

LAWYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE

WE, the undersigned members of the legal profession:

BELIEVE IN UPHOLDING THE RULE OF LAW, AS A CORNERSTONE OF SOCIAL STABILITY, PROSPERITY AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES.

NOTE THE UK PARLIAMENT'S DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN 2019 and similar declarations by over 2,000 national and local governments. We also note that in 2021 the International Energy Agency concluded that there could be no new oil or gas fields or coal mines if the world was to reach net zero by 2050, and the UN Secretary General's statement in April 2022 that "investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure is moral and economic madness". Despite which, as global carbon emissions from fossil fuels hit record levels in 2022, the UK Government approved a new coal mine in Cumbria and currently plans to issue more than 100 new licences for oil and gas production in the North Sea.

RECOGNISE THAT WE ARE SET TO BREACH THE 1.5°C GLOBAL WARMING LIMIT ESTABLISHED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

PROFOUNDLY REGRET THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES. HM Treasury stated in its *Net Zero Review: Interim Report* (July 2021) that we face an "existential threat". Accumulating scientific evidence has conveyed stark warnings of the increasingly severe, interconnected and often irreversible impacts of climate change on ecosystems, biodiversity and human systems. The likely consequences of "overshooting" 1.5°C include widespread loss of life and livelihoods, catastrophic harm to health, large scale population displacements and the destruction of critical infrastructure. In the UK alone, we are already seeing unprecedented heat waves, wildfires, flooding and coastal erosion. In other parts of the globe the effects are already far worse. To take but two examples, in East Africa at least 30 million people are facing famine and 2022's record-breaking floods in Pakistan impacted around 33 million people. Climate change results in climate injustice: lower-income groups and countries and the younger generation have contributed least to climate change but are the most severely affected by it.

EXPRESS OUR GRAVE CONCERN THAT THE ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS POSE A SERIOUS RISK TO THE RULE OF LAW. And note that lawyers who support transactions the effects of which are inconsistent with the 1.5°C limit contribute towards the above consequences.

ACCORDINGLY:

- (1) WE CALL UPON OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR COLLEAGUES TO ACT URGENTLY TO DO WHATEVER THEY CAN TO ADDRESS THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL CRISES AND TO ADVANCE A JUST TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABILITY.**
- (2) WE SUPPORT LAW REFORM AND LITIGATION AIMED AT MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING.** In particular, we support the implementation of the polluter pays principle to correct the market failure that externalises to society the costs of greenhouse emissions created by burning fossil fuels.
- (3) WE SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS' DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF PEACEFUL PROTEST, IN PARTICULAR PEACEFUL PROTEST AIMED AT DRAWING PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS.** And we note with concern the provisions of Part 3 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Bill currently before Parliament that seriously restrict this right.
- (4) WE HAVE DONATED, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DONATE, OUR TIME OR MONEY TO THE ABOVE CAUSES AND ENCOURAGE OUR COLLEAGUES TO DO LIKEWISE.**
- (5) WE DECLARE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR CONSCIENCES, THAT WE WILL WITHHOLD OUR SERVICES IN RESPECT OF:**
 - (i) supporting new fossil fuel projects; and**
 - (ii) action against climate protesters exercising their democratic right of peaceful protest.**