

> Take Action | Fight for Climate Justice



Oxfam
America

We've all seen the images on the evening news: the droughts, floods, hunger, and disease. Decades of greenhouse gas emissions have finally caught up with our climate—and it's the poorest among us who are worst affected.

Over the past 30 years, the Turkana people of northwest Kenya have experienced a 25 percent average decrease in annual rainfall. In the former Soviet states of central Asia, countries like Tajikistan have experienced extreme drought, paradoxically coupled with floods and landslides. And in Bangladesh, where scientists have warned that a rise in sea level may flood 20 percent of their land, typhoons and floods have already increased in severity.

The outlook is frightening. But maybe that's why climate change is finally getting the attention it deserves.

“Let us recognize that the effects of climate change affect us all. And that they have become so severe and so sweeping that only urgent, global action will do. We are all in this together. We must work together.”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Oxfam America has a long history of supporting vulnerable communities through our disaster preparedness and livelihoods work. Now, we are joining the worldwide movement to use political action to stabilize our planet's rising temperature. Our contribution? We'll put the needs of poor people first.

We are asking that the US:

- **Stop harming.** As one of the world's largest producers of greenhouse gases, the US must commit to reducing its emissions—and helping developing countries reduce their own emissions through clean energy technologies. By 2050, US reductions must be at least 80 percent below 1990 levels. This would help us avoid a global temperature rise of 3.6° F (2° C), the point at which the world would experience huge shocks to our water resources, food production, sea levels, and ecosystems.
- **Start helping.** The US must commit to assisting poor people in developing countries who are already struggling to deal with climate change—by providing funding to help them adapt. With this funding, vulnerable communities could diversify their ways of earning a living and plan and budget for disasters.
- **Establish fair solutions.** Through US climate change policies, companies producing greenhouse gas emissions should contribute toward helping poor people here and abroad.



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In Finchawa, Ethiopia, where drought has led to water shortages, boys jump over a canal leading from a spring. The spring serves as a community water source. Oxfam, together with doctors from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, visited the site as part of a public health assessment to gauge the needs of displaced people nearby.

The time is now

A number of legislative proposals dealing with climate change, such as America's Climate Security Act, are moving through the US Senate. The possibility of a House proposal is increasing. And we are engaging voters in the 2008 elections. Each event represents a vital opportunity for Oxfam and our supporters to take action.

Oxfam America

Oxfam America is an international relief and development organization that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice. As part of our campaign to create equitable solutions to the climate crisis, we are asking that the US cut greenhouse gas emissions and provide financial assistance so that the most vulnerable communities can adapt. All we need now is your voice!

The Facts: Climate change

... requires urgent action.

- According to the World Health Organization, climate change may already contribute to more than 150,000 deaths a year.
- Accelerated global warming has been observed, and the impacts of this warming are proceeding much faster than predicted in the 1990s.

... hurts poor people first and worst.

- Nearly two billion people in developing countries were affected by climate-related disasters in the 1990s. That rate may double in this decade. People in developing countries are more than 20 times as likely to be affected by such disasters as those in the developed world.
- As of August 2007, some 248 million people were affected by flooding that year in 11 Asian countries. Extreme floods are common in South Asia, but climate change models predict even heavier monsoon rainfall—and intense rain in unlikely places.
- Between July 2007 and October 2007, Africa's worst floods in three decades hit 23 countries from Senegal to Somalia. Nearly two million people were affected. Africa's climates are highly variable, but more climatic extremes—especially “extremely wet events”—are in line with climate change predictions.
- By 2020, up to 250 million people across Africa could face more severe water shortages. In some countries, yields from rain-fed crops could be halved during the same period.

... threatens global security.

- Conflicts and migration are likely to intensify as a result of increased competition for scarce natural resources.
- According to a report by a panel of retired US generals and admirals, climate change acts as a “threat multiplier for instability” in some of the most volatile regions of the world.
- Rising sea levels in Central America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia are wiping out low-lying coastal lands. This may lead to massive migrations, which could easily trigger major security concerns and aggravate regional tensions.

... requires real resources.

- According to a recent report published by the UN Development Program, adaptation needs in developing countries are likely to cost up to \$86 billion each year.
- If early action is taken, the cost of climate change will likely be several orders of magnitude below the cost of inaction. If global greenhouse gas emissions are not cut fast enough, steeper reductions will be required down the line.

... demands innovative solutions.

- In South Africa, farmers are already planting faster-maturing crops to cope with unpredictable rainfall.
- In Bangladesh, villagers are creating floating vegetable gardens to protect their livelihoods from ruin by floods.
- In Vietnam, communities are planting dense mangroves along the coast to diffuse the waves caused by tropical storms.



Ibnu Sakdan plants mangroves along the coast in Alue Deah Baro village, Indonesia. After the 2004 tsunami in Asia, Oxfam funded the replanting of mangroves, which act as a natural barrier during storms.

What can you do?

There are limits to what vulnerable communities can achieve on their own. They need national and international support. Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/climate. Call on Congress to cut greenhouse gas emissions and provide financial assistance so that the most vulnerable communities can adapt.

Working together to end poverty and injustice

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