

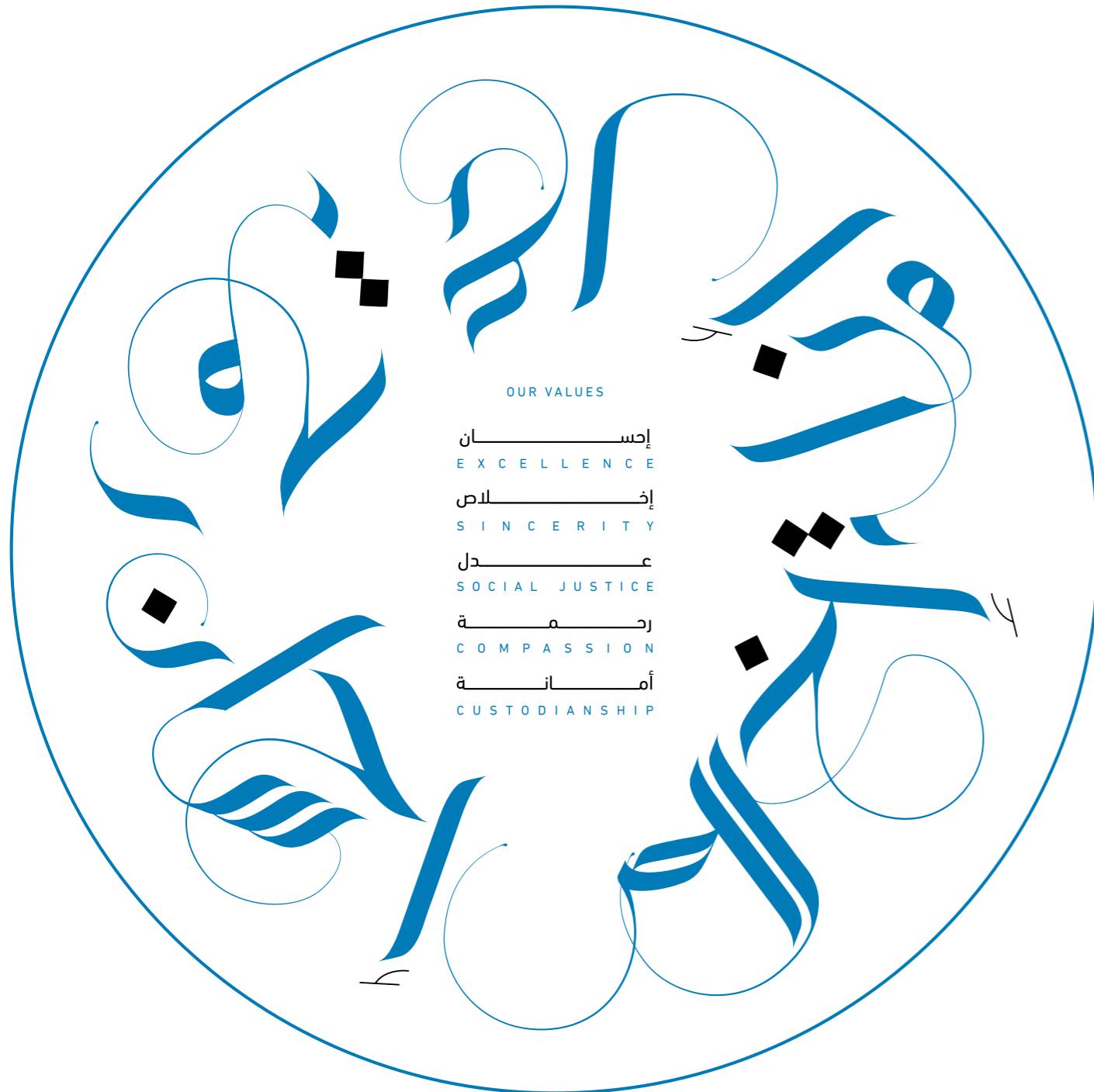


Climate Change Policy

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Document author(s)/ Key	Muhtari Aminu-Kano
Contributors including:	Syed Shahnawaz Ali and Mohammed Tariq (contributors). Helen Stawski, Martin Cottingham and Fazlun Khalid (Reviewers)
Department:	Strategy, Policy & Process Division (SPP)
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1.

Definitions

Adaptation: The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In communities, adaptation seeks to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Anthropogenic: Resulting from or produced by human activities.

Biodiversity: The variability among living organisms from terrestrial, marine, and other ecosystems. Biodiversity includes variability at the genetic, species, and ecosystem levels.

Bioenergy: Energy derived from any form of biomass such as recently living organisms or their metabolic by-products.

Biofuel: A fuel, generally in liquid form, developed from organic matter or combustible oils produced by living or recently living plants. Examples of biofuel include alcohol (bioethanol), black liquor from the paper manufacturing process, and soybean oil.

Capacity building: The practice of enhancing the strengths and attributes of, and resources available to, an individual, community, society, or organization to respond to change.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂): A naturally occurring gas, also a by-product of burning fossil fuels from fossil carbon deposits, such as oil, gas, and coal, of burning biomass, of land use changes, and of industrial processes (e.g., cement production). It is the principal greenhouse gas resulting from human activities.

