

## 6

# Using advocacy to help protect the environment

Advocacy is about influencing people, policies, structures and systems in order to bring about change. It is about communicating with those in power and persuading them to act in more just and equitable ways. At the core, it is about building relationships. It is about tackling the root causes of poverty and promoting justice. Advocacy can be done by, with, or on behalf of, those affected by injustice. Anyone can carry out advocacy work – it should not be left to professionals or experts.

An example of an advocate is Queen Esther in the Bible. The people asked her to represent the Jews before the King because she had the relationship with him. She had the potential to influence him for the greater good. Like her, we can influence people in power when we have a relationship with them and the potential to influence them.

Advocacy involves action or processes that can complement other development work. It is critical in relation to environmental issues because many environmental problems cannot simply be addressed by good development practice within communities. For example:

- if a community is suffering because of environmental pollution by a local factory, it may be appropriate to address the problem through advocacy work. Advocacy work at the local level would involve influencing the decision-makers in the factory through showing them the impact of the pollution, and asking them to stop the pollution. This can be done positively by explaining the health benefits of no pollution. At the national level, advocacy might involve asking for changes to the laws related to pollution by industry.
- as climate change is a global problem, governments around the world need to work together to find a solution. Development organisations can support national governments by carrying out research and collecting data related to local impacts of climate change. There may be opportunities for some organisations to attend international meetings to talk to delegates from many different countries about the problem of climate change.

## 6.1 Introduction to advocacy

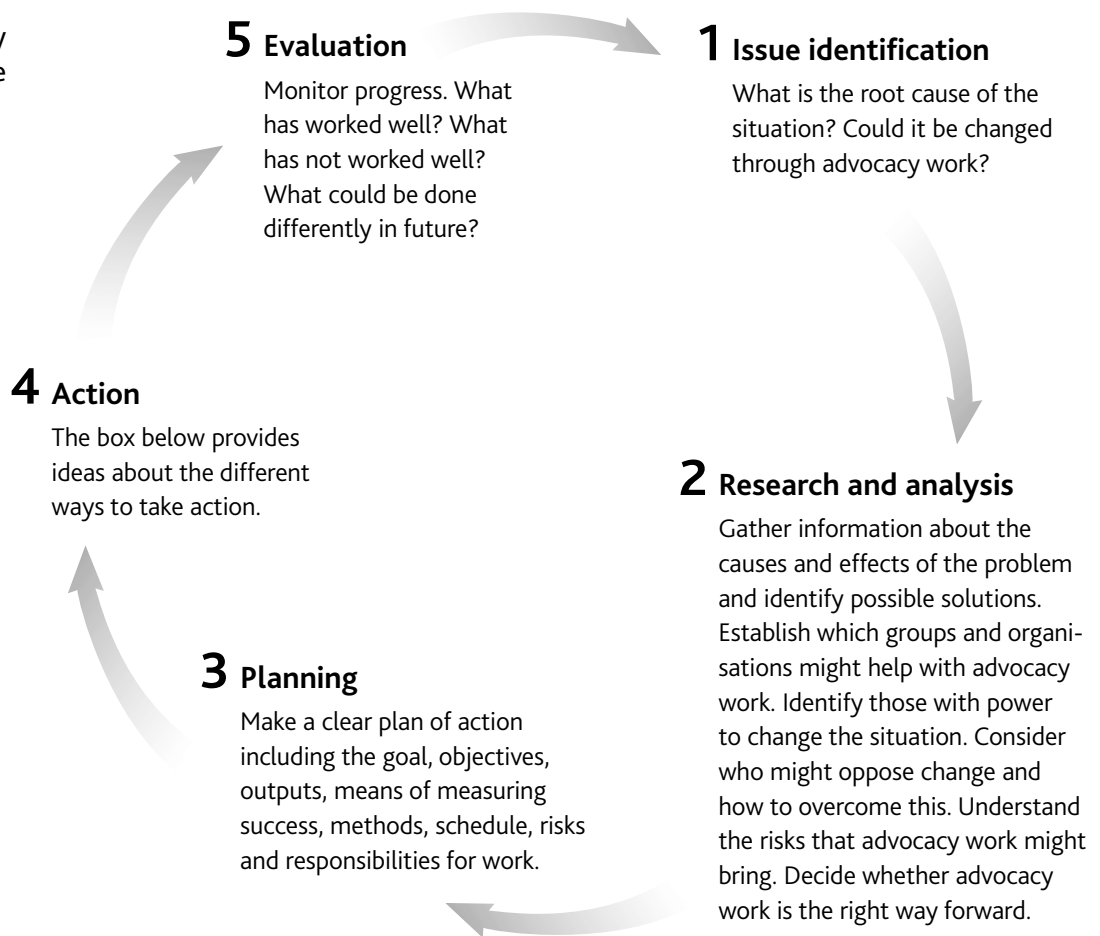
It is part of the mission of the church to carry out advocacy work through speaking out against injustice, defending the cause of poor people, holding those in power to account, and empowering people to speak out for themselves. Advocacy is a way of showing that our God is a God of justice. Advocacy:

