

Scotland's Commitment to Global Climate Justice and Fair Climate Finance

Executive Summary

This debate presents an opportunity to affirm Scotland's global leadership on Climate Justice and Loss and Damage, demonstrate cross-party support for key positions in this area, share policy proposals for the next government relating to climate justice, and strengthen calls for a progressive outcome at COP30 starting in November in Brazil.

Quick Background

Scotland was the first country in the world to pledge money to address “Loss and Damage” at COP26 in Glasgow. This initial £2m pledge became £10m over the course of this Parliament. Crucially, this pledge helped build political momentum on Loss and Damage internationally, and was a major contribution to the global agreement to establish the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) at COP27 Egypt.

State of Play

The Scottish Government continues to champion Loss and Damage, and civil society in Scotland is looking for some tangible new commitments in this area to demonstrate further leadership. Internationally, the FRLD will disburse its first funds soon, but it is dangerously under-resourced, and there are concerns that its means of deploying funds could be cumbersome, inefficient and laden with bureaucracy. Therefore this is an important moment to reaffirm the importance of FRLD for the Global South and to highlight the impact of loss and damage projects funded by the Scottish Government.

Our Asks:

Asks of the Scottish Government:

- Continue Scotland's leadership on Loss and Damage (L&D) by establishing a Centre of Excellence for Loss and Damage hosted at a Scottish University and outlining a comprehensive L&D funding programme in the next Parliament plans.
- Join the “[Fill the Fund](#)” campaign, actively championing more grant-based pledges to be made to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) and champion direct access for communities to this fund.

- Back the call for a [Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty](#) - to chart a path to a global just transition - being spearheaded by 17 of the world's most climate vulnerable nations.
- Maintain the International Development Fund (IDF) at £15m per year and increase the Climate Justice Fund (CJF) to match this also at £15m per year, increasing in line with inflation, whilst significantly increasing the Humanitarian Emergency Fund.
- Introduce a [Private Jet Tax](#) as a flagship climate justice policy, making polluters pay for their climate damages. Commit to exploring other 'Make Polluter Pay' funding mechanisms such as an air departure tax.
- Publish an ambitious Climate Change Plan (CCP) in the coming weeks that gets Scotland on track to at least meet the legal minimum emissions reductions targets, recognising that every missed target leads to more Loss and Damage, and include commitments to renewed climate justice funding in the CCP.

Our Asks for World Governments at COP30:

- Get back on track with emissions reductions now that we have [missed the 1.5°C target](#)— every missed target drives greater loss and damage.
- Secure agreement in Belem on a clear roadmap to mobilise [£1.3 trillion](#) for climate finance annually as soon as possible.
- Scale up contributions to the FRLD to meet the scale of the need, and ensure community access and rapid disbursement windows
- Make polluters pay — introduce new levies and financial instruments to generate predictable revenue.

Further Info

Climate Change Across the World

Across the world, climate change is devastating lives, undoing development progress and pushing people deeper into poverty. From South Sudan, where catastrophic floods in 2024 displaced over 65,000 people, to Bolivia in 2025, where months of unseasonable rain have impacted over 590,000 families and displaced more than 100,000, and East Africa, still reeling from a drought and food crisis that pushed over 55 million people into acute hunger and killed millions of livestock across the region.

The impacts of climate change fall hardest on those least responsible for climate emissions. According to Oxfam's "[Climate Equality Report](#)", **the poorest 50% of the world's population are responsible for only around 10% of global emissions, yet they are the most exposed to the risks of climate change.** The richest 1% of the global population is responsible for more carbon emissions than the poorest two-thirds of humanity combined.

It is not an accident of geography that makes this so, but the product of a combination of global economic inequality, the legacy of colonialism, decades of broken promises on climate action, and a pervading extreme poverty that the world has failed to eradicate.

How does Scotland's aid budget relate to the UK aid budget?

Scotland's Official Development Assistance (comprising of the international development fund, climate justice fund and humanitarian emergency fund) is accounted for in the Scottish budget, separate from UK development spending. Scotland's climate justice funding in particular is an example of how having a (modest) separate international development spend from the UK can innovate. The Governments of Wales, Jersey and Guernsey similarly have small portfolios of international aid.

What was the impact of the Scottish Government's L&D contribution?

Scotland's initial pledge to Loss and Damage had a genuine impact and did make a big contribution to the political momentum on this issue, leading to the establishment of the fund. However, the £10m thus far pledged is modest, and Scotland will need to continue to *innovate* to maintain its position of leadership on this topic. The commitment to Loss and Damage is one of the enduring legacies of COP26 in Glasgow. It helped position Scotland internationally as an ally of the Global South, committed to international justice, and politically courageous. This "soft power" platform provides continuing opportunity to further champion other progressive international agendas effectively.

What kinds of projects are funded by the Scottish contribution and the FRLD?

