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This edition of the newsletter began with the intention of its being built on good news stories.

Unsurprisingly, it's not easy to find good news about climate change. Most of it is not good, and getting more not good day by day as the science progresses and the political answers regress. For example, from the World Bank report we hear, "New scientific report, 'Turn Down the Heat' says the world is barreling down a path to heat up by 4 degrees at the end of the century if the global community fails to act on climate change, triggering a cascade of cataclysmic changes that include extreme heat-waves, declining global food stocks and a sea-level rise affecting hundreds of millions of people."

Many knowledgeable people are saying that 4° mark could be upon us soon after mid century - in our grandchildren's lifetimes. Some are saying we've left our run too late, hardly an encouraging Xmas message. But as Dr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group says, "The solution ... ensuring all our work, all our thinking, is designed with the threat of a 4° world in mind."

However we think of Jesus of Nazareth, God Incarnate, in the line of the Prophets, or simply as a man who'd got the nature of God pretty well sussed, if we follow his spiritual path, we find it includes prayer and a hatred for the injustice of poverty and a demeaning class system of his day. He seemed to have been energised by his concern for justice, and certainly wasn't the sort of person who would shy away from looking squarely at any threat.

Early Quakers called themselves "Friends of the Truth", and seemed to have realised also that there's no spiritual path without working for justice. As did Jesus, who, we are told, described himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Two thousand odd years later as we celebrate the birthday of the man with such a passion for Truth, we find that the truth that we have to face up to is the distinct possibility of that 4° world and the unprecedented scale of injustice it would impose on the most vulnerable millions unless we seriously do something about it. It is to be hoped that, like Dr. Jim Yong Kim, we can say, "all our work, all our thinking is designed with the threat of a 4° world in mind."

Hearing of someone like Dr. Jim Yong Kim who has the courage to do that has to be good news.

Floating gardens in Bangladesh



Villagers in flood-prone areas of Bangladesh face increasingly intense and frequent flooding. CARE is working to help them adapt.

This includes creating floating gardens that rest on a bed of water hyacinth (photo above). Buoyed by the hyacinth, crops

can rise above the flood waters to protect a critical source of food and income.

We have been running training sessions on garden preparation, seedling raising, crop-cycle, aftercare and protection against pests. We have distributed seeds and netting to all the participants.

"I have eight family members who depend on the floating garden for vegetables now. Even though I lose my land for half the year, having a productive use for the water body that is created is a blessing. Having seen the success of the floating garden, I will make a longer garden bed this year to increase my production and income."

Some Encouraging You Tube Videos

You can find some encouraging stories of women making changes at this URL
<http://www.oxfam.org/en/campaigns/climatechange/sisters-planet>

Coal Funeral in Hyderabad

350

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/350org/sets/72157631974788798/>



A coal funeral was organized in the city of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. 70+ youth participated in the rally on necklace road and made their way to different media houses. Top news agency TV9 covered the rally and raised the issue of the unprecedented use of coal in Andhra. Andhra Pradesh has immense potential for wind and solar energy and the team spoke of tapping this potential.

Earlier in the day they met the speaker of the legislative assembly and delivered a petition to turn the assembly green by use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

10 Nov 2012.

Growing Native Plants to Combat Climate Change

Notes from Australia:

Our journey towards allowing students to gain skills to address climate change commenced four years ago. In early 2008, in a Year 6/7 creative writing task, the questions "If you had one wish what would it be?" and "What are your hopes for the future?" were presented. A surprising number of students wrote about the pollution of the planet and their feelings of helplessness regarding environmental problems.

This creative essay writing task transformed teaching at our school: it led to first establishing a waterwise garden, and then to an extensive native tree growing program. Our students started growing 1,500 trees from seed in the first year, 2,000 in the second year and are now aiming for growing 4,000 native plants.

Some of these plants are planted around our school where they replaced lawn and other introduced species. However, the majority are donated to nearby reserves and parks. Furthermore, our school has developed relationships with farmers and water catchment groups in the Wheatbelt area, and assists them by growing trees for them, and later planting these trees.

The extensive environmental work at our school is heavily supported by the P&C, which not only provides volunteer labour, but also ongoing funding required for seeds, pots, soil etc.

Cornelia Major, Vice President Ardross Primary School P&C Association Inc.



Finnish companies ranked on top in the Nordic climate index

<http://www.goodnewsfinland.com/archive/news/finnish-companies-ranked-on-top-in-the-nordic-climate-index/>

Good News from Fri, 19 October, 2012:

UPM-Kymmene The Finnish paper company UPM-Kymmene is one of the highest ranked companies on the Nordic Carbon Disclosure Leadership Index.

Finnish companies have been ranked highly in the top Nordic climate index.

The Nordic Carbon Disclosure Leadership Index, which assesses the disclosure of climate change information, included 13 Finnish companies. The index comprises 26 companies and it is based on the analysis of the responses to Carbon Disclosure Project's questionnaire, which focused on greenhouse gas emissions, emissions reduction targets, and risks and opportunities associated with climate change.

In order to enter the climate change index companies needed a disclosure score of 83 or above, and the average score of the companies in 2012 was 90. In the consumer staples group, Kesko received a score of 88, in financials Nordea a score of 90, in industrials Metso got a score of 97, Finnair 92, Kone 90 and Outotec 87. In technology group Nokia was ranked highly with a disclosure score of 98 and Tieto with 89. In materials group UPM-Kymmene received a score of 98, Outokumpu 84 and Stora Enso 84, and in communication services and utilities Elisa scored 89 and Fortum 98 points.

— Kesko participates in mitigating climate change by saving energy in its operations and increasing waste recycling and recovery, says Kesko President and CEO Matti Halmesmäki.

— Our view is based on the global challenges requiring the whole energy supply to be organised in a more sustainable way. In practice this means an energy system based on CO2-free electricity production, smart energy consumption and distribution, and high system and resource efficiency, says Anne Brunila, Fortum's

Executive Vice President, Corporate Relations and Strategy.

In the Nordic Carbon Disclosure Leadership Index companies are scored on their climate change disclosure, and high scores indicate good internal data management and understanding of climate change-related issues affecting the company. The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) represents 655 institutional investors with the assets of 78 trillion US dollars under management.

Dew from the Air

www.cdproject.net

ScienceDaily (June 5, 2007) — Two architects pursuing PhDs at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology have devised a low-tech way to collect dew from the air and turn it into fresh water. Their invention recently won an international competition seeking to make clean, safe water available to millions around the world.

The brainchild of Technion Architecture and Building Planning grad students Joseph Cory and Eyal Malka, “WatAir,” is an inverted pyramid array of panels that collects dew from the air and turns it into fresh water in almost any climate.

Inspired by the dew-collecting properties of leaves, one 315 sq ft unit can extract a minimum of 48 liters of fresh water from the air each day. Depending on the number of collectors used, an unlimited daily supply of water could be produced even in remote and polluted places.

According to Cory, WatAir can be easily incorporated into both rural and urban landscapes because it has a relatively small base. Its vertical and diagonal design utilizes gravity to increase the collection areas. The panels are flexible and easy to collapse when not in use, and provide shelter from rain and heat and play areas for children.

“WatAir is a wonderfully simple concept which draws its inspiration from nature,” said competition judge Jo da Silva. “This is a simple and effective idea using tried and tested technology.”

The project was selected from 100 entries from North America, Europe, Africa and Asia as the winner of the “drawing water challenge” sponsored by Arup – a global firm of designers, engineers, planners and business consultants specializing in innovative and sustainable design.

Geotectura and Malka Architects, the respective architectural studios of Cory and Malka, are located in Haifa, Israel.

The Technion-Israel Institute of Technology is Israel's leading science and technology university. Home to the country's winners of the Nobel Prize in science, it commands a worldwide reputation for its pioneering work in nanotechnology, computer science, biotechnology, water-resource management, materials engineering, aerospace and medicine. The majority of the founders and managers of Israel's high-tech companies are alumni. Based in New York City, the American Technion Society



is the leading American organization supporting higher education in Israel, with 17 offices around the country.

The above story is reprinted from [materials](#) provided by [American Technion Society](#).

***Disclaimer:** Views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect those of ScienceDaily or its staff.*

WatAir, shown here in an artistic rendering, could produce an unlimited supply of fresh water even in remote and polluted places. (Credit: Image courtesy of American Technion Society)

Fog-harvesting for water - clouds on tap

Water-wheel, WRC



The Namib fog beetle is a feisty little creature. Every morning he makes an arduous journey to the top of a sand dune, where he turns his body into the wind, straightens out his rear legs and lowers his head. The fog rolling in from the sea gradually collects on his back, forming droplets of water, which glide downwards and hang from the insect's mouthparts. In this way, the

Onymacris unguicularis is always assured of a healthy morning drink, despite being miles from the nearest fresh water.

.... For years the remote fishing village of Chungungo relied solely on trucked-in water. In 1987 it was transformed by the installation of a fog collecting system. With a dependable and affordable water supply, not only did the growing population have domestic water, they were also able to cultivate commercial crops and plant trees.

Although unconventional, the technology behind fog collection is amazingly simple: massive vertical shade nets are erected in high-lying areas close to water-short communities. As fog blows through these structures, tiny water droplets are deposited onto the net. As the droplets become larger, they run down the net into gutters attached at the bottom. From there, water is channeled into reservoirs, and then to individual homes.

“European Commission should consider dropping the EU ETS”,

say environmental NGOs*

🕒 November 14, 2012 🗨️

Seven years after its start up, the EU Emission Trading System has failed to achieve its own objectives. The European Commission itself came to this conclusion as it proposed different options to fix the trading mechanism today. An important option is missing from the Commission’s document: the abolishment of the EU ETS after 2020.

“The ETS is not fit for purpose. It has generated windfall profits for polluting corporations, postponed the needed transition away from fossil fuels and its unintended consequences are locking the EU into another generation of energy production based on fossil fuels. These structural flaws remain unaddressed by the Commission”, says Joanna Cabello from Carbon Trade Watch.

The Commission exclusively proposes options to stabilise the price of carbon permits which are traded within the EU ETS. Due to the recent collapse of the carbon price the EU ETS is not providing the price signal for investment in low carbon technology and infrastructure that its proponents have been promising.

“This is exposing the inner contradiction in the EU vision about the ETS: can a trading mechanism, where the cap is based on projections of industrial emissions years into the future ever provide a reliable price signal? Experience shows that it cannot”, states Jutta Kill from Fern.

An additional structural shortcoming which remains unaddressed by the Commission’s proposal is the hole in the cap – the use of carbon offsets in the EU ETS. Offset projects in the South haven’t generated the sustainable development they were said to deliver. Moreover, as offsets do not reduce but only displace emissions, any trading scheme allowing the use of offsets will delay the unavoidable reduction of emissions.

Rather than catalysing the transition towards the low carbon society that Europe envisages, the ETS has been a mechanism standing in the way of bold political decisions that could end our current fossil fuel based energy model. In its 2012

World Energy Outlook the International Energy Agency warned yesterday that 2/3 of the proven fossil fuels reserve must stay in the ground in order to avoid a temperature rise by 2 degrees Celsius. It requires political will not a market based mechanism to turn advices like these into practice.

“Instead of taking their responsibility, politicians have voluntarily put their main instrument to fight climate change in the hands of the financial markets. As we know market mechanisms have their own dynamic. Profit making and not fighting climate change has become the overriding objective of the players involved in carbon trading. It is an illusion to believe that proposals like the one presented now by the Commission would be able to substantially improve the EU ETS”, Cabello concludes.

* Signatories are: Attac France, Carbon Trade Watch, Corporate Europe Observatory, Counter Balance, FERN, Re: Common

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<http://www.counterbalance-eib.org/?p=2067>

A tale of typhoons, trees and tiny creatures

that stood between a community and climate resilience

Mike Shanahan
17 April 2012

Nguyen Viet Nghi's enthusiasm was infectious as he showed off a scene of remarkable renewal in what was once a disaster zone.

We were in Da Loc commune, a sleepy part of Vietnam's Thanh Hoa province. It's a place that on a single day witnessed both the fury and the protective power of nature.

The community learned well from the experience, but only after they overcame the attention of some tiny animals that threatened to spoil the story.

Da Loc's day of destiny came on 17 September 2005. At around ten o'clock in the morning Typhoon Damrey tore into Vietnam here and unleashed its awesome power.

As it churned at the coast at 100 kilometres per hour, it tore buildings apart and spawned a sea surge that smashed through the commune's protective dyke wall and laid waste to the villages behind it.



Many people lost their lives that day.

The survivors found their homes and livelihoods in ruins. The sea swept inland for kilometres. Its salt ruined rice crops and would leave fields infertile for years to come.

The typhoon caused more than US\$4.4 million in damage. But one area suffered less than the rest.

A 500 metre stretch of the 3500 metre long dyke had remained intact because of what stood between it and the sea: a patch of mangrove forest.

Nature had provided a lesson that Da Loc commune could not afford to ignore. And in 2006 Nguyen — a project manager for Care Vietnam — arrived with a mangrove mission in mind.

The plan was simple: to support the community to plant a living wall of mangrove trees to protect against future storms.

But when they first tried to plant mangroves along that stretch of coast, the trees died after just two months. It looked like Nguyen's mission was doomed to fail. Until, that is, one of the villagers diagnosed the problem.

Little creatures called barnacles had attached themselves to the mangrove seedlings in such numbers that they killed the trees before they could establish themselves.



Now the villagers go out onto the mudflats each month to battle the barnacles.

Sinking knee deep in the thick grey mud, they scrape them off with a sharp knife. It's a tough way to spend a day, as I found out yesterday.

But the tactic works. Once the seedlings reach a certain height they can tolerate the barnacles and grow into mature trees whose seeds help the forest to spread further.

I visited Da Loc as part of the 6th International Conference on Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change, which gathers researchers and development workers to share knowledge

of how local action can protect people from extreme climatic events like droughts, floods, landslides and heat waves.

Typhoons and big coastal storms seem to be becoming more frequent and more intense in Vietnam. And while none can be proven to be caused by climate change, the experiences of Da Loc can inform other communities around the world who face threats from the extreme events that climate science predicts will become more common as the world warms.

In Da Loc, the community has owned and managed the mangrove planting project, decided how and where to act and how to share the work. Care Vietnam has supported the process with funding, technical advice on climate resilient livelihoods and programmes to educate children about disaster risks.

To date more than 6,000 villagers — mostly women — have planted mangroves on 305 hectares of the shoreline. The oldest trees now form a thick wall that shields several kilometres of the coast.

Nguyen says the whole operation has cost just US\$1000 per hectare of planted forest. Based on the losses mangroves prevented in 2005, he equates each dollar spent with US\$186 in saved storm damages.

It's a cost-effective way to protect 50,000 people from extreme weather and it has boosted food security and incomes too.

More mangroves means more fish, crabs and shrimp, which shelter among the tree's submerged roots. They provide the villager with an important source of protein and something to sell.

The trees give globally too, as mangrove forests lock vast amounts of climate-changing carbon in their wood and the mud they stand in.

Nguyen's pride was palpable as he showed off the blanket of mangroves the villagers planted in 2007. The trees are now taller than him.

"Now when a big wave comes," he says, "the mangroves take its energy and make the water calm, like big hands that keep the people safe."

CO₂ hit record high in 2011 – UN report

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/nov/20/co2-record-high-2011-un-report>

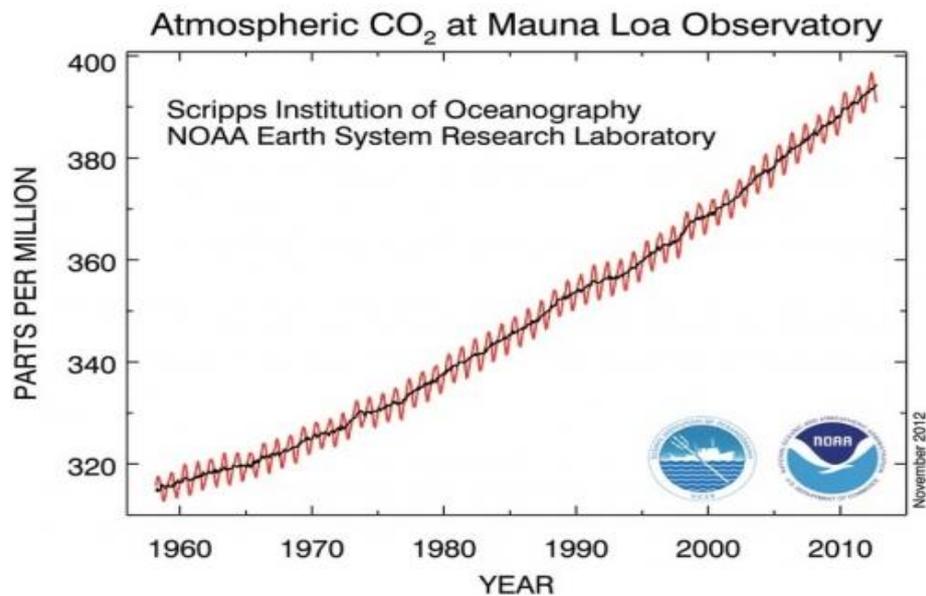
WMO figures show levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere broke a new record last year, at 390.9 parts per million



Levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere have reached a new record high, driven by man-made carbon emissions from sources such as power plants. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod

The amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached a record 390.9 parts per million (ppm) in 2011, according to a report released Tuesday by the UN's [World Meteorological Organization](#) (WMO). That's a 40 percent increase over levels in 1750, before humans began burning fossil fuels in earnest.

Although CO₂ is still the most significant long-lived greenhouse gas, levels of other heat-trapping gases have also climbed to record levels, according to the report. Methane, for example hit 1813 parts per billion (ppb) in 2011, and nitrous oxide rose to 324.2 ppb. All told, the amount of excess heat prevented from escaping into outer space was 30 percent higher in 2011 than it was as recently as 1990.



Atmospheric

CO₂ at Mauna Loa Observatory. Credit: [NOAA](#).

These are sobering numbers, not because they come as any sort of surprise, but rather because they don't. Scientists have known about the heat-trapping properties of CO₂ since the mid-1800s. They've been [documenting the steady rise of CO₂](#) pumped largely out of smokestacks and exhaust pipes since the 1950s.

About half of the excess CO₂ going into the atmosphere so far has been absorbed by plants and the oceans, but, said WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud in a press release, "... this will not necessarily continue in the future" as these natural "sinks" for CO₂ reach their capacity.

The CO₂ that remains in the atmosphere, meanwhile, takes centuries to dissipate, which is why the numbers continue to climb. As a result of all the extra CO₂ pumped into the air, worldwide average temperatures have already risen by 1.8°F since 1900.

Yet despite all of this knowledge, the world has largely failed to act on reducing emissions. The best they could do at a UN-sponsored climate meeting in Copenhagen in 2009 was to agree to a non-binding target of limiting the world's greenhouse-gas-triggered temperature increase to no more than 2°C (3.6°F) above preindustrial levels to limit the potential damage. Just a year later, [it was already clear](#) that they wouldn't come close to making it.

Frustrated with this global inaction, the World Bank [released a report](#) on Sunday saying that without significant emissions reductions, the world's average temperature could climb by 4°C (7.2°F) by as early as 2060. The report highlighted the dire consequences for human health and safety — including dangerous sea level rise, [heat waves](#), and [other extreme weather events](#).

But the potential disruption to people and property are so enormous that the report is, if not a wake-up call, at least another attempt to rouse world leaders after too many false starts and stops.

It calls not just for a reduction in CO2 emissions, but also for an aggressive program to reduce other drivers of global warming that might be easier to control including not just short-lived but powerful greenhouse gases like methane, but also heat-absorbers such as [black carbon](#) — essentially, soot.

Unlike CO2, which stays in the atmosphere for a century or more, black carbon and other so-called "short-lived climate forcers" act on timescales of weeks to a few years, meaning that reducing them would yield much faster benefits.

The World Bank report also calls attention to the fact that poor people and poor nations are at the greatest risk from the dangers posed by rising greenhouse-gas levels and the changes in climate that are likely to result.

Dutch government may face legal action over climate change

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/nov/14/dutch-legal-action-climate-change>

The move is intended to put the spotlight on the Netherlands' failure to prioritise cuts in greenhouse gas emissions

- [Fiona Harvey](#), environment correspondent
- [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), Wednesday 14 November 2012 18.11 GMT



The move is intended to put the spotlight on the Netherlands' failure to prioritise cuts in greenhouse gas emission. Photograph: Lourens Smak/Alamy

The Dutch government is facing the threat of legal action if it fails to take swift action on [climate change](#).

The move, which is thought to be the first time that European human rights legislation has been used to take a government to court over climate change failures, is intended to put the spotlight on what campaigners say is a lack of action and force them to prioritise cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

[Urgenda](#), the pressure group behind the move, sent a letter to ministers calling on them to announce new initiatives on cutting emissions. Without that, the group said it would proceed to the courts.

The government of the [Netherlands](#) has not yet responded.

The Dutch campaigners believe similar laws could be used in other countries to force the hand of governments. Marjan Minnesma, of Urgenda, and one of the leaders of the action, said: "We definitely want to give a strong example to other countries. We believe we can take this to the courts and we would like organisations in other countries to look at what we are doing and consider it for themselves."

Their campaign is supported by the Nasa climate scientist Prof James Hansen. "In the climate and energy debate we need more pressure and involvement from the public, willing to defend our rights and those of our children and grandchildren using all the means of our laws to achieve justice," he said.

Wednesday's move came as governments prepared to meet for the next round of [United Nations negotiations on climate change](#), to start at the end of this month in Doha, Qatar. This year marks the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto protocol, and some governments – including the EU and Australia, but not the US, Japan or Canada – are expected to sign up to a continuation to 2020, with fresh commitments to cut emissions.

For years, the Netherlands were seen as an environmentally conscious nation who were among the first to treat global warming as a serious threat. As a large part of the country lies below sea level, Dutch people have been particularly conscious of the damage that could be done by sea level rises, and from the heavier rainfall and fiercer storm surges that are predicted to result from climate change.

But campaigners say this has changed in the past decade, with the government less willing to talk about climate change and emissions, and a greater focus on the resurgent oil and gas industries.

Minnesma said the performance of the Dutch government on climate issues in recent years had been "disappointing". She accused ministers of failing to take a lead, especially at international climate talks and in developing renewable energy.

Roger Cox, a partner at the law firm of Paulussen Advocaten in the Netherlands who is involved with the legal move, says that the scale of inaction by governments means that pursuing the legal route is justified. "Averting dangerous climate change has become all but impossible, putting western countries at serious risk of committing human right violations on a scale nobody had thought to ever see again after world war two," he wrote in a [comment piece for the Guardian](#). "This leaves the judiciary with the task of stepping in and averting catastrophe. In a democracy, issues certainly stop being only political when they give rise to domestic human rights violations and endangerment."

[You can read more of this article from the above URL]

China: Most Consumers Aware of Climate Change

Updated: 2012-11-02 07:55

By Lan Lan (China Daily)



A shopper inspects energy-efficient refrigerators at a department store in Zaozhuang, Shandong province. According to a survey, 87 percent of Chinese respondents said they would be willing to pay more for greener products. Ji Zhe / For China Daily

Majority of Chinese willing to pay more for greener goods, poll shows

The vast majority of Chinese believe climate change is taking place and most consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly products to reduce its effects, a survey has found.

Some 93 percent of respondents said climate change is under way, while about three out of five respondents feel they have been directly affected by it.

The study of 4,169 Chinese adults was carried out from July to September by the Center for China Climate Change Communication, jointly established by Renmin University of China and non-governmental organization Oxfam.

About 68.4 percent of respondents said they thought China has already suffered from the effects of climate change, while about half of respondents said it will affect people in rural areas more.

About 90 percent of respondents said the government should have prime responsibility for dealing with climate change, followed by the public, media, companies and NGOs.

Zheng Baowei, director of Renmin University's Research Center of Journalism and Social Development, said the government should play a dominant role in adopting measures and designing policies in line with the public's expectations and interests. However, implementation of the policies will eventually rely on public participation.

More than 93.4 percent of respondents felt they have knowledge of climate change, while just 6.6 percent said they had never heard of it.

About 60 percent thought climate change is mainly caused by human activities, while 33 percent considered it to be mainly caused by the environment.

Sun Zhen, deputy director of the Department of Climate Change at the National Development and Reform Commission, said the data might sound satisfactory, but climate change is placing increasing pressure on China.

As the world is facing more extreme weather-related events, such as hurricanes, drought and floods, the government has an obligation to clarify to what extent climate change has contributed to these, Sun said.

Wang Binbin, executive director of the Center for China Climate Change Communication, said addressing climate change also calls for the public to practise low-carbon ways of living and consumption, while the good news is that more Chinese consumers are willing to pay more for a greener life.

Some 87 percent of those surveyed said they were willing to pay more for greener products, while more than 34 percent said they would accept a 30 percent price rise to buy such products.

The survey also showed that people aged between 18 and 24 were willing to pay more for environmentally-friendly products.

More than four out of five respondents said they supported the government in setting standards for mandatory garbage separation and waste recycling, adopting greener materials for construction, and producing greener cars, even if it means higher costs.

Only 34 percent of respondents said they separated their garbage.

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<http://www.counterbalance-eib.org/?p=2067>

Kāpiti first council to enter to emissions reduction scheme

Thursday, 15 November 2012, 5:01 pm

Press Release: Kapiti Coast District Council

November 15, 2012

The Kāpiti Coast District Council is the first council in the country to gain admission to the prestigious Carbon Emissions Measurement and Reduction Scheme (CEMARS).

CEMARS is run by Landcare Research and recognises organisations that can independently verify they have measured and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Other New Zealand agencies that are CEMARS certified include Toyota NZ, Meridian Energy and the University of Canterbury.

Mayor Jenny Rowan says the achievement recognises Council's determined commitment towards reducing its carbon footprint.

"I am not sure people realise just how active this Council is in the area of energy conservation and carbon emission reduction. We are leaders in the local government sector and have pioneered a range of initiatives across all our operations.

"From the wood-fired boiler at the waste water treatment plant to solar power, more efficient heating, the installation of low energy LED street lights, environmental restoration and water conservation projects, Council is leading the way."

Council began its bid to gain CEMARS certification in 2011. This involved calculating its corporate carbon footprint to the internationally recognised ISO 14064 standard and adopting an emissions management and reduction plan for the organisation. This work was independently audited and verified.

(The **ISO 14064** standards (published in 2006 and early 2007) are part of the [ISO 14000](#) series of International Standards for [environmental management](#). The ISO 14064 standards provide governments, businesses, regions and other organisations with an integrated set of tools for programs aimed at measuring, quantifying and reducing [greenhouse gas](#) emissions. These standards allow organisations take part in [emissions trading](#) schemes using a globally recognised standard.

The plan targets a 45% reduction in operational emissions in 2014-15, compared to the baseline year of 2009-10, increasing to 80% in 2021-22. Mayor Rowan says Council has already significantly reduced carbon emissions in recent years but CEMARS status will “turbo-boost” those efforts.

“Council is already walking the talk on sustainability but under CEMARS we will be doubling our efforts to slash greenhouse gas emissions, which accelerate climate change.



“As a coastal community, Kāpiti is already feeling the effects of climate change and rising sea levels, in particular. I believe we are duty bound as a corporate entity as well as a global citizen to do what we can to mitigate our contribution.”

Mayor Rowan says Council’s plans to further reduce greenhouse gases include eliminating emissions from sewage sludge disposal - its biggest emissions source - generating renewable energy and improving energy efficiency in Council facilities, vehicles and street lighting. These measures will be funded from existing budgets and the savings they generate.”

Details of the Council’s CEMARS accreditation including emissions inventory (carbon footprint) reports for 2009-10 and 2010-11 and emissions reduction plan will be available on the Council website.

ENDS

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<http://www.africagoodnews.com/development/environment/2903-trash-collectors-become-zimbabwes-unlikely-climate-change-ambassadors.html>

[Trash Collectors Become Zimbabwe's Unlikely Climate Change Ambassadors](#)

Tuesday, 14 August 2012

Tomson Chikowero was ashamed of his job. He did not want anyone finding out what he did to earn a living, so he used to wake up early every morning and leave his home in Hatfield, a residential suburb in Zimbabwe's capital city Harare, under the cover of darkness.

And he would return only after sunset when no one could see him carrying the bags of plastic bottles that he collected from people's trash that day.



For the middle-class Chikowero, who was formerly employed as a builder but lost his job in 2010, collecting plastic and cardboard boxes from people's trash to resell was embarrassing at first. But now he has become one of a handful of unlikely climate change ambassadors here.

Climate change has already had an impact on the country, with the Meteorological Service Department confirming that rainfall here has declined, while temperatures have risen in the past few years. It will, according to a study released on Mar. 21 titled Strengthening national capacity for climate change programme in Zimbabwe, place the country's food security and economic growth at risk.

However, trash has a role to play in climate change mitigation in this southern African nation. A 2010 publication by the United Nations Environment Programme titled Waste and Climate Change said: "after waste prevention, recycling has been shown to result in the highest climate benefit compared to other waste management approaches. This appears to be the case ... also in developing countries."

Barnabas Mawire, the country director for Environment Africa, an environmental NGO, agreed that recycling is important for Zimbabwe.

"Recycling helps climate change (mitigation) a great deal...If industries recycle plastic bottles and scrap materials they will not use the same amount of energy they would use if they were making plastic or metal from scratch. If they recycle, they would use less raw materials and energy and that has been proven to reduce the carbon footprint," he told IPS.

The United States' Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) factsheet on recycling stated that "recycling plastics uses only roughly 10 percent of the energy it takes to make a pound of plastic from virgin materials."

While there are no estimates on how much Zimbabwe would save in greenhouse gas emissions, recycling in the United Kingdom currently saves more than 18 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, the annual emissions of 177,879 passenger vehicles.

But many Zimbabweans are not aware of climate change or mitigation efforts. This southern African country has no climate change policy, though it is in the process of formulating one with the Climate and Development Knowledge Network.

So when Chikowero first started collecting trash he, along with the hundreds of others who sort through people's trash to collect plastic and cardboard boxes for resale, merely did it to earn a living in a country with an unemployment rate of 70 percent. A kilogramme of plastic can be sold for between seven and 10 dollars.

While there are no official figures on how many people earn a living from this, the sight of people collecting trash from Harare's suburbs is a common one. Plastic buyers at the Mbare Musika market in Harare told IPS that they deal with over 200 garbage collectors every day.

The market is the biggest in the city, and has an organised area for buyers of



recyclable material. In addition, Mukundi Plastics, a packaging and recycling company in Harare's industrial area, said that they receive deliveries from about 100 people a day.

Photo: City dump; Phnom Penh

Recycling is important to the country. According to the Environmental Management Authority, a government

body set up to protect environmental services and goods, Zimbabwe is running out of landfill sites.

In addition, the Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa 2011 said that Zimbabwean households generate solid waste amounting to 2.7 kg per day, of which only 47 percent is biodegradable. Authorities often resort to burning trash as a way of disposing it, a practice considered harmful to the environment.

Recycling is a great way to combat this.

Chikowero first learnt about climate change and how recycling can reduce carbon emissions when a buyer mentioned it to him and other trash collectors as a way of encouraging them to continue their work.

“We were just doing this for the money when we started, and I wondered why people are interested in buying plastic bottles and cardboard boxes, until we were told what happens once the plastic is bought from us,” Chikowero said. It is recycled by both local and international companies for the manufacture of soft drink bottles and cereal boxes.

He also did not realise that by encouraging domestic workers in the homes he collected trash from to separate paper from plastic, he was helping Zimbabwe with climate change mitigation.

According to the study strengthening national capacity for climate change programme in Zimbabwe, commissioned by the government and U.N. agencies, the nation lacks the capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

“I asked them to separate plastic bottles from the waste that they put in their rubbish bins. At first they were hostile to the idea, but with time when they became familiar with me and understood why I was asking them to do so, it became easy,” said Chikowero.

The more people embraced the idea, the easier his job became. And he is now able to collect larger amounts of plastic in less time, thereby earning more money.

Currently he collects plastic from 50 blocks of residential flats in Harare’s city centre and the outlying areas of Eastlea.

The caretakers of these flats are also fast becoming part of his sphere of influence. “They help me a lot and that makes my job easy,” said Chikowero as he pointed to a notice by the caretaker encouraging residents to separate their paper and plastic from the rest of their waste on a wall at the St. Tropez Flats in Eastlea.

Here, housemaids Idah Ndadziyira and Tatenda Munjoma told IPS that three other plastic collectors passed through the building on a regular basis, and that they, like Chikowero, taught them about climate change and the importance of recycling.

“I did not know what it was about. In fact I thought it could only happen in other countries and not in Zimbabwe until the plastic collectors educated me about it... I am now sharing the information with other people,” Ndadziyira told IPS.

Chikowero has now gotten every third house in the Eastlea suburb to recycle their plastic, and other households are steadily catching up.



Photo: City dump; Phnom Penh

“It’s now a way of life. That’s why this movement is growing,” said Chikowero.

Even the country’s National Climate Change Committee coordinator, Dr. Toddy Ngara, acknowledged the efforts of trash collectors like Chikowero.

“Their work is commendable, they have helped a lot in cleaning our cities and are now helping to clean the environment with their contribution to the recycling industry,” Ngara told IPS.

The government’s climate adaptation committee has promised to consult and use them as ambassadors in developing a national climate change strategy.

The director of environment at the Ministry of Environment, Irvin Kunene, said at a climate change policy meeting in Harare in early May that “all stakeholders including trash collectors will be consulted in crafting the country’s national climate change policy.”

And it has made Chikowero proud of his job.

“Now, I am no longer ashamed,” he told IPS.

By Stanley Kwenda

Source: IPS News

