



**LABOUR:  
BE BOLD**

# Communicating an Internationalist Green New Deal Programme

Developed by



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## Foreword

A group of young people are congregating on a street corner in their local community. There's an atmosphere of giddy anticipation mixed with some nerves. For some, it's their first time canvassing. For others, it's just another morning of door knocking. The young outfit of Green New Deal Rising campaigners just read An Internationalist Green New Deal Programme and are excited to share their enthusiasm.

After reading this communications deck,<sup>1</sup> they feel prepared to effectively make the case for an internationalist Green New Deal to community members, who may be sympathetic, or stubbornly on the fence.

A pair walks up to their first door. They knock and hear footsteps approaching. They're ready to meet the moment.

1. This communications deck was inspired by [NEON](#).



# Framing Principles for an Internationalist Green New Deal

## Remind people of the big picture

Climate and ecological breakdown is here and rapidly worsening. It won't go away unless we face it head on with a bold plan to transform the international economy. The UK has a profound responsibility and opportunity to lead on an internationalist Green New Deal.

## Example message

The UK was instrumental in writing the global trade rules that protect investor interests, fatten corporate profits, and stifle the Global South's ability to develop on its own terms. These same trade rules have led to domestic deindustrialization and the erosion of labour rights, inflicting tremendous harm on British communities. The UK has a responsibility to not only extricate itself from the trade straitjacket but to spearhead a global effort of economic democratisation, providing the breathing room for equitable decarbonisation and social prosperity.

## Make clear who wins and who loses

An internationalist Green New Deal is a policy programme for people and planet. It empowers the most vulnerable and redresses the unequal dynamics between those responsible for climate breakdown and those that have done the least to cause it.

## Example message

People living on the frontlines of the climate crisis are facing devastating droughts, famines, heatwaves, and wildfires while the companies responsible are laughing to the bank. Fossil fuel corporations, driving planetary heating – and lining their pockets amidst a cost of living crisis – should pay for the damage they've done. If these companies were properly taxed and the Government stopped handing them billions in subsidies, money could be freed up to help those least responsible for climate breakdown.

## Positive framing

Emphasis should be placed on the benefits that an internationalist Green New Deal brings the global majority. It uplifts the most vulnerable, delivers a more just, democratic society, and takes important steps towards averting the worst impacts of climate and ecological breakdown.

## Example message

Responsibility, care, compassion – these are the best facets of our culture. Welcoming those fleeing climate and social catastrophe and offering them a safe, dignified life should be the standard-bearer of British society. An internationalist Green New Deal meets the moment with humility, courage, and decency.



**01**

**Relieve**

**Debt**



**120%**

is the amount Global South debt payments have increased between 2010 and 2021.

1/6

Sources ↓  
[Debt Justice](#)

**Over half of low-income countries are now in “debt distress,” or at “high risk” of becoming so.**

2/6

Source ↓  
[IMF](#)

**\$4.2 trillion**

in loan interest payment has been paid by developing countries between 1980 and 2015, far outstripping total aid received over the same time period.

3/6

Sources ↓  
[The Guardian](#)



The Global South spends five times more on debt repayment than on addressing climate breakdown.

4/6

Sources ↓  
Debt Justice

90%

of debt contracts for lowest-income countries, and 50% of debt contracts for all Global South countries, are governed by English law.

5/6

Sources ↓  
Debt Justice

£4.9 billion

of Global South countries' debt is held by the UK.

6/6

Sources ↓  
HM Treasury



# 01 Relieve Debt **Common attacks**

## How is sovereign debt relief a **Green New Deal policy?**

High levels of external debt payment syphons money away from key development goals and urgent climate action.

What's more, the need to service debt in foreign currency often forces Global South countries to shape their economies around dirty export industries like fossil fuel production and industrial agri-business.

This vicious cycle of harm can be cut through urgent, large-scale debt relief.

## Why should the UK cancel other countries' debt when the UK has such a high level of debt itself?

The UK's sovereign debt situation actually is not a problem.

Of the UK Government's debt, only 20% is owed outside the UK, and payment on these debts are just 3% of Government revenue – one of the lowest levels of any “rich” country.

On top of that, cancelling Global South debt would have a negligible impact on the Government's balance sheet, but would make a big difference to debtor countries.

Won't cancelling debt cause a huge loss of income for the UK?



No, the UK Government holds just £4.9 billion of Global South debt. This is equivalent to a meagre 0.002% of annual GDP.

Why should the UK bail out countries in the Global South for their bad economic decision-making?

The Global South is not experiencing a debt crisis due to bad decision-making.

High levels of Global South debt stems from our unequal economic system where tax, trade, and financial rules are designed to enrich the Northern investor class. With economies that were systematically weakened under colonial rule, Global South countries have had little choice but to borrow.

High levels of debt are maintained because of exceptionally high interest rates. While average interest rates on loans to Global North countries is around 1%, in the Global South, interest rates frequently range from 6%-10%. This creates a spiral of further debt accumulation.



### Shouldn't countries just pay off the debt if they owe it?

No, debt repayment should never come ahead of funding development needs or urgent climate action.

In the UK legal system, there are multiple mechanisms for cancelling debts owed by individuals and companies when debts cannot be paid. For government debts, there is no legal process for making lenders comply with debt relief.

This needs to change.

### Why should the UK lead on debt relief when China is the single largest sovereign creditor?

While China does hold a large amount of Global South debt, private creditors (banks, asset managers, etc.) are the largest creditor to Global South countries. It is private creditors that are largely blocking international debt relief efforts.

The UK is in a great position to legislate for private creditors to comply with debt relief because the majority of debt contracts for low-income countries are governed by English law.



**A strong majority of voters in Northern England agree that the UK Government should support Global South countries.**

Note: There is limited polling specifically around sovereign debt cancellation.

**64%**

Around 4 in 6 voters agree that helping the world's poor is the right thing to do.

**93%**

Around 9 in 10 voters identified that the UK should support specific international development goals like access to clean water.

Sources ↓

[Coalition for Global Prosperity](#)

Note: There is limited polling specifically around sovereign debt cancellation.

**Frames about redressing colonial injustices are not popular among the UK public.**

Note: While there is some tension around using the 'redress of colonial injustice' frame to communicate debt relief, it is a historical truth that should not be shied away from.

**69%**

Around 7 in 10 British people see the former empire either as something to be proud of, or neither a source of pride or shame. This compares with just 1 in 5 people who think the British empire is something to be ashamed of.

Sources ↓

[YouGov](#)

Note: While there is some tension around using the 'redress of colonial injustice' frame to communicate debt relief, it is a historical truth that should not be shied away from.



**02**

**Pay UP**



**£40 billion  
to £100 billion  
per year**

is the UK's fair share contribution of climate finance. The UK currently spends just £2.3 billion annually on international climate finance.

1/10

**£96.9  
billion**

is how much the Government could raise by taxing fossil, taxing wealth, and reallocating Special Drawing Rights. This can all be directed towards international climate finance.

2/10

**\$2.5  
trillion**

is how much global oil and gas giants made in excess profits in 2022. They spent the majority on repurchasing shares and paying dividends to shareholders.

3/10

Sources ↓  
[Global Justice](#) [Common Wealth](#) [GOV.uk](#)

Source ↓  
[See An Internationalist Green New Deal Programme](#)

Sources ↓  
[Global Witness](#) [Faith Birol](#)



Oil and gas companies consistently pay negative tax.

In the six years after the Paris Agreement, ExxonMobil, BP and Shell paid nothing and received £1.25 billion.

4/10

Source  
Sky News

95%

windfall tax on excess fossil fuel profits would raise an estimated £43.6 billion per year.

5/10

Source  
Tax Justice

£14 billion

is how much the Government could raise annually by scrapping fossil fuel subsidies.

6/10

Sources  
New Economics Foundation Rachel Reeves



**The richest 1% currently own as much wealth as the bottom 69%.**

Since the 1980s, wealth inequality in the UK has risen dramatically.

7/10

Source  
[University of Greenwich](#)

In the UK, the top 1% income earners emit the same amount of carbon in one year as the

**bottom 10% do in two decades.**

8/10

Source  
[Autonomy](#)

**£22.3 billion**

is how much the Government could raise annually by implementing 2% wealth tax on individuals with net wealth in excess of £10 million.

9/10

Sources  
[Arun Advani](#)



**\$27.5  
billion**

is how much the UK received in SDRs from the COVID-19 SDR allocation. It's more than all low-income countries combined.

10/10



## 02 Pay Up **Common attacks**

**Why should the UK support developing countries to fix their own problems?**

Countries in the Global South are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, but they've done the least to cause it. Developed countries have cumulatively contributed a far greater portion of global emissions.

The UK in particular has a considerable carbon debt due to its historic contribution to the crisis. Financial support can be used for a variety of urgent and life-saving measures.

**We are living in a period of austerity. We can't afford to give money away.**

'Pay Up' policies expand the tax base, which means existing revenues aren't being redirected. For instance, increasing the windfall tax on excess profits of oil and gas companies only recoups previously uncollected taxes. Austerity is also harmful and unnecessary.

The Green New Deal proposes we increase public investment to fund a domestic jobs guarantee and large-scale expansion of public services.



## 02 Pay Up **Common attacks**

**If we heavily tax energy producers and remove their subsidies, they will just pass the costs onto consumers, meaning our energy bills will skyrocket.**



The proposed windfall tax only targets the exceptional profits of oil and gas companies. Profits that are not excess are still taxed at the normal rate. Therefore, there is no excessive burden placed on fossil fuel producers.

Moreover, subsidies for fossil fuel producers are not a prerequisite for cheap energy. Renewables are currently 9 times cheaper than dirty energy sources, meaning our bills should reflect that.

In addition, the Government should impose a cap on energy prices to ensure that the windfall tax bill is not passed onto the consumer. Any difference between the cap and market price of energy should be paid for by the producers, not taxpayers.



## 02 Pay Up **Common attacks**

**If we over tax fossil fuel companies, they will just move their money to other countries, decreasing tax revenues.**

The windfall tax is designed to only recoup abnormal profits that are unearned. And even if they were to leave, we're proposing an internationally coordinated windfall tax that snuffs out tax avoidance.

**Taxing fossil fuel companies will drive them out of the country, decrease energy production and make our bills go up.**

Fossil fuel companies have significant sunk costs in production, which makes hasty departure very unlikely. And if we're being honest, the fossil fuel industry does not have a future in the UK. What we need is a just transition that protects workers and rapidly rolls out zero-carbon energy. This will decrease emissions and energy bills.





## 02 Pay Up **Common attacks**

**It's unfair to take people's hard earned money and give it away.**

Wealth inequality in the UK is dramatic, and the wealth gap is still growing.

Concentrations of wealth undermine social cohesion and perpetuates systemic inequities. The wealthiest individuals also have the most carbon-intensive lifestyles. A wealth tax addresses wealth inequality and climate breakdown by ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources.

**The UK is not responsible for the climate crisis. China and India should pay for climate finance.**

While China and India are large emitters today, their historic emissions are comparatively small. The UK in particular has a considerable carbon debt due to its historic contribution to the climate crisis. The UK has already far overshoot its fair share carbon budget.



## 02 Pay Up **Where the public are at**

**There is strong support for international climate finance.**

**49%**

Around 1 in 2 people believe the UK has a responsibility to provide climate finance. Young people (aged 18-34) show especially strong support (65%).

Source  
[The Guardian](#)

**Taxing oil companies to fund climate finance is a popular policy.**

**63%**

Around 2 in 3 people would support the Government in taxing oil companies to pay for the Loss and Damage Fund.

Source  
[Christian Aid](#)

**A majority of people want the Government to end fossil fuel subsidies.**

**65%**

Around 2 in 3 people want the UK Government to redirect fossil fuel subsidies towards the expansion of renewable energy and increasing home energy efficiency.

Source  
[YouGov](#)



There is widespread concern with income inequality.

**84%**

Around 8 in 10 people believe that the income gap in the UK is too large.

Source  
[Equality Trust](#)

There is robust cross-party support for taxing wealth.

**78%**

Around 8 in 10 people would support a wealth tax of 1% on wealth over £10 million. This includes support from 77% Conservative voters and 86% of Labour voters.

Source  
[YouGov](#)



**03**

**Transform  
Trade**



**\$4.7 million**

is the average amount states are forced to pay in legal fees to elite law firms for investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) cases. Investors win 57% of cases, with an average taxpayer-funded payout of \$438 million.

1/5

**Fossil fuel companies are using ISDS to sue sovereign states for \$18 billion over climate policy.**

Safer decarbonisation pathways could lead to \$340 billion in ISDS investor awards.

2/5

**\$600 million**

is the average fossil fuel investor award.

3/5

Sources ↓

TNI Allen & Overy UNCTAD

Sources ↓

War on Want Climate Policy

Source ↓

IISD



**€344.6  
billion**

is how much the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) protects in fossil fuel assets across 31 European countries. Of this, €140.7 billion is concentrated in the UK fossil fuel industry.

4/5

Source  
[Investigate Europe](#)

**€4.4  
billion**

in fossil fuel investor payouts would be avoided through a coordinated UK-EU ECT withdrawal.

5/5

Source  
[OpenDemocracy](#)



### How is transforming trade a **Green New Deal policy?**

Current trade rules are incompatible with the economic transformation we need to tackle climate breakdown and improve people's lives. They enrich wealthy investors at the expense of human welfare and planetary health.

### Doesn't free trade lead to jobs and better wages?

“Free trade” was designed to boost corporate profits. This allowed powerful multinationals to offshore production and exploit cheap labour in other countries. In the UK, this corporate race to the bottom has led to the degradation of wages, labour rights, and working conditions. There is nothing “free” about economic insecurity.



**If we leave free trade agreements, won't we be excluded from the global market and suffer economically?**

We are already suffering from an economic system that places profit above our livelihoods and the planet. Leaving free trade agreements that degrade labour conditions and worsen environmental harm will only increase the economic security of working people.

**Free trade agreements allow us to sell British products abroad and benefit from cheap foreign products - right?**

A free trade agreement is not needed to sell goods to other countries. For example, the UK does not have a free trade agreement with the US, but still exports over £168 billion worth of goods per year. On the other hand, trade deals mandate the import of goods that break UK laws on product safety, including animal welfare. We should ensure that imported goods are aligned with our values.



### Won't getting rid of low carbon technology patents **disincentive innovation?**

There is no evidence to suggest that strong patents encourage innovation. If anything, they enable a system where profits are privatised and risks socialised.

We should use publicly-funded innovations for public purposes, not for padding the pockets of tech monopolies.

### ISDS is important to protect British companies abroad, especially those operating in corrupt countries.

ISDS' original purpose of protecting investments from direct expropriation has been totally manipulated, and instead has assumed a role of corporate insurance plan.

In fact, companies can trigger ISDS disputes over policies like minimum wage increases and climate protection, because they threaten future profits! ISDS is undemocratic and not fit-for-purpose.



I know the Energy Charter Treaty has issues, but if we leave won't energy companies pull out of the UK? **Now, more than ever, we need to incentivize energy production to lower bills!**

The Energy Charter Treaty by and large protects fossil fuel companies, making it difficult to transition to zero-carbon energy that lowers bills and mitigates climate breakdown. If anything, it's an obstacle in fighting the cost of living crisis.



**Favourable views on free trade are decreasing, but public support remains robust.**

Public support for the perceived impacts of free trade agreements has fallen by 4% since the last wave of polling (in 2021), but around 2 in 3 people (64%) still support the perceived impacts of free trade agreements.

Source  
[Department for International Trade](#)

**Public support for trade hinges on the belief that trade is good for the economy.**

Of the people who expressed favourable views on free trade, the number one reason was “improved trade opportunities” followed by “free trade is good/beneficial” for the economy.

Source  
[Department for International Trade](#)

**Negative views on trade hinges on the belief that trade will degrade quality of services and goods, including concerns of animal welfare and ecological sustainability.**

Of those who believed free trade would negatively impact the UK, around 1 in 5 people (22%) said that trade would degrade the quality of goods and services, including food standards and animal welfare. 16% of people also said trade would worsen environmental damage.

Source  
[Department for International Trade](#)



The public do not want to stay in the Energy Charter Treaty.

9%

Only around 1 in 10 people wants the Government to remain in the Energy Charter Treaty.

Source  
[Global Justice](#)

Public awareness of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is low, but support is high.

28%

Only around 1 in 4 people know about the CPTPP. Of the people who are aware, roughly 2 in 3 (57%) support it. However, a growing number of people are opposed to the CPTPP (19% in 2022 compared to 13% in 2021).

Source  
[Department for International Trade](#)





**04**

**Support  
Migrants**



**37.6  
million**

people were forced to flee their home country in 2021, up from 11.3 million in 2010.

1/5

Source  
UNHCR

**1.2  
billion**

people are predicted to be displaced by 2050 as climate breakdown intensifies.

2/5

Source  
Institute for Economics and Peace

**92% of climate breakdown is caused by excess emissions from the Global North, making it directly responsible for high levels of displacement.**

3/5

Source  
The Lancet Planetary Health



# 5,000

refugees per year is the number of people the Government has committed to accommodate under the UK Resettlement Scheme. However, in 2022 only 1,185 people were resettled.

4/5

Sources ↓

[International Rescue Committee](#) [Refugee Council](#)

# 128,812

is the number of asylum seekers in the UK waiting over 6 months for a decision. This number has doubled over the last two years.

5/5

Source ↓

[BBC](#)



### How is supporting migrants a Green New Deal policy?

The Green New Deal is a plan for climate and social justice. That means the UK needs to account for its share of climate breakdown and the harms of colonisation. Offering safe haven for people fleeing the crises the UK helped create is not just common sense, but the right thing to do.

**The UK is not to blame for migration. People are fleeing from unstable, corrupt regimes that we have nothing to do with.**

As a former coloniser, the UK was instrumental in putting corrupt regimes into power. And migration is also driven by climate breakdown – which the UK has had an outsized role in causing. The UK bears massive responsibility and ought to assume accountability.



**We simply don't have the money to accommodate so many people.**

Supporting migrants is not a question of money. People who have lost their homes and are forced to flee from climate disasters, food and water shortages, persecution, and conflict should be offered safe haven. And the UK can provide housing, healthcare, and job opportunities.

Migrants are integral to UK social, economic, and cultural life. They should be welcomed as valued members of society and offered the chance to live a dignified life.

**How can we ensure that other Global North countries are also doing their bit?**

The UK is an international outlier in its commitments to housing refugees, especially with the recent introduction of draconian legislation. The UK needs to first improve its human rights to the standards of other countries. Then it can use its influence to build a migrant justice framework amongst former colonial powers responsible for climate breakdown.



**While I agree with a lot of your suggestions, I'm concerned that the UK will struggle to accommodate the resulting influx of people.**

Since March 2022, the UK has accommodated over 170,000 Ukrainians. This has shown the UK's ability to provide a safe haven for those in need. 150,000 resettlement places for all asylum seekers is something the UK is more than capable of delivering.



A strong majority want to welcome incoming refugees.

**75%**

3 in 4 people think that those fleeing persecution should be welcomed abroad, including in the UK.

Source  
British Future

Many people see that immigration has a positive impact on the UK.

**50%**

1 in 2 people think immigration positively impacts UK economic and cultural life.

Source  
IPPR

Public opinion towards migration is becoming more positive.

**30% → 50%**

In 2015, only 3 in 10 people wanted immigration numbers to increase or remain the same in the UK. In 2022, that number increased to 1 in 2.

Source  
IPSOS



The progressive turn in public attitudes toward immigration presents an opportunity for Labour.

Among those who voted Conservative in 2019, and have a positive view of immigration, around 1 in 2 (52%) are now considering Labour. Among those who voted Liberal Democrat in 2019, and have a positive view of immigration, almost 9 in 10 people (88%) are now considering Labour.

Source  
IPPR

There is strong support for allowing asylum seekers to work.

**58%**

Around 6 in 10 people are supportive of asylum seekers when given the prompt, “asylum seekers may have useful skills/ experience and should be allowed to work.”

Source  
IPPR