

UPDATE SIGNATORY LIST ON PROTEST LETTER AGAINST UNEQUAL LIFE EVALUATION BY CLIMATE CHANGE ECONOMISTS IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

Below is a sign-on letter which GCI has been circulating. Since June, many people and organisations around the world have co-signed this in protest against the actions of some economists now working in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change or IPCC's Working Group Three (WG3) on "Economic and other Cross-Cutting Issues".

These (mostly OECD) economists have now established the following ideas in the drafts of the IPCC's Second Assessment Report (SAR): -

- (a) There will a huge number of deaths as a result of human-induced global climate changes.
- (b) These need to be given a cash value (a "damage cost").
- (c) The cash value of people's lives around the world is different.
- (d) This is because of their differing abilities to pay for damage insurance.

Consequently, the lives of people in poor countries should be substantially discounted in the Global Cost/Benefit Analysis (G-CBA) being conducted by IPCC.

The poorer countries have least - or indeed no - responsibility for causing the problems of climate change. They also cover the regions of the globe where most of the associated deaths will occur. They are also the countries now most blamed for "future impacts".

We do not feel that this aspect of the IPCC's analysis is ethically justifiable or politically prudent. We therefore ask you and all your colleagues please to consider becoming co-signatories to the attached letter. Signature collection will also continue until the 1st "Conference of the Parties" (COP) ie the UN Climate Change negotiations in Berlin next March.

"DEFEND THE VALUE OF LIFE"

Please co-sign THIS letter to the Conference of the Parties & the IPCC

"Protecting the world environment requires that development be sustainable.

"Some time ago main-stream economists explicitly set out to capture the sustainable development agenda for the economics profession.

"In this pursuit and with much public money, they invented the technique they call "global cost/benefit analysis" (G-CBA). Global warming and the cost and benefits of climate change are now assessed by them in these monetary terms. And this assessment is being aggressively pushed by the economists in the UN's Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

"Part of this exercise, they assert, entails giving cash values to human lives. They accept there are going to be hundreds of thousands of deaths worldwide as a result of global climate changes.

"A recent research paper from the UK-Government-funded C-SERGE, the UK's "Centre for the Social and Economic Research of the Global Environment", (C-SERGE Director David Pearce is also the convening lead author in IPCC on "Social Costs" and has now formally lodged this approach in the IPCC text - and it has survived the peer review) states that the cash value of a "statistical life" in the EC or the USA is \$1,500,000 per head, but in ("poorer countries" such as) China it is only \$150,000. In G-CBA, this means that, as an economist, you help capture the sustainable development agenda for your profession by discarding a real Chinese life ten times more easily than a real life in the EC or the USA.

"Ironically, these lives are now at risk as a result of damage to the global environment for which citizens in the EC and the USA have been and are at least ten times more responsible per head than citizens in China. There is, of course, a foreign policy cost associated with this since the population of the EC and the USA is outnumbered 10-1 by everyone else.

"The need to value human rights as equal, is prudent as well as perennial."

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| Aubrey Meyer Global Commons Institute (GCI) | Sheelagh O'Reilly Bangor University, Centre for Arid Zone Studies Research Fellow |
| Tony Cooper Global Commons Institute (GCI) | Dr. David T. Smernoff Bay Area Action California |
| Richard Douthwaite Global Commons Institute (GCI) | Louise Say Bradford University Peace Studies |
| Tim Rickman Global Commons Institute (GCI) | M C Mapako Biomass User's Network Technical Director |
| Joy Pagano Global Commons Institute (GCI) | Marielle Savard, British Columbia University, Canada |
| Dan Davenport Global Commons Institute (GCI) | Malachi O Orondo CCDU Kenya Director |
| Dave Bradney Global Commons Institute (GCI) | Professor Graciela Chichilnisky Director, Project on Information and Resources Columbia University |
| Nigel Dower Aberdeen University Dept Philos Politics & Int. Relations | Helle Rasmussen Copenhagen Business School |
| Antoine Sendama Africa Water Network | Leif Bloch Rasmussen, Copenhagen Business School |
| Sadachari Singh Tomar Agri Energy and Power Institute Bhopal India | Neelam Sethi Cornell University |
| Bruce McFarling MA Economics (University of Tennessee) | Dora Ann Lange Canhos Base de Dados Tropical Fundacao "Andre' Tosello" Brazil |
| Mustafa Pultar Prof. Faculty of Art, Design, Architecture, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkiye | Milind Kandlikar Carnegie Mellon Uni, Dept of Engineering & Public Policy |
| Arthur R Barrit Associated Labour Unions, Philippines | D Taylor Centre for Low Input Agriculture, South Africa, Director |
| Peter Kiwummulo Association of Socio Economic Progress Uganda | Koshy Cherail Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, India |
| Nirmada Das ASTRA Indian Institute of Science | Dr Paul Redfern Centre for the Study of Global Governance LSE UK |
| N Ganguli ASTRA Indian Institute of Science | Cynog Dafis Ceredigion & Pembroke North MP |
| S Lokras ASTRA Indian Institute of Science | Caree Simmons, Drury College |
| U Shrinivasa ASTRA Indian Institute of Science, Chairman | John Hontelez Chairman Friends of the Earth International |
| Victor Anderson Author Alternative Economic Indicators | Paul Spray Christian Aid UK |
| Brian Grant National Party of Canada, Pacific Region | Stan Jones, University of Oregon, USA |
| Tom Athanasiou | |

