



# CLIMATE – NEWS

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## CLIMATE CHANGE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### NASA CLIMATE EXPERT MAKES PERSONAL APPEAL TO OBAMA

James Randerson, Science Correspondent

2 January, 2009 The Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jan/02/obama-climate-change-james-hansen>

One of the world's top climate scientists has written a personal new year appeal to Barack and Michelle Obama, warning of the "profound disconnect" between public policy on climate change and the magnitude of the problem.

With less than three weeks to go until Obama's inauguration, Professor **James Hansen**, who heads Nasa's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, asked the recently appointed White House science adviser Professor John Holdren to pass the missive directly to the president-elect. In it, he praises Obama's campaign rhetoric about "a planet in peril", but says that how the new president acts in office will be crucial. Hansen lambasts the current international approach of setting targets through "cap and trade" schemes as not up to the task. "This approach is ineffectual and not commensurate with the climate threat. It could waste another decade, locking in disastrous consequences for our planet and humanity," the letter from Hansen and his wife, Anniek, reads.

The letter will make uncomfortable reading for officials in 10 US states whose cap and trade mechanism - the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - got under way yesterday. The scheme is the first mandatory, market-based greenhouse gas reduction programme in the US. Hansen advocates a three-pronged attack on the climate problem. First, he wants a phasing out of coal-fired power stations - which he calls "factories of death" - that do not incorporate carbon capture. "Nobody realistically expects that the large readily available pools of oil and gas will be left in the ground. Caps will not cause that to happen - caps only slow the rate at which the oil and gas are used. The only solution is to cut off the coal source," the Hansens wrote

Second, he proposes a "carbon tax and 100% dividend". This is a mechanism for putting a price on carbon without raising money for government coffers. The idea is to tax carbon at

source, then redistribute the revenue equally among taxpayers, so that high carbon users are penalised while low carbon users are rewarded. Finally, he urges a renewed research effort into so-called fourth generation nuclear plants, which can use nuclear waste as fuel.

## **MANY GLACIERS WILL DISAPPEAR BY MIDDLE OF CENTURY AND ADD TO RISING SEA LEVELS, EXPERT WARNS**

Juliette Jowit, Environment Editor

19 January, 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jan/19/glacier-rising-sea-levels>

Most of the planet's glaciers are melting so fast that many will disappear by the middle of the century, a leading expert has warned. Figures from the World Glacier Monitoring Service show that although melt rates for 2007 fell substantially from record levels the previous year, the loss of ice was still the third worst on record. The total mass left in the glaciers is now thought to be at the lowest level for "thousands of years". Even under moderate predictions of global warming, the small glaciers, which make up the majority by number, will not recover, said Prof Wilfried Haeberli, the organisation's Director.

The warning will raise concern among those who say that glacier melting is one of the greatest threats of climate change because it raises the risk of sudden avalanches of rocks and soil released from the ice, threatening the livelihoods of more than 2 billion people who depend on melt-water to feed rivers in summer. Glacier melting will also add to rising global sea levels.

"If the climate is not really cooling dramatically, they'll retreat and disintegrate," said Haeberli. "This means many will simply be lost in the next decades - 10, 20, 30, 40 years.

"If you have a realistic, mid-warming scenario, then there's no hope for the small glaciers - in the Pyrenees, in Africa, in the Andes or Rocky mountains. The large glaciers in Alaska and the Himalayas will take longer, but even those very large glaciers will change completely; they will be much, much smaller, and many of them will disintegrate, forming lakes in many cases."

The WGMS, whose backers include UN agencies and scientific bodies, collects annual data for up to 100 glaciers around the world, including 30 "reference" glaciers in nine different mountain ranges on four continents, for which data goes back nearly three decades. Figures for 2005-06 showed the biggest loss of ice in a single year since those records began, and based on historic reconstructions, it was thought to be the worst year for 5,000 years.

