



***Global Climate Change:  
The Catholic Church's Vision and Work to Respond to  
the Challenge***

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**Cecilia Calvo** – Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

**Shaun Ferris** – Senior Advisor for Agriculture and Environment,  
Catholic Relief Services

**Bill O'Keefe** - Senior Director, Advocacy Department, Catholic Relief Services



## What is climate change?

- Climate change is not a new phenomena.
- Conditions are becoming less stable.
- Measurable changes in average sea and air temperatures.
- Less predictable rainfall, more droughts.
- Glacial melt is occurring and accelerating and sea levels rising.
- Adverse weather affecting 7 billion people is cause for considerable concern.

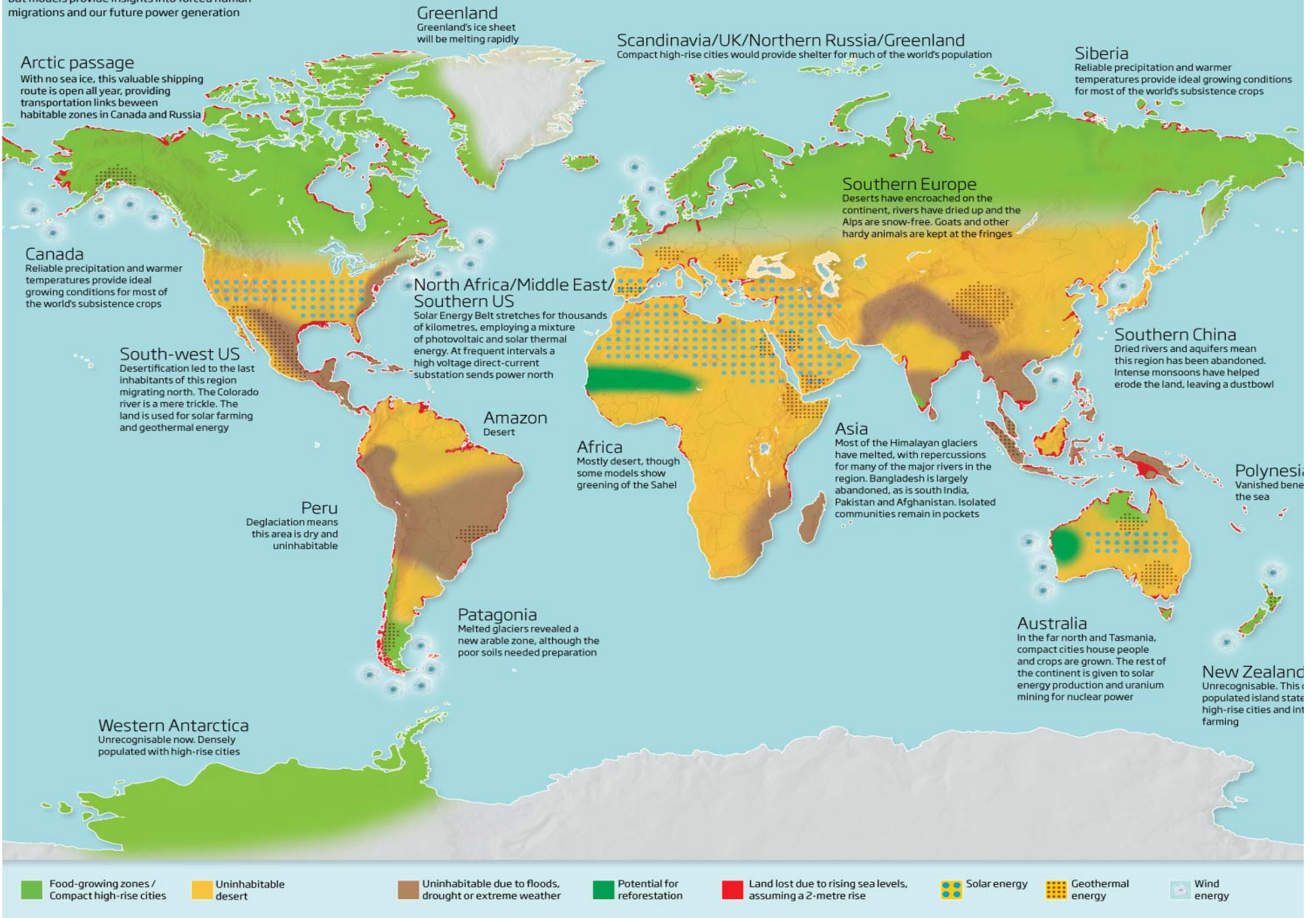


## Who will be the people most affected by climate change?

- The more dire affects of climate change will be felt most by people in poverty who do not have the means to adapt and mitigate the effects.  
**What will they do?**
- The first people to suffer will be those living in coastal areas and those depending on rainfed agriculture.
- The coastal areas in the implicated zone are home to 200 million people.
- Most of Africa's 900 million people rely on rainfall to provide food and drinking water and 900 million in Asia.

# The world: 4°C warmer

No one knows exactly what this world will look like, but models provide insights into forced human migrations and our future power generation





## How should we respond to gradual climatic shifts?

- With a concerted global effort we can help people in poverty adapt to the effects of climate change (global stimulus package).
- We can build sea walls, dykes and irrigation systems, we can develop new crops.
- However, with no investments, poor people in areas that face flooding or drought will migrate.
- The scale of migration could be 200-300 million people migrating into Northern Asia, Europe and Canada in the next 50 years.



## What is Church teaching on Climate Change?

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good.*

**“ At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. *It is about the future of God’s creation and the one human family.*”**



# What is Church teaching on Climate Change?

- Prudence
- Promoting the Common good
- Option for the Poor



“The real “inconvenient truth” is that those who contribute least to climate change will be affected the most and have the least capacity to cope or escape.”

USCCB testimony on the *Religious and Moral Dimensions of Global Climate Change* before the Senate



