

Harvest of Letters

Higher temperatures. More droughts that parch fragile crops. Changes in seasons that leave farmers scratching their heads over when to plant their fields. Rising sea levels that crowd out coastal communities. This is what climate change looks like for many people around the world.

It also means more hunger.

More than 75 percent of people who regularly go to bed hungry live in rural areas in developing countries and most of these are smallholder farmers. Their livelihoods are vitally linked to the weather—and what is happening with the climate.

Our partners tell us they are already noticing changes in their seasons, more droughts and more severe storms that are making it more difficult for community members to grow enough food to feed their families. We are responding by asking Canadians to write letters to their MPs.

What we're asking for

We can support smallholder farmers by advocating for strong Canadian policies that address climate change and its impacts on vulnerable people. Canada participates in international climate change negotiations, which include decisions on how to financially help developing countries address climate change.

In 2010, Canada provided \$400 million in financing for developing countries—Canada's fair share of the global fund agreed upon in Copenhagen. Unfortunately, most of Canada's money went as loans through the World Bank for clean energy development and is unlikely to reach the most vulnerable.

We expect another commitment of \$400 million for 2011 and 2012. We need to influence how Canada spends this money so that it will more effectively reduce hunger.

What's Denmark got to do with it?

At the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009, Canada supported the Copenhagen Accord, which included a commitment to provide \$30 billion in new and additional financing for developing countries for 2010-2012 to help them fight and adapt to climate change.

To do this, the government should:

Increase funding for adaptation – In 2010 only 11% of Canada's \$400 million went toward adaptation. The Copenhagen Accord stipulates that financing should be balanced between both slowing climate change (mitigation) and helping people adapt to changes that are already happening. For smallholder farmers, adaptation is the immediate priority.

Give grants not loans – To truly help those most vulnerable to climate change, most financing should be given as grants, not loans that burden developing countries.

Make financing additional to Canada's aid budget – Financing for climate change shouldn't divert money away from other important initiatives, such as health, education and food security.

Checklist

- Have copies of this handout, writing paper, envelopes and pens available when organizing this for a group.
- Be prepared to identify MP names/ridings by postal code. This information is available at www.parl.gc.ca.
- Fill out the Harvest of Letters Report and mail it to Canadian Foodgrains Bank—or fill it out online on the Harvest of Letters webpage at www.foodgrainsbank.ca under Get Involved.
- Letters may be sent postage-free to Parliamentary address: MP name with title; House of Commons, Parliament Buildings; Ottawa, ON; K1A 0A6



**Climate
change
affects us all...**

*but not
equally.*

**Let's
empower
small-scale
farmers to adapt.**

Sample Letter

Dear _____,

I am pleased that the Canadian government committed \$400 million for 2010 to help developing countries adapt to and fight climate change. It is important to maintain this commitment for 2011 and 2012.

As a supporter of Canadian Foodgrains Bank I would like to see Canada's financing for developing countries help smallholder farmers. More than 75% of the world's poorest people live in rural areas, and most are farmers. Climate change increases their risk of hunger and ongoing poverty.

To best support farmers and other vulnerable groups, I ask that:

- Canada give a larger share of its financing toward adaptation, as agreed to in the Copenhagen Accord. In 2010, Canada gave only 11% of the \$400 million towards helping people adapt to climate changes;
- Canada's contribution be given as grants, not loans;
- It be additional to Canada's existing aid budget.

I urge the Canadian government to ensure that Canada's \$400 million truly supports those most vulnerable to climate change. I request that you convey this important message to the Prime Minister's office and to the Minister of the Environment.

Sincerely,

It's a good idea to start with something positive.

Make the letter personal. Are you studying international development which has inspired your concern? Mention it. Did you grow up on a farm and can appreciate the challenges farmers face everywhere? Mention it.

Be clear about what you're asking for.

Don't assume your MP is knowledgeable about this issue. Some background info is helpful.

It's helpful to point out what the government already agreed to do.

Make sure your return address is somewhere on the letter so your MP can reply.

Harvest of Letters Report *(or fill out online at foodgrainsbank.ca under Get Involved > Harvest of Letters)*

We held our letter-writing event on / I wrote my letter on (date) _____

Main contact person _____ Name of church/campus/group _____

Address _____ City/Town _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

email _____ Church Affiliation (if any) _____ Ph _____

Our event was attended by _____ people (if applicable). Number of letters gathered: _____

MP _____ #of letters _____ MP _____ #of letters _____

MP _____ #of letters _____ MP _____ #of letters _____

MP _____ #of letters _____ MP _____ #of letters _____

Please rate the Advocacy Guide & Harvest of Letters on how clear and easy-to-use it was: (5=clear, useful; 1=not clear, difficult).

Please circle: 5 4 3 2 1 Comment:

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