Dennis Berg,
Environmental Studies, CSU, Fullerton

Christine Harold

Tova Perlmutter

John Mead
Christian Ecology Link

Grace Akumu
Climate Network Africa (Kenya)

MK Pillai
Coir Board India

Art Farley
Computer and Information Science Uni Oregon USA

Per Flensburg
Copenhagen Business School

Helle Rasmussen
Copenhagen Business School

Birgitte Bush
Copenhagen Business School

Leif Bloch Rasmussen,
Copenhagen Business School

Chris Cuomo
Cornell University Science and Technology Studies

Ulrich Loenig
Edinburgh University Centre for Human Ecology - Dir.

Miles Litvinoff
Earthscan Action Handbook Author

Shelley Braithwaite
Earth Action Resource Centre

Jonathon Bevan
Earth Repair Charter

Dan Hinckley
Earthweb Project USA

Dr John Whitelegg
Ecologica Ltd Lancaster UK

Nicholas Hildyard
Ecologist Magazine

Wagaki Mwangi
EcoNews Africa

Adrian Berwert
Environmental Economist Zurich

Eugene P. Coyle
Energy Analyst San Francisco, California

Stephen Law
Environmental Monitoring Group, South Africa

MK Sharma
Educational Media Research Centre, India

K R Baskar
EMRC - MK University Madurai S India

S Rayamarhandan
EMRC - MK University Madurai S India

S Manukandan
EMRC - MK University Madurai S India

N Murthipandi
EMRC - MK University Madurai S India

M Ramkeerthi
EMRC - MK University Madurai S India

John Gowdy,
Professor of Economics, Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst Troy,
New York

S V Bajay
Energy Planning Co-Ordinator University of Campinas
Brazil

Youba Sokona
Environment and Development in the Third World,
IPCC WG3 Lead Author, Mali

Chris Chetsanga
Environment and Remote Sensing Institute, Zimbabwe

Rob Sinclair
Environment Liaison Centre International

Heinz Greijn
Environment Liaison Centre International

Jim Berreen
Environment Speaker Green Party UK

W Fred van Raaij
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Martin Hogan
Essex University

Musiliu O Ashiru
Forestry Research Institute Nigeria

AB Oguntala
Forestry Research Institute Nigeria

Charles Secrett
Friends of the Earth UK Director

John Whiting
Global Commons Trust UK

John Gordon
Global Environmental Research Centre

Iris Marion Young,
Professor Graduate School of Public & International
Affairs University of Pittsburgh

Titus Alexander
Stop Global Apartheid

Mike Feinstein
Green Party California

Patrick Samphire
Green Party Colchester

Alan Francis
Green Party Euro-candidate Beds and Milton Keynes

John Morrisey
Green Party Executive UK

Penny Kemp
Green Party Executive UK

Susan Miles
Green Party Executive UK

Penny Shepherd
Green Party Executive UK

John Morris
Green Party Executive UK

Miriam Kennett
Green Party Executive UK

Alex Begg
Green Party Executive UK

Ron Bailey
Green Party Executive UK

Darren Johnson
Green Party Executive UK

Jan Clark
Green Party Executive UK

David Taylor
Green Party Executive UK

Kit Brown
Midlothian Green Party

Ian Morrice
Midlothian Green Party Treasurer Scottish Green Party

Patricia McKenna
Member European Parliament, Comhaontas Glas Eire

Richard Howitt
Member European Parliament Labour Essex South

Nel van Djik
Member European Parliament, Groen Links, Netherlands

Stan Newens
Member European Parliament, London Central

Peter Crampton
Member European Parliament, Humberside, UK

Veronica Hardstaff
Member European Parliament, Lincolnshire & Humberside
South, UK

