

## POV6 – Point of View #6 - [Saving Our Planet](#)



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### **10 ways for UNFCCC to drive CO2 reductions**

The global environmental and climate emergency is being recognized with declarations made by countries, cities and districts across the world.

The upcoming UNFCCC Climate Action Summit 2019 in New York on 23 September 2019 provides a critically important opportunity to discuss and agree an increased level of ambition and collaboration. In this 6<sup>th</sup> and latest Point of View, Saving Our Planet proposes 10 practical ways for the UNFCCC to drive reductions in CO2 emissions.

#### **Saving Our Planet**

Established in 2016, Saving Our Planet is an International NGO with the mission to inspire and enable people to work together to save our planet from climate degradation. Honorary Members are George Monbiot who writes for The Guardian and Brice Lalonde who was French Minister of Environment 1988-1992 under President Mitterrand.

#### **1-How to persuade all countries to commit to Net Zero GHG by 2050?**

Now the UK and France have committed to Net Zero Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG's) by 2050, all eyes are on how the UNFCCC can persuade the rest of the countries to do the same. Indications are that all but 3 of the other 27 EU countries are willing to commit to Net Zero by 2050. In addition, another 17 countries are part of the Carbon Neutrality Coalition who should also be willing to commit.

The opportunity in New York is for the UNFCCC - plus the countries who have committed and those who are willing to commit - to work 1:1 to get a commitment from

other countries. The G19 are a good starting point, because at the G20 meeting in Osaka in June 2019, 19 nations re-affirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement.

## **2-How to get ALL to take action on the Climate Emergency?**

It's an emergency. So it's an opportunity for the UNFCCC to convince ALL parties to address the climate emergency with actions and incentives calculated to reduce GHGs. This must include not only national governments, but also local government, businesses, non-government organizations, communities and individuals.

## **3-How to Stop Burning Fossil Fuels?**

Given that fossil fuels account for the vast majority of CO2 emissions, the UNFCCC must insist on a global fossil fuel reduction program with year-on-year decreasing use, starting immediately, with an end-date to stop burning fossil fuels altogether.

## **4-Why do we need to Explore for Oil and Gas?**

Despite the need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, oil and gas companies are still planning huge amounts of money on oil and gas exploration. For example, BP plans to spend £41bn over the next 10 years [Source: Guardian 22 Jun19].

The UNFCCC should promote a global ban on oil exploration. In particular, exploration in the Arctic and Antarctic should cease immediately because of the risk to these uniquely pristine environments. Everywhere else, the UNFCCC in conjunction with national governments, should seek to ban all exploration for new oil and gas. Instead, the UNFCCC should seek to encourage oil and gas companies to invest their efforts in low-carbon energy.

Also, the UNFCCC should encourage national governments to replace current subsidies for oil and gas with incentives for low-carbon energy.

## **5-Time now to introduce Carbon Pricing?**

CO2 levels are continuing to rise. Global financial disincentives are necessary for coal, oil, and gas. The obvious place to impose carbon pricing is at source, specifically, at the point in which the fossil fuels are taken from the ground.

Instead of countries implementing Carbon Pricing on their own, or in groups, it makes more sense for the UNFCCC to put forward a global scheme and encourage as many countries as possible to implement it. Proposals for a Carbon Fee and Dividend by CCL have been around for about 10 years. Now, it's urgent to implement this or a similar scheme as widely as possible.

At the New York meeting, the UNFCCC should also strongly encourage businesses to implement Internal Carbon Pricing. This is very low cost, available immediately, and is supported by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). We recommend the following pricing per Tonne of CO2e emissions:

- \$50 up to 2020
- \$100 up to 2025
- \$200 up to 2030
- \$400 up to 2040
- \$1600 up to 2050

**6-How to Stop Coal?**

Much stronger encouragement is needed to close down existing Coal fired power stations – if necessary, with financial incentives to switch to other energy sources. As requested by the [#ExitCoalNow](#) petition ([bit.ly/ExitCoalNow](http://bit.ly/ExitCoalNow)), the UNFCCC needs to propose alternatives and incentives to shut down existing coal fired power stations and build no new ones. This needs to be explicitly stated and committed to by all Parties, as soon as COP25, as part of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action: <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/marrakech-partnership-for-global-climate-action>

**7-How to Stop Deforestation?**

Deforestation poses a great risk to the planet and no means to stop it have been found yet. The UNFCCC must redouble efforts to stop deforestation, with the help of every nation which is serious about achieving Net Zero GHG emissions.

