

2016/17

Commitment
FOR LIFE



Turning faith into hope for the future

Inside: Stories from partners and the fantastic work Commitment for Life has supported in Bangladesh, Central America, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, and Zimbabwe.

Welcome

I am excited to be sharing this year's magazine with you.

We are part of a diverse global community and by working and sharing together we enrich each other's lives. Sharing gives us wisdom and courage to be the person God wants us to be.

The work of Christian Aid partners in our chosen regions is always about building trust and community cohesion. Whether it is working on disaster resilience in Bangladesh or supporting basic human needs or rights in Central America, communities become stronger together.

The story from Zimbabwe shows how Christian Aid partners have been working with young people in the Tonga community to improve their physical health and emotional wellbeing. Please do take time to read the inspiring stories in this issue. If they have moved you, why not share them with your church congregation?

Our intern Amelia also reflects on life in community, inspired by her visit to Christian Aid partners in Brazil, earlier in 2016.

Global Justice Now continues to work for those living with poverty and injustice. Why not be more active in campaigning this year or encourage your church community to take part in The Big Switch? More details can be found in the Christian Aid campaign update on page 13.

On behalf of those you may never meet, I thank you for your continued generosity to Commitment for Life. Our partner countries will face huge challenges in the coming year, but as a faith-filled and thoughtful people, we are called to share what we have by giving, praying and taking action.

Jesus promised good news for the poor, freedom for the oppressed and a time of God's favour. We must continue to play our part in bringing this to fruition.

Linda Mead

Programme Coordinator



For information about Commitment for Life, email Linda Mead at lmeadcforl@gmail.com or visit cforl.org.uk

Commitment for Life encourages all United Reformed and Local Ecumenical Partnership churches to take action, pray and give for people living in poverty around the world. 75% of all income raised goes to Christian Aid to be divided equally between the partner countries, and 5% to Global Justice Now (previously called the World Development Movement). The remaining 20% is spent on grants, resources and administration. Last year we raised £380,424 to help alleviate the root causes of poverty.

Cover image: Feroza Begum in her kitchen garden she was helped to grow by Christian Aid partner GUK.

Photo: Christian Aid/GMB Akash/Panos Pictures

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Bible reflection

Living in community

Inspired by her visit to Christian Aid partners in Brazil earlier this year, Commitment for Life and Christian Aid Collective intern Amelia Sutcliffe reflects on life in community and what it means to her.

This year, I have been learning a great deal about community and its place in changing the world. I have always valued community. I was lucky to grow up in a caring, supportive community. Finding and developing my own community at university (which now spans the world) dramatically changed my time there, so I have always seen it as an essential part of my life. This year I have spent much time discussing what it really means and looks like in the world today.

I believe community is where people come together to support each other, where they stand in solidarity. This may sound very basic, but I believe it is powerful and transformative. Why? Because when people come together, real change can happen. Throughout the Bible there are stories of people gathering, supporting each other and transforming their world. In Acts, we are told about the followers of Jesus and the time after his resurrection and ascension, which could have been filled with doubt and fear, but instead, we are told, is filled with transformation. In the disciples' new community of friends, who were previously strangers – including many of those left out of 'normal' society – there is no poverty, all are fed and everyone is welcome (Acts 2:44-48).

By trying their hardest, the disciples ended poverty in their community. Our community may be bigger, but we also have greater opportunities and abilities than the disciples could ever have imagined. **This is why I believe we will be able to end extreme poverty too, throughout our global community, as long as we act together just like the disciples did in Acts. I'm committed to being that Acts community today, are you?**



Amelia (shown second from the right in red) with her Christian Aid Intern community on their recent trip to visit partners in Brazil.

As the joint Commitment for Life and Christian Aid Collective Intern, Amelia works to inspire young people in the United Reformed Church to be involved in social justice issues around global poverty. She travels around the country visiting youth groups, churches and schools to talk about the work of Christian Aid and Global Justice Now and to run workshops, preach or reflect biblically on the issues around global poverty in order to help young people understand the search for justice and equality as part of their faith journeys.