J Poehlmann
Green Party Germany

Jan Bojer Vindheim
Green Party Norway

Peter Doran
Green Party of Northern Ireland Region

Frank de Jong
Green Party of Ontario, leader

Mike Woodin
Green Party Oxford City Council

Mike Woodin
Green Party Oxford City Council

Claes Roxbergh
Green Party Sweden

Gosta Lynga
Green Party Australia

Ian McKenzie
Green Party Australia

Leeza Dobbie
Green Party Australia

Brendan Fuller
Green Party Australia

Karen Alexander
Green Party Australia

Piers Allbrook
Green Party Australia

Fran Thompson
Green Party Australia

Susie Chapman
Green Party Australia

Deb Foskey
Green Party Australia

Malcolm Lewis
Green Party Australia

Loise Crossley
Green Party Australia

Dr Richard Lawson
Health Speaker Green Party UK

Oleg Cazanov
Independent Ecology-Political Movement Russian Fed

Moha Rafi
India

P J Paul
Indian Institute of Science

R Prakas
Indian Institute of Science

K S Jagaduh
Indian Institute of Science

V Guyathu
Indian Institute of Science

M Girish
Indian Institute of Science

K J Dinesh
Indian Institute of Science

Mahesh Natarajan
Indian Institute of Science

Donald Winslow
Indiana University Department of Biology

Phil Ferraro
Institute for Bioregional Studies

Thomas Pattern
Institute of Education London University

Thomas Schulze
Institute for Energy Economics & the Rational Use of
Energy University Stuttgart

Dennis Palmini,
Professor of Economics Uni Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Axel Dorscht
Institute for Social Research, Ottawa, Canada

