



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

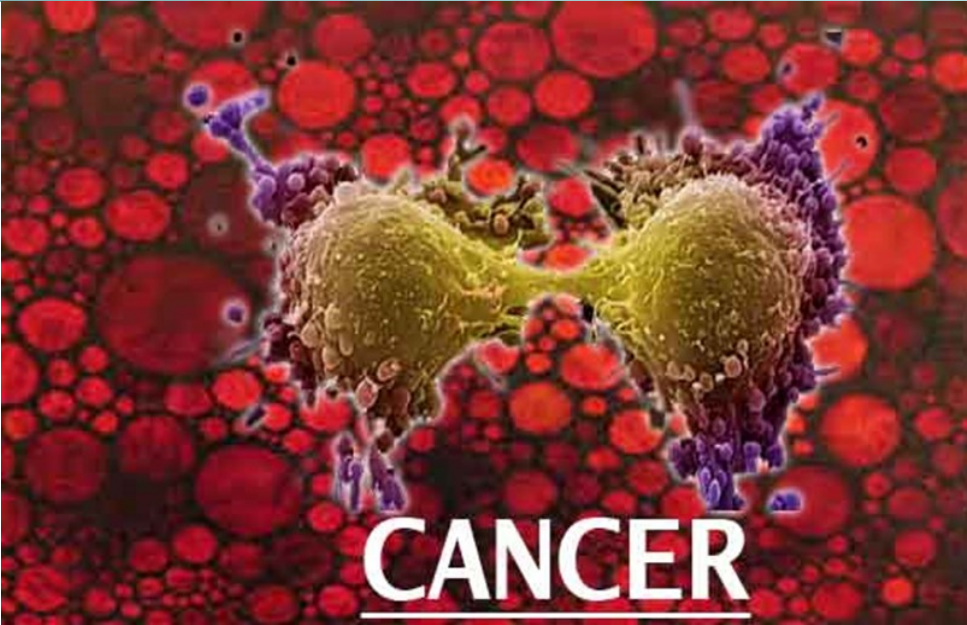
May 25, 2017

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## THE GLOBAL BURDEN OF PREVENTABLE CANCER MORTALITY

The key issues in global cancer mortality and prevention are explored. According to estimates from the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), of 14 million new cancer cases in 2012, 8 million occurred in low-middle income countries (which contain 82% of the world’s population). Worldwide in 2012, the three most commonly diagnosed cancers were lung, bronchus, and trachea. [Read More on Ingenta Connect](#) and [FMCH](#)



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## THE DECLINE OF ARCTIC SEA ICE

Over the past three decades the area of sea ice in the Arctic has fallen by more than half and its volume has plummeted by three-quarters. So says a report “Snow, Water, Ice, Permafrost in the Arctic” (SWIPA), produced under the auspices of the Arctic Council, a scientific-policy club for the eight countries with territory in the Arctic Circle, as well as observers including China and India. SWIPA estimates that the Arctic will be free of sea ice in the summer by 2040. Scientists previously suggested this would not occur until 2070. The thickness of ice in the central Arctic ocean declined by 65% between 1975 and 2012; record lows in the maximum extent of Arctic sea ice occurred in March.

[Read More on The Economist](#)





## Continuum of HIV Care: What Does it Mean and How is Europe Doing?

From diagnosis of HIV to successful viral suppression, this new European Center For Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) report summarizes key findings concerning and the Continuum of HIV Care in Europe based on data reported by countries in Europe and Central Asia. In the 37 countries reporting data, an estimated 1.2 million people are living with HIV, 898,000 of whom (75%) have been diagnosed; 88% of these are estimated to be virally suppressed. The continuum of HIV care is a framework that enables countries to monitor the effectiveness of their HIV response -- from diagnosis towards viral suppression (which means that the virus is no longer detectable in the blood). [Read More on Science Daily](#)

## Pattern of Global Health Financing and Potential Future Spending on Health

The article, "Global Burden of Disease Health Financing Collaborator Network," uses a wealth of data to explore global health financing trends across a 20-year period for a vast number of countries. Particularly relevant for policy matters, low-income countries are increasing their health spending at much slower rates than more economically developed countries, which increases the health expenditure gap and calls attention to the need for policy interventions. Although international assistance might seem to be a natural way of bridging the gap, incentives for higher public and private expenditure in low-income and lower-middle-income countries must also be developed.