There is no planet B

'Our job is to guard over the mangroves in order to protect them from the criminal hand of man'

Alvaro Orellana Crespo

Alvaro and the Istaten Association have managed to stave off threats from developers, preventing further deforestation of the mangroves.



El Salvador is one of the countries in the world most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Our partners there report rising temperatures and sea levels, an increasing number and intensity of hurricanes, and rainfall becoming ever more erratic.

Natural storm buffers such as mangroves have been heavily deforested in the country, which has the second-highest rate of deforestation in Latin America. This process affects wildlife and ecosystems, and makes the country susceptible to landslides and flooding during heavy storms.

In November, we wrote to you about Lidia Guardado, who lost her home and means of earning a living to the waves triggered by storms that hit her community in San Francisco Menéndez. Her story and those of others like her serve to show how climate change can compound an already acute state of poverty.

With your support, however, our partner UNES is working with people like Lidia to fight back.

Protecting the mangroves

The Istaten Association guards and protects the local mangrove reserve in San Francisco Menéndez, near the border with Guatemala. Founded in 2012, this small volunteer-run group has now flourished into a network of 35 individuals, working across a number of local communities.

Headed up by Alvaro Orellana Crespo, the association has worked with UNES to stave off the threats of developers and deforestation. They've successfully taken on the local mayor to prevent 70 *manzanas* (a *manzana* is the same as 0.7 hectares) of forest being cut down to turn into sugar-cane fields. Volunteer-run and social media savvy, the members of UNES are a testament to the strength of grassroots activists who, collectively, can make huge changes for all of us.

The impact of deforestation

Mangrove trees grow in tropical coastal regions, as they have the ability to survive in both salt and freshwater. Mangrove swamps provide a home for marine life, while offering protection from storms, and preventing coastal erosion and flooding from the sea and rivers.

Alvaro told us: 'The mangrove...allows us to survive. We find reptiles, crabs and fish. It's a very important place for fishermen – 80 per cent of the population in this region survive from fishing. The mangroves are really important, too, because they're a protective barrier. They lessen the impact of flooding...and provide a refuge for so many animals.'

Fighting back

The Istaten Association started a forest ranger committee to protect the mangrove forest and its ecosystem, and raise local awareness of the situation in 2012.

The first deforestation threat that Alvaro and his team faced down was from a local farm about to cut down 86.5 *manzanas* of mangrove forest to grow sugar cane. With support and training from UNES, the association helped the community lobby for the protection of the mangroves.

Alvaro explained the vital role UNES – with your support – plays in making this happen: '[UNES'] support is very important. They give us everything. They give us food and legal advice. They cover transportation costs when we have to mobilise. In all the different areas, UNES has been fundamental.'

A message to campaigners around the world

Alvaro and his team demonstrate the power of community action. The impact of their advocacy work is not only being felt in their local community, but on a national level. Alvaro is keen that their work inspires people further afield to protect the environment.

'I urge you, as our friends from around the world, to make an effort to defend and protect nature. We started as a committee and now we've grown into an association that has had successes in the environmental realm. We're not just defending some ecosystems, we're defending nature as a whole.'

UNES could not continue its work without your support. Giving as an individual or a church congregation helps people in El Salvador to adapt to the challenges of a changing climate.

£320 could pay for a Climate Change Awareness Day in 10 communities, raising awareness of climate change and its impact among young people and women.

£32 could provide a series of weather bulletins on conditions across the region to help a community prepare for storms.

£23 could pay for the fuel to take 35 community leaders to a leadership workshop.



Deforestation of mangroves in San Francisco Menéndez.

When the mighty river rises

At 1,800 miles long, the Brahmaputra River flows through Tibet, India and Bangladesh. Every year, when the snow at its source melts, it can cause catastrophic flooding.

