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# BRINGING IT HOME

**Making a global  
deal on climate change  
a reality**

EDITED BY  
**Ed Wallis**

**FABIAN  
SOCIETY**



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## PREFACE

Anthony Giddens

I wrote the first edition of my book, *The Politics of Climate Change*, in 2008. At that point there was about a year to go before the UN meetings due to be held in Copenhagen to try to limit the impact of global warming (COP 15). The hope was widespread that a global deal could be reached to regulate the level of carbon emissions. Over 100 heads of state, including President Obama, put in an appearance at the meetings. The EU was ahead of most of the rest of the world in developing a strategy to regulate emissions, and its leaders hoped to be in the forefront of the discussions.

I take no pleasure in saying that I was sceptical that these efforts would lead to very much. The obstacles standing in the way of reaching meaningful agreements were formidable. There were major divisions of interest, for example, between the industrialised and developing nations. The former group wanted binding targets that all countries would be committed to realise. Those from the less developed countries, however, believed that the industrial states should shoulder the burden, since they were responsible for the bulk of the emissions that have entered the atmosphere. Even if an agreed global programme had been concluded, there would have been no way of enforcing it, since there are no effective means of sanctioning international law.

In the event, the meetings were a greater fiasco than anyone could have anticipated, marked by conflicts and disputes from the very beginning. At the last moment a small group of leaders, with Obama at the forefront, put together a short document, the Copenhagen Accord. The EU's representatives were excluded – a humiliation for them. Participating countries agreed to set out their plans for reducing carbon emissions and to try to co-ordinate with one another in seeking to actualise them. Little of any practical consequence emerged however, although the annual COP meetings continued, with many smaller ones in between. The volume of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted into the atmosphere continues to increase year on year.

This year it is COP21 – once again happening in Europe, this time in Paris. After a six-year lull, hopes are once more running high. President Obama is sure again to take a leading role. The EU and its member states are again developing elaborate preparations. On the surface it's eerily like Copenhagen all over again. Are there any reasons to suppose the outcome will be different this time?

There are at least some. In the first place, there is the Copenhagen experience itself to draw upon, an object lesson in the pitfalls that lie in wait. While the sceptics still make a lot of noise – and have an impact on public opinion – climate science has advanced significantly over the interim period. Unusually intense episodes of extreme weather have been experienced in many parts of the world. The leaders of some of the largest emerging economies, most notably China, have shifted their attitudes significantly over recent years. They have come to accept that climate change poses massive risks for everyone, and that remedial action cannot be confined to the industrial countries. The EU is immersed in a range of crises, but has adopted a testing set of carbon targets. It is unlikely to be marginalised this time round. So it is not impossible that some robust agreements could be reached.

Even if they are, however, the problems of how to implement them, and how to sanction states that don't fulfil their obligations, will remain. What happens behind the scenes in Paris, particularly among the large states, might matter more than any formal principles endorsed by the world community as a whole. China, India, the US and the EU countries account for a huge proportion of total global emissions. What they choose to do will determine whether or not runaway climate change can be effectively curbed, more or less regardless of what takes place elsewhere. The key in the short term is reducing world dependence on coal, the most lethal fossil fuel in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

In any case, it certainly won't do to treat the Paris meetings as our only hope for reducing the impact of climate change. Action will have to happen on a diversity of fronts, from the local to the global – a key emphasis of this volume. What takes place even in small local communities can make a big difference and it need not remain local for long. As a result of the advance of the internet, the world is far more interconnected than even a short while ago. Best practice can be diffused much more rapidly than was ever possible before. Cities are emerging as highly effective actors on a global level, able to move faster and be more innovative than most states can manage.

One of the greatest problems we face in seeking to bring climate change under control is the inertia built into the fossil fuel industries, whose activities are responsible for such a high volume of the world's carbon emissions. On a global level, renewable forms of energy have thus far made very little impact indeed. Yet perhaps this inertia is much less implacable than it appears, given the overall acceleration of technological change and the rapidity with which it can spread around the world? Think of the speed with which many traditional industries have disappeared, or have been radically transformed in recent years. The

first iPhone appeared in 2007. Today there are more mobile devices in the world than people, although not everyone owns one. They have not remained the monopoly of the rich states, but have gone straight to the poorest areas of the world too. Countries in Africa have been able to skip the stage of having fixed phone lines. Perhaps something similar can happen with renewable technologies? Giants in other industries have been humbled. The same could happen to the seemingly impregnable coal and oil companies if they should refuse to change their ways.

The level of public concern about climate change in the industrialised countries remains low, with some notable exceptions – for instance, the Scandinavian states. There are many reasons for this lack of engagement. The risks associated involved are filtered through the findings of the scientific community. Most citizens have no chance of making an in-depth assessment of them. They are vulnerable to the influence of the sceptics; and indeed those risks are surrounded by uncertainties, since humanly induced climate change has no precedents in prior history. Some powerful groups, including one or two of the large fossil fuel companies, have actively sought to contest the findings of climate science.

However, the main reason for low salience among the public, in my view anyway, is that the impact of climate change is widely seen as quite far off. Even many experts tend to speak in this way. James Hansen, for example, who thinks that the risks associated with climate change are greater than the majority of climatologists believe, still called his book *Storms of my Grandchildren*. We must find ways of bringing home to the public that climate change is dangerous in the here and now – and all the more so because it is irrevocable. We know of no way of getting the greenhouse gas emissions out of the atmosphere once they are there, and some will persist for centuries. One avenue of doing might be to emphasise how closely entangled

climate change is with other immediate and visible risks we face – flooding at home, world population growth, water and food scarcity and global conflicts in a world littered with nuclear weapons.

The reader will find interesting and original ideas on all of the topics I have touched upon in what follows in this book.





# INTRODUCTION

Ed Wallis

In December, politicians, campaigners and diplomats will come together in Paris for the latest in a series of UN negotiations aimed at tackling the world's greatest collective challenge: how to catalyse action on climate change. But whether or not these talks put us on a plausible path to keeping global temperature rises to 2°C – the generally agreed safe limit – will ultimately be up to us.

The UN gathering is one of the most complex diplomatic negotiations in the history of mankind, with all kinds of competing political, economic, social, not to mention environmental, interests around the table. In the end, however, our political leaders respond to their national political interests and so public pressure is crucial to securing a stretching deal.

But there is currently no sense that climate change is high on the political or public 'to-do' list. The UK is in a crucial election year, but a discussion about the future of our planet is not on the agenda. As Ruth Davis points out in this collection of essays, the fact that people at present might be more focused on jobs or the NHS is hardly surprising; in fact, it's a perfectly sensible response to what she calls the "junkie politics" of the climate debate: "riding high on NGO calls to save the world one minute, and crashed out against the realities of international relations the next." The chaos of Copenhagen in 2009, the last

time the world came together to try to pin down a deal, is a case in point.

There are reasons to think this time might be different, however, not least because the scars of Copenhagen run deep for many involved. In Paris, the world's biggest polluters will be on board for a start, with the US and China now committed to joint action to reduce emissions and decarbonise their energy supplies. This vastly reduces other nations' scope for excuses. There is also a growing convergence around the territory on which a realistic deal might be done. Indeed you can find a word being bandied about not often associated with climate change and our prospects of doing something about it: hope.

Hope is a useful starting point, but only gets you so far. If 2015 is going to be remembered as the year the world finally got serious about our climate threat, we will need bold and imaginative political leadership.

The starting point should be the places people live. As the recent Fabian Society report *Pride of Place* showed, people can find it hard to emotionally engage with large scale, abstract environmental issues. Instead, when citizens think of 'the environment', they tend to think of the local places they live and the people they live there with. We need to ensure that people feel empowered to make positive environmental interventions in their own neighbourhoods – a warmer home that wastes less energy; a well-maintained park that feels safe and inviting. If we can't take control of the things we see in our own lives, how could we ever think we might stop the seas rising?

There is a critical role for legislation at the international level in this. As Nick Mabey puts it, "the only way to win the national politics of limiting climate risk is through a credible international agreement. Without the reassurance that others are acting to reduce global climate risk, countries will always shy away from taking firm action." And as it is with states, the same goes for people. A key

barrier to people living more sustainably is a sense of powerlessness, the feeling that anything they could personally do is dwarfed by the scale of the challenge. Climate change is a classic 'collective action problem': an individual might decide to withhold participation in a group activity and 'free-ride' if they felt their personal behaviour made no difference to the outcome. We need international agreements to bind us into a sense of collective endeavour, a sense that everyone is pulling in the same direction, doing their bit to an appropriate and achievable level. This is a politics of both/and: the politics of the global conference and the local green space.

Starting at home also means showing how climate change is not an abstract, far off threat, but a clear and present danger to the things we hold dear: the nature that surrounds us and the relationships that define us. As Adam Corner puts it in this volume, we need to "join the dots between climate change and people's lives", establishing climate change as a "social fact" rather than a scientific one.

Marc Brightman suggests that politicians could do this "by embracing environmentalism as a political issue, and arguing that economic inequality and climate change are connected through the politics of sustainability." Kerry McCarthy MP is a politician herself and, in Bristol, is on the frontline of the apparent 'surge' of the Green Party. She finds that people's pro-environmental instinct is most powerfully manifested in wanting their immediate surroundings to be better. She argues that "we need to empower communities so that they feel the protection and preservation of their natural (and built) environment is in their hands; that they are its stewards." Charlotte Billingham stresses the importance of the European Union here. The EU is beginning to re-find its feet in the climate leadership stakes after being left on the sidelines in Copenhagen. But it needs to show how its investment and

interventions make a difference on the ground, “so people can see for themselves what is being done, which could empower them to take further action”.

