

Climate change expert Julius Ng'oma works with communities in Malawi to ensure their voices, and concerns about climate change, are heard loud and clear.

Here, Julius shares his thoughts on why Climate justice is so important.



“The fundamental principle of climate justice is that **those who are least responsible for climate change suffer its gravest consequences.**

Countries such as Malawi are currently suffering the terrible impact of climate change, with frequent droughts and flooding destroying people’s crops and homes. In view of this, the United Nations Framework – UNFCCC – developed key principles to promote climate justice globally. These include the Common But Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) and the polluter pays principle.

The first of these, CBDR, asserts that – in view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation – states have common but different responsibilities for addressing the problems now faced. The polluter pays principle makes those most responsible for producing pollution, responsible for paying for the damage done to the natural environment. It is only the absolute understanding and consideration of these principles that will allow us to holistically, realistically, and fairly address climate change.

But we need to act now. In Malawi, not only are we experiencing the impact of climate injustice today, but it will continue for years to come, manifesting itself through frequent droughts, flooding, and diseases affecting crop yields. Malawi’s economy is mainly based on agriculture, so disasters like these will damage the income, livelihoods and health of many thousands of people.

One method of tackling this problem is through financial and technical support to the poor and most vulnerable, as is practised in the Scottish Government-funded **Climate Challenge Programme Malawi (CCPM)**. However, programmes like this must be significantly scaled up by other wealthy nations who have contributed to climate change. Only then will we have a far-reaching impact on the lives of those currently marginalised and disadvantaged by climate change.

Too much of the rich world is still in a ‘business as usual’ mode, failing to be ambitious enough in policies, programmes and plans to deal with this global challenge. Current levels and channels of financing will not guarantee the level of support needed to address climate change for millions of people in developing countries.

The CCPM is a great example to other countries – it is already helping thousands of people in Southern Malawi overcome the problems they are facing due to the global climate emergency. It illustrates that by providing the right support to vulnerable communities, we really can help them to overcome the climate-related challenges they face and become more resilient in the future. But the scale of the problem is huge – many millions of people need this support too. That is why other nations must now follow Scotland’s example. **It’s not too late to act, but it needs to happen now.**”

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

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