



The effects of climate change are complex and cut across peoples, communities, civil society, businesses and governments around the planet. For this reason, it is vital that all levels of society explore ways to both minimise and manage the present and future effects of this international phenomenon.

Integrated, coordinated action must occur at all levels of society. Action at the community level not only has the potential to minimise and manage the effects of climate change directly, but also has the power to influence and inspire change in other sectors such as business and government.

This fact sheet highlights what can be done at the government, business and community levels to address climate change.

What can be done to address climate change?

Every sector of society has a role in activities that produce greenhouse gases. Solutions must therefore involve cooperation among individuals, communities, businesses, civil society and governments. Action must take place at the local, national and international level.

Reduce emissions

Human beings are the primary drivers and responders of climate change. The primary cause of climate change is increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (UNEP, 2007). The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide which is produced by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas to produce energy (PEW Centre on Global Climate Change, 2007). These fuels are used to produce electricity and for transport around the world.

There are many ways in which greenhouse gas levels can be reduced.

Individuals can:

- ◆ Calculate your current impact. See [http://](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/ClimateChange/WhatYouCanDo/carbon_neutral.asp)

www.davidsuzuki.org/ClimateChange/WhatYouCanDo/carbon_neutral.asp for a range of online calculators.

- ◆ Make simple changes in your energy consumption such as turning lights off and using your car less can reduce your impact.
- ◆ At home and work replace light bulbs with new energy efficient bulbs, unplug electronic devices when not in use and recycle where possible.
- ◆ Walk, cycle and use public transport where possible to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- ◆ Switch to green power: Energy generated by clean renewable sources. (Climatecrisis.net).

Governments can:

Introduce policies and legislation that:

- ◆ Support and reward household and business use of alternative energy sources such as wind and solar power.
- ◆ Promote energy efficiency and conservation by businesses and

households.

- ◆ Establish carbon trading schemes.

Businesses can:

- ◆ Introduce technologies and techniques to cut their operational energy use.
- ◆ Improve the energy efficiency of products they produce such as electrical appliances and vehicles.
- ◆ Become *carbon neutral* by offsetting their emissions.
- ◆ Save money by reducing their energy use.

Did you know?

Taking action

- ◆ In 2006, the UK Government outlined a Climate Change Bill to reduce emissions by 60% by 2050 (UK Government, 2006).
- ◆ In 2001, in San Francisco USA, the community voted in favour of an initiative that paid for solar panels, increased energy efficiency and wind turbines for public facilities (The Vote Solar Initiative, 2007).
- ◆ Mexico was the first large oil producing nation to ratify the Kyoto Protocol (Pew Center on Global Climate Change, 2007).
- ◆ In 2007 the German Environment Minister announced that he will work towards doubling the amount of non-fossil fuel energies in Germany by 2020 (Deutsche Well World, 2007).
- ◆ Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer is aiming to cut emissions by 20% by 2012. This is also expected to reduce operating costs (Mongabay.com, 2006).
- ◆ Brazil offers tax incentives for buyers of cars with lower emissions (Pew Center on Global Climate Change, 2007).
- ◆ In 2000, India's energy policy initiatives reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 5% (Pew Center on Global Climate Change, 2007).



Communities can:

- ◆ Calculate the individual - family - community carbon dioxide emissions, set a reduction target and make a plan of action to achieve it. See: <http://www.earthday.net/> or http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral.asp
 - ◆ Encourage government and politicians (local, state and national) to introduce emission reduction targets, and policies that encourage renewable energy. The UNFCCC (2007) has recommended that industrialised countries need to reduce their emissions by 60-80% by 2050.
 - ◆ Encourage your local government to join Cities for Climate Protection at www.iclei.org/co2/
 - ◆ Protect trees and forests. Deforestation and land use change accounts for as much as 25% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Conservation International, 2007).
 - ◆ Organise a tree planting program See the Billion Tree Campaign website for information and support materials: - <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/index.asp> (in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic).
 - ◆ Avoid excess packaging. Reducing waste will help cut emissions
- (Climate Crisis 2007). See the CUW Waste in the Environment and Plastic Bags Fact Sheets.
 - ◆ Include climate change content in school curriculums to educate young people.
 - ◆ Explore alternative energies such as solar cookers – see <http://www.solarcooking.org/docs.htm> (in 15 languages).
 - ◆ Be more water efficient, especially in drought-affected areas and consider additional water storage – see <http://practicalaction.org/practicalanswers/> and the CUW Water Conservation Information Sheet.
 - ◆ Talk to your teacher or employer about organising a walk or bike to work/school day.
 - ◆ Maintain diverse seed supplies and be flexible in the types of crops that can be grown. Agricultural biodiversity provides resistance to changing conditions and is a key adaptation strategy. <http://www.ukabc.org/> and <http://www.fao.org/biodiversity/>
 - ◆ Raise awareness in your community – use a local hall or town square to establish a central information point, erect public noticeboards, organise dances, plays or poster competitions. Keep messages simple for maximum effect.

- ◆ Approach local media such as radio to include one-off and/or ongoing segments on climate change.
- ◆ Remember to share your successes as widely as possible - notify media, CUW and other local, national and international organisations.

Please see the References section and Clean Up the World Internet Resource List for more useful websites on this issue.

Document last updated January 2009

References

Climate Crisis, *Ten Things To Do*, viewed 12 March 2007, Viewed 15 Jan 2009, <http://www.climatecrisis.net/pdf/10things.pdf>

Conservation International, 2007, *Climate Change*, viewed 15 Jan 2009, <http://conservation.org/learn/climate/Pages/overview.aspx>

Deutsche Well World, 2007, *German Companies World-Leaders in Renewable Energy*, 15 Jan 2009, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2355370,00.html>

Mongabay.com, 2006, *A Green Walmart?* viewed 15 Jan 2009, <http://news.mongabay.com/2006/0208-walmart.html>

Pew Center on Global Climate Change, *Climate Change Mitigation in Developing Countries*, viewed 15 Jan 2009, http://www.pewclimate.org/globalwarmingindepth/all_reports/climate_change_mitigation/dev_mitigation_execs.cfm

The Earth Institute at Columbia University, 2008, *Climate and Society*, viewed 15 Jan 2009, <http://www.earth.columbia.edu/articles/view/2124>

The Vote Solar Initiative, *Regional Initiatives*, viewed 15 Jan 2009, <http://www.votesolar.org/state-initiatives/regional.html>

UK Government, 2006, *Government unveils Climate Change Bill*, 16 November 2006, viewed 15 Jan 2009, http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/N11/Newsroom/DG_064897

UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) 2008, *World Environment Day – 5 June 2008*, Fact-sheet, viewed 15 Jan 2009, http://www.unep.org/wed/2008/english/Information_Material/factsheet.asp

UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), 2007, *UNFCCC Executive Secretary calls for speedy and decisive action on climate change*, viewed 15 Jan 2009, http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advocates/application/pdf/070202press_rel_paris_en.pdf

UNFCCC, 2008, *The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan 1-12 Dec 2008*, viewed 15 Jan 2009, http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php