What we need from our politics is a compelling story about the challenges we face and a plausible means to address them. Yet environmentalism has seemed to fail on both counts. The managerial tone of our environmental conversation, that talks about carbon budgets and biodiversity offsets rather than the beauty of the places in which we grew up, has failed to embed the concepts of sustainability and conservation in people’s lives and build a broader sense of environmental citizenship. What’s more, the distant, doom-laden rumblings of global climate brinkmanship don’t tend to suggest a practical solution is imminent.

So we need our political leaders to inspire us with what’s possible and engage us in a conversation about the collective challenges we face. The complexity of climate negotiations, the expertise and the science involved, and the democratic distance of the UN makes Paris feel very remote and disempowering. But at its simplest, it’s the only real means we have of balancing competing interests. As the contributors to this pamphlet argue, we must not see Paris as an end point: it is a critical staging post on a longer journey, not a single event. We must not expect our politicians to return with tablets of stone that tell how the world will be ‘saved’ and a low-carbon economy ‘delivered’. What we need in this crucial year for climate is to find a hopeful story about why Paris matters, for our values, for our national interest and for our daily lives; that engages us all in the task of our times, and serves as a promise of purposeful commitment to the long process of political change.

## PARIS 2015: THE STORY SO FAR

Paris 2015 will be the next mandated event of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, a formal set of workshops and events established in 1992, after the first World Climate Conference in 1979. In 1997, the famous Kyoto Protocol was adopted, which legally committed countries to emission reduction targets: the Protocol's second 'commitment period' is due to end in 2020.

The most significant precursors to Paris 2015 are:

- Copenhagen 2009 ended in deadlock, with no legally-binding commitments on CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction. However, the 'Copenhagen Accord', though not unanimously passed, agreed that action needed to be taken to keep temperature increases below 2°C and that developed countries had a responsibility to finance developing countries to reduce their emissions.
- The 'Cancun Agreements' of 2010, largely but not unanimously accepted, established several key features: the creation of a Green Climate Fund and Fast Start Finance to support developing countries; a new focus on mitigation and adaptation; and the establishment of Forest Management Reference Levels to monitor deforestation.
- The 'Warsaw Outcomes' of 2013 saw nations bound in an effective global effort to reduce emissions and established the need for action

to be quicker and broader in scope. There was also international agreement reached about what action should be taken on deforestation and how.

- The New York Climate Summit in 2014, hosted by Ban-Ki Moon, aimed to invigorate global debate but was not part of the formal negotiation process. Lima, December 2014, largely outlined discussions for Paris 2015. Lima ended the 'firewall' between developed and developing countries, recognising many developing nations are now major economies and emitters.

What will be most significant about Paris is the structure of the deal. Rather than a focus on top-down targets, countries will now bring forward their own plans for carbon reductions. As Green Alliance put it, "a good agreement will provide an enabling framework, allowing individual countries to do more than they could alone." It is likely there will be a legally-binding commitment by all major economies to limit emissions. Campaigners hope that a deal can include a 'ratchet and review' mechanism to increase national emissions commitments over time and a long term goal of net zero emissions. In November 2014 China and the USA confirmed at a bilateral conference that they would both make significant commitments.

# 1 | A MEANINGFUL STEP ON A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Ruth Davis

*Paris will not provide a single, one-off global solution to the problem of climate change. But with renewed diplomacy, a richer understanding of national interests, and a recognition and pursuit of the common good, we can build the trust needed for a climate treaty that will last.*

**N**aomi Klein is on the front page of the *Guardian*, and unless you try really hard not to, you will hear her telling you that we have but a matter of months to save the world – months, that is, before another attempt to sign a global agreement that will cut greenhouse gas pollution fast, and in doing so avoid the worst impacts of dangerous climate change.

You could be forgiven for raising an eyebrow. The last time everyone in the climate movement was shouting this same thing (including me, I hasten to add), it ended in acrimonious chaos at the climate summit in Copenhagen. And whilst Klein has been admirably persistent in her repeated warnings that the problem has not gone away, in the interim journalists and politicians have seemed happy to forget about it.

Now, five years on, the wheels of politics and fashion have turned again. It looks like we are in for another bout of millennial prophesying, followed by predictable despair

at the lack of proportionate action by our leaders – running the gamut of political emotions from A to B, as Dorothy Parker might have said. No wonder many people would rather spend their time thinking about something more rewarding, like housing or the living wage.

But it needn't be like this – and indeed it cannot be, if we want to do the best we can to curb climate change. We don't have to make 'the road to Paris' into this kind of junkie politics – riding high on calls to save the world one minute, and crashed out against the realities of international relations the next.

We could just as easily reject the idea that there is a single, one-off global solution to the problem of climate change – recognising that since it is one of the most politically and technically complex challenges of our time, it will require sustained and systemic efforts to address it.

And instead of demanding a complete, entirely just and righteous solution handed down from the UN (as if it were some celestial court), we could concentrate on the hard-graft of effective diplomacy – the kind of diplomacy that acknowledges and attempts to reconcile different national interests and works through long-term alliances towards a common good. The kind of diplomacy, in fact, that has probably underpinned every worthwhile treaty ever signed. And ironically, the kind of diplomacy that Britain used to be very skilled at, before we traded our established foreign policy tradition for a handful of goodwill ambassadors and a battalion of oil salesmen (snake, or otherwise).

Once we see Paris through this new – or rather, renewed lens – we will understand with much greater clarity what each country is facing when it comes to the negotiating table. We will see that a great power like Russia is almost inextricably dependent in its present incarnation on revenues derived from fossil fuels – but that this dependence is also corrupting its government and imperilling its people. We will acknowledge that India is caught on the cusp of



securing its own industrialisation through fossil fuel use, or becoming a power-house in the development of solar energy – or both. We will understand that the US is simultaneously an oil economy, and an agricultural economy highly vulnerable to extreme weather events – and consequently at war with itself about its fundamental climate interests. And we will see that the UK, home to the city of London, with its trillions invested in the oil, coal and gas industries, is also host to huge commodities companies that employ tens of thousands of people, and whose supply chains will be worn thin or broken by the effects of climate change on agricultural systems overseas.

Understanding these national interests will be central to securing a deal on climate change that will mean something tangible in the real economy – that will impact on investment decisions, spur innovation and help cut costs in the renewables sector, make cities more liveable, protect forests and save natural resources. Because it will be a deal based on a mutual understanding of interests, and made in the context of domestic political realities – and therefore one likely to stick.

But such a deal will also involve abandoning the chosen models of both free-market economists and many campaigning NGOs. Because such a deal will never deliver the dream of climate-savvy market liberals – a system of carbon pricing standardised across the global economy. It will disappoint all those fossil fuel businesses eyeing up the possibility of buying cheap carbon offsets from rainforests – who stumble over the small matter of the inhabitants of those forests, and their extraordinary cultural and natural history, which have made them oddly and hearteningly unamenable to global commodification. It will similarly frustrate those who hoped that a carbon price would drive ‘cost effective’ cuts in emissions in faraway places – only to discover that not only have those faraway places got other economic and social interests, but that they also have

businesses just as adept at gaming the carbon market as our own.

No wonder, then, that there is little appetite for drawing up a global climate agreement based purely on the unifying tenets of free-market liberalism. But whilst this may not leave many Fabians weeping into their beer, for the sake of balance, it is only right to point out that there is equally little enthusiasm for the centralised, top-down system of UN carbon targets favoured by many on the left.

There will simply not be a deal that allocates legally binding national carbon allowances to each country, based on strict equity criteria negotiated through the UN. This form of agreement – favoured by many NGOs – is off the table, for the bald reason that too many big players don't believe it will wash with their public, or feel that they have a credible plan for making it work. So, for those who hold that the only acceptable climate agreement is one that redistributes resources from global north to global south via the medium of strictly enforced carbon budget, Paris will also be a disappointment – and in their terms, a failure.

And so, if there is no big single market solution and no grand UN-imposed final settlement on offer, what can we expect?

The answer is both more than we might have dared to hope a few years ago and, as the balance of interests tip towards greater climate risk, not nearly enough.

It is easy to document why we might be hopeful about a deal. Extreme weather events, the falling costs of renewable energy, and the growing recognition that chronic air pollution requires urgent action to curb coal burning have tipped the case in favour of action in several major economies. As a result, a bargain has been struck on climate change between the world's two biggest economies: China and the US, which is likely to form the bedrock of the Paris agreement.

The run up to the summit in December will also see almost every major and middle-sized economy in the world

come forward with new plans to cut pollution or speed up the deployment of clean energy. Bottom and piecemeal this process is, it will still mark the most sustained global effort yet to tackle the problem – and it would not have happened without the imperative of signing a new UN deal.

Add to this the potential to agree a shared goal to end carbon pollution entirely, by or near the mid-point of this century, and this becomes something eye-catching. Particularly if countries agree to meet this goal through a regular negotiation cycle, avoiding the boom and bust political economy of Copenhagen, and building confidence that we may ultimately be able to match the scale of our efforts to the seriousness of the problem.

This is the prize at stake – one worth having, but one that will require diligent efforts if it is to be secured; not least, in ensuring that there are international flows of finance available to support clean and climate resilient development – enabling poorer countries to meet the energy needs of their populations without adding to the burden of climate pollution.

But encouraging though recent progress is, it is still not nearly enough. Because despite all these advances, the offers on the table will not to keep us on course for a two rather than a three, four or even five degree global temperature rise. Actions promised in the run up to Paris will help ‘bend the curve’ of accumulating greenhouse gas emissions. But they will not stop our world becoming significantly less liveable, less beautiful and less safe for most of its people. And unfortunately, we still have a long way to go before the implications of this are fully understood – either as a core national interest, or as part of a wider conception of shared security and the common good.

