

CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY

YOUNG FABIANS ENVIRONMENT NETWORK COP26 REPORT

Revealing How to Improve Transparency, Assign Responsibility & Implement Science-Backed Solutions to Solve the Climate Crisis

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NETWORK

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Climate Change Accountability

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MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP

FOREWORD

Next November's COP26 UN climate change conference in Glasgow will be a critical moment in the fight against runaway global heating.

The summit will be the first test of the provisions of the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement designed to see signatories ratchet up their climate ambitions every five years in order to limit the rise in the global temperature to "well below" 2°C and achieve global net zero emissions in the second half of this century.

Current commitments are leading the world down a path to over 3°C of heating, so the overriding goal of the summit must be to convince all participants to significantly raise their ambitions when it comes to their domestic targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet success or failure in that regard is something that is likely to be determined in capitals around the world long before delegates arrive in Glasgow in November 2021. That means that leadership needs to be demonstrated well in advance of the summit to generate the necessary momentum.

As the summit's host, but also as the first country in the world to industrialise and the world's sixth-largest economy, the UK has

a particular responsibility and capacity to ensure COP26 is a success. Failure is something that our planet cannot afford.

It is therefore imperative that the Government establishes the credibility of the UK's COP26 Presiden-



cy now. That must begin here at home with much more ambitious action to rapidly decarbonise our economy this year, alongside the publication of a Nationally Determined Contribution based on a significantly enhanced 2030 emissions reduction target.

The need to rebuild our economy in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to advance that effort and it is imperative that the Government does not let the present opportunity to enact an ambitious green stimulus package slip through its fingers.

In addition to greater ambition at home, the credibility of the UK's

COP26 Presidency also rests on the Government's actions abroad. That is why Ministers must act to ensure the UK's actions abroad are compatible with its obligations under the Paris Agreement, starting with an immediate end to the use of public money to finance new fossil fuel projects overseas and a greater focus on support for the poorest and most vulnerable nations least responsible for climate breakdown and most exposed to its effects.

At present, the gulf between the Government's rhetoric on climate action and the reality is vast. Ministers must use the next fourteen months to prove to the world that the UK is doing everything it possibly can to secure a successful COP26.

We all have a stake in securing that success, especially given the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018 warning that, in the response to the climate crisis, the next few years are "probably the most important in our history". That is why this collection of essays, addressing a wide range of issues that will influence the outcome in Glasgow, is so timely and so necessary. 🇬🇧

Matthew Pennycook

Labour MP for Greenwich and Woolwich

Shadow Minister for Climate Change



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Jack Parker, Lead Editor

Coronavirus has reinforced the reality that our economy is reliant upon the normal functioning of society, and likewise society is dependent upon the stability of the natural environment. Much like a pebble balanced on a stone, in turn balanced on a boulder, the products and services we take for granted on a day to day basis are in fact vulnerable to small shifts in the environment on which we have built everything around us. If coronavirus was a small shift of the boulder, then climate change threatens to be a major earthquake, threatening much more significant disruption to society and the economy.

This report was initially intended to be published ahead of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, originally scheduled for late 2020. Despite the UN's flagship meeting being postponed to November 2021, the Young Fabians decided that

we should press ahead regardless with the writing and publication of this report. Climate change is no less urgent, and so our response should be no less proactive and ambitious as before.

While the contributions in this report are broad and diverse, they all focus around policies and ideas that can help drive global accountability and enable science-based action on an international level to solve the climate crisis.

This includes greater transparency and education, strengthening the role of scientific advisors to tackle fake news and misinformation. It includes greater awareness of the historical contributions of Western nations and today's sharing of responsibility based on consumption, not just domestic production. This also involves global cooperation to ease the pain of climate-related migration and to prevent de-

forestation. We tackle all of these issues in these pages.

I want to thank all of the contributors that made this report possible, especially to Cecilia Jastrzemska and Laura Cunliffe-Hall for their support in editing.

While this report cannot offer a comprehensive list of solutions, our hope is that these ideas become part of the narrative and critical thinking which is desperately needed ahead of COP26 next year. I encourage you to read and share these ideas, to debate and improve them, and to lobby politicians and decision makers over the coming year. We must leverage the opportunity of COP26 to set our economy and society on a new, sustainable track, and to protect the things that coronavirus has taught us to value more than ever.



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CLIMATE CHANGE: INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND MULTILATERAL REFORM

By Cecilia Jastrzemska, Co-Editor

'Now more than ever, we need to reinvigorate our pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, invest in green transitions, and maintain diplomatic momentum to push for low carbon economies'

In an ever more internally focused, nationalistic and individualist world, the challenge to find global solutions is greater than ever. The COVID-19 crisis is but a drop in a rapidly acidifying ocean compared to the ramifications we will face if we fail to make use of the crucial narrowing window we have to mitigate the deleterious effects of anthropogenic climate change. With the US set to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on constraining global warming by 4th November, the climate change movement is severely under threat.

Emissions reduction targets have been repeatedly missed, documents referring to climate change redacted, environmental fines ignored as reported by the BBC on the top UK polluters recidivating, and many companies responsible for unprecedented levels of destruction do not even have environmental policy frameworks. As a result, 250,000 people a year as a very conservative estimate

are dying from climate change¹. Meanwhile, food security and safe drinking water have been compromised, conflict has increased, and extreme weather events and ensuing epidemics have killed hundreds of thousands. For one example, witness the cholera outbreak which followed Cyclone Idai in Mozambique in 2019.

Rising global temperatures have expanded mosquito habitats, exposing more people to diseases for which they are vectors, including dengue, chikungunya and zika in Australia. When these elements converge, they cause ecological cascade effects and co-extinctions. We have also lost indefensible amounts of biodiversity, with the species extinction rate at 100-1,000 times faster than times without the presence of humans². This is only going to increase, and is likely to precipitate the sixth mass extinction event.

Demonstrating the intersectionality of climate change, UN Environ-

ment found that “nearly one quarter of all deaths globally in 2012 could be attributed to modifiable environmental risks, with a disproportionately high amount occurring in populations in developing countries”.³ This makes climate change a human rights issue; from a legal perspective, “a right to a healthy environment in various formulations is recognized by the constitutions of 118 nations around the world”.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently stated that humanity now has eleven years left to avoid the worst effects of climate change, and tropical deforestation alone is currently responsible for around 8% of the world’s annual emissions⁴. In order to achieve real progress on the climate crisis and to realistically prevent as much damage as possible within the tiny window we have, there are five concrete policies that progressives need to implement. 🇺🇸

The Urgent Need to Recognise and Record: To Extend Life, We Must Understand Death

The first issue is the existence of a data gap. As with any problem, accurate information needs to be collated to generate applicable decisions which can tackle it.

For example, during the pandemic, predictive modelling is continuously being used to determine

government policy on lockdowns. This is based on death certificates acknowledging COVID-19 infections, which enable scientists to track infection hotspots and analyse transmission trajectories. However, the lack of identification of climate change as a cause (even if indirect) on death certificates se-

riously hinders the ability to understand the scope of mortality rates and to make informed decisions⁵. A far more holistic approach needs to be taken when looking at causes of death, and non-biomedical causes such as climate change must be not only recognised but recorded. 🇬🇧

From Anonymity to Accountability: Identification Is Key

Secondly, companies which fund projects that significantly contribute to the climate crisis, and therefore to global deaths, must be legally required to identify individuals responsible for their projects which have significantly harmed the environment (and consequently led to avoidable deaths). Anonymity is one of the strongest facilitators of crime, and the greatest defence against an invisible enemy is to label it. In June, I chaired a discussion between two key figures in the UK climate movement: Luke Pollard MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs, and Jo Blackman, Labour councillor for Redbridge and Head of Forests Policy and Advocacy for Global Witness. Global Witness is a high-profile international NGO which exposes fossil fuel funding trails and cases of illegal deforest-

ation. We discussed the future of environment policy, the future and role of the UK's DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and global decarbonisation efforts. I posed questions predominantly about how to establish accountability for companies and individuals that significantly contribute to the climate crisis.

As an example, I asked about Crispin Odey, one of the largest Conservative party donors who has invested more than £140m into SLC Agricola⁶, one of Brazil's most damaging agribusinesses that has been deemed responsible for widespread deforestation of the Amazon, despite receiving several environmental fines from national governments. In response, Jo Blackman noted the fact that when Global Witness contacted Mr. Odey about the fines and the destruction he was funding, in a textbook

demonstration of cognitive dissonance, he denied causing any harm and made clear that the fines were inconsequential.

In terms of holding these people accountable, suggestions from both speakers were similar. Individual people must be named and their reputations put on the line when they decide to profit from ecological devastation. Just as money launderers, thieves, drug traffickers, and criminals in every category are exposed and put on trial, those who choose to act as accelerants to, rather than trying to ameliorate, a phenomenon which has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives must also be made known. Their reputations need to be at stake and legal frameworks must be established where infractions have clear consequences without loopholes. 🇬🇧

The War on Wording: Reframe to Redress

"Not only can framing have an impact on how an issue is perceived but on whether and how policy is made on the issue."

- Hong Vu, Assistant Professor of Journalism at University of Kansas⁷

There is also a significant case to be made for a centralised international political effort to push back against three key elements within media. Firstly, destructive media framing. The public isn't going to feel a sense of crisis if changing weather patterns or

temperature increases as a result of climate change are reported as 'hottest summer on record', rather than as 'heat deaths set to rise as temperatures soar in global warming effects'. If news outlets are not covering the issue with commensurate urgency, the possibility of

a change in paradigm rapidly retreats.

A second obstacle is the deliberate dissemination of misinformation. Science denialism also needs to be tackled with force. Climate change conspiracy theorists need

to have their platforms taken away and donations to them by fossil fuel companies made sanctionable. For example, Amazon still sells books such as 'The Global Warming Hoax' by Larry Bell, and YouTube refuses to take down videos by deniers such as Senator James Inhofe, chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, who received some £2m in political fossil fuel donations from corporations such as ExxonMobil and the Koch Brothers in an effort to block any substantial government initiatives which could contribute to a green energy transition⁸.

When denial means danger to public health and the obstruction of policy changes means deaths in the hundreds of thousands, not to mention species extinctions, the consequences for encouragement of that denial needs to reflect the gravity of its effects. Just as the glorification of violence is a prose-

cutable offence, so must there be punitive measures for those who actively contribute to this narrative.

Finally, lack of reporting at all. Some newspapers like the Guardian have taken an active role in promoting a sustainable climate agenda by adding it to the campaign text on every article published, but many outlets barely cover the issue whatsoever. Major American broadcast networks such as ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox spent just 142 minutes covering climate change last year, according to the progressive Media Matters group⁹. Comparably, the pandemic has been covered incessantly by the media around the globe, with live international death tolls, constant briefings and condemnations of lockdown flouters. The exigency of the climate crisis, and those actively exacerbating it, needs to be covered as the emergency it is. Challenges need to be brought against justifications for lack of reporting to

one of the greatest threats to humankind.

