



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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## AIDS Funding, Who will Step Up?

Scientists say the tools needed to end the AIDS epidemic are available. But public health interventions are running out of money. And even as officials talk about the approaching end of a pandemic that has killed more than 35 million people, the goal of eradicating AIDS is looking ever further away. Funding has dropped before, but this time seems different, said Mike Podmore, the director of STOPAIDS. Global fatigue has set in after nearly two decades of funding the AIDS response.

[Read More on Devex](#)



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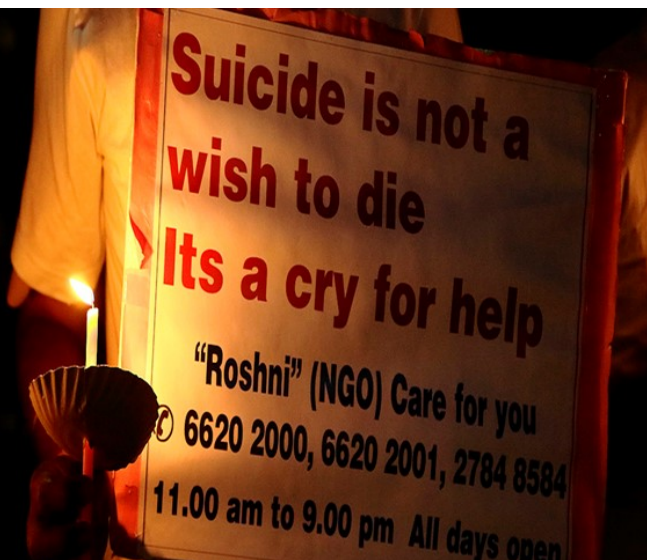
## US States Agreed to Keep Exxon Climate Deception Probe Secret: Here's Why

As far back as the 1970s, Exxon conducted research that confirmed the occurrence of climate change—and that burning fossil fuels is a major contributor to it. But ExxonMobil largely kept that research under wraps, while funding campaigns that denied the science of climate change for decades. This deception came to light last year, triggering multiple state-level investigations and legal challenges of the oil giant.

[Read More on Green Car Reports](#)







## Suicide Deaths in India Increasing At Alarming Rate

Suicide rates in India are drastically increasing compared to the rest of the world, with Indian women having the highest rates of all countries. Approximately 30 percent of the world's suicide deaths occur in India. In 2013, more than a quarter of a million Indians committed suicide and more than 100,000 deaths in women alone. Some researchers believe the rigid marriage system in India may be contributing to the country's high rates. In an article published by the Indian Journal of Psychiatry, the authors explained the expectations placed on Indian women to marry and stay married, no matter the cost or negative circumstances such as mistreatment.

[Read More on Humanosphere](#)

## Haiti's Nationwide Doctor Strike Continues With No End in Sight

Medical staff across Haiti have entered the fourth month of a nationwide strike, which has spread to more than a dozen state-run hospitals and led to countless deaths as hospitals scramble to provide care for neglected patients. The residents on strike earn the equivalent of about \$140 a month and are demanding better pay, improvements in hospitals' sanitary conditions and basic medical supplies like surgical gloves and gauze. News reports have documented the appalling conditions in public hospitals, where power outages are common and night-shift surgeons are forced to operate by light from their cell phones.

[Read More on Humanosphere](#)



## Hard Times in Venezuela Breed Malaria as Desperate Flock to Mines

Venezuela was the first nation in the world to be certified by the World Health Organization for eradicating malaria in its most populated areas, beating the United States and other developed countries to that milestone in 1961. It was a huge accomplishment for a small nation, one that helped Venezuela's development as an oil power and fueled hopes that a model to stamp out malaria across the globe was at hand. Since then, the world has dedicated enormous amounts of time and money to beating back the disease, with deaths plummeting by 60 percent in places with malaria in recent years, according to the W.H.O. But in Venezuela, the clock is running backward.