In the UK, our understanding of the effects of such a steep rise in global temperatures is patchy at best. The public conversation about climate change is still conducted at a banal level: boxing matches between those

who dispute the physical basis for the theory of human-induced climate change and those who have been set up to 'defend the science'.

Whilst such debates have their rightful place in a functioning democracy, they surely should not be a substitute for much richer and sustained reporting of the great wealth of cutting edge climate research being undertaken by physicists and geographers all over the world. Adequate reporting of this research would reflect, for example, the increasingly sophisticated understanding we have of how human-driven climate change is affecting today's weather events, including the recent floods. It would recognise our growing awareness of the sensitivity of oceans to rising levels of carbon dioxide, and the threat this represents to marine life and fish stocks. It would consider the speed at which sea-levels are rising and likely to rise, and the consequences for our own coast line and cities. It would, in short, enable the listening and interested public to consider the implications of climate change for their own lives, based on our best understanding of rapidly evolving science.

And if such a debate were also reflected in public policy making, it would encourage the Treasury and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to work alongside UK business leaders to understand how our national economic interests are exposed to a changing climate and a changing energy economy. In this spirit, the next government could build on the excellent work of the Hadley Centre and the Committee on Climate Change, and commission a high-level national climate risk assessment for the UK. This would simultaneously create a much stronger national interest case for our involvement in Paris, and help build alliances with others – working up from the bedrock of mutually understood interests, rather than endlessly repeated claims to the moral high ground.

But whilst such alliances built through shared interests are vital to a renewed climate diplomacy, they will not

be enough on their own. Because beyond these interests, we also need to develop a renewed understanding of the common good in our relationship with the environment.

By common good, I do not mean the marginal benefits that might accrue to global GDP over different timescales if we reduce our use of fossil fuels. Rather, I mean a common good based on the elaboration of shared values: a love of nature; a respect for the history, identity and traditions of other nations and peoples; careful tending to our children's inheritance; and solidarity with the world's poor.

These are the values that many of us hope Pope Francis will remember and call upon when he publishes his long-awaited encyclical on the environment later this year. And whilst his words will have particular significance for Catholics, his personal moral authority may also mean that they help civil society renew its own story about climate change.

Because by arguing from a starting point of the values we share, it will become easier to say without equivocation, that other life forms on this planet should not be brushed aside by the inexorable grind of human material progress as carelessly as barnacles scraped from the sides of a ship. We will find greater courage to acknowledge the suffering of those threatened with permanent exile from their lands and loss of their identity by the impacts of climate change, and to seek to alleviate it. We will also remember to say together, that good parents do not spend their children's inheritance or poison the land or drain the rivers upon which their future depends.

And finally, we will find the voice to say something that is core to the Labour movement and to faith traditions alike – that we have a shared moral obligation towards the poor, and a duty to protect them from the appropriations and enclosures of the rich, wherever they may be.

Renewed diplomacy; a richer understanding of national interests, leading to stronger and more long-lasting

alliances; a recognition and pursuit of the common good – all these could be harnessed now, to help build the political case for action, and engender the spirit of trust and co-operation between nations needed to build a climate treaty that will last.

This is the best hope I can think of, not for making Paris a solution to the problem of climate change, but for making it a success and a meaningful step on what will be a long and winding road. I wonder if we have the imagination for such an old fashioned approach?

## 2 | THIS NEEDS EVERYONE

Adam Corner

*Paris 2015 needs to be part of a much wider narrative that joins the dots between climate change and people's lives. By expanding the 'social reality' of climate change, bringing the centre-right in from the cold, and developing a story about climate impacts that is consistent and coherent, the conversation about tackling climate change can be an inclusive and powerful one.*

A quarter of a century has passed since climate change entered the global policy arena, following the NASA scientist James Hansen's now infamous testimony to the US Senate in 1988 that the world was rapidly warming. Since then, levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have rocketed, and global temperatures have continued to rise. In the UK, political and public interest in climate change has inevitably ebbed and flowed. Public concern has been buffeted by the global economic recession, undermined by the climate 'denial' lobby, and punctured by moments of clarity, as the extreme weather predicted by scientists (such as more intense coastal and river flooding) begins to manifest.

For campaigners and politicians, the 'road to Paris' stretches clearly ahead, a crucial checkpoint on an even longer journey that ultimately needs to end in a global cap on greenhouse gas emissions (or, even better, on the extraction of fossil fuels in the first place). But are the UN negotiations at the end of 2015 on the public's radar?

On the one hand, the answer is a resounding 'no'. Outside of the bubble of policy wonks and activists, few have the 'road to Paris' as their blueprint for the year ahead. Climate change has a faint and fragile cultural footprint: unless you look closely, it is not easy to see it reflected in people's daily lives. Floods and droughts may temporarily focus our minds, but for the most part, climate change is 'psychologically distant'. And this psychological distance permits even those who grasp the scale of the challenge on an intellectual level to disengage emotionally, and quietly avert their gaze.

In the theatre of public discourse, climate change is typically offered no more than fleeting, cameo appearances – and there is even an argument that the Paris talks could be counter-productive for public engagement. After being billed as the last chance to 'save the world', the anti-climax of the last major UN climate negotiations (in Copenhagen, 2009) preceded a rapid decline in media coverage and political salience.

But while climate change is never likely to compete with more immediate, visceral and tangible policy issues like terrorism, immigration or unemployment, there are signs that the debate is shifting once again. What is crucial in the run-up to Paris 2015 is that politicians, campaigners and community activists from across the breadth of society take a broader, more connected approach to public engagement.

Because while political gatherings may briefly pique the public interest, what will sustain it is a programme of public engagement that builds a popular environmentalism, and positions climate change in its rightful place at the heart of public and political discussions about what we want the future to look like. Achieving this means at least three things.

Firstly, it means thinking creatively about how to move climate change from a scientific to a 'social' fact – and how to mobilise our collective cultural imagination. The



Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN) is currently collaborating with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) on a series of events and publications which try to push the boundaries of what climate change means, and catalyse new conversations that don't just involve the usual suspects. Climate change has been trapped in a box marked 'environmentalism', which has stifled our societal response to it. While the environment is clearly a crucial concern, climate change is relevant to every aspect of our lives – and it urgently needs to break out of the 'green ghetto'.

Our collaboration with the RSA is called the 'Seven Dimensions of Climate Change' because thinking about climate change through the lens of seven different perspectives – science, culture, law, behaviour, democracy, technology and economics – is crucial if we are to mobilise a societal response that is proportionate to the scale of the challenge. Our first event involved leading comedians trying out 'climate comedy'. Maybe laughing about something as serious as climate change is just another form of denial – but perhaps humour could activate our cultural antennae in a way that graphs, infographics and images of melting ice could never do. The science-communicators certainly don't seem to be making much progress with the public – so maybe it's time to let the comedians have a turn.

Secondly, it is crucial to build a rich and positive sense of identity and ownership around climate change that stretches across the political spectrum. This means faith groups, young people, black and minority ethnic communities, sports teams and everyone else in between. But it is no secret that scepticism about climate change is predominantly associated with the right of politics. Research consistently shows that people reject the conclusions of climate change science because it threatens their political views. Someone who believes in the shrinking of the state and the autonomy of the market is unlikely to take kindly to climate policies which prescribe greater regulation of

polluting industries and the government 'meddling' with consumer energy behaviour.

But while the right may never learn to love these ideas, they are not the only climate policies in town. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, it is in the interest of people across the political spectrum that the centre-right has a strong voice on climate change. It is far better that the debate centres on what to *do* about climate change, not whether it exists.

COIN's research has identified a number of narratives about climate change that are more likely to engage centre-right voters – from protecting our 'green and pleasant land' from the impacts of climate change, to building a 'safe and secure' climate for jobs, investment and community well-being. But it is crucial that these ideas are promoted by figures on the centre-right – not dictated by green campaigners and left-wing activists.

Thirdly, we need to develop a clear and coherent narrative about climate impacts and extreme weather in the UK. Recent survey findings from Cardiff University showed a clear positive connection between the 2013/14 winter floods and public concern about climate change. Flooded residents were twice as likely to identify climate change as one of the three most serious issues facing the country. Two thirds of respondents thought the floods were a sign that the impacts of climate change were already beginning to be felt, while an even clearer majority (72 per cent) agreed that the floods were a sign of what we should expect in the future from climate change. These findings provide important clues for campaigners, because they show that there is a widespread social consensus around the risks of increased flooding from climate change.

Scientists will never be able to tell us whether a particular weather event was conclusively 'caused by' climate change – the probabilistic link between weather and climate makes these sort of simple statements impossible.

But we don't necessarily need to have the 'is this climate change' conversation every time a flood submerges a village, or a period of drought damages crops. We know enough to say that the chance of these sorts of events occurring will increase as the earth warms up. And in the same way that politicians and campaigners routinely point to public opinion when justifying a crime or immigration policy, appealing to popular opinion on the need to take climate impacts more seriously may be an effective supplementary approach.

In some ways, it is not the 'climate impacts' themselves but their *implications* that are important for developing meaningful public narratives. When climate change is present in the stories that people use to discuss their lives, and what they expect from the future, individual climate impacts will more easily slot into them. A volatile climate means a vulnerable tourism industry. Unpredictable seasons produce unreliable harvests. Travel and food (to pick just two examples) are much easier starting points for a conversation about climate change than computer models or probability statements.

And in the same way, Paris 2015 needs to be part of a much wider narrative that joins the dots between climate change and people's lives. The lesson that campaigners cruelly learned after Copenhagen was that positioning the 2009 negotiations as the 'last chance' made it difficult to maintain momentum after the conference came and went, with no legally binding treaty to show for it. The road to Paris will not in fact end there – and campaigners must be careful not to suggest that it will.

