

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill

SUBMISSION FROM: Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)

The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) is the official overseas aid and development charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland. Last year SCIAF provided long term development support and emergency help to more than 220,000 people in 27 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. We work in Scotland providing development education programmes within schools, parishes and community groups, developing policy responses to issues of global poverty, and advocating for change at the global and national level. Our vision is a world in which all people, especially the poor and the oppressed, can survive and thrive.

Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and the experience of the communities we work with around the world, SCIAF takes a climate justice approach to tackling climate change. This approach acknowledges that richer countries like Scotland have benefitted from a model of development that is now hurting our poorest sisters and brothers the most. In addressing this injustice, Pope Francis has called for us to undergo an 'ecological conversion' recognising our responsibility to the planet and to each other.

Heeding the call from Pope Francis, SCIAF has been taking steps to reduce its own carbon footprint and encouraging its supporters to do the same. We are a member of eco-congregations, a Christian initiative aimed at supporting churches of all denominations to improve their environmental impact. We have produced various resources to help parishes and individuals put the teaching of Pope Francis into practice¹, and internally we are integrating the Caritas Guidelines on Environmental Justice into our policies. SCIAF's Environment Group has already taken a number of steps towards this, including recent enhancement of our office recycling capacity, and the introduction of policies to reduce flights taken by staff to only necessary journeys, outside of the UK, when no alternative mode of travel is available. In 2018, SCIAF announced that it has divested from fossil fuels alongside a number of other Catholic organisations worldwide².

While we must all take action to tackle climate change, we believe politicians are in a unique place to make the most significant difference. SCIAF is urging Parliamentarians to show the political courage called for by Pope Francis and pass a strong and ambitious Bill.

Key points from SCIAF's evidence:

- **Targets:** As it stands, the Bill neither meets the ambition of the Paris Agreement nor the urgent needs of communities on the front-line of climate change. If Scotland is to do its fair share to tackle climate change, the Bill must include a net zero target by 2050 and a strong interim target of 77% reduction by 2030. Setting strong targets will help to drive the innovation needed to move to a clean economy.
- **Consumption:** Tackling Scotland's consumption emissions is a key part of taking a climate justice approach. Without doing so, Scotland could be accused of simply 'outsourcing' its emissions. A first step is to ensure that data related to consumption emissions is useful and that Ministers are obliged to act on it.
- **Support for Net-Zero:** People across Scotland and across the world are calling on the Scottish Parliament to pass a net-zero target by 2050, to lead the world with bold climate change legislation needed to stop a climate catastrophe.

Targets

SCIAF believes that the targets proposed in the Bill are not adequate on the grounds that 1) they are based on per-capita emissions calculations, 2) they are premised on an 'overshoot' scenario, which could be devastating for developing countries 3) they are based on out-of-date advice from the CCC, and 4) they are unambitious. This section explores each of these arguments in turn.

Firstly, SCIAF notes that the CCC advice which led to the proposal of a 90% emissions target rather than 100% ('net-zero') by 2050 was based on Scotland's per-capita portion of the remaining global carbon budget. This means that the CCC's calculations have estimated Scotland's contribution to cutting emissions on the basis that everyone in the world is equally responsible for producing emissions responsible for causing climate change. This is not the case. We believe that this calculation contradicts the aim of this legislation to bring Scotland in line with its Paris commitments. The Paris Agreement calls for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respected capabilities (CBDRRC). Adhering to this principle requires countries like Scotland which have benefitted from the emissions that have caused climate change to do more to repay this debt. Moreover, countries that have the capacity to do more ought to do more, according to this principle, and Scotland has huge potential to lead the world on climate change thanks to its wealth, geography and political will.

Everyday SCIAF sees the devastating impact of climate change on vulnerable communities in the global south. Extreme weather caused by climate change is pushing these communities further into poverty and insecurity. It is an injustice that those who have done least to cause the problem are bearing the brunt of its impacts. CO₂ emissions per capita in the UK, for instance, are approximately 65 times more than emissions per capita in Malawi³. Yet in Malawi, livelihoods and food security are being severely impacted by both drought and devastating flooding. It is clear that industrialised countries like Scotland have benefitted from the historic use of fossil fuels and are in a better position than others to tackle the problem. From a perspective of fairness, the Scottish Bill must reflect this reality.