## **PARCHED: AUSTRALIA FACES COLLAPSE AS CLIMATE CHANGE KICKS IN**

Geoffrey Lean and Kathy Marks

1 February, 2009 The Independent

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/parched-australia-faces-collapse-as-climate-change-kicks-in-1522529.html>

Leaves are falling off trees in the height of summer, railway tracks are buckling, and people are retiring to their beds with deep-frozen hot-water bottles, as much of Australia swelters in its worst-ever heatwave.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January, Melbourne thermometers topped 43<sup>o</sup>C (109.4F) on a third successive day for the first time on record, while even normally mild Tasmania suffered its second-hottest day in a row, as temperatures reached 42.2<sup>o</sup>C. Two days before, Adelaide hit a staggering 45.6<sup>o</sup>C. More records are expected to be broken.

Ministers are blaming the heat – which follows a record drought – on global warming. Experts worry that Australia, which emits more carbon dioxide per head than any nation on earth, may also be the first to implode under the impact of climate change.

## **RICH NATIONS SHOULD BE READY FOR DEEPER CUTS AT COPENHAGEN: INDIA**

7 February, 2009 (UNI) New Delhi, National News

[http://www.deepikaglobal.com/ENG3\\_sub.asp?catcode=&subcocode=&newscode=31828](http://www.deepikaglobal.com/ENG3_sub.asp?catcode=&subcocode=&newscode=31828)

India today told an international conference on climate change that the present arrangement under which developing countries like India had been exempted from mandatory cuts in carbon emissions should not be disturbed at copenhagen.

“Rather developed nation should be ready for more deeper cuts under the principle of common but differentiated responsibility,” Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Mr. Vijay Sharma said giving the country’s perspective at the valedictory session of the Delhi Sustainable Summit (DSS) . It may be pointed out that the world nations were required to arrive at an agreement for emission cuts and other measures to fight climate change at Copenhagen in coming December. The agreement is to succeed the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012.

Mr. Sharma said developed nations should scale up financing of clean development mechanism (CDM) and adaptation measures in developing countries to help them fight the impending climate change. The country wants the international finances under the climate change action to be governed by the Unites Nations Fund for Climate Change (UNFCC), he said, adding that adaptation was critical to India’s strategy to fight climate change, and that required massive funds.

Ms Sharma stressed that rich nations should be ready for deeper emission cuts at Copenhagen, and they have to give up their unsustainable life-style instead of asking the poor and developing nations to accept mandatory emission cuts.

## **AMAZON FORESTS MAY GET DRIER BUT SURVIVE WARMING**

Alister Doyle, Environment Correspondent

09 February, 2009

<http://news.stv.tv/uk/75018-amazon-forest-may-get-drier-but-survive-warming/>

OSLO (Reuters) - Amazonian forests may be less vulnerable to dying off from global warming than feared because many projections underestimate rainfall, a study showed. The report, by scientists in Britain, said Brazil and other nations in the region would also have to act to help

avert any irreversible drying of the eastern Amazon, the region most at risk from climate change, deforestation, and fires.

## **EATING LESS MEAT COULD CUT CLIMATE COSTS**

Jim Giles

10 February, 2009 New Scientist - Environment

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn16573-eating-less-meat-could-cut-climate-costs.html>

Cutting back on beefburgers and bacon could wipe \$20 trillion off the cost of fighting climate change. That's the dramatic conclusion of a study that totted up the economic costs of modern meat-heavy diets. The researchers involved say that reducing our intake of beef and pork would lead to the creation of a huge new carbon sink, as vegetation would thrive on unused farmland.

The model takes into account farmland that is used to grow extra food to make up for the lost meat, but that requires less area, so some will be abandoned. Millions of tonnes of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, would also be saved every year due to reduced emissions from farms. These impacts would lessen the need for expensive carbon-saving technologies, such as "clean coal" power plants, and so save huge sums, say Elke Stehfest of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and colleagues.

Beef is particularly damaging. Methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is released from flatulent cows and by manure as it decays. Furthermore, to produce a kilogram of beef (2.2 pounds), farmers also have to feed a cow 15 kg of grain and 30 kg of forage. Grain requires fertiliser, which is energy intensive to produce. Stehfest has now weighed the economic impact of beef and other meats against the cost of stabilising carbon dioxide levels at 450 parts per million – a level that some scientists say is needed to help prevent dangerous droughts and sea level rises. If eating habits do not change, Stehfest estimates that emissions would have to be cut by two-thirds by 2050, which is likely to cost around \$40 trillion.