- tackles root causes of poverty and injustice and brings long-term change
- sees people as agents of change in their own communities
- can help to generate more resources for development work
- can change power structures and systems of injustice.

Advocacy work includes many different activities, such as those mentioned in the diagram below. It can be carried out alone, with a group of people, or as part of a network, coalition or alliance. It can be a one-off intervention or an ongoing process. Whatever the context and whatever the advocacy looks like, there will always be a relationship at its core.

Effective advocacy work requires planning. It works best when it fits around, and complements, other development work, and when it concerns an issue that is central to the entire work of an organisation or church. The advocacy cycle below shows the stages that need to be considered before going ahead with any advocacy work.

The advocacy cycle



For more information about how to plan and carry out advocacy work, see *ROOTS 1 and 2: Advocacy toolkit*.

Some examples of advocacy methods

**DIRECT INFLUENCING** (sometimes called lobbying)

This is about increasing the awareness of someone in a position of power about an issue and suggesting potential solutions. It is important to provide them with information and evidence to support your argument. Direct influencing can be done orally or in writing. It could involve writing letters to officials, or it could involve meeting with them individually or in public meetings. Relationship-building is often an effective activity. It is important to include people who are directly affected by an issue in influencing those in power, whether that means involving them in research, consulting them about what needs to be done, or enabling them to speak directly to those in power.

**MOBILISING THE PUBLIC** (sometimes called campaigning)

This is about telling the public about a situation – the problem and the potential situation – so that they are encouraged to take action. Sometimes this involves telling people about how a situation may affect them. It could include arranging public meetings, taking part in demonstrations or marches, writing newsletters, asking people to sign petitions, or preaching. Methods that are appropriate in some countries may not be appropriate in others. For example, public demonstrations may be appropriate in some countries but ineffective or dangerous in others.

**MEDIA**

This is about informing people about a problem, identifying those who are responsible, and suggesting solutions for those who have the power to change the situation. Media work could include writing an article or letter for a newspaper or magazine, talking on the radio or TV, telling journalists about the situation or producing a press release.

**PRAYER**

Prayer should support every kind of action – prayer for advocacy can happen in small groups, at a church service or individually. Prayer is one of the things that makes Christian advocacy work distinctive. We can also pray about issues on which we lack the capacity or opportunity to carry out advocacy.

Advocacy is not about confrontation; in fact quite the reverse. The best advocacy very often involves gently influencing those with power to bring about change. It is important to first find issues which you both agree on. Spend time supporting them and building good relationships. Once you have done this they are more likely to be sympathetic to your requests for changes in other areas.

The rest of this section focuses on particular environmental issues and how advocacy can be used to make a difference.

## 6.2 Advocacy and sustainable management of natural resources

Good management of forests, fresh water, pastures, soils and other resources is essential if communities are to develop in ways that do not damage their natural environment. There is increasing competition for land, wood for fuel or for timber (industry and export) and for water for drinking, agriculture and industry. These challenge efforts to manage the natural environment so that it does not become depleted and damaged.

