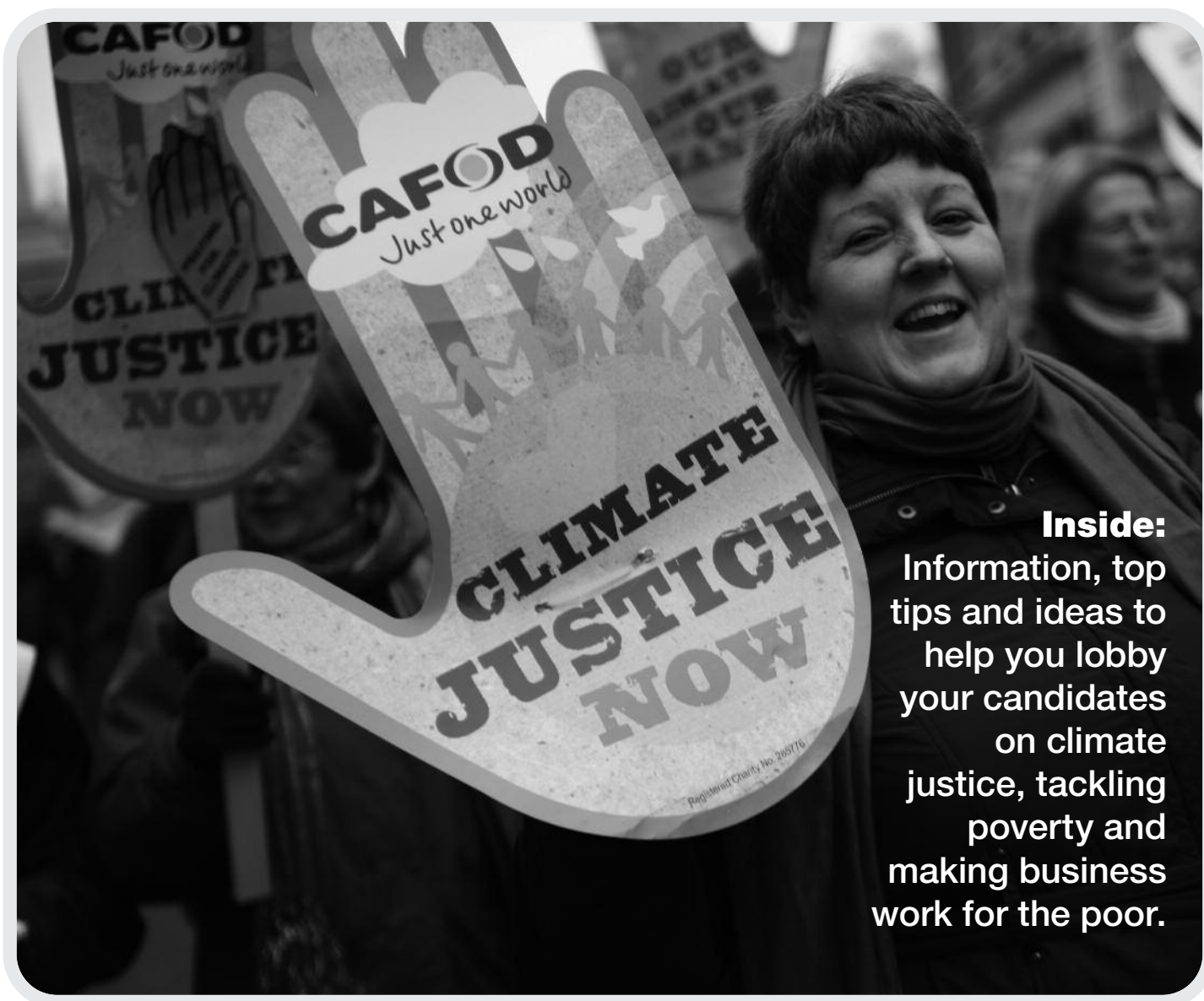


YOUR GUIDE TO THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTION



Inside:
Information, top tips and ideas to help you lobby your candidates on climate justice, tackling poverty and making business work for the poor.

