School of Anthropology and Conservation
Declaration of Climate and Environment Emergency

Preamble

The Global Climate and Environment Crisis

Humanity and the environment that supports it face a historically unparalleled existential threat from human-induced climate change and environmental degradation.

An average one degree Celsius of global warming is already destabilising the world's ice sheets and regional climate systems, rising sea levels, and accelerating or increasing the frequency and intensity of floods, droughts, extreme weather events and spread of diseases. Together with the growing pressures on dwindling natural resources and widespread damage to the Earth's atmospheric, terrestrial and marine life-support systems, the effects of ocean acidification, accumulation of plastics, pollution and historically unprecedented loss of biodiversity have far reaching impacts socially, politically and economically. The climate and environmental crisis presents both a stark warning and a threat to life and civilization as we know it.

Wealthier, industrialised countries and regions have disproportionately contributed to the climate and environmental crisis and have repeatedly obstructed global efforts to transition toward a sustainable economy, and thus bear an extraordinary responsibility to address the crisis. Poorer countries, regions and people, by contrast, have contributed least to the crisis yet shoulder an increasing and disproportionate brunt of the consequences.

In April 2016 world leaders from 175 countries recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep warming "well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C."

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that the actions currently pledged are not enough; with current ambition likely to result in warming of three degrees by 2100. In its latest Special Report, IPCC SR15[1], the IPCC issued a stark warning noting that the global community has just 12 years to limit the most devastating impacts of

[1] The IPCC SR15 is the largest of its kind in history and was assembled by a panel of the world's top experts. It is based on the careful analysis and interpretation of findings across a range of disciplines, in a way that reflects the state of knowledge today. Its recommendations are both conservative and based on a high level of scientific consensus, see https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/.

global heating. The UN Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services (IPBES) additionally warns of biodiversity loss so rapid and severe that we face the extinction of one million species within the next few decades.

Global emissions must decline by 45% by 2030 (from 2010 levels), and reach net-zero by around 2050 to limit warming to one and a half degrees. To achieve this, there must be rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land-use, buildings and infrastructure. The IPCC acknowledges that this will be very difficult without immediate action, but also note that “the energy transition required to limit global warming to one and a half degrees is already underway in many sectors around the world.”

Minimising the catastrophic effects of unmitigated climate change requires an emergency mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II, in order to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, rapidly and safely draw down or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and implement measures to protect all people and species from the worst consequences of abrupt climate change.

The role and responsibilities of Higher and Further Education and the School of Anthropology and Conservation

The School of Anthropology and Conservation at the University of Kent is a global leader in inter- and multi-disciplinary research and teaching relating to environmental conservation, human-environment relations and the human condition more generally. As a School we are deeply aware of the ability, duty and responsibility of universities to generate the necessary knowledge and human capacities needed to transition to an ecologically, socially and economically regenerative economy at emergency speed.

SAC is committed to social and environmental well-being, sustainability and justice and to helping students become critical global citizens and catalysts for effective and long-lasting change. Our staff and students have witnessed up front the dramatic consequences that the climate and environment emergency is having on many of the world's critical ecosystems and societies, including the indigenous and local ways of life that both support and are supported by much of Earth's biodiversity.

In addition to the challenges faced by institutions across all sectors seeking to reduce their environmental impact at a time of great financial duress and uncertainty, SAC faces the additional challenge that as a School within a larger University, it has limited direct control, oversight and ability to determine many of the decisions and actions relating to its use of energy and resources. Nevertheless as a group of deeply concerned and committed administrators, academics, researchers and students, we feel compelled to raise the alarm and to constructively engage and work with those around us to make those changes that are necessary to stave off the worst consequences of climate change and to ensure a liveable future for all.

Declaration

In light of the above, the School of Anthropology and Conservation commits to:

- Declare a Climate and Environment Emergency
  This involves stating publicly to all students, staff and to the University of Kent that we:

- Fully acknowledge the academic findings of IPBES (2019) and IPCC SR15, and the severity of the risks and consequences of not taking immediate and effective actions to decarbonise our economy and society
- Fully accept the need for change and the recommendations as set out by IPCC SR15
- Support calls and actively work towards the University of Kent declaring a climate and environment emergency and taking effective action by reducing its own carbon and ecological footprint, as outlined below.
- Commit to sensitise and educate the community of stakeholders within and beyond the University on the scale and urgency of the crises and the need for action.
- Work with University of Kent administrators as well as other Schools and students and their representative Union and organisations to embed the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, as set out by the signing of the SDG accord by the University of Kent in 2018.
- Support Canterbury City Council's and Kent County Council's recent declarations of a climate emergency, and their target of reaching zero emissions by 2030 and 2050, respectively.

- Set a target to reduce emissions related to SAC activity, committing to meet, and aspiring to surpass, IPCC SR15 recommendations.
    - Make baseline calculations of 2018 direct and indirect emissions[2] and size of ecological footprint
    - Reduce emissions by at least 45% by 2025, reaching net zero by 2040 or, at the very latest, 2050[3].
    - Review relevant internal plans, actions and policies in order to conform to these goals.

- Establish and mandate a staff-student working group to advise on and develop actions required to meet the above commitments, which can liaise with the University for the calculation of baseline emissions and for devising appropriate strategies.

[2] Direct emissions (Scope 1) result from owned or controlled resources, such as gas; indirect emissions result from the consumption of purchased energy, such as electricity (Scope 2) or through the consumption of resources and production of waste upstream and downstream from the institution (Scope 3), and which are associated both with the direct running of the institution (including, for example, the consumption of paper or sourcing of materials), as well as the practices and habits of its members (including, for example, the carbon footprint of work, research and scholarly-related travel)

[3] These figures are aspirational to the extent that the production of Scope 1 and 2 emissions, in particular, lie outside of the direct control of the School and will thus require close cooperation with the University.