



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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Challenges To Cancer Program Development In Low And Middle Income Countries

Numerous challenges exist to cancer program development, and there is constant competition from other equally pressing health and environmental issues that pull on the resources allotted to cancer care. In settings of poor resources, there is limited government buy-in and poor awareness; hence, cancer program development may not be feasible in the short term. Efforts should be geared at awareness, education and primary prevention. The barriers to cancer control in low middle income countries are multiple and diverse, but not insurmountable.

[Read More on Annals of Global Health](#)



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\$17 Billion Project Proposes Changing Course of Asia's Mekong River

The Mekong River meanders through the nations of Southeast Asia, making its way south from China's Tibetan plateau until it spills into the South China Sea, about 4000 kilometers away. For the past few years, fishing communities along its banks have complained that fish stocks are drying up, and many blame construction projects underway upstream. Huge hydropower dams and irrigation systems designed to power modern farms across the Mekong region are changing how people interact with the river. With more than 30 other hydropower dams currently planned for the Mekong region, alarms are beginning to sound echoing chaos regarding the transformation of the distinct culture of an entire region.

[Read More on VOA](#)





Suicide Attempt In Uganda Ignites Conversation About Mental Health

A dramatic suicide attempt caught on video in Uganda's capital has spurred a national conversation about mental illness. The man survived, but many are now calling for increased attention to the nation's mental health care system. However, most Ugandans especially in rural settings, lack basic access to effective care. With a population of over 37 million, there are only 32 psychiatrists in the entire country. Dr. Basangwa, the executive director at Butabika Hospital, said that the government is improving access in Uganda. This includes refurbishing regional mental health care wards and training around 300 psychiatric clinical officers to work in lower level health facilities.

[Read More on VOA](#)

In India, Systemic Forces Lead Scores Of Indebted Farmers To Commit Suicide

Combining restrictive financial policies with the instability of climate change can lead to crippling debt for farmers. Even worse, this debt is leading many of those farmers to commit suicide in large numbers. More than 300,000 farmers, cultivators and agricultural laborers, have committed suicide between 1995 and 2014 either by ingesting pesticides or by hanging themselves. Farmer suicides account for 11.2 percent of all suicides in India. Agricultural investment is a big gamble.

[Read More on Humansphere](#)



More Than 300 Million At Risk Of Life-Threatening Diseases From Dirty Water

More than 300 million people in Asia, Africa and Latin America are at risk of life threatening diseases like cholera and typhoid due to the increasing pollution of water in rivers and lakes. Population growth, expansion of agriculture and an increased amount of raw sewage released into rivers and lakes are among the main reasons behind the increase of surface water pollution, putting some 323 million people at risk of infection. The water quality at a global scale and the number of people affected by bad water quality are much more severe than expected. However, a significant number of rivers remain in good condition and need to be protected.

[Read More on Reuters](#)



Obama On Climate Change: The Trends Are “Terrifying”

What makes climate change difficult is that it is not an instantaneous catastrophic event. It is a slow moving issue that, on a daily basis, people don't experience and don't see. Climate change, Mr. Obama often says, is the greatest long-term threat facing the world, as well as a danger already manifesting itself as droughts, storms, heat waves and flooding. More than health care, more than the historic first of an African-American president, he believes that his efforts to slow the warming of the planet will be the most consequential legacy of his presidency. “When you see severe environmental strains of one sort or another on cultures, on civilizations, on nations, the byproducts of that are unpredictable and can be very dangerous. It is certainly going to be enormously disruptive worldwide.”

[Read More On The New York Times](#)

Russia's Norilsk Nickel Admits Spillage Responsible For 'Red River'

Russian metals giant Norilsk Nickel has admitted that a spillage at one of its plants was responsible for a local river turning blood red. Russian environmental regulators had ordered an investigation last week into why the Daldykan River near Norilsk in the Russian Arctic had been discoloured. Despite initially denying that it was responsible, Norilsk Nickel admitted that heavy rains had resulted in water flooding over a “filtration dam” at the plant and into the river. Activists said it was too early to evaluate the environmental impact of the spillage as the official investigation is still ongoing. The Norilsk region is one of the most polluted regions in the world. The country's state statistics service classified the region Russia's most polluted in 2010.

[Read More On The Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#)



Arctic Sea Ice Summer Minimum In 2016 Joint-Second Lowest On Record

The arctic has hit its summer sea ice minimum for the year, say scientists at the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre, with a total ice cover clocking in at 4.14m square kilometers. That puts 2016 in a statistical tie with the second lowest summer extent set in 2007, with only 2012 recording a smaller extent of 3.39m square kilometers. However, the sea ice measurements for this year are still preliminary, as changing winds or late season melt could still reduce the Arctic ice extent. As global average temperatures have reached new highs through 2015 and 2016, including an ongoing streak of 15 consecutive months of record-breaking temperatures, records have also tumbled for this year's sea ice.

[Read More on The Carbon Brief](#)



The Reasons Why Politics Seems So Tribal In 2016

The freedom to live desirably, a good education and the internet: could these things be widening the gap between opposing political beliefs?

Politics has never seemed more tribal. In America, it's Donald Trump versus Hillary Clinton. In Europe, it's the Europhiles versus the Eurosceptics. In the U.S., Australia and the Europe, the gap between liberals and conservatives, the left and the right is widening. Look at social media, and it can feel like antipathy towards the other side is becoming increasingly intense.

So, what might be driving this tribalism? Psychological research reveals subconscious forces, which in the face of facts, experience or better judgement, prevent people seeing alternative points of view and push them into ever-more partisan camps. From where people live to what they read, modern life has an alarming power to entrench people's political affiliations and views without them even realizing it.

[Read More on BBC Future](#)

Revisiting The Journey To The Sustainable Development Goals

It's been almost one year since heads of state and government adopted 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', the ambitious agenda which contains 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets during a special session of the UN General Assembly. In fact, 2015 was one of the most important years for multilateral agreements. Not only did the governments sign up to SDGs, they also reached the Paris Climate Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as the framework for funding the two policy agendas. However, one major criticism levelled at the SDGs and their targets is that they are far too numerous. The reality is that the world of 2015 faced major crises in so many areas that it is difficult to imagine what could have been excluded.

[Read More On Inter Press Service](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH:

18.3% Decline In First Nations Students Receiving Federal Support For Post Secondary Education

The number of First Nations students in Canada receiving federal support for post secondary education has dropped 18.3% since 1997, according to documents obtained by the federal NDP through an Access to Information request. CBC reports that the First Nations population in Canada grew by 27% over this same period. The report comes in the wake of criticism directed at the federal government for not including a 50 million dollar increase to the Post-secondary Student Support Program in the federal budget that was pledged during the 2015 election campaign. "I'm shocked and saddened to see those numbers. I didn't realize it was that high," Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde said in an interview with CBC. "This is not acceptable. It's just another missed opportunity to help close the socioeconomic gap that exists."

[Read More On CBC News](#)



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

About 500 representatives of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, and other faiths recently discussed how their members could better promote peace and reconciliation. In a final appeal that key representatives signed and gave to children from around the world, they vowed "to oppose every form of violence and abuse of religion which seeks to justify war and terrorism..."

"No to war! May the anguished cry of the many innocents not go unheeded. Let us urge leaders of nations to defuse the causes of war: the lust for power and money, the greed of arms' dealers, personal interest and vendettas for past wrongs."

Assisi, Italy, September 20, 2016

[Read More On The Huffington Post](#)



EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Oct. 15-16	Climate Change Adaptation 2016 Fifth International Conference	Toronto, Canada	http://planetfriendly.net/calendar/
Oct. 16-17	6th Global Forum on Health Promotion	Charlottetown, Canada	https://parc.ophea.net/event/
Oct. 17-20	Habitat III: The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development	Quito, Ecuador	http://www.habitat3.org
Oct. 18-19	Health Promotion Ontario Annual Con- ference	Ottawa, Canada	http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/docs/charter-chartre/pdf/charter.pdf
Oct. 18-23	Planet In Focus: 17th Environmental Film Festival	Toronto, Canada	http://planetinfocus.org/
Nov. 9-11	The Thirteenth AMNET International Conference on Chronic Diseases	New Mexico, USA	http://www.amnet.bcom.org/
Nov. 14-18	4th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Vancouver Canada	http://www.csih.org/en/events/
Nov. 21-24	9th Global Conference on Health Pro- motion	Shanghai China	http://www.who.int/healthpromotion