Polls consistently show that a majority of the UK public supports the government signing an international agreement to tackle climate change: government action is always more popular than changes to individual's lifestyles. Despite this, Nick Pidgeon, Professor of Environmental Psychology at Cardiff University, has documented the

'governance trap' of climate change, whereby voters expect the government to lead, and the government think climate change is a vote loser.

The only way to overcome this double bind is for campaigners from across the political spectrum to mobilise voters to show their support for an international agreement. Bringing climate change into the mainstream is crucial for achieving this: by expanding the 'social reality' of climate change, bringing the centre-right in from the cold, and developing a story about climate impacts that is consistent and coherent, the conversation about tackling climate change can be an inclusive and powerful one.

If, as Naomi Klein argued in her recent climate change call-to-arms, we must 'change everything', then it follows that we 'need everyone' to make this happen.

### 3 | CAMPAIGN CLIMATE

Kerry McCarthy

*Securing a global climate deal will be one of the most pressing challenges facing the next government, but at the moment there is very little activism around the Paris talks. To mobilise support we could learn from Make Poverty History and establish a clearly-branded umbrella organisation, bringing together all the environmental NGOs and other interested parties, with a clear message and a clear 'ask'.*

**T**he Fabian report *Pride of Place: Land, community and a popular environmentalism* argues that most people think of the environment in terms of the place they live and the people they live there with, not carbon emissions and climate change.

As an MP in Bristol, which is currently EU Green Capital and the first UK city to be given this accolade, this rings true. Much of the Green Capital programme and funding is given over to talks, public education and awareness-raising rather than the 'big picture'. But when I am out and about talking to constituents, and indeed, to many people already involved in what could broadly be termed 'green' initiatives, they tend to be rather sceptical as to the value of such a programme. They are impatient to see a real legacy of more green spaces, more green jobs, a greener way of living: tangible improvements that can be seen on the streets and estates of Bristol. When I repeated

on local radio a simple suggestion that was put to me by UWE students and staff, that as part of Green Capital year we ought to be putting more recycling bins at bus-stops, or outside takeaways, it met with huge approval.

This bears out the results of a poll that was conducted for *Pride of Place*. Anti-social behaviour easily tops the list of environmental issues 'which are of most concern to you and your family'. Litter and dog-fouling polled as highly as climate change. To put it quite simply, people want their immediate surroundings to be better. They want unpleasantness removed from their daily lives.

*Pride of Place* argues that a truly popular environmentalism starts at home: "People need to feel they can effect change in their own backyard before they can change the world". I could point to so many projects in Bristol that are trying to do just this. St George in Bloom has filled previously dull and dusty streets with vividly-coloured hanging baskets and window boxes, and planted wild-flower meadows. The 'guerrilla gardeners' of Edible Bristol bring unloved grass verges back into use as vegetable beds. There are community food growing and distribution projects like Feed Bristol, Sims Shared Harvest and the Severn Project. At the monthly Repair Café, a voluntary project hosted in a church, people can bring broken and torn items along to be fixed by community volunteers armed with soldering irons and sewing machines. All these – and there are many more – echo what *Pride of Place* says about the importance of place and people in popular environmentalism.

I feel it's worth quoting this at some length:

*"People don't live their lives in abstract terms and as such find emissions targets difficult to care about and exhortations to make small lifestyle changes difficult to reconcile with the reported scale of the climate threat. And if people feel powerless to prevent damage to their*

*local environment that they see every day, how are they going to feel empowered to tackle complex global challenges?"*

How indeed?

A starting point would be to address this sense of powerlessness at a local level. Ruth Davis of Greenpeace and others have criticised an overly 'managerial' approach to the environment, where the conservation of land and nature has been consigned to bureaucratic 'action plans' administered by officials. This is true at both a local and national level, with the mountain of Local Plans, Core Strategies and the National Planning Policy Framework obscuring the rights of local people in impenetrable jargon, which only the most determined would attempt to decipher. We need to empower communities so that they feel the protection and preservation of their natural (and built) environment is in their hands; that they are its stewards.

Secondly, we need to connect the local with the need for national or international action. In the weeks leading up to the EU vote on whether to suspend the use of neonicotinoids – a new type of insecticide – I was inundated with emails from constituents supporting a ban. It was interesting how many of them were from keen gardeners, who were witnessing from the frontline the loss of bees – but who were doing what they could to address it, planting pollinator-friendly plants, and sourcing seeds which haven't been treated with neonicotinoid pesticides. The 'Act for Nature' campaign, run by the RSPB, Wildlife Trusts and others, has also generated a lot of support. Before Christmas I overheard many well-targeted 'elevator pitches' from constituents to their MPs in central lobby, on the overwhelming need to protect our natural environment. Again, this was about making the link between the local and the national, as was the anti-fracking campaign. Campaigns which make people think about what they consume have also proved effective,

such as Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's FishFight campaign against unsustainable fishing, or Meat Free Monday, which highlights the environmental impact of livestock production and meat consumption.

But what about the bigger picture? Securing a global climate deal in Paris in December 2015 will be one of the most pressing and immediate challenges facing the next government. Ed Miliband has said that tackling climate change will be "one of the highest priorities in the government I lead" and has appointed John Prescott, the UK representative at the Kyoto talks, as his climate change adviser.

But at the moment there is very little activism around the Paris talks. This is despite the so-called 'Green Surge'. The last Green Surge, which peaked with its 15 per cent of the vote in the 1989 European elections, was clearly linked to a public awakening about environmental threats, from ozone layer depletion and acid rain, to climate change and rainforest destruction, and fuelled by lots of media coverage. And politicians sat up and listened. Margaret Thatcher even gave a landmark speech to the UN in November of that year. At the time, Jonathon Porritt, then head of Friends of the Earth, said: "It wasn't until Mrs Thatcher went into her short-lived green period that things really took off (for the green movement). Before Mrs Thatcher started to talk about the ozone layer and climate change, lots of people said: 'These green issues are just for weirdos treehugging. But if Mrs Thatcher's saying something like that – there must be something in it'."

But this time round it doesn't seem that the revival in the Green party's fortunes has been accompanied by any real resurgence of interest in environmental issues amongst the voting public. Recent research by James Dennison of the LSE found that of those intending to vote Green on 7 May only 12 per cent cited the environment as the most important issue (although this is some way ahead of the rest of the electorate, on only 2 per cent). Labour activists will tell



you that austerity, rail renationalisation and the minimum wage are far more likely to be raised by potential Green voters on the doorstep.

So while the renewed interest in the Greens might tempt the main parties to put forward a stronger environmental offer – although I don't think Ed Miliband needs any persuasion on that front – it doesn't mean the environment will be a key election battleground.

So how can we raise awareness and engagement? Or, to pose a different question for starters: does it actually matter whether the public is fully engaged? This depends partly on what we expect from the UK in the months between now and the Paris talks. Green Alliance recently brokered support from all three main party leaders – Cameron, Miliband and Clegg – that they would seek “a fair, strong, legally binding” deal in December. So, if they're all already signed up, do we need to keep up the pressure?

Yes, we do – and we want the UK to take a strong leadership role on the international stage. We could be key influencers within the EU, within the Commonwealth and in our bilateral relationships with countries such as China and the USA. Our pivotal role within the Commonwealth networks of nations could be particularly useful, as it includes some of the countries most negatively affected by climate change, such as the Maldives and Bangladesh. It also includes one of the most significant countries when it comes to achieving a strong deal, India; and, in Canada and Australia, two countries which have proved reluctant in recent years to come to the negotiating table.

And the groundwork on this must start now – or, at least, as soon as a new government is formed. We do not want to see a repeat of what happened in Copenhagen in 2009.

At the time John Sauven, executive director of Greenpeace UK, said: “The city of Copenhagen is a crime scene tonight, with the guilty men and women fleeing to the airport. Ed Miliband [the then UK climate change

secretary] is among the very few that come out of this summit with any credit. It is now evident that beating global warming will require a radically different model of politics than the one on display here in Copenhagen.”

On this, the signs are already more promising, with good progress being made on some fronts at the Lima talks and in other discussions.

So reigniting a spark of popular environmentalism that focuses on the bigger picture could be important. But how do we do this when the reality of the negotiations is so dry? Urging people to ask their MPs to ‘Vote for Bob’, as a recent RSPB nature campaign did, is relatively easy (Bob being a red squirrel). But when Ed Miliband promises, as he did in a speech in January, that a Labour government would push “for global targets for reducing carbon emissions that rise every five years with regular reviews towards the long-term goal of what the science now tells us is necessary – zero net global emissions in the latter half of this century,” how do you turn this into a popular campaign?

The complexity of the process doesn’t help: it is as much reliant on other agreements outside the Paris structure, and the fact that it is extremely difficult for the USA to ratify treaties, as it requires a two-thirds majority in the Senate, makes a legally binding agreement less attainable. But it is not impossible. Organisations such as Avaaz have shown it is possible to mobilise people across the world to assert international pressure. For example, they urged people to ‘make Hollande a Hero’ to increase his level of ambition for the talks he’s hosting or to lobby big investors and pension funds to divest from fossil fuels. Other potential pressure points could be Cameron’s refusal to set a 2030 decarbonisation target, or the sluggishness with which some countries are pledging support for the UN Global Climate Fund.

One recommendation I would make is that the campaign, as with the highly-successful Make Poverty History,

needs a clear identity: a clearly-branded umbrella organisation bringing together all the environmental NGOs and other interested parties, with a clear message and a clear 'ask'. This could be done under the auspices of existing groupings but possibly needs a new banner so that people feel they are signing up to something that is very much of the moment, and carries a sense of urgency about it. It needs to know who its targets are in terms of lobbying, and what the most ambitious but realistic outcome is that could be achieved in Paris. Then, I think, we will be able to mobilise the support which we know is already out there.



