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Anthropologists Release Statement on Humanity and Climate Change

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AAA Global Climate Change
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AAA Statement on Humanity
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Chair, AAA Global Climate
Change Task Force

[http://www.anth.umd.edu/fac
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The [American Anthropological Association](#) (AAA) adopted a strong and clear statement on Humanity and Climate Change on January 29, 2015. The statement, based on the [final report](#) of the Association's Global Climate Change Task Force, reveals eight ways anthropologists attack the problems of climate change from an anthropological perspective. The document recognizes climate change as a present reality and an intensifier of current underlying global problems; the markedly uneven distribution of impacts across and within societies; and the fact that humanity's decisions, actions and cultural behaviors are now the most important causes of the dramatic environmental changes seen in the last century.

"Anthropologists focus on several aspects of climate change research that other scientists do not fully address, specifically the disproportionately adverse impacts on vulnerable populations, the extent to which our current challenges stem from culture and cultural choices on a societal level; and the value of the long record of human development and civilization that can inform our choices for the future," said Shirley J. Fiske, Ph.D., Chair of the American Anthropological Association Global Climate Change Task Force.

The statement affirms that the global problem of climate change is rooted in social institutions and cultural habits. Solutions and social adaptations therefore require knowledge and insight from the social sciences and humanities. "Resilience and adaptation can be best addressed locally and regionally, by enabling communities to provide knowledge and social capital to construct viable solutions," said task force member Ben Orlove, Ph.D. While climate change will have a global impact, the impact will fall unevenly; and as climate impacts intensify, public expenditures needed for emergency aid and restoration will escalate.

"It is crucial that we attend to the statement's message that *climate change is not a natural problem, it is a human problem*," said AAA President Monica Heller, Ph.D. in a recent statement. "Anthropologists play a vital role solving this human problem and the AAA is eager to continue to support the work of our members in this area."

Task force members are Drs. Susan Crate, Carole Crumley, Shirley Fiske, Kathleen Galvin, Heather Lazrus, George Luber, Lisa Lucero, Anthony Oliver-Smith, Ben Orlove, Sarah Strauss and Richard Wilk. Read the entire statement and learn more about the AAA Global Climate Change Task Force at <http://bit.ly/1At4qnn>.

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The American Anthropological Association, dedicated to advancing human understanding and addressing the world's most pressing problems since its founding in 1902, is the world's largest professional anthropology organization.

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