When deciding to carry out advocacy in relation to this issue, it is very important that the causes of a particular problem impacting a community or country are fully analysed (see Section 4). Usually, government responsibility for resource management is divided between different departments and administrative levels. Understanding the most effective way to use advocacy is therefore very important. Sometimes resource management issues can result in conflict between local people and large multinational companies, with government sometimes taking the side of the companies. Resource management issues can also cause conflicts within communities as people struggle for scarce resources such as water or land.

Problems related to natural resources are usually interconnected – what happens to forests affects water supplies and soil qualities and so on. Communities may only experience impacts in relation to one resource, but the resources in other communities may also be affected.

### Getting involved in advocacy on natural resource management

Advocacy on natural resource management can be an effective area of advocacy work for local communities who may be affected by problems such as the management of surface or ground water, or deforestation. Severe problems arising due to drought and floods, as well as ongoing issues, such as the distribution of water between small farms and commercial enterprises, could be addressed.

Consider how to develop the capacity of communities that feel strongly about such issues and help them to speak out. Consider also how to work with other stakeholders such as people from environmental or conservation organisations. Although they may have a different perspective, they bring valuable expertise related to managing resources and preserving biodiversity. Be aware that the more complex the issue, the more stakeholders there tend to be. This may also mean many conflicting priorities, so be careful when deciding who to work with.

Once you have identified the issues on which to advocate and the causes of the problem, consider the following questions:

- Does the government have national laws to protect forests or land ownership? Or to protect and manage lakes, rivers and groundwater? If not, can we campaign for laws to be put in place?
- If there are laws, do the authorities have the capacity to implement them and effectively manage natural resources? Is advocacy needed for more funding from government or better regulation about how money is spent? Is there potential to help local authorities understand the issues, so that they can influence the national government about providing the money and spending it wisely?

- If there are laws, are they enforced by local and national governments? Could we bring a case in the courts if we think a law is being, or will be, broken?
- If business (whether local, national, or international) is damaging natural resources or preventing community access to them, should we target the company itself, by boycotting their goods and services or by protesting?
- Can we use the media to persuade the government to take action by exposing environmental damage?

Then develop a plan, identifying your goals and targets, and work out what advocacy methods are appropriate.

## 6.3 Advocacy and waste management

The issue of waste, such as rubbish and excreta, overlaps with natural resource management. If waste is not properly managed it can cause damage to water supplies, reduce soil or air quality over time and attract disease carriers such as rats. The best solution to the rubbish problem is to avoid creating it in the first place. However, we all need to produce some rubbish, and disposal of excreta is an issue for every living person. Waste management is often a challenge. Leaving rubbish on the street can be a health hazard; burning it pollutes the air; dumping it in rivers or lakes pollutes water and can damage fish stocks; and burying it pollutes the soil and the water supply, causing long lasting pollution that is difficult to clean up. Local and national governments should have clear strategies related to how they deal with rubbish, and how human excreta are processed, to avoid polluting the environment.

Advocacy related to waste management could therefore include ensuring the provision of improved sanitation facilities, or ensuring the safe collection and disposal of rubbish. We can also advocate for a reduction in the amount of rubbish people need to throw away by challenging shops on the amount of packaging (especially plastic) they produce and by encouraging people to recycle their rubbish.

There is often a need for local level education to raise awareness of the need for effective and safe sanitation. We can raise awareness of the need to address the problem of sanitation and encourage advocacy at local and regional level.

CASE STUDY

**LA MOYA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE**

Ayaviri is a small town in the Andes mountains in Peru. It surrounds an ecological reserve called La Moya. Two indigenous communities live on the edge of La Moya. In recent years, the reserve has become polluted:

- People from the town dump their rubbish there.
- People wash their clothes in the river because running piped water is available for only a few hours each day in Ayaviri.
- People use the green space for sports, which is turning some of the reserve to dust
- Ayaviri is on a slope, and there is no drainage system to stop all the dirty water and rubbish from the town flowing into the reserve.

Pastor Eron from the Bible Institute of Ayaviri started raising awareness about the need to protect the reserve. Tearfund partner organisation Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope) helped the Bible Institute to produce awareness-raising materials and to plan for change. As a result of their campaign, the mayor passed laws to prevent the dumping of rubbish in La Moya reserve and to establish an 'ecological patrol' which will guard the reserve and fine people for dropping litter or urinating there. The Bible Institute also mobilised local people to clear rubbish from the reserve and distribute leaflets to urge people to protect their local environment. Regular environmental education programmes were broadcast on the local radio.

Local people are now much more aware of the need to protect La Moya. There is still work to be done to address some of the underlying causes, such as providing alternative places to put rubbish, and stopping infected and polluted water flowing into the reserve. Advocacy related to these issues continues.

**Getting involved in advocacy on waste management**

When thinking about getting involved in advocacy on waste management, here are some questions you could consider:

- How is rubbish collected and disposed of locally/nationally? Are there laws governing this, and are they enforced? Who is responsible locally, and are they effective? If not, why not?
- Are people aware of the problems caused by dumping rubbish, and do they need to be educated about the need to protect the environment from pollution?
- How is human excreta dealt with? Who is responsible, and are there any laws in place? Are people aware of the health hazards of open defecation?
- Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 is about ensuring environmental sustainability. It includes a target to 'Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation'. Micah Challenge is a Christian Alliance working on the MDGs with national campaigns in many countries. Why not work with them to ensure the government improves access to safe water and sanitation ([www.micahchallenge.org](http://www.micahchallenge.org)).

Then develop a plan, identifying your goals and targets and work out what advocacy methods are appropriate.

CASE STUDY

**A CO-COMPOSTING PLANT IN KUMASI, GHANA**

Urban environmental sanitation is a serious issue for governments in most developing countries. The city of Kumasi in Ghana has one million inhabitants. It used to have ineffective sanitation systems. In 1999, the government approved an Environmental Sanitation Policy to encourage local authorities to regulate environmental sanitation and prevent pollution, allowing them to use decentralised and simple methods.

Co-composting means the composting of two or more raw materials together. In Kumasi, solid waste from rubbish and faecal sludge were used. The higher temperatures reached during the composting process kills diseases. The composting results in a safe soil conditioner and fertiliser.

A pilot plant was established in 2002 at Buobai, 15km from Kumasi. Here there are tanks to collect the sewage and waste, a composting area, a packaging area and offices.

It takes between 10 and 12 weeks to process the waste into compost. There is high demand for compost in the Kumasi area, mainly from farmers. However, the price they are willing to pay is less than the production costs, mainly because there are also plentiful supplies of poultry manure. The findings of a pilot study indicated that the ideal production size of a co-composting unit would produce between ten to 45 tons of compost a year.

Co-composting is an effective way of dealing with human faecal waste. However, a good marketing strategy is necessary to encourage sustainability.

Adapted from a report by Anthony Mensah, Olufunke Cofie and Agnes Montangero, Ghana

## 6.4 Advocacy and sustainable energy

Energy is critical for development. Lack of access to clean, sustainable energy sources can result in many environmental and non-environmental problems. Poor communities need access to financial resources and technology to enable them to develop sustainably.

Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, rich countries must provide funding and technology for poor countries to use energy to develop in a clean way, and to become more energy-efficient. At present, wealthy countries are not doing this. Advocacy can therefore be used in order to hold wealthy countries to account, by asking for increased funding and transfers of technology.

### Getting involved in advocacy on sustainable energy

When thinking about getting involved in advocacy on sustainable energy, consider the following questions:

- In our country, how do people generate power for heating, lighting and transport? Consider urban areas and rural areas. How many people have access to clean sources of energy?
- Does the government have a policy or strategy for generating power? Is it environmentally sustainable or does it need changing?

- Can we lobby our government in relation to the UN process to ensure poor country access to finance and technology for sustainable energy and energy efficiency?
- Can we educate our local authorities about how to put pressure on the national government to provide sustainable energy?

Then develop a plan, identifying your goals and targets and work out what advocacy methods are appropriate. This area can fit well with work related to climate change, and it also overlaps with natural resource management.

REFLECTION

■ Should we develop our capacity to carry out advocacy work on environmental issues?

■ What local environmental issues require advocacy work?

## 6.5 Advocacy and disaster risk reduction

Environmental disasters affect poor people more than any other type of disaster, but there are many things that governments and communities can do to reduce people's vulnerability to environmental hazards, such as floods and droughts. As climate change and environmental degradation accelerates, the intensity of these extreme hazards is predicted to increase. Advocacy related to disaster risk reduction (DRR) can have a key role in saving lives and livelihoods.

