OPINION: It's time to take climate justice seriously.

Corporations and governments need better data, measurement and analysis to take charge. Actionable data is needed to save humanity and the planet.

We accept that anthropogenic climate change is a direct result of an unbridled use of fossil fuel. There's no denying that we've been trashing the planet and social justice. Most people agree on the need for urgent action, but the world keeps kicking the can down the road.

The Greta effect and plenty of scientists, campaigners and influential people bring the crisis to our attention, yet that energy isn't being reflected in the rooms where the decisions are made.

It's well documented how air pollution is a primary driver of climate change that claims the lives of 9m people every year. The people with the moral obligation to do something about it, those that cause it, are not those that bear the brunt. As the death toll continues to rise, we don't seem to be addressing the inequality of it all. We know that poverty is linked to higher vulnerability to poor air quality, and a higher proportion of people in the developing world are more likely to be exposed to higher levels of air pollution.

In a recent report in The Lancet, Pollution and Health: a Progress Update, they conclude that "despite its substantial effects on health, societies, and economies, pollution prevention is largely overlooked in the international development agenda, with attention and funding only minimally increasing since 2015, despite well documented increases in public concern about pollution and its effects on health".

As corporations and governments proudly announce ambitious carbon reduction plans, you can't help but think it's greenwashing. Box ticking. Concerned with their responsibilities to stakeholders and public perception, it's not easy to find a long-term solution with short-term measurable results.

Carbon offsetting is surrounded by controversy. It's not all bad. It helps develop good new technologies and, the good programs do, of course, remove carbon from the atmosphere. But will we be able to implement the new technologies fast enough to save ourselves?

The Smart Cities Initiative is a great start. A global network of mayors taking urgent action to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone can thrive. The C40's mission is to halve the emissions of its member cities within a decade, by 'a science-based and collaborative approach'.

Philanthropists, such as Bill Gates, focus on efforts to speed up net zero. With the threat of climate change becoming more pressing, they are funding research into technologies that resolve the very real issues of climate justice.

The fact remains that we emit far more CO_2 than we can offset. According to the United Nations Environment Program 'cities are a key contributor to climate change, as urban activities are major sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Estimates suggest that cities are responsible for 75 per cent of global CO_2 emissions, with transport and buildings being among the largest contributors'.

Carbon dioxide is 'the currency of climate change'. Air pollution can be measured and converted into a CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e). For example, Ozone is 1,000 times CO_2e and PM in the form of fossil fuel soot is 2,500 x CO_2e. NO_2 is a potent catalyst of atmospheric reactivity, reducing methane and producing ozone, acid rain and PM. As improvements are made to air quality, equivalent and carbon footprint are reduced.

International organisations and governments need to invest in air quality data and analytics to achieve climate justice in cities and urban spaces. Data, analytics, and evidence is needed to address the clear environmental health risks.

All urban communities need access to detailed, street by street, data to show them where the problems are, in hard numbers. Only then can they quantify the effect of any improvements they plan, in terms of reduced exposure to citizens. Authorities can identify where the sources of air pollution are coming from, and going to, in order to pursue those companies and businesses responsible.

Until now, there hasn't been a solution of a high enough resolution to identify hot spots and incidents in real time. Project based investigations and analyses have cost the private and public purse dear. But the results are a snapshot in time and air pollution is an ever-shifting problem, needing constant monitoring, assessment and reaction. And often one group's solution simply shifts their problem further into the most deprived areas with the densest populations.

Climate justice is needed at street level. On a permanent basis.

This global catastrophe goes to the heart of AirScape's mission. Their research scientists share decades of experience, making important breakthroughs in understanding how air pollution contributes to climate change. They are currently rolling out a high-density, real-time, low-cost air quality monitoring network, taking measurements every minute in cities and towns to inform policymaking for the environment and public health. Only by making the invisible visible, can we change our behaviour, for the health and wellbeing of everyone, everywhere.