

**Ensuring a “climate-conscious”
post-2015 development framework**
**ACT Alliance key asks on the climate
change in the context of the UN post-
2015 sustainable development agenda**



ACT is an alliance of 146 church and church-related organisations. We work together for sustainable change in the lives of people affected by poverty and injustice through coordinated humanitarian, development and advocacy work.

146

members, rooted in the communities we serve

76%
global
south

22%
global
north

2%
global

25,000

member staff and volunteers in

140

countries, working together for sustainable change

ACT Alliance is on the frontlines of addressing systemic poverty; supporting survivors of disasters, wars and conflicts; training rural communities in sustainable agricultural techniques; helping people adapt to environmental change; and influencing governments and other key decision makers to safeguard human rights.



For ACT Alliance, 2015 marks an important milestone in the global debate forging the way forward in addressing climate change, promoting the eradication of hunger and poverty, reducing the risks of and increasing protection against disasters, encouraging community resilience and ensuring social protection.

Climate change and poverty reduction

The scientific consensus presented in the most recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report asserts that it is extremely likely (95 per cent) that climate change is the main cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. Each of the last three decades has had higher average temperatures than any preceding decade since 1850. In the second half of the 20th century this has increased the temperature of oceans, melted snow and ice, raised global mean sea level and storm surges, and contributed to climate extremes such as drought, flooding and the strength of hurricanes. Continued emissions of greenhouse gases would cause further warming. Emissions at or above current rates would induce unprecedented changes in all components in the climate system.

Climate change adds to existing underlying causes of poverty, increasing the risk that already vulnerable people face. It is a threat multiplier which builds on existing problems, and needs to be addressed directly when planning for future development. Persisting with conventional approaches to development, whether agricultural investments or urban settlements, without factoring in the need for climate resilience both now and for coming decades would be short sighted, and would lead to maladaptation and serious climate risk to development investments.

Millions of farmers across Asia, Africa and Latin America can no longer rely on conventional farming practice and can no longer predict the rain fall pattern using traditional means. In many coastal areas, cities

and towns have to prepare for stronger storm surges and extreme weather events, which most greatly impact the poorest and most vulnerable people. Up to 325 million extremely poor people will be living in the 49 most hazard-prone countries in 2030, the majority in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. A combination of deforestation and climate change is pushing many forest dwellers into the margins of society. Extremes of droughts and flooding combined with high levels of poverty in communities can undermine conventional development practices.

Climate change is affecting every aspect of development, with businesses ruined and education disrupted. It is often women who bear the brunt of the resulting hardship, because the activities they traditionally carry out are most affected – collecting clean water and wood for fuel, and providing food for the family.

The impact of climate change on development must therefore be acknowledged across the whole of the post-2015 sustainable development framework, with strategies promoted that are resilient to climate change and ready for climate disaster. It will also be essential that the goals and targets contribute to the global transition towards a low-carbon economy, reducing dependence on fossil fuels while delivering poverty reduction, and working with forest communities to conserve forests. This is not just an issue for developing countries, but is a clear example of why the goals must be universal, with all countries delivering their part of the response.

ACT Alliance Partners for action on climate change and poverty reduction

In the Philippines, ACT partners provided emergency response services following Typhoon Haiyan, and they work to reduce disaster risk from flooding by establishing community early warning systems.

In many parts of **Kenya**, where rainfall has become unpredictable due to climate change, ACT partners work with climate scientists and farming communities to ensure that up to date weather information is accessible by mobile phone.

In **Brazil**, ACT partners work with the Quilombola community to protect their land rights from logging and mining companies, and to protect the forest and their livelihoods.

In **Bangladesh**, ACT Alliance partners are supporting farmers whose land has been covered in seawater, causing salination of the soil, to grow resilient rice varieties and to diversify their farming.