[Read More on The Lancet](#)



## US Cities With The Worst Air Pollution

How clean is the air you breathe? For the past 18 years, the American Lung Association has released an annual "State of the Air" report, using data from official air quality monitors to look at pollution levels in cities across the U.S. The 2017 report finds continued improvements in air quality, but says 125 million Americans -- nearly 4 out of 10 people -- still "live in counties with unhealthy levels of either ozone or particle pollution." The health risks include lung cancer, asthma attacks, and developmental problems among children, among other issues. The American Lung Association evaluated cities for three types of air



## Miles of Antarctic Ice Collapsing Into the Sea

Ice sheets flow downhill, seemingly in slow motion. Mountains funnel the ice into glaciers. And ice flowing from the land into the sea can form a floating ice shelf. Glaciers in certain areas have been undercut by warmer ocean waters, and the flow of ice is getting faster and faster. The acceleration is making some scientists fear that Antarctica's ice sheet may have entered the early stages of an unstoppable disintegration. Because the collapse of vulnerable parts of the ice sheet could raise the sea level dramatically, the continued existence of the world's great coastal cities — Miami, New York, Shanghai and many more — is tied to Antarctica's fate. [Read More on NY Times](#)

## Antarctic Has Seen Widespread Change In Last 50 Years, Moss Study Reveals

In 2013, researchers studying mosses and microbes growing at the southern end of the Antarctic Peninsula documented unprecedented ecological change over the last 50 years, driven by warming temperatures. Now, the same research group has confirmed that those striking changes in the Antarctic are widespread, occurring all across the Peninsula. The findings appear in *Current Biology* on May 18. "This gives us a much clearer idea of the scale over which these changes are occurring," says lead author Matthew Amesbury of the University of Exeter. "Previously, we had only identified such a response in a single location at the far south of the Antarctic Peninsula, but now we know that moss banks are responding to recent climate change across the whole of the Peninsula."

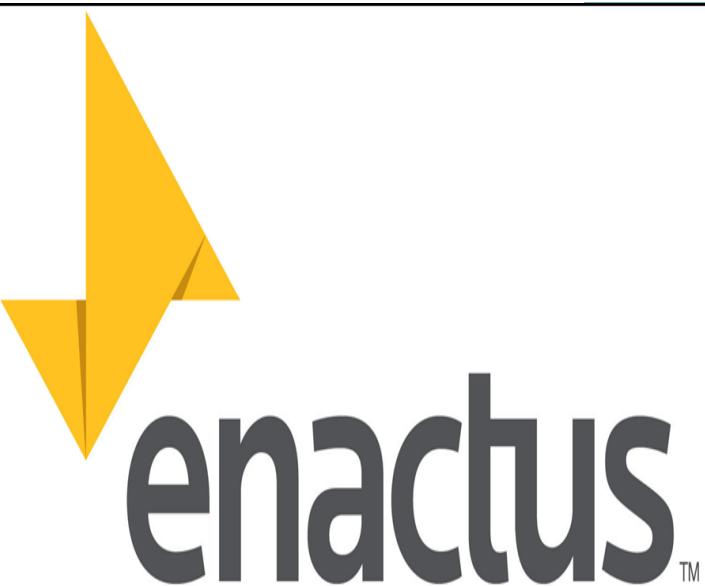
[Read More on Science Daily](#)



## Different Places Warm At Different Places

One of the robust features of global warming under increasing greenhouse gas concentrations is that different places warm at different paces. It turns out that the fast warming in each region has its own cause. Observations had already shown that Earth's surface warms fastest in the polar regions and slowest in the tropics. On the other hand, observations and model results had revealed that the ocean warms fastest over midlatitudes and the Arctic.

[Read More on Science Daily](#)



## Ryerson University Students Named National Champions Of The Environment

In Gujarat, India, where 70 per cent of the population faces high water stress, Enactus Ryerson University students created Project Pura, which empowers local waterpreneurs to manufacture and sell ceramic water filters, while simultaneously providing a water sanitation education and entrepreneurship program to drive industry growth. Enactus Ryerson University has been named the 2017 Scotiabank EcoLiving Green Challenge National Champion by this country's largest student leadership development organization, Enactus Canada, and program supporter Scotiabank. The national competition took place at the 2017 Enactus Canada National Exposition in Vancouver.