Daphne Wysham
Institute for Policy Studies Washington

V Balu
International Energy Initiative Director Bangalore

M Ramachandran
IREDA New Delhi India, Manager

Andrew Samuels
Jungian Analyst

B R Jagan
Karnataka Power Corporation, India

Peter Newell
Keele University, Dept of international Relations

Atiti Okwambitsa
KENGO Protection Office

Gilbert Arum
Kenya Energy & Environment Organisations

Dominic Walubengo
Kenya Energy & Environment Organizations

M S Ramaprashad
KIENT India

Sarah Hemstock
King's College London

Frank de Jong
Leader Green Party of Ontario

Melanie Jarman
Llyods and Midland Boycott Campaign

Suchit Nanda
Live Wire BBS Bombay India

Mark Norman
Macclesfield Green Party

R S Rajan
Madras

Piers Stephens
Manchester University Philosophy Department

Mark Thorp
Manchester University Academic Affairs Officer

Harry Lesser
Manchester University Snr Lecturer Philosophy
Department

Douglas McArthur
Manchester University Snr Lecturer French Department

Peter Dorman
James Madison College, Michigan State University

Blair Sandler,
Lorax Political Ecology Study Group California USA

Dr. Laura Punnett,
Dept. of Work Environment, Univ. Mass. Lowell, USA

Oduor Ong'wen
Multilateral Development Bank

Manuel Cervantes
National University of Nicaragua Managua

Simon Zadek
New Economics Foundation UK

Martin Saning'o
Olkonerei Pastoralist Survival Project Tanzania

Mike Smith
Oxford University Philosophy Dept

Sharad Lele
Pacific Institute Berkeley USA, Doctor

Julio K Prime
Panama

Dr Julian E Salt
Peace Studies Dept University of Bradford

S K Arthikeyan
PMT PVT Ltd

Jon Scott
Prof & Chairman Atmospheric Sc. Univ. at Albany New York

Ian Douglas
Prof School of Geography Manchester University

Ian Ramsey
Rainforest Action Group Scotland

Angie Zelter
Reforest the Earth

Brendan Hill
Reforesting Scotland

Andy Wightman
Reforesting Scotland

Alastair McIntosh
Reforesting Scotland Development Director

Tim Lenton
Robinson College Cambridge University

Jose Nicolas
Rural Enterprise Development Fdn Philippines

M K Raja
Samrat Engineering

Peter Lauchmonen
Sarvodaya Development Organisation, Zimbabwe

Wanda S. Ballentine
Save Our Ozone

Keekok Lee
Snr lecturer Philosophy Department Manchester Uni

N H Ravindranath
Snr Sc Officer Indian Institute of Science

R Marston
Sterling University Dept of Environmental Science Dr

Gerald Leach
Stockholm Environment Institute

Toby Champion
Sussex University

Martin Khor
Director Third World Network

Buhler Reea
Umwelt und Energie, Dorfli

Arnaldo Walter
University of Campinas Brazil

Stan Jones,
University of Oregon, USA

David Barkin
Professor of Economics
Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana Unidad
Xochimilco, Mexico City

Chris Tilly
Assoc Professor economist Dept of Policy and Planning
University of Massachusetts

John Barkham
University of East Anglia Snr lecturer Sch of
Environment Sc.

Electo Silva Lora
University of Oriente Cuba

Alan Long
VEGA UK

George Monbiot
Visiting lecturer Green College Oxford UK

Ann Heidenreich
World Council of Churches

Tom Wakeford
York University Biology Department UK

Ernst von Weizsacker
Wuppertal Institute President

Mechtild Schmedders
Wuppertal Institute

Christopher Manstein
Wuppertal Institute

Marcus Stewen
Wuppertal Institute/University of Mainz

Nese Yawuz
Wuppertal Institute

Meike Kolsch
Wuppertal Institute

Thomas Merten
Institut Arbeit und Technik

Lorenz Kneser
Wuppertal Institute

Hans Peter Durr
Max Planck Institut fur Physik

Annegret Falter
VDW

Ulrich Albrecht
Freie Universitat Berlin

Andreas Buro
JW Goethe Universitat Frankfurt

Johns Behrmann
Max Planck Institut

Heinrich Schiemann
Pensionere des ZDF

Constanze Eisenbart
VDW

Roland Vogl
Staatshanglenland Brandenburg

Helga Ehlers
Freie Journalisten

HE Gumlich
TU Berlin

Bernd Hamm
Universitat Trier

Olaf Joachim
Universitat Bonn

Ulrich Bartosch
Universitat Regensburg

HJ Fischbeck
EV Akademie Mulheim

Christiane Busch Luty
Universitat der Bundeswehr, Munchen

Charles Levenstein, Ph. D.
Professor of Work Environment Policy University of
Massachusetts Lowell

Fotine Fahouris
Member WWF Greece

Robert Rubin
Wolfgang Rehm
VIRUS Vienna

Bernhards Wiebel
Ruhr Universitat, Bochum

Zia van der Veen

Dr Warren Andrew Chang

David Carter

Odette Berger

Andrew Ridell

Peter Alcock

Ian Boote

Graham Reid

Gurinder Shahi

S Iniyani

Patrick Mann
Organic Farmer

Jacqueline Florek,
Issues Specialist, USA

George Silva

Ramona McCoy

Blair Irvine

Nancy Glass

Markku Oksanen

Heikki Patom

Kenneth Scott (USA)

Toni Vidan
Zeleva Arcia Zagreb

Andrea Ersek
Zeleva Arcia Zagreb

Marin Kiriwck
Zeleva Arcia Zagreb

Kristina Markowic
Zeleva Arcia Zagreb

Maja Bogunovic
Zeleva Arcia Zagreb

Eva Kaufmann
VIRUS Vienna

Karl Brandnek
VIRUS Vienna

Ernst Lamar
Endery Vienna

Maria Bayer
Siemensk Vienna

Michaela Hoffman
Siemensk Vienna

Michael F Herder
Vienna

Tomas Cerny
Vienna

Marcus Windhaber
Gymnasium Vienna

Ivoneta Diethart

Bernhard Baumann
Vienna

Evelyn Magletner
Vienna

Angelica Tesak
Vienna

Jet van Hailsma
ASEED Holland

Chrissa Pearson
Prague

Stephanie Howard
Prague

Erika Welge
Kulturne Socialni Centrum Prague

Hellmuth-Christian Stuvén
Denmark

Brian Grant

Claire Gilbert
Blazing Tattles

late arrivals

Anand Patwardhan
Department of Engineering and Public Policy
Carnegie Mellon University

Ellen Schmidt
Greenpeace International Climate and Energy Campaigner

ORIGINAL GCI CLIMATE STATEMENT AND SIGNATORIES

"We the undersigned acknowledge with concern that climate change through enhanced global warming is a real and growing threat and is caused by the emissions of long-lived greenhouse gases from human activities.