Climate change: It refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties (such as precipitation or temperature), and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes, solar cycles, volcanic eruptions, or as a result of persistent human induced changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use. Note that the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in its Article 1, defines climate change as: 'a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods'. The UNFCCC thus makes a distinction between climate change attributable to human activities altering the atmospheric composition, and climate variability attributable to natural causes.

Community-based adaptation: Local, community-driven adaptation. Community-based adaptation focuses attention on empowering and promoting the adaptive capacity of communities. It is an approach that takes context, culture, knowledge, agency, and preferences of communities as strengths.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR): Denotes both a policy goal or objective, and the strategic and instrumental measures employed for anticipating future disaster risk; reducing existing exposure, hazard, or vulnerability; and improving resilience.

Ecosystem-based adaptation: The use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Ecosystem-based adaptation uses the range of opportunities for the sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that enable people to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Ecosystem services: Ecological processes or functions having monetary or non-monetary value to individuals or society at large. These are frequently classified as (i) supporting services such as productivity or biodiversity maintenance, (ii) provisioning services such as food, fiber, or fish, (iii) regulating services such as climate regulation or carbon sequestration, and (iv) cultural services such as tourism or spiritual and aesthetic appreciation.

Greenhouse gas (GHG): Greenhouse gases are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere that absorb and emit radiation in such a way that produces a greenhouse effect. Water vapor (H₂O), carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄), and ozone (O₃) are the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere.

Land grabbing: Large acquisitions of land or water rights for industrial agriculture, mitigation projects, or biofuels that have negative consequences on local and marginalized communities.

Mitigation (of climate change): A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.

Resilience: The capacity of a community to cope with a hazardous event or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain its essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.

Sequestration: The addition of a substance of concern to a reservoir thereby disabling it from acting as a source of greenhouse gases. The uptake of carbon containing substances, in particular carbon dioxide, by the soil or plants is often called (carbon) sequestration.

Vulnerability: The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.

2.

Summary of broad policy statement and headline messages

IR's policy statement on climate change

Islamic Relief is inspired by Islamic teachings, on justice and stewardship of the Earth, to recognise climate change as one of the greatest moral, social and environmental issues facing humanity today. As a matter of urgency, we will support communities to enhance their resilience by prioritising the development of climate change adaptation and risk reduction work in communities that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and improve learning on environmental issues amongst our staff and supporters. We also aim to significantly reduce our carbon footprint as well as undertake advocacy at all levels to promote substantial and equitable reductions in greenhouse gases.

IR's key policy messages on climate change

The headline statements of IR's policy are outlined below. Further details are given on each statement in Section VI.

1. IR agrees with the scientific evidence that human-made global warming is happening and that it poses an existential threat to life on earth, it therefore supports the target of keeping the average rise in the surface temperature of the Earth to less than 2°Celsius above the levels prevailing in the pre-industrial period.
2. The impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed- the poorest countries and people bear its brunt even though they do not contribute much to the problem. Inspired by Islamic teachings on social justice, IR strongly advocates that industrialised countries should urgently undertake substantial reductions in their emissions of greenhouse gases and also support countries in the Global South to do the same.
3. IR recognises and supports the urgent

need for investment and research into the development of truly sustainable renewable sources of energy fit for future use. However the switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy should not happen at the expense of reducing poverty.

4. IR believes that climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are inter-linked, important and necessary elements of current and future sustainable development planning and practice.
5. IR recognises and advocates that the conservation and sustainable use of forests and other natural and human-made habitats play an important role in sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It will promote the revival and wider adoption of Islamic approaches to the conservation of natural resources.
6. IR collaborates with others and promotes enhanced cooperation amongst all stakeholders – many organizations share the same concerns and solutions regarding climate change.
7. IR is working to reduce its carbon footprint.

3.

Introduction

Islamic Relief's Policy on climate change is outlined in this document. It sets out the **foundations** that underpin the policy, putting it in the context of Islamic perspectives, scientific evidence, Islamic Relief's experience, human development and poverty reduction; followed by a **series of key policy messages** which IR uses in its programmes and advocates to external audiences in order to address climate change.

The objectives of the policy are:

- » to provide guidance for the family on the role IR can play in addressing climate change;
- » to advocate to political forums and external audiences what IR believes the issues are, and what should be done about them.

This Policy will be accompanied by toolkits and guidelines for application by the IR Family [these are currently under development].

The Policy underpins IR's Programme of Work on climate change. This will be mainstreamed across the Regional and Global Programmes.

Rationale

Why should the Islamic Relief Family be concerned about climate change?

The scientific evidence is overwhelming: climate change presents very serious global risks for people, especially poor people and vulnerable groups. It demands an urgent global response. The direct and indirect impacts of climate change are of central concern to IR's objectives and targets, in terms of the reduction of both poverty and suffering. The IR Family has a significant contribution to make in tackling climate change.