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WHAT IS THE REAL SIZE OF AFRICA? HOW WESTERN STATES USED MAPS TO DOWNPLAY SIZE OF CONTINENT



On a typical world map, Canada is a vast nation. Home to six time zones, its endless plains spread from ocean to ocean, dominating great swathes of the northern half of the globe. But, in reality, three Canada's would comfortably fit inside Africa. The world map is wildly misleading. It's all down to the European cartographer Geert de Kremer, better known as Mercator, and his 16th century map projection. While a convenient way to chart the world, the map distorts the true size of countries.

Somehow this map projection came to be used on most world maps, especially those produced for classrooms since the beginning of the 1900s. Mercator initially made globes. Later transferring his map from a three-dimensional curved surface to a flat sheet of paper was problematic. Taking the equator as the logical map center left big, confusing gaps near the poles. Mercator's solution was to stretch out the northern and southern extremities of the globe to fill those gaps, producing an elegant and usable map. While a revolutionary tool for captains and explorers, the projection distorts the relative size of the continents, to the advantage of the West.

The repercussions of this are still being felt today.

[Read More On Modern Ghana](#)



HERE'S WHAT CHINA AND THE U.S JUST COMMITTED TO ON CLIMATE

The leaders of the U.S. and China committed their nations to the fight against global warming when they handed arcane but momentous documents to the United Nation's top official.

The documents stated that the U.S. and China are ready to join a new global warming pact, putting it on course to potentially become international law before the end of 2016. Largely because of global warming, this year is expected to be the hottest year on record, beating a heat record set last year, which beat the record set the year prior. "We have a saying in America, that you need to put your money where your mouth is," President Obama said during the joint media appearance in China before G20 meetings began. "And when it comes to combatting climate change, that's what we're doing, both the United States and China. We're leading by example."