For people living in the Char islands in northern Bangladesh, their lives and livelihoods can be precarious. Isolated from the mainland, these poor communities are at the whim of the river and an ever-changing climate.

Our partner GUK's staff make a daily four-hour round trip to the Chars six days a week to deliver a project that is transforming the lives of people there. This work has made locals more resilient, self-sufficient and knowledgeable about how to live in this tough environment.

Feroza Begum and her family, who you may have heard about during Christian Aid Week, arrived in Bazetilcupi Char with next to nothing four years ago after being flooded from their home. GUK identified Feroza and her family as 'ultra-poor'.

At that time, Feroza's husband Joynal (from our March Update) was having to work far away in Dhaka as a day labourer. Their income was on average 66p per day. 'I feel like crying when I think of those times,' Feroza told us.

Feroza was supported with cattle, poultry, the raising of her homestead (to protect it from flooding), training in agricultural techniques, and workshops in rights awareness. Now her assets are worth more than £3,500. Feroza has status in her community, owns land and is ambitious in her hopes for the future

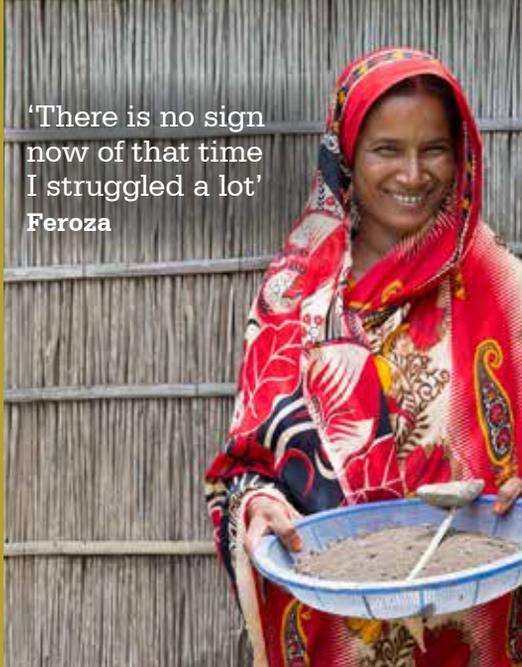
Free to choose

Four years ago, Feroza and her family's life looked very different. Such was their poverty that she described wanting to 'break off her hands and legs' because she felt so useless. But with the support of GUK, she turned things around and is now able to make choices to improve her family's lives.



A little girl uses a banana-tree raft to travel through the flooded Bazetilcupi Char.

'There is no sign now of that time I struggled a lot'
Feroza



In the last four years Feroza's life has been completely transformed. Once 'ultra-poor', she is now thriving.

Communities under pressure

Each year, with increasing unpredictability, flooding and river erosion affect the lives, livelihoods and homes of Char dwellers like Feroza.

In the Chars, there are few opportunities for economic development beyond agriculture. A widespread lack of employment means male family members are often forced to migrate seasonally for work.

These factors are contributing to a worsening social and economic situation for communities already on the margins of society.

Resilience for the future

As well as helping people earn a secure living, GUK is supporting them to improve their disaster preparedness, through early warning systems, emergency contingency planning and the provision of emergency shelters. A crucial aspect of the project has been the raising of people's homesteads, to protect their homes, animals and crops from flood waters.

While Chars communities will always be vulnerable to disasters such as flooding, this project enables people to build their assets and financial security, so they can make choices and think to the future.

As Feroza told us: 'Now I have more confidence. I enjoy more freedom and I have decision-making power. Even my value in my community has increased. What I have received from GUK has changed my life.'

On our visit to the Chars last year, we met more families like Feroza's in need of support. Whether giving as an individual or with your church congregation, every penny will make a difference.

£25 could buy a goat for a family like Feroza's, providing important nutrition and milk to sell.

£75 could set an individual up with everything they need to rear chickens, giving them an important food supply and source of income.

£200 could pay to raise a family's homestead to protect it and everything they own from the floods.

