



Quaker Peace &
Social Witness

Stand Up and Take Action: The Great Persuasion

16-18 October 2009

Stand up and persuade politicians to take action on poverty and climate change now! We want you to contact your parliamentary candidates on 16-18 October and persuade them to pledge to meet commitments to carbon emissions reduction and ending poverty.

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What is happening?

On the weekend of 16-18 October 2009, millions of people worldwide will contact their politicians demanding that they take action against poverty and climate change.

In the UK the aim of *Stand Up and Take Action: The Great Persuasion* is that activists in every constituency of the country will contact their parliamentary candidates and persuade them to pledge to take action on climate change and global poverty if their party wins the general election.

Climate change and poverty are global crises and need a global response. Standing up to politicians on 16-18 October will show decision makers worldwide that global citizens want action.

Why then?

Because of the global economic and financial crisis and because of the approaching general election (which has to take place before May 2010) decision makers in the UK are likely to be increasingly receptive to demands for action on poverty and climate change.

Confronting climate change and poverty is urgent and action must be taken now. The weekend of 16-18 October ends 50 days before the world's leaders meet in Copenhagen for the global climate talks, where a new deal on emissions reductions will be thrashed out. Global action in October will demonstrate to those negotiating the deal that the world wants it to be a deep and meaningful agreement.

Stand Up is coordinated by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), a global alliance of trade unions, community groups, faith groups, non-governmental organisations and other campaigners, and Stand Up and Take Action takes place every year around the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October. For the last four years Friends have joined with others across the globe to 'Stand Up' against poverty, with 116 million people taking action worldwide last year, in what was the largest ever public mobilisation. For more on Stand Up please see www.standagainstopoverty.org.

What can you do?

Agree to take part, by:

- Contacting the parliamentary candidates in your constituency, by visiting them, writing to them, telephoning them, emailing them, or inviting them to a meeting or event on 16-18 October.
- Persuading them of the need to work for a massive cut in CO₂ emissions and to take action on global poverty.
- See 'Lobbying your parliamentary candidates' and 'Organising an event'.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Sunniva Taylor on 020 7663 1047 or sunnivat@quaker.org.uk. Sunniva can help you identify who your parliamentary candidates are and provide resources to support you.

Action: lobbying your parliamentary candidates

Friends are encouraged to get in touch with their current MP (and/or the parliamentary candidate for your MP's party if they are not standing again) and the parliamentary candidates for the main opposition party(ies) in your constituency.

We are in the lead up the general election and we want poverty and climate change to be key electoral issues. Politicians have to be persuaded that real action on poverty and climate change is vital to them getting elected. Candidates will then feed this information back to their parties.

Visiting your parliamentary candidates or holding an event and inviting them to visit you is the most effective way to get them to listen and to engage in a conversation and debate about your concerns. However, it may only be possible to, or you may prefer to, make contact by phone or letter.

Who are your candidates?

- Identify your constituency – go to <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>. Type in your postcode. This will tell you your constituency and your MP. Note that a number of constituency boundaries have changed, which may affect which constituency you are in for the next election. If you are not sure whether this applies to your constituency go to the website of the Labour Party (www.labour.org.uk) and put your post code into the box under 'Labour in your area' in the right hand panel (all parties have a similar facility). This will tell you both your current constituency and constituency for the next general election. You need to use the later when taking the following steps.
- Find out the parliamentary candidates in your constituency at <http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/guide>. Go to 'seats a-z' and click on your constituency. You will see a description of your constituency, including your current MP and the parliamentary candidates for all parties. Note your MP will not necessarily be the parliamentary candidate for that party, if they are stepping down, for example. The key opposition candidate is probably the one who came second in the 2005 elections – look at '2005 result' (or 'Actual 2005 result') to find out who this is. You may also want to contact other candidates, particularly if they have demonstrated a particular interest in the issues.
- Find out their contact details – you will probably be able to do this by googling their name. If you are having difficulties doing this please get in touch.

Sunniva Taylor (sunnivat@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1047) can also provide you with the details of the candidates for your constituencies, and their contact details.

