

International Development Excerpts from the 2010 Green Party Manifesto

http://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/resources/Manifesto_web_file.pdf

Trade, aid and debt p46

Making it fair, making it sustainable

Free trade has been globalisation's mantra for over 30 years. It comes at a cost because:

- It encourages a 'race to the bottom', in which countries are forced to compete with one another to offer the lowest costs, leading to downward pressure on wages and environmental protection, as well as lowering of corporate taxation.
- The liberalisation of trade in goods and services has rendered the world economy increasingly unstable because economic contagion spreads more quickly.
- It destroys infant industries in poorer countries, which are forced to open their markets to imports from more developed countries, and undermines efforts to become more self-reliant in both North and South.
- It produces increased international trade, which makes a significant contribution to the rise in transport-related carbon emissions.

So we seek trading relations, particularly with poor people in poor countries, that give them a fair price for their products within a stable and sustainable pattern of trade.

Poorer countries are entitled to protect their people and their markets from unregulated competition, and we would seek to turn the World Trade Organization into a General Agreement on Sustainable Trade, which, together with a reformed International Monetary Fund, would better reflect the interests of smaller countries.

We would:

- Promote fair trade, so that trade with developing countries is based on decent pay and conditions, with a fair price paid to producers.
- Ensure that trade deals, whether global or with the European Union, allow developing countries to retain control over their economies and do not force through deregulation and liberalisation.
- Promote an international Financial Transactions Tax (a Robin Hood Tax) on transactions between financial institutions, and introduce unilaterally a small levy on foreign currency transactions involving the pound sterling.
- Support the decent work agenda, by encouraging developing countries with which we work to implement core International Labour Organization standards.
- Ensure that UK companies operating abroad adhere to environmental and human rights standards.

- Fully implement and enforce the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention
- Increase aid. We will exceed the UN's 0.7% target and allocate at least 1% of UK Gross National Product for aid by 2011, adding an extra £4.5bn pa. Aid should be targeted for the poorest, not involve economic policy conditions, respect gender equality and not be diverted to equipping security forces.
- Keep an International Aid Department separate from the Foreign Office, with its own Secretary of State, so as to separate foreign policy interests from humanitarian assistance.

Foreign Policy and Defence p42

Act to reduce arms sales worldwide by ending Government support for and subsidies of arms exports, including through UK Trade & Investment's Defence & Security Organisation and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

Press for successful negotiations over a robust and comprehensive global Arms Trade Treaty.

Recognise the importance of civil society organisations and of a free press worldwide and their role in promoting transparency, democracy, good governance and fighting corruption.

A positive role in Europe p44

A fundamental principle of Green politics is that decisions should be taken at the lowest practicable level: sometimes things dealt with at national level might better be decided regionally or more locally. So why bother with the European Union at all?

Greens are internationalists; we want to foster solidarity between peoples, and we believe co-operation builds peace, as it has done in Europe. Our geography means that we are part of Europe. We believe in Europe, but not in a European superstate.

Our vision for Europe seeks to replace the unsustainable economics of free trade and growth with the alternative of local self-reliance. We want to foster co-operation on issues of common interest, not establish international institutions for their own sake. Accordingly we are critical of many of the objectives built in to the EU treaties, of the EU institutions and how they work, and of many particular EU policies. We believe many things done and decided in Europe might better be done by member states or by regions or localities. So while we are members of the EU we will work for its fundamental reform.

However there are matters – safeguarding basic rights, peace and security achieved through mutual understanding, environmental protection, the spread of culture and ideas, regulation of the financial system – where we agree that EU action is appropriate. While the EU has control over trade, we accept that in practice the way to affect these matters is to call for EU action – so we call, for example, for an EU ban on genetically modified (GM) foods because in current circumstances that is the best way to achieve a ban in the UK.

And there are other matters – for example, welfare policy – where although member

states retain basic control, the Open Method of Coordination between member states allows for a useful measure of discussion and co-ordination on matters of mutual interest.

Climate Change p33

The canary in the mine

Miners used to take canaries down mines with them to check for poisonous gases. They were an advance warning of impending problems. That's what climate change is today – a threat in itself to our survival as a species and a warning of more general ecological collapse. The evidence from Copenhagen suggests that mainstream governments just haven't grasped the nature and scale of the changes that need to be made, from massive investments in energy saving, to green technologies and infrastructure, to transfers of funds to developing countries.

Human-made climate change is an unprecedentedly serious threat to our welfare. But only the Green Party understands that this is just one sign of the stress our economies and lifestyles put on the environment.

