



TOGETHER, MORE THAN EVER,  
LET'S FIGHT TO CHANGE THE WORLD!

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE: WHAT ARE OUR FUTURE ACTIONS AND DEMANDS?



### I. WHY AND HOW WAS THIS DOCUMENT DRAWN UP?

The Board met online on several occasions between January and October 2021 and held regular discussions. This provided an opportunity to discuss the analysis of the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequences of this crisis. One of these meetings focussed on how our movement, in its struggle against poverty, is involved in the essential struggle for environmental and climate justice.

This reference document is the summary of the Board's debate, which was launched on the basis of a preparatory document that provided a non-exhaustive overview of the environmental and climate justice initiatives in our various regions.

### II. WHICH WORLD ASSEMBLY DEBATE DOES THIS REFER TO?

This document is intended to help you prepare for the following debate, as set out in the 2021-2025 Guidance Report that you have received:

#### **Subject 4:**

Why and how can we take action and speak out together?

How have our joint initiatives helped us to tackle the causes of poverty?

How can we go further and make our demands known?

What struggles should the movement engage in for the future, given the democratic and ecological challenges, and faced by the exacerbation of the inequalities and forms of racism directed at migrants in particular?



### III. PRESENTATION OF THE DOCUMENT

This document is a complement to the sheet on our struggle for "Social and Environmental Justice for a Sustainable World" and outlines the Board's analysis and proposals.

#### Analysis

Emmaus' work has been part of the environmental movement from its infancy, via its recycling, collection and re-use activities which limit consumption of natural resources and prevent them from running out, reduce waste production, and provide an alternative to consumer societies and planned obsolescence.

The analysis highlighted many different initiatives run by the groups of the movement in this area. However, these actions are not always linked to a political message. There is currently no common basis shared between the groups – each region has its own specificities.

Africa region	Americas region
<p>Group activities in the Africa region are mainly based around agriculture and market gardening. Some groups combine these activities with information or training sessions (environmental protection, compost manufacture, agricultural techniques) but each group carries out quite different activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Actions based on agriculture and market gardening, sometimes with an environmental protection approach (agroecology, water conservation).</li> <li>⇒ Not linked to any political campaigning.</li> </ul>	<p>Recycling activities are particularly well developed in the Americas region and often include an educational aspect aimed at young people. Recycling is perceived and presented as a way of protecting the environment. A number of groups have participated in the "RSU" [Urban Solid Waste] training programme and have therefore worked together on building a political message on this subject.</p> <p>Some groups take a strong stance on environmental protection and the destruction caused by humanity, in line with the concept of "buen vivir" [good living].</p> <p>The issue of land grabbing and landlessness is also very present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Actions based on recycling of waste and environmental protection with an educational and campaigning aspect for some groups.</li> </ul>

Asia region	Europe region
<p>Most groups carry out awareness-raising and training work on agroecology (water conservation, ancient crops, plant cultivation, fertiliser manufacture and organic pesticides, etc).</p> <p>Many groups tackle the problems caused by the activities of multinational businesses,</p>	<p>The range of activities is wider, given the number of groups present, but most work takes place in the field of education on environmental issues and sustainable development, and implementing agricultural projects with a recreational or rehabilitation-based approach. The region recommends pooling knowledge and exchanging</p>



<p>speaking out against these while implementing alternatives which help the most excluded people to organise.</p> <p>⇒ Actions aimed at building the capacities of the poorest populations to address environmental problems and abuse committed by large companies, through training and raising awareness of agricultural techniques which respect the environment. Identification of external factors and whistle-blowing activities.</p>	<p>practices to help Emmaus groups learn how to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, adopt practices in line with their ideals, and adapt to new challenges in terms of re-use and recycling, without being complicit in production which violates social and environmental principles.</p> <p>⇒ Actions based mainly on recycling, education on environmental issues and agricultural projects through sharing knowledge and practices.</p> <p>⇒ Identification of the problem of climate change which affects the poorest populations.</p>
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This assessment also shows that the two subjects that groups work on most, and on which a political message has emerged, are recycling and agroecology.

The issue of waste, and therefore recycling, is present throughout the movement. Waste has always been collected by the poorest people as a means of subsistence. As the environmental crisis becomes undeniable and natural resources dwindle, the authorities are starting to take an interest in waste. However, as is often the case, they are particularly interested in the value of a growing number of recyclable materials, and private corporations are also starting to take an interest.

Opposing the appropriation of waste – whether public or private – is therefore a matter of socio-environmental justice. To oppose this plundering, the category of “commons” could be useful, as this goes beyond the circular economy.

The issue of social justice to confront climate change is highlighted in the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in February 2022.

An interesting point emerged from the consolidation work done on the Urban Solid Waste programme in the Americas region: groups have observed that with regard to the environment, most group members know what environmentalism is but find it difficult to define how their daily activity contributes to the wider objective of environmental justice. Is this the case for other regions? Does this observation apply across the board? If so, what solutions can be found for this?

Furthermore, many groups have been bearing the brunt of the effects of climate change for several years. Some of them have experienced disruption of their activities due to natural disasters caused by human activities. This confirms the reality of climate inequality: the poorest and most vulnerable populations are the hardest hit by these events, whilst being the least responsible for them.

## Proposal





## Environmental and climate justice: what are the actions and demands for the future?

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At the 2016 World Assembly, the movement adopted the struggle “Social and Environmental Justice for a Sustainable World” with the objective of helping excluded populations to organise and resist policies which authorise the plundering of natural resources, land grabbing, and privatisation of shared resources. However, the movement has not built a true political stance on these issues. The positions we have taken have been on specific issues (EU-Mercosur agreement, support for the Landless Workers’ Movement, support for peasant struggles), and have systematically combined environmental factors with social factors.

In 2019, the Board approved our participation in the following campaigns:

- Rights for people, rules for corporations (speaking out against the social and environmental impacts of multinationals)
- Jai Jagat World March (promotion of climate justice for disadvantaged populations who are the first victims of climate change)
- Brazil Resists! Fighting is not a crime (situation of social and environmental justice in Brazil, support for environmental defenders and speaking out against the government’s devastating climate policies)

Furthermore, the Global Report sets out two objectives closely linked to this subject:

- Developing an economy that genuinely works for human beings and their environment
- Developing economic activities that guarantee respect for social and environmental rights

At this World Assembly, we need to question the future initiatives and campaigns that our movement would like lead on this issue. Initial proposals have been made by the Executive Committee and the Emmaus International Board:

- Further exploring the theme of environmental justice, as it is more relevant to the work groups are carrying out and is more encompassing than climate justice. One of the strategic guidelines for the World Assembly would be to engage the movement on this issue and develop a common voice and shared initiatives, in addition to the work undertaken by each individual group.
- Setting up a work process after the World Assembly to collectively develop our political stance on recycling and agroecology, as interesting practices exist, but perhaps in a field that has yet to be identified as ‘Emmaus’.

Whichever option is chosen, we will need to relate these to the demands raised in our Global Report.