Chris Hayes, editor for The Nation tweeted "every single time we've covered [climate change] it's been a palpable ratings killer. So the incentives are not great"¹⁰ and yet television has forgotten its Paul Revere responsibilities – it has an obligation to air programmes that are in the public interest, irrespective of rating performances. Users responded noting the rating quashing argument was the reverse of that used during the 2016 US presidential primary campaign, when corporate media justified gifting Donald Trump £4.4m in free air time because 'it was good for ratings'¹¹. Media outlets need to be called out for avoiding the issue or for pandering to pro-fossil fuel agendas and the standard needs to be raised in terms of both the volume and the quality of coverage. 🇩🇪

Counteracting Greenwashing

Countries need to establish clear sanctions to counteract greenwashing, whereby companies disseminate disinformation to present an environmentally responsible image of themselves whilst continuing environmentally destructive business as usual behind a green veneer. For example, British oil company BP (formerly British Petroleum) launched a multimillion pound global advertising campaign, its largest in a decade, to mislead customers into thinking

that it was transitioning to renewable energy when in fact, more than 96 percent of its annual capital expenditure is still on oil and gas¹².

ExxonMobil has also just dismissed a shareholder proposal¹³ calling for the company to disclose how it plans to align its business with the Paris Agreement climate targets, going so far as to call the proposed report 'materially misleading'¹⁴. The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations criminalises

false advertising, including deceptive messages and leaving out important information. Greenwashing is the epitome of what this outlaws, and should be met with penalisation, as well as all government support for companies doing so rescinded. Green claims must be independently verified for companies to be able to make them, and to receive environmental certification. 🇩🇪

Destruction to Equal Divestment

In France, there is a law that if one walks past someone in grave danger and distress but does nothing to assist them, one can be charged as if one was an accomplice to a crime. The proverb 'The standard you walk past is the standard you accept' applies

here. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that emissions from fossil fuels are the dominant cause of global warming, to the tune of 71% of global emissions. Over half of those emissions since human induced climate change was officially recognised

can be traced to just 25 corporate and state producing entities¹⁵.

Some of the biggest names in global finance are far more than accomplices; they are fully complicit in environmental destruction. Well-known companies such as Barclays, Deutsche Bank, HSBC,

Santander, JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley are funding companies which are either directly or indirectly causing deforestation in some of the largest rainforests in the world. The average person's nest egg is more than likely to be contributing to the destruction of the world's most precious ecosystems, due to a systemic failure of accountability in the financial system¹⁶.

At our event, Luke Pollard MP remarked that even parliamentary pension funds have shares in companies involved in ecocide, showing just how entangled the investment webs are. As asserted by Global Witness, 'the financial

sector must take responsibility for the impact of their financing and investments on forests and the climate'¹⁷. Government subsidies must be pulled from environmentally destructive companies that fail to meaningfully strike for a green transition. Divestment campaigns need to target guilty banks and corporations, and shareholder activism needs to become the next consumer protest. Climate action is no longer confined to the direction given by policy makers – it is now a social movement, commanded by both economic and ethical imperatives. Investors in fossil fuel companies carry influence over one fifth of industrial greenhouse gas emissions worldwide¹⁸.

Thus, divestment campaigns can be a potent force. The Tate Modern recently severed ties after 26 years with BP over climate protests and now feature climate activists in its exhibitions. Direct action group Extinction Rebellion have now set their sights on Barclays, who recently invested £85 billion in fossil fuels, making it Europe's biggest benefactor to environmentally destructive companies¹⁹. Awareness not only needs to be raised in terms of financial institutions dodging responsibility, but also of who the top climate criminals are, including those directly committing ecocide on an international level. 🇬🇧





Next Steps: Rejecting 'Business As Normal'

Business as normal just doesn't cut it anymore. Corporations investing in projects that ultimately kill hundreds of thousands of people and wipe out whole species is not normal. We need a vastly different, new normal. Progressives can take practical steps to tackle the devastating consequences of the climate emergency, including changing death certification to include climate change as a cause, and comparing death data against environmental data to facilitate risk and impact assessments.

To establish transparency, disclosure of environment affecting projects in line with the Financial Stability Board's (FSB) Taskforce for Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) or a similar framework must be made mandatory, and specific people held responsible for specific projects. Due diligence obligations must be enacted for companies financing any kind of ecological destruction to account for all risks involved, and multilateral cooperation facilitated to penalise countries with bases in the countries involved which continue to significantly harm the environment.

It is vital that definitive destruction thresholds over which sanctions apply be established, and those sanctions be made proportionate

to company profits to effectively deter violations. A human rights charity would not allow a serial human rights abuser to sit on their board of trustees, as it would obviously be contradictory, inappropriate and completely counterproductive. In the same vein, fossil fuel companies cannot be allowed a seat at the table at international climate summits such as the Paris Agreement any longer, as sponsorship deals stymie the progress of environmental agendas.

The pandemic is indisputably a tragedy that has brought about huge suffering, economic devastation and the destabilisation of international development. However, it may inadvertently pave the way for a schema of substantially more sustainable living, and coronavirus can in fact be a catalyst for long-term change if we act decisively.

Now more than ever, we need to reinvigorate our pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, invest in green transitions rather than resuscitating the fossil fuel industry, and maintain diplomatic momentum to push for low carbon economies. Organisations who commit ecocide must be held to account, individuals identified, and deaths recorded accurately to reflect the risk climate change poses. International pressure must be put

on the US to remain a signatory to the Paris Agreement, because the consequences if it leaves are unthinkable. Not just from the damage it will cause but the danger of other countries following suit. Clear frameworks for disclosure, due diligence, and thresholds above which environmental sanctions apply need to be established and recourse to accountability must be created.

The media must play its role by comprehensively covering the issues of climate change, and by exposing aspects such as payments by multinational corporations to climate change deniers, and raising awareness of key figures perpetuating ecological destruction. As economies rebuild, inviolable conditions must be attached to government support packages, for example, as recommended by the Young Fabians Environment Network to the 2020 Labour National Policy Forum Consultation. There is an increased impetus for global cooperation as countries emerge from the pandemic and they must not waste the opportunity to act collaboratively by investing in sustainable transformations. Let's make a new, sustainable 'business as usual' where we put ourselves, and our planet first. 🇬🇧

Policy Recommendations

- Changing death certification to include climate change as a cause, actively looking to connect relevant external contributory factors
- Comparing death data against environmental datasets to facilitate risk and impact assessments
- A clear framework to be set out for environmental destruction disclosure, similar to Gender Pay Gap Reporting with unlimited fines (or at the minimum, proportionate to net company profits) if data is not published. This data must be accessible to the public for transparency so that consumers may choose to divest or invest as they wish. This should be in line with the Financial Stability Board's (FSB) Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD)
- Enacting mandatory due diligence for companies financing ecological destruction to account for all risks involved
- Closing loopholes which allow companies to refrain from disclosing plans that may significantly detrimentally impact the environment
- Establishing clear individual accountability by making it mandatory for companies to name specific people to hold responsible for projects
- Increasing cooperation between international NGOs and national governments through information exchange and sharing of best practices to tackle each country specific issue, for example in Brazil; deforestation, and in the UK: runway building
- Quantifying and defining unambiguous, definitive thresholds of environmental destruction above which sanctions apply
- Facilitating multilateral cooperation between countries to penalise companies with bases in member countries which are continuing to significantly harm the environment
- Lobbying governments to increase climate related policy content in manifestos
- Ramping up financial and legal sanctions for violations
- Disallowing fossil fuel companies a seat at the table at international climate summits such as the Paris Agreement to prevent sponsorship deals influencing and delaying environmental agendas
- Pressuring social media platforms to expunge science denialists
- Exposing routes of multinational corporation payment to climate change deniers
- Raising awareness of key figures funding and perpetuating ecological destruction
- Rescinding government subsidies and support for environmentally destructive companies which refuse to set out green transition plans. Decarbonisation commitments must have hard timeframes, e.g. net zero by 2024 with recouping/proportionate financial sanctions if they fail to meet those commitments.
- A frequent flyers tax to be established to de-incentivise the use of planes and instead incentivise eco-friendly tourism. The revenue to be reinvested in sustainable initiatives, for example to build more charging stations for electric cars.
- The prevention of the subsidisation of extractive and carbon-intensive industries by revoking the back door case-by-case-basis evaluation of fracking company applications and reinstating the blanket ban.



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IMPROVING EDUCATION & TRANSPARENCY AROUND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION TO TACKLE DISINFORMATION AND SHAPE A NEW ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE

By Laura Cunliffe-Hall, Co-Editor

The climate crisis is the defining issue of our time - an enormous challenge threatening the future of our planet. We face the fight of our lives to solve environmental degradation and climate breakdown before it is too late.

2020 has been a year of turbulence. School climate strikes, devastating wildfires across Australia, the COVID-19 pandemic and the #BlackLivesMatter movement have exposed the inequalities and dissonance across the globe that prove our previous political, environmental, cultural and social systems were not fit for purpose.

We need a more egalitarian future, with an international commitment to tackling both climate and racial justice, as you cannot achieve one without the other. In order to do so,

we need to ensure increased transparency and the delivery of stronger education around the climate crisis. This education needs to be focused on the intersectionality of the issues that mean the crisis we are facing will hit women, people of colour and poorer communities the hardest.

One of the most valuable tools in the fight against climate change is education. First and foremost, we need to introduce educational reform to ensure environmental issues are taught and articulated

effectively in schools across the world from a young age. Subsequently, we will need to utilise social media, technology and sophisticated contemporary methods of communication to tell a more nuanced story about climate change and why immediate action is necessary. Finally, we will need to create concrete routes to accountability for both each other and politicians on addressing the significance of climate as an issue that can engender clearer education in the future and a long term-shift in attitudes towards the climate crisis. 🇩🇪

Climate in the Classroom: Educational Reforms

An effective, comprehensive programme of public education around the climate emergency is essential to tackle disinformation and promote understanding of the shared role we all have to play in tackling this global issue. This needs to begin in schools.

Young people are key political actors in the fight against the climate crisis. Already, the younger generation has shown incredible leadership on climate as an issue, with Greta Thunberg's school strikes instigating a world-wide movement where young people have held older generations to account and confronted them with the reality of the climate crisis. Organisations

such as the UK Student Climate Network and their campaign Teach the Future UK are student-led¹, seeking to reorient the education system around the climate emergency, with equivalent organisations such as the Sunrise Movement in the US and Fridays for Future Uganda, similarly working to raise awareness of the climate crisis and demand action.

To help these young people of the future across the world, the education system needs to reflect what they have been telling us: we must take climate more seriously. For too long, education has been focused on the insular – each nation describes its own version of history and inscribes a specific set of val-

ues. Instead, rather than focusing on the past, children need to be taught about how they can positively influence the future. Compulsory climate emergency classes need to be introduced – teaching us about how the crisis came about, its impact and most importantly, how this can be mitigated through high-impact measures like living car-free and reducing air travel. It is the collective responsibility of international governments to work together to transmit this knowledge effectively. Summits such as COP26 must be used as springboards for change, where governments can utilise international collaboration to improve how children are taught about the environment. 🇩🇪

Biodiversity, Flooding & Food Systems: Understanding the Planet

Increased education around both biodiversity and food is fundamental. As UNESCO states², the loss of biodiversity is humanity's main battleground for sustainability, alongside the challenge of climate change. More detailed education around biodiversity is therefore required. This should highlight the importance of the need for biodiversity net gain, leading to a long-term international commitment to protecting biodiversity in different countries and will also illustrate the intimate connection between biodiversity and cultural diversity³.

