

ONE VOICE

TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR AN **END TO POVERTY**

CYCLONE IDAI: SIX MONTHS ON

As the flood waters rose, Paulo was trapped in his home. Cyclone Idai was tearing through his village in Mozambique.

The 35-year-old lost a leg when he was a soldier and uses a crutch to help him walk. He survived the cyclone after some friends carried him to a neighbour's home. His house later collapsed and he lost his crops: millet, maize, and wheat.

It's six months since Cyclone Idai brought strong winds and widespread flooding to Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

It ripped apart roads, bridges, houses, schools and health facilities and submerged vast areas of farming land.

It's estimated three million people were affected. Close to 1,000 deaths were recorded and many more were injured. People lost homes, possessions, livelihoods and hope.

Tearfund staff and partners responded immediately.

As of today, 68,871 people have received much-needed food supplies and a further 50,000 have received essential items such as chlorine tablets, soap, jerry cans and buckets.

Paulo was helped by partner CEDES who organised a distribution of food and other essentials. He said, 'I'm going to have food now, good food, to eat well. Before [the distribution] I was not eating good food.'

PLEASE PRAY

Gracious Father,

Thank you for the work of all those who are providing essential supplies and support after Cyclone Idai. Please continue to heal the sick, comfort the broken-hearted, and provide for those who are still in desperate need. We lift up the people of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe and ask that you will give them your hope – a strong and lasting hope.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

A NOTE FROM...

'We still have a lot more to do, and together with your help and our partners we shall be able to help communities rebuild what was destroyed. Thank you for the continued support, both financially and through prayer.' **Jennipher Sakala, Southern and East Africa Team**

A HARVEST FESTIVAL TO SAVE THE EARTH?

With the threat of climate change looming large, this year's harvest season provides us with an opportunity to stand up for creation.

*'We plough the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand'*

I love this hymn. It's evocative of countryside churches, autumn garlands and tins of spaghetti hoops being solemnly placed before the altar. The chorus reminds us that 'all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above.'

Yet humanity's reckless treatment of creation means that these good gifts are under threat. As the Earth heats up and the weather turns against us, the fields we plough and the seeds we scatter are at risk.

Many communities that Tearfund works with are already suffering. In countries closer to the tropics, failed harvests are becoming increasingly common. Here in the UK, many farmers have been struggling with the erratic weather. No one can escape the effects of the climate crisis.

But there is hope, if we act now.

On 23 September, the UN is hosting a Climate Action Summit. This is a key moment for governments to take the decisive action needed to avoid catastrophe. Until now, many world leaders have only paid lip service to their environmental commitments. The use of harmful fossil fuels continues to rise.

To coincide with the summit, on Friday 20 September people around the world are going on strike from their workplaces and schools. The demand is for wealthy countries to wake up to the scale and severity of the climate crisis. It's set to be the largest mobilisation on the climate crisis in history: thousands of marches, strikes and other events are planned across 117 different countries.

The event coincides with harvest – providing an exciting opportunity.

Harvest festival – the date of which is 22 September, with church services taking place throughout the month – exists to remind us of our intimate connection to the land. If the land suffers, we suffer. Christians especially should understand the need for action. This Earth is God's good gift, one that we should cherish and look after.

Perhaps our harvest offering this year, as well as that tin of spaghetti hoops, could be to join these protests in whatever way we can – standing in solidarity with people around the world in prayer, or joining an event. Many Tearfund staff will be taking action, and we're encouraging our young supporters to get involved with school and university events (providing they have permission if under 18).

How wonderful would it be to see the church lift its voice in outrage at what is happening to creation?

Please join us as we cry out to God this harvest:

Gracious Father,

For the way in which we have become disconnected from the land –
Lord, have mercy.

For when the church has failed to speak out in defence of creation –
Lord, have mercy.

For the way in which we have failed to see climate change as the threat that it is –
Lord, have mercy.

For the crucial days ahead –
Give us your strength, O Lord.

For when difficult decisions need to be made –
Give us your wisdom, O Lord.

For this year's harvest –
Give us your provision, O Lord.

Amen.