Arrange to meet your candidates

- If you are going to visit your candidates, write, ring or email them asking for a meeting between 16-18 October.
- In your letter/phone call/email identify yourself as a constituent and state whether you are writing as an individual or corporately (on behalf of your Meeting or a group). If you manage to get the support of your Meeting this may vastly strengthen your message. You may also wish to identify yourself as a Quaker and explain, very briefly, why Quakers are concerned about poverty and climate change. Ask to meet the candidate because you are concerned about climate change and global poverty and would like to know what they think about these issues and what action they and their party plans to take. Say that you are taking part in *Stand Up and Take Action: The Great*

Persuasion, a global action to persuade politicians to take action on these issues.

- In your letter ask whether you can take a photograph of yourself with the candidate after your meeting. You will be able to upload this at www.standagainstopoverty.org. This will demonstrate to others in the UK and abroad that UK parliamentarians are listening.
- See the template letter for candidates asking for a meeting for ideas on page 9.
- If you are told they are not available on these dates, do persist. If it really isn't possible to speak to them between 16-18 October, ask to meet as close to those dates as possible. *The Great Persuasion* will have most impact if action is concentrated.
- You will be able to register your meeting at www.standagainstopoverty.org. This will enable it to contribute to the global mass lobby.

Meeting your candidates

If you haven't met your politicians before, don't be daunted. And don't assume that they will know any more than you do about world poverty and climate change – the chances are that they won't.

The section 'Climate Change and Poverty Reduction', on page 6, lists suggested questions to ask your candidates and background information on these issues.

'Tips for communicating with candidates', on page 12, provides some bullet points about how to communicate to your politicians effectively.

By the end of September The UK General Election International Development Manifesto – a document produced by civil society organisations in the UK that sets out their demands of the political parties on what is needed to address poverty and climate change - will be available. We would like Friends to hand over this document to candidates when you meet. A Question and Answer sheet about the Manifesto will also be available. If you have let Sunniva know you are taking part in Stand Up then she will ensure this document is sent to you.

Write to your candidates

If you can't, or prefer not to, meet your MP in person then please write to them. You can tell them about *Stand Up and Take Action: The Great Persuasion*, and ask them what action they will support in response to climate change and global poverty. You can also send them a copy of the UK General Election International Development Manifesto (see above).

We have produced a template letter to candidates that you can use or modify as you wish. See page 10 for this.

Working with others

Many organisations are encouraging their supporters to take this action, and so it maybe that there are others in your constituency already planning to make contact with your parliamentary candidates. If this is the case we hope you may be able to work together: this will increase the impact and demonstrate solidarity.

Please let Sunniva Taylor know you are taking action. Sunniva will be able to tell you if others in your constituency are also planning to take part.

Organising an event

Rather than meeting your MP/candidates in their office you may prefer to invite them to an event that you organise yourselves.

As in previous years Stand Up and Take Action will involve schools, colleges, universities, faith communities and workplaces which will mark this moment of global solidarity with meetings and events. Last year many Friends literally stood up, after Meeting, to demonstrate their desire to eradicate poverty. Many Friends took action by signing petitions or filling in campaign postcards about selected issues.

This year, why not organise a Stand Up between 16-18 October, and invite your MP, and other candidates along. This could be a talk, debate, campaign stand or even a 'hustings' for the candidates. You could ask a speaker from a local or national organisation to talk about some relevant issues and policies and pose questions to the candidate(s), or, if you are confident enough, you could fulfil this role yourself.

Make posters and leaflets about the event, advertise it in relevant newspapers and make sure to invite all your own family and friends. Also, make sure your local papers know about the event. See page 13 for a template press notice, which should go out two weeks before your event.

You will be able to register your event at www.standagainstpoverity.org. Then it will be counted as part of the global mass lobby.

Tell the world!

Whether you have lobbied your candidates at their own offices or hosted them at your own event, tell the world that you have been engaging with your politicians and about what concerns you.

Write a letter to the local newspaper comparing the performance of the candidates you met and outlining the issues about which you are concerned. Letters should be short and to the point.