**8-How to Encourage Tree-Planting on a Massive scale?**

Recently there has been much press about the potential for massive scale tree planting to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Such tree planting is best accomplished on a national government level. However, individuals can also act responsibly to fund tree-planting to compensate for their own CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. See for example [www.n0co2.org](http://www.n0co2.org) The UNFCCC should encourage a) Government-sponsored tree planting targets within every country, b) Government financial contributions to tree-planting to other countries where it is most efficiently done, and c) Drive match funding schemes which seeks to bring in private finance to encourage global wide-spread individual contributions as well.

**9-How to Encourage a Plant-Based diet?**

Methane and other GHGs from animal farming pose a substantial threat to the environment. In addition, animal farming is land-intensive compared to feeding the planet directly with plant proteins. Accordingly, the UNFCCC should work with member nations to develop a strategy to encourage demand to switch away from meat from animals, and at the same time to reduce supply by using the available space and food sources on the planet more efficiently.

**10-How to provide Backup for Wind and Solar Energy?**

With the growing use of wind and solar in Northern Europe has also come the realization about the need to deal with their intermittency caused by consecutive windless, cloudy or sunless winter days. Wind and Solar comprised around 21% of UK electricity generation in 2018. <sup>[1]</sup> While in Germany in 2018 Wind and Solar comprised around 29% of electricity generation. <sup>[2]</sup>

As a result, people are now coming to understand that wind and solar have to be used in conjunction with backup, and that batteries have nowhere near the required capacity. As a result, backup is required from energy sources which are continuously available – currently oil, gas, coal, and nuclear. <sup>[3]</sup>

But the need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions means progressively shutting down coal, oil and gas – which will leave only nuclear power, because its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are so much lower than any other energy sources, as a continuously available backup energy source. Hydropower can help, wherever available, but is not widely available and will

become less reliable because of climate change. It's time for all to weigh up this binary choice:

- Either continue to burn fossil fuels and cause global warming to go over 1.5C, which will cause untold damage to the planet and continue to kill hundreds of thousands of people each year from pollution <sup>[4]</sup>
- Or, build more of the newest and latest nuclear power plants, which have only a very low risk. For instance: China is already acting on this, because its planning to open over 8 nuclear reactors a year and to have more nuclear power plants even than the USA. Source: <https://www.power-technology.com/features/future-of-nuclear-china/>

**The UNFCCC must also draw attention to critical aspects of the way in which Governments must implement CO2 reductions**, without which the overall climate project will fail:

- a) Governments must ensure that all new laws and projects are compatible with a low carbon transition. Before new laws are approved, they must be evaluated for their compatibility with the overall task of reducing GHG.
- b) Low carbon transitions can cause major social changes. Governments must be sensitive to these changes and include measures to ensure their public acceptability.
- c) Sadly, what we've seen is that many actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gasses bring few results – for example because measures to reduce CO2 emissions many not translate into real reductions in the use of fossil fuels. Governments must systematically evaluate the impacts of their measures on the emissions of greenhouse gasses, to ensure that the results of their political decisions are aligned with their goals.
- d) The UNFCCC must also encourage governments to support breakthrough technologies including clean energy and CO2 removal, to encompass research, development, demonstration and deployment.

## References:

[1]

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/791297/Press\\_Note\\_March\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791297/Press_Note_March_2019.pdf)

[2] ([https://www.energy-charts.de/energy\\_pie.htm?year=2018](https://www.energy-charts.de/energy_pie.htm?year=2018))

[3] <https://jancovici.com/en/energy-transition/renewables/100-renewable-electricity-at-no-extra-cost-a-piece-of-cake/>

[4] <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2012/06/10/energys-deathprint-a-price-always-paid/#702e6bbe709b>

## About Saving Our Planet

Saving Our Planet is an International NGO registered in France as Charity Number W751235109. See [www.savingourplanet.net](http://www.savingourplanet.net)

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31 July 2019 <sup>[17]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>