WHAT WE'RE DOING AT THE PARTY CONFERENCES THIS YEAR

Over the next month, members of Tearfund's Government Relations team will be attending the Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative and Scottish National Party (SNP) party conferences.

Party conferences happen every year and are a way for the main political parties to meet with their members and share their vision for the following year. They feature a mix of speeches, events and debates.

Read on to find out why we're there, what we're going to be getting up to and how you can get involved.

Why are we going to the party conferences?

Tearfund engages with MPs because we want to see lasting change. This happens by not only working with those living in poverty, but by changing the circumstances, laws and systems that are keeping them trapped. Working with decision-makers who have the power to make laws is fundamental to alleviating poverty.

Party conferences are an opportunity for us to engage with party members, Peers and MPs, discussing Tearfund's work with them and building relationships that we can continue when they are back in Parliament.

Working with UK politicians, we can encourage the government to use its role as a leader on issues such as climate change. The government can then use its influence at global summits, international bodies and with other countries to push for vital changes.

The UK government has a commitment to spend 0.07 per cent of its spending each year on international aid. Tearfund has been able to work with the Department for International Development (DFID) on how some of that money gets spent.

You may remember that, through DFID, the UK government match funded our recent campaign to tackle plastic pollution across the world. DFID agreed to double all donations up to £3 million, raising an incredible £8,884,768.

DFID listen to Tearfund because of our experience and expertise, and the party conferences help us cultivate our relationships with MPs who work on this area. This can lead to further match funding opportunities.

What are we focusing on this year?

Tearfund will be taking our Rubbish Campaign to the party conferences this year. The campaign highlights the devastating link between plastics and poverty. We will be discussing with MPs the role in which the government and multinational companies can play in breaking this link.

Plastic pollution is destroying our natural environment and harming the world's poorest people. Every 30 seconds someone dies because of diseases caused by plastic pollution and other waste. Plastic production is on an upward curve and, unless urgent action is taken, global plastic production will double over the next ten to fifteen years.

Here's how we're highlighting this rubbish issue at the party conferences:


- Liberal Democrat Party Conference, 14–17 September: Tearfund will be co-hosting a prayer breakfast with the Liberal Democrat Christian Fellowship on the 16 September.
- Labour Party Conference, 21–25 September: Tearfund will be part of two panel events. One looking at Faith in Aid and the other looking at fighting for social and environmental justice abroad. These will take place on 23 and 24 September.
- Conservative Party Conference, 29 September – 2 October: Tearfund will be hosting an event on the Rubbish Campaign on 1 October. We will also be a guest panelist at the Conservative Environment Network debate on women in climate change.
- SNP Party Conference, 13–15 October: Tearfund will be co-hosting an event, date to be confirmed.


PLEASE PRAY


- Lift up our Government Relations team, who have been planning these events and will be going to the party conferences. Pray for the logistics of the events and for energy, strength and wisdom for our team.
- Pray for good attendance at our events by MPs, their staff and decision-makers, and that they would be spurred to take action to tackle plastic pollution.
- Pray for our relationship with MPs, that we would be able to deepen our current relationships and build new ones too.
- Plastic pollution is hitting people in poverty the hardest. Pray for people who are forced to live among mountains of rubbish. Pray especially for their health and for a change in laws to reduce single-use plastic and alleviate their suffering.

You can also tell your MP that Tearfund will be at their party conference this year. You can email them and invite them to one of our events. If you do not know who your local MP is, it's easy to find out – visit www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps. If your MP wants to know more, you can tell them to email our team at government.relations@tearfund.org.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

 Praise God that levels of militia violence in the area of Beni, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, have been decreasing. This is a real answer to prayer. Please continue to pray for peace in the country, where our staff work in incredibly challenging conditions. Please continue to pray for an end to the Ebola outbreak there.

 Please pray for the people of Zimbabwe, who have been deeply wounded by decades of economic and political turmoil. Pray that they will know God's peace, healing and forgiveness as they process the news of Robert Mugabe's death. Pray for the leaders of the country, that they may govern in peace and find long-term solutions to the economic crisis.

 We join people around the world in mourning the terrible devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. More than 2,500 people are missing, and thousands of homes and businesses have been destroyed. Please pray for God's comfort, provision and protection over the Bahamas.