Loss and Damage projects focus on "ex-post" interventions, helping communities recover from climate events after they have taken place. This can include activities such as rebuilding homes and infrastructure or providing emergency response needs, including cash transfers. Some projects also include investments in prevention of future disasters, such as construction of flood defenses or climate resilient agriculture.

You can see examples of L&D projects funded through the Humanitarian Emergency Fund [here](#) and a report by the [Loss and Damage coalition](#) on learning from L&D work funded by the Scottish Government [here](#).

Why is a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty needed?

In order to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, we need international cooperation not just to reduce emissions but also to stop the expansion of fossil fuels and to manage a global just transition away from fossil fuels in a manner that is both fast and fair, so that no worker, community or country is left behind. A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is being proposed as a way to do this, and as a complement to the COP process.

Scotland has shown it can be influential on the world stage, and show meaningful solidarity with those countries suffering the worst impacts of climate change. We call on the Scottish government to do this again by backing the most climate-vulnerable countries in their call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This briefing was compiled by Christian Aid, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, Global Justice Now and Quakers in Scotland.

Case Studies

Case study 1: Loss and Damage Fund – Christian Aid - Ethiopia

[Breaking New Ground – Loss and Damage in Ethiopia - Christian Aid](#)

In December 2023, at the start of the UN Climate summit COP28, the Scottish Government awarded £250,000 to Christian Aid to support communities in Dasenech that suffer extreme climate change-related impacts known as Loss and Damage.

Loss and Damage is a term much-used by campaigners, the UN and governments to describe the extreme effects of climate change that go beyond what people can cope with, and crucially it includes factors that are hard to capture purely in economic terms - such as the damage being done to long-held, precious cultural aspects of life.

Scotland is one of the first countries in the world to commit funds to address economic and non-economic loss and damage, and over the last few months some of that support been channelled through Christian Aid's local partner Action For Development, in ways that build the resilience of the community and attempt to address some of these huge challenges.

The community participated in a process to help identify the main climate change-related problems they face, and to prioritise and suggest their own solutions.

Non-economic impacts of climate change were also identified, including traumatisation and depression. Women often bear the brunt of the challenges - for example girls can be married off young to enable their family to restock their animals.

The action plan took an integrated approach in which vulnerable people were offered choices on how their urgent needs might be met. For example, there were grants for new livelihoods (such as women's fishing groups) and cash transfers to vulnerable households.

But the project also embedded a range of activities aimed at addressing some of the non-economic impacts that were felt most deeply by the community.

For example, in light of the social and cultural status associated with herd ownership, over 1000 goats were provided to around 200 households, replenishing some of the animals lost in recent months, and a total of 158,198 livestock were vaccinated. Furthermore, reflecting the mental health impact felt by many in the community after recurring climate-related threats and shocks, 54 health and community leaders were trained in psycho-social support.

24-year-old Ekules Lobuma received guidance in her quest for safe drinking water for her family, as well as 5 goats. According to Ekules, 'the support I received not only brightened my future but also filled me with the hope to live'.

Case study 2: Loss and Damage Fund – SCIAF - Malawi

At COP26 in Glasgow, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon committed £2 million to Loss and Damage projects around the world. This was the first funding of its kind, with SCIAF receiving £500,000 for an innovative seven-month programme in Malawi.

Prior to the programme, Malawi had suffered the losses and damages of several large-scale cyclones, including Idai, Gombe and Ana – all of which were made more severe and likely to happen as a result of climate change. Together, they destroyed land, lives and livelihoods, bringing untold suffering and leaving families with nowhere left to turn.

This Scottish government funding was awarded to SCIAF working with Trócaire, Civil Society Network for Climate Change (CISONECC), Churches Action Relief and Development (CARD) and the Catholic Commission for Development in Malawi (CADECOM) in Zomba.

With our partners in Malawi, we began working with local communities in 2022 to identify their most pressing needs. A programme was then co-created to support families and communities with the skills, tools and monies they needed to get back on their feet, re-build infrastructure, and ensure further losses and damages would not occur.

In total, 85,000 people benefited from the programme in Malawi.

In the most hard-hit locations, [emergency relief was provided](#), including the provision of warm blankets and essential foods such as cooking oil, salt and maize flour. Childcare centres were rehabilitated using climate resilient methods, allowing children and young people to continue their pre-school education. And storm flood barriers were repaired, protecting communities from rising river levels during storms.

In addition, there was a focus throughout the programme on non-economic losses and damages – exploring protecting and repairing cultural items or artefacts without a significant monetary value. A graveyard in the southern region of Malawi is one such example, which was protected with flood defences on the request of the local community.

This innovative Loss and Damage work has received recognition on the international stage and repeated interest from media outlets, including the BBC who visited the programme in Malawi in January 2022. This is wonderful for the people we serve, shining a light on one of the most important issues of our times and encouraging global action.

Beyond these direct successes, this programme serves as an exemplar case study for what can be achieved with Loss and Damage funding around the world – and the importance of governments to deliver on their commitments to support those impacted first and worst by the climate emergency.