Moreover, as floods, droughts, wildfires and similar natural disasters continue to cause devastation as the climate crisis worsens, increased education is needed on the adaptability and resilience required to combat these issues. Education is also necessary to prevent the continuation of negative behaviours, such as the reckless extraction of natural resources through the felling of trees and building on flood plains, that led to

these issues in the first place. We can't repeat the mistakes of the past. We need to work towards a better future by being open about the errors that have led to the climate crisis; this will allow us to move forward in the most efficient way.

Food systems, and the people who depend on them, are profoundly threatened by climate change.⁴ Improved and more holistic education around food will encourage students to experience and understand how nature sustains life, through lessons around responsible production, farming, waste management and food supply chain systems. International governments need to work with community and volunteer groups, schools and other youth services to reposition how environmental impacts are taught.

We need to teach that we cannot talk about environmental issues without environmental justice. Currently the people most likely to be impacted by climate change are disproportionately people of col-

our in poorer communities, who are the least likely to benefit from the appropriate resources to tackle environmental impacts on their lives. To cite the US as an example, more than half of the 9 million people living near hazardous waste sites are people of colour⁵, with black Americans three times more likely to die from exposure to air pollutants than their white counterparts. This is unacceptable, and education is key to raising awareness of the need to redress these drastic inequalities.

Our collective responsibility for the environment needs to be placed at the heart of international educational curriculums. This will ensure that the climate crisis will remain at the forefront in the minds of the next generation, rather than the afterthought it has been viewed as all too often by previous generations. Education on climate issues can't just exist; it needs to be proportionate, regularly updated and above all, intersectional. 🇬🇧



Access to Educational Resources on Climate

COP26 is an important zeitgeist; to ensure further transparency around climate, countries need to work together to build a consensus on climate education for the future of the planet.

A series of useful resources and initiatives around climate education are provided here. These resources need to be added to mainstream curriculums and disseminated more widely following international agreement on the best forms of community education at COP26:

- **Marine Conservation Society:** <https://www.mcsuk.org/coolseas/>
- **NASA Global Climate Change:** <https://climate.nasa.gov/resources/education/>
- **Oxfam Climate Challenge:** <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/stories-of-climate-change>
- **UC Climate Change Learning Partnership:** <https://www.uncclearn.org/learning-resources/integrating-climate-change-education-primary-and-secondary-level-interactive>
- **World Wildlife Foundation (WWF):** <https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/resources/climate-change-resources>

Communicating with Clarity: Managing the Media

Education is vital to increase transparency around the climate crisis and to prevent ‘fake news’ filling international airwaves. An ongoing similarity between the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis has been the disinformation surrounding both, distorting messaging and making it harder to tackle the issues that matter. Rumours circulating that drinking bleach can cure the virus and that global warming is part of the Earth’s ‘naturally occurring’ climate cycles are more than ill-informed – their potential to reach vulnerable audiences is dangerous. Media publications such as the Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday continue to perpetuate false studies and rhetoric around a ‘hiatus’ in global warming⁶, whereas The Guardian and Al Jazeera are reporting the facts around the crisis and have dedicated environment-specific coverage. This needs to be the norm in media rather than the exception. Social

media also has a vital role to play in communicating the truth about the climate crisis.

As it has become increasingly evident that the adverse climate conditions humans have both created and exacerbated could lead to further pandemics, now more than ever is the time to do things differently and create a clear and easily digestible narrative around climate change. Through modern technology, we have access to more information than ever before. Nevertheless, governments need to work in tandem with social media networks, corporations and environmental activists to disseminate the right messages that communicate the reality of the climate crisis and provide tangible ways of how people can play their part to help.

Thus far, initiatives like #WorldEnvironmentDay and #InternationalDayofBiodiversity play a crucial role in drawing attention to cli-

mate and creating a conversation that brings people into the environmental movement. We need to expand the reach of these and make them mean more to more people. Targeted funding pots for improved communications and graphics would enhance the reach of these campaigns and massively increase their effectiveness. The facts about the dangers to our planet are out there – we need to make people take notice of them. The lack of media reporting, or destructively framed media reporting, around the climate crisis means that the reality of what is happening to our planet is not connecting with enough people with enough impact. Ultimately, only through telling a more compelling story around the climate emergency on a global scale, can we reach a wider audience and impress the scale of this issue to a greater number of the world’s population. 🇩🇪

Shifting Attitudes: Talking About Climate Issues Outside of Established Circles

Finally, it is important that individuals and green campaigns, charities, organisations and political parties step outside of their comfort zone when talking about climate. We cannot be preaching to the converted; more people need to challenge poorly formed beliefs and continue to hold environmentally damaging behaviours and opinions to account.

Humans are social animals – by taking social factors into consider-

Now is the time for international collaboration to deliver global leadership that takes a serious and long-term approach to tackling the climate crisis. Education and communication need to be at the heart of this, transforming the way future generations are taught about climate and how current societies view the crisis. We need to act decisively now, encouraging active learning about

ation⁷, we can ensure that we hold both each other, as well as the powerful (governments and major corporations such as Amazon and Google), to account to recognise our role as social actors living in the climate crisis. In doing so, we can use our voices to force others to take action. By coming out of our silos, we can shape and influence more environmentally focused policies, such as those promoting conservation and improved land

the environment and commit to challenging others and stepping outside of leftist echo chambers.

Subsequently, we can use this increased personal accountability to demand further accountability from governments, businesses and the media. If this accountability and scrutiny is continually applied, it will lead to policy development and mitigation measures that can restore and protect the planet. Ef-

management. Sometimes even the biggest problems can be tackled by something as simple as a conversation.

If the following policy recommendations, outlined in detail below, were adopted at COP26, we can create a more sustainable future where we are transparent with ourselves and the next generation about the scale of the climate challenge facing us. 🇬🇧

fecting change requires hard work and a commitment to changing previously accepted behaviours and narratives about climate. A shared international commitment to facing and telling the truth about the climate crisis needs to start now for us to stand a chance of passing the environment on to the next generation in a better state than we found it. 🇬🇧

Policy Recommendations

- Compulsory climate emergency education classes
- Improved education around biodiversity and the need for biodiversity net gain, including providing further access to nature
- Increased education about food, including responsible production, farming, waste management and food supply chain systems
- Intersectional climate-crisis material added to curriculums which focus on environmental and racial justice
- Consensus on educational environmental resources and wider dissemination of these resources
- Pressuring media and social media organisations to prevent the promotion of studies and theorists denying the existence of the climate crisis
- Co-ordinating messaging to clearly communicate the scale of the climate emergency
- Increased funding for promotional initiatives celebrating the planet such as #WorldEnvironmentDay and #InternationalDayofBiodiversity
- Raising awareness of the climate crisis through increased publicity and profile for green-friendly policies.

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THE UNITED NATIONS SHOULD COMMIT TO 1.5°C

By Amy Dwyer

The UN COP Summit has been postponed until November 2021, but this does not mean that we can afford to put climate change mitigation on hold until then. If we are to prevent further climate change and limit a rise in the earth's temperature to 1.5°C, then we need committed and consistent action from every country. This means that we cannot base climate change commitments off political agreements, and they must be science-backed.

The Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change established that an additional increase of just 0.5°C creates considerable damage to our global ecosystem¹. This is the logic behind targets being set at 1.5°C and not 2°C. Although this damage might not be felt to the same extent by every country, it is imperative for the international community to work together on this issue. It is estimated that limiting global warming to 1.5°C rather than 2°C would limit global flooding and tropical cyclones, which are seen to be much more commonplace if we choose to set limits at 2°C². Additionally, the Panel found that an ex-

tra 0.5°C increase in global warming would expose poverty-stricken communities in Africa and Asia to even scarcer resources across energy, food and water sectors².

It is widely acknowledged that the probability of an ice-free Arctic Ocean is substantially increased with a 2°C temperature increase, which has potentially catastrophic consequences for low-lying island states². Several island nations have already declared a climate crisis at the Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) Summit and it has been estimated that around 1.7 million people could be displaced in this region by 2050³. This demonstrates the importance of restricting our emissions as much as possible and highlights why we should not take an easier approach at 2°C, which would cause sea levels to rise by 0.1m more than at 1.5°C². Understandably, this could be fatal for those low-lying nations and highlights the need for political commitments to be based on science.

The risk of extinction of a variety of species are also much higher at 2°C due to the resulting considera-

ble impact on various habitats and ecosystems². It is estimated that at 2°C we would lose 18% of insects, 16% of plants and 8% of vertebrates, compared to 6% of insects, 8% of plants and just 4% of vertebrates at 1.5°C warming². Various news outlets have reported that if effective action does not take place, climate change may cause up to one in three species of plants and animals to become extinct⁴.

Alongside this, it is seen that water scarcity would increase significantly if temperatures rose by 2°C, which could easily further inflame tensions in areas where access to water is already scarce. There is the strong potential for several hundred million people to be less susceptible to poverty and climate-related risks if we are able to stick to this target. Given that clean water, no poverty, zero hunger and climate action are three of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, these need to be put above any political alliance and ensure that any targets and agreement are based solely on science. 🚩

1.5°C Increases the Chance That Humanity Can Retain Control

In addition, if the UN sets the target at 2°C this would significantly increase the risk of negative climate feedback loops, compared to 1.5°C. As the world warms, global ice caps melt which creates problems for the ecosystems of the North and South Poles but also the communities within the Arctic Circle. Sea levels rising have a wide impact across the world, but it is the low-lying island nations that will be most affected by

this. An extra 0.5°C would create significantly more melted ice and therefore even higher sea levels. This, in turn, results in darker water in these regions, as opposed to reflective ice. Darker water will absorb more heat and therefore ensure that the ocean water here is warmer⁵. Therefore, this creates a loop; targets at 2°C means warmer oceans and so warmer ice, which then creates a situation where the ocean absorbs more heat and be-

comes even warmer⁶. This is clearly a dangerous situation, which needs to be avoided if at all possible. The best way for the UN to ensure this is avoided is to set a clear roadmap to a 1.5°C maximum rise in temperature, not 2°C.

A similar feedback loop is seen through permafrost melting, which is releasing methane into the atmosphere. Methane has a significant impact on climate change as it produces 21 times as much global

warming as CO₂⁷. If the UN set targets at 2°C, more permafrost would melt and more methane would be released into the atmosphere, thus worsening climate change considerably. As a result, reducing the amount of methane in our atmosphere needs to be a central priority, which further supports the need for climate change mitigation to be set at 1.5°C.