Climate change threatens to undermine Islamic Relief's mission - to protect life and dignity as well as reduce poverty and suffering. Climate change clearly poses new challenges to our existing approaches. It is implicated in the disaster situations we face and is a major contributor to poverty and human suffering. It is already having multiple impacts on people in poverty, especially those in least developed countries and vulnerable communities who have limited ability to cope- they face, amongst others:

- » death, injury, ill-health or disrupted livelihoods in low lying coastal zones and small islands due to storms, sea level rise and flooding,
- » death, ill-health or disruption of livelihoods in dry lands due to droughts and famine,
- » food insecurity due to drought and flooding in many areas,
- » loss of rural livelihoods and income due to insufficient access to drinking and irrigation water as well as reduced agricultural and livestock productivity for farmers and pastoralists in semi-arid regions that have no access to financial capital.

We know that the changes we are facing due to climate change will be huge and wide-reaching in terms of scale and speed. We do not yet have the knowledge to predict with certainty how and when individual communities will respond to climate change, or how precisely they will be affected. However we do know that efforts now to improve their resilience through strengthening their assets and addressing existing structural barriers will help them adapt to climate change. Climate change has gone beyond the sphere of the environment; it is also both a development and moral issue. It is one of the greatest social justice issues of our time. Faith-based institutions must be a voice in addressing the climate crisis to emphasise its human and moral elements. There is an expectation from its staff and outsiders that Islamic Relief should play a prominent role in amplifying the Islamic voice.

If we are to have any credibility in engaging with the climate debate outside of our organisation, then we have to address the issue effectively within. We must institute environmental efficiency procedures in our processes and operations that lead to a low carbon footprint. It will be a contradiction for IR to provide support and succour to the victims of climate change while at the same time contributing to the problem by not reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions.

Scope

This policy explains how IR understands the issue of climate change and its impacts on the Earth and its inhabitants with particular emphasis on the communities we serve. It also presents the guiding principles that underpin a holistic view of the issue from an Islamic perspective. It covers both mitigation and adaptation aspects of climate change. It outlines the strategic approaches that Islamic Relief will adopt to integrate climate change into its humanitarian, development, policy and advocacy work. It also sets out how IR intends to address its own carbon footprint, to support communities to cope with its effects and our policy stance with regards to advocating for a just and effective solution towards limiting greenhouse gas emissions at the global level.



Context

Climate change is the most important human-induced environmental challenge facing humanity today.

How the climate is changing

The scale of current and predicted changes in temperature is greater than has been experienced for many hundreds of thousands of years, and these changes are happening at what many believe to be an unprecedented rate.

The release of rapidly increasing levels of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide as a result of human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels, is heating up the atmosphere. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), increased greenhouse gas emissions (including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) have already caused the Earth's surface to warm, on average, by 0.85°C above pre-industrial levels (IPCC, 2013). Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850. Greenhouse gases in our atmosphere have increased to levels unprecedented in the past 800,000 years. The IPCC believes that any increase in surface temperature beyond 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels will reach a tipping point resulting in catastrophic consequences for life on earth.

The IPCC forecasts that with business as usual, average global surface temperatures will be between 3.7°C to 4.8°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, and will continue to rise after that even if emissions stabilise [IPCC, 2013a]. This is a huge increase. For comparison, the average change in temperature between the peak and trough of a major ice age is 4 or 5°C. A 2.5°C warming would be the greatest global climatic shift since the end of the last ice age 10,000 years ago, but would happen far more quickly and would be to a higher temperature. The most recent science indicates that the IPCC forecasts are conservative, and the amount of warming for a particular concentration of greenhouse gases is likely to be higher.

Impacts on biodiversity

Climate change is already impacting on biodiversity and by the end of the century, climate change and its impacts may be the dominant direct driver of biodiversity loss and changes in ecosystem services

globally. More severe effects, including species extinctions, are predicted. It is estimated that without urgent action, almost one third of land-based species could be condemned to extinction as a result of climate change by the middle of this century (Nature, 2005).

Climate change adds yet another pressure on biodiversity, which is already being lost and degraded at an escalating rate. Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than during any comparable period of time in human history, largely to meet rapidly growing demands for food, fresh water, timber, fibre and fuel. This has resulted in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in biodiversity (MEA, 2005). Threatened species are becoming more threatened and many common ones are in decline. Current extinction rates are exceptionally high.

The climate change consequences for ecosystems and wildlife already being felt include increased extreme weather (floods and droughts), the retreat of mountain glaciers, the thawing of permafrost, later freezing and earlier break-up of ice on rivers and lakes, lengthening of mid- to high-latitude growing seasons, poleward and altitudinal shifts of plant and animal ranges (resulting in declines in some plant and animal populations, and the potential extinction of species where no such shift in range is possible) and changes such as the earlier emergence of leaves and insects, earlier return of migrant species, and earlier egg-laying by birds. These changes, particularly the shifts in range and abundance, will have profound impacts on species, sites and habitats. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, national communications under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant reports all identify numerous links between biodiversity and climate change.

People's lives are being affected by climate change – climate change and livelihoods are inextricably linked. Climate Change is a development issue.

The effects of climate and land-use change on people

Climate change threatens the basic elements of life for people around the world – access to water, food production, health, and use of land and the environment.

Climate change threatens these basic elements of life – for example it is predicted that melting glaciers will initially increase flood risk and then strongly reduce water supplies; declining crop yields, especially in Africa (where over 70% of workers rely on small-scale farming that is dependent on direct rainfall) could result in an additional 80-120 million people at risk of hunger (Working Group on Climate Change and Development); rising sea levels will result in tens to hundreds of millions more people flooded each year; and ocean acidification, a direct result of rising carbon dioxide levels, will have major effects on marine ecosystems, with possible adverse consequences for fish stocks.

