

How the State Can Make Ireland a Leader in Tackling Climate Change

Submission to the Citizens' Assembly

**from the
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice**

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JCFJ **jesuit centre
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Introduction

The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Citizens' Assembly on "*How the State can make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change*".¹ We applaud the Assembly for including this important topic in the assembly process.

We acknowledge that the Assembly called for, in particular, submissions in relation to Ireland's energy, transport, and agriculture sectors. We hope that recommendations pertaining to these sectors will be addressed in detail in other submissions. In this submission, we wish to instead identify a number of **broad approaches** to policy planning and implementation which we believe would improve the State's overall approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate change risk, and help move Ireland towards taking a stronger position on climate action.

We argue that if the State is to make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change, it must:

- **Meet its existing climate obligations and do its fair share of the global effort on climate action;**
- **Acknowledge its responsibility towards climate justice;**
- **Take an ecological and social approach to climate action;**
- **Complement the National Dialogue on Climate Action with strong political leadership and the appropriate framing of climate change and climate action.**

In the following, we first outline the scale and seriousness of the challenge and the urgency to respond. This is followed by an overview of our recommendations to the Assembly, supported by brief background context.

¹**The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice** is dedicated to creating a better society for all by promoting social justice and policy reform through awareness raising, research and advocacy. The Centre works across a number of policy areas including penal reform, housing and homelessness, economic justice, and environmental justice. Our commitment to building a just society extends to caring for the natural environment. The Centre is an active member of the Stop Climate Chaos, a civil society coalition of 32 members including overseas aid and development, environmental, youth and faith-based organisations that campaign for Ireland to do its fair share to tackle climate change.

The seriousness of climate change, the urgency of climate action

Reconciliation with Creation and care of our common home as proclaimed by Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015) is a fundamental part of the Jesuit mission. The global community is now faced with a single crisis that is social and environmental, with climate change a symptom and outcome of deep social inequality and a much wider disconnect with each other and with our common home, the living earth.

Climate change presents the biggest threat to human progress, wellbeing, security, and population displacement, and to the overall health and diversity of our planetary ecosystems.² However, the impacts are and will not be evenly distributed. Affected most intensely are vulnerable regions of the world that are already socially, economically, politically and climatically exposed – populations who lack the capacity to respond and adapt, and above all, who have done the least in contributing to global emissions. These include, for examples, the region of East Africa, the Philippines, and low-lying, populated coastal regions, such as Bangladesh.

“Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded”³

Climate change impacts will undermine human health and food security, and worsen prevailing resource scarcities, with negative consequences for regional peace and security. Together with the drivers of people’s increasing exposure and vulnerability, climate change is expected to amplify the risk of global population displacement globally. In 2016, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported that for that year, more than 24 million people fled climate-related disasters in 125 countries and territories.⁴

At the time of writing this submission, our Jesuit colleagues, the **Irish Jesuit Mission** and **Jesuit Refugee Service** were in areas of East Africa responding proactively to the widespread, drought-fuelled humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region. Under changing climate conditions, complex crises of this nature will become more prevalent.

² The Fifth Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2013) concluded that climate impacts will bring changes to regional climate patterns, and increases in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as hurricanes, flash floods, heat waves, extreme cold spells, and drought. (See: https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf)

³ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City (2015), n. 25.

⁴ See: <https://www.nrc.no/more-than-31-million-people-displaced-within-their-own-country-in-2016>.

Here in Ireland, the human impacts of increasingly unpredictable and intense weather events on homes and businesses are already significant.⁵ Unfortunately, the time for meaningful action to prevent irreversible and dangerous climate change is quickly diminishing. We recognise that **difficult social and political decisions** will have to be made. However, the non-negotiable nature of climate change places a **moral imperative on the State** to protect its citizens now, and future citizens from preventable harm.

Ireland must do its fair share of the global effort

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis asserts that “*we lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations*” (n. 53). Climate action demands strong political leadership. There is an urgent need for climate policies that are **ambitious** in terms of responding to the current scientific evidence on climate change and in meeting Ireland’s climate policy obligations, and **equitable and just** in terms of recognising that heavy polluters, such as Ireland,⁶ have a **moral responsibility** to respond.

While the topic of the Assembly addresses the concept of leadership, Ireland is currently failing to achieve even its fair share of the global effort required to prevent and reduce the risks involved. Among its EU partners, Ireland now has a reputation as a “climate laggard” and is only one of five countries set to miss its EU 2020 climate targets.^{7 8} The Environmental Protection Agency and the Climate Change Advisory Council (Ireland’s independent advisory body) have explicitly stated that **transformational change, long-term planning, a stable policy framework, and concrete policies** are essential across all aspects of Irish society.