Furthermore, the level of 1.5°C as a target has been established, as it is believed that past emissions alone are unlikely to raise global temperatures to this level. This means that states should be able to commit to

these targets, as it is not impacted by past emissions and only new levels of emissions². While reaching and sticking to these targets will still require significant measures, this arguably puts states on a more level playing field. A global transformation is required by all states to prioritise climate change action to meet these targets, that is unquestionable.

However, it is clear that the global community has historically been incredibly inactive on climate change, partially due to several leaders around the world who continue to deny the existence and hu-

man responsibility of global warming. As a result of these factors our task of mitigating climate change is daunting and requires serious and fundamental shifts in the way we approach the issue. Tackling climate change should be hard, if it is not then we are not doing it properly. It will demand significant changes to our current lifestyles, but it needs to be a change that all states accept and push for. It is their responsibility to do so, to ensure the environment is protected for future generations. 🇬🇧



We Must Act on the 2015 Paris Agreement

In order to achieve the target of 1.5°C warming, the UN notes that greenhouse gas emissions need to be halved by 2030 and hit net zero emissions by 2050⁸. This was introduced in the Paris Agreement in 2015, which was signed by 175 countries⁹. Nonetheless, it is important that countries do not see the signing of this agreement in itself, as an effort towards meeting this target. These targets will be challenging, they need to be, and so it is important that they are followed through with equally demanding action. The inclusion of updates every five years should hopefully increase transparency and ensure that countries do make

continued effort towards these targets¹⁰.

Since 2015 there has been some backpedalling on the Paris Agreement from various countries, including the United States¹¹. Inevitably, this creates significant problems for the global effort to address the issue. There can be no room for omissions in the international arena for states to deny or neglect the issue of climate change. It is therefore incredibly important for other states to challenge this opposition and potentially introduce sanctions for lack of action towards the Paris Agreement targets.

We have an opportunity at present,

where there seems to be a reasonably broad consensus, albeit with some important challenges, that climate change needs to be prioritised. This offers a unique scope to establish science-based goals and it is a situation that must be taken advantage of. If we stick to them, then science-based targets are clearly the most effective way to mitigate climate change across the world, whilst also ensuring that countries are unlikely to be alienated due to the apolitical nature of these targets.

The science tells us that the international community is not doing enough to tackle climate change and while national governments

may prefer to claim that they are, the scientific evidence is clear. If national governments were to choose the targets that were set, it is likely that they would be much more achievable. But this is not what we need. These targets are based on what is just within our reach, if we fully commit to the cause. This is not scientists being unrealistic and naïve but instead

serves to demonstrate the seriousness of the issue and is the only way to guarantee that states are working towards measures that will be able to stop climate change.

The UN needs to rise to the challenge of ensuring that the commitments made in the Paris Agreement are upheld. A rise of 1.5°C should be the absolute maximum

rise in global warming that is condoned. More measures should be established to ensure that carbon emissions do peak by 2030 and that all states that have signed the Agreement are completely carbon neutral by 2050, with policies implemented to deter states from failing to meet the targets that they agree to. 🇺🇳

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STRENGTHENING SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES & COMMUNICATION TO PUT COP26 BACK ON TRACK

By Holly Smith

Effective and trustworthy science communication has been more crucial than ever in the last few months. Earlier in the coronavirus crisis, the World Economic Forum warned that misinformation would contribute to panic and distrust, harming the public health response to the crisis¹.

Similarly, we have seen certain governments grappling with how to interpret and apply complex and fluid science in their coronavirus responses, leading to inconsistency across nations, for example over how far apart people need to be to 'social distance'². Perhaps most sinister has been the attempts by Donald Trump and others to deny and "distort scientific facts", according to the editor-in-chief of the leading journal *Science*³.

Those of us involved in campaigns to tackle the climate emergency are all too familiar with these dy-

namics of denying, misconstruing, or downplaying scientific evidence. Although the general rate of climate denial in the UK is low and falling⁴, the Government is still routinely criticised for downplaying the severity of the oncoming crisis and failing to respond with the ambition and urgency required.

For example, the IPPR thinktank recently revealed that the Government's recent £2bn investment in decarbonising homes offers just one-third of the action needed to be on track for net zero-carbon by 2050, and its plans to install heat pumps will deliver less than 2% of the number required⁵.

There is cause for concern about this Government's understanding and appreciation of the severity of the climate emergency in terms of their approach to COP26. After her sacking as President of the COP26, former Climate and Ener-

gy Minister Claire Perry O'Neill hit out at Boris Johnson, claiming he told her he "doesn't really understand" climate change, adding: "He doesn't really get it, is what he said, but others around him do."⁶

Science communication and use of science in policy is a complex issue, with more potential solutions and pitfalls than this article has space to cover. I have selected two areas where the Government and other organisations could act fairly quickly, and which could have a significant impact on the success or otherwise of COP26. This article will make the case for strengthening the Government's climate change advisory body and climate education, to help get COP26 back on track by better embedding scientific communication and understanding in policy. 🇬🇧

Strengthening the Committee on Climate Change

First, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) should have its powers and remit strengthened. The CCC was established by the last Labour Government under the Climate Change Act 2008. Its principle role is to advise the UK Government on tackling and preparing for climate change which, according to its website, includes the following four priorities⁷:

- Providing independent advice on setting and meeting carbon budgets and preparing for climate change
- Monitoring progress in reducing emissions and achieving carbon budgets and targets

- Conducting independent analysis into climate change science, economics, and policy
- Engaging with a wide range of organisations and individuals to share evidence and analysis

Although the Chair and Board Members are appointed by government, the CCC is operationally independent, meaning that, although the government can ask it to investigate certain topics, the recommendations produced should be independent of government influence. The CCC has had some major policy successes via its 'soft power' influencing. For example, when it was asked by the Government to assess what was

both a feasible and ambitious target for emissions reduction, its recommendation to aim for net zero-carbon by 2050 was adopted into legislation⁸. Although many campaigners would argue this is not a sufficiently ambitious target, it is nonetheless a success for the CCC that it was adopted by the government.

However, as referenced earlier in this piece, the government is way off track in meeting its own target. The CCC can call this out, in the media and in its regular reports to Parliament on carbon emissions, it has no tangible power to hold the government to account. This allows Ministers to repeat the state-

ment that they have adopted net zero by 2050 into law despite a relative lack of action.

The CCC could be hugely influential at COP26, but only with additional powers and the remit to hold the government to account on delivery. The delay to COP26 could be an opportunity for the CCC to investigate and report on their recommendations for actions at COP26, well in advance of the timetable setting process. A government serious about listening to scientific expertise would then use these recommendations to guide

the goals and outcomes of the summit – using science to guide policy.

Furthermore, we know that one of the downfalls of the Paris Climate Agreement is the lack of accountability for governments failing to meet the requirements contained within it⁹. Within the UK, the CCC could provide the necessary accountability, by assessing and challenging Government decisions according to whether they meet the latest climate agreements.

A more powerful CCC could also be given the remit to investigate

and take action against companies failing to reduce their emissions in line with Government agreements. Another criticism of the COP system is that it fails to address emissions by corporate entities: the Climate Accountability Institute reports that 63 percent of the carbon dioxide and methane emitted in the last 250 years is attributable to just 90 companies, including Chevron, Peabody and Shell¹⁰. International agreements that fail to address this proportion of emissions are only tackling half the problem. 🇬🇧

Education is Critical to Tackling Fake News & Understanding Science

Looking forward to COP26 and beyond, we need to embed accurate and proportionate understanding of the climate emergency into our education and culture. According to UNESCO:

Education is an essential element of the global response to climate change. It helps young people understand and address the impact of global warming, encourages changes in their attitudes and behaviour and helps them adapt to climate change-related trends.¹¹

In the lead up to COP26, effective climate change education and media communication could help build a national consensus on the need for the summit to end with ambitious and legally binding emissions reductions commitments. If the climate strike movement has taught us anything, it is that children and young people are engaged and mobilised to take action on the climate crisis. COP26 is an opportunity for children and young people, particularly in Glasgow but also across the country, to get involved with the summit, in the process learning about international cooperation, climate change and the UN. I would like to see the

Department for Education working with schools and campaign groups to develop resources for teachers to use with their classes.

Climate education can also help to tackle the spread of ‘fake news’, but social media companies should also have an obligation to tackle climate fake news on their platforms. Some progress has been made, for example with Twitter now tagging content as ‘misleading’ where appropriate. In the absence of Government regulation, companies have taken to boycotting Facebook for its failure to remove hate speech¹², which could also prove an effective tactic to force Facebook and others to take action over fake news.

Finally, media organisations should take responsibility for effectively reporting on the climate emergency. The Guardian has provided leadership in this area, by setting out a series of ‘climate pledges’ in late 2019¹³. These pledges include using language that reflects the severity of the crisis and reporting on how climate collapse is already affecting people worldwide. These pledges help to make the climate emergency a tangible, immediate issue for readers, and should be adopted widely by media companies.

The UK does not appear to have a significant problem with explicit climate change denial. However, our politics and culture suffer from the threat and severity of the climate emergency being downplayed and underestimated, which contributes to a lack of ambitious Government action. In order for COP26 to be successful at agreeing ambitious goals and seeing these realised in the years to come, the Government’s climate change advisers need to have a far more powerful role in setting the agenda and holding them accountable for delivery. We also need far greater climate change education in the curriculum, as well as balanced, accurate reporting across the media. This should help the government and the public alike recognise the climate emergency as the most significant existential threat we face. 🇬🇧



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FAIRLY ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY BASED ON HISTORICAL IMPACT

By Alexander Naile

Next year, when COP26 finally happens, the world's diplomats and leaders will be faced with the same question that faces any attempt at large-scale co-operation.

'Whose responsibility is it?'

Even aside from quibbles on the importance of various elements, there are two straightforward issues that need addressing: Do we

allocate responsibility based on current or historical emissions or do we allocate it by the production of goods, or by the consumption of those goods?

China is the world's largest producer of greenhouse gas emissions, at approximately 27%, so there's a clear argument that they should shoulder a significant share of the responsibility¹. This seems fair but China has a population of 1.393 bil-

lion and so their per capita impact is much lower, on top of the fact that they've only industrialised within living memory. China's industrialisation only really began in 1953, at a time when much of Western Europe and the US had been industrialised for generations. They've been emitting tonnes since 1953, but that's nearly 200 years later than the beginning of Britain's contributions. 🇬🇧

Historical Emissions Centre Around the North Atlantic

Since records began one quarter of all CO₂ that has been emitted has been by the USA, and 22% by the EU (including Britain's 5.8%, even if our inclusion is a touchy data point), compared to China's 13%². Given that China has over four times the population of the US and around three times that of the EU, the per capita emissions are even more starkly centred around the North Atlantic. While it's not quite so simple as every molecule of CO₂ having been in the atmosphere since it was emitted, it is self-evident that a tonne that has been circulating for a century has trapped more heat than a tonne that has only just billowed from a power plant.

