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FIRST MINISTER URGED TO DO MORE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Scotland's largest civil society coalition, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), has this week written to the First Minister calling for the new Climate Change Bill goes even further to help stop the growing threat to the world's poorest communities.

With just over a month to go until the public consultation on the Bill ends, SCCS is pushing the Scottish Government to produce a world-leading plan for Scotland, insisting the current proposals fall short of the mark.

Last month, the coalition, made up of 50 members including SCIAF, WWF Scotland, Oxfam, RSPB Scotland, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Christian Aid, and Unison, launched its Act for Our Future campaign calling for a Climate Change Bill that creates both "world leading ambition and the policies required for delivery."

SCCS chair Tom Ballantine has written to Nicola Sturgeon praising the Scottish Government's "commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement" through the upcoming Climate Change Bill, said current Government plans fell well short of the level needed if Scotland is to be at the forefront of delivering the international agreement signed by 197 countries 18 months ago.

Tom insisted a bolder Bill would create jobs, improve health and reduce poverty at home, whilst also ensuring Scotland plays its part in helping the poorest people in the world cope with the impact of climate change.

The letter outlines the coalition's three key demands for the new Climate Bill including setting a target of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest, and a reduction of 77% by 2030, ensuring that future finance budgets are consistent with our climate targets, and committing to actions that cut emissions and deliver and cleaner, healthier, more prosperous Scotland.

He wrote: "The new Climate Change Bill is a huge opportunity to renew Scotland's climate leadership and demonstrate the creative, imaginative and bold policies you are aiming for in the next Programme for Government. A net zero target by 2050, and the transformative policies to deliver it, would maintain Scotland's place as a true world leader. It would deliver an increase in jobs, cleaner air, reduced burdens on the NHS and economic prosperity.

“Thousands of SCCS supporters will be submitting their responses to the recently launched consultation on the Climate Change Bill. We look forward to working with your Cabinet to ensure that the new Act delivers on a just, prosperous, low-carbon future.”

Tom also highlighted great challenges on climate change in the past year, in particular President Donald Trump’s decision to signal US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement being a “cause for deep concern”.

“Against that backdrop, we have been heartened by the renewed, and growing, commitment to tackle climate change and build a resilient, thriving low carbon future from the EU, China and other nations as well as from states, cities, businesses and communities in the US and around the world,” he added.

“We welcome your own and your Government’s heightened resolve to continue to lead, demonstrated in the recent MoU with California and your speech to the Arctic Summit.

“The task at hand is as urgent as ever – not a question of ‘will we act?’ but ‘will we act fast enough?’. Scientists have warned us that without immediate action our chances of keeping global warming to 1.5°C, a key Paris goal, will be gone. We know that the world’s poorest people are already feeling the effects of climate change, from Malawi to Bangladesh - delivering climate justice is a challenge for today, not tomorrow.”

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 set a greenhouse gas emissions target to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. The new Climate Bill proposal increases that target to 90%, making provisions for a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target to be set when the evidence becomes available.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is a diverse coalition of organisations campaigning on climate change, including environment, active travel, faith and development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups.

The deadline for the Climate Bill consultation is 22nd September 2017. Don’t miss your chance to have you say by going to <http://bit.ly/SCCSAct>.

Ends