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THE
Kerryman

Environment Watch

NIAMH NÍ DHUILL
TRANSITION KERRY

Buckets of plans but where is the action?

TRANSITION Kerry held a community climate action conference entitled 'Up for the challenge? Community Solutions to Climate Change' on the 11th November in Tralee. Over 130 people attended from all over the county and, on the day, there were a range of speakers and local representatives who spoke on the challenges and opportunities facing communities in the face of climate change.

One of the speakers was Dr. Margaret Desmond, based at the Environmental Research Institute (ERI) in UCC. Margaret had been attending the Citizens' Assembly on 'How to make the state a leader on climate change'. She spoke about the factors that need to be considered: how to reduce emissions and how to protect ourselves in the future from climate risk.



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Ireland is failing to meet its emission reduction targets for 2020 and we may not meet the more demanding 2030 targets. Ireland is faced with a huge task to reduce emissions and adapt to inevitable consequences of climate change and is currently considered to be a laggard in terms of facing up to our responsibilities.

There is both an international and national policy focus on climate change, which includes low carbon (which means climate mitigation) and climate resilience (climate adaptation). Margaret explained that nationally, there is both policy and legislation on climate change, which provide a framework for action. The National Mitigation Plan is a large suite of action but essentially 'nothing new'. The National Adaptation Plan is currently out for public consultation, but there seems to be a lack of public response, which demonstrates a lack of awareness about this topic. New structures are being put in place to help build resilience at the local authority level.

The part that affects Kerry directly involves the 'Southern Atlantic Region Structure' (Cork, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Waterford), which is assessing and planning for climate risk based-sea level rise, surges, storms and flooding risks for county Kerry.

The Climate Act 2015 is an important piece of environmental legislation, however it could be strengthened. Tackling climate change also allows us to deal with other international obligations such as the Sustainable Development Goals and aspirations around Disaster Risk Management. If we take full responsibility at both a local and national level, it would be a win-win policy initiatives would cover all three policy areas. The transition to climate resilience will require both top down and bottom up initiatives, from communities on the ground to local authorities to national government.

In summary, Margaret stated that the overall problem is lack of leadership. We know what needs to be done but no one body or authority has been tasked with delivery. 'We have buckets of plans, but where is the action?'. This statement was captured by local artist Lisa Fingleton (*above*). Sometimes a picture can say it all...

We will be posting a report about the conference and uploading a video of the conference to our website soon - www.transitionkerry.org.