

9 December 2008

## Open letter to the world's leaders

In the face of economic crisis, we have seen what is achievable when countries unite in a common cause. But, with the world at the brink of ecological disaster and millions of poor people already living on the frontline of climate change, it is essential that this ambition be heightened as world leaders meet at the UN climate negotiations in Poland.

The hope following last year's UN climate negotiations at Bali has faded, with progress painfully slow. This is to the detriment of poor people, who are now at risk of having any progress in pulling them from poverty reversed by climate change.

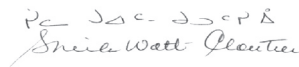
Around the world, international aid agencies like Oxfam have seen the effects of climate change on the world's poor. In Uganda, changing weather patterns mean farmers gamble when to sow seeds to feed their children and make some money, or see them wash away in floods or dry up in drought. In Bangladesh, more intense and frequent monsoons have destroyed homes, while land salinisation has made water unsafe to drink and impossible to grow crops. Around the world, general health is at risk by disease and malnutrition, and children – usually girls – are being pulled from school to walk further distances for water.

It is desperately unfair that the poor should again feel the brunt, despite being least responsible. Wealthy nations, who are in their advantaged position because of heavy industrialisation, are the most responsible and able to lead the world in tackling climate change. This is why you must show leadership in Poland and provide solutions that have the interests of the world's poor at their heart.

Rich countries must lead the way to cut emissions now so that all countries take their fair share of responsibility and act to stop global warming exceed 2oC above pre-industrial levels. They must also commit funding so poor communities can adapt to climate change. Together, we must work towards low carbon development so that all countries – including the poor – can prosper.

We look to you to ensure that these ingredients are put in place in Poland. Only then can we hope for a global climate agreement that will safe-guard the planet and ensure poor people can truly pull themselves from poverty.

Yours truly

Archbishop Emeritus  
Desmond Tutu

Sheila Watt-Cloutier



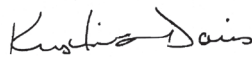
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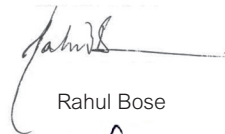
Ian McEwan



Sir David Attenborough



Kristin Davis



Rahul Bose



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Annie Lennox



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