Post-2015 and the UNFCCC

A common argument against including climate change targets or even goals in the post-2015 framework is the possible interference with (or from) the climate change negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). However, sustainable development is clearly not possible without concerted action on climate change and neither will current emissions targets be met without sustainable, low-carbon development. Synchronisation between both agendas and processes will be necessary to ensure that they are mutually beneficial and promote policy coherence. A post-2015 framework that includes action to address both the underlying causes and the impacts of climate change will send a strong message and be a springboard for action on a strong and legally binding climate deal under the UNFCCC in 2015.

Moreover, we know that we need

climate action now and cannot wait until implementation of a global deal even if it is reached in 2020, which is when the proposed start of a new mandate for a renewed UN climate agreement post-Kyoto. The post-2015 goals may not be legally binding but they could establish sustainable development as a norm and drive investment into clean, low-carbon technologies, as well as into disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Another argument used against the inclusion of climate change targets in post-2015 is the wish to avoid difficult conversations around the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). Fortunately, language on this issue was agreed through the Outcome Document of the Special Event on the MDGs¹ and Post-2015, and that principle seven agreed to in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, was reaffirmed.

Required responses in the post-2015 development framework and SDGs

There are three elements to the response to climate change which the post-2015 framework must include:

- Ensure low-carbon development and sustainable production and consumption
- Ensure climate resilience
- Build in disaster risk reduction to global, national and local strategies

Mainstreaming: For ACT Alliance, these responses must be clearly built in across the whole post-2015 framework of goals, targets and indicators. Climate change is a cross-cutting issue, affecting all sectors, all economies and all countries. Therefore all relevant goals should be climate-friendly (see below for examples) and include targets designed to deliver a triple win of ending poverty, shifting to low or zero carbon development, and enabling adaptation, disaster risk management and resilience to environmental shocks and stresses. Mainstreaming climate change targets

across the goal framework will strengthen sectoral integration and drive action on the ground, which is crucial for achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Climate change goal: The success of the climate change policy agenda also depends on political visibility and raised ambitions on mitigating climate change. A climate goal in addition to mainstreaming could provide this visibility and can send a strong signal to the UNFCCC that an ambitious and binding global climate deal is essential for development and ending poverty.

Annex 1 presents some examples of “climate-smart” targets.

Means of implementation and partnership for change

Delivering climate smart goals will require the appropriate means of implementation to support developing country responses. These will need to be over and above conventional aid (above the 0.7 per cent gross national income commitments for official development assistance from donor countries) and will need to consider the additional capacity-building and technology transfers that developing countries will need in order to deliver sustainable development.

At a national level, it will be necessary to manage funds and development planning in a way which is integrated: with climate adaptation, economic development, agriculture, urban planning and disaster management working together to ensure climate resilience is built-in.

Additionally, it is essential that all stakeholders work together and play their part in delivering results; this will require partnership between government, civil society and the private sector. It will be necessary for all stakeholders to be transparent in their actions both against climate change and to ensure all future investments are climate

resilient and low-carbon. This way bad practice can be countered and good practice promoted.

Supporting states to optimise their means of implementation will require global commitments to:

- Ensure \$100 billion annual climate finance is delivered by 2020, and scaled-up considerably after
- Secure 50 per cent of all public climate related finance provided by developed countries to developing countries is allocated to adaptation
- Facilitate technology transfer and capacity building for developing countries, which is essential for implementation of climate-smart development goals.
- Ensure that all development assistance is assessed to be climate-smart.

Annex: example goals²

1 Targets recommended for a CLIMATE CHANGE goal.

1a Target on mitigation/low carbon development.

- Global emissions peak within this decade and rapidly decline thereafter in line with the UNFCCC agreement to keep global warming below 2°C.
- Global cumulative emissions of greenhouse gases limited to x (GtCO₂ equivalents) between 2015 and 2030 to have a better than 50 per cent probability of keeping global warming below 1.5°C, with equitable sharing of emissions reductions between countries.
- All countries have developed and implemented low-carbon development strategies or plans.
- By 2030 all countries have reduced the carbon intensity of their economies (CO₂/GDP_{ppp}) by at least x per cent (against y baseline).

