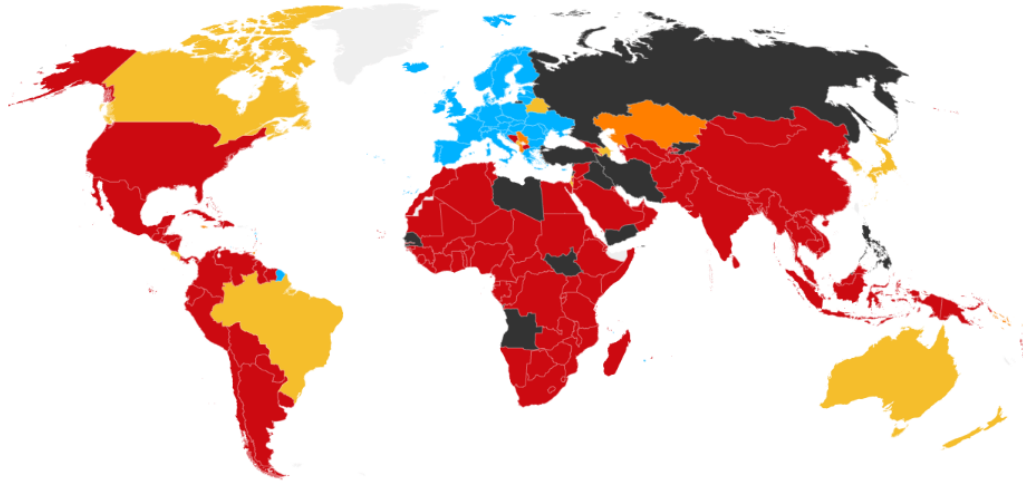


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Three-quarters of Paris agreement commitments are insufficient to tackle climate change, say experts

● Sufficient - emission reductions of 40%+ ● Partially sufficient 20-40%
● Partially insufficient 0-20% ● Insufficient No emission reduction target ● No commitment ● No data



Guardian graphic. Source: Universal Ecological Fund, The truth behind the climate pledges

8 Critical Actions for Climate Emergency Leaders

Critical action is needed to reduce CO₂ emissions. By 2030, instead of CO₂ emissions reducing by 45%, CO₂ emissions are on track to INCREASE by 10.7% according to the UNFCCC's own report^[1], whereas greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by 50% by 2030 in order to keep global warming below 1.5°C, according to a November 2019 report by the Universal Ecological Fund. ^[2] Also many countries still have no emissions reduction target – shown red in the above graphic.

Nevertheless, some progress was made at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019. Highlights include: 77 countries have now made a commitment to Net Zero CO₂ emissions by 2050. Russia signed the Paris Agreement. Pakistan committed to plant 10 billion trees, and China set a target of increasing forest stock to levels which would store about 4% of its current CO₂ emissions by 2030.

This 7th and latest Point of View from Saving Our Planet looks at 8 critical actions which climate emergency leaders need to take now if we are to stop global warming.

1-Choose to stop global warming?

Most people now are aware of global warming and its associated threats from sea level rise, droughts, floods, ever stronger hurricanes, crop failures and food shortages, and climate refugees and social unrest. Despite hearing the facts, too many people remain complacent. It's time for people to choose: Continue as we are now and wreck the planet and with it the future of our children, and our wildlife? Or choose to stop global warming?

Clear and consistent communication is required to inform people there's an urgent need to stop fossil fuel emissions, it's not too late to make the changes necessary to meet the Paris Agreement goals, and what people need to do to help.

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2-Embrace and enforce carbon budget commitments

Climate Leaders need to focus on the global carbon budget associated with the 1.5°C temperature goal, and insist on answers to questions such as:

- 77 countries have committed to Net Zero GHG emissions by 2050. What incentives can be provided to encourage more countries to commit to a leaner carbon budget?
- How will a target of 50% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 be achieved by individuals, by communities and local government?
- When are Governments going to reduce fossil fuel subsidies and tax breaks which encourage fossil fuel use? Because these conflict with the urgent necessity of reducing GHG emissions. The IMF has estimated that government subsidies to fossil fuels amount to roughly \$5 trillion a year.

3-Decarbonise electricity generation

About 80% of the world's energy is produced by burning fossil fuels - coal, petroleum and natural gas. All of these emit CO₂, the greenhouse gas which is largely responsible for the climate emergency. Global demand for energy is rising with increasing population and pressure for higher living standards. Energy demand worldwide grew by 2.3% in 2018. So the top-priority challenge is: How to increase global energy production while driving down the use of fossil fuels?

- During 2019 support has increased for the view that if we are to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, then nuclear energy is essential – the OPEC Chair and heads of the IEA and OECD have all spoken out in favour of nuclear energy. Then on 29 November 2019, this resolution was adopted: the European Parliament "believes that nuclear energy can play a role in meeting climate objectives because it does not emit greenhouse gases, and can also ensure a significant share of electricity production in Europe."^[3]
- It's time to choose: to accept a low level of risk from the latest generation nuclear power, or to face the certainty of significant additional damage to our planet because global warming increases above 2C. China has made its choice and plans to open over new 8 nuclear reactors a year. ^[4]
- For the same reason, we must continue to use and also extend the life of current nuclear power stations.
- Nuclear energy already plays a key part in IPCC plans to limit global warming to 1.5°C. In a report dated October 2018, the IPCC featured four model pathways for limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the threshold at which most experts believe the worst impacts from climate change can still be avoided. All four model pathways include increases in nuclear power generation by 2050, ranging between 59% and 501%. It's time for governments, media and environmental NGOs to promote science-based understanding of the issues and combat irrational prejudices against nuclear power.
- Meanwhile, coal – which is around 5 times most polluting than gas – still supplies a third of all energy used worldwide and makes up 38% of electricity generation, according to the IEA. We invite all to support the petition Exit Coal Now from Saving Our Planet, on www.exitcoalnow.org

4-Stop burning fossil fuels: carbon pricing

We know we need to stop burning fossil fuels. Increasing their price and decreasing their convenience would help.