If, however, the global population shifted to a low-meat diet – defined as 70 grams of beef and 325 grams of chicken and eggs per week – around 15 million square kilometres of farmland would be freed up. Vegetation growing on this land would mop up carbon dioxide. It could alternatively be used to grow bioenergy crops, which would displace fossil fuels. Greenhouse gas emissions would also fall by 10% due to the drop in livestock numbers, she calculates. Together, these impacts would halve the costs of dealing with climate change by 2050.

## **AUSTRALIA FIRES RELEASE HUGE AMOUNT OF CO2**

David Fogarty, Climate Change Correspondent, Asia

26 February, 2009 Environment

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE51P12120090226?feedType=RSS&feedName=environmentNews>

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Bushfires that have scorched Australia's Victoria state released millions of tons of carbon dioxide and forest fires could become a growing source of carbon pollution as the planet warms.

Mark Adams of the University of Sydney said global warming could trigger a vicious cycle in which forests could stop becoming sinks of CO<sub>2</sub>, further accelerating the rise of the planet-warming gas in the atmosphere. "With increasing concerns about rising CO<sub>2</sub>, rising temperatures and reduced rainfall in many of the forested areas, then we could well see much

greater emissions from forest fires," Adams, dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, told Reuters.

The Victoria fires, which killed more than 200 people, were the worst in the nation's history and many are still burning. Firefighters battled seven wildfires in the state on Wednesday, hoping to control the flames before expected higher temperatures hit the fire-ravaged state on Friday.

"Scientists worldwide are worried about fires and forests. It doesn't matter if it's the Arctic tundra fires, or peat fires in Kalimantan or bushfires in Australia," said Adams, who has worked in collaboration with the Bushfire Co-operative Research Center.

In a submission to the United Nations last year, the Australian government said wildfires in 2003 released 190 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent, roughly a third of the nation's total greenhouse gas emissions for the year. Such large, one-off releases of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases such as methane, are not presently accounted for in Australia's annual list of national greenhouse gas emissions. If they were, the country would vastly exceed its emission limits under the Kyoto Protocol, the United Nations' main weapon to fight climate change. Which is why Australia is calling for amendments to rules on land use change under the United Nations so that only human activities that "can be practicably influenced" are included.

## **MELTING SNOW PROMPTS BORDER CHANGE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND ITALY**

Peter Popham, Rome  
24 March, 2009

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/melting-snow-prompts-border-change-between-switzerland-and-italy-1653181.html>

Global warming is dissolving the Alpine glaciers so rapidly that Italy and Switzerland have decided they must re-draw their national borders to take account of the new realities.

The border has been fixed since 1861, when Italy became a unified state. But for the past century, the surface area of the "cryosphere", the zone of glaciers, permanent snow cover and permafrost, has been shrinking steadily, with dramatic acceleration in the past five years. This is the area over which the national frontier passes, and the two countries have now agreed to have their experts sit down together and hash out where it ought to run now.

Daniel Gutknecht, responsible for the co-ordination of national borders at Switzerland's Office of Topography, said "the border is moving because of the warmer climate", among other reasons.

The redrawing of the borders brings together the geological and geographical experts of two countries which have adopted drastically different approaches to global warming. In Switzerland the government has been fully aware of the problem for years, and is actively engaged in reducing atmospheric pollution and energy use to minimise human impact on the atmosphere. In Italy, on the other hand, scepticism prevails. The Berlusconi government threatened to veto the EU Energy and Climate Package last October, and Italy is among the worst-performing states in the Climate Change Performance Index.

## ICFRE NEWS

### PARTICIPATION OF ICFRE IN INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOP IN BRAZIL.

Dr. Renu Singh, Head, BCC Division, ICFRE attended the international technical workshop on “land area change assessment: the experience of the existing operational system” in Sao Paulo, Brazil from 04 – 06 February 2009.

The workshop discussed land cover and land use change detection by using remote sensed data. The objective of the workshop was to introduce developing countries experts to techniques and scientifically sound practices of detection and tracking of forest land cover changes due to changes in land use (deforestation) and in carbon density (forest degradation, including forest fires).