## 4 | UNDERSTANDING 'SUCCESS' IN PARIS

Nick Mabey

*Paris will not give us an unambiguous victory in the fight to avoid uncontrollable climate change. The challenge for the climate movement is to take the progress available and use it to push for more action, rather than split into mutual recriminations and cries of failure.*

**T**he battle has already begun to define success at the Paris climate talks in December 2015. Official expectation management is live, particularly in Paris and Washington where political leaders have domestic legacies to defend.

They are right to be concerned. Paris will not give us an unambiguous victory in the fight to avoid uncontrollable climate change. Governments fear an imperfect deal will lead to a public perception of failure.

The question for those concerned with preventing catastrophic climate change is whether the imperfect deal we will get in Paris will be a deal worth having. Or, as some environmentalists fear, it will end up legitimising high levels of greenhouse gas pollution and insufficient climate aid to vulnerable countries for the next 15 years.

This is a classic 'progressive's dilemma', like so many at the heart of Fabian discussions since its foundation. Climate politics may lack the clarity of debates between

Leninist revolutionaries and democratic socialists in the early 20th century, but the sustainability problems of the 21st raise their own political fights about how best to drive necessary change.

So how should we define success in Paris? Is it technical matter of adding up the giga-tonnes of greenhouse gas abatement promised and seeing how close they are to an 'optimal' 2°C pathway? How small a gap is close enough? Or does it depend on how much money the rich world promises to give poor countries and poor people to respond to unavoidable climate impacts?

This is not an issue of diplomatic management, communication tactics or spin. The responses to the Paris outcome will not just determine the future of the UN climate regime but have a huge impact on the viability of all multilateral solutions in an increasingly multi-polar world.

The outcome of Paris negotiations cannot be judged away from the broader economic and political context. This is, overall, a good news story: the world has moved on from Copenhagen, and the Paris negotiations have a following wind.

Agreement between countries in Paris is not assured but seems likely. But a deal in the negotiating room does not equal success. The true outcome of Paris will be seen in how it shapes national political debates over energy policies, boardroom debates over investment in fossil fuels and new energy infrastructure, and citizen debates over whether politicians are taking the climate threat seriously.

These conversations will not dwell on legal details but on broad brush perceptions. Have countries agreed to limit risks from climate change? Have all major polluters joined? Can we tell if they deliver on their promises? Is progress towards a low carbon economy irreversible?

The answer to all these questions can be yes, but only if with the strongest outcome possible in Paris. There is still

a lot of work to do to deliver such an outcome, but it is a practical outcome.

What is not possible is that Paris will definitively put the world on a path to staying below 2°C or to eliminating fossil fuel use. Paris is not the cup final for the climate, and if it is defined as such it can only be seen as a failure.

The best deal available in Paris will keep 2°C as a possibility and force countries to come back to consider further greenhouse gas cuts in 2019/20. That is why it must be a red line that Paris cannot permanently lock countries into their current 2030 emission reduction goals, which is the current position of India and China.

The reason there will not be a 'slam dunk' 2°C agreement in Paris is not because the UN process is flawed, or because of a plot by multinational companies, or even because developed countries should contribute more money. The reason is much simpler than that. We will not get a 2°C agreement in Paris because the major emitting countries do not yet think this is their national interest.

All countries may have agreed in 2010 that keeping global temperature rises to (at least) below 2°C was the threshold for avoiding 'dangerous' climate change; the official objective of the UN Climate Change Convention. In international law this legally obliges them to act to deliver this outcome, but international politics rarely follows such neat logic.

The reality is that few countries have even had a national political debate on how much climate risk they are prepared to take. The poisonous climate change politics of the US means advocates of climate action have been focused on winning any action on mitigation. Until recently they have left the longer term to look after itself. Chinese leaders have traditionally been unwilling to move faster than the US, fearing that this would lead to other geopolitical burdens. But China mainly fears that it cannot redirect the juggernaut of its coal-driven economy

fast enough to reach a 2°C trajectory at the same time as 250 million people move from the countryside to become energy-hungry urban consumers.

Even the European Union has faltered in its ambition. Held back by Polish coal interests, a lack of economic confidence and distraction from the Ukraine crisis, the EU failed to agree to stay on the least cost trajectory to phasing out fossil fuels by 2050. This not only reduces the EU's leverage in climate diplomacy, but means European consumers paying to build fossil fuel infrastructure which will end up being economically 'stranded'.

The shortcomings of a Paris deal will faithfully reflect the deficiencies of national climate politics in the major countries. These politics will change over the next 5 years, just as they have changed since Copenhagen.

There is still time to move the world into a safer emissions trajectory. As countries deploy low carbon technology, and perceptions of climate change risks increase, so will the political will to act. Based on preliminary 2014 figures, China may have already peaked its coal use. But it will be several years before the government will feel confident enough in this trend to factor it into their international obligations.

The predictable shortcomings of even the best Paris outcome have seen the drum beat of progressive in-fighting start-up. Accusations of appeasement to the establishment and the naivety of backing a UN process have begun on op-ed pages and in the Twitter-sphere. On one side the argument is that neoliberal carbon profiteers will never let their profits be removed through the rule of law. Only people power and popular anger to destroy 'capitalism' will protect us. The other side points to the successes already made and councils for the slow grind of legislative process. The climate movement threatens to split into its own versions of classic 'incremental' and 'revolutionary' factions.



Such a split would be a political disaster which would hand victory to the true enemies of climate action. It would result from a misreading of the success and the weakness of the current broad coalition for strong climate action. It would undermine the UN Climate process, which would have huge consequences for broader multi-lateral progress on democracy, international rules, human rights and security.

As usual in such debates both sides hold a measure of the truth. The critics of current levels of progress are right that the politics of climate change are embedded in broader fights over power, ideology and geopolitics. They are right that the mainstream environmental movement often ignores this fact, and are more comfortable in the abstract worlds of science and policy than engaging with the grit and mess of power politics.

Tackling climate change is an issue of power, but that does not translate to a fight with all businesses. It is a battle with the type of extreme neoliberal ideology that brooks no government interference in the economy. Climate change at its heart is a fight to assert the public interest in shaping the economy over vested interests.

Limiting climate risk requires shifting \$90tn of infrastructure investment over the next 15 years from high carbon to low carbon, efficient and resilient investment. Put another way, it requires the coordinated reconfiguration of the global energy economy during the fastest period of urbanisation ever seen. This process will destroy the value of many existing assets, not least for owners of coal and oil reserves. The new value created by these changes will be spread thinly over billions of consumers and millions of new businesses.

This is why a 'people power' strategy directed at divestment from private fossil fuel assets is a great tactic but a poor strategy to keep temperatures below 2°C. Over 80 per cent of fossil assets are held by states or state-owned

companies and are immune to private shareholder decisions. A strategy aimed at private business does not help drive the fundamental economic reforms needed to build the zero carbon economy.

The truth is that apart from ideologically inspired exceptions – like the Koch Brothers in the US – companies mainly follow the leadership of politicians not visa-versa. Strong states and weak laws is the real cause of climate failure. Attacking multinationals en masse is a distraction and drives possible allies into alliances with high carbon interests. Corporate activism must be a scalpel not a blunderbuss and be part of a political strategy that challenges government behaviour in cooperation with progressive businesses and investors.

China, India, US or Poland cannot be forced to decarbonise fast enough to meet the 2°C goal. There is no hard power solution to climate change. These countries have to see stronger action on climate change as being in their best interests; despite all the risks and political dangers real action will pose in their domestic politics.

The only way to win the national politics of limiting climate risk is through a credible international agreement. Without the reassurance that others are acting to reduce global climate risk, countries will always shy away from taking firm action. This doesn't mean nothing will happen, but without international agreement the likelihood of crossing catastrophic climate system tipping points becomes extremely high.

The counter argument from many climate activists is that their time is better spent fighting real national political battles than arguing for a global climate treaty. They are right. A global climate treaty is necessary but not sufficient to deliver 2°C. The real politics need to emerge from national debates but cannot be delinked from the global context.

Often the best way to analyse what's at stake in a political debates is to examine what the opposition is saying.

The far-right ideologues and corporate fossil interests that want to stop all climate action have a clear strategy. They want failure in Paris to be part of their narrative shift from climate denial to climate despair.

This narrative is evident in the US Republican response to Obama's unexpected 2014 US-China climate deal. After a few days of confusion, their line was angry despair: Obama was naive; the Chinese would never deliver their promises; and, anyway we could never tell if they did because they would lie. Obama had given China a free pass to pollute to 2030 while the US unilaterally disarmed its coal power sector.

This will be the line anti-climate forces take after Paris whatever the outcome. Whether motivated by greed, ideology or geopolitics they all have an interest in promoting despair. They will argue that the 2°C target is now out of reach and it should be dropped in favour of a more 'realistic' outcome.

The anti-climate action forces are aligned because they are losing and in the minority. They know that the forces moving towards phasing out fossil fuel use are winning, even if progress is currently too slow to limit climate risk below 2°C. They need Paris to be a failure because the underlying pressure driving greater climate action will only get stronger.

This is why those advocating for climate action cannot call the imperfect outcome of Paris a failure. If voices from both extremes in the debate call failure, the centre ground will be hard to hold.

Those who want climate action must get as much as possible out of Paris and critically make sure it does not lock us in to a high risk future. That also means calling an imperfect deal a success and defending it against the defeatists.

Paris is not the end point and it is critical to keep focused on driving the debate the day after Paris. A debate

is needed in all countries about the consequences of the Paris outcome for their citizens. The chance to finally start a public debate over how much climate risk we want to take as societies, and to mobilise new and broader coalitions for action.