As we sit here in the UK, with historical emissions per capita second only to Luxembourg, a tiny nation that would rather tellingly prefer to be known as a tax haven than a steel dominated carbon emitter, it is much more palatable to talk about China's vast swathes of factories than our own long history of dark satanic mills³. These rankings are for production, which is much easier to track historically, leading to the remainder of the top ten being filled out by perhaps

surprising countries like Belgium, Estonia and Czechia, small but industrialised European countries, as well as the resource rich but sparsely populated steppe and tundra of Kazakhstan, Russia and Canada. The US does, however, take the bronze medal in this ignominious competition, almost as historically dirty as us³. That's a very literal almost, a single tonne per capita, while a hundred tonnes above fourth place Belgium³.

So, with five of the (formerly) G8 in the top 10 for historical emissions per capita, political expediency would point away from using it as a metric for judging who should bear the costs of what needs to be done. This would be cowardice though, as these countries have risen to economic and diplomatic power off the back of poisoning the planet. Where would the British Empire have reached without coal shipped out of Newcastle? Without that early industrialisation powering colonial exploitation would the wealth of the world have flowed into London and funded all the 'clean' wealth of our modern service sector? What kept much of Africa and Asia from industrialising when exposed to the ideas and ex-

ample of industrialised states was in fact deliberate colonial policy to maintain export markets for manufacturers.

The legacy of our dirty industrialising past is still in the atmosphere, still causing just as much harm as it did last year, and the year before that, for decades and centuries. If we are to take genuine responsibility for our contributions to climate change, we will need to take this multiplier effect into consideration. 5.8% of historical emissions are British, and a lot of those are among the oldest industrial emissions worldwide³. So, at the very least, we should be shouldering 5.8% of the cost of cleaning up the mess that we've made, and likely more than that, given the age of many of our emissions. Just because we have, relatively speaking, cleaned up and outsourced our emissions does not mean we can pass the buck for our actions.

To wipe clean the records of advanced economies, and shift the responsibility for cleaning up their mess onto developing economies would be historically illiterate and adding insult to injury. 🇬🇧

Tracking Consumption, Not Production

The second debate is more current, perhaps more pressing and definitely more tied into the global nature of the global economy. A pair of Nike shoes are made in China, and sold in Britain by an American company, so is the carbon emitted in the manufacture of them Chinese, British or American? Currently, the standard is that the country of production is the responsible one, but this does not seem like a fair allocation of that responsibility.

The world economy is a complicated global mesh of trade in goods and services, and often the life of a manufactured object is just as international as its environmental impact. There is a comforting idea that by passing laws requiring clean air and high environmental standards we can fix everything, and implicitly sacrifice nothing. This has worked, as far as it was meant to, in that the developed world has cleaner air and water, and a slowing of growth in produced emissions. It only works though because we can still get all the cheap plastic tat and manufactured goods that we always could, but from Shanghai not Sheffield.

Aside from the economic impact on industrial areas in the developed world, it's a shell game, playing hide the carbon with the world

economy and shifting the blame onto the developing world, who can't afford to outsource the less savoury parts of maintaining their lifestyles.

High income countries, making up 16% of the global population, produce 39% of the world's CO₂, already an outsized contribution. If we look at the emissions produced to provide their level of consumption, it rises to 46%, a much more damning figure. The lifestyle of the rich world is unsustainable on a level that is difficult to comprehend⁴.

If everyone on the planet consumed at the rate of the richest 16%, then we would have triple our current emissions, which are already far too high. To put it another way, think about having about a third as much stuff, including holidays and travel, as the average European does now. If everyone on the planet had that much (or, compared to our current lifestyle, that little), then we would be in the exact same boat of overconsumption, overproduction, and over-emission.

Developing countries do not produce dirty goods for the developed world because they do not care about the environment. In fact, in many cases the developing world will be hit hardest by the impact of global heating. We have deliberately created a global economy

that outsources dirty businesses and greenwashes the rich world and the blame is transferred to developing countries who haven't the financial stability or influence to defend themselves.

Choosing to share responsibility on the basis of historical emissions and by goods consumed has the distinct advantage of placing the burden onto states best able to bear it. Britain is more able to pay the price of carbon, and more culpable for the climate crisis than South Africa and should therefore be the one paying that price.

Carbon markets are a touchy issue, but putting a price on consuming rather than on producing encourages the actual behaviour shift that is needed, while making sure that the cost burden is put on trans-continental holiday-makers rather than starving slum-dwellers.

It wouldn't be feasible to put a price on decades or even centuries old emissions, but it would serve as an excellent metric for each state's share in supporting the institutions that will be necessary for a carbon market, or for research investment in clean options across the economy. Even better, and only marginally more difficult, would be if this is weighted to account for the extra impact of older emissions. 🇬🇧

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ALIGNING RESPONSIBILITY WITH CONSUMPTION

By Helen Clarke

When we talk about going carbon neutral in the UK, we often talk about reducing our carbon emissions, a goal that has been set by the UK government to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050¹. What we talk about less often is reducing our carbon consumption, this being the amount of carbon we consume through the products we produce and practices that emit carbon in

other countries.

Globally, large parts of the world have agreed to act on the climate crisis and 175 parties were present to sign the Paris Agreement² in 2016, promising to keep a rise in global temperatures to below 2°C, above pre-industrial levels. Achieving this goal can be done in one of two ways: either each country looks to reduce their carbon emissions separately using their carbon

budget (an allowance of carbon they can use to keep the global temperature down; or through working together with other nations, they can look at the global problem of carbon consumption.

If the aim of reducing our carbon usage is to protect those most at risk of fatalities and disruption to daily life from the climate crisis, then why is reducing emissions alone not enough? 🚩

The Need for Accountability

It is well known that more developed countries are responsible for more carbon emissions than developing countries, with China, the US and Europe being amongst the biggest contributors. Meanwhile, developing countries are up to ten times more likely to experience climate disasters than developed countries. These developing countries have considerably less finance and infrastructure to build resilience against events such as flooding, food insecurity and extreme heat waves caused by the effects of climate change.

If developed countries are causing the most emissions and developing countries are suffering the consequences, there needs to be accountability for this responsibility.

If developing countries such as Rwanda reduce their emissions (currently at 0.1 tonnes per capita³), it is still a drop in the ocean

compared to Canada's emissions (currently 15.1 tonnes per capita). So, the solution seems to be for developed countries in the West to drastically reduce their emissions for the benefit of countries in the Global South; but, what about consumption?

Carbon consumption looks at the amount of the global carbon budget that is spent in one country for the benefit of another. For example, if India produces carbon emissions producing goods for America, the carbon used in energy from the factory producing those goods and the fuel in the plane delivering them is part of the emissions for India but the consumption for America – as America's actions have led to the production of that carbon.

The Climate Equity Reference Project recently looked at the UK's target to reduce global warming and how this would work in relation to

other countries. The project took into account who was responsible for the production of carbon and argued that "The global effort of reducing emissions – can be divided among all countries according to their responsibility (for causing the problem) and capacity (to help deal with it)."⁴ This led to the production of their infographic 'Fair Share' which explores decarbonising initiatives both domestically and internationally.

However, while this research looks at responsibility for leading to the climate crisis through the production of emissions, it does not take consumption into account. We cannot have a true picture of collective responsibility for the detrimental effects of climate change if we study emissions alone. 🚩

Rebalancing Our Carbon Budget

With this in mind, it is necessary that the 175 signatories of the Paris Agreement should be doing more to look at consumption and rebalancing our carbon budget goals.

Therefore, these goals should take the following three factors into account:

1. The total amount of carbon a country produces both directly and indirectly
2. The scale of the effects of climate change in that country
3. The countries' ability to develop resilience to those effects

This would then give us a truer picture of who is causing the most damage to the environment both at home and abroad. We would then be able to better plan for the future success of the Paris Agreement as we are seeking that international solution while also looking at factors such as financial resilience and infrastructure.

Taking the United Kingdom as an example, the proposed model would look like this:

1. We would seek out an independent research body such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to track carbon consumptions of all 175 countries. When the UK imports goods from other countries, the regulatory body would look at the carbon be-

ing produced in that country as a result of the UK paying for that service and apportion an amount of responsibility for that carbon to the UK.

This could be 0.02 tonnes, with the rest of the carbon produced going towards the country's emissions, for example 0.04 tonnes. We would then have a new 'carbon responsibility' total for each country and we could create the first of three scales – the Carbon Responsibility Scale. This would likely see more developed Western countries such as the UK at the top.

2. After the creation of the Carbon Responsibility Scale, the adverse effects of climate change on each country could then be reviewed and generate a report similar to the Climate Risk Index.

We know some of the worst effects to be flooding, damage to land and crops and therefore food insecurity as well as the destruction of homes. These problems vary in scale from country to country. If we look at the forest fires of Australia or the droughts in Kenya in 2018 that left more than a million people on the brink of famine, we can see that not all countries are affected equally.

We would look at recent and

historic patterns in weather and any unexplained, sudden changes which climate scientists believe to be linked to the amount of carbon being produced. This is the evidence we would use to create a Carbon Effects Scale, with those countries most affected at the top – which would likely be those in the global south, such as Myanmar and Pakistan.

3. Lastly, we would explore the resilience of each country in relation to climate change. So, if the United Kingdom were to experience extreme flooding which we have seen in recent months; how likely are we to be able to combat this issue? This research wouldn't look at what we have done in the past – for example if councils and devolved administrations haven't been allocated enough money from central government to develop flood defences, it doesn't mean that the UK doesn't have the ability to do so.

Where developing countries such as Uganda and Yemen may not have yet established sufficient flood defences, but may lack the GDP and infrastructure to do so, they would be less resilient than the UK who could easily allocate funds for this work. This measurement would be known as the Resilience Scale. 🇬🇧

A Global Partnership

Only when the three scales have been created and cross-referenced would we have a true picture of which countries have the most effect on climate change; along with which countries suffer the most. We would know with whom the responsibility for climate change sits, and what steps need to be taken to realign our carbon budgets and take ac-

tion to combat climate change globally.

If the research indicated that on balance, more developed Western countries were in the top 30% of countries more responsible, least affected, and most resilient; we would pair them with a country on the other end of the scale. This being those countries who were least responsible, most affected,

and least resilient to the effects of climate change. This would aim to offset the carbon of the more developed Western countries.

This could be done by the Western countries providing education on topics such as renewable energy, solar power, reusing rainwater or building for heavy weather; or this could be in the form of grants to companies who operate in climate



science in those countries such as producing wind farms or tidal plants.

Then, if these first countries want to produce goods in the second group of countries, it could be agreed that they needed to meet certain standards such as having at

least 50% of the energy in the factory be renewable or 50% of lights to use LED/energy saving bulbs.

For this system to work effectively we need countries, starting with the 175 parties of the Paris Agreement to look at their consumption, not just their emissions, and take

responsibility. We need countries to look at who is causing the damage and who is being affected by it, who can make a difference to those countries and who is simply being taken advantage of in this situation. 🇬🇧

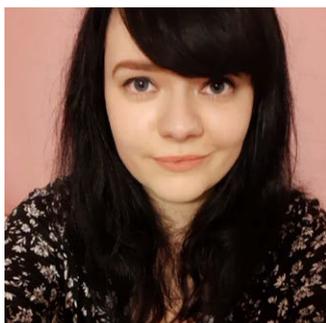
Why COP26?