"The IPCC advises that to stabilise atmospheric concentrations requires a reduction of emissions to less than 40% of current levels.

"On average each person in the world contributes 1.65 metric tonnes of carbon and equivalents each year. 40% of this figure ie 0.66 MTCE thus represents each individual's output threshold to forcing future climate change.

"Currently (1990) 53% of the people in the world produce greenhouse gas emissions at or below this threshold figure, and their emissions contribute only 90% of the non-forcing total. They therefore provide the equivalent of a 10% "credit" (subsidy) which is taken up by the rest of the world.

"This inequity is particularly unacceptable at a time when the majority of people are struggling to meet basic human needs. it is also unacceptable as the forcing emissions total is derived largely from unsustainable, luxury-based activities in countries one of whose governments has still refused even the principle of setting targets for CO2 stabilization let alone reduction.

"We believe that all people present and future, should have rights-to-life and sustainable livelihoods which are free from the threat and the reality of human-induced climate disruption.

"We stress that the responsibility for taking corrective action and reducing bad practice lies with those who created and who continue to exacerbate this global crisis. We demand that their response should be immediate and without prevarication, and should take special action over this issue of social inequity."

Ann Clywd
Shadow Minister Overseas Development UK

Sir Richard Body
Conservative MP (UK)

Tony Benn
Labour MP

The Rt Hon Paddy Ashdown
leader of the Liberal Democrats UK

Simon Hughes MP
Lib/Dem Environment Speaker

Charles Kennedy
President of the Liberal Democrat Party UK

Margaret Ewing MP
Leader of the Scottish National Party

Ken Livingstone MP
UK Labour Party

Bryan Gould MP
UK Labour Party Shadow Environment Speaker

Dr David Clark
UK Labour Party Shadow Food and Agriculture Speaker

Clare Short MP
UK Labour Party

Hermann Scheer
Bundestag MP

Michael Meacher
UK Labour Party Shadow Spokesman Social Security

Jim Wallace MP
UK Lib/Dem Party Chief Whip

Sir Russell Johnson
Lib/Dem Speaker on Europe

Lord Bonham Carter
Lib/Dem Speaker on Overseas Development

Lord Stoddart of Swindon (Labour Peer) Former Lord Commissioner for the Treasury and Front Bench Opposition spokesman on Energy in the Lords

Baroness Eward Biggs
opposition spokesman for ODA House of Lords UK

Wilfried Taelkemper
Vice President European Parliament

Dyfedd Wigley MP (Now Lord)
Plaid Cymru

Dyffid Ellis Thomas MP
Plaid Cymru

Rosie Barnes MP
Social Democratic Party

Bowen Wells
Conservative MP

Ken Collins
MEP Chair of European Parliament Environment Committee

James Glynn Ford
Member European Parliament

Kim Howells MP
UK Labour Party

Terry Lewis
UK Labour Party

Joyce Quinn MP
UK Labour Party

Tom Pendry MP
UK Labour Party

Joan Ruddock MP
UK Labour Party

Jeremy Corbyn MP
UK Labour Party

Jim Cousins MP

UK Labour Party

Hemmo Muntingh
Member European Parliament

Paul Lannoye
Member European Parliament

Jon Owen Jones
UK Labour Party

M Watson
UK Labour Party

Joan Lestor
UK Labour Party

R Waring MP
UK Labour Party

Dawn Primarolo MP
UK Labour Party

Anne Campbell
UK Labour Party

Jean Corston MP
UK Labour Party

Alice Mahon MP
UK Labour Party

Kevin Hughes MP
UK Labour Party

Mike Hall MP
UK Labour Party

Andrew Miller MP
UK Labour Party

Dale Campbell Savours MP
UK Labour Party

Ieuan Jones MP
UK Labour Party

Cynog Dafis
Plaid Cymru