Climate change in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is particularly affected by the changing climate. Recent extreme temperatures before the 2015 monsoon demonstrated how average temperature rise can also increase the likelihood of dangerous heatwaves.

As well as rising temperatures, both average and extreme rainfall is projected to increase further, raising flood risks. Increased outbreaks of rain extend the length of the dry spells in between, contributing

to a decrease in crop harvests. This combination of factors means that the 80 per cent of Bangladeshis whose lives depend on agriculture will have to increase their resilience substantially to cope.

Sport for change



Young girls engage in sport, which gives them the opportunity to share ideas on how to overcome challenges of growing up in Binga.

Despite continuing challenges in Zimbabwe, particularly the recent food crisis (see box opposite), we've achieved a great deal there in the past year.

The Christian Aid country programme has been providing different kinds of support to poor communities, particularly targeting minority ethnic groups, women, people with disabilities and young people.

In 2015, with your help, we directly reached more than 10,000 poor households (60,000 people), while pushing for wider policy changes to benefit entire communities of poor, marginalised people.

The poorest of the poor

Binga district in northern Zimbabwe is one of the remotest, least developed and poorest regions in the country. It's inhabited by the Tonga people, who are marginalised not only because of their remote location, but also because of their ethnicity.

This poor region presents few opportunities for the young people growing up there. The communities' patriarchal culture and negative social norms, combined with the cost and distance of schools, mean that few

children will reach secondary school. And less than 14 per cent of those who do will leave with a pass. The situation is worse for girls and children with disabilities, who face additional barriers, including discrimination and, in some cases, abuse.

Sport for Change

Our partners Christian Care, Open School World Wide and Silveira House have been working with communities in Binga to improve the opportunities for, and educational attainment of, children and young people. With their Sport for Change programme, they are also improving young people's physical and emotional wellbeing, and educating them about gender, sexual and reproductive health, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and their rights and responsibilities.

Thousands of young people have been attending sports clubs and competing against each other at Sport for Change football, netball and volleyball tournaments. The team captains have also been trained as peer educators tasked with educating their team mates on children's rights, education, entrepreneurship and life skills. The sports

clubs provide literacy and numeracy classes, and vocational training, as well as sessions on child abuse, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and gender issues.

The tournaments give an opportunity to reach out to communities with similar messages on health and child rights. The messages are aimed at changing negative norms, particularly relating to girls, children with disabilities and violence against children. Already local chiefs and village heads are taking more action to address violence against children.

Changing together

So far, almost 2,000 young people have taken part in the sports clubs and tournaments, while more than 530 parents, guardians and community members have attended learning sessions at the tournaments. Sport is helping change attitudes, reduce stigma and discrimination, improve skills and confidence, and boost uptake of local services.

We have already seen a greater number of young people taking part in education and entrepreneurial activities, as well as increased reporting and action on child abuse. Young people are demonstrating a greater understanding of their rights and participating more in decisions that affect them. The Sport for Change programme has also promoted leadership skills among young people, encouraging them to participate more in their communities.

Josias Mutale, a trained team captain and peer educator, shares messages on sexual abuse and children's rights, with support from nurses from the local hospital.



Childhood in Binga

Before starting work in Binga, we conducted a study, exposing the harsh reality of childhood in the communities we are working with:

- **23%** of children are orphans or are otherwise vulnerable.
- **24%** of children don't have a birth certificate – preventing access to school and vital services.
- **10-20km** is the distance many children travel to school.
- Just **17.5%** of children passed Grade 7 of primary school in 2013.
- **40%** of children reported experiencing at least one form of physical violence in the last 12 months.
- **20%** of children reported experiencing at least one form of sexual violence in the last 12 months.

Update: Zimbabwe food crisis

Zimbabwe has declared a state of disaster triggered by a severe drought, which has been made worse by El Niño weather patterns.

Following prolonged dry spells, experts predict 75 per cent of harvests will fail, particularly in southern areas, and close to 4 million people will be affected. This means families will be unable to grow crops or feed their livestock: their main source of food and income.

We have four partners ready to respond in the worst-hit areas. They plan to provide supplementary food for livestock, cash or cash vouchers to help families purchase essentials, and food aid where necessary.

To support our emergencies fund, please visit: christianaid.org.uk/emergencies

Empowering women in the West Bank



Women from Beit Furiq village in the West Bank are earning a secure, environmentally sustainable living from growing safflower.

The occupied West Bank is a challenging environment in which to make a living, particularly for women. Local industry is subjected to movement and trade restrictions, limited technical imports and natural resources, and there is little physical space to develop. Farmers and producers have few opportunities to access vital agricultural services and market information to increase production.

Area C of the West Bank is under full Israeli civil administration and security control. People there mostly rely on agriculture to make a living, but face numerous obstacles, and Palestinians in the region are becoming increasingly marginalised.

Women are particularly affected. Many are prevented from working due to social and cultural restrictions, which have also stopped them gaining the necessary skills and support needed to enter employment or set up their own business.

Christian Aid's local partner the YMCA is helping transform the lives of people, particularly women, in Area C in a number of different ways. With the support of Commitment for Life, the YMCA's Women's Training Program is giving women greater opportunities to earn a secure living. We are also working with existing agricultural cooperatives, training them in environmentally sustainable methods, as well as building their skills and capacity to reach more people with their products.

Earning a living for life

The YMCA team always starts by working with local communities to carry out a Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (PVCA). This helps identify the risks and barriers people have faced in the past, and any activities that could help them overcome those barriers.

Following this assessment, 50 women in the villages of Jub Al-Deeb and Al-Oqban attended training on agricultural production, food processing, animal husbandry, family health and small project management. Seeds and seedlings were also distributed to the trainees. These training sessions give women the confidence and skills to earn a sustainable living, allowing them to contribute to local economic development and increase their resilience under occupation.

In the Deir Balout village, the YMCA is working with a cooperative to increase its income through promoting, marketing and distributing pickled cucumbers. The cucumbers were bought from women farmers, and 31 cooperative members, including women, were trained in pickling. With the YMCA's support, the cooperative has seen an increase in sales to such a level that it has found it hard to meet demand. In addition, women farmers received help to market 600 jars of their pickles through the cooperative, helping them reach more customers and grow their business.

Environmentally sustainable livelihoods

The YMCA is working with another cooperative in the village of Beit Duqqu to help it produce an environmentally sustainable, quality product, reach new customers and improve sales. Cooperative members have been learning a new technique, developed and tested by the local Adel Fair Trade Non Profit Corporation, which reduces the use of chemical fertilisers, protecting the environment and producing fruits and vegetables that are free of artificial preservatives and chemicals.

By partnering with Adel Fair Trade Non Profit Corporation, the cooperative is not only gaining from its expertise in this field, but also its market knowledge and access. According to Jihad Abddo, head of marketing at Adel: 'There is increasing interest in local products. The demand exceeds the supply, especially for fresh fruits and vegetables. Three

types of consumers are looking for these products: those who want to buy artificial preservative-free products, those who like to support the women and young farmers who provide the products, and those seeking to support Palestinian products.'

Commitment for Life support has been key to helping women in the West Bank to develop sustainable livelihoods. It costs just \$165 (£116) to train a Palestinian woman in agricultural production. With your contribution, we could strengthen the skills, status and earning power of more women there.



A clean break

In other news, Christian Aid and the YMCA have also been working with another women's cooperative in the village of Beit Furiq. This cooperative, which produces high quality as well as traditional olive oil soaps, had been struggling to find the right market for its product. We connected it to our partners Bethlehem Fair Trade Artisans and Americans for a Vibrant Palestinian Economy, who are now helping it to sell its soaps internationally.

Food for thought

Dinner and a film make a perfect way to learn more about your partner country.

Have you ever thought of organising a meal to raise money and awareness for Commitment for Life?

Soup or prawn cocktail, chicken casserole or chickpea hotpot, followed by fruit skewers or jam roll was on the menu when members of The Cornerstone, Southend, organised a Sunday lunch. Tables were attractively set and dishes presented to please the eye.

Following the meal, members were served coffee and given Commitment for Life magazines and leaflets explaining the programme. They were shown a film about Zimbabwe, their partner country, highlighting the worrying drought situation in the south, where the last two rains have failed. The money raised from donations

will form part of their yearly contribution to Commitment for Life.

Comments included: 'Great food and a timely message', 'It means more when you see and hear real stories', and 'We have so much – the need to share is vital'.

Harold Anderson, link person at the church for more than 22 years, was extremely pleased with the overall result. 'We had a great time in fellowship and it also raised awareness of Zimbabwe's current problems.'

Why not hold an event like this in your church? It could be an afternoon tea or a simple buffet lunch. You could even find recipes from your partner country on the internet. It's often easier to talk to people in a relaxed setting and helps build your community, too.



Standing together for change

Over the past year, thousands of you have joined with us in The Big Shift campaign, as we seek to move money out of fossil fuels and into renewables. Last autumn, more than 15,000 people signed a petition to Amber Rudd MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, asking the government to phase out coal. Over the last few months, we have been focusing on The Big Church Switch and have supported more than 500 churches to register and switch their energy to a renewable supplier. Hundreds of people have also switched their personal energy supply.

As we launch the next stage of our Big Shift campaign, we will be exploring how together we can take action to shift the balance of the amount of public and private money in fossil fuels towards renewables. For more information keep an eye on our website: christianaid.org.uk/climate

Remember your church can still register to switch until the end of August. Visit: bigchurchswitch.org.uk

Get involved locally

Remember the Speak Up lobby last June? This year, we're joining again with The Climate Coalition to plan a week of climate action across Britain from 10-16 October. Communities will come together to Speak Up For The Love Of all the people, places and cherished things affected by climate change. These local events will give you the opportunity to meet other people passionate about tackling climate change in your area and to ask your local MP what progress has been made since last June. **To register your interest, please sign up here: christianaid.org.uk/climateweek**



Christian Aid campaigners lobby parliament to make burning fossil fuels a thing of the past.

Tax campaign update

As tax dodging scandals such as the Panama Paper leaks continue to play out in the media, we have seen a growing interest in our tax campaign around the ownership of companies registered in UK overseas territories. In addition, our Sourced campaign continues to use the financial influence of local councils to change the behaviour of big business. If we can get councils to commit to asking strong tax questions to companies they do business with, they'll send a clear signal to companies that they can't dodge tax and expect to win public sector contracts. More than 28 councils are already engaged in this campaign and eight of those have passed a motion to incorporate tax compliance questions into their procurement procedures. We expect more to follow.

Add your voice to the tax dodging debate by taking action here: christianaid.org.uk/sourced

'No TTIP': the campaign for trade justice



Our campaign to stop the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is capturing the public imagination and enthusing campaigners across Britain. Most importantly, we have a real chance of securing a significant victory.

Our campaign, which began two years ago, has already forced the European Commission to bow to public pressure and make amendments to try to force the deal through. But these amendments don't change the fact that this deal could have

real consequences for ordinary people, democracy and the environment (see box opposite).

The campaign has achieved a great deal in the last 12 months; raising awareness, building alliances across civil society and making sure that when TTIP eventually comes to a vote at the European Parliament, we will be in a position to ensure it is stopped in its tracks. Thanks to the support of Commitment for Life, we've be able to:

- work with partners across Europe to get 3.5 million people to sign a Europe-wide petition against TTIP. This was the largest petition in the EU's history, and included more than 500,000 signatures from people in Britain.
- establish 39 TTIP Free Zones. We have helped local councils voice opposition to TTIP by making their area a 'TTIP Free Zone'. So far, 39 councils have passed the motion supporting the campaign.
- produce hard-hitting research. TTIP affects every area of our society and economy. We've been working to bring this to life by researching the impact on different areas, from climate change to tax justice, to inform the public, politicians and campaigners.
- support local campaigners across Britain. We've been working with students, faith groups and other 'No TTIP' groups around the country to help everyone learn about TTIP and take action locally to stop it.