“... the transformation required in the Irish economy and society represents a different and more difficult task than any other area of public policy: the costs of inaction will fall much more heavily on future generations while the current generation in Ireland, and elsewhere, will have to be leaders in transforming the economy and society”⁹

⁵ Sweeney, J. & Coll, J. (2013) Current and future vulnerabilities to Climate Change in Ireland. Climate Change Research Programme (CCRP) 2007-2013, Report Series No. 29. Environmental Protection Agency, Johnstown Castle, Wexford.

⁶ Ireland is the third highest emitter per capita in the European Union (See:

<https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/airemissions/EPA%202015%20GHG%20Projections%20Publication%20Final.pdf>), and people in Ireland emit an average of 8.8 metric tonnes of carbon each year compared to just 0.1 metric tonne for Ethiopians.

⁷ Irish Times. November 22nd 2016. ‘Government criticised for failing to act on climate change; Pat Cox says Ireland is in danger of becoming the climate change laggard of Europe’. Available at: <http://www.irishtimes.com/business/energy-and-resources/government-criticised-for-failing-to-act-on-climate-change-1.2878291>

⁸ Climate Change Advisory Council (2017) Periodic Review Report 2017. See:

http://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/CCAC_PERIODICREVIEWREPORT2017_Final.pdf

⁹ Climate Change Advisory Council. (2016) First Report. See: http://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/CCAC_FIRSTREPORT.pdf

The recently published National Mitigation Plan – Ireland’s first statutory climate plan¹⁰ – has been heavily criticised not just by Ireland’s environmental and development NGO sector, but also the Advisory Council, for lacking in the specific, concrete policies that are needed to guide Irish society along the type of social and economic transformation required. In their recent review, the Council said that the Government should “*provide a **transparent and coherent framework** for economy wide actions towards the 2030 and 2050 targets and objectives*” and that “***concrete commitment** to new measures*” is required.¹¹

*“A healthy politics is sorely needed, capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia... the advances have been regrettably few. Reducing greenhouse gases requires **honesty, courage and responsibility**, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most”*¹²

The National Mitigation Plan has also been criticised for adopting a vague wait-and-see approach which relies on the potential of future technology to assist Ireland’s low carbon trajectory.¹³ Ireland cannot afford to adopt such an approach to policy planning, nor can it assume business-as-usual or a reliance on a future technological quick-fix. Failure to act now jeopardises Ireland’s long-term effort in meeting its climate change requirements. This inaction will increase the costs that Irish society will have to pay for failing to meet our climate policy obligations¹⁴ and the costs associated with adapting to climate change impacts as they unfold.¹⁵

Recommendations to the Assembly: The principle of **climate justice** demands ambition in the implementation of climate policy. In moving towards a position of leadership, Ireland must first do its **fair share of the global effort** in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. This can be achieved by addressing, at least, the “**implementation gap**” that currently blights our approach to climate action and that succeeds in reinforcing Ireland’s international reputation as a

¹⁰See: <http://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/publications/Pages/National-Mitigation-Plan.aspx>

¹¹ Climate Change Advisory Council (2017) Periodic Review Report 2017. See:

http://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/CCAC_PERIODICREVIEWREPORT2017_Final.pdf

¹² Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City (2015), n. 169, n. 181

¹³ See: https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/download/pdf/scc_pillar_joint_submission_on_national_mitigation_plan.pdf

¹⁴ Estimates from the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA, 2016) suggest that in the scenario of no new climate action measures being urgently brought forward, combined 2020 and 2030 non-compliance costs to the Irish taxpayers may exceed €6 billion. See: <http://www.iieta.com/blogosphere/how-much-of-irelands-fiscal-space-will-climate-inaction-consume>

¹⁵ The cost of adapting to climate change impacts in Ireland has been estimated at between €80m and €800m annually.

Adaptation to these impacts is absolutely essential to protect Irish communities and businesses. See:

https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/climate/CCRP_30%20COCO%20Adapt.pdf

climate laggard.