Also, consider writing a longer account of your experience with your politicians in a faith magazine, a newsletter or blog, or tell a local radio phone-in about it.

If possible, tell the people around the world who will also be meeting their politicians, by taking a picture of you and your candidates and uploading it to www.standagainstpoverity.org. People in these pictures will be counted and the numbers presented at the UN Climate talks in Copenhagen in December, to demonstrate how many people care about politicians taking action on climate change.

The issues: climate change and poverty reduction

QPSW is keen that Friends particularly persuade candidates to:

- Make cuts in the UK's CO₂ emissions of at least 40% by 2020
- Ensure that existing international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals and commitment to spending 0.7% of national income on aid by 2013 are achieved.

Climate change

It is now clear that climate change represents one of the greatest challenges to humankind and the natural world as it currently exists. As well as destroying the environment, we are already seeing how climate change has profound social, political and economic consequences. And the highest price is already being paid by the poor.

Bangladesh is one of the country's most at risk from the impacts of climate change. Extreme weather is causing flooding, destroying lives and livelihoods. The irregularity of rainfall threatens agriculture and causes hunger and increases poverty.

QPSW has partnered with the Bangladeshi development organisation, GUP, to learn about how climate change is affecting communities there. See 'What climate change means for me...', available at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/climate-change-conference-2009-documents> for more details. When you meet your parliamentary candidate you can draw on this to illustrate the impact that climate change is already having on poor people, and to demonstrate the time you have taken to inform yourself of the issues.

You may also wish to highlight the corporate concern that Friends have demonstrated regarding climate change. In June 2009 Meeting for Sufferings produced 'A Quaker response to the crisis of climate change' (available at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/environment>). Many Friends have already taken action to live more sustainably, reduce their carbon emissions and lobby those in positions of power.

What to ask your candidate

- What action they will support to ensure that the UK reduces emissions by at least 40% by 2020?

What you need to know

We all need to take responsibility, individually and collectively, for tackling climate change.

We need to ensure that the world's temperature does not rise more than 2°C (above the pre-industrial average). Above this the affects of climate change are likely to be even more catastrophic. This means a radical global reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2008 the UK passed the Climate Change Act, the world's first legally binding framework to tackle climate change. Our government has committed to cutting carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, and has agreed that emissions from international aviation and shipping should be included in this.

If this target is to be at all realistic then we need to have made deep cuts in our carbon dioxide emissions of at least 40% by 2020. This must be done without resorting to offsetting (typically the financial support of projects that reduce the emission of carbon to compensate for the emission of carbon elsewhere).

Want to know more?

For more about the work that QPSW and Friends have been doing on climate change and the environment see www.quaker.org.uk/environment. You can download here *Responding to Climate Change*, a set of six briefings that has been produced to help Friends and others learn more about, reflect on and take action on climate change. You can also request these from Sunniva Taylor (sunnivat@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1047).

Poverty

What to ask your candidate

- What action will they support ensure that the UK meets existing international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals and commitment to spending 0.7% of national income on aid by 2013?

What you need to know

The food and financial crises that have affected almost all of us in some way have been having devastating effects on those in developing countries. They have increased and entrenched poverty amongst the most vulnerable. This means children unable to go to school, mothers unable to feed their children and farmers unable to buy seeds. And the crises, as well as the impacts of climate change, are making the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) even more challenging.

The MDGs are a blueprint developed at a series of United Nations conferences in the 1990s to meet the needs of the world's poorest. Amongst the aims are: the reduction of the number of people in poverty by half; universal primary education; and the reduction by two-thirds of infant mortality rates. All to be achieved by 2015.

Since they were agreed in 2000 Friends have been involved in holding leaders to account on the achievement of the MDGs. We need to continue this pressure and ensure that whichever party wins the General Election takes the necessary steps to ensure that the goals are met.