COP26 aims to bring together countries from around the world to agree on a global solution to climate change, the scales mentioned here can be a part of that global solution. This would also serve to give a voice to those countries who may not dominate as much airtime, and ensure they

are getting the support needed to tackle extreme weather and hardship through collaboration with other more powerful countries.

This is not a simple problem and therefore taking into account our global consumption and emissions will not be a simple solution.

However, recommending as I have done here, that we use a three-scale model to assess our actions and consequences, I believe, is a vital step to balancing the scales of carbon usage internationally and reducing our detrimental effect on human life. 🇬🇧



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CLIMATE MIGRANTS: GAINING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT TO SHARE COSTS & ADAPT

By Alex Chitty

The international community's first climate duty is to devote its resources towards reducing emissions through decreasing polluting activities. The key focus of climate change policy is, and must remain, prevention. This is the only way to stop climate catastrophe.

However, the unhappy fact is that it is already too late to undo some of the harm that has been done. Some of the impacts of man-made climate change up to this point are already happening or are now

A Global Responsibility

We must acknowledge that there is an international shared responsibility to mitigate the impacts of climate change on these people who are being worst affected, and specifically to protect those who are forced by climate change to migrate.

The arguments for why we hold this responsibility are plentiful. We can look at the international community's duty to protect climate change migrants from a rights-based perspective, as part of each member

Missing Protections

The current glaring holes in international commitments to protecting climate migrants are rights protections for cross-border migrants and an economic commitment to alleviate the burden of regions which are disproportionately affected by climate change that forces internal migration.

Regarding rights protections for cross-border migrants, there is an

unavoidable and "locked-in". Sea level rises and increased rapid-onset climate events have been set in motion by and will continue to increase, as will droughts, regardless of how our behaviour changes now. These impacts fall under the category of 'loss and damage'; the negative effects of climate change that people have not been able to cope with or adapt to¹. Loss and damage can be large or small scale, but as the impacts of climate change escalate so too will the importance of debate around this

state's commitment to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights where they have pledged to promote the rights, not only of their own population but of all people⁴. Loss and damage have a direct impact on these established rights and so it is in the international community's duty to take action.

International responsibility also stems from the Polluter Pays principle which states that the polluter should bear the cost of pollution⁵. As developing countries and re-

equal international commitment from states to accepting migrants driven away by disaster. This was established in January 2020 by the UN Human Rights Committee, who set a precedent stating that countries may not deport immigrants who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right to life⁶.

However, this commitment does not go far enough. Although cli-

mate migrants will be accepted by countries when they are fleeing disaster, their lack of status means that they are at risk. Whilst those escaping conflict may be granted refugee status, at present there is no equivalent designation for those escaping natural disaster. The rights of climate-induced migrants should fundamentally be protected by State law in their new host state under the guidance of international

principle. It is within its scope that climate migrants fall. Climate migrants are people who, due to "sudden or progressive changes in the environment as a result of climate change that adversely affect their lives or living conditions", are forced to, or choose to leave their habitual homes, either temporarily or permanently. The World Bank estimates that by 2050, there will be 143 million climate migrants from the regions of Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia alone³. 🇳🇵

gions are the least polluting and yet most affected by loss and damage, those developing countries and regions have an obligation to pay the costs associated with climate migration.

There is a resounding moral argument that those who have done little or nothing to contribute to climate change must be protected from its worst effects by the international community. 🇳🇵

mate migrants will be accepted by countries when they are fleeing disaster, their lack of status means that they are at risk. Whilst those escaping conflict may be granted refugee status, at present there is no equivalent designation for those escaping natural disaster. The rights of climate-induced migrants should fundamentally be protected by State law in their new host state under the guidance of international

protocol⁷. Current international policy towards climate migrants is inadequate in that impacts of climate change do not only immediately

endanger their right to life, but also a plethora of other rights. A working international protocol on climate migrants would entitle them

to concrete rights in the same way as refugees from conflict are. 🇩🇪

Missing Support

The second area where international commitments do not go far enough is in terms of economic support for affected regions. Those being displaced by disaster and those seeking economic opportunity following the degradation of their agricultural economy follow a pattern of migration which overwhelmingly takes place internally, not cross-border. However, cross-border climate migration will increase alongside slow-onset events which impact larger areas, for example, low lying islands and territories. But even as these events increase it is likely that migrants will still follow a similar pattern in that they do not travel further than necessary, and so will mainly migrate into neighbouring countries where they may have existing relationships⁸.

At present the greatest impacts of climate change are on developing countries, and due to these

patterns of migration the greatest burden of the costs and practicalities of facilitating climate migrants also falls on developing countries and regions. The Asian Tsunami of 2004, for example, displaced over 400,000 people. Those people were largely not displaced to OECD countries. Instead the local region overwhelmingly bore the burden of displacement and that of providing for evacuees⁹. Therefore, although in theory there is an equal international commitment to accept climate migrants, for the vast majority of climate migrants this commitment does not come into play. The guiding principles on internal displacement mean that all states must facilitate climate migrants within their borders, but this is being put into practice far more often in certain regions¹⁰. Those states that are facilitating climate migrants need financial support to support these climate migrants

who have moved internally or into neighbouring states.

Furthermore, when climate migrants choose to migrate to limit the impact of climate change on them this does not just impact the individual that chooses to migrate but also those that remain and receive remittances for them after they migrate. This allows those remaining in impacted areas to divest from agriculture, mitigating the impacts of climate change on a wider community. Climate migration due to slow-onset events that make agricultural work unworkable drives a pattern of migration from rural areas to urban areas and urban economies need stimulation in order to provide work for climate migrants and thereby support both for themselves and for those left behind to whom they send remittances. 🇩🇪



Coronavirus: Fire to the Flame

This is especially pertinent in the light of COVID-19. Whilst there has been a great deal of research into the links between climate change and migration patterns, there now has to be a new consideration, as for the next few years these events and patterns will develop in the context of a pandemic and the knock-on effects of this on the international economy. The coronavirus pandemic opens an opportunity to build an interdependent international health and climate policy as it has exposed holes in migration policy and shown where we must build resilience against future pandemics as well as climate change.

The pandemic and climate change

each exacerbate the effect of the other on the lives of those impacted by both. Taking the case study of Bangladesh, those moving due to drought and salination in the Delta region move to Dhaka to work in the garment industry. Yet the pandemic may force these factories to close or they may close due to a drop in demand in the west due to lockdown measures enforced there. Putting these climate migrants out of work not only puts them in a precarious situation but also disrupts the flow of remittances back to the Delta region. This flow of remittances is an ad hoc climate adaptation strategy¹¹. There must be an international commitment to protecting this flow

of remittances through supporting jobs in urban economies or replacing this climate adaptation strategy with another.

This will pay the costs of building infrastructure for communities which must permanently migrate due to slow-onset events. This can only be carried out through the UN because this may take place internally or cross-border but will always be contained to the smallest possible radius for those escaping climate change events. Therefore, the financial commitment must be run through an international organisation which takes money from polluters and funnels it into regions or states which are in need. 🇳🇵

Time for Concrete Change

This must be introduced through the existent Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage. It acknowledges that "loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change includes, and in some cases involves more than, that which can be reduced by adaptation"¹². Its mandate involves many areas including improving coordination between stakeholders, enhancing knowledge and capacity-building¹³. However, it falls short of provisions for liability or for compensation for loss and damage. The Paris Agreement upheld the Warsaw Mechanism but states that this is only on the basis that it "does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation"¹⁴.

This simply is not good enough. At COP26 the Warsaw Mechanism must be upheld and it must be updated to involve both liability and compensation for Loss and Damage. However, the liability and compensation must be taken on based on the polluter-pays principle. This principle must also be broad

in scope. It is not good enough to base calculations off production of CO2 within borders. It must take account of all greenhouse gases being produced and of importation and exportation of product.

Liability and compensation must take the form of concrete financial commitments. Contributions must be collected in a pot to be appropriated by the UN, IMF or World Bank. It must be allocated at a regional and state level for displacement aid due to rapid-onset events and also for medium- and long-term relocation of communities, as would be required of island nations due to sea-level rise. It must also be used for climate migrants who have migrated with agency due to slow-onset events. Climate migrants need income and the communities they leave behind need the flow of remittances to survive. By providing them with work on climate adaptation infrastructure building this protects them as urban economies are set to collapse due to the pandemic. Existing UN work on adaptation strategy must

prioritise awarding work to those at risk of loss and damage.

This pot must be funnelled down to the individual, household and community level. It must be used to protect and support those support services for the people trapped without the means to migrate to avoid climate change induced events as well as those who have migrated to urban slums, facing social and economic deprivation and discrimination. In both circumstances their right to livelihoods and economic well-being are at stake, and so need support for their socioeconomic development.

In conclusion, COP26 is an opportunity for the international community to address the two glaring holes in the protection of climate migrants. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the global lack of preparedness and resilience in the face of disaster. Through learning the lessons from this we can prepare for the unavoidable growth in climate migration. The UNCFCC must address this through two channels. The first is through bol-

stering human rights legislation for climate migrants by expanding the rights of cross-border climate migrants, allowing them to claim refugee status. The second is through the expansion of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. It must be updated to involve both liability and

compensation for loss and damage based on the polluter-pays principle. It is only through concrete legal and financial commitment from UN member states that we will protect climate migrants of the present and future. The two channels must be implemented together so that the burden does not fall on the

regions which are worst hit by climate change, where cross-border migration will be taking place, without support in the form of financial aid from member states in other regions. 🇩🇪

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OPEN-SOURCE SOLUTIONS TO FIGHT DEFORESTATION

By Sebastian Castedo

We need to focus on conserving the forests that we already have before attempting to replant on a grand scale. The key to conserving the planet's forests is to be able to hold countries, law enforcement and companies to account. Using open-source data and satellite technology, we can fight this environmental destruction.

Forests are an essential part of our planet, providing a host of environmental and social services. Nearly 1.6 billion people depend on the world's four billion hectares of forest for their livelihoods¹. The benefits of conserving forests are wide reaching not only for the people dependent on it for income but also for the health of the planet. However, forests are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate with around 314 million hectares of tree cover lost between 2001

and 2015². Without a concerted effort to curb deforestation in the world, neither the UN Sustainable Development Goals nor the Paris Agreement targets are likely to be reached.

The positive news is that there are ongoing efforts internationally to try and tackle the issue: The UK along with many countries have launched initiatives aimed at boosting tree planting; £50 million was put aside to plant 11 million trees by 2022³ and a "northern forest" project to plant 50 million trees has been launched⁴. It has even turned into a bit of a cultural movement when in response to the 2019 Amazon fires, a Youtuber who goes by the name of "Mr Beast", started an internet campaign that got the likes of Elon Musk and several large Youtubers to crowdfund the planting of 20 million trees.