[Read More on New York Times](#)





## Scientists Warn World Will Miss Key Climate Target

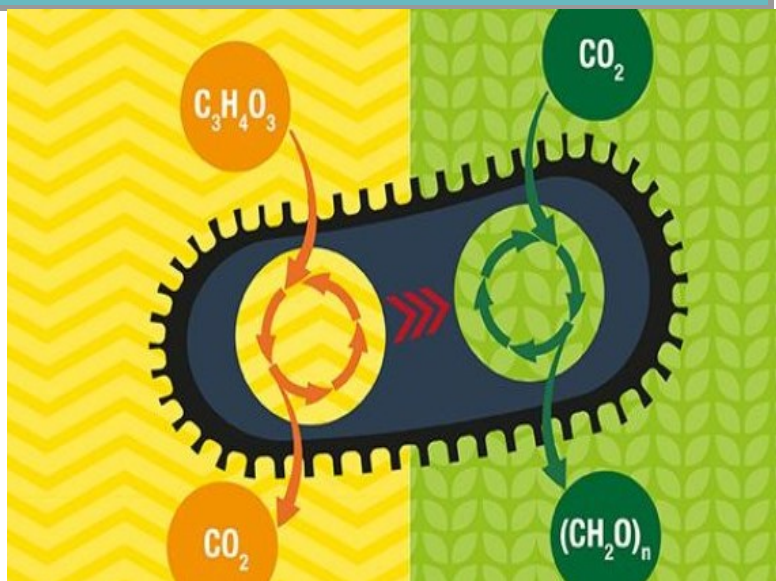
Leading climate scientists have warned that the Earth is perilously close to breaking through a 1.5C upper limit for global warming, only eight months after the target was set. Figures from Ed Hawkins of Reading University show that average global temperatures were already more than 1C above pre-industrial levels for every month except one over the past year and peaked at +1.38C in February and March. Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. The Paris agreement is vague about the exact rate at which the world's carbon emissions should be curtailed if we are to achieve its 1.5C target. It merely indicates they should reach zero by the second half of the 21st century.

[Read More on The Guardian](#)

## Eating Air, Making Fuel

Is it possible to "reprogram" an organism that is found higher in the food chain, which consumes sugar and releases carbon dioxide, so that it will consume carbon dioxide from the environment and produce the sugars it needs to build its body mass? That is just what a group of Weizmann Institute of Science researchers recently did. Dr. Niv Antonovsky, who led this research in Prof. Ron Milo's lab at the Institute's Plant and Environmental Sciences Department, says that the ability to improve carbon fixation is crucial for our ability to cope with future challenges, such as the need to supply food to a growing population on shrinking land resources while using less fossil fuel.

[Read More on The SolarDaily](#)



## The End of Coal-Fired Growth In China

China's coal consumption grew from 1.36 billion tons per year in 2000 to 4.24 billion tons per year in 2013, an annual growth rate of 12 percent. As of 2015, the country accounts for approximately 50 percent of global demand for coal. In other words, China's economic miracle was fueled primarily by coal. This tremendous coal combustion creates air pollution and carbon emissions that threaten China, its neighbors and the rest of the world. Now, China is able to maintain a moderate growth rate while lowering its coal consumption. Two forces are driving this trend.

[Read More on Brookings](#)





## Why The GMO Labelling Bill Obama Just Signed Into Law Is A Sham and A National Embarrassment

It is known as the DARK Act—Denying Americans the Right to Know. It was signed by President Obama in the afterglow of the Democratic National Convention, without fanfare or major media coverage. He also nullified the GE seed labeling laws in Vermont and Virginia that allowed farmers to choose what seeds they wanted to buy and plant. And for good measure he preempted Alaska's law requiring the labeling of any GE fish or fish product, passed to protect the state's vital fisheries from contamination by recently approved genetically engineered fish.

[Read More on AlterNet](#)

## Overall Americans Are Becoming Less Skeptical About Global Warming, But There Are Still Partisan Divisions

As temperatures climb higher, global warming doubt among Americans is falling to record lows. Recent reports indicate that the first half of 2016 was the hottest since records have been kept. At the same time, the number of Americans who do not think there is solid evidence for rising global temperatures has reached a new low: just 15%. These results from the latest National Surveys on Energy and the Environment (NSEE) from the University of Michigan and Muhlenberg College indicate the lowest level of global warming doubt among Americans since the NSEE began in 2008.

[Read More on The Brookings](#)



## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: Ottawa apologizes for forced relocation of Sayisi Dene First Nation in Manitoba

The Canadian government has apologized and will provide millions in compensation for the forced relocation of the Sayisi Dene First Nation 60 years ago in northern Manitoba. The Sayisi Dene were relocated about 250 km east because the provincial and federal governments believed they were causing a steep decline in the caribou herd — which was later proved to be untrue. In their new location near Churchill, food was scarce and housing inadequate.