Central to increasing the UK's aid contributions is the commitment to spending 0.7% of national income on aid by 2013. This pledge was first made 39 years ago by the world's governments and has been repeatedly reaffirmed in many international agreements over the years. Analysis by the UN Millennium Project indicates that 0.7% of the rich world's income would provide enough resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Whilst it is vital that this commitment is met, money is not a simple solution to poverty. Achievement of the MDG's relies on an increased quality, as well as quantity, of aid, cancelling illegitimate and unpayable developing country debt; reforming global financial institutions; addressing corruption; and tackling climate change. Tackling these issues also means addressing the underlying structural causes of poverty.

Want to know more?

For more information about the work that QPSW and Friends have been doing on addressing poverty and economic injustice see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/economics>. Some of these issues have been discussed in past editions of Better World Economics, our newsletter for Quakers interested in economics. To download current and past editions and register to receive the newsletter if you don't already please see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/better-world-economics>.

Further information about the Millennium Development Goals is available at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>. Information about the 0.7% target is available at <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/07.htm>.

TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARLIAMNETARY CANDIDATES REQUESTING A MEETING

Dear [your MP/ parliamentary candidate]

Stand Up and Take Action: The Great Persuasion

I am writing as one of your constituents [and on behalf of x Quaker Meeting/group if this is the case] as I am very concerned about the issues of global poverty and climate change. I would like to request a meeting between 16th-18th October 2009 to discuss what actions you will support to take on these issues if you are successful in the next general election.

I am not alone in my concern. Last year more than 100 million people across the world (including 50, 000 in the UK) took a stand against poverty in the days surrounding UN World Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October, coordinated by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) – the world's largest civil society anti-poverty organisation. This year between 16th-18th October thousands of people across the country will be taking part in *Stand Up and Take Action: The Great Persuasion* to demonstrate to politicians that we are deeply concerned about poverty and climate change.

[If you know any relevant details about the candidate, such as positive or negative steps they have taken on the issues of international development and climate change, you may want to mention them here politely.]

I am particularly interested to talk about what action you will support to meet UK commitments to reduce CO₂ emissions by at least 40% by 2020, and how you will ensure that existing international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals and commitment to spending 0.7% of national income on aid by 2013 are to be achieved.

[You may also wish to identify yourself as a Quaker and explain, very briefly, why Quakers are concerned about poverty and climate change.]

I also hope you will also agree to a photograph after the meeting, which we will share with others in the UK and abroad to show that UK parliamentarians are listening.

I look forward to hearing from you as to when you are available to meet.

Yours sincerely,

[Remember to give your contact details]

TEMPLATE LETTER TO CANDIDATES IF YOU ARE NOT MEETING WITH THEM

Dear [your candidate's name]

Action on climate change and poverty

I am writing as one of your constituents [and as a representative of X Quaker Meeting/group if this is the case] very concerned about global poverty and climate change, and to ask what action you will support to tackle these issues if you are successful in the next general election.

I/we are not alone in my/our concern. Last year more than 100 million people across the world (including 50, 000 in the UK) took a stand against poverty in the days surrounding UN World Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October, coordinated by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) – the world's largest civil society anti-poverty organisation. This year between 16th-18th October thousands of people across the country will be taking part in *Stand Up and Take Action: The Great Persuasion* to demonstrate to politicians that we are deeply concerned about poverty and climate change.

[You may also wish to identify yourself as a Quaker and explain, very briefly, why Quakers are concerned about poverty and climate change.]

Specifically, I would like to know what action you will support to:

- Ensure that the UK reduces emissions by at least 40% (against 1990 level) by 2020;
- How you will ensure that the UK meets existing international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals and commitment to spending 0.7% of national income on aid by 2013?

Climate change represents one of the greatest challenges to humankind and the natural world as it currently exists. The highest price is already being paid by the poor. In Bangladesh, for example, extreme weather events are causing flooding, which destroys lives and livelihoods and increases poverty.

To prevent even more catastrophic climate change we need to ensure that the world's temperature does not rise more than 2°C. This means a radical global reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As you will be aware the UK now has the world's first legally binding framework to tackle climate change, committing us to cutting carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. If this target is to be at all realistic then we need to have made deep cuts in our carbon dioxide emissions of at least 40% by 2020. I/we would like to know what action you will support to ensure that this reduction is made.

