

Media Release

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Hunger Strike on climate change

'to wake up the world' starts today in advance of the Copenhagen summit

Ordinary people from Tegucigalpa to Toronto are choosing to go hungry from today until at least the end of the Copenhagen climate summit – more than 40 days – as part of a global hunger strike to 'wake the world up to reality'.

In what has been described as 'a moral response to an immoral situation', members and supporters of the hunger strike - called 'Climate Justice Fast!' - have organised the strike in order to emotionally engage both world leaders and ordinary citizens around the world with the climate change issue, provoking them into taking the action that is needed to meet the ever-more-urgent scientific recommendations.

The number of supporters of the hunger strike is reported to be growing every day.

“The situation is absolutely desperate, and we’re seeing buck passing and delaying tactics from the leaders of developed countries rather than the real, necessary action to avert catastrophe,” CJF founder Paul Connor said from the Australian capitol of Canberra, where he and others began their strike on the Parliament House lawn.

Fellow activist and CJF organiser Anna Keenan, speaking from the Barcelona climate talks, which conclude today, agreed. “We must use Copenhagen to rise above the petty politics of climate change, to instead recognise it as a clearly moral issue, with a clear choice between what is right and what is morally wrong. World leaders have been making the morally wrong decisions - delay and inaction - for too long, and right now is the time for change.”

“We’re facing an emergency, and can no longer simply sit by, waiting to see what they have in store for us. We must let them know that they work for us, the people, not for special interests, and we expect responsible, moral action.”

She said people the world over are frustrated by the lack of progress in tackling climate change, and pointed to this week’s walk-out in the Barcelona climate talks by some 50 African nations in response to developed countries’ refusal to offer effective emissions targets.

During the walk out, the African leaders argued that the richer nations have been producing excessive greenhouse gases for decades, and are the only ones with the financial resources to address the problem. It is now time for them to make sacrifices, the Africans declared.

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“Barcelona brought home the fact that it is a grave injustice that developed countries continue their profligate over-consumption while the world’s poor, and all future generations, suffer. We need to let them know in Copenhagen that the world demands better”, Ms Keenan said.

American Diane Wilson, a well-known environmentalist, will be leaving her home in Texas soon to join the hunger-strikers in Copenhagen, “Something needs to be done, and quickly, before the damage becomes irreversible,” she said. “We hold the future of today’s children and the next generations in our hands, and it would be obscene to just stand by while a problem that we created destroys the planet.”

“People from all around the world have joined this fast, and I decided to do my part. If my sacrifice can wake up one person, or inspires someone to do something, it will be worth it”.

Climate Justice Fast was started in Australia, and has grown to include people from all ages and walks of life in the US, the UK, India, France, Germany, Canada, South Africa, Belgium, Honduras, Bhutan, New Zealand, and the Philippines. It begins at the conclusion of the Barcelona talks and is set to continue throughout the Copenhagen summit.

Pointing to what he described as the failure of the Barcelona talks, Mr. Connor said time that is running out and more desperate measures – such as this hunger strike – are therefore appropriate. He expects to see an increase in radical action as people realise the seriousness of the crisis and respond to world leaders’ lack of commitment and action.

“This is a global emergency driving us towards an almost unimaginable catastrophe, and our governments’ inaction is set to make them complicit in the greatest crime against humanity in history. We’re already seeing the world’s most vulnerable people suffering the consequences of a problem they did not cause,” he said.

“We are average citizens, all with different background, from all around the world, who are driven to take this same, drastic action because our planet is facing a drastic emergency. Judging from the support we’re receiving, a lot of people feel the same way.”

Ends

Images are available. Interviews can be arranged with

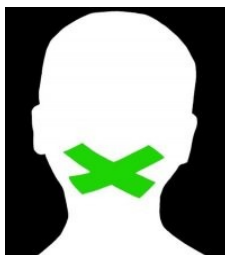
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