reading Pope Francis encyclical by his political courage and deep human care.

### **The human face.**

- People in developing countries may not use the "jargon" of climate change but their perception of risk is associated with changes in temperature, water scarcity, increases in sea levels, cyclones and other extreme weather events. Poor people, especially women, are experiencing a daily threat to their security, to their ecosystems, to their livelihoods.
- I was in Ethiopia this year. There, Sefya Funge, a farmer in Kombolocha district told Oxfam: "The rain doesn't come on time anymore. It stops just as our crops start to grow. It rains after the

crops have already been ruined. Lack of feed and water means that most of my cattle have died. The few that survived had to be sold so that we could buy food to live. As I no longer have the means to support my family, only three of my eight kids are still with me. Losing our assets was bad, but the fact that our family is separated is devastating”

- In Guatemala, we have witnessed how high temperatures, heavy rains and dry periods have given rise to the coffee rust plague, which has infected 70 % of coffee plantations. Loss of crops and employments means people struggle to feed their families. It means hunger.

### **Coping with the crisis.**

- Small-scale farmers are adopting a variety of coping mechanisms. Many are shifting to more drought tolerant crops, improved forest management practices and alternative means of income. Pastoralists have also divided pasture into wet and dry season grazing areas to better manage risk, while others have changed their herd from cattle to camels and goats, which can better tolerate dry weather. Women food heroes lead the struggle of adaptation.
- Countries in the global South are doing more. Oxfam estimates that sub-Saharan African countries are spending around U\$5billion of their own resources on adaptation action. Tanzania spent in 2011-12 three times more than it receives in international climate finance. These efforts have to be backed by the international community.
- The near term cost of adaptation in Africa is estimated between \$7-15 billion per year by 2020. So far roughly 1-2 billion have been flowing. By 2050, Africa's adaptation costs could rise to \$50 billion per year if temperatures stay below 2C and up to \$100 billion per year in a 4C scenario.
- Compared to the needs, the investments are largely insufficient. Developing countries should not be forced to use scarce domestic resources from priorities such as education and health, to tackle

climate change. The \$100 billion commitment of Copenhagen has not been delivered. Abstract numbers not backed by reality make no difference at all in the life of Sefya.

### **Climate change and inequality.**

- As Pope Francis states in his Encyclical, Climate Change is fueled by inequality: production and consumption patterns from the rich are mostly responsible for carbon emissions. Inequality is fueled by climate change: the most vulnerable people will face the worse impacts, are un-protected and under threat by carbon emissions, and will become poorer. An unequal distribution of risk.
- The poorest and most food insecure countries are the furthest behind in the preparedness for climate impact on those more vulnerable.
  - While most industrialized countries ensure some form of social protection in many poor countries such as Zambia, Mali and Laos, coverage is less than a 5%. With no social protection scheme (school feeding, cash transfers...) people spend their income in procuring food and are worst exposed.
  - Adequate levels of public investment in agriculture are vital to build the resilience of poor farmers. Yet ODA for agriculture has decreased from 43 % in the 80s to 7 % today. In addition since 2003 only 4 out of 10 African countries have met the target of 10 % public spending in agriculture.
- Extreme inequality is unacceptable. 85 individuals are as wealthy as the poorest half of the world. Concentrating wealth means concentrating resources. The super rich and the company giants have a disproportionate influence in global and national rules and its enforcement. They pay less in taxes through tax dodging, blocking any meaningful attempt to close tax havens and build an international tax authority. They extract resources from the public finance essential for social rights and also for climate finance.
- This political capture is huge in the energy sector.

- For every 1\$ governments spent to support green energy, another 6\$ are spent on fossil fuel subsidies. OECD members spend between \$55-90 billion a year in support to fossil fuels.
- 75 % of declared EU lobby meetings are with corporate interests being climate and energy the most lobbied portfolio.
- The fossil fuel industry is standing in the way of progress by actively lobbying against climate change action. For the same good reason the World Health Organization has banned companies in the tobacco control talks, the UNFCCC needs similar protection from industry political capture.
- Today climate change is a matter of political choice. It is about choosing between the interest of the many and the interest of the few, those who hold for the un-sustainable carbon-intensive growth strategies. In this power game, governments have so far decided to favor the latter.
- As well as the Pope, Muslim leaders issued the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change. They single out wealthy nations and oil producing states to lead on a fossil fuel phase out and provide support to those less well off. They also call on big business to stop their relentless pursuit of growth, change their extractive models and provide greater benefits for people and the climate.

**Oxfam position towards Paris COP.**

1. Rich countries must meet their existing commitments, yes meetj, to mobilize \$100 billion/year by 2020 for climate adaptation in poor countries, without taking money from the ODA budget in the processjj. Be aware, we need well targeted fundsjjj not export credits. Private financing will not reach the poorest in the meaningful way it is urgently needed.
2. Rich countries and new contributors must commit to new standalone collective commitments for adaptation and mitigation finance for the post 2020 period. This should not be a one off voluntary declaration in Paris but a provision in the new post 2020 legal regime.

3. Emissions cuts have to start now. All countries must commit to their fair share of near term (2025/2030) emissions cuts. Collectively these should be sufficient to put the world on track to stay below 1.5/2C of warming, with country fair shares determined according to their respective responsibility for emissions. The agreement must include a mechanism for all countries to increase their initial Paris pledges as soon as possible after Paris so as to keep the 1.5/2C goal within reach.
4. All countries must commit to a collective goal of phase-out all fossil fuel emissions and phase in 100% renewable energy by early in the second half of the century, with rich countries committing to move faster and providing the finance and technological support needed for developing countries to do so.
5. The new post 2020 legal regime must recognize Loss and Damage as conceptually distinct from adaptation to climate change, since it is not possible to adapt to salt water intrusion or forced migration.
6. We need to find a coherent agenda to tackling inequality and climate change. As a starting point, freeing public budgets from subsidies to fossil fuels and implementing carbon taxes would allow to re-direct investments into health, education and social protection of the poor people, while also contributing to cut emissions.

## **Conclusion**

- The commitment by world leaders in the SDGs framework to achieve zero hunger by 2030 is historic. That said, climate change is making the fight against hunger much harder, and unless we slash emissions and boost investment in adaptation now, it will be out of reach. A strong agreement in Paris is a vital step on the road to zero hunger.
- Too many rich countries are pretending to be too poor to take their responsibilities in terms of climate finance, or supporting SDGs or taking in refugees. We encourage the Pope to speak the truth to those governments and politicians and to encourage them to think of the next generation not the next election.

- The Pope said: “Today we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”. Let’s hear this loud cry.