In many regions, changes in rainfall or melting of snow and ice are affecting the quantity and quality of water resources. Climate change has also been proven to have negative impact on the yields of staple crops such as wheat and maize. Further, vulnerability to climate change is increased by violent conflict while climate change is also a known cause of conflicts.

In a nutshell, climate change is forecast to exert a human cost that is severe, widespread and irreversible. That cost includes:

- » Shortages of food, water and productive land,
- » Increased poverty,
- » Forced migrations that can increase the risk of violent conflict,
- » Extreme droughts and floods,
- » The collapse of ice sheets that can flood coastal cities, and
- » A steady rise in death toll, especially among the world's poorest.

Developing countries as well as poor and marginalised people are disproportionately affected by climate change- even though they have contributed less to the problem. Climate Change is a moral issue of social justice.

Vulnerability of developing countries

The impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed – the poorest countries and people will suffer earliest and most.

Developing countries are often already warmer, on average, than developed ones, and they suffer from high rainfall variability. Further warming will bring high costs and few benefits. All humans depend on the services provided by natural systems. However, environmental assets and the services they provide are especially important for poor people. Many developing countries

are heavily dependent on agriculture, the most climate-sensitive of all economic sectors. Climate change also threatens to wipe out plant species used in traditional medicines. The World Health Organisation estimates that 80% of the population in developing countries depends on traditional medicine for primary health care (WHO, 2006). Unchecked climate change will become a major obstacle to continued poverty reduction.

Vulnerability of low-lying island communities

Despite the fact that small island developing countries have minimal greenhouse gas emissions and thus do not contribute much to climate change, they bear the brunt of climate change.

Most island nations are dependent on fisheries, agriculture or forestry to earn a living. These resources may become scarcer due to climate change. Sea level rise and extreme weather events particularly threaten the lives and livelihoods of inhabitants of small islands.

Vulnerability of poor and marginalised segments of the population

People who are marginalised- socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally or otherwise- are especially vulnerable to climate change both within and between countries.

Climate change affects the lives of poor people directly through impacts on livelihoods, reductions in crop yields or destruction of homes. It also has indirect effects, for example, through increases in food prices or food insecurity. Poor and marginalised people are most severely affected because they lack the assets and power to cope with these impacts.

This is an issue of extreme urgency – we need to act now to avoid complete catastrophe.

Current estimates are that unless there are substantial (40% to 70%) cuts in GHG emissions by 2050, it is unlikely to avoid a temperature change of 2°C above pre-industrial levels which is the tipping point for catastrophic change in the climate. The earlier we start, the easier it will be to meet the target. Energy and land use patterns within society need to change.

It is clear that some climate change is inevitable. We have already seen an increase in average global temperatures, and regardless of any actions taken we are likely to experience a further 1°C increase.

It is widely recognized that if the worst impacts of climate change are to be avoided then the average rise in the surface temperature of the Earth needs to be kept at less than 2°Celsius above the levels prevailing during the pre-industrial period, i.e. before the late 18th century. We therefore need to act now to reduce



emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels through changes to energy consumption, increased energy efficiency and land use changes. Time is running out. The IPCC believes that if we are to keep temperatures from rising beyond the tipping point, our emissions should peak by 2020. If we do not act now, the opportunity to do so will be lost well before 2050.

Hard targets need to be set and adhered to by the international community. Energy use patterns within society need to change. A growing share of our current and future energy production worldwide has to shift from fossil fuels to truly sustainable renewable sources. There is an urgent need to raise awareness on the impact of climate change and on the positive steps people can and must take to adapt to and mitigate climate change. In economic terms alone, as summarised in the Stern Review (Stern, 2006): The evidence shows that ignoring climate change will eventually damage economic growth. The earlier effective action is taken, the less costly it will be.

Climate change is global in its causes and consequences – we all have a role to play to mitigate and adapt to climate change

We all have a responsibility to adapt our behaviour and actions to help reduce future impacts of climate change.

Islamic Relief has an important role to play regarding climate change. Islamic teachings make it imperative for all Muslims to be good stewards of the earth. Also, IR is committed to helping poor communities adapt to climate change, campaigning for stronger action by governments and business, reducing its own carbon footprint and raising awareness of the key issues within and outside the IR Family- Our worldwide network is present in over 40 countries and has access to some of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities.

Clearly IR cannot work on this agenda in isolation.

We have strong relations with many local, national and international organisations, as well as national governments. At the national and international level, IR is a member of networks working together to minimise the impact of climate change on people by advocating for justice and rights. Given the close links between social justice, climate change and livelihoods, it is clear that agendas of organisations concerned with faith, climate change, and development must converge to achieve our shared goals. Policy development and implementation will need to result in mutually supportive outcomes.

It is clear that all countries have a role to play. Although high income countries should, for reasons of both fairness and practicality, take the lead in cutting emissions, the rapidly industrialising nations will also need to take action. Primarily through reduced energy consumption as well as through reducing emissions, sustainable renewable energy, halting deforestation, technology transfer etc. The high income countries need to provide support through transfer of technology, capacity building and adequate financial resources.