Well-planned tree planting projects have an important role to play, however, problems arise when tree planting is promoted to the detriment of more holistic solutions. Tree planting is not a silver bullet and initiatives addressing the main drivers of environmental degradation must be prioritised⁵. In the aftermath of the 2019 Amazon fires, media attention rarely focussed on why forests are being lost. Instead, it led to one-dimensional approaches such as the World Economic Forum's promise to plant one trillion trees within a decade⁶.

There is merit in reforesting parts of the UK, but our attention should be broader and redirected towards protecting standing forests in tropical regions. 🇬🇧

Our Focus is Wrong

The scientific consensus suggests that we should first focus on protecting standing forests and only then consider restoring forests. Reforesting initiatives are only truly useful when a country has its deforestation under control, as is the case with Costa Rica and Vietnam. Unfortunately, the fact is that today 72 out of 100 tropical countries are still in phases of rapid deforestation and require our

protection⁷. That is why proposing one size fits all solutions like 'we need to plant x number of trees in the UK' should be avoided.

It should also be noted that not all forests are created equal. The three great tropical rainforests of the Amazon, Congo Basin and Indonesia are vital to the planet's survival. They contain 30 million plant and animal species and are instrumental in the purification of

air and water systems worldwide⁸. Although reforesting temperate forests (like those found in the UK) offer several benefits, their value compared to that of a rainforest is very small; reforesting in tropical areas is around three times more effective at reducing warming than in colder climates⁹. If we want to tackle deforestation, we need to shift our focus from temperate to tropical forests. 🇬🇧

Causes of Deforestation

The main cause of tropical deforestation is expansionist and extractive commodity production: 73% of deforestation worldwide is caused by agriculture, with commercial agriculture alone accounting for 40%. Other drivers include mining (7%), infrastructure (10%) and urban expansion (10%)⁷. Deforestation is primarily the result of clearing land for commodities such as palm oil, soy, beef, and paper which require large amounts of open land.

Although some blame needs to be placed on the governments of Brazil, Indonesia and Congo for inaction and poor policy choices,

we have to come to terms with the fact that the majority of deforestation is being carried out by large multinational commercial actors for the consumption of international markets. The western world is far from innocent in tropical deforestation and for real change to happen, a concerted international effort is needed.

At the core of the western world lies a system obsessed with uninhibited economic growth. Current levels of deforestation are a consequence of a system that treats nature as an unlimited resource which one can endlessly exploit. A study from 2000 reports that one

half to three quarters of industrial inputs returned to the environment as waste within a year¹⁰. We can improve some aspects of the current system, but in the end, the destruction will continue unless we transition the economy away from capital interests to a world where people and planet live in harmony.

Now, proposing a “transition to socialism” at the next COP in Glasgow is unlikely to be productive. But there are steps that we can take today to minimise and curtail some of the worst excesses that this system creates. 🚩

Solutions to Protect Tropical Forests

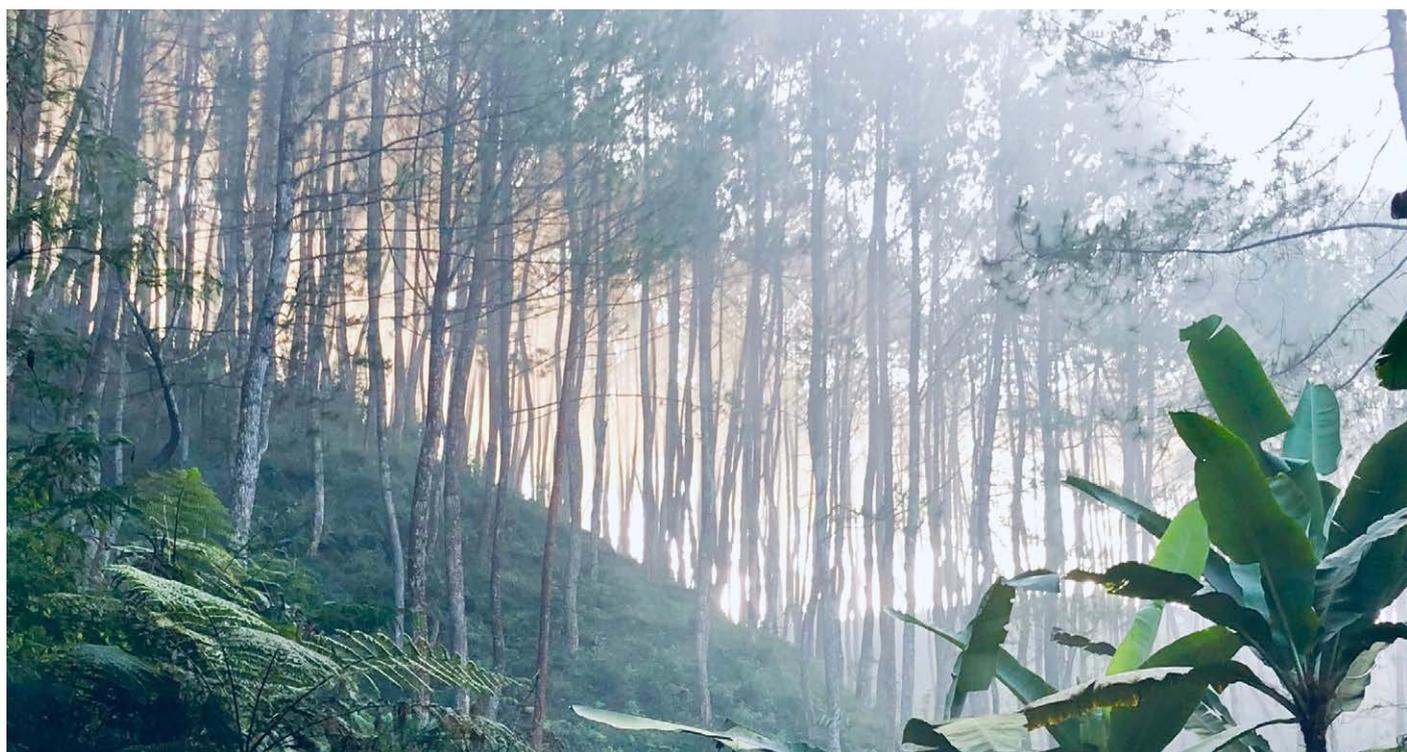
So, how can the international community come together and tackle this? Since clearing for commodity production is the largest cause of tropical deforestation there is widespread agreement that the following solutions all have an important role to play^{2 11}:

First, we must implement policies to protect more forests. Policies

which have been shown to achieve this include expanding protected areas like national parks, giving more land to indigenous communities, and adopting moratoria on forest conversion. Examples of this can be seen in Indonesia’s Moratorium on Forestry¹² and Brazil’s ‘Amazon Region Protected Areas’¹³.

Second, we must introduce finan-

cial incentives for local farmers and companies to produce more sustainably and reduce the economic incentives for forest conversion. This can be done through the expansion of initiatives like the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) scheme and removing counter-productive agricultural subsidies. 🚩



Current Solutions do Not Work Because of the Lack of Data; Open-Source Would Solve This

The challenge with these policies, however, is that although they may exist, they are not working as they should. Most countries on the frontier of forest conservation, such as Brazil and Indonesia already have financing measures, forest codes and areas of protected land in place. Yet a crippling lack of resources, lax enforcement, and corruption, mean that these measures often are not effective. In Indonesia, despite a ban on forestry, the rate of deforestation in the country doubled in the 2000s¹⁴.

The Open-Source Solution

An open-source, accessible database on the world's forests would combat the lack of verifiable information. Open-source data refers to information that anyone can use, access, or distribute without any mechanisms of control or “owners” – think Wikipedia. Data on forests has traditionally been within the domain of governments, who control and often restrict access to that data. A free, open-source system, on the other hand, allows information to be accessed by individuals, the media, NGO's, and universities, as well as the governments themselves.

An open-source platform allows much of the currently held data on forests to be utilised. It usually takes institutions like the UN and national governments several years to turn their data into a usable resource (the UN's Global Forest Resources Assessment is only published every five years¹⁶) because it takes time for even well-funded departments to validate their data. By the time it is published, the data is usually out of date. The power of an open-source model is that it allows anyone to verify the data, meaning that information would be published practically in real time. And whilst the data can never be

Governments are often incapable of upholding the very laws they enact.

Partly to blame is a lack of information for NGOs and international organisations to use to hold governments accountable. Current efforts to protect the forest are not effective because the areas which have the most valuable forests (Amazon, Congo Basin, and Indonesia) also have the weakest institutions and high levels of corruption – resulting in poor enforcement of regulations,

completely verified, the open-source nature means that the data becomes democratic, constantly cross checked and arguably more reliable as it relies on multiple sources instead of just one.

Not only is open-source data democratic and fast, it also tackles challenges related to capacity; forests cover four billion hectares of the surface of the world and government agencies have limited ability to monitor. With open-source data, anyone with an internet connection can access and contribute, massively increasing the scale of available data.

One of the most promising open-source data solutions is Global Forest Watch (GFW): a free, online forest monitoring and alert system that uses the Google Earth engine to provide interactive maps, forest statistics and infographics¹⁷. It uses satellites to monitor forest cover from above and ground-level data is provided by anyone from a local farmer to a university.

Global Forest Watch has the potential to hold governments accountable and gives local governments the information they need to enforce laws. National governments can target their law enforcement

as well as under-resourced monitoring mechanisms. Weak institutions cannot stand up to corruption due to a lack of transparency and a lack of data. Governments are often reluctant to publish national data on forest stocks, agricultural permits, and the location of new industrial sites for fear this information will be used against them. Reports from the Environmental Democracy Index show that most countries do not require the release of environmental information to the public¹⁵. 🇵🇪

efforts by opting to receive alerts on illegal deforestation in near real time. Completely transparent open-source data means that there is no longer the secrecy surrounding what a government is doing. Global Forest Watch is also a helpful tool for governments when implementing sustainability programmes. The information provided by GFW is helping to improve the moratorium on new forest concessions in Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo is using GFW to determine “deforestation taxes.”¹⁸.

Data from GFW has been cited in over 1500 stories on deforestation. In this way, GFW's data has allowed NGOs to target their campaigns more effectively with access to more and better data. Journalists can demand accountability from private enterprises and governments: in Peru, two journalists used Global Forest Watch to find a clearing in a protected rainforest that was later identified to have been caused by United Cacao. Exposure from this story stopped the forest clearing and the company was later delisted from the FTSE stock exchange¹⁹.

Finally, since commercial agri-



culture is responsible for 40% of deforestation, it is vital to co-operate with the private sector. Fortunately, many companies have come up with corporate sustainability goals to make sure they become deforestation free. Glob-

al Forest Watch provides special dashboards that give companies detailed information so they can ensure their supply chains are clean. Business managers who buy commodities can also use GFW to see if suppliers are clearing the for-

ests that they promised to protect. Examples of use in the private sector include the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil and pulp/paper firms APP and APRIL¹⁸. 🇩🇪

Next Steps

Notwithstanding its promise, **Global Forest Watch is an underused and under-resourced tool.** To unleash their potential, open-source solutions such as GFW should be scaled up and democratized further. COP26 in Glasgow is the moment to set in motion an expansion of the open-source model.