Governments and local authorities have a responsibility to protect their citizens and there are many things they can do to reduce risk of disaster, such as:

- making DRR a priority in their development policies
- developing laws on DRR that involve participation from all levels of society
- allocating resources for work related to DRR
- developing contingency plans at all levels of government
- working with local communities to carry out disaster risk assessments and take action to be prepared in the event of a disaster risk.

Around the world, development organisations are working with poor communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. However, with increasing poverty and global climate change, only governments and inter-governmental agencies (such as the UN) have the capacity to ensure that disaster risk reduction approaches are used within communities on a wider scale.

In 2005, in Kobe, Japan, 168 governments met at the UN 'World Conference on Disaster Reduction'. They agreed a set of goals to be achieved by 2015, which were set out in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015. These are:

- ensuring that DRR is a priority at national and local levels
- identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risk and enhancing early warning



- using knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels
- reducing underlying risk factors
- strengthening disaster preparedness for effective responses at all levels.

Achieving these goals is the responsibility of all governments. Governments in the North must invest more funds in DRR in developing countries, while governments in the South must act on these agreements and be held accountable for achieving them.

### **Getting involved in advocacy on DRR**

As a first step, find out which other organisations in the country or region are carrying out advocacy work related to DRR and arrange to meet with them. Try to gain a clear understanding of the national context for DRR by researching the existing policy frameworks and structures. Useful questions to ask could be:

- How are local communities affected by disasters? What could local authorities be doing to minimise the impacts of disasters? How can we influence them to make sure they do all that they can?
- What is our government's policy and strategy related to DRR? Where can we find our government's policy and strategy for DRR? Are there any laws in place that relate to DRR, such as land use and building codes?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of our government's policies on DRR?
- Has our government signed up to the Hyogo Framework for Action?
- Does our government recognise linkages between DRR and climate change?

Then develop an advocacy plan, identifying goals and targets, and work out what advocacy methods are appropriate.

CASE STUDY

**STORING RAINWATER IN RAJASTHAN**

In India, staff from the organisation Discipleship Centre have carried out participatory disaster risk assessments with many vulnerable communities. These assessments help communities to consider likely hazards (such as drought or cyclones), and assess who and what would be affected. Discipleship Centre then helps them to plan how to reduce the risks, with an emphasis on using the skills, resources and abilities that already exist within the communities.

One Village Development Committee (VDC) in Rajasthan decided to build rainwater cisterns that would be helpful during times of drought. In that area, the frequency and duration of droughts is increasing. The cisterns are three to four metres wide, about four metres deep and can store 40,000 litres. During the rainy season, rainwater is collected through channels which run into the cistern. When full, the cistern can provide drinking water for several families throughout the year. The cisterns can also be used to store water brought in by tankers in times of drought.

Discipleship Centre provided training and materials to build one cement cistern. However, one cistern was not enough to meet community needs. Motivated by their new awareness and understanding, the VDC decided to take their cause to a local government meeting. Discipleship Centre staff helped the committee to make a formal application and provided advice about how to present their case. As a result of this application, the government has promised to build another ten cisterns in the village.

## 6.6 Advocacy and climate change

Climate change is one of the most urgent and pressing issues facing the world today. In Section 1 (page 16) we discussed two main responses that can be addressed through advocacy work. The first relates to 'adaptation' and the second to 'mitigation'.

**Adaptation** is about the need for funding and technology transfer to help poor communities to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. At a local level, this might involve helping those with power in the community, such as local officials or local agencies, become aware of what is happening and encouraging them to take action so that communities can adapt to climate change and develop more sustainably. At a national level, advocacy work might involve urging governments to access the necessary funding and technology transfer, or working to support or influence national governments' National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

**Mitigation** is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions to a 'safe' level globally. Rich countries must make the most reductions, while poor countries must be able to gain access to funding and technology to develop sustainably, for example by receiving incentives to protect their forests. At a local level, advocacy work could involve informing local authorities about how to engage with national level processes, and educating them about potential mitigation options, such as using renewable energy. At a national level, advocacy work might involve asking governments to access the funding and the technology needed to help communities develop in a way that is more sustainable.