In doing its fair share, the State needs to:

- Minimise the long term social, environmental and economic costs of climate change by implementing **comprehensive and consistent policies** across all relevant sectors that are underpinned and informed by a **target driven carbon-budget framework** that advances the State towards i) closing the significant margin between Ireland’s current emissions profile and our 2020 climate and energy target; ii) achieving Ireland’s 2030 climate and energy targets; iii) realizing Ireland’s long-term 2050 decarbonisation vision; and iv) meeting Ireland’s obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement (which Ireland ratified in 2016) and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Government must ensure that **departmental policy planning and delivery** in the areas of transport and infrastructure, energy, residential and construction, agriculture and land-use, is brought into line with Ireland’s climate commitments. Policies and political decisions which contradict and undermine Ireland’s target commitments, and which undermine climate justice and environmental sustainability should not be pursued. These decisions will have consequences for the policy direction of specific economic sectors, such as agri-food and the land-use sector, and energy, and will require an alternative, more sustainable approach to economic development. These decisions will also demand an overhaul of how and where taxpayers’ money is allocated. For example, we support calls made by Irish NGOs to the Government to **align how taxpayers’ money is spent** with the overall public interest of mitigating climate change.¹⁶ This will mean directing taxpayer supported existing subsidies away from the polluting peat-generating fire stations that contribute to climate change, towards incentivising the low carbon transition, and divesting Ireland’s Strategic Investment Fund away from fossil fuel investments.¹⁷ The scientific reality and justice implications of climate change means that a business-as-usual approach to policy and certain economic objectives is no longer viable, socially or ecologically sustainable.

¹⁶ See:

https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/download/pdf/scc_pillar_joint_submission_on_national_mitigation_plan.pdf

¹⁷ Formerly the National Pension Reserve Fund, the Strategic Investment Fund is a State investment vehicle which is funded by taxpayers’ money. Currently, the Fund has approximately €300million invested in global fossil fuel companies. These investments could be directed to the renewable sector, where investment opportunities are increasing.

- Ensure that future plans and templates incorporated into mitigation and adaptation planning **comply with the legislative requirements** ascribed under Ireland’s Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2015).
- **Work collectively with EU partners** to increase collective ambition on EU-wide emission targets, as part of effort-sharing and in our commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement.

As part of Ireland’s commitment to the **2030 Sustainable Development Goals**,¹⁸ it must “*integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning*” and improve “*human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning*”.¹⁹ In making any advancement towards showing leadership, Ireland’s national policy framework as laid out in the National Mitigation Plan on climate change (across the relevant sectors) should be updated to reflect these goals. This will require that the **necessary technical and advisory infrastructure and capacity** be in place to inform the formulation and implementation of policy.

Ireland must meet its responsibility on climate justice

As climate impacts unfold and become unavoidable, the needs of vulnerable populations will continue to grow. Continued financial support is essential in the global effort to minimise the risks experienced by developing countries. The Green Climate Fund was established in 2010 by 194 countries who are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Fund seeks to mobilise \$100 billion per annum by 2020 in order to provide a delivery mechanism for developing countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change impacts.²⁰

Ireland’s current pledge to the Fund is €2 million, representing approximately €0.50 per capita – this compares to the average EU pledge of approximately \$12 per capita.²¹ Contributions to the Fund must be made in addition to existing overseas development aid, yet no further pledges have been made by the Irish Government. Environmental NGOs in Ireland have previously

¹⁸Under the United Nations **2030 Sustainable Development Goals**, Ireland’s has committed to take urgent action on climate change and its impacts. This commitment has to be reflected in policy ambition, planning and implementation.

¹⁹See: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/>

²⁰The Fund “*seeks to promote a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development, taking into account the needs of nations that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.*” See: <http://www.greenclimate.fund/who-we-are/about-the-fund>

²¹See <https://www.e3g.org/news/media-room/europe-tops-green-climate-fund-leaderboard> and http://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/24868/Status_of_Pledges.pdf/eef538d3-2987-4659-8c7c-5566ed6afd19

recommended that a fund be established to meet Ireland's international climate finance commitments.²² We support these recommendations. The establishment of a separate Climate Justice Fund, as has been done by the Scottish government,²³ would facilitate State contributions to the Green Climate Fund, and help Ireland meet its international climate finance responsibilities.

Recommendations to the Assembly: Ireland's Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (2015) states that climate policy in Ireland must give regard to climate justice. Yet, Ireland's National Mitigation Plan includes no reference to **climate justice**, and the absence of specific policy pathways and considerations of the costs of inaction in the Plan suggests a lack of overall Government commitment to the principle of climate justice. Reference to climate justice and the global and domestic, local implications of this principle for national climate policy need to be considered by Government, and addressed in future climate policy planning. As part of this commitment, the Government should increase the financial contribution it makes to the **UN Green Climate Fund** to be in line with Ireland's responsibility and capacity. The establishment of the Climate Justice Fund would provide a specific avenue for funding separate to overseas development aid.