Other political parties will have you believe that it's just an isolated problem. But it's not. It's a sign of what's to come unless we get our planetary home in order.

We know that every person, every community, every country has a carbon footprint that contributes to climate change. And we know that those with big footprints – the wealthy and those with extravagant lifestyles – have to make them smaller.

But carbon isn't the only footprint we have. We have water footprints, and other footprints too. Added together, these different footprints add up to our total ecological impact – and it mustn't be bigger than the planet we live on.

Today, though, the scale of economic activity has taken us dangerously beyond what the planet can bear if it is to continue to support flourishing human and other life, and population growth only makes things worse.

That is why climate change is more than an isolated threat – it is a warning of the catastrophic social and environmental consequences of business as usual.

The failure of the Copenhagen Conference makes it more obvious than ever that finding a global solution to climate change is not just a technical and economic issue. The solution must also involve justice on a global scale, equity and interdependence. And it is an area where the UK should play a leading role in the EU and at international level to secure a fair, ambitious and binding deal.

That is why we support the Contraction and Convergence framework for mitigating climate change. Under such a system all countries would eventually converge on the same low emissions per capita. Rich countries would need to contract to that level quickly, while poorer countries would contract much more slowly to that level, or in a few cases expand to meet it. Under that scenario, and to avoid warming exceeding 2°C, the UK needs to adopt an initial annual carbon dioxide emissions reduction target of around 10 per cent, with the aim of reducing emissions by 90 per cent from 1990 levels by 2030 and 65 per cent by 2020 – starting now.

Crack down on tax havens and other methods of tax evasion and avoidance, raising £10bn in 2010 rising to £13bn by 2013.

Taxes to reduce inequality p15

In particular press for a transparent international accounting standard that requires companies to report on a country-by-country basis so that their profits can be located and taxed.

We favour a Robin Hood Tax – a tax on financial transactions– but because that would work best with wide international agreement we do not rely on it to fill the gap in the Government's finances, though we believe there is also scope to act unilaterally by introducing a tax on sterling foreign exchange transactions, and that the UK should demonstrate global leadership.

Box: The Robin Hood Tax p47

We support the idea of a Robin Hood Tax, sometimes called a Financial Transactions Tax (and similar to the special case of a 'Tobin Tax' on currency transactions). It would involve a very small tax (maybe 0.05%) on the value of every financial transaction between financial institutions worldwide. Globally this tax has the potential to raise as much as £250 billion, as well as help stabilise the financial markets.

Any global climate change treaty must involve a transfer of resources of well over US\$150 billion a year from rich countries to poorer countries channelled through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to pay for the development of renewable energy technologies and climate change adaptation, and to help resist deforestation.

We favour dedicating the revenues from an international financial transactions tax to this purpose and to wider global sustainable development. If that does not prove successful the UK must pay its fair contribution from other resources.

Box: Debt, and ecological debt p48

The Green Party calls for a reassessment of the nature of debt itself by acknowledging the historical ecological debt owed by rich to poor countries.

A 2008 study by the University of California, Berkeley, found that the rich world's ecological debt to the poor world outstrips the traditional debt owed by poor countries to rich ones.

For example, greenhouse emissions from low-income countries have imposed US\$740 billion of damage on rich countries, while in return rich countries have imposed US\$2300 billion of damage on poorer countries.

The ecological debt has been built up by: the extraction of natural resources without proper payment; the use of local and indigenous knowledge for the development of products (e.g. medicines) without proper recompense; the use of local land for mono-crop export rather than for feeding the local population; and the appropriation of the atmosphere for the disproportionate emission of climate change gases.

Ecological debt needs to be acknowledged and paid for. Simultaneously, the Green Party wants to see the cancellation of all unjust and unsustainable traditional debt 'owed' by the developing world to richer countries.

Debts are often unjust and they worsen poverty. Much of the poorer world's debt is left over from reckless lending by wealthier countries in the 1970s. Some of the effects of this are made worse by corrupt government in parts of the developing world, but the real damage is done by the huge repayments demanded by the IMF, the World Bank, and rich-country governments.

At the moment there are lots of strings attached to debt cancellation, often unjust and undemocratic in themselves. We want to see these strings removed. In the end the only way to avoid debt in the future is economic justice now. This is why we positively support the Millennium Development Goals and their achievement by the 2015 target.

Box: Promoting fair trade starts at home p47

Led by Green Party local councillors and Norwich South candidate Adrian Ramsay, a Green Party motion for Norwich to become a Fair Trade City was adopted by the City Council. This means that the Council stocks and helps to promote fair trade goods.