Unfortunately, while the campaign makes good progress, we have to remember that TTIP is just one of several trade deals being pushed by the US and the EU. While TTIP negotiations continue, we will be focusing on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) being negotiated between the EU and Canada, as well as the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), which could result in the privatisation of transport, banking and energy systems in middle-income countries. We will continue to set out our vision for a positive, sustainable trade system, which can move us towards a fair global trade system that works for people and the planet.

Commitment for Life and Global Justice Now (previously the World Development Movement) has a long, proud history of campaigning for fairer trade systems. We have stopped other dodgy deals in the past, and working together we can stop them again.

Thanks for supporting the campaign for trade justice. Together, we can win.

What's wrong with TTIP?

TTIP – and other trade deals like it – put corporate interests before the interests of ordinary people, democracy and the environment. In particular, we are concerned that:

- climate change will get worse. An EU impact assessment of TTIP states that it will add an additional 11 million metric tonnes per year of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.
- developing countries will be hit hard. For instance, Niger is likely to see a drop in its exports to the US of 12 per cent. Ivory Coast and Guinea could see a reduction of GDP of 6.4 per cent and 7.4 per cent.
- rules and regulations that protect public health and the environment will be rolled back. Cosmetics and food production are just some of the areas likely to be deregulated, putting profit ahead of public and environmental health.
- corporations will be able to sue countries for policies that harm their profits. This would mean that bringing public services back into public ownership, raising the minimum wage, or banning dubious practices such as fracking could be challenged – and could prove hugely costly for countries.

A message from Loretta



It is such a pleasure to be writing again for the Commitment for Life annual magazine. Christian Aid is so grateful to Commitment for Life churches for their ongoing and

steadfast support of Christian Aid, and in particular, the four Commitment for Life partner regions.

You may note that there is a recurring theme in this year's magazine – one that I know has come up before in the Commitment for Life regions – and that is climate change. Christian Aid and our partners are continuously having to adapt to the ever-changing environment we are seeing as a result of climate change.

The gradual rise in global temperature is having a huge effect on the people Christian Aid strives to help, fuelling an increase in natural disasters and climatic shocks such as droughts and floods.

On page 9, as well as reading about the work Christian Aid's partners have been doing to increase educational opportunities for children and young people, you will read of the growing food crisis in Zimbabwe. The crisis, caused by the El Niño induced drought, is expected to affect some 4 million people.

Meanwhile in El Salvador, deforestation of essential mangrove swamps is damaging the environment and worsening the effects of climate change. However, some

amazing work by the Istaten Association demonstrates the potential within grassroots organisations to make change and protect the environment for us all and future generations.

In Bangladesh, the focus of this year's Christian Aid Week, you can see how Feroza, with the support of partner organisation GUK, has changed her life and developed the resources and resilience to respond to climate threats. Thank you to all Commitment for Life supporters for how you have enabled change in each of these extremely challenging situations.

Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory is the one region not so prevalent in our climate change work. However, on page 11, you will read how women in the West Bank are learning and using environmentally friendly agricultural techniques. They are a testament to how, even in the most difficult of conditions, a climate-friendly approach can lift people out of poverty.

All that remains for me to say is thank you to all Commitment for Life churches and supporters for your ongoing partnership and support of Christian Aid's work. Without the support of people like you, Christian Aid simply wouldn't be able to continue changing the lives of some of the world's most forgotten people.

Loretta Minghella
Chief Executive, Christian Aid



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Commitment for Life, The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT Tel 020 7691 9867