[Read More on The Toronto Star](#)



## Quote of The Week

Referring to a (currently) last hope scheme for keeping to the 1.5 degree of global climate increase through making bioenergy available by creating vast plantations of trees and bushes, using their wood burned for energy while the carbon dioxide emitted would be liquefied and stored underground, Cambridge University climate expert Professor Peter Wadhams said:

**"It could be the trick. The trouble is that you would need to cover so much land with plants for combustion you would not have enough space to grow food or provide homes for Earth's wildlife. In the end, I think we just have to hope that some kind of extraction technology, as yet unimagined by scientists, is developed in the next couple of decades. If not, we are in real trouble."**

[Read More on The Guardian](#)

## EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Oct. 15-16	Climate Change Adaptation 2016 Fifth International Conference	Toronto, Canada	<a href="http://www.planetfriendly.net/calendar/">http://www.planetfriendly.net/calendar/</a>
Oct. 16-17	6th Global Forum on Health Promotion	Charlottetown Canada	<a href="http://parc.ophea.net/event/">http://parc.ophea.net/event/</a>
Oct. 17-20	Habitat III: The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development	Quito, Ecuador	<a href="https://www.habitat3.org">https://www.habitat3.org</a>
Oct. 18-19	Health Promotion Ontario Annual Conference	Ottawa Canada	<a href="http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/docs/charter-chartre/pdf/charter.pdf">http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/docs/ charter-chartre/pdf/charter.pdf</a>
Nov. 9-11	The Thirteenth AMNET International Conference on Chronic Diseases	New Mexico, USA	<a href="http://www.amnetbcom.org/">http://www.amnetbcom.org/</a>
Nov. 14-18	4th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Vancouver Canada	<a href="http://www.csih.org/en/events/">http://www.csih.org/en/events/</a>
Nov. 21-24	9th Global Conference on Health Promotion	Shanghai China	<a href="http://www.who.int/healthpromotion">http://www.who.int/healthpromotion</a>



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# ACHIEVING GLOBAL HEALTH EQUITY: WHAT WILL IT REALLY TAKE?



In a lively discussion that went into the late hours, they described the immense challenges they face in the Democratic Republic of Congo delivering adequate health care to nearly 80 million people across an area the size of Western Europe, where roads, electricity, clinics, medicine, and doctors are all in critically short supply, and three out of four people live on less than US\$2 a day. During the past 25 years, the percentage of the world's people who live in extreme poverty has been cut in half. Average life expectancy has increased by more than six years. Childhood mortality has been reduced by 50 percent. Polio has nearly been eradicated.

Steve Davis, CEO of PATH believes the greatest impact will come from social innovation. Social innovation is a term that gets tossed around a lot at international meetings, in business schools, and around conference tables where people are trying to figure out how to improve health in desperately poor communities where traditional government and market-based approaches are inadequate. He defines social as a disruptive approach that has a significant and sustained positive impact on the lives of large numbers of people through partnerships that span governments, businesses and the social sector (which includes multilateral organizations, foundations and nongovernmental organizations).

[Read More on The Medium](#)

# FLIP THE SWITCH! FOUR FORMER COAL SITES THAT ARE GOING GREEN



Solar, wind, geothermal – you name it, renewable power capacity is on the rise. Around the world, there are more people employed by renewables than ever before (8.1 million, to be exact) and global investment in clean energy is through the roof. All this while at least 50 US coal companies have filed for bankruptcy since 2012, which tells you which way the wind is blowing from the market's perspective. But dirty energy like coal leaves a big mess when mines are closed and power plants are decommissioned. So what happens to those sites after Big Coal moves out? Sometimes clean energy moves in and, well, cleans things up.

In Nanticoke, Ontario what used to be the largest coal plant in North America (and the dirtiest in Canada) is well on its way to becoming a 44-MW solar farm off the coast of Lake Erie. Nanticoke Coal Plant was decommissioned in 2013 amid safety concerns and as part of Ontario's gradual phase out of coal-fired power – which has now been banned entirely in the province. Construction for the solar farm is slated to begin in 2017, and the project will take advantage of the transmission lines already in place from existing infrastructure. In 2015 (the first year Ontario was completely coal-free), the Canadian province didn't have a single smog day, compared to 53 smog days just 10 years before.

[Read More on The Climate Reality Project](#)





Using a collection of six posters, Nigeria attempts to inform health care professionals on proper safety protocol when administering medication and disposing medical waste.

One of the poster titled "Segregation of Medical Waste" shows health workers the proper way to segregate medical waste. Foods, bottles, cans and paper materials should go in the non-infectious waste. It shows that needles, syringes and broken glass should go in the sharps waste. In addition, gauze, dressing, IV fluid lines should go in the infectious waste.