An ecological approach to climate action is required

Climate change is a symptom of a much wider crisis that revolves around our unhealthy and unsustainable relationship with the natural world. Over-consumption, exploitation and related social inequality, unsustainable land management, pollution, ecosystem decline and extinction are all part of the same crisis. While much of the debate on climate change and climate policy centres on the human costs, less focus is attributed to the biodiversity costs and the implications for the planet's ecosystems. In addition to acting on climate, under the **UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**, Ireland has also committed to the **conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems**, and to take urgent, significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats and halt the loss of biodiversity. Climate change impacts will have considerable impacts on the natural ecosystems which human society depends on; however these impacts may also be amplified by policies and measures that seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

²² See: https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/download/pdf/climate_justice_fund_brief_october_2015_final.pdf

²³ See: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/International/int-dev/climatejustice>

“It is not enough to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.”²⁴

In Ireland, the development of a bio-energy sector (organic matter used as fuel and energy) has been identified as a climate mitigation option for meeting Ireland’s energy needs. Furthermore, a policy of widespread afforestation is being promoted as a means of capturing and storing carbon in the soil.²⁵ The development and reliance on bio-fuels and biomass, particularly when imported from outside the State, is not necessarily emissions neutral, and may have negative implications for regional biodiversity and food security.²⁶ Monoculture afforestation can also reduce local biodiversity and have negative impacts on soil and water quality.²⁷

Recommendations to the Assembly: Showing leadership on climate action cannot be based upon a business-as-usual approach, but should rather aim to promote and facilitate radical, transformative change in our relationship with the living planet. As much as climate policy needs to be underpinned by **fairness, social equity and social justice**, it must also aim to adopt a **true ecological approach** by incorporating the need for a healthy ecology, conserving ecological sustainability and diversity in line with Ireland’s other environmental obligations (such as the Habitats, and Birds Directive, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy). Policies for promoting reduced fossil fuel dependency and emissions will need to take into account, potential land use and ecological conflicts, as well as social and community needs. Ideally, a true ecological approach would involve policy responses that seek to simultaneously facilitate emissions reductions and biodiversity promotion. A very tangible and inexpensive example of this could involve the rewetting and protection of Ireland’s unique, but threatened **peatlands** for the purpose of storing carbon, conserving ecosystems, and offering flood protection in flood-prone regions.

²⁴ Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*: On Care for Our Common Home, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City (2015), n. 33

²⁵ See: <http://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/National%20Mitigation%20Plan%202017.pdf>

²⁶ See: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1364032114000677#bib3>

²⁷ See: https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/download/pdf/not_so_green.pdf

A social approach to climate action is required

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis argues that current environmental and social problems demand an integral response; one that hears both **the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth**. The National Mitigation Plan relies heavily on cost-effectiveness as a means of determining and evaluating climate action measures – this is despite recommendations from organisations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the formation and implementation of climate policy also incorporate distributional equity implications and the wider societal impacts.²⁸

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental... Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature”²⁹

As Ireland shifts towards a low carbon society over coming decades, the advancement of climate action measures may be socially regressive by negatively affecting communities in regions that rely on employment from fossil fuel industries (such as, for example, communities located in proximity to Ireland’s coal burning electricity station at Moneypoint, and peat-burning stations in the midland regions of Ireland).

“Today... we have to realise that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”³⁰

In their recent periodic review, the Climate Advisory Council advised that *“the distributional effects of climate change policy need to be fully assessed and measures taken need to ensure a fair and equitable transition to a carbon-free economy and society”*.³¹ The Government needs to adopt an **integral ecology** approach to climate policy; implementing climate mitigation measures that are complemented by coordinated planning to meet the needs of communities who will be affected by the introduction of measures to shift Irish society towards a low carbon economy.