Emergency relief protects life and dignity. However this is mainly treating the symptom without tackling the root cause of the problem. Islamic Relief believes that the best form of humanitarian assistance is to be proactive in helping to reduce the risks that disasters pose to vulnerable people.

Islamic Relief is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint through reduced energy use associated with the running of offices (including heating, lighting, stationery, printing, laundry etc.) and all forms of transportation, especially air. We cannot be credible advocates for the environment unless we 'walk the talk'. Agents of change must change within themselves.

Islamic Relief's programmes are increasingly addressing climate change- these need to be scaled up

Islamic Relief adopted its first environmental policy in 2008. It has also identified climate change as a key cross-cutting issue in its 2011-2015 Global Strategy. In terms of its programmes, IR has a record of implementing climate change projects. However, they have tended to be stand-alone and, at times, donor-driven initiatives. A majority of these projects have been designed to support communities to adapt to climate change and for disaster risk reduction. A few outstanding examples, such as the DRR work in Bangladesh, have gained global recognition.

In 2011; Mendera, Kenya, faced its worst drought in 50 years and many farmers were thrown into dire poverty and malnutrition but farmers supported by Islamic Relief Kenya were able to grow irrigated vegetables, fruit and cereals to feed their families and escape from malnutrition.

In North Kordofan, Sudan, Islamic Relief helped to construct two large rain water harvesting reservoirs (known locally as *hafirs*). It also provided training to representatives of the community on the operation and maintenance of the *hafirs*, environmental awareness and vegetable cultivation. The reservoirs provided the community with clean water all year round as well as the ability to cultivate irrigated vegetables

The worst floods in 25 years swept through Gaibanda, Bangladesh in June 2012. This would have destroyed many houses and other property on its path. However Islamic Relief Bangladesh (IRB) had earlier helped the vulnerable inhabitants living on the floodplains to anticipate and prepare for extreme floods by erecting their houses on raised earth mounds (known as *plinth*s). This small village community was thus protected from harm.

Again in Bangladesh, IRB has worked extensively to improve the resilience of vulnerable people to bank erosion and flooding. It has helped to establish village disaster management committees made up of volunteers from the community. These committees have prepared, executed and evaluated contingency plans. The activities undertaken by the community included awareness raising, road construction, bridge repairs and *plinth* establishment, amongst others.

In Baluchistan, Pakistan, Islamic Relief implemented an integrated development project whose objectives included the pilot testing and promotion of renewable energy. The project constructed boreholes for rural communities. The pumps employed in the boreholes were powered by wind mills and electricity was provided to some of the houses through solar panels.

In 2012/13, Islamic Relief Worldwide commissioned a consultancy firm, Atkins Global, to undertake a carbon audit of its offices in the UK and the field. This exercise identified the main carbon generating aspects of its operations (Atkins, 2014) and is being used to develop a carbon reduction and offset plan (Islamic Relief, 2014a) with accompanying monitoring (Islamic Relief, 2014b) and communication (Islamic Relief, 2014c) plans.

Islamic teachings provide guiding principles and values that can ensure environmental sustainability- they can be used to stimulate individual consciences and mobilise communities to action.

Climate change is a symptom of a greater challenge-how to live sustainably and justly on this earth. The underlying cause of environmental degradation in the world today is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production. This is based on the mistaken notion that increased consumption and economic growth result in human prosperity and wellbeing. This paradigm is leading the world in an irrational search for ever-increasing economic growth even in the face of limited resources. Thus the desire for goods leads to high consumption which fuels production and this, in turn, rapidly depletes resources, including natural resources. As energy resources are largely based on fossil fuels, their use pumps a lot of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which disrupts ecological cycles and causes climate change.

To support the quest for economic growth, highly unjust and unstable global financial and monetary systems have been created and maintained which are based on debt, compound interest and the creation of money out of thin air. This breeds inequality, depletes resources and destabilises the ecological balance. Islam presents an alternative to this narrative.

Islamic teachings show clearly that human wellbeing is holistic and does not depend on material wealth alone. Islam teaches moderation, a feeling of unity with all creation (*tawheed*) and the innate disposition of humans as an integral part of the natural pattern and not separated apart from it (*fitra*). It also teaches that the world is created in a fine balance (*mizan*) and that humanity has accepted the stewardship of the earth and its resources (*khilafa*) as a trust (*amana*) from Allah.

Khalid (2014) has identified more than 250 verses in the Qur'an that explain the above concepts in relation to the environment. He categorizes them into four basic principles, namely- unity (*tawheed*), creation (*fitra*), balance (*mizan*) and responsibility (*khilafa*). These principles, derived from Islam, can guide Muslims to the highest standards of sustainable environmental management. An online course has been developed on

these principles (IR & IFEEES, 2014a).

The unity principle (*tawheed*). This defines the Islamic worldview. It is based on the clear emphasis of the oneness of God and the unity of all creation since it comes from the same Source. It is said in the Qur'an:

"Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian over all things." (Az Zumar, 39:62).

