



Climate change: Eroding Development

Ireland is the sixth most generous overseas aid donor per person. At the same time, Ireland is the fifth most climate-polluting country in the developed world. In 2003, in Ethiopia and Uganda, the average carbon emissions per capita were 0.1 tonnes; Ireland emitted over 10 tonnes per person. Every Irish person, therefore, is responsible for 100 times the carbon pollution of the average Ethiopian.

Developing countries have done little to create the problem of climate change but are especially vulnerable to its effects. Communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, so often hit by droughts, floods and famine, are now at further risk from changing weather patterns. They have done the least to cause climate change and are least able to cope with its consequences.



Communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, who have done the least to cause climate change, are the ones most likely to suffer its effects.

What are Irish NGOs doing about it?

Irish NGOs are responding at different levels to stop climate change running out of control:

1. Irish NGOs work to help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change

Irish NGOs are committed to ensuring that the poorest communities are helped to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Work is ongoing in areas such as water conservation and irrigation, as well as agricultural production and food security. This work is already helping communities cope with increasingly extreme weather events, which can have a very serious impact on the lives of the poor and vulnerable.



The interaction between climate change and poverty is potentially catastrophic as climate change pushes what are already fragile livelihoods over the edge.

2. Irish NGOs help tackle the causes of climate change

The international community so far has failed to take sufficient action to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. In April 2007, Irish NGOs formed the coalition [Stop Climate Chaos](#) - a unique coalition of development, environment, youth- and faith-based organisations - to ensure that Ireland plays its part in preventing runaway climate change.

The Stop Climate Chaos campaign calls on the Irish Government to:

- ★ Push for an international agreement to keep the rise in global temperatures to 2°C or less. This means global greenhouse gas emissions must reach their peak and begin to decline irreversibly within 10 years.
- ★ Ensure that Ireland does its fair share to prevent climate chaos by bringing in a climate change law. This should provide for an annual Carbon Budget and 3% year-on-year reductions in Irish greenhouse gas emissions.
- ★ Support developing countries to adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change.

3. Irish NGOs lobby rich countries to pay for their climate change damages

Through the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, NGOs are calling on rich countries, including Ireland, to provide financial support to help developing countries to cope with climate change. This funding must be additional to existing overseas development budgets to avoid diverting aid budgets that are already committed to poverty eradication.

NGOs have a wealth of experience in helping poor countries to respond to and cope with natural disasters. Their expertise in reducing people's vulnerabilities to such events will inform the task of helping poor countries adapt to the effects of climate change.

