DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS NOMINATED AND SELECTED THE FOLLOWING CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AREAS FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION. PARTICIPANTS THEN WORKED IN TEAMS TO FRAME KEY ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EACH POLICY AREA, AND TO USE THESE ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AS CRITERIA TO DETERMINE SPECIFIC CLIMATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 This document does not represent a consensus statement. Individual themes and policy prescriptions are the product of breakout groups and may not reflect the views of all participants.

Cover photo: “Polar Bear–Alert” by Michael Bamford, used under CC BY 2.0 / desaturated from original
Purpose

This report summarizes policy actions and ethical considerations identified by participants at the Ethical Dilemmas in Climate Change roundtable dialogue, convened by Simon Fraser University’s Centre for Dialogue at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre on October 23, 2015.

Participants included 17 leading Canadian scholars, thought leaders and faith leaders recognized for their contributions to discourse on environmental and climate ethics. The dialogue used an ethical lens to generate ideas for climate action, with a goal to inform Canadian policy decisions that follow from the COP21 climate conference in Paris.

The viewpoints listed in this document reflect participant discussions and are generative in nature. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SFU Centre for Dialogue.

Policy Area 1
Convening a National Visioning Process

Ethical Considerations:

• Who participates in a national visioning process? Who listens?
• How should we address differences in the capacities of individuals and communities to engage?

Policy Recommendations:

• Establish a national roundtable to help define options for a sustainable Canada.
• Use this roundtable to create an integrated discussion across sectors and governments, while also inviting participation from existing processes, citizen coalitions and stakeholder groups.
• Select government participants so as to build the capacity of the federal government and other levels of government to take further action on climate issues.

Photo: “Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University” by SFU’s Centre for Dialogue
POLICY AREA 2
COMPENSATING PROVINCES FOR UNEQUAL IMPACTS

Ethical Considerations:
• How should the federal government compensate provinces for the disproportionate impacts of reducing emissions?

Policy Recommendations:
• Work with provinces to develop an emissions reductions target and subsequent implementation plan.
• Set a meaningful cap on Alberta tar sands production and a national price on carbon.
• Create mechanisms to address disproportionate impacts on provinces such as Alberta, potentially including compensation.
• Ensure that compensation agreements do not support the continuation of the oil economy.

POLICY AREA 3
ENGAGING WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN A MEANINGFUL AND RESPECTFUL NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Ethical Considerations:
• Ensuring equality among Indigenous peoples & non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.
• Creating solutions that address both climate justice and justice for Indigenous peoples.

Policy Recommendations:
• Finding alternatives to the Indian Act that enable more respectful and just relationships between Indigenous & non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.
• Using the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation when engaging with Aboriginal communities on climate change issues.

Photo: “2013 Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver, BC” by Reconciliation Canada
POLICY AREA 4
CREATING NEW PATHWAYS FOR DECARBONIZATION

Ethical Considerations:
• Inter-generational ethics and impacts.
• How should we address differences in the capacities of individuals and communities to engage?

Policy Recommendations:
• Develop an arms-length, $20 billion Canadian carbon innovation fund to reduce investment risk and leverage an additional $100 billion in private sector capital towards building retrofits, electric vehicles, clean energy, and similar projects.
• Set a renewable energy production target. Require retailers to purchase a minimum quota of renewable energy.

POLICY AREA 5
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AGAINST EXTREME CLIMATE EVENTS

Ethical Considerations:
• Ensuring that ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ receive equal access to emergency response services and are fully included in related decision-making.
• The disproportionate impacts of climate change in northern Canada.

Policy Recommendations:
• Invest in ‘soft’ infrastructure, such as inter-governmental emergency response coordination and implementation, to protect the most vulnerable in society.
• Develop a grant program to create social infrastructure in cities, potentially targeting active transport hubs, green building hubs, libraries, schools, and faith groups.
• Engage beyond the ‘usual suspects’ to discuss climate action and resilience.
• Build upon existing networks and infrastructure, such as Emergency Preparedness Canada.

Photo: “Wind farm south of Drumheller, Alberta” by Wilson Hui, www.wilsonhui.com (CC BY 2.0)

Photo: “Community Resilience” by James Tzorov (CC BY 2.0)
Special Guest
Professor Tim Flannery

Professor Tim Flannery is the recipient of Simon Fraser University’s 2015/16 Jack P. Blaney Award for Dialogue, in recognition of his international outreach on climate change. In addition to authoring the global best-seller, The Weather Makers, Prof. Flannery is recognized by SFU for his leadership convening international business leaders as Chair of the Copenhagen Climate Council and creating meaningful public dialogue as Chair of the Australian Climate Commission.

Professor Flannery opened the October 23 dialogue by highlighting the challenges created due to relative inaction in the 21 years following the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He then described three recent developments that encouraged him to title his new book, Atmosphere of Hope. These include increased public awareness, a flat lining of emissions from the energy sector, and new research into “third way” technologies that could remove carbon pollution from the atmosphere. He further emphasized the need to take immediate steps to rapidly reduce emissions, and to use human equality as an ethical lens to consider climate action.

Jack P. Blaney
Award for Dialogue

Simon Fraser University’s Centre for Dialogue uses dialogue to generate nonpartisan and constructive communication around difficult topics. The Centre’s climate solutions hub works on a national and global scale, and includes the work of Renewable Cities, Clean Energy Canada, Carbon Talks, and the Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT).