

## Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future

**Mary Robinson**

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Author Mary Robinson was the first woman president of Ireland, serving from 1990 to 1997; afterward, she served as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002. She was also an honorary president of the global development charity Oxfam.

In November of 2016, Robinson was in Marrakech for UN climate change talks; Donald Trump's election seemed like proof that America was retreating into apathy about the environment. She was determined to "forge ahead, with or without the United States," and in *Climate Justice* she and journalist Caitríona Palmer profile admirable individuals who are coping with climate disasters in vulnerable areas and pointing the way to a sustainable future.

From cattle farmers in Chad to the Yupik people who fish Alaska's west coast, the people most affected by climate change are generally those who are least equipped to deal with it due to poverty and a lack of political representation. Robinson and Palmer highlight inspiring stories of ordinary people who are making a difference for the environment—especially women who have become "agents of change."

These include women like Vu Thi Hien, who works on forest preservation in Vietnam, and Australian skincare entrepreneur Natalie Isaacs, who tackles plastic waste. After Hurricane Katrina, Sharon Hanshaw of Biloxi, Mississippi, became an "accidental activist," founding Coastal Women for Change to draw attention to the unfairness of how low-income survivors were treated.

Robinson always keeps one eye on the future. She ponders how climate change will affect her grandson's generation and regrets her own carbon footprint. Instead of blaming governments, she believes we must all take responsibility for our environmental impact; she offers simple strategies such as cutting meat consumption. Living sustainably is a universal goal in Robinson's envisioned "'people first' platform."

REBECCA FOSTER (September/October 2018)

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