Why this election matters

What's your vision? At CAFOD, we're striving for a world free from poverty and injustice where every person can flourish, live in dignity and safety, and in harmony with the rest of creation. That vision underpins everything we do.

By influencing people in power locally, nationally and internationally, we believe we can make this vision a reality and make the world a fairer place for millions of people living in poverty.

The forthcoming general election is a crucial opportunity to put the issues you care about – climate justice, tackling poverty and making business work for the poor – at the top of every party's agenda.



The decisions taken by the next government, and the next parliament, on issues like aid, climate change and regulating business will have far-reaching consequences for poor communities worldwide. That's why this election matters. And that's why we need you.

The big issues

Climate justice

The world is a gift from God and its future is intimately bound up with our own lives and choices. Climate change not only threatens the natural world, but also the lives and livelihoods of our global neighbours, especially the world's poorest communities.

Climate change risks pushing millions of people deeper into poverty. Droughts, floods and extreme weather conditions will intensify. Homes and crops will be lost, and shortages of resources like water could cause conflict. The poorest will be most vulnerable – yet they have done least to cause the problem.

In December 2009, thousands of campaigners marched in London and worldwide, yet leaders at the climate talks in Copenhagen failed to agree the fair, ambitious and binding deal the world so desperately needs. The talks resulted in a political 'accord' rather than a legally binding agreement. There was no new money to help countries cope with climate change – nor targets for developed countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions.

Rich countries like ours are most responsible for polluting the world's atmosphere. We have a moral duty to lead in cutting emissions and to provide money to help poorer countries grow sustainably and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Money from existing aid commitments shouldn't be diverted and money should be given as grants, not loans, so that it does not increase poor countries' debts.

Why now?

The election will come at a vitally important time for climate justice. Global talks are continuing through 2010, with the next international meeting in June – just months, or possibly weeks, after the general election.

The 2010 UK General Election

- A general election has to be held by early June 2010.
- Many MPs are standing down, so we're set to see the largest number of new MPs since 1945.
- The professional background or interests of many candidates may mean they haven't paid much attention to poverty and climate justice. Until now...



Aid

Our faith calls us to share what we have with those in need. Aid that is well-targeted and well-managed can make an enormous difference to people in poverty. It can help train teachers, equip hospitals, boost local businesses and much more. But there's not enough of it. In addition, aid may not be targeted to meet the needs of the poorest and can come with potentially harmful conditions attached.

In 1970, rich countries at the United Nations pledged to give 0.7 per cent of their national income in aid. Today, only a handful of countries have met this target although some are working towards it.

After years of lobbying and campaigning, in particular through

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY in 2005, all the main UK political parties have now committed to meeting this aid target over time if in government. But we need to make sure they keep this promise in tough economic times.

Why now?

There's a draft bill before parliament at the moment to turn this pledge into UK law, making it harder for any future government to cut aid spending, but analysts believe it's very unlikely to pass before the general election. Therefore it's important that all parties commit to passing this bill if they get into government.

Making business work for the poor

Many powerful global companies are based in the UK or listed on the London Stock Exchange. As our *Clean up your Computer* and *Unearth Justice* campaigns showed, multinational businesses can have a huge impact on people in the developing world. Despite voluntary initiatives and a growing Corporate Social Responsibility industry, problems are still being reported. Businesses can bring jobs and investment. But in the worst cases they can contribute to corruption, human rights abuses and environmental damage.

We're calling on the next UK government to ensure companies publish information about their behaviour and their impacts - in particular making public all payments, including taxes, that they make to governments in each country where they operate.

Why now?

All the parties say that they will give the private sector a central role in development. So it's vital that the next UK Government adopts a balanced approach to business, ensuring that the actions of all companies support development and do not harm communities and the environment.

Parliament is already considering a Bribery Bill, but a detailed anti-corruption strategy and sufficient resources are still needed to combat bribery and corruption by UK companies or their subsidiaries.

“The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.”

**Pope Benedict XVI,
World Day of Peace message, 2010**

In accordance with charity law, CAFOD does not endorse any particular party or candidate or seek to persuade members of the public to vote for or against a candidate or a political party. Our aim is to raise awareness of international development issues with all candidates, whatever party they represent.

What we're calling for

We urge all prospective candidates to support three specific things:

- 1) **Climate Justice.** Working towards a fair and binding global climate deal as an immediate priority. This deal should:
 - be legally binding
 - include emissions cuts from developed countries of more than 40 per cent on 1990 levels by 2020
 - include \$195 billion each year by 2020 on top of existing aid pledges to help poor countries cope with climate change
- 2) **Aid.** Turning the UK's commitment to give 0.7 per cent of gross national income as aid into law
- 3) **Making business work for the poor.** Supporting measures to ensure that international companies act responsibly, and do not contribute to tax evasion or corruption overseas

Suggested questions for your local candidates

These are questions that you can ask your candidates when they knock on your door, when you meet them, at a hustings or by letter or email. You may also want to give them a copy of these questions at your meeting.

Climate Justice

- Do you agree that the next UK government needs to support work towards a fair and legally binding global climate deal as a top priority? If so, what action would you take to press for this if elected?
- How would you and your party support the target of the rich countries achieving carbon emissions cuts of more than 40 per cent on 1990 levels, by the year 2020? Would you support a strengthening of the UK Climate Change Act? What influence would you and your party use in the EU to ensure other rich countries in Europe commit to these cuts too?
- How would you and your party ensure that the UK and other rich countries help poor countries to adapt to and cope with climate change? Would you agree to a level of \$195 billion per year by 2020 which is additional to existing overseas aid budgets?

Aid

- The UK's main political parties all agree that the UK should honour its commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on aid. How would you and your party guarantee this is never reneged on and when would you turn this pledge into law?

Making business work for the poor

- Companies can have a huge impact on human rights or the environment but often they can simply opt out of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. What actions would your party take to ensure that all UK-based companies behave responsibly in the developing world?
- How will you make sure that the Bribery Bill is enforced and UK companies do not contribute to corruption overseas?



What you can do

Are aid, climate justice and making business work for the poor voting issues for you? Then, let your prospective candidates know. It could make a huge difference if every newly-elected MP knew their constituents were pushing them to act to tackle poverty and injustice.

No specialist knowledge or experience is required! Find out below what you can do and encourage your friends or fellow parishioners to join you.

1. Find your constituency and who is standing as a candidate

Visit cafod.org.uk/election to find out the names of the candidates in your constituency.

2. Find your candidates' contact details

Type each candidate's name and party into an internet search engine. Web searches may also help you find out more about your candidates' interests and background.

3. Get in touch with your candidates

- Ring or email their office and introduce yourself as a constituent. You are getting in touch because you are concerned about climate change and global poverty. You would like to know what action they and their party plan to take.
- If you have a group of people (e.g. from your parish) interested in meeting the candidate this could make them particularly keen to hear what you have to say.
- If you can't meet your candidates, outline your concerns in a telephone call, email or letter. Make sure you include questions for them to respond to (see page four for suggestions). You can also raise your concerns if someone canvasses at your door.

Top tips for meeting candidates

- Don't be intimidated! MPs and parliamentary candidates can't be experts on everything. You may find you know more about climate change and world poverty than they do!
- Stay polite, and keep your points simple and focused.
- If the candidate tries to change the subject, politely but firmly bring them back to the point. You could say: "I know your time is very valuable, but we really only came here to discuss how you can help on this issue."
- Finish with an action point for them to take forward and take notes so you have a record of the points they made. You can hold them to these if elected!
- If the candidate asks a question you can't answer, offer to find out and get back to them. Contact us or visit cafod.org.uk/election for answers to any sticky questions (see page eight).
- Follow up with a thank you letter and re-emphasise your points. If the candidate agreed to do anything as a result of your conversation, politely remind them.
- Please let us know what they said – use the feedback form on page twelve. This will be invaluable for us to find out which newly-elected MPs might support our aims.



Hustings

Hustings are public meetings where local candidates can be asked questions about their policies. It's your chance to see your candidates in person and hear their opinions. You could organise a hustings event yourself – or work with other churches or groups in your constituency. It's fine to focus the hustings on one topic, such as global poverty.

Top tips for hustings

- Find a date as far in advance as you can, that works for as many of the candidates as possible. Candidates may have very busy diaries.
- Book a suitable venue. Make sure candidates have clear directions to the venue, and note their mobile phone numbers in case they run late on the day.
- Make sure people know it is happening – distribute flyers and posters, tell your local newspapers, and advertise in newsletters and on email lists.
- Plan what needs to happen on the day. Agree on someone to meet the participants. Make sure you have water for the speakers, and test the microphone system!
- Find a firm and fair chairperson, who will be seen as impartial. It's their job to make sure that candidates speak for equal amounts of time and that questions from the audience are short and to the point.
- Thank the candidates afterwards and publicise the key points raised through local media, newsletters or websites.

Legal stuff: rules around campaigning during an election period

If you're acting on behalf of a CAFOD group, organising a public event, or mentioning your support for CAFOD when contacting candidates, there are rules you need to follow to avoid accusations of bias.

Don't give the impression of supporting or disparaging one candidate or political party.

Don't do any public campaigning or media work with your MP or one candidate only. Make sure all candidates are invited to meetings or events.

Don't publish materials that seek to make comparisons between the parties' manifesto commitments – this could be interpreted as influencing the reader into voting for one party over another. Setting out information for people to draw their own conclusions is fine. Making direct comparisons and drawing conclusions from them is not.

Don't use statements from one particular candidate or party publicly during the election period. If you use one statement, you need to seek statements from all the local candidates, including any independent candidates.

For more guidance about campaigning around a general election, visit:
www.charity-commission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/elect.asp

As an individual constituent, you can still visit or write to individual candidates privately to raise issues of concern to you. Attending an event that one candidate has initiated themselves is also fine. The rules above apply only when you are acting as a CAFOD supporter or in the public arena.



**“We are citizens of the world.
When you elect your politician, elect
someone who guarantees that our great-
grandchildren can inherit a world like we
have today. Your vote guarantees the
safety of this world.”**

**Cristián Domínguez,
climate change campaigner, Bolivia**

Got the lobbying bug?

If you've enjoyed lobbying your candidates, why not become a CAFOD MP correspondent?

The general election is only the beginning. We need to make sure that newly-elected MPs know that their constituents care about poverty and injustice. All we ask is that you build on the contact you've had with your new MP by contacting them three times each year. We'll provide everything you need to take action.

MPs assume that for every constituent who gets in touch, there must be at least ten more who care but will never get round to contacting them.

MPs can influence party policy and government ministers – taking your concerns right to the top. They pass laws and set budgets on climate change, aid, corporate behaviour and other issues affecting poor communities worldwide. These communities may not have a voice in decision-making, but we do.

Becoming a CAFOD MP correspondent

We provide:

- easy-to-adapt letters and background info
- a 'Write for Justice' pack with tips, ideas and contact details for writing a letter or lobbying your MP in person
- ongoing support from our campaigns team

All you need to do is:

- write to your MP three times a year
- meet with them (individually or as part of a group) at least once a year
- tell us how you got on.

“It's time very well spent – you actually feel like you're getting somewhere, making a difference.”

Joe Andrew,
CAFOD MP Correspondent, Stoke-on-Trent

Still got questions?

You don't need to be an expert in aid, climate change or business before contacting your candidates. But to help you feel more confident, we've got some answers to frequently asked questions on our big issues.

Visit cafod.org.uk/election for:

- Tricky questions and answers on climate justice
- Vote Global manifesto – produced for the general election by BOND, a network of development charities which includes CAFOD.
- Questions and answers on the Vote Global manifesto
- Details of local training, events and hustings

More information

Before you meet the candidates, you might like to find out where their parties stand on our big issues. We've listed the websites and phone numbers of the main political parties below, but remember in your constituency there may also be independent candidates or representatives of smaller parties.

www.conservatives.com	020 7222 9000
www.labour.org.uk	08705 900 200
www.libdems.org.uk	020 7222 7999

Contact us

Fill in the feedback form below or contact Rachael Varney, our parliamentary officer on rvarney@cafod.org.uk or 020 7095 5413 with any questions or to let us know how you get on.

You can also find details of your local diocesan office here: cafod.org.uk/uk