The CCC's approach, therefore, is not sufficient in applying the principles of differentiated responsibilities and respective capacity to take the necessary action. SCIAF is glad to see that reference to a 'fair and safe budget' has been retained in the Bill. We are also pleased to see specific reference to the UNFCCC and its protocols in target-setting criteria. **We believe this section could be strengthened further by making explicit reference to the key principle of CBDRRC.**

Secondly, the CCC proposed a 90% target based on 'overshoot' scenarios - where the world temperature would go beyond 1.5°C before returning to that temperature later. We believe this is a risky approach. The communities SCIAF works with are being pushed further into poverty as a result of changes to the climate *already* taking place. Increasing evidence is pointing to the damaging impacts of higher temperatures and irreversible consequences of these even if average temperatures then return to 1.5°C level⁴.

Thirdly, the advice of the CCC - based on calculations in the 2015 Carbon Budget - is now out-dated, given the rapid political, technical and economic developments in recent years. In terms of political will, a number of states and regions have already made commitments to achieve net-zero emissions including Sweden, New Zealand, Catalonia, Bhutan and South Australia. Whilst there are always challenges in comparing legislation and policy between different states, there is undoubtedly a growing global consensus on setting net-zero

emissions targets. It is expected that this will be further cemented in October, when the IPCC will publish its special report on 1.5°C. It is broadly anticipated that this report will call for stronger and wider action to reduce emissions drastically, and add further evidence to the case for aiming to hold temperature increases to a maximum of 1.5°C (rather than the current 1.5-2°C target embedded in the Paris Agreement).

In terms of the technical and economic developments in recent years, there have been a number of developments, including peer-reviewed research by leading Scottish academics demonstrating the vast potential for land-based negative emissions in Scotland (up to 90% of present day emissions)⁵, rapid reduction in the price of renewables and a commitment from the Scottish Government to phase out sales of fossil fuel cars and vans by 2032. The CCC pathway to 90% emissions reductions, which they suggested were at the “limits of feasibility”, envisaged that by 2050, 28% of Scottish energy demand would still come from fossil fuels, and that there would still be a small proportion of fossil fuel cars on the road (5%). In summary, the political, technical and economic landscape has changed significantly in the past few years, and SCIAF believes that boundaries of feasibility are rapidly changing. Climate legislation is a powerful tool to drive transformative economic and social change, and we believe that Scotland can show the political courage required to lead this global transformation.

Fourthly, SCIAF believes that the proposed targets are ultimately unambitious. They are unambitious in terms of assessment of technical ‘feasibility’ and in terms of political will. In the case of technical feasibility, the CCC pathway to 90% emissions assumes that in 2050 there will remain a balance of 7.4Mt CO₂e in Scotland’s emissions account. This is made up of 16.8Mt of emissions, offset by 9.9Mt of emissions removed from the atmosphere by natural methods (e.g. tree planting) and technological methods (e.g. bioenergy with carbon capture and storage). On the basis of conversations with the CCC, sector colleagues have found that this scenario unambitiously predicts that by 2050 tree planting will not have risen from the 2032 target, all aviation will still be fossil-fuelled, and there will have been no change to peoples’ diets that would reduce food sector emissions. At SCIAF, we understand that all pathways require some level of predicting the unknown. However, there is a range of ambition that can be shown in predictions, and it is the role of politicians to show the courage to make decisions that create technical solutions in the name of delivering justice. We are calling on Scottish Parliamentarians to show such courage, to lead the way, and to take the bold decisions that are necessary, in the confidence that they are possible, through continued political will.

We recognise that targets of 77% by 2030 and 100% by 2050 will be challenging. However, for SCIAF they represent a compromise between ethical necessity and political feasibility. Setting strong targets – particularly a strong interim target - would send a clear signal to policy makers and industry which we believe would help to deliver the social and technical changes needed. The 2020 and 2030 targets proposed in the Bill essentially maintain current levels of ambition and are, therefore, inadequate, and a 90% target by 2050 would represent a huge missed opportunity to lead the world in climate change legislation.