Another poster called, "Be Needle Smart, Avoid Needle Stick Injury" informs health workers about how to dispose of used syringes correctly. It shows the public syringes and needle boxes must be disposed into safety boxes after each injection without recapping.

In addition, the poster "Five Moments to Wash Hands" aims to explain to the public when it is important to wash your hands. These situations include of before and after touching a patient, before clean or aseptic procedures, after touching patients surroundings and after body fluid exposure risk.

[Read More on AIDS Free US Aid](#)



# RARE EARTH MARKET



Most people have no idea what's in an iPhone. Yttrium and praseodymium don't exactly roll off the tongue, but they're part of what make smartphones so small, powerful and bright. These exotic materials are among the planet's 17 rare-earth elements, and surprisingly, the soft, silvery metals are not at all rare. But they're found in tiny concentrations, all mixed together, and usually embedded in hard rock, which makes them difficult — and messy — to isolate. In China, which mines 89 percent of global output, toxic wastes from rare-earth facilities have poisoned water, ruined farmlands and made people sick.

Beyond high-tech gadgets, rare earths play a critical role in national defense, enabling radar systems and guided missiles. Ironically, they also power clean-energy technologies, such as wind turbines and electric cars. This year, global consumption is expected to be about 155,000 tons, far more than the 45,000 tons used 25 years ago. Demand will only grow — likely at an accelerated pace — as the world tries to rein in climate change.

At the moment, only China can satisfy that hunger. Yet in 2010, Beijing cut rare-earth exports by 40 percent — possibly to boost its high-tech sector — and cut off supplies to Japan over a territorial dispute. Its muscle flexing caused prices to soar, sparking new exploration for rare-earth deposits around the world. A boom in illegal mining in China has since driven prices back down, making it extremely difficult for non-Chinese mines to stay open or get off the ground. Nevertheless, the rest of the world hasn't given up: there are currently 50 deposits at an advanced stage of development (see map) that could someday challenge China's dominance.

[Read More on Foreign Policy](#)

# DO OIL COMPANIES REALLY NEED \$4 BILLION PER YEAR OF TAXPAYERS MONEY?



What would happen if the federal government ended its subsidies to companies that drill for oil and gas? The American oil and gas industry has argued that such a move would leave the United States more dependent on foreign energy. Many environmental activists counter that ending subsidies could move the United States toward a future free of fossil fuels — helping it curtail its emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In a new report for the Council on Foreign Relations, Gilbert Metcalf, a professor of economics at Tufts University, concluded that eliminating the three major federal subsidies for the production of oil and gas would have a very limited impact on the production and consumption of these fossil fuels.

Cutting oil drilling subsidies might reduce domestic oil production by 5 percent in the year 2030. As a result, he thinks, the worldwide price of oil would inch up by only 1 percent. He assumes it will hardly be affected because other countries would increase production as the flow of American crude slowed. Demand would hardly budge, as the price of gasoline at the pump would rise by at most 2 cents a gallon.

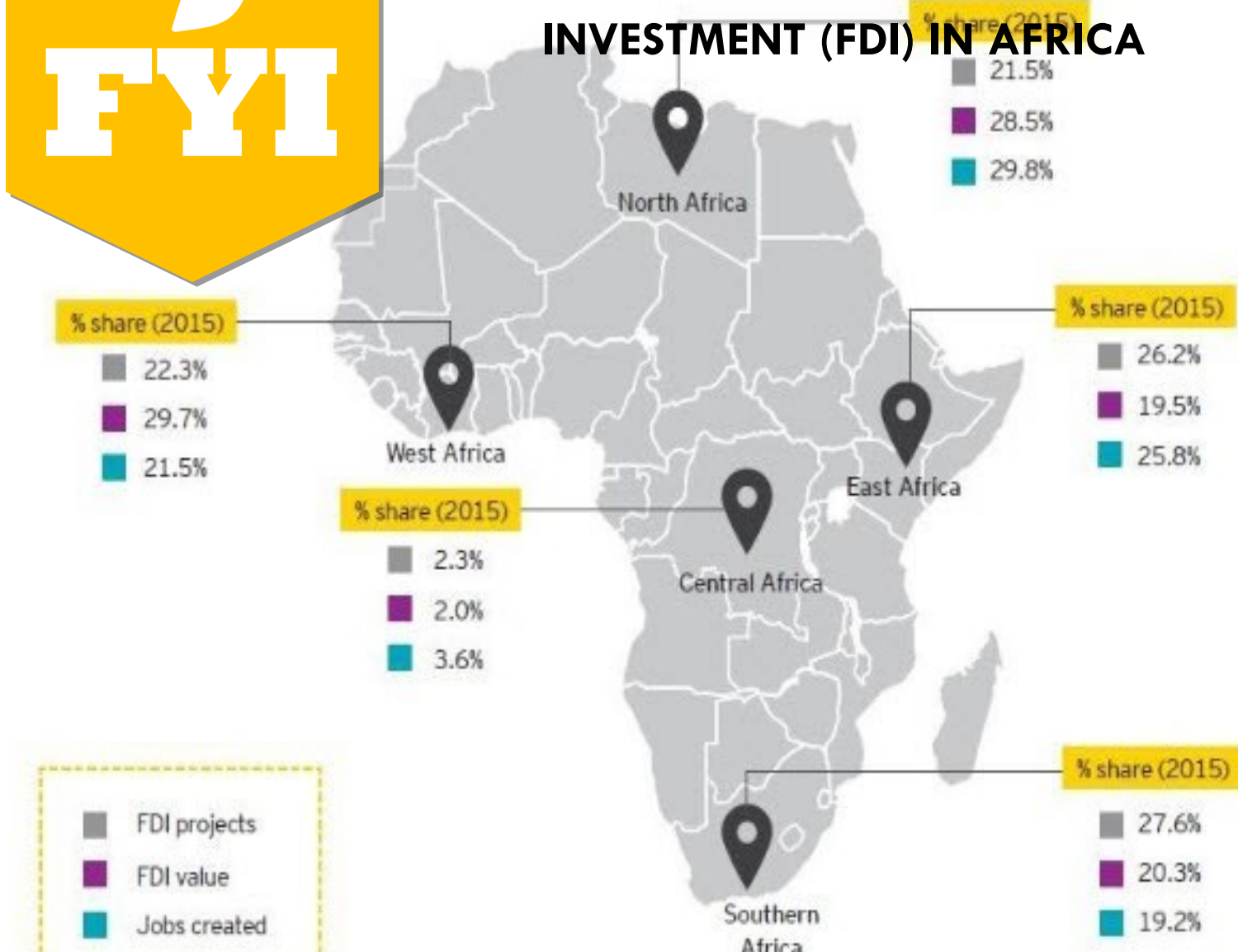
In terms of carbon emissions, nothing much would happen at all, he concludes. An earlier study concluded that eliminating subsidies would have reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 2005 and 2009 by less than 1 percent. Mr. Metcalf argues that this “overstates the emissions reduction potential of tax reform.” And still, these modest findings could give some political muscle to those fighting climate change. They may not mobilize Republican politicians to join in the battle. But they help to undermine the case made by energy companies that drilling for fossil fuels merits federal support.

[Read More on New York Times](#)





## FIGURE OF THE WEEK: FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) IN AFRICA



Recently, Ernst and Young released their annual report, EY's Africa Attractiveness Program 2016, which takes stock of Africa's FDI landscape in 2015. The report highlighted the 2015 gains made by the East African region and Kenya specifically, noting that East Africa has nearly closed the gap with southern Africa as an FDI destination—receiving 26.2 percent of total FDI projects in Africa compared with southern Africa's share of 27.6 percent. From 2014 to 2015, southern Africa observed an 11.6 percent decrease in its share of FDI projects, while East Africa saw a 26.3 percent increase.

Despite the fact that regional integration is one of the key factors driving foreign direct investment (FDI) to the region, the East African Community (EAC) has been experiencing some hardships lately. Tanzania, the current chair of the EAC Heads of State, announced two weeks ago that the regional body would not be signing an economic partnership agreement (EPA) with the European Union—a deal that the Kenyan government strongly favors.

Tanzania cites the Brexit as justification for refusing to sign, arguing that the deal could render the EAC vulnerable to declining economic conditions in Europe. Still, Kenya has much more at stake if the EAC continues to refuse the EPA, as it does not benefit from the same Least Developed Country status that already allows many other EAC countries favorable access to the European market. Starting in October, Kenya will face increased tariffs and trade regulations if the deal is left unsigned.

[Read More on The Brookings](#)

Finding our way home and back to routines at the end of summer break!!!  
The 'Inukshuk,' a symbolic stone construction from Canada's northern Inuit and other peoples,  
marking key places for direction and communication, telling us we 'are on the right path.'  
(Toronto Waterfront, Summer, 2016)



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