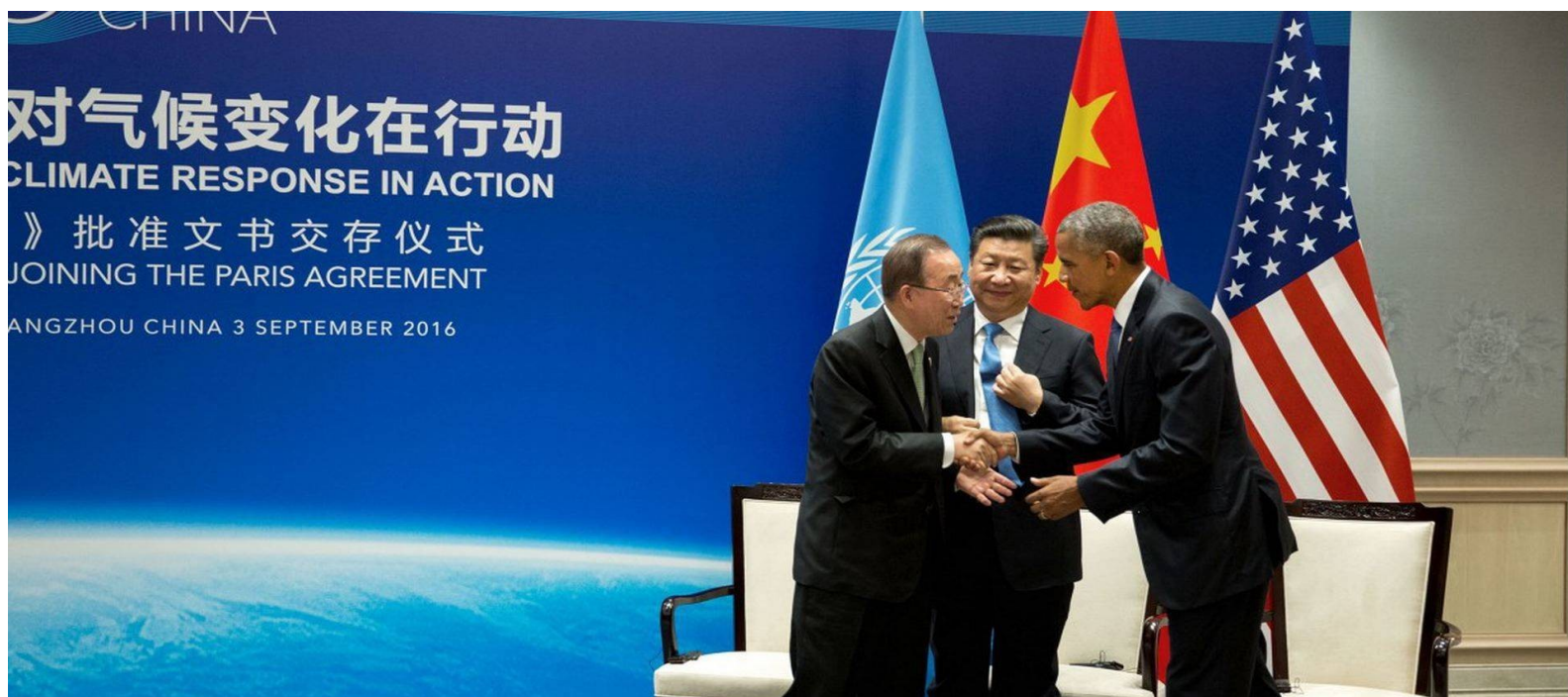
In Paris, the U.S. agreed to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas pollution it releases in 2025 to about a quarter below its 2005 levels. China agreed to halt the growth in its annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, something it appears to have already achieved.

Even if those and other nations' promises under the Paris agreement are kept, global temperatures may yet soar well above 2°C (3.6°F) compared with pre-industrial times, roughly twice the amount of warming recorded so far. Further climate negotiations in the years ahead will aim to keep warming below that dangerous level.

By submitting its instrument of ratification, the U.S. has indicated that it is ready to join the Paris agreement. After a number of other countries have done likewise, the agreement will "take force."

"Of course, the Paris Agreement alone won't solve the climate crisis," Obama said on Saturday. "But it does establish an enduring framework that enables countries to ratchet down their carbon emissions over time, and to set more ambitious targets as technology advances."

[Read More On Scientific American](#)





WATCH THE ARCTIC'S OLDEST SEA ICE DISAPPEAR OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS



The climate is changing. But in the Arctic, climate change is in overdrive, because it's warming twice as fast as the rest of the world, on average.

One of the most obvious indicators of the warming world is melting Arctic sea ice. According to preliminary data, Arctic sea ice set a record low every day in May. And in June, we set an astonishing record. Arctic sea ice covered a full 100,000 square miles less ocean than the previous record low, and it was 525,000 square miles below the 1981-2010 long-term average.

About years ago, the sea ice in the Arctic Ocean was mostly old, thick ice that survived year-round. It was surrounded by seasonal ice that was much younger, thinner, and more vulnerable to changing temperatures. But with climate change, more and more Arctic sea ice hasn't lasted long enough to withstand warming summers, and that puts the entire Arctic at risk to melting, causing sea levels to rise and ice to retreat in a big, big way. That's not good for the Arctic, and it's not good for the planet. Burning dirty fossils, harmful greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere. Because of that, the climate is changing, sea and land ice is melting, and sea levels are rising.

Big Oil may be able to profit off of melting sea ice, a disaster of their own making. Melting sea ice makes parts of the Arctic Ocean accessible that once were not, opening up new offshore drilling opportunities for at least 90 billion barrels of crude oil. But, climate impacts notwithstanding, drilling in the Arctic is a particularly risky endeavor. Huge, moving icebergs, strong winds and big waves, along with colder temperatures during the winter, make spills more likely as well as more difficult to clean up.

