

Climate justice and recovery post-COVID-19: social and racial inequality

22 July 2020, 14:00-15:30 BST, Zoom

14.00 – 14.05 Welcome and introduction

14.05 – 14.30 Presentations

Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of the Centre for Climate Justice, and
Dr Sennan Mattar, Researcher at the Centre for Climate Justice, Glasgow Caledonian University

Dr Patrick Schröder, Senior Research Fellow of the Energy, Environment and Resources Programme, Chatham House

Zarina Ahmad, Climate Change and Environment Officer, CEMVO Scotland

14.30 – 14.45 Question and answer session

14.45 – 15:10 Breakout room discussions

Breakout room 1: How do we ensure the transition out of this crisis to a new normal is done in a manner that is equitable, fair and climate just for all?

Breakout room 2: How do we support international efforts to build resilient, sustainable local economies in the era of climate change?

Breakout room 3: How do we build back better to ensure inclusivity?

15:10 – 15:30 Plenary discussion and closing remarks

Event contacts:

For questions regarding the event content, please contact Sennan Mattar: Sennan.Mattar@gcu.ac.uk

For questions regarding registration, please contact Melissa MacEwen: mmacewen@chathamhouse.org

Context for the event:

Global carbon emissions are expected to fall because high emitting industries and lifestyles have been hampered by lockdown measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Yet, this temporary relief for the climate has come with huge social and economic costs rarely seen in peacetime. In many industrialised it has been marginalised communities who bear the brunt of the social, economic and health impacts of COVID19. Yet the challenges are most intense in the developing world already grappling with the impacts of climate change, inadequate access to clean water and sanitation, overcrowded shelter, food insecurity and insecure livelihoods. This pandemic serves as a terrible reminder that our health and our economies are not independent of the world around us.

The lockdown measures will end, but there is a risk economic stimulus packages may follow past examples of treating the economy as separate to the wider reality of our climate and the inequalities within our societies. Racial discrimination is one particular societal inequality that is intrinsically linked to environmental policymaking and one that must be addressed in order to have a truly just transition. Poorer, marginalised, and particularly black and minority ethnic communities are disproportionately affected by environmental and health issues arising from air pollution, waste management, energy production and mineral extraction.

There are growing calls to incorporate climate action and the concepts of just transitions and circular economies into coronavirus recovery strategies. The lockdown measures have already opened our imagination to a world with less emissions and cleaner air – with the UK and European Union recently bringing recovery agendas to climate negotiations and investment plans. If the world is to prevent dangerous levels of climate change and achieve a fair transition to a low-carbon and sustainable economy, a new normal must be reached that addresses the social, climate and racial injustices that have so far characterised high-carbon economic growth.

The questions for society and policymakers across the globe are: 1) how do we ensure the transition out of this crisis to a new normal is done in a manner that is equitable, fair and climate just for all?, 2) how do we support international efforts to build resilient, sustainable local economies in the era of climate change?, and 3) How do we build back better to ensure inclusivity?

This webinar is an opportunity to hear from leading experts on a range of relevant topics and join the discussion on tackling climate change in a world after coronavirus. During registration, attendees will be invited to indicate their interest in a specific topic or region for breakout room discussions as part of this event.