

The Paris climate agreement and the question of climate justice

Tasks

1. Watch the videos by “Bread for the World” on the Paris Climate Agreement (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SREtWjmfkgA> [translation via subtitle is possible]) and the interview with Sabine Minninger on climate justice (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqMdex_ivdI&t=69s [translation via subtitle is possible]).
2. Discuss the three main goals of the Paris Climate Agreement with regard to the consequences for your own personal life and for societies, states and businesses in the Global North.
3. Formulate a definition of the term "climate justice" in a maximum of 30-35 words.

The "Paris Agreement" was adopted at the World Climate Conference on 12 December 2015. With a view to the 2030 Agenda¹ for Sustainable Development, 195 countries committed to mitigating climate change and reorganising the global economy in a climate-friendly way.

The three main objectives of the agreement are:

1. limiting the rise in global average temperature
2. reducing emissions and adapting to climate change
3. channelling financial resources in line with climate protection goals.

Specifically, the agreement states that the global temperature rise should be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius if possible, but in any case to well below two degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial age.

In order to achieve this goal, the amount of climate-damaging gases² emitted in 2050 can't exceed the amount that is removed from the atmosphere, for example by forests. According to the unanimous opinion of (natural) scientists, this can only be achieved, if the global economy immediately and consistently releases significantly less carbon ("decarbonisation").

The ability of all countries, but especially those most affected, to adapt to the changing climate needs to be improved and their resilience to the adverse effects of climate change needs to be increased. The Paris Agreement states that it is only possible when billions dollars in global public and private financial flows into sustainable investments. The countries of the global south are to be supported financially and through knowledge and technology transfer in realising measures for climate protection and adaptation to the consequences of climate change.

The Paris Climate Agreement involves all countries of the world. They have committed themselves under international law to making a national climate contribution, developing concrete steps for implementation and reporting regularly on the progress of their efforts.

In the same direction the concept of “climate justice” views man-made climate change not only as an environmental problem and technical challenge, but primarily as a political and

¹ The 2030 Agenda (from 2015) is the first international agreement to link the principle of sustainability with poverty reduction and economic, ecological and social development.

² Since the beginning of industrialisation around 1800, humans have unintentionally had a massive impact on the earth's natural heat balance by introducing more and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels. Together with water vapour and other gases such as methane, nitrous oxide and fluorocarbons, this carbon dioxide now reflects some of the heat back to earth, that was previously able to escape into space. This increasingly heats up the earth. As this effect is similar to the principle of a greenhouse, the gases in question are also referred to as greenhouse gases: Like the panes of glass in a greenhouse, they amplify the heat from the sun and retain it.

ethical issue. Climate change is linked to issues such as equality, human rights and social justice.

So far, the countries and population groups that are suffering the most from the consequences of global warming are those that have contributed the least to it now and in the past. People in the global south are particularly affected, including the most vulnerable, such as indigenous communities, smallholder farmers, women, children, the elderly and the sick.

The concept of climate justice endeavours to distribute the burdens and opportunities of climate change fairly across the globe. According to this concept, the main perpetrators of climate change must not only drastically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. They also have a responsibility to provide countries with appropriate support in adapting to the consequences of climate change, coping with climate-related damage and losses and making the transition to a climate-neutral, sustainable economy and way of life.