[Read More And Watch This Video On The Climate Reality Project](#)

145 YEAR OLD INDONESIAN MAN REVEALS VERY IRONIC KEY TO LONGEVITY



An Indonesian man born just a few days before construction began on the Brooklyn Bridge has shared a revelation about longevity. It's much simpler than that. *The key, he says, is to be patient.*

Born on December 31, 1870, Mbah Gotho of Sragen in central Java was recently confirmed by record office officials as the oldest person to have ever lived. All that's needed now is third-party confirmation to cement his name in the Guinness Book of World Records. He has outlived all 10 of his siblings, four wives, and children. He's just three years younger than Canada, and all this despite smoking.

"What I want is to die," the ironically impatient fossil told local media recently. His grandson says he has been planning for his death since the tender age of 122, the age of the officially confirmed oldest person ever, who died in 1997.

He even bought a gravestone in 1992 and has prepared a burial ground that.

[Read More On The Notable](#)



REPORT CITES GROWING EVIDENCE OF EXTREMISTS REVIVING SLAVERY



There is growing evidence that extremist groups including the Islamic State and Boko Haram are reviving slavery and organizing slave markets, according to a report launched Thursday. James Cockayne, head of the United Nations University office in New York and lead author of the report, said "we're seeing horrifying new twists" on the ancient problem of human trafficking in conflict. Social media apps and websites have made it possible to engage and recruit potential human trafficking victims, and trade them "in a way that wasn't possible before," he said.

Islamic State extremists, for example, have published a 'How To' manual" that says enslavement is legally justified in some cases, despite international law banning all slavery. According to the report, Islamic State militants in Iraq are thought to have enslaved over 5,000 women, children and men from the Yazidi religious minority in Iraq. There is strong evidence that social media is being used to both recruit and trade enslaved Yazidi and other peoples.

In certain instances, this can amount "to crimes against humanity" that could be referred to the International Criminal Court. Options are actively being explored with the ICC prosecutor.

[Read More On Yahoo](#)

DOES HAVING A BACKUP PLAN UNDERMINE YOUR TENURE TRACK DREAMS?



“Should the postdocs and grad students I advise only focus on academe and not have backup career plans?” asks Natalie Lundsteen for Inside Higher Ed. The author cites research suggesting that having a backup plan can rob students of the motivation required to achieve an improbable or difficult goal, yet Lundsteen also argues that it is essential to remain aware of potential obstacles on the road to a goal, and to have plans ready for addressing those obstacles. Ultimately, concludes Lundsteen, “it is foolish for Ph.D.s to be single-minded about a career path.”

Most Ph.D.s harbor some hope of getting a tenure-track job, but for many, there comes a point when they don’t have enough publications, their experiments aren’t going to yield results or they have been on the job market too many cycles and it’s exhausting. Ph.D.s come to the conclusion that they should explore other career paths, but is it foolish for Ph.D.s to have single-minded focus on just one career area? Does a consideration of other paths dilute the energy needed to succeed? When should Ph.D.s start thinking about the other paths? Ph.D.s should put the most energy into pursuing the path they most want to take but should also be realistic. It’s called managing expectations. “No matter how competitive or challenging your chosen career path may be, keep your eyes on the prize, but scan the landscape so you are aware of potential hurdles or obstacles. Accurately assess your chances at employment, understand the likelihood of getting hired and, most important, recognize what is in your control and what is not.”

“Take responsibility. Recognize the challenges of your chosen career path but reformulate goals whenever possible to reflect a focus on the things that you can control. You can’t make an institution give you tenure, a top journal accept your article or a consulting firm interview you, but you can manage your own career direction by having a plan, as well as a backup plan.”

[Read More On The Inside Highered](#)

After a research team meeting, focusing on educational leadership in health science institutions, at Mekelle University, Tigray, Ethiopia

Ryerson Public Health Student Erica-Martine Jean, Debbie Spicer, Dr. Tesfay Gebreziher and Dr. Zakus (September 5, 2016)



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