²⁸ Somanathan E, Sterner T, Sugiyama T, Chimanikire D, Dubash NK, Essandoh-Yeddu JK, Fifita S, Goulder L, et al. (2014). Chapter 15 - National and sub-national policies and institutions. In: Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. IPCC Working Group III Contribution to AR5. Eds. In, , Cambridge University Press

²⁹ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City, 24 May 2015, n. 139. (See: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudatosi.html)

³⁰ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City (2015), n. 49

³¹ Climate Change Advisory Council (2017) Periodic Review Report 2017. See: http://www.climatecouncil.ie/media/CCAC_PERIODICREVIEWREPORT2017_Final.pdf

Recommendations to the Assembly: The State has a responsibility to provide **sustainable livelihoods for all**, especially the most vulnerable sections of society. The formation and delivery of policy measures on climate action must aim to be socially just and progressive, seeking not only to reduce emissions, but also aiming to facilitate a planned transition for meeting the needs of communities affected by the implementation of policy decisions. The design, delivery and evaluation of climate action policies should be based on important principles such as **equity, social and environmental wellbeing, sustainability and progress**. A number of recommendations have already been put forward in this regard, including the need to ensure that individual climate policies be **socially and rurally proofed** to minimise the impact on affected communities.³²

Strong leadership is needed to ensure an effective National Dialogue on Climate Action

A number of recent examples of public policy in Ireland show that policy delivery can be either progressive or regressive. For climate policy to be effective, **political leadership, acceptance and buy-in** from communities is essential. Therefore, we welcome the establishment of the National Dialogue on Climate Action, its objective of facilitating a system of community engagement to build public support, and the inclusion of a number of environmental and development agency representations in its formation. We also welcome that the Dialogue aims to create local, regional and national based structures to support the development and implementation of ideas.

“A consensus should always be reached between the different stakeholders, who can offer a variety of approaches, solutions and alternatives. The local population should have a special place at the table; they are concerned about their own future and that of their children, and can consider goals transcending immediate economic interest. We need to stop thinking in terms of “interventions” to save the environment in favour of policies developed and debated by all interested parties. The participation of the latter also entails being fully informed about such projects and their different risks and possibilities”³³

³²See:

http://www.iiea.com/ftp/Publications/2017/IIEA_National%20Mitigation%20Plan%20Assessment%20Report_2017.pdf

³³Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City (2015), n. 183

Given the scale of the climate challenge, we hope that the National Dialogue will seek to facilitate policy debate, and contribute to a more informed society that is motivated to engage in climate action, and empowered to participate in policy, and in a just transition to a low carbon society.

Recommendations to the Assembly: We believe that the following points will help ensure that a well-resourced National Dialogue on Climate Action can be effective in achieving its established objectives:

- Climate action will need to be framed not as a cost to Irish society, but as **an opportunity** to embrace the social, public health, economic, and environmental opportunities that are and will arise from a transition to a low carbon society.
- While it is important to acknowledge Ireland’s EU and international policy obligations on meeting climate change targets; it is vitally important that the human role and moral imperative for urgent, transformative action is meaningfully communicated. Climate action needs to be communicated as an opportunity for reconciliation with each other and with the living earth. The communication around this framing should be underpinned by:
 - The clear evidence which shows the diminishing timeframe available to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees – the goal established by the Paris Agreement.
 - The economic, social, and ecological domestic and international implications of inaction on climate change.
 - Examples of national, regional and community-based best-practice examples from other countries advancing socially, economically and ecologically progressive climate policy measures.
- The Dialogue should seek to frame climate change as a symptom of a much wider model of economic development that fails to **meaningfully prioritise socio-ecological sustainability and wellbeing**.
- It is essential that the delivery of the Dialogue be complemented and supported by a **robust, committed political and policy framework** that is underpinned by whole-Government support and commitment to meeting Ireland’s responsibility to act and play its part. Political representatives need to be aware of the realities of climate change and the urgency and need for transformative climate action.
- **Trust** is an essential ingredient in establishing buy-in and acceptance. The scientific literature shows that people’s trust in policy depends on how they perceive **knowledge,**

competence and expertise, their perceptions of **openness, honesty and motives**, their perceptions of **fairness**, and the extent to which they believe **concern and care** is shown towards the public. We recommend that these important variables be considered in how climate policy is communicated and debated throughout the Dialogue process.

Conclusion

As global temperatures break new records and climate-related displacement increasing, Ireland must ratchet up efforts to **mitigate, adapt and prepare** for greater climate risk. The short list of recommendations in this submission will not make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change. Given Ireland's existing poor record, considerable steps will have to be made to show leadership. It is hoped however, that the suggestions listed will at least put Ireland on a more meaningful and committed pathway that will help ensure Ireland is doing its fair share and seeking to minimise the long-term social and environmental costs of inaction here in Ireland and internationally. We hope that these broad suggestions are of use to the Assembly, and will be brought forward to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

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