Progressive and radical politics has often seemed to be at its most comfortable when it is losing. In climate change a radical political idea is winning but it has not yet won. There are few things more truly radical than eliminating the whole fossil-based energy system underpinning modern life in two generations. But surprisingly there is a growing mainstream consensus that this must be done.

Paris is a challenge for the maturity of the climate movement. Will it take the progress available and use the political energy generated to push for more action? Will it build a 'popular front' that combines parliamentary, business and protest action? Or will it split into mutual recriminations and cries of failure, allowing the opposition to sow despair. Managing (partial) success and wielding (constrained) power is part of taking responsibility for change rather than asking others to take responsibility. The response to Paris will show whether the climate movement has finally come to terms with its own power to shape the world.

## 5 | CAN EUROPE LEAD THE WAY?

Charlotte Billingham

*To a large extent, Europe sets the tone on climate policy. Yet despite some promising signs of European leadership, the political context in Europe is a challenging one. In the face of growing disenchantment with political institutions, the EU can build solidarity with a credible plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which puts people at its heart.*

**T**he European Union has a reputation for leadership on climate change, and has demonstrated this in the past with strong co-operation and purposeful legislation. However, back in 2009 at the summit in Copenhagen, Europe was left on the sidelines, whilst the US and China negotiated a final deal. Since that moment, European leadership on environment and climate policies has been questioned, but it is crucial that the EU gets back on the front foot.

To a large extent, the rest of the world is waiting to see what will happen in Europe on climate policy, as it still sets the tone as to how much the other developed countries will pledge in their actions or financially. This is particularly the case with US elections looming next autumn, further constraining their position. Canada is another significant country concerning the international climate agreement with elections due this autumn. In the face of political uncertainty elsewhere, Europe's role is even more important.

It is reassuring to see, therefore, that the last nine months have witnessed increased debate on energy and climate issues, and the EU has also introduced several policies which directly address climate action. In July, the European Commission revised its position on energy efficiency, agreeing headline targets and a framework for 2030 in October. While many felt that the targets could have been much more ambitious in seeking to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, it does show nevertheless that even with their huge differences, the 28 countries can co-operate in this area. Moreover, it is the only climate deal of its kind, where so many member states can come together and agree on a common policy. This is a positive step.

Further to this, the Energy Union strategy was announced at the end of February, which brings a much wider social aspect to Europe's climate and energy policies for the coming decades. The Energy Union document recognises the need for more solidarity, social dialogue and a 'just transition'. It aims to put energy efficiency and renewables as top priorities, as well as increase interconnection between energy markets, increase environmental sustainability and spur on growth in green job sectors.

But the main urgent issue is reform of the Emissions Trading Scheme. This was the world's first carbon market trading scheme for reducing emissions, and it was designed to be the most cost-effective means of cutting greenhouse gases through an efficient, market-based, and harmonised pan-European approach. Similar carbon trading schemes are now proliferating across many other parts of the world, including the US and China, where policymakers have drawn on Europe's leadership and experience. However, the low price of carbon allowances has instead oversupplied the market, resulting in a large increase in coal use in Europe. The planned introduction of the 'market stability reserve' aims to create greater price stability, but unless implementation is fast-tracked

it would not come into effect until 2021. The sooner this is done the sooner wider reforms can begin to take place, with many stakeholders pushing for it to start in 2016. For Europe to have a credible climate policy, the Emissions Trading Scheme needs to be at the core of it. The EU needs to prove to the international arena that these reforms are being carried out.<sup>1</sup>

The EU has set out its ambitions in its 'Road to Paris' communication, which calls on all members to cut global emissions by 60 per cent of 2010 levels by 2050. In addition, the Commission investment package pledging €315bn in the next three years should also see a lot of financial resources going towards energy, climate and environmental policies. The results of this investment need to be demonstrated across the local regions, so people can see for themselves what is being done, which could empower them to take further action themselves.

Yet despite promising signs of European leadership, the political context in Europe is a challenging one. There is growing discontent across Europe. Mainstream political parties are losing voters rapidly to populist and extremist parties in nearly all member states. The results at the European elections last May highlighted this, with a steep increase in the number of non (politically) -affiliated MEPs and those in the eurosceptic Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group, whereas the Greens saw a drop. In general, these smaller 'fringe' parties tend to influence the political agenda of the mainstream parties. So a shift to the right makes it harder for the mainstream centre-left Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group to build strong alliances with other parties on the left on climate issues.

On a positive note, in a report analysing the six months of the new European Parliament since the elections, VoteWatch Europe revealed that "the fringe groups, in spite of their increased strength in numbers, have not been able to impose their own views in key European

Parliament decisions so far.” It goes on to say, however, that their presence in greater numbers seems to be forcing the centre-right European People’s Party and the S&D to dilute their differences. This will make it increasingly difficult for citizens to identify mainstream parties’ agendas and relate to them, which poses a problem to transparency and may result in even further support for radical views. The fringe groups, instead, use other tools to create a disproportionate visibility, such as parliamentary questions and oral and written statements. Submitting statements and parliamentary questions can be done by individual members alone in an unlimited manner, which allows the member the ability to put political pressure on the institutions, particularly if these statements are well-communicated to the public.

Having the selection process for the top candidate for the European Commission ahead of the European elections has helped give more political credibility to the European Commission and its President. There is now a feeling that Jean-Claude Juncker has earned the political mandate to lead the Commission. Previous Commissioner Presidents didn’t enjoy this feeling to the full extent, even José Manuel Barroso. This has enabled him to some extent to be bold in his decisions and proposals. This was seen in the way the structure of the Commission was changed, now with seven Vice-Presidents and reorganised responsibilities.

Since 2009, rhetoric and focus has shifted in Europe towards energy issues. Before, climate was the main issue; the economic crisis has somewhat changed that. Many environmentalists fear that climate and the environment have been pushed aside by energy and that this may lead to a stronger influence from corporations supporting fossil fuel energy sources rather than small ill-resourced NGOs. The Commission must be bold and show strong leadership to ensure the fossil fuel lobby doesn’t crowd renewables out of the debate in this crucial year.



In public opinion polls, when asked their main concerns, the environment, climate and energy issues tend to rate low, with housing and immigration currently at the top of people's lists. Nevertheless, close to three quarters of EU citizens are in favour of a common EU energy policy according to the latest Eurobarometer survey in December 2014. FEPS is currently carrying out a project looking at how young people vote, called the Millennial Dialogue. Within the results found so far from the surveys it is interesting to know that, whilst millennials in Germany were also likely to think that the economy was going to be important, the factor that they were more concerned with was 'the state of the environment'.

These factors demonstrate that we, as progressives, should go much further in our thinking on the economic model, especially if we are going to continue to attract young voters. It is becoming more apparent that we need to change our growth patterns to seriously take into consideration its effects on climate. Following the financial crisis of 2008, economic alternatives are on the table, which FEPS, along with others, have been developing. Even before the crisis, concepts such as the green new deal, circular economy and green economy were showing that a different economic model is possible. Indeed our addiction to fossil fuels and inability to resist corporate influence is having disastrous effects on our societies. That is why the role of trade unions in building public alliances is important. If we are to have a 'just transition', social dialogue is key. Indeed any move towards green jobs and changing our industrial sector requires re-skilling workers who would otherwise lose out.

Trade unions are lobbying very effectively at national and European levels, although when it comes to protecting workers' rights and a green transition, they give mixed messages. Without doubt, they have made important strides in coining the term 'just transition'. However,

because they often protect workers in heavy industry, chemical and fossil fuel sectors, they can sometimes be found sitting on the wrong side of the fence when it comes to discussing how to achieve a low-carbon future, appearing uncertain of how to fully embrace a green transition. Mainstream parties need to fully engage with trade unions in helping them lead this debate on behalf of the workers.

As the European Coal and Steel Community, the EU was originally built on pooling together energy resources, but not many people today would see the union as one of co-operation and solidarity. Instead the EU we have today is a capitalist EU, as many Greeks are shouting on the streets. Unfortunately we still have a long way to go towards building a more 'social Europe': one that protects citizens' rights, embellishes a welfare state and encourages social mobility. Addressing poverty and fairness for example, combatting fuel poverty through energy savings measures is an agenda that can go much further at EU level and hopefully it will with the latest set of measures.

However, support from the member states is also needed. Research from 'the climate change and political parties' project shows that mainstream parties have failed to prioritise acting seriously on climate change, and these issues only seem to arise when there is an international agreement coming up. In addition, hostility to EU policies risks jeopardising co-operation towards a sustainable transition. In order to overcome the period of disenchantment for politics and the European Union, a new agenda for solidarity can be promoted. The discussions surrounding our energy and climate change policies is also a good space for rebuilding the case for a strong European Union too and helping member states come together more.

There is a lot of discussion on what format the Paris agreement will take, if it will be legally-binding or not, if all parties will be able to adhere to it. Or will it be more simply an agreement of trust and promise that encourages, enables

and promotes action to reaching the target of keeping global temperature rises to 2°C. Whatever the shape of the agreement, the main thing it needs to ensure is that people are at the core of its agenda. A credible plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions needs to be participatory and have elements of sharing if it is to be accepted and promoted by the people on the ground. This goes for the EU member states and for other countries around the world.

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### Endnotes

- 1 See FEPS publication *Energy Union: New Energy for the EU* for more on this



## 6 | INEQUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Marc Brightman

*It is all too easy for the public to switch off from the threat of climate change. Politicians can engage people by embracing environmentalism as a political issue, and arguing that economic inequality and climate change are connected through the politics of sustainability.*

**I**n 1935, when the air was clogged in Washington DC by the topsoil that had been blown there from the dust-bowl, legislators immediately took drastic action. However dramatic the destructive effects of large scale agriculture in the interwar period in the Midwest USA, they were less serious than those we face as a result of global climate change. But for many people living in rich nations today, the effects are invisible. Not so for the inhabitants of Pacific islands that will soon be submerged by rising oceans, as the tears of the Filipino negotiator at a UN climate meeting in 2012 made clear. Still our leaders do not act.