Climate change, as well as the financial and food crises, also threatens the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which are vital to tackling global poverty. Will you ensure that our commitment to these is be maintained?

Analysis by the UN Millennium Project indicates that 0.7% of the rich world's income would provide enough resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Rich countries, including the UK, have repeatedly affirmed that they will commit to provide this by 2013. I/we would like to what action you will support to ensure that the UK meets this target.

I look forward to receiving your response and hope to hear that you will personally commit to take whatever action you can against world poverty and climate change.

Yours sincerely,

[remember to include your contact details]

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH CANDIDATES

Be prepared

- Make sure you know where you are going and when!
- If possible try and read up a little bit on the person you are going to meet. Most candidates will have a website or you can google them to see if they have received any press coverage on the issues we are concerned about. This will ensure you know if you have been a big supporter of climate change action for example, or said anything that you can use as a way of starting the conversation.
- Read the background information we have prepared, particularly on what we are asking for and why (under 'Climate change and poverty reduction').
- Be able to say a few lines about Stand Up.

Keep it simple

- Stick to a few main points. We suggest that you focus on the two main questions we have highlighted around climate change and poverty reduction.
- Hand over the UK General Election International Development Manifesto.
- Finish with an action point for them to take forward. For example, ask that they send the International Development Manifesto to the relevant person within the party, and personally commit to take whatever action they can against world poverty and climate change.

Draw on your own experience

- You may wish to identify yourself as a Quaker and to explain very briefly why Quakers are concerned about climate change.
- You could mention any particular knowledge or experience you have. For example, if you have read the information QPSW has prepared about the impact of climate change on communities in Bangladesh (see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/climate-change-conference-2009-documents>).

Ask their views

- Ask what their own views are on the issues and what action they will personally take. This will enable the candidate to answer if their views are different from that of the party.

Be confident

- If you haven't met your politicians before, don't be daunted. And don't assume that they will know any more than you do about world poverty and climate change – the chances are that they won't!
- If the politician tries to change the subject, politely, but firmly, bring them back to the topic in hand by saying something like, "I know your time is very valuable; we really only came here to discuss how you can help us on this issue".
- If the politician asks you a question you can't answer, offer to get back to them with the information.

- It may be useful to take notes, particularly if any action is agreed upon.
- Remain polite and courteous throughout.

Follow up

- After the meeting write to the candidate thanking him or her for the meeting and taking the opportunity to restate your points.

TEMPLATE PRESS NOTCIE FOR EVENT

[Issue Date]

For News Editors. Date for Diaries.

Event/photo opportunity: On [date] at [time], [your town/Meeting] residents are holding x event/ available for photos [doing a photo-worthy activity].

[Your Meeting/group] will take part in a Guinness World Record attempt by joining millions across the world to pressure politicians to tackle poverty and climate change.

[Your Meeting/group] will meet [MP's name] and candidate [name of candidate(s)], as part of a [your event- e.g. after Meeting, hustings, debate, stall]. They are asking them what action they will support to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions and ensure that international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals, the blueprint to end world poverty, are achieved.

Event organiser [Your name], a [occupation/member of X Meeting] from [your town] said:

[provide a quote]

Worldwide, people have pledged to contact more than 2000 parliamentarians, including over 100 in the UK, as part of the 'Stand Up and Take Action' campaign (16-18th October 2009) of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and the UN Millennium Campaign.

Ends-----

Notes:

More information on the global campaign can be found at www.standagainstopoverty.org

The global initiative is organised by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP - the world's largest civil society anti-poverty alliance), in association with the UN Millennium Campaign and Micah Challenge.

To arrange an interview with [your name] please contact [your email address] or call [your telephone number].

To arrange an interview with Tim Gee, Stand Up and Take Action UK Co-ordinator, or a campaigner from a developing country, please call Tim Gee on 02075200253/07788708673 or email tgee@bond.org.uk.

Quakers are known formally as the Religious Society of Friends. More information about Quakers in Britain can be found at www.quaker.org.uk.