The view that Allah's creation is a unified whole can be explained by what is happening to our climate today. Why is it that climate change affects the whole globe and all of humanity and other creations whilst the carbon dioxide pollution that causes it is largely caused by the rich countries? The answer is because the earth is one, and everything is connected. We may live in different parts of the world but everything we do ultimately connects either directly or indirectly with everything else.

There are other evidences in the Qur'an in support of the environmental aspects of the unity principle. These include an affirmation that Allah is: one and only God (Al-ikhlas, 112:1-4), the Creator of everything (Ghafir, 40:62), the Giver of form (Hashr, 59:24), the one who encompasses all things (An Nisa, 4:126) and the originator and regenerator of creation (An Naml, 27:64).

The creation principle (*fitra*). The Qur'an teaches that the human species was created as a part of nature and not separate from it. We are part of a natural pattern and have an innate natural disposition similar to other creations:

"So set yourself firmly towards your faith, as a pure natural believer. Allah's natural pattern in which He originated mankind. There is no changing Allah's creation. That is the true faith. But most people do not understand it." (Ar Rum, 30:30).

Other verses in the Qur'an ask humans to reflect on the story of Allah's creation of the universe and the natural world and their self-sustaining functions. The Chapter on Yunus (Jonah) describes the creation of the planetary system with the sun at the centre of our system and the rhythms of night and day as well as the changing seasons. It compares these to verses of the Qur'an ('ayas') as signs of the Almighty (Yunus, 10: 5 - 6). Other wonders of the natural world and descriptions of the *fitra* are given in surah an-Nur, 24:45. Allah then creates the human being in the state of the natural environment (Al-Alaq, 96: 1 - 2).

In the verse quoted above (Ar Rum, 30:30), we are warned that there are limits to modifying the environment to excess and we cannot go about changing the patterning that has been established by the Creator, at will.

The balance principle (*mizan*). The preceding section on

fitra has explained that there is a patterning in which all of creation functions. In this section, we will see that this is kept in balance (*mizan*) by the forces of nature that give us stability. The following Qur'anic verse states this clearly and warns us not to tip this balance over.

He raised the heavens and established the balance. Give just weight- do not skimp the balance. (Ar Rahman, 55: 7 - 9).

The balance here connotes both a physical form in relation to the natural world and a social form in relation to justice. There are verses supporting these connotations. For example, Ar Rahman, 55: 5 - 6 tell us that the sun and moon by performing their exacting roles keep everything in balance. Everything we see around us works because it is in submission to the will of the Creator.

Ash Shura, 42:17 and Al Hadid, 57:25 emphasize the justice dimension of *mizan*. They can serve to remind us that we do injustice to the earth and its habitants when we disrupt the natural balance. Climate change is a sign of imbalance and science tells us that we are responsible for it and we have begun to face the consequences.

Qur'anic guidance on resource use tells us that the earth is a place of abundance and it contains enormous diversity (Al Hijr, 15:19). As everything is created in known measure what we take from the earth should be no more than what we actually need. Waste is an act abhorred by Allah:

"O children of Adam!... eat and drink- but waste not by excess for Allah loves not the wasters." (Al Araf, 7: 31).

The responsibility principle (*khalifa*). Allah has made the human race His *khalif* on earth. The word is often translated as successor, trustee, vicegerent and other terms meaning responsibility. The Qur'an says:

"It is He who appointed you khalifs on earth." (Al Naml, 6: 165).

"We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it and man assumed it. He is a tyrant and fool." (Al Ahzab, 33: 72)

This trust comes with a heavy responsibility to act as guardians and protectors of the environment and to ensure that we conserve and sustainably use the earth's resources for the benefit of present and future generations. We will be accountable to Allah for how well, or otherwise, we have discharged this duty on the Day of Judgement.

The basis of Muslim social interaction is to call to good action, encourage what is right and prohibit what is wrong (Al Imran, 3:104). Such ethic will reinforce

the consciousness and behaviour necessary for the discharge of humanity's duty of stewardship of nature. The Qur'an often reminds humanity of its place in creation in spite of its role as *khalifa* (eg Ghafir, 40:57). It also reminds us of the consequences of our bad behaviour as in the following:

"Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deed) that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil)." (Ar Rum, 30:41).

Many scholars have added a **moderation principle**. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

"Thus have We made of you a Middle Ummah, that you might be witnesses over the people, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves..." (al-Baqarah, 143)

"Say: "O People of the Book! Make no excess in your religion, trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the even Way." (al-Ma'idah, 77)

Muslims are called *Ummatan Wasatan*. The commentators of the Qur'an explain the word "*wasat*" as "justly balanced", "the best (*khiyar* or *khayr*)". (see al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir etc.) Yusuf Ali says: "The essence of Islam is to avoid all extravagances on either side. It is a sober, practical religion." (note 143 on 2:143)

Allah has made this *Ummah* a moderate *Ummah*. Muslims have to follow the middle path, the path that has no extremes or excesses.



Islamic teachings are also rich in practical tools and methods that can be applied to achieve good environmental management.

The principles explained in the preceding section have been put to practice by Muslim societies in the past through systems and institutions that existed since early Islamic history. These conservation techniques have been successfully applied by Muslim communities and there is a need to revive and adopt them more widely in the present day. They include the *hima*, *harim*, *waqf* and *hisba* systems. An online course of these mechanisms has been developed (IR & IFEEES, 2014b).

