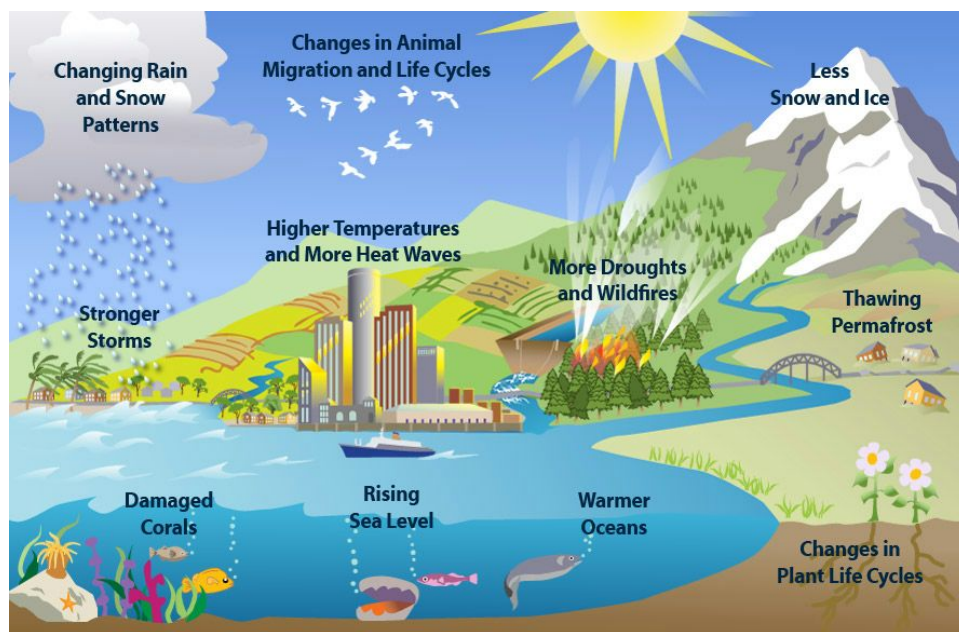


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## What is Climate Justice?

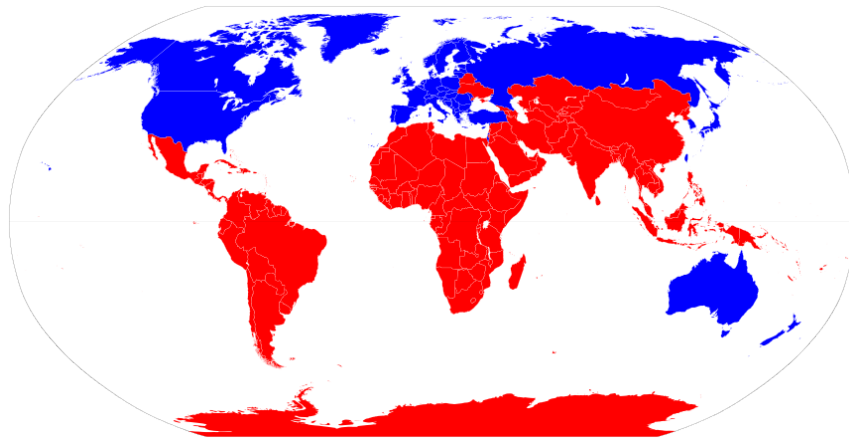
The effects of climate change are seen and felt in all regions of our world, but some people are feeling these immediate consequences more drastically than others. Storms are getting bigger, they're lasting longer, and they're reaching places they never used to normally reach. Areas that are normally dry are being flooded by heavy rainfall, and annually wet regions are experiencing prolonged droughts. Weather is becoming more extreme, and the places that are being hit the hardest are the areas that were not responsible for this change in climate.



## Who is responsible?

It all started in Britain, when the Industrial revolution began in the 1700s. It quickly spread to other parts of the world and soon many countries were inventing machines that would be used in

factories that ran on dirty coal, which released an enormous amount of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. We know now that greenhouse gases are the cause of man-made climate change, and our climate has been continually warming since the release of gases like CO<sub>2</sub> and methane in mass quantities. The industrial revolutions in these countries turned them into developed countries, while the countries that hadn't had their industrial revolutions were left behind. The global north consists of countries like North America and Europe that have been industrialized, that have high human development indexes, and are generally quite stable. The global south consists of developing countries like South America and Africa that have not yet fully gone through their industrial revolutions, have high population growth, unstable economies, lack of resources and lack of funds.



