



student action on world poverty and the environment

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Rt Hon Hilary Benn
Secretary of State for International Development
1 Palace Street
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Dear Secretary of State,

People & Planet, the UK's largest student network campaigning on global poverty, human rights and the environment, has been campaigning on climate change since 2000. We have always been concerned about the impact of climate change on people, communities and livelihoods in developing countries, and consider climate change to be an issue primarily of global social justice.

We welcome DFID's recognition of climate change as a major long term threat to development, and the importance placed upon it in the recent White Paper. However, we are extremely concerned that despite this recognition, the UK provides both financial and political support to oil and gas extraction through the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

We believe that this is a misuse of development money, which is dedicated to poverty reduction. Oil and gas extraction not only contributes to climate change, feeding the excessive demand for energy in industrial countries like the UK, but has a record of negative impacts on the economies, communities, governance and local environments of the places where it is carried out.

We also note that despite growing debate and activity, both in the UK and internationally, on the subject of energy security, and most notably the World Bank's Clean Energy Investment Framework, scant attention is being paid to renewable and decentralised energy. The discussion instead perpetuates business-as-usual thinking, assuming the continued dominance of fossil fuels in the global energy mix, rather than seeking to challenge this dominance.

This is why we have launched a new climate change campaign, Ditch Dirty Development, to urge DFID to provide the global leadership and innovative thinking necessary to move the energy and climate change debate to a new, sustainable level.

When it comes to energy policy, business-as-usual thinking will lead us down a path to dangerous climate change. People & Planet believes that there is a need for boldness of political leadership and for new thinking about development. We believe that DFID is well placed to provide such leadership.

The solutions to climate change exist, primarily in curbing the consumption of fossil fuels in the developed world, and in technologies which harness unlimited and unpolluting renewable energy. In addition, there is a need for strategies to address the growing energy needs of emerging and developing economies without concurrent increases in carbon emissions.

People & Planet is calling on DFID to produce an energy and climate change strategy, covering both bilateral and multilateral energy funding, which will:

1. Ensure DFID's activities actively contribute to mitigating climate change through global emissions reductions. To do this, DFID must:
 - phase out all support for fossil fuel extractive projects.
 - massively increase support for new renewable energy sources.
2. Increase access to energy in the developing world, by promoting and championing decentralised and low carbon forms of energy as appropriate.

The strategy must have specific, timebound targets and built in monitoring systems. DFID should report to Parliament on progress towards these targets on a regular basis.

An energy and climate change strategy would enable DFID to take a leading role in promoting low carbon development. Energy policy is critical both to mitigating climate change and to alleviating poverty, and should be central to DFID's work.

I have enclosed People & Planet's campaign policy paper, '**Fueling the Future: why DFID should ditch dirty development and lead the way to a low carbon future**' along with a campaign action card which will be used by student groups to gather support for the campaign.

I look forward to hearing your response to People & Planet's policy paper, and hope that our campaign will play a positive role in developing responses to the new and complex challenges that climate change poses for development.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Leggett
Director