



IFLRY Position Paper on Climate Change

The work towards a sustainable future originates from the liberal view that my freedom ends where your freedom begins. The burning of fossil fuels has made a lot of nations wealthy and has made energy accessible to many, but at a cost to others. It has also caused degradation to the environment and our natural ecosystem, as well as increased health risks. Our recognition of freedom does not imply the abuse of others' fundamental rights, including a sustainable environment.

As humans change the concentration of the atmosphere, by taking large amounts of CO₂ out of its natural cycle, the climate changes with it. Some countries will see both the most dramatic changes, as well as be least prepared to face those changes. Climate change is expected to increase the risks of conflicts in areas already gravely affected. Effects of climate change challenge our ability to eradicate poverty and prevent war and conflicts, and contribute to increased human migration. There is an underlying and inherent inequity. Thus, we are of the view that it is liberal to fight climate change.

A liberal is progressive, and always in search of new and better solutions. These should be a result of knowledge and research. Climate change policy should be central to the liberal ideology, as it is indispensable in order for all individuals to enjoy the right to equal possibilities and a prosperous future.

A 2°C rise would entail serious and damaging changes, and thus, the ambition should be limiting global mean temperature rise to no more than 1.5°C. This calls for urgent action towards reducing the burning of fossil fuels, as the time frame for limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C is rapidly closing.

Measures and decisions are needed on local, regional and international level. A fair, ambitious, universal and binding climate agreement is needed to respond to the urgent threat of climate change. We need to enable a transformation towards sustainable economies and limit the use of fossil fuels in society. An agreement must emphasize the need for transparency, and should contain mechanisms that allow and simplify the international community's ability to monitor and supervise individual parties. IFLRY also welcomes bilateral and multinational agreements, as well as other types of cooperation between countries, regions and cities.

Even though the world faces big changes, these changes are necessary if we shall avoid dramatic consequences of climate change. Change can be difficult, but as research tells us, business as usual, is not an option.



But how can we fight climate change in a liberal way?

- 1) Use market-based and government incentives to promote environmentally friendly options

One way, that will not reduce freedom, but rather change people's habits and actions, is through incentives. By incentivising the environmentally friendly options, we can use the market to create a green shift. By making the environmentally friendly option more economical and better, we can create a solution that will benefit not only the people using it, but also the society and the environment.

In order to promote a green shift by incentives, existing harmful price manipulations on the market, such as fossil fuel subsidies, need to be phased out. Long-term and firm environmental commitments by governments are prerequisites for fostering green investments and technology innovations.

- 2) Put a price on emissions

Another way of reducing emissions, and thereby climate change, is to put a price on carbon and all emissions. It should never be an economic incentive to pollute. Today, unfortunately, it is often cheap, or even free, to emit greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. This market failure must be corrected, by putting a price on emissions of greenhouse gases. This way, we can make it profitable for companies and private persons to be environmentally friendly. Several jurisdictions have now implemented, successfully, a form of price on emissions.

We need an international mechanism to facilitate the linking of national and regional emission trade systems. Incomes from emission trade or comparable emissions pricing mechanisms should be allocated to mitigation actions and support climate change adaptation measures through the Green Climate Fund or other comparable financing instruments.

- 3) Countries with the ability to do so should offer countries that need it, monetary and technological support to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

An important part of liberal climate policies is to help those that already are facing consequences of the burning of fossil fuels. Climate change is happening now. We have to limit the consequences so that they will not be worse than they already are, and help people who are suffering from the consequences to adapt. It is also essential to further develop sustainable solutions, such as renewable energy that can replace the non-renewable energy. For countries with the ability to do so, such knowledge could both be used to reduce their own emissions, but also to help poorer countries reduce theirs, without having to reduce their standard of living. Renewable energy is available all over the world, in different forms, unlike fossil fuels. Making



renewable energy and sustainable solutions available for all, is not just better for the planet and for people by reducing dangerous consequences, it can also make the world fairer.

- 4) Empower indigenous populations with instruments such as enhanced property rights, cooperative management and joint stewardship

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that climate change is better mitigated by indigenous peoples, particularly when their well being is tied to the land. Most notably, studies indicate that with forests in particular - global governments have an untapped opportunity to decrease the pace of deforestation and forest degradation, while reducing overall emissions. Forests are a key element of climate change mitigation as they act as carbon sinks, alleviating the greenhouse effect. Because indigenous peoples, not governments, are the day-to-day stewards of most of the globe's forests it is imperative their land and resource rights are strengthened. Such recognition has been empirically shown to maintain or even improve the carbon storage capacity of existing forests. There is a clear correlation between rights-granting and carbon dioxide emission reduction.

- 5) Nations should increase investment in Research and Development (R&D) that will allow for more environmentally friendly technologies.

Allocating more budgetary funds towards Research & Development on (trans-)national levels is critical, both to promote innovation to make fossil fuel technologies less harmful, but also to further increase the capacity of sustainable energy and environmentally friendly technologies. Public, private, and public-private partnership solutions should all be encouraged.

- 6) A human-rights based approach to climate change

With increased consequences of climate change, it is the people who have contributed the least, with the least ability to tackle it, who will see the most of the consequences. The shift towards a sustainable society should be used as a chance to make the world a fairer place. Tackling climate change can thus be a good opportunity to increase the equality of all individuals. With renewable energy being accessible all over the world, a sustainable world will be able to empower all. Therefore, it is vital to encourage the most vulnerable societal groups to participate in this change. First of all, it is vital to ensure intergenerational equity, making sure that young and future generations will have at least the equal opportunities as we should. IFLRY also acknowledges the need to include minorities, people and groups of people not properly represented today, in decision-making processes on climate change. We should utilize the great amount of knowledge and expertise these [groups, individuals] have, and better use them in climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies.



- 7) Nations should promote and strengthen initiatives and programs on building adaptation and resilience to prepare communities on the impact of climate change

Every individual has the right to information and scientific knowledge concerning the risks and vulnerabilities of climate change. It is important to ensure the inclusion of climate change and disaster risk information in national education systems as well as community-based awareness programs. Nations must also recognize the particular vulnerability to disaster of poor communities and the importance of immediate rehabilitation and resettlement of those who have been affected by extreme weather events and a changing climate.

Furthermore, this means we support the freedom of scientists to research and speak without fear or prejudice. Liberals support intellectual property rights and believe that free and open access to the right information in the field of climate change is of great importance in expanding our knowledge of the changing climate and the predictions concerning its effects in a prompt and broad manner.

Adoption of these principles on a global scale would be effective in mitigating and reducing the impact of climate change on future generations. IFLRY encourages its member organizations to abide by these principles and policies. As an international organization, IFLRY has the possibility to directly impact policies globally, and by working for implementation of the above principles, we can move towards a sustainable future for all.