1b Targets on adaptation, disaster risk management and resilience.

- By 2030, eliminate increase in the proportion of people living in poverty following disasters (measured at one, three and five year intervals) and reduce economic losses from people living in the poorest quintile populations by at least 75 per cent against a 2010 baseline.
- By 2020 all countries have science based and participatory national climate risk assessments developed, and disaster risk reduction is mainstreamed into development strategies and programmes.
- By 2020 all countries have national planning processes and instruments in place which build resilience to, and reduce impacts from, climate related impacts and disasters (based on a baseline of 2010).
- By 2030, x per cent (differentiated according to country context) of national annual budgets allocated to reducing climate change risk.

2 Targets recommended for a climate-smart ENERGY goal.

- By 2030 ensure universal access to renewable (sustainable, reliable and safe) energy services for all households.
- By 2030 increase the share of renewables in the global energy mix to 42 per cent.
- By 2030 increase the global rate of energy efficiency to X per cent.
- By 2030 phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

3 Targets recommended for a climate-smart FOOD and AGRICULTURE goal.

- Support small-holder agriculture to become climate resilient by shifting to agro-ecological based approaches.
- Transform consumption patterns and industrial food systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and food waste, including by cutting food waste related to consumption and processing from 40 per cent to 20 per cent by 2020 and from 20 per cent to 10 per cent by 2030.

4 Targets for a climate-smart HEALTH goal.

- Health systems ensure that education, care and public infrastructure are climate-smart and build the resilience of local and national populations to the impacts of current and future climate disruption.
- X per cent increase of international support for the poorest and most vulnerable groups, i.e. those with little or no access to health services, to reduce their vulnerability to climate change related health impacts.

5 Targets for a climate-smart WATER goal

- Adopt sustainable, integrated and equitable water management practices which improve and protect the quantity, quality and timing of water flows, and ensure fair and equitable access for all.
- Strengthened and transparent water resource monitoring systems addressing quantity, quality, use, distribution and reliability, including for groundwater resources.

- Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) and water resources management investments are climate-smart, based on the best available science and incorporating local knowledge; and that are developed inclusively, with effective participation of affected communities including vulnerable groups.

6 Natural resource management.

- Equitable access to natural resources.
- Biodiversity and ecosystem services maintained and restored.
- Minimal human and economic loss owing to natural hazards.

7 Climate-smart PARTNERSHIP Target / Target for a PARTNERSHIP goal.

- Transparency of private sector for its carbon emissions. Ensuring corporate sustainability reporting and with companies, where appropriate, especially publicly listed and large companies, to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

¹ http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/6

² These targets were drawn from a series of discussion papers on integrating climate change into the post-2015 framework.

The three original papers are available for download:

- Discussion Paper:

Cross Cutting Climate Change: How to integrate Climate Change in the Post-2015 Framework

- Discussion Paper:

Arguments for a stand-alone climate goal.

- Discussion Paper:

Options for integrating climate change considerations into the post-2015 development framework.

³ The UNFCCC will review the 2°C target and progress towards its achievement, including the consideration of 1.5°C, and there should be the possibility for appropriate adjustment of this target, for example during five yearly reviews. The need to adjust targets based on emerging commitments and scientific facts (as seen in the MDGs) applies also to some other targets.

⁴ In this goal area we suggest 2010 as illustrative example for a baseline, in line with many suggestions on the post-2015 framework.



ACT Alliance Secretariat

150 Route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2,
Switzerland

777 United Nations Plaza
Suite 9D
New York, NY 10017
USA

www.actalliance.org

 **@ACTAlliance**

 **ACTAlliance**

ACT Alliance is a member of



International
Council of
Voluntary
Agencies

HAP Humanitarian
Accountability
Partnership