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- Economists generally agree that carbon pricing is the most efficient and effective way to curb climate change, with the least adverse effects on the economy. An example is Climate Income from Citizens' Climate Lobby.
- Air travel, international shipping, mining and construction should not be exempt from carbon taxes or pricing. All economic sectors should pay a price on GHG emissions, e.g. ClimateIncome.org , www.carbonpricingleadership.org/

5- Stop deforestation

Much more effort and new thinking needs to go into how to stop deforestation. We know that drivers for deforestation include poverty and prioritisation of business exploitation over forest conservation, with businesses exploiting and destroying forests by logging, mining and industrial scale farming. It's time to exercise more imagination as to what might be possible by better regulation, management and legal protection for forests, and enabling local people to earn more from keeping forest standing (e.g. agroforestry, ecotourism) than they would from clearing it.

6-Plant trees to remove 8% of global CO2 emissions

Planting trees is recognised by the IPCC as an important tool in the combat against climate change. According to Eden Reforestation, hundreds of billions of trees including mangroves could be planted in Madagascar alone.

Funding possibilities include using existing funding for climate mitigation, for aid, or for poverty relief. Governments might encourage contributions from big CO2-emitters like airlines, steel and concrete, as well as individuals, with fund matching schemes. Individuals can also compensate for their own CO2 footprint by donating to fund tree-planting, such as www.n0co2.org

7-Reduce meat and dairy farming – methane pricing?

Cattle and sheep emit significant amounts of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. A tax or charge on livestock proportionate to its environmental damage would encourage more planet-friendly diets.

8-Protect the natural environment

Many people over 50 have witnessed the loss of woods and wildlife habitats, due to building, roads, mining, or simply to cutting down trees. How can we continue to destroy the environment when the world is facing steep annual declines in numbers of bees, insects, habitats, wildlife and decline in quality of soil? Isn't it time to say NO to destruction of ancient woodland, habitats of animals, and lands of indigenous people? How to stop or find incentives to compensate the conversion of greenfield land?


Saving Our Planet

Established in 2016, Saving Our Planet is an International NGO, registered in France, Charity Number W751235109. Honorary Members are George Monbiot who writes for The Guardian and Brice Lalonde, who was French Minister of Environment 1988-1992.

Our mission is to inspire, energize and enable people the world over to work together to save the planet, and to convince World Leaders to make the fight against climate change their number one priority. See www.savingourplanet.net
Do you like our message? Then please support us, join us or help us.

Stephan Savarese, President, Saving Our Planet

Contact: info@savingourplanet.net

24 November 2019 

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REFERENCES

[1] A joint report by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UNFCCC to assess whether the Paris Agreement is working, titled “The Heat is On: Taking Stock of Global Climate Ambition,” was delivered before the UN Climate Action Summit in New York on 23 September 2019. Citing UNFCCC analysis, the report states that the world is on track for a rise in emissions of about 10.7% above 2016 levels by 2030, starkly at odds with the UN Secretary-General’s call for governments to come to the 2019 Climate Summit with pledges consistent with reducing global GHG emissions by 45% by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050, in order to meet the 1.5°C temperature goal.

[2] The November 2019 Universal Ecological Fund [report](#) “The Truth Behind the Climate Pledges” (“UEF 2019 Report”) addresses progress towards the Paris Agreement’s most ambitious goal of keeping global warming below 1.5°C (3.6° F) above pre-industrial levels. Meeting this goal would require reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally by 50 percent by 2030. The report ranks the countries’ commitment to reducing GHG emissions and identifies weaknesses in the voluntary pledges. Based on an analysis of current commitments to reduce emissions between 2020 and 2030, it concludes that almost 75% of the climate pledges are partially or totally insufficient to reduce GHG emissions by 50 percent by 2030. The report predicts that “Without massive changes and active leadership in the very near future, we could be living in a 1.5°C world in about a decade.”

[3] Nuclear energy can play a role in meeting climate objectives because it does not emit greenhouse gases,
<http://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Nuclear-part-of-climate-solution-says-European-Par>

See also:

- IPCC Head to Speak at International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/ipcc-head-to-speak-at-international-conference-on-climate-change-and-the-role-of-nuclear-power>
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- Net-Zero Carbon Dioxide Emissions By 2050 Requires A New Nuclear Power Plant Every Day, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rogerpielke/2019/09/30/net-zero-carbon-dioxide-emissions-by-2050-requires-a-new-nuclear-power-plant-every-day/#228342b035f7>

[4] Is China powering the future of nuclear?
<https://www.power-technology.com/features/future-of-nuclear-china/>

[5] Deforestation Is Accelerating, Despite Mounting Efforts to Protect Tropical Forests. What Are We Doing Wrong? <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/06/deforestation-accelerating-despite-mounting-efforts-protect-tropical-forests>