Consumption

The 2009 Act established the requirement to report on emissions attributable to the consumption of goods and services in Scotland. The Carbon Footprint Report⁶, which has been produced annually for the last 3 years and 5 yearly before that, notes the trends in emissions associated with Scotland’s imports but does not detail the most significant goods

and services driving these trends. SCIAF is pleased that this requirement has not been removed by the new Bill, but notes that there is still no obligation for Ministers to act as a result of these figures. Reducing Scotland's Carbon Footprint is also a National Performance Framework indicator⁷, but there is no action plan in place to achieve this.

While territorial emissions in Scotland have fallen by 49% since 1990⁸, consumption emissions have declined far less dramatically – falling 8.5% between 1998 and 2014⁹. Consumption emissions are a key part of the equity and climate justice debate. According to some research, the world's richest 10% are responsible for 45% of the world's emissions¹⁰. Without addressing our consumption Scotland risks being accused of simply 'outsourcing' its emissions.

On these grounds, we believe that the Bill should: 1) require reporting of the most significant goods and services contributing to Scotland's consumption emissions, 2) align policy with practice and require the report to be laid annually, 3) require Ministers to lay a statement in Parliament alongside the report, detailing actions taken to reduce consumption emissions.

Scottish and International Support for Net-Zero

Last summer, in the public consultation on the Climate Change Bill, 99% of almost 20,000 responses called on the Scottish Government to set a net-zero target by 2050, 77% target by 2030 and bold policy commitments to match these ambitious targets. With this in mind, we are disappointed that the Scottish Government has not moved from the position it set out in the consultation. Moreover, more than 120 MPs from the SNP, Labour, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens have recently signed a letter calling on the UK Government to set a net-zero target by 2050. This represents broad political support for a net-zero target by 2050 all over the UK, including in Scotland, and we believe this will be key to world-leading legislation¹¹.

As part of the SCCS network, SCIAF has also collected '100 voices' from communities already experiencing the devastating impact of climate change, who are calling on the Scottish Government to 'Give it 100%' by setting a net-zero target in the new Bill. As part of the campaign, a farmer from Cambodia told SCIAF: *"I'm really concerned that climate change is getting worse and I don't know what to do to cope with it. I'm not sure about the future. Now I don't see a choice for our children but to farm, but I am concerned. I would like Scotland to continue helping us to cope with climate change. I would like to request developed countries like Scotland, who have big factories that produce a lot of pollution, to stop polluting"*. In 2014, the area he lives in was flooded and rice stocks were destroyed. The flood water stayed for one month and was 1.5 metres deep. Many people had to leave the area to work so they could provide for themselves.

Ambitious targets will require ambitious policy action to meet them. As part of SCCS, SCIAF is calling for stronger policy action in energy efficiency, transport and agriculture to help deliver these ambitious targets. We believe, however, that a reliance on existing knowledge and technologies should not block setting strong and ambitious targets. We have over three decades to achieve the technical and social changes needed to deliver net zero emissions by 2050. 30 years ago we could not have foreseen the technologies that would change our lives. Indeed, when the last Act was being consulted on the Scottish Government argued that the 2050 target needed to be "more ambitious than what current technologies can deliver in order to help provide an incentive to develop new technologies"¹². That argument is still valid. We need to act now.

¹ See for instance, [Caring for Our Common Home](#)

² [Catholic institutions announce move away from fossil fuels](#)

³ World Bank data, CO₂ emissions – metric tons per capita, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC?view=map>

⁴ See for instance, C F Schleussner et al Differential climate impacts for policy-relevant limits to global warming: the case of 1.5 °C and 2 °C Earth Syst. Dynam., 7, 327–351, 2016, www.earth-syst-dynam.net/7/327/2016/ doi:10.5194/esd-7-327-2016

⁵ Alcalde et. al. (2018) - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1750583617310794>

⁶ ⁶ Scotland's Carbon Footprint 1998-2014 <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529095.pdf>

⁷ Scottish Govt, National Performance Framework, <http://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

⁸ Scottish Govt, Scottish GHG emissions 2016, June 2018 <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00536542.pdf>

⁹ Scottish Govt, Scotland's carbon footprint, Dec 2017 <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529095.pdf>

¹⁰ Thomas Piketty, Lucas Chancel, Carbon and inequality: from Kyoto to Paris, Nov 2015, <http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/ChancelPiketty2015.pdf>

¹¹ [Cross-Party Mp Joint Letter: UK](#)

¹² Scottish Government, Jan 2008, p.48 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/210419/0055642.pdf>