The *hima* is a multiple use conservation area which can be established and managed by the state, a civil society organisation or the community. The first Islamic *hima* was established by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) near Medina in Saudi Arabia mainly for cavalry horses. *Hima's* can be established in grazing lands, forests, watersheds or as community reserves. Each *hima* is divided into zones which are assigned for various uses. For example, a *hima* in a grazing area can be divided into a zone of total or partial exclusion of domestic animals (to allow survival of important species such as bees for pollination), a zone where animals are restricted to certain seasons, and a zone designated for seed banks. There are a few examples of the revival of the *hima* system today that range from a national network of *himas* in Lebanon to individual areas such as Jabal Aja' in Saudi Arabia (desert oasis), Misali Island in Zanzibar (marine fisheries) and Yagour in Morocco (montanne pastures).

A *harim* is a sacred area designated specifically to exclude direct human use. On his first entry to Mecca after a long exile, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared:

"It is sacred by virtue of the sanctity conferred on it by God until the last day. Its thorn trees shall not be cut down, and its animals shall not be disturbed..... and its fresh herbage will not be cut."

He made a similar declaration in respect of the area between the two mountains surrounding the city of Medina. Succeeding generations of Muslims have established *harims* around sources of water, spaces surrounding settlements, roads and even individual trees that provide shade.

Waqf comprises land, buildings, financial trust or other assets dedicated in perpetuity for charitable purposes. The specific purpose of the endowment depends on the wishes of the donor. Islam has a culture of endowments from the time of Prophet Muhammad until the middle of the 20th Century. Waqf is the prime Islamic form of civil society activism. They served several different purposes and were established for the benefit of education, health, culture, animals and the environment. In the present day, the Kuwait Awqaf Foundation has

used some of its resources in support of conservation efforts. However **waqf** can benefit the environment in many other ways. For example, an area rich in biological resources can be procured and designated as a **hima** or **harim** and established as **waqf**.

The **hisba** is based on the call to good action in the Qur'an (3:104):

"Let there be a community among you who call to the good, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success."

A court to administer this call has been established by many Muslim communities and it has been given enforcement powers. Hisba courts have traditionally been involved in giving speedy judgements to keep public spaces such as markets in good order. However it has been demonstrated that it is well suited to intervene in cases of environmental wrongdoings as happens in some states in northern Nigeria.



7.

Policy statement

Islamic Relief is inspired by Islamic teachings, on justice and stewardship of the Earth, to recognise climate change as one of the greatest moral, social and environmental issues facing humanity today. As a matter of urgency, we will support communities to enhance their resilience by prioritising the development of climate change adaptation and risk reduction work in communities that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and improve learning on environmental issues amongst our staff and supporters. We also aim to significantly reduce our carbon footprint as well as undertake advocacy at all levels to promote substantial and equitable reductions in greenhouse gases.



8.

Key Policy Messages

1. Islamic Relief agrees with the scientific evidence that human-made global warming is happening and that it poses an existential threat to life on earth, it therefore supports the target of keeping the average rise in the surface temperature of the Earth to less than 2° Celsius above the levels of the pre-industrial period.

1.1. IR agrees with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that warming of the climate system is unequivocal (). Since the 1950s, the atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of ice and snow have diminished, the sea level has risen and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased.

1.2. Human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. The emission of greenhouse gases (particularly carbon dioxide) as a result of human activities has been shown to be the major factor responsible for the unprecedented climate change therefore its solution must involve a reduction in the emissions of these gases.

1.3. It is widely recognised that if the worst impacts of climate change are to be avoided then the average rise in the surface temperature of the Earth needs to be kept at less than two degrees above the levels prevailing during the pre-industrial period, i.e. before the late eighteenth century. This is the view not only of many scientists but also of the global community under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

1.4. Islamic Relief recognises that for a variety of reasons, there are people who are yet to be convinced of the reality of human-induced climate change. We will contribute to the mounting evidence and testimonies of poor people to engage in a respectful but meaningful debate with this constituency.

2. The impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed- the poorest countries and people bear its brunt even though they do not contribute much to the problem. Inspired by Islamic teachings on social justice, IR strongly advocates that

industrialised countries should urgently undertake substantial reductions in their emissions of greenhouse gases and also support countries in the global South to do the same.

- 2.1. Islamic Relief advocates far stronger carbon emission reduction targets for industrialised countries (compared to those in the global South) and promotes means of making incentives and other forms of support available to Southern countries to limit their emissions.
- 2.2. IR will seek to amplify the Muslim voice on climate change and climate justice in the period and processes leading up to and during the UN meeting to develop a successor to the Kyoto Protocol which will take place in Paris in December 2015. We will call for an equitable, ambitious and legally binding agreement at the Paris meeting and advocate for effective implementation thereafter.
- 2.3. Islamic Relief advocates specific energy efficiency targets at local, national and regional levels.
- 2.4. Islamic Relief believes a growing share of our current and future energy production worldwide has to shift from fossil fuels to truly sustainable renewable sources.
- 2.5. Islamic Relief advocates a wide range of changes in land use encompassing sustainable bioenergy production, afforestation and reduced deforestation.
- 2.6. Islamic Relief believes that these measures are a matter of utmost urgency- we must step up now or pay a huge price for inaction.

