

A Rocha Worldwide Family Statement on Climate Change

Who we are

A Rocha is an international family of Christian organisations with a vision for a world where nature flourishes as people live equitably and sustainably. Through church engagement, environmental education, research, and conservation action, our mission is to live out God's calling to care for creation and equip others to do likewise. A Rocha has been working on the ground since 1983 to protect and restore nature, and help Christians to act in favour of God's creation.

Why we care

"Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!" – Genesis 1:31

Human caused climate change is harming both the natural world as a whole and humanity in particular, with disproportionate impacts on the poorest and most vulnerable. We cannot and should not separate the need to care for vulnerable people and also to preserve, protect and restore ecosystems upon which all life depends.

Climate change is a major driver of biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems worldwide by inducing rapidly changing temperature and rainfall patterns, along with more frequent and intense extreme weather events. Ocean warming is disrupting the life cycles of many marine species and ecosystems, together with melting land ice it is also leading to rising sea levels. Acting as a threat multiplier, climate change is accelerating the decline of nature already diminished by pollution, overexploitation, habitat loss, and invasive species. Together, these pressures have placed over 47 000 species at risk of extinction.¹

Climate change-induced environmental damage poses a serious challenge to human health and livelihoods. By increasing the risk of wildfires, extreme heat, and droughts, climate change is threatening agricultural productivity and contributing to disease spread, ultimately destabilising food, water, social and public health systems.²

Human-induced climate change reflects a profound injustice. Although it is largely the emissions from historically wealthy nations that are driving our changing climate, the most devastating impacts are being felt amongst the world's most vulnerable communities. In the same way, the rapidly changing climate threatens the future of generations to come.

What we believe

"For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." – Colossians 1:16

¹ IUCN Red List

² World Health Organisation. Climate Change and Health.

Creation exists for God and his glory and is also a blessing to humanity, a reflection of God's love for us. As human beings, we are not separate from creation but an integral part of it, entrusted with the responsibility to tend and nurture it.

A Rocha accepts the overwhelming scientific consensus that human activity —particularly the burning of fossil fuels and the destruction of ecosystems— is responsible for the current warming of the climate. Moreover, these changes are happening at a pace that many species and natural systems are not able to adapt to, and which is projected to exceed safe limits for life on this planet³ as defined by the scientific community.

As an international organisation we have witnessed first hand the impacts of this changing climate on nature and the communities where we live and work. This is not only a scientific issue but a moral one. We regard that it is a sinful rebellion against God knowingly to destroy the integrity of Creation and increase human suffering. Yet we recognise that many people lack accessible, affordable, and sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels. So our concern lies not only in transitioning away from their use, but also in ensuring we do not overlook those without the resources to do so. With urgent, coordinated action—both individual and collective—it is still possible to restore healthier relationships between people and nature to reduce future harm.

We recognise that we cannot address the biodiversity and climate crises in isolation and that the global response, both in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, will shape our ability to protect and restore nature. Caring for nature is part of the solution, and must be fully integrated into climate strategies. Nature's resilience is one of our greatest allies in addressing the climate crisis. Healthy ecosystems—such as forests, wetlands, and oceans—not only absorb and store carbon from the atmosphere, but also provide natural defenses against increasingly severe extreme weather events. By embracing other solutions such as nature-based solutions to protect biodiversity and restore habitats, we build the resilience of both people and nature and help them to adapt to climate change. However, while restoring nature is essential in addressing climate change, it cannot solve the crisis on its own and must be implemented in tandem with other solutions.

Our approach to nature conservation is motivated by our Christian faith, expressed in our [Commitment to Creation Care](#). As caretakers of God's Creation, we are called to enable it to flourish, allowing all life to thrive and bear fruit.

Care for creation is not to be separated from caring for humanity. As humans we are fully part of creation. All of the natural world, including humanity, is tightly bound together by the Creator and this includes climate.

Though the challenge of mitigating and adapting to climate change is immense and beyond the means of any of us alone, we believe we are called to play a part. As a family of Christian organisations dedicated to the protection of biodiversity, we seek to cherish and safeguard the world that God has entrusted to our care.

What we call for?

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." – Ephesians 5:1-2

³ Planetary Boundaries. See planetaryhealthcheck.org for more information.

The A Rocha worldwide family seeks to lead through example, taking action where possible to reduce our negative impact on the climate and adapt to its consequences. We strive to make the most of what we have and to tread lightly on the earth.

To this end, we call on all people, institutions, and nations to pursue a rapid, just, and sustainable transition away from fossil fuels toward sustainable lifestyles, renewable energy and environmentally sustainable economic activities. As part of this global effort, we within the ARWF seek to honour God by reducing the environmental footprint of our operations—cutting unsustainable energy use wherever possible and carefully considering the necessity of any emissions we cannot avoid.

In our practices, we are committed to protecting God's creation and addressing the impacts of climate change through both action and knowledge. Through dedicated research, we work to understand how climate change affects nature and to develop ways to help it adapt to the rapid pace of change—by protecting and restoring habitats and the species they sustain. Trusting in nature's remarkable capacity to heal, we strive to create conditions where it can flourish and become part of the solution to climate change. Recognising the deep inequalities and injustices that climate change reveals, we will support communities in adapting in ways that are harmonious with nature. We will initiate projects and programmes that integrate both scientific and moral imperatives for climate mitigation and adaptation, for the benefit of biodiversity and people alike. In line with this, we commit to decarbonising our national organisations, supporting carbon sequestration, and resisting the unnecessary sacrifice of nature and communities' well-being when climate goals are pursued through misguided or harmful means.

Guided by our Christian faith, we are committed to speaking the truth about climate change and sharing a message of hope rooted in the care for God's creation. We will work to raise awareness among both Christian communities and the wider public, using our faith-informed voice to champion nature in national and international arenas. We seek to inspire and equip younger generations to act for the protection of people and nature in a changing climate, to call the global Church to take decisive action for the good of all creation, and to promote the urgent reduction of emissions from human activities.

Further resources:

Nature and Climate:

- ARWF, Oct 2021, '[Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Change: A Rocha Worldwide Family Position](#)', position paper for UNFCCC COP26

Theology and Creation Care:

- ARWF, Aug 2023, '[A Rocha Commitment to Creation Care](#)'
- ARWF [Theology and Churches Programme](#)

Nature, climate and poverty:

- ARWF, '[Tackling the three crises with Faith](#)', Policy statement for CBD COP15