Do we have to experience a phenomenon first hand to be able to engage with it? Public perceptions of the threat of terrorism suggest that we do not. The participants in mass protests around the world following the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* were overwhelmingly people who had not only been nowhere near Paris when the event occurred, but who had also never read, nor even perhaps heard of

the publication. The threat of Soviet nuclear attack during the cold war years also mobilised mass consensus. Some research suggests that voters are more likely to be worried about immigration if they live in rural areas which are almost entirely unaffected, than are those who live in parts of the city with large immigrant populations. These things suggest that it is neither necessarily the presence of a problem in people's everyday lives, nor its perceived scale, that determines whether people are worried about it.

Research on the origins of religion suggests that humans have a cognitive disposition to attributing agency to anthropomorphic entities; we imagine gods, in other words, as magnified projections of human capabilities. More than this, we see them as chimera: as agents with the capacity for thought and action that we recognise in a human face, but with the powers of other animals, or of phenomena such as wind, thunder or waves. In a similar way, the Soviet threat, terrorism, or migrants in the xenophobic imagination, represent personified fears – personified in the images of foreign leaders, dark-clad warriors, or ragged boat people.

The high priests of climate change – the scientists who form the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – tell us that the phenomenon of global warming is caused by a more diffuse agency, one that it seems impossible to put a face to. It is caused by a techno-industrial complex (energy production, agriculture, transport, deforestation) which represents and embodies an entire way of life that has put down deep roots since the industrial revolution. When someone tries to put a face to climate change – whether it be a politician such as Dick Cheney or the CEOs of polluting corporations such as Chevron – the 'face' quickly denies responsibility. They can easily do this if only by relativising their contribution, although pretending the phenomenon is of limited importance, or that it does not exist at all, is a more common response.

It is even worse when we try to acknowledge that it is we ourselves, as consumers, who are responsible for this vast problem. Not only is it hard to associate our own petty actions with a looming disaster of dimensions greater than mushroom clouds or collapsing office blocks. It comes naturally to fear an enemy, but fear of ourselves is unlikely to become a powerful motivator for action. This is all the more problematic when the only remotely coherent message comes from scientists themselves, who are not professional communicators. The combination of deep specialism and multidisciplinary perspectives that makes up the broad scientific consensus on climate change is open to manipulation and distortion from actors who have other interests at stake. For this reason, the airing of scientists' dirty laundry when emails were leaked from the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit in 2009 was whipped up into a public scandal that has gone down in history as 'climategate'. The exposure of the myth of the purity and certainty of scientific knowledge, through the spectacle of the social and sometimes political interactions through which knowledge is produced, led some eager commentators to conclude that where there is uncertainty, there is doubt, and where there is doubt, we should disbelieve.

It is all too easy for populists to ignore the fact that belief is only meaningful in the presence of some doubt, and that decisions must always be taken in the presence of a degree of uncertainty. So climate change is unquestionably a political issue, whether we are concerned with the imminence of the threat, or of the actions to take. So when our main political leaders in the UK signed a pledge earlier this year to take action on climate change, what were they doing? Were they de-politicising the issue in order to make it technical, to close the door to political objections to practical solutions? The emphasis on green growth and natural capital as pillars of the ecological transition would suggest

that this may be the case. Were they trying to slow the rise of the Green party, which is polling level with its counterpart engine of dissent on the right, UKIP, by forestalling election debates on the environment?

It is hard to imagine the three parties coming together in the same way on the question of inequality, which is a problem that people engage with perhaps more than climate change, or environmental problems more generally. Yet there may be advantages to trying to focus on how problems of inequality are connected to environmental problems. Consumption is unequal, and excessive consumption leads to waste and depletion, which is an environmental problem. It is poorer communities that are more vulnerable to the effects of pollution. The more ways we find for privatising nature, the less it will be accessible to those without the means. The privatisation of woodlands, for example, seems to be an environmental problem, but it won't necessarily lead to their destruction – it will more likely lead to ordinary people having to pay to access them. The aesthetic and health benefits of nature will become open only to those who are better off.

But there are similar limits to people's engagement with the problem of inequality and the problem of environmental degradation. Our horizons are limited. Our material conditions become degraded, but after a year or two we become habituated to our new surroundings – they become the new normal. Just as survivors of natural disasters can be no more likely than other people to be worried about climate change or the possibility of further disasters, the poorest in society are not campaigning for progressive taxation policies.

As NASA's photographs of the earth at night show, the world's geographical centres of capital accumulation are also the centres of energy usage, and it is to these places that the world's material resources tend to gravitate. This is all the more significant since unsustainable resources, such



as fossil fuels, overtook solar energy in the production of food: today only a tenth of the calories in our food comes from the sun. To a significant extent, the world's environmental problems are problems of distribution rather than problems of destruction or depletion.

Politicians find it difficult to make arguments about redistribution. They also find it difficult to contemplate the idea of 'degrowth' – reducing consumption but increasing wellbeing – preferring the 'win-win' formula of 'green growth'. But as the economist Thomas Piketty has shown, the benefits of growth mostly go to the owners of capital, who are a small minority in society. The historical exceptions to this have been the two world wars of the last century. These were great levellers for a variety of reasons which include the urgent mobilisation of political power for the good of whole nations, not merely for the wealthy.

The challenge for politics today is to mobilise the vast capital wealth that is controlled by a minority of citizens for the common good. If we cannot vote for this kind of change, then we are our own worst enemies. But voters need to be inspired by good leaders. What a significant part of the electorate may be looking for is the vision and courage that would be demonstrated by embracing environmentalism as a political issue, and arguing that economic inequality and climate change are connected through the politics of sustainability.



## 7 | INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Therese Kieve

*A clear agreement in Paris can provide a strong signal that the world is serious about creating a low carbon economy and that will help harness investment. Pension funds have nearly £3tn tied up in them; how they invest is crucial for the health of our economy, communities and environment.*

2015 is a key year for climate policy. December's UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December will hope to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate from all the nations of the world. A global agreement is necessary to allow countries to introduce stronger policies to cut emissions without risking impacts on their ability to compete internationally. But it would also provide a clear signal to business that the world is serious about creating a low carbon economy and help harness investment.

Business needs certainty in order to make investments. The longevity of infrastructure projects such as power stations can mean investments made now are locked in for the next 40 years. Therefore, policy decisions leading to longer-term certainty will aid the flow of funds into an efficient and clean energy infrastructure that will be essential for a transition to a low carbon economy. Crucial to this are our pensions. Pension funds have nearly £3tn tied up in them and the investment decisions they make on our

behalf are crucial for the health of our economy, communities and environment.

Long-term institutional investors have enormous potential to act as providers of capital, to lead to low-carbon prosperity and to promote sustainable wealth creation. But our investment markets are dysfunctional and failing in their core purpose of allocating capital effectively. This is partly driven by the lack of clear guidelines and incentives for large investors to act in the best interest of savers whose money they manage. In particular, the investment system routinely overlooks the challenge of environmental sustainability and social inequality, although both have profound implications not just for long-term investment returns but for the future wellbeing of today's pension savers.

Historically, pension savers have not been proactive in asking for these sorts of issues to be considered, but this is changing. A recent YouGov / UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association survey found that 53 per cent of the public want pension funds to engage with companies to ensure they pay their fair share of taxes and 48 per cent want pension funds to ensure that executive pay and bonuses are not excessive.

All pension savers should realise that we have a strong voice in decision making and can really play a part in the process. For example, ShareAction recommends that simply emailing your pension fund directly can bring these issues to the forefront. Pension funds and asset managers can then engage with policymakers and companies to drive change in social and environmental areas. Additionally pension funds should challenge the companies they invest in who lobby for no action to be taken on climate change.

While directors of large companies are aware of the growing risks to business performance posed by environmental issues, corporate action to address these risks is constrained by an investment system that overwhelmingly

values short-term thinking and returns. Although climate change is perhaps the gravest environmental issue to tackle, other environmental impacts of production and consumption of goods have also been overlooked in investment funds, such as water scarcity, ocean acidification and loss of biodiversity.

To reduce uncertainty for business and investors, climate policies should be clear and effective to enable action in the short and long term. A key issue that would benefit from clear policies is the risk of 'stranded assets', which result from the over-valuation of fossil fuel reserves when binding targets are put in place to limit climate change. If a significant portion of these reserves cannot be extracted or extraction becomes commercially unviable, that reduces the valuation of these companies and their ability to repay their debt.

Across the EU, financial institutions and government holdings are exposed to this risk. A recent report by the Green European Foundation has estimated that total exposures exceed €1tn, consisting of €260–330bn for EU pension funds, €460–480bn for banks and €300–400bn for insurance companies. This only serves to highlight the substantial losses that could occur if these assets become stranded.

In the UK, there are signs that these types of risks are being brought to the attention of financial institutions. Insurance companies, as long-term investors, are exposed to climate risk in their own investments. Recently the Bank of England warned insurance companies that huge volumes of fossil fuel reserves could be left 'stranded' if strong targets were agreed to limit the carbon emissions that cause climate change. Paul Fisher, the deputy head of the Bank's Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), told an insurance industry conference that insurance companies could suffer a "huge hit" to their investment portfolios if meaningful action is taken to combat climate change. This would occur because "a huge portion of oil, gas and coal

companies' reserves would need to stay in the ground, dramatically reducing their share prices and, in turn, hitting investors such as insurance firms."

