

The First Minister
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear First Minister,

Scotland's Just and Green Recovery from COVID-19

Representing a broad range of Scotland's civil society, our organisations wish to meet with you to discuss our emerging vision of how Scotland can lead a radical response to the double crises of climate change and Coronavirus.

Across the world, communities, institutions and governments are engaged in an unprecedented global effort to save lives and protect the most vulnerable.

As Coronavirus and climate chaos tear apart people's lives globally we are seeing pre-existing inequalities laid bare and exacerbated, as the poorest suffer worst.

Massive upheaval to people's daily lives is our present reality and immediate future. Yet a simple return to business as usual is both unrealistic and undesirable.

As Scotland moves past a peak of infections our attention is turning to what comes next.

You have stated the need for a recovery that cuts climate emissions by "building a fairer, greener and more equal society", an aim that we strongly agree with.

The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare how inequality is lethal to human life, but it has also shone a light on acts of solidarity and cooperation and centred the vital role of public services, key workers and unpaid carers. Amidst a global threat to human rights and democracy, this crisis has also brought forward the possibility of an economic revival that ensures resilience to future crises, including the climate emergency.

The recovery from Coronavirus is a rare chance to markedly accelerate the repurposing of government away from the prioritisation of economic growth and towards goals of wellbeing and sustainability, ending inequality and environmental destruction. This is a time for system change.

These are the steps we believe must be followed to deliver a just and green recovery:

1. Provide essential **public services** for people, not profit. Expand public ownership of public services and boost investment, including in social care, strengthen the NHS and cradle-to-grave education, and create zero-carbon social and cooperative housing instead of buy-to-let.
2. Protect marginalised people and those on low incomes by **redistributing wealth**. Provide adequate incomes for all instead of bailouts for shareholders, significantly raise taxes on the wealthy, ensure all public workers receive at least the real Scottish Living Wage and strengthen health, safety and workers' rights, including access to flexible home working. Investigate and mitigate the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 and social distancing on women, children and young people, disabled people, LGBTI people, people of colour, key workers, unpaid carers, private renters, and those on lower incomes.

3. Provide new funds to **transform our society and economy** to meet Scotland's Fair Share of climate emissions cuts and greatly enhance biodiversity. Create and protect jobs in sustainable travel, renewable heat, affordable local food and energy efficiency, with ambitious green employment opportunities for young people and support for retraining where whole industries are affected. Put measures in place to ensure all government programmes tackle inequality, public health and the just transition away from fossil fuels, excluding rogue employers, tax avoiders, major polluters and arms manufacturers from bailouts.
4. Strengthen **democracy and human rights** during these crises. Withdraw new police powers, surveillance measures and restrictions on protest as soon as possible. Enable full scrutiny of planning and policy decisions. Create an independent Recovery Commission founded on participatory democracy to engage and empower communities, trade unions and civil society. Introduce fundamental human rights into Scots law so that safety nets are always in place for the most vulnerable.
5. Offer **solidarity across borders** by proactively supporting an international Coronavirus and climate emergency response that challenges the scapegoating of migrants, centres on the worst affected, bolsters global public health, development and environmental bodies, and ensures equitable access to COVID-19 treatment. Use the UN climate talks in Glasgow to push for robust implementation of the Paris deal, platforming the voices of indigenous and frontline communities and advancing climate finance and global debt cancellation. Ensure coherence between all domestic policy and global sustainable development outcomes.

Decisions made in times of crisis have long-lasting consequences. After the 2008 financial crisis, inequality grew and climate emissions spiralled. We want to see this moment seized for the common good, not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Civil society has a central role to play in helping to shape Scotland's future in this unprecedented time. We look forward to meeting with you to address how we can realise a truly just and green recovery.

Yours sincerely,

[list of signatories]