



MSPs have held what was said to be the world's first parliamentary debate on climate justice.

The concept of climate justice highlights the unequal impact that rising carbon emissions and associated climate change has on poorer countries.

During the debate, Environment and Climate Change Minister Stewart Stevenson announced the launch of a "climate justice fund" this spring in response to the impact of climate change on the world's poorest communities.

Mr Stevenson said that according to Professor Alan Miller, of the Scottish Human Rights Commission, and Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Holyrood held the "first ever parliamentary debate on the climate justice concept worldwide".

He said: "The Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice aims to secure global justice for the many victims of climate change who are usually forgotten - the poor, disempowered and marginalised across the world.

"The foundation gives the following definition which I think captures the essence of the agenda: Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly."

He added: "In our manifesto last year we committed to establishing an international climate adaptation fund. Given the clear link between the need for adaptation in developing countries and climate justice, I can announce today that we are renaming the commitment as Scotland's

'Climate Justice Fund' and that we will launch this fund in the next few months."

Mr Stevenson said it is important to "capitalise on Scotland's enhanced international profile" on climate change, citing former US vice-president and campaigner Al Gore's praise of "Scotland's leadership on climate change", and First Minister Alex Salmond's recent South Australia International climate leadership award.

However, Labour environment and climate change spokeswoman Claudia Beamish quoted WWF Scotland, who said the Scottish Government's report on climate saving policies and proposals "falls well short of providing the confidence that targets will actually be hit and fails to commit to the step change on policy action described as necessary by the UN Committee on Climate Change".

She said: "We were disappointed with the Government's decision to cut the active travel budget by almost 40%, although after cross-party work it must be acknowledged that it has improved but it has still been cut by 20%. Demand reduction is also an imperative. Eradication of fuel poverty by 2016 is jeopardised by Scottish Government budget cuts."A