Global south is in red and global north is in blue

This created a divide between the two regions of the world that is continuously getting wider. Because the global south has not yet gone through their industrial revolutions fully or are just beginning to take their first steps, they have not been emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere for nearly as long as the countries in the global north have. This means that the global north has emitted more pollutants into the air, which makes them the driving force of

man-made climate change. The greenhouse gases rise into our atmosphere, build up and warm our world. This rise in global temperatures changes global weather patterns, which is what has been leading to increased amounts of unpredictable storms and stronger weather events.

### **So what is climate justice?**

It is exactly what it sounds like. It is a global movement that brings environmental issues like climate change together with issues of social injustice and inequality. The global south has to suffer the consequences from the emissions of the global north, and the global north has done close to nothing to alleviate the suffering and destruction vulnerable countries are feeling because of the rising temperatures. The climate justice movement aims to give individuals in communities that are feeling the effects of climate change a voice in the global discussion of climate change. They want justice for the people who are forced out of their communities because of rising sea levels or destructive storms and they want the global north to take the responsibility of coming up with solutions to the problems they made.



### **How are they doing this?**

Each year the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) holds a Conference of the Parties (COP), which is a place where representatives from every country in the

world come together and discuss the issue of climate change and what their efforts are going to be to in order to combat the negative effects. The climate justice movement attends these events and even though they can't go inside where the actual conference take place, they create their own two week event where members of civil society come together and discuss what they wish to see come out of the negotiations. Civil society consists individuals, groups and organizations that are linked together through a common interest or goal, and for the climate justice movement that is ensuring that the outcome of the climate negotiations take into account the needs and rights of indigenous, poor, or vulnerable communities around the world that need protection from the effects of climate change that are a direct result of the actions of the global north. They do this through speeches, workshops, discussions, presentations, and collaborations. Many different organizations come together at the two week people's summit that takes place outside of the Conference of Parties, where they can exchange ideas and information with each other. They work together through peaceful protests and demonstrations that show what and who they are standing up for, since the delegates inside tend to not pay attention to their needs. Collectively they can create blockades, which prevent the delegates from leaving the negotiations until the demands of the climate justice movement are met, or they can come together and chant their demands at the negotiators that exit the building. To sum it up, there is an enormous amount of creative effort coming from the climate justice movement. They see that the current global political system is perpetuating injustice, and in simplest terms, the people who have been on the short end of the stick are demanding justice.

**What happened last year at the COP21?**

Last year in Paris, the COP21 took place and for the first time since the beginning of these conferences in 1997, there was a consensus and the Paris Agreement was created. Although this was seen as a groundbreaking event in environmental legislation, it is far from perfect. The agreement states that everyone should limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. The problem is that the ‘pledges’ the countries made weren’t legally binding, so there is almost no motivation or incentive for them to keep their word.

The climate justice movement doesn’t believe that the vulnerable communities were represented enough and the forceful language they wanted included in the text in order to ensure these communities were taken care of was eliminated. The text did include 100 billion dollars to the Green Climate Fund and 100 billion for loss and damages, but again, no country was held liable to donate money to either. For the most part, the climate justice movement feels that the Paris Agreement is full of empty promises.



**So why should you care?**

Countries in the global south are already suffering from climate change, and soon extreme weather will begin to hit wealthier nations. In California, we are already experiencing the effects of our warming world with the extreme prolonged drought. Some parts of the global north are already feeling some of the effects with extended droughts and flooding. But the global north has the resources to deal with these kind of events. Vulnerable communities in countries in the global south do not, and the destruction to their homes and buildings from extreme weather will probably not be fixed. The increased amount of unpredictable/changing weather patterns makes it hard for farmers to grow crops, which is essential to the livelihoods of these people. Their lives are at stake and the climate justice movement wants the world to know, mobilize, and take action.