3. Islamic Relief recognises and supports the urgent need for investment and research into the development of truly sustainable renewable sources of energy fit for future use. However the switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy should not happen at the expense of reducing poverty.

- 3.1. Large scale changes in energy systems and increased efficiency are essential. Renewable energy offers an important contribution to combat climate change, by reducing dependence on fossil fuels and hence reducing harmful emissions of greenhouse gases.
- 3.2. However any switch or investment in renewable energy should not be at the expense of efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption or those to increase overall efficiency of energy use.
- 3.3. It is essential that renewables have a distinct

positive carbon and social balance across their entire life cycle. For example, biofuels must not involve heavy use of fertiliser or lead to the displacement of small scale farmers through land grabbing or cause wild fluctuations in food prices.

- 3.4. Islamic Relief supports and promotes the local generation of energy. Local generation by use of efficient technologies brings benefits to local communities, especially in the Global South.
- 3.5. Standards based on sound research must be set and advocated for – safeguards must be in place in terms of certification, greenhouse gas emissions guarantees, and impact assessments prior to development of renewable sources of energy.

4. Islamic Relief believes that climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are inter-linked, important and necessary elements of current and future sustainable development planning and practice.

- 4.1. Islamic Relief is committed to its existing strategy and programmes which address climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Addressing existing threats will increase the resilience of communities to future climate change.
- 4.2. Islamic Relief recognizes the urgent need to build and integrate adaptive community capacity building strategies that moderate and cope with the current and future consequences of climate change within its current strategies and programmes of work. It will place strong emphasis on scaling up and mainstreaming climate change adaptation in its programmes.
- 4.3. Islamic Relief recognises that adaptation is specific to the particular context- a variety of responses may be appropriate, and these may differ across the world.
- 4.4. Islamic Relief will promote climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and climate change education both within the IR Family and amongst its external constituencies.

5. Islamic Relief recognises and advocates that the conservation and sustainable use of forests and other natural and human-made habitats play an important role in sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It will promote the revival and wider adoption of Islamic approaches to the conservation of natural habitats.

- 5.1. Islamic Relief seeks recognition of the diverse benefits that ecosystems such as forests provide, in terms of biodiversity and other ecosystems services, to local communities and human wellbeing; as well as their role in the mitigation of climate change.
- 5.2. Islamic Relief will promote the revival and adoption of traditional Islamic techniques for the conservation of natural habitats such as *hima* and *harim* and the use of other Islamic mechanisms such as *waqf* (endowment) and *hisba* to strengthen environmental practice in Muslim countries.
- 5.3. Islamic Relief recognizes that Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) accounts for a quarter of net human GHG emissions mainly from deforestation, agricultural emissions from soil and poor nutrient management and livestock practices. However AFOLU also plays a key role in food security and sustainable development. Therefore IR will support cost effective mitigation options in forestry and agriculture. This includes sustainable forest management and reducing/ avoided deforestation as well as good cropland management, grazing land management and the restoration of organic soils.

6. Islamic Relief collaborates with others and promotes enhanced cooperation amongst all stakeholders – many faith and humanitarian organizations share the same concerns and solutions regarding climate change.

- 6.1. Islamic Relief recognises that climate change crosses all boundaries- geographic, institutional, thematic and religious. Therefore it is committed to work with others of all faiths and none, at global, regional, national and sub-national levels; to achieve mutually supportive outcomes on climate change. Interventions at one level or by one player will be a drop in the ocean due to the magnitude of the challenge.
- 6.2. Islamic Relief strongly supports the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. It therefore calls on all countries to take vigorous action on climate change. However it calls upon industrialised countries to provide significant support to countries in the Global South, particularly the poor and vulnerable. Such support should include adequate financial resources, transfer of appropriate technology and requisite capacity building.
- 6.3. Specifically, Islamic Relief urges the G20 countries to step up and provide sufficient resources to the Green Climate Fund.

7. Islamic Relief is working to reduce its carbon footprint.

- 7.1. IR is committed to reduce its own carbon footprint. The primary focus is the reduction of direct emissions in its offices and operations through efficient use of electricity and heating fuel, improving energy efficiency, and reducing carbon emissions from air travel. We will invest in greater use of, and training in, technologies which have the potential to reduce the need to travel, such as web-, phone- and video- conferencing.
- 7.2. Islamic Relief also aims to cut indirect emissions by sourcing its products and services (including energy) from companies that are offering low-carbon products or processes. This will not only reduce our carbon footprint, but will encourage the companies and organisations with which it works to consider their carbon emissions and environmental impacts.
- 7.3. For all those direct emissions (from travel, office running and other sources) which cannot be reduced, Islamic Relief will explore the option of setting up an offset scheme based on its field projects
- 7.4. We will initiate and expand our portfolio of projects that promote the links between sustainable use of renewable natural resources and improved livelihoods for people in poverty.

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Islamic Relief Worldwide

19 Rea Street South
Birmingham
B5 6LB
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 121 605 5555
Fax: +44 121 622 5003

irw@irworldwide.org
www.islamic-relief.org

Registered Charity No. 328158
Registered Company No. 02365572