Organisations that have experience in advocacy work could try to influence decision-makers at international level through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This could be done by forming relationships with government officials who are involved in international negotiations and providing them with information so that they are fully informed about the issues at local and national level. Some organisations may be able to attend international meetings in order to lobby officials or to support their governments. Examples of this are given in the following boxes.

### United Nations Climate Change Talks

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was established at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and countries have met every year since 1995 to work together to address climate change. These annual meetings are known as 'COPs' (Conference of the Parties). In 1997, a separate protocol to the Convention was agreed, although it did not take effect until 2005. This is called the Kyoto Protocol which sets out binding emissions reductions for developed countries – known as Annex I countries.

As developed countries are responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, it is fair that they should make large cuts as early as possible. The first phase of emission reduction targets that run from 2008 to 2012 are quite weak. They tend to be based on what countries are willing to do, rather than what is needed to seriously tackle climate change. In December 2007 an agreement was reached on a process to agree a framework to take effect when the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012. Negotiations are establishing new targets for Annex 1 countries for the next commitment period up to 2020. Some rapidly developing countries are also considering what action they can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The discussions at international level also cover adaptation to climate change. A number of UN funds exist to help poor countries adapt to climate change – the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund and the Adaptation Fund. However, the money in these funds is very small compared to the scale of the funding required.

Also covered during discussions at international level is the issue of how to reduce emissions from deforestation, how to ensure that environmentally sustainable technology can be accessed by developing countries and how to provide finance for developing countries to develop in a clean or environmentally friendly way.

### Getting involved in advocacy on climate change

When thinking about getting involved in advocacy on climate change, consider the following questions:

- Can we join a regional climate change action network group?
- How can we keep records about the local environment, such as temperatures, rainfall, drought? Is there a Northern NGO we can give the information to, for them to use in advocacy on climate change?

- How has the climate changed in our region and how is this affecting the lives of local communities? Is there a need to explain climate change to local communities and how it may affect them?
- What could be done by local authorities or local leaders to help people to cope with changes in the climate? What opportunities can we create for community members to talk to local decision-makers?
- Do we need to learn more about climate change in our organisation or at a governmental level to understand what we need to do?
- Does our country have a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPAS – see website [www.unfccc.int/adaptation/napas/items/4583.php](http://www.unfccc.int/adaptation/napas/items/4583.php))? If not, what needs to be done to ensure that it develops an effective plan? If it does have one, does it need to be improved, and how is it being implemented?
- Is our government including adaptation measures in its development planning and programming? If not, what can we do to encourage it?
- What is our country's position on key issues discussed at international level? What does it think about adaptation funding and good practice, about targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and about best ways to get access to sustainable technology?
- How can we positively influence our government's position at the UN talks, or help it to be more effective? This might involve lobbying and campaigning at a national level, or attending the UN talks to learn about the process and to gain experience of direct advocacy.

Try to work with others who work on this issue. Plan carefully and target people and organisations that have power to bring about change. Tearfund's advocacy staff can provide support in helping identify key targets.

## CASE STUDY

### TEARFUND PARTNER ROLE AT UN CLIMATE TALKS

David Kamchacha from the Evangelical Association of Malawi went to the UN Climate Talks (COP12) in Nairobi in 2006. His expertise was in disaster risk reduction and he did not know much about climate change and UN processes. He joined members of Tearfund's advocacy staff to lobby participants at the talks. David met and built relationships with the Malawian delegation and other key African delegates. He used these opportunities to lobby officials on the issue of adaptation for poor countries, and was able to use information from Tearfund reports to support his lobbying. David says that he often felt 'like a lion waiting in ambush' as he waited for opportunities to speak out.

David learnt a lot during the talks and maintained a strong and effective relationship with the Malawian government when he returned home. As a result, the following year, he was invited to attend the talks as a member of the Malawian government delegation. At the UN Climate Talks (COP13) in Bali in 2007, adaptation was a crucial issue. David was able to have a strong voice within his own government during the talks.