The more information we make available on these open-source repositories, the better they will work. The leading countries in satellite imagery should add their data to a global open-access database mirroring the US Geological Survey's

release of its Landsat archives to the public. It is also necessary for satellite capable countries to establish standard imaging specifications and co-ordinate complementary satellite launches to ensure continuous coverage of our forests²⁰.

Governments who do not have satellite capabilities should release more surface level data such as information on land planning and biodiversity change. This ground level data is just as vital and will help these systems provide a better understanding of realities on the ground. We must increase interna-

tional pressure on countries to be more open and transparent with their data and COP resolutions could be a way to facilitate this. Similarly, there should be more pressure on companies to release detailed maps of production areas and government allocated land to commit businesses to sustainable supply chains.

At COP, the UK should propose a resolution, for all attending nations to sign, to commit to increasing the use of open-source data and providing the necessary funding to enable this expansion. 🇩🇪

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THE RISE OF ECO-FASCISM: THE ENVIRONMENTAL CASE FOR TAKING A TOUGHER STANCE AGAINST ONLINE HATE

By Louis Dean

Eco-Fascism: Ideology, Manifestations & Origin

Eco-fascism is the ecological wing of the contemporary 'Alt-Right', a term coined by prominent white nationalist and Neo-Nazi Richard Spencer to articulate a loose set of extreme-right ideals centred on white identity and the preservation of western civilisation¹.

Of growing prominence in North America, Europe, Scandinavia, Australia and New Zealand, eco-fascism is a combination of these white nationalist beliefs, held within a "growing acceptance, of the unavoidable reality of climate change and economic degradation" especially among young people². The core tenant of the ideology is a Neo-Malthusian belief that

overpopulation, from 'developing' countries, is the leading cause of climate change, with immigration from these countries into the west causing, what white nationalists call, 'white genocide'. This is a conspiracy theory purporting that non-white immigration into the west is causing the death of the white race. In short they blame climate change on ethnic and religious minorities, specifically Muslims, Jews, people of colour, and the left more broadly.

In March 2019 self-proclaimed eco-fascist Brenton Tarrant, dubbed the 'Christchurch shooter', massacred 49 Muslim worshipers in Christchurch, New Zealand. Prior to the attack he also published a

manifesto online proclaiming "I am an Ethno-nationalist Eco-fascist. Ethnic autonomy for all peoples with a focus on the preservation of nature and the natural order"³. Just five months later in August of 2019 Patrick Crusius, the 'El Paso shooter' killed 23 people, predominantly Latino, also positing a political manifesto to the online forum 8chan stating; "There is no Green future with never ending population growth, the ideal green world cannot exist in a World of 100 billion, 50 billion, or even ten billion people. Continued immigration into Europe is environmental warfare and ultimately destructive to nature itself."⁴ 🇺🇸

Growth

The growth of eco-fascism follows more broadly the recent growth of the far-right globally. Yet specifically this ecological component can be attributed to the general consensus amongst the vast majority of young people that climate change is real and is a global threat. In addition to this belief is the disillusionment that young people have in the current structures, global institutions and in short, liberal democracy to effectively deal with the climate crisis. This disillusionment is not unfounded with greenhouse gases continuing to rise, now over 60% above 1994 levels⁵. This growth

is in spite of countless protocols and world summits pledging to tackle climate change over the last 30 years. This generational divide over the climate crisis is also beginning to appear in far-right circles. The rift is evident in the youth wing of Germany's far-right 'Alternative for Germany' party, who has called on the party to rethink its climate scepticism over fears it will lead to loss of support amongst youth. The youth wing also suggested the national outfit back a one child policy in developing countries to "counter one of the greatest climate problems, overpopulation."⁶

It is therefore of paramount importance that states at COP26 collectively realise the threat of this ideology. In addition, it is crucial that those at COP acknowledge their previous failings and inaction are largely responsible for its growth, and should strive to take accountability for the manifestations of these failings. In a warning of the continued rise of eco-fascism Blair Taylor, Program Director of the Institute for Social Ecology states, "as social and ecological crises continue to deepen, and with few emancipatory political alternatives in sight alt-right ecology is likely to keep growing."⁷ 🇺🇸



The Role of Social Media

Any meaningful attempt to counter this ideology must focus efforts on where it is spreading, online. In addition to a common ideology, the terrorists mentioned above were all radicalised online, primarily through social media sites. On social media they would consume propaganda and conspiracy theories, while all being reinforced through their interactions with the wider alt-right online community.

A recent report from the Community Security Trust (CST) titled 'Hate Fuel: the hidden online world fuelling far right terror' provides a comprehensive analysis of contemporary far-right online activity.

The 62-page report highlights how extreme right wing groups are utilising smaller, less established, social media sites to radicalise and recruit, with the report exposing the content on their online networks message boards. The report focuses on social media sites where these online networks are prevalent namely Gab, Telegram, BitChute and 4chan. Some of the most extreme findings from these sites were videos showing and glorifying the live streaming of the Christchurch attack and several videos made by or in support of the neo-Nazi terrorist group National Action. The report concludes that there exists a "global network of vi-

olent Neo-Nazis" which is "fuelling terrorism by sharing vast quantities of easily accessible, extreme and violent images and posts on social media platforms."⁸

Therefore, to tackle the rise of eco-fascism, the solution must be to eradicate these far-right online networks. Governments at COP26 must take accountability and embrace a multilateral and bold approach that requires taking a holistic view to the consequences of the climate crisis, one which acknowledges the political, cultural and radicalising impact it is having in fuelling far-right attacks across the world. 🇩🇪

Current Social Media Regulation

The country at the forefront of tackling online extremism is undoubtedly Germany with NetzDG, or the Network Enforcement Act. Passed in 2017, the legislation, which covers social media networks and media sites with more than two million members, obliges these networks to publish bi-annual reports if one hundred or more complaints are received, with fines of up to €50million for violations of the act including the negligent or intentional violation of

its obligations. Twitter has 50 staff who exclusively work on processing NetzDG complaints, with Facebook having 65 and YouTube 100 who work exclusively on NetzDG complaints⁹.

However, while the NetzDG act is a crucial step, multiple inefficiencies still exist which greatly reduces the act's ability to be effective. Firstly, the scope of the NetzDG is too narrow, not including smaller platforms which, as the Hate Fuel

report highlights, is where the far-right are predominantly operating. In addition, those in far-right online circles have become adept at using coded language to shroud their white supremacist beliefs proving extremely difficult for moderators and automated flagging programmes to recognise. Lastly, to tackle such a transnational issue isolated state efforts have to give way to global or at least regional, solutions.

Solutions: Multilateral Effort

Regulation must be a multilateral effort. One of the conclusions from CST's Hate Fuel report is that due to far-right radicalisation posing a global threat "government's law enforcement and technology platforms must cooperate internationally to combat the propaganda that fuels it."¹⁰ Governments at COP26 therefore must

all pledge, in a combined effort, to take steps which will effectively tackle the spread of far-right material online. The European Union has already realised the importance of a multilateral effort to fight against the far right online. In 2019 the EU Internet Forum committed to an EU Crisis Protocol, to allow member states and online platforms to

form a rapid response to contain the viral spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online¹¹. Governments at COP26 should look to this model to establish a coordinated and multilateral effort to tackle the far-right online networks. 🚩

Human Moderators

Another key solution is to extensively employ human moderators who have a deep and contemporary understating of far-right online activity. Yet while this may take some time, an initial step for governments at COP should be to ensure that social media companies are engaging and utilising civil and human rights organisations to assist in the flagging and monitoring of problematic content.

Many of these organisations such as The Anti-Defamation League

and the Southern Poverty Law Centre already have an extensive knowledge of far-right online activity and their expertise in extremism and online hate will prove useful.

However, for this approach to then be expanded, large scale employment of moderators with specialised training is crucial. There needs to be a large network of moderators who are provided with comprehensive and tailored training programmes which specialise in the language, imagery, and ac-

tivity of far-right groups online. On the issue of training moderators, the Centre for American Progress states that the training needs to be created and administered by those who have an "expertise on hate, such as those who have peer-reviewed publications and solid academic credentials"¹². Employing a vast network of well-trained human moderators is at the heart of any successful social media regulation. 🚩

Apply to All Social Media Platforms

To be effective, regulation must apply to all social media platforms, no matter how small. As shown from CST's Hate Fuel report it is the smaller social media sites such as Gab and BitChute where the majority of far-right material is being circulated. Examples of how to introduce regulation to platforms outside of the big three (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) can be tak-

en from the NetzDG act. For social media companies with annual revenues of approximately 500,000 euros the expense of implementing NetzDG was only 1% of the site's total revenue, expelling the myth that regulation and red tape would financially cripple new start up social media platforms¹³ The importance of regulating smaller social media sites at a time when

there is an exodus of users from traditional sites is illustrated by Julia Ebner in the book 'Post-Digital Cultures of the Far-Right' where she states that "these virtual migration streams demonstrate that a static, linear perspective will fail to reflect the changes in the fast-paced online universe of far-right extremists"¹⁴. 🚩

Utilising 'Hash Technology'

Another crucial step to identify and eliminate eco-fascist material would be for all social media sites to utilise and develop 'hash technology' to quickly identify and take down content. 'Hash technology' is used by mainstream social media sites such as Facebook who, in the aftermath of the Christchurch shooting, used the technology to block around 1.2 million videos of the shooting being uploaded to its platform¹⁵.

Conclusion

The impact of the climate crisis is being felt across the globe and as the rise of eco-fascism shows, in ways which conventional thinking on climate change has not anticipated. Decades of inaction and the previous failings of international agreements has produced a con-

text where an eco-fascist ideology has grown, facilitating devastating far-right terrorist attacks. Therefore, COP26 must realise this threat, the part they have played in allowing it to spread and embrace innovative solutions to combat it. These innovative solutions must be

database, it will instantly alert the platform and be taken down swiftly. Governments at COP should insist that the use of 'Hash technology' to flag extremist material be made a mandatory practise of all social media sites. It would allow smaller sites to utilise existing databases such as from (GIFCT) to quickly flag and takedown the harmful content.

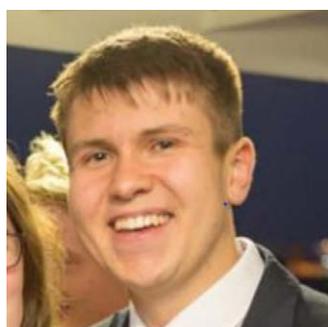


focused where the radicalisation is occurring, online. Governments at COP26 therefore should pledge to take multilateral action, assisting all social media sites in becoming safer platforms for their users, by taking a tougher stance against the spread of far-right material.



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CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY

YOUNG FABIANS ENVIRONMENT NETWORK COP26 REPORT

Revealing How to Improve Transparency, Assign Responsibility & Implement Science-Backed Solutions to Solve the Climate Crisis