There are a number of ways investors might seek to manage the issue of stranded assets: engagement with fossil fuel companies; reducing the proportion of the invested portfolio that includes high carbon investments; investing in renewables and other low carbon investments instead; complete divestment. Ultimately it's about acting early by employing long-term active investment strategies instead of relying on passive strategies that result in little control over specific investments. Clear investment mandates that include long-term objectives and requirements related to these issues can make a significant difference.

Beyond the risk of stranded assets, climate change risks can affect the sustainability of businesses directly. In 2014, the Bank of England contacted dozens of insurance companies to assess the risk that climate change poses to their solvency and earnings. This related specifically to the impact of ever more frequent extreme weather events and related catastrophes on the sustainability of the insurance businesses. The Bank of England is working on compiling a Climate Change Adaptation Report, which will analyse these risks due to be published later this year. It is hoped that the report would provide further insight and guidance.

Effective climate agreements can also boost investment into initiatives that focus on climate solutions such as technologies that harness renewable energy, increase efficiency and reduce waste. However, a large shift of capital is needed to fill the gap in green investment. Pension funds can play a substantial role in this space. For example, pension fund trustees can initiate discussions with their fund managers to understand if there are any products or funds in their portfolio which allow exposure to low carbon investments. This would demonstrate demand for these types of investments.

Businesses are beginning to see opportunities in the low carbon transition. Markets in low carbon goods and services now amount to £3.4tn and have outperformed the mainstream economy since the onset of the financial crisis, according to Green Alliance research. The cost of renewable energy continues to fall significantly. A recent report released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has revealed that the cost of generating power from renewable energy sources has reached parity or dropped below the cost of fossil fuels for many technologies in many parts of the world. Specific projects such as the REDD+ initiative – which strives to reduce greenhouse gases and protect forests in developing countries – can benefit from a strong framework. In terms of financing such initiatives, institutional investors can play a key role. A clear agreement in Paris can provide the opportunity to reward such low carbon investment.

The 2014 GLOBE Climate Legislation Study revealed that 66 countries, representing around 88 per cent of global emissions now have climate legislation in place. Almost 500 climate laws have been passed and it is developing countries and emerging markets that are advancing climate change laws and regulation at the fastest pace.

In February 2015, the European Commission set out the EU's vision for the new global climate change agreement due to be adopted in Paris. While the EU's early announcement is promising, many observers have questioned its ambition. Some feel that there are still too many loopholes and ambiguities for the EU proposal to be effective. As the rest of the nations reveal their proposals in the coming months, the prospects for a strong agreement should become clearer.

An estimated 9 million more people in the UK will be saving through pension funds over the coming years as the government's auto-enrolment programme is rolled out across workplaces in the UK. Pension funds should speak

up for their savers and call for strong and concerted action from local, regional and international policy makers. Surely a low carbon future where security in retirement, environmental stability and global job creation go hand in hand is not too much to ask for.



## CONCLUSION

G rard Fuchs

**W**ith the Paris climate change conference coming into view, hopes are high, but so are the dangers. What can be said, and more importantly, what can be done, for this conference to be a major step in the long fight against climate change?

Undoubtedly, there are reasons to be positive. The first one is that the knowledge and analysis of climate change has made significant progress. Wondering whether global warming was of astronomic or solar origin rather than anthropic was once a legitimate scientific question. But only a tiny minority now dispute that it is our present model of development that is responsible for releasing millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the main source of global warming. Another positive element is that almost every individual involved in the climate change negotiations looks back at the Copenhagen conference of 2009 and says: "Never again!". Lastly, a number of important studies – and in particular the well-known 'New Climate Economy' report led by Felipe Calderon and Nicholas Stern – clearly indicate that the later we react to global warming, the higher will be the price to be paid for its consequences.

These positive elements will be very important, but probably not sufficient to build a glorious future. In this respect, I would like to emphasise three key points.

First, when one looks at the climate change conference held in Lima last December, it is tempting to consider that things are moving in the right direction. Indeed, the conference ended up with a decision adopted by all. But let's take the example of the 'national contributions' that each country must submit, to illustrate that the reality is much more complex. A proposal had been put on the table that these contributions should be ready before the summer 2015. This would have left time to add up all the national targets and to assess the gap between these and a possible trajectory to keep global warming below 2°C. It would also have made it possible to ask all countries to present better proposals, in an auction mechanism. But instead, the end of September has been adopted as the deadline for submitting these national contributions, which leaves no time for such a mechanism to be implemented.

This is a great pity. In the absence of an auction mechanism, we should adopt the proposal of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, chaired by the American economist Jeffrey Sachs. This states that all national contributions should include a "national deep decarbonisation path" looking at a 2070 horizon, in addition to the shorter-term targets. This would help the national governments and, most importantly, the general public and civil society, to consider long-term objectives, without which no present actions can be ambitious enough.

This leads us to a second point, which is the discussion of a future model of development. It is obvious today that developed countries have to decarbonise their economy. It is also clear that developing countries have to take a different path to the one that has been followed by industrialised countries. And this is where we come back to the issue of public opinion. Presently, the main concern in developed countries is unemployment: if people don't have jobs – or for the young, the prospect of having one – there is no chance for politicians or scientists to be heard

when they talk about climate change. There is no chance unless the discourse includes the idea that the fight against global warming will lead to the creation of new jobs, by conceiving and constructing new products and skills that correspond to new energy sources and new ways of life.

In parallel, in many developing countries, the main issue is the fight against poverty. A big idea like fighting climate change doesn't make sense if you still have to fight for your food, housing or health – unless it includes the development of new energy sources: new water management methods allowing crops to grow in arid regions or new ways of building houses and cities, enabling acceptable conditions of living that are compatible with the natural equilibrium.

This leads us to my last – but key – point. I would like to address all people of goodwill, progressives and beyond, who accept the idea that the world of the future should not be built on the main incentive to get, for the few only, as much money as possible, but should be built on the objective of achieving a decent life and dignity for everybody. I personally believe that the fight against climate change has no chance to be won without strong redistributive policies, within and between countries. As a former politician, I like to convince people. I know I can convince the people of my city to better insulate their house to save energy and thus money. But I also know that I cannot convince them to do this if they can't afford to put aside some money every month to pay for it. And while I know I can convince a Malian farmer that cutting the last trees of his neighbouring forest is dangerous for the future of his village, I also know that he will keep doing it if he is not offered an alternative technology for his family to cook their food.

The same goes for the Paris climate change conference. If countries with a high level of poverty receive an insufficient answer to their questions regarding the finance and technologies available to implement their projects,

they may still say no, whatever their concern regarding climate change. And the French president has to receive strong messages from outside to show these views are strongly shared!

I do believe that the conditions can be created for the Paris conference to be a real step forward, with strong political will from all countries and positive decisions for an effective fight against climate change. This requires that national views start to be complemented with a vision of common interests and with the conviction that co-operative strategies are more efficient. But to get there we need to make sure that bilateral and multilateral talks do not drop in intensity in the coming months.





## Discussion Guide: Bringing it home

### **How to use this Discussion Guide**

The guide can be used in various ways by Fabian Local Societies, local political party meetings and trade union branches, student societies, NGOs and other groups.

- You might hold a discussion among local members or invite a guest speaker – for example, an MP, academic or local practitioner to lead a group discussion.
- Some different key themes are suggested. You might choose to spend 15–20 minutes on each area, or decide to focus the whole discussion on one of the issues for a more detailed discussion.

**A discussion could address some or all of the following questions:**

1. Campaigners and experts agree that securing a stretching global deal will be dependent on the level of public pressure – but in a crucial election year in the UK, climate change isn't really on the radar. As Ed Miliband admitted recently, climate change isn't as fashionable as it used to be. So how, in these inauspicious circumstances, can we put climate change on the political agenda and increase pressure on policymakers?
2. The strict equity model of setting an overall carbon budget and then allocating carbon allowances based on historic emissions will be abandoned in Paris. Instead, a global deal will be based on allowing countries to propose national emissions reductions. Is this the right balance between pragmatism and fairness?
3. European leadership is crucial to securing a stretching global deal. Such leadership could also revitalise the political case for the EU, which is increasingly under threat from rejectionist parties across the continent. How can our European institutions regain the lost momentum of environmental politics?

**Please let us know what you think**

Whatever view you take of the issues, we would very much like to hear about your discussion. Please send us a summary of your debate (perhaps 300 words) to [debate@fabians.org.uk](mailto:debate@fabians.org.uk).

PROGRESSIVES  
FOR CLIMATE



PROGRESSISTES  
POUR LE CLIMAT

In view of the Paris climate change conference (COP21), the Jean-Jaurès Foundation and the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (FEPS) engage actively in reflections on climate change policy through the project “Progressives for Climate”. This project aims at informing the debate on the political, economic and societal implications of climate change and at broadening the perspectives for the agreement to be reached in Paris in December 2015. Our ambition is to contribute, throughout 2015, to shape a progressive vision of a low-carbon future, in a world of opportunities for all.

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# BRINGING IT HOME: MAKING A GLOBAL DEAL ON CLIMATE CHANGE A REALITY

In December this year, politicians, campaigners and diplomats will come together in Paris to attempt to tackle the world's greatest collective challenge: how to catalyse action on climate change. There are reasons to be hopeful that a global deal might be done. But whether or not the latest in a series of UN negotiations can keep global temperature rises to 2°C will ultimately be up to us. Public pressure is crucial to securing a stretching deal.

Yet there is currently no sense that climate change is high on the political or public 'to-do' list. If 2015 is going to be remembered as the year the world finally got serious about our climate threat, we will need bold and imaginative political leadership.

We must not see Paris as an end point: it is a critical staging post on a longer journey, not a single event. What we need in this crucial year for the climate is to find a hopeful story about why Paris matters, for our values, for our national interest and for our daily lives; that engages us all in the task of our times.

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