## What is CRS doing to help poor people worldwide respond to climate change?

- **Adaptation:** *Providing skills and technology in response to change*
  - Using vouchers to transfer assets (seeds, tools, livestock, fertilizer)
  - Providing new seed varieties that are adapted to drought
  - Improving water management at community level dams and smallholder irrigation systems
- **Mitigation:** *Dealing with causes*
  - Planting thousands of trees to protect erosion points
  - Terracing landscapes to tackle soil loss
  - Linked to payment for Ecosystem services



## What is the Church doing in the U.S. to respond?

- **USCCB Policy position:**
  - Placing the needs of the poor and vulnerable- at home and abroad- at the center of climate change legislation
  - Helping people in the most vulnerable developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change
- **Catholic Coalition on Climate Change and the Catholic Climate Covenant Initiative:** Demonstrating a common Catholic commitment to care for God's creation and to stand with the poor and vulnerable people in our nation and around the world facing the most severe impacts of a changing climate



Catholics Confront Global Poverty, a USCCB/CRS initiative that seeks to engage one million Catholics in the United States issues that are affecting poor people worldwide, including climate change.

[www.usccb.org/globalpoverty](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty) or  
[www.crs.org/globalpoverty](http://www.crs.org/globalpoverty)



## **What is the U.S. government doing to respond?**

- Obama Administration initiative
- *American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009*, drafted by Reps. Markey (D-MA) and Waxman (D-CA)



## What would additional resources for adaptation/mitigation accomplish?

- **\$1M** - Support 100 farmer groups to plant 875,000 trees and put 800 ha under improved practices e.g. conservation agriculture, water harvesting, soil and water conservation
- **\$10m**— Build new skills and capabilities with 50 NGO partners, who would each develop integrated water resource management strategies for improved natural resources management, covering 250,000 farmers and up to 1m ha of land.
- **\$100M** – Support major water shed level management and irrigation systems to upgrade agriculture from rain-fed for clusters of districts.



# What can we do to respond today?

- We all need to be engaged and active on this issue to make a difference.
- Join Catholics Confront Global Poverty: [www.crs.org/ccgp](http://www.crs.org/ccgp).
- Take the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor.