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‘Being Here Makes Me More Worried’

CLIMATE ANXIETY Barack Obama may have struck a gloomy tone, but that sense is amplified for those in imminent peril.



Students protest at the White House as part of Fridays for Future's Earth Day climate strike in April 2022. | PHOTO: Picture Alliance

BY OLIVER MILMAN

1 AFTER AN exhausting two weeks of speeches, protests, meetings, and increasingly tortuous negotiations at the Glasgow climate summit, a sense of simmering frustration and anxiety has gripped many of the 25,000 attendees. Even former world leaders are not immune. “There are times where the future seems somewhat bleak,” said Barack Obama on Monday. “There are times where I am doubtful that humanity can get its act together before it’s too late, and images of dystopia start creeping into my dreams.”

2 The initial text of the climate agreement to be thrashed out by negotiators has done little to ease the anxieties of activists and delegates who wanted to see a major breakthrough to contain disastrous global heating. “Things are still missing from that text, and the clock is ticking; it has added to the fear and anger,” said Alexis Pascaris, an environmental policy researcher and activist from Michigan, who

added that the climate crisis had, as with many other young people around the world, made her question whether she should have children. “To procreate seems hypocritical,” she said. “If I am bringing up another mouth to feed, that will involve more trees being chopped down and more gasoline being pumped. I tend to think: ‘Am I allowed to add to this mess?’”

3 “I feel dismal and sometimes disempowered. I got into this thinking I’m going to save the world, and now I would say maybe I’d inspire one or two human beings because I don’t think large-scale change is feasible. There is this underlying anger, but we have to turn that into action.”

4 For many of the delegates, the looming threat of climate catastrophe is rooted in tangible danger rather than more abstract fears. Maina Talia, a delegate from Tuvalu who took a week to travel from the small Pacific island nation to Glasgow, said his feeling of anxiety “is more than what Obama is talking about”. “It’s part of us now; it’s in us,” he said.

⁰ **TO STRIKE A TONE** (fig) e-n Ton anschlagen — **to amplify** verstärken — **imminent** (unmittelbar) bevorstehend — **peril** Gefahr

¹ **tortuous** verworren — **simmering** schwelend — **to grip s.o. jdn.** erfassen — **attender** Teilnehmer(in) — **to get one’s act together** die Kurve kriegen — **to creep into s.th.** (fig) in etw. eindringen

² **to thrash out** ausarbeiten — **to ease (anxieties)** (Ängste) zerstreuen — **delegate** Delegierte(r) — **to contain** eindämmen — **to procreate s.** fortpflanzen — **hypocritical** heuchlerisch — **to chop down h.:** abholzen

³⁻⁴ **dismal** miserabel — **disempowered** machtlos — **to get into s.th.** mit etw. anfangen — **large-scale h.:** tiefgreifend — **feasible** machbar — **underlying** zugrundeliegend — **looming s.** abzeichnend — **tangible** konkret

⁵ **to wipe h.:** löschen — **viability** Lebensfähigkeit — **to some degree** bis zu e-m gewissen Grad — **anguished** besorgt — **cavernous** höhlenartig; riesig — **convention centre** Kongresszentrum — **to perch h.:** s. befinden

⁶⁻⁷ **plea** Appell — **distress** Notlage; Verzweiflung — **counterpart h.:** Altersgenosse(-in)

⁸ **at times** manchmal — **lingering** andauernd — **food insecurity** Ernährungsunsicherheit — **forced migration** erzwungene Migration — **to be set to do s.th.** etw. tun werden

⁹⁻¹⁰ **life-altering** lebensverändernd — **to acknowledge** eingestehen — **to counteract** entgegenwirken — **to link with s.o. s.** mit jdm. zus.tun — **to advocate for s.th. s.** für etw. einsetzen — **realm h.:** Umfeld — **alongside s.o.** mit jdm. zusammen

¹¹ **restorative** erholsam

“It’s an everyday reality for us, the fear for what the future will look like for us, our kids. There is anxiety and fear, particularly when there are high tides. The water is rising; the waves are crashing against our doors.”

5 The nightmare scenario for Tuvalu and other vulnerable countries is that sea level rise wipes them almost completely off the map. The future viability of certain countries is to some degree being decided in front of anguished representatives in a cavernous convention centre perched on the banks of the River Clyde.

6 “It seems if no action is taken by the international community, we will have to move,” said Talia. “We want to stay on our island, practice our culture. Some of the people are listening to our plea for survival, but this is like a game to the oil-producing nations. What can we do?”

7 Anxiety over the climate crisis appears to be growing, especially among younger people, but differs between countries, experts say. Dr Lisa Page, a climate specialist at the Royal College of Psychiatrists – who prefers the term “eco distress”, as “anxiety” is a more clinical term – said young people in the UK often feel fearful over their future and guilty over their role, while their counterparts in Africa are more likely to feel angry and a sense of injustice.

8 “You hear from younger people that they are really worried about this; it causes them at times to feel quite hopeless, depressed, and fearful,” Page

said. People exposed to climate-driven disasters such as floods and hurricanes could have lingering mental health effects even several years after they happened, she added, with escalating conflict, food insecurity, and forced migration set to cause further distress as the world continues to heat up.

9 For those not in immediate life-altering danger, Page said it was important not to view worries about the climate as pathological and to understand such concerns are rational responses to bad news. “It’s not possible to say to young people ‘it’s not going to be that bad’ because the science is saying the opposite – it may even be worse,” she said. “The first thing is to acknowledge that these are overwhelming problems, and your ability to counteract them is limited. There is hope, though, so maybe link with other people talking about this, join movements that advocate for higher change. Knowing it’s valid to feel this way is helpful.”

10 For those within the realm of COP26, however, the experience of being alongside thousands of others worried about the climate crisis has not been entirely restorative. “Being here makes me more worried because this COP isn’t very inclusive; those on the frontlines of climate change aren’t here to tell their stories,” said Makoma Lekalakala, a delegate from South Africa. “There is a lot of trauma, people who don’t have access to water, people affected by natural disasters, and we cannot bear it any more. We wonder if anyone is listening at all.”

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Greta Thunberg Says ‘We Shouldn’t Be Relaxing’ on Climate Change

ACTIVISM The activist has become a symbol for young people across the world protesting climate change inaction.

BY ELINOR ASPEGREN AND SAVANNAH BEHRMANN

1 GRETA THUNBERG had two wishes for her eighteenth birthday on Sunday. The first was a “promise from everyone that they will do everything they can” for the planet, she said in an exclusive interview with *The Sunday Times*. She had another, more tangible gift: Replacement headlights for her bike. “In Sweden, it gets very dark in the winter,” she said.

2 The climate activist, who is from Sweden, also took to Twitter to celebrate her birthday with a jab at climate change conspiracy theorists. “Thank you

so much for all the well-wishes on my eighteenth birthday!” she said. “Tonight, you will find me down at the local pub exposing all the dark secrets behind the climate- and school strike conspiracy and my evil handlers who can no longer control me! I am free at last!!”

3 On celebrities who talk about the climate emergency while flying around the world [she said]: “I don’t care. I’m not telling anyone else what to do, but there is a risk when you are vocal about these things and don’t practice as you preach, then you will become criticized for that, and what you are saying won’t be taken seriously.”

4 What’s not on her birthday list: new clothes. “I don’t need new clothes. I know people who have clothes, so I would ask them if I could borrow them or if they have something they don’t need anymore. I don’t need to fly to Thailand to be happy. I don’t need to buy clothes I don’t need, so I don’t see it as a sacrifice.”

0-2 INACTION Tatenlosigkeit — tangible konkret — replacement headlights Ersatzscheinwerfer — to take to s.th. h.: etw. nutzen — jab h.: Seitenhieb — conspiracy theorist Verschwörungstheoretiker(in) — handler Betreuer(in)

7-11 to preach s. lautstark äußern — to practice as you preach praktizieren

Climate Scientists Reach 'Unequivocal' Consensus on Human-Made Warming in Landmark Report

CLIMATE REPORT The assessment is the work of more than 200 scientists digesting thousands of studies.

BY ERIC ROSTON AND AKSHAT RATHI

1 AN EPOCHAL new report from the world's top climate scientists warns that the planet will warm by 1.5° Celsius in the next two decades without drastic moves to eliminate greenhouse gas pollution. The finding from the United Nations-backed group throws a key goal of the Paris Agreement into danger as signs of climate change become apparent across every part of the world.

2 The latest scientific assessment from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for the first time speaks with certainty about the total responsibility of human activity for rising temperatures. The scientists forecast no end to warming trends until emissions cease. "It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land," wrote the authors of the IPCC's sixth global science assessment since 1990 and the first released in more than eight years. The crucial warming threshold of 2° Celsius will be "exceeded during the twenty-first century," the IPCC authors concluded, without deep emissions cuts "in the coming decades."

3 The assessment released on Monday is the work of more than 200 scientists digesting thousands of studies, and an accompanying summary was approved by delegates from 195 countries. More than any other forecast or record, this report's determinations establish a powerful global consensus – less than three months before the UN's COP26 international climate talks.

4 Among the headline findings: The past decade was most likely hotter than any period in the last 125,000 years, when sea levels were as much as

10 meters higher. Combustion and deforestation have also raised carbon dioxide in the atmosphere higher than they've been in 2 million years, according to the report, and agriculture and fossil fuels have contributed to methane and nitrous oxide concentration higher than any point in at least 800,000 years.

5 The full 3,949-page assessment was released in conjunction with the 42-page "summary for policy-makers." While the latter went through a diplomatic approval process in addition to a scientific one, the former comes directly from scientists. Chapter one of the underlying report includes strong language admonishing Paris signatories, calling their pledges so far under the agreement "insufficient to reduce greenhouse gas emission enough" to keep global warming well below 2° Celsius.

6 The document is "a code red for humanity," said António Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, in prepared remarks tied to the release. "This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels before they destroy our planet."

7 Even as the IPCC authors have done away with some of the cautious uncertainty that marked past assessments, the last few months have seen a series of rapid-fire climate disasters that underline the new language. Summertime in the Northern Hemisphere has been marred by severe flooding across Europe and China as well as alarming drought and the early onset of large wildfires in the Western US and Canada. One of the coldest places on the planet, Siberia, has experienced severe heat and forest fires.

8 Nearly all of this can be attributed to human influence. The IPCC found that the combined

0–2 **UNEQUIVOCAL** eindeutig — **landmark**; s.w.u. **epochal** richtungsweisend — **to digest** h.: auswerten — **...backed** von ... unterstützt — **to forecast** voraussagen — **threshold** Schwelle — **to exceed**; s.w.u. **to breach** überschreiten

3–5 **delegate** Delegierte(r) — **talks** Verhandlungen — **nitrous oxide** Distickstoffmonoxid — **in conjunction with** zusammen mit — **to admonish** (er)mahnen — **pledge** Zusage — **insufficient** unzureichend

6–7 **code red** Alarmstufe Rot — **to be tied to** verbunden sein mit — **to sound the death knell for s.th.** (fig) etw. den Todesstoß versetzen — **to do away with** aufgeben — **rapid-fire** (fig) schnell aufeinanderfolgend — **to mar** beeinträchtigen — **onset** Beginn

8–9 **to attribute s.th. to s.th.** e-e S. auf etw. zurückführen — **to dump** h.: schleudern — **fine-particle pollution** Feinstaubbelastung — **carbon budget** CO₂-Budget — **upper bound** Obergrenze

10–12 **to call for** fordern — **expiration date** Ablaufdatum — **to imply** nahelegen — **to curb** eindämmen — **to slip out of reach** in weite Ferne rücken — **anomalous** h.: aus der Reihe fallend — **to set out** h.: abstecken — **mandate** Auftrag — **to address s.th.** s. mit etw. befassen

13–14 **to account for s.th.** etw. berücksichtigen — **magnitude** Größenordnung — **prior** vorausgehend — **to stand** h.: Bestand haben — **to restate** noch einmal sagen — **marker**; s.w.u. **mark** Marke — **Climate Action Tracker** Internetseite, die die Fortschritte der Länder im Hinblick auf das 1,5-Grad-Ziel verfolgt

SPECIAL  WORLD AND PRESS

Supplementary material

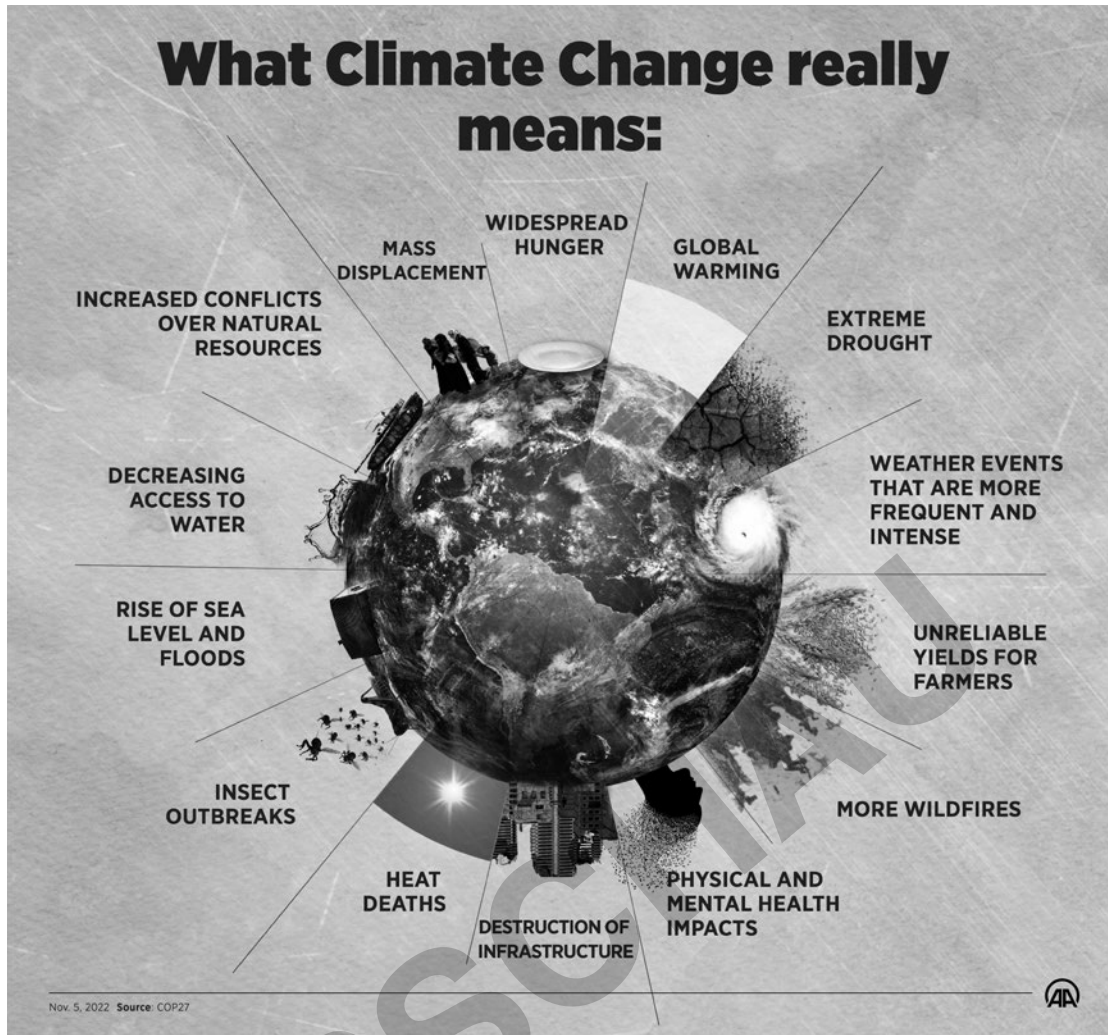


Photo: Picture Alliance



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INFOGRAPHIC: Getty Images



People escaping their flooded homes in Houston, Texas, after Hurricane Harvey struck in 2017.

Photo: Getty Images

Which Countries Are Meeting Their Paris Agreement Goals?

Selected national emission reduction goals and projected achievements by 2030, by associated limit on global warming

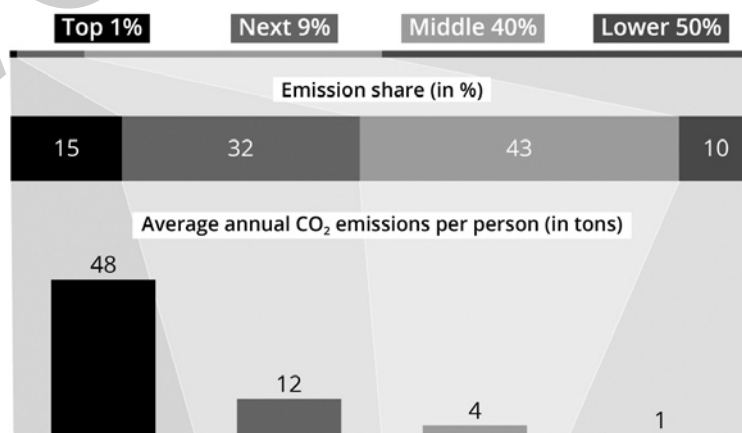
	Target	Projected achievement
Saudi Arabia 🇸🇦	+>4°C	+>4°C
Indonesia 🇮🇩	+>4°C	+3°C
India 🇮🇳	+>4°C	+2°C
Kenya 🇰🇪	+>4°C	+1.5°C
Russia 🇷🇺	+4°C	+4°C
Brazil 🇧🇷	+4°C	+3°C
Argentina 🇦🇷	+3°C	+4°C
Mexico 🇲🇽	+3°C	+4°C
Australia 🇦🇺	+3°C	+3°C
China 🇨🇳	+3°C	+3°C
Canada 🇨🇦	+2°C	+4°C
Japan 🇯🇵	+2°C	+3°C
U.S. 🇺🇸	+2°C	+3°C
European Union 🇪🇺	+2°C	+2°C
Nigeria 🇳🇮	+2°C	+1.5°C
UK 🇬🇧	+1.5°C	+2°C

Source: Climate Action Tracker



The One Percent's Huge Carbon Footprint

Estimated global CO₂ emission share by income groups



Source: Carbonbrief



acidification	Versauerung	climate-driven	klimabedingt
adaptation	Anpassung	coal	Kohle
agriculture	Landwirtschaft	coal consumption	Kohleverbrauch
air pollution	Luftverschmutzung	coal-fired power station	Kohlekraftwerk
aquifer	Grundwasser enthaltende Erdschicht	combustion	Verbrennung
billion	Milliarde	commodity prices	Rohstoffpreise
biodegradable	biologisch abbaubar	conservation	Naturschutz
biodiversity	Artenvielfalt	to conserve	erhalten
biomass	Biomasse	contaminant	Schadstoff
bushfire	Buschfeuer	contributor	Verursacher
car exhausts	Autoabgase	COP (= Conference of the Parties)	UN-Klimakonferenz
carbon capture and storage	CO ₂ -Abscheidung und -Speicherung	coral bleaching	Korallenbleiche
carbon dioxide	Kohlendioxid (CO ₂)	coral reef	Korallenriff
carbon emissions	CO ₂ -Emissionen	crude (oil)	Rohöl
carbon footprint	CO ₂ -Fußabdruck; CO ₂ -Bilanz	to cultivate	anbauen
carbon-neutral	CO ₂ -neutral	deforestation; forest clearance; logging	Abholzung
carbon neutrality	Klimaneutralität	desertification	Wüstenbildung
carbon	Kohlenstoff	to devastate; to ravage	verwüsten
climate accord	Klimaabkommen	developed countries	Industrienationen
climate advocate	Klimaschützer(in) (a. Verfechter[in])	developing countries	Dritte-Welt-Länder
climate breakdown	Klimakollaps	drought	Dürre
climate change denier	Klimawandelleugner(in)	ecology	Ökologie
climate change	Klimawandel	ecosystem	Ökosystem
climate crisis	Klimakrise	emerging economies	Schwellenländer
climate disaster; climate catastrophe	Klimakatastrophe	to emit	ausstoßen; emittieren
climate emergency	Klimanotstand	energy consumption	Energieverbrauch
climate scientist	Klimaforscher(in)	energy security	Energiesicherheit
climate summit	Klimagipfel	energy supply	Energieversorgung
climate target	Klimaziel	energy transition	Energiewende
		environmental degradation	Umweltzerstörung