### Mr. JADISH KISHWAN, DG, ICFRE: VISIT TO SURINAME

Mr. Jagdish Kishwan, DG, ICFRE was invited by the Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management of the Republic of Suriname to participate in the Symposium "REDD Negotiations: the Case of High Forest Cover Low Deforestation Countries" in Paramaribo, Suriname on 13 March 2009, and to make a presentation before the senior officers and negotiators of Suriname. The purpose was to sensitize the Suriname officers with the history of the SBSTA agenda item 5-Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to simulate action (REDD), the ongoing negotiations relating to technical, methodological and policy aspects in SBSTA and AWG-LCA, and the possible strategy for HFLD countries in the ongoing process under the UNFCCC. The presentation was received very well, and was followed by an intense question-answer session.

### PARTICIPATION OF ICFRE IN EXPERT MEETING OF UNFCCC IN GERMANY

Mr. VRS Rawat, Scientist D, ICFRE attended the Expert meeting on methodological issues relating to reference emission levels and reference levels in Bonn, Germany from 23 - 24 March 2009.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **C40 LARGE CITIES CLIMATE SUMMIT – SEOUL 2009**

18 to 21 May, 2009. Seoul, Korea.

The C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group was established in 2005 by London's then mayor Ken Livingstone, and comprises the world's largest cities committed to taking action on climate change. C40 previously met in London 2005, New York 2007, and will meet in Seoul in 2009 for its third Summit. The theme of the Seoul Summit is 'Cities' Achievements and Challenges in the Fight against Climate Change'. The Summit is expected to attract the mayors from the C40 Group to share their policies and experiences on this issue through plenaries and sessions. For more information contact: Internet: <http://www.c40seoulsummit.com/>

### **CARBON EXPO:GLOBAL CARBON MARKET FAIR AND CONFERENCE**

27 to 29 May, 2009. Barcelona, Spain.

Organized by: World Bank, IETA (International Emissions Trading Association)  
Carbon Expo 2009 will act again as the global meeting point for companies operating on the CO<sub>2</sub> market. The Trade Fair and the Conference will inform about the latest CO<sub>2</sub> projects and climate development. 2009 is an important year for the Climate Change negotiations when governments will seek to come to an agreement in Copenhagen on the future framework for climate change. The CARBON EXPO 2009 Conference programme, spreading over three days of the event, will feature debates, in-depth case studies and leadership sessions providing an in-depth overview of the status of the Market and International negotiations.

### **30TH SESSIONS OF THE UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

1 to 12 June, 2009. Bonn, Germany.

The 30th sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) – are scheduled to take place from 1-12 June 2009, in Bonn, Germany. For more information contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); Internet: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc\\_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2009](http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2009)

### **GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL WARMING 2009**

5 to 9 July, 2009. Istanbul, Turkey.

<http://www.gcgw.org>

Conference Topics: The primary themes of the conference are global warming and climate change, not only in engineering and science but also in all other disciplines (e.g. ecology, education, social sciences, economics, management, political sciences, and information technology). Organized by: Ibrahim Dincer, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Canada.

## **WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE 3**

31 August to 4 September, 2009. Geneva, Switzerland.

The First and Second World Climate Conferences, held in 1979 and 1990 respectively, resulted in major movement on climate change issues. The third conference will take as its theme “Better climate information for a better future,” and will focus on how humankind can benefit from the advances in climate prediction and knowledge. It will also serve as input to COP 15. For more information contact: Buruhani Nyenzi, WCC-3 Secretariat, WMO; tel: +41-22-730-8273; fax: +41-22-730-8042; e-mail: [wcc-3@wmo.int](mailto:wcc-3@wmo.int); Internet: [http://www.wmo.int/pages/world\\_climate\\_conference](http://www.wmo.int/pages/world_climate_conference)

## **TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL (MOP-21)**

4 - 8 November, 2009. Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt.

This meeting is scheduled to take place from 4 - 8 November 2009, in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. For more information contact: Ozone Secretariat; tel: +254-20-762-3850/1; fax: +254-20-762-4691; e-mail: [ozoneinfo@unep.org](mailto:ozoneinfo@unep.org); Internet: <http://ozone.unep.org/>

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