[Read More on The Globe and Mail](#)

## SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

### Fewer Heart Attacks And Strokes After New York State Trans Fat Ban

When many of its counties banned trans fats a decade ago, the state of New York began a massive, real-world experiment with millions of participants. After ten years of this “trial,” researchers have found impressive evidence that the ban led to significant decreases in heart attacks and strokes. While heart disease has been declining nationally, New York counties with trans fat bans saw an additional 6.2% decline compared to counties in New York without a ban.

[Read More on Diatribe Foundation](#)



## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH:

### Census Highlights ‘Extreme Poverty’ Among Southern Mexico’s Indigenous

A new census in Mexico’s southern state of Veracruz has for the first time measured economic status differences among ethnic groups, revealing staggeringly high rates of poverty within its indigenous community. María Angélica Méndez Margarito, director of the Veracruz Institute for Indigenous Affairs (IVAIS), said the government of Veracruz was “very concerned” about the figures, which showed that out of every 10 people living in the indigenous municipalities, eight live in conditions of extreme poverty, according to an *Organización Editorial Mexicana* report. The indigenous poverty rate is rising in part due to a lack of government programs.

[Read More on Humanosphere](#)



## Quote of The Week

“Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health care system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care.”

Creating a Climate for Change Resource Booklet

[Read More on FNHA](#)

## EVENTS | DATE | CONFERENCE | LOCATION | REGISTER | |---------------|--|--------------------|---| | June– Sept | Aboriginal Conferences | Canada | <a href="http://aboriginalconferences.ca/">http://aboriginalconferences.ca/</a> | | June<br>12-23 | McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Disease and Global Health | Montreal<br>Canada | <a href="http://mcgill-idgh.ca/">http://mcgill-idgh.ca/</a> | | June<br>12-16 | Global Health Diagnostics | Montreal<br>Canada | <a href="http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/global-health-diagnostics/">http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/global-health-diagnostics/</a> | | July<br>25-27 | Pedagogy For The Anthropocene: Re-rooting Academic Knowledge in Nature | Toronto<br>Canada | <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfofqDbn3qR-F5XpU09k_mhfkPp6SOj3w4-vQsouYH1oVuYnQ/viewform?c=0&amp;w=1">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfofqDbn3qR-F5XpU09k_mhfkPp6SOj3w4-vQsouYH1oVuYnQ/viewform?c=0&amp;w=1</a> |



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# WHY ELECTION POLITICS DON'T WORK AS WELL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AS THEY DO FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

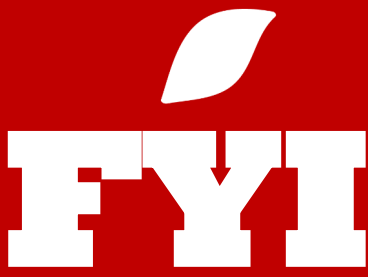


Below is a post from Matthew Spencer, who crossed over from the environment sector recently to become Oxfam's Director of Campaigns and Policy.

"Before the end of the first week of the UK election campaign, to widespread surprise, Theresa May agreed to the development sector's main demand to maintain our 0.7% overseas aid commitment. In contrast, the following week the government had to be forced to publish its plan to reduce air pollution by a judge so fed up with its delaying tactics that he instructed ministers to ignore election purdah rules. The first decision helps people who live thousands of miles away, the other obstructs action to address something proven to be killing British voters. It should therefore be easier to get political leadership on environmental health than on international development, but the reverse appears to be true. Why?

As someone who has recently started working for Oxfam after thirty years working in the environment community I've been trying to understand the differences between the sectors in order to make sense of these political dynamics. Unsurprisingly they have very different histories and somewhat different organisational models. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth were set up in the late 70's as campaign-only organisations, and their sector has had many political wins on pollution regulation and nature conservation in the decades since. In contrast, the coalition that helped secure the 0.7% commitment from the Prime Minister is made up almost entirely of organisations whose primary mandate is to deliver long-term development programmes and humanitarian aid; campaigning is a very small part of what they do. The differences make sense."

[Read More on Oxfam](#)



# MAKING EVERYONE COUNT: A CLOCK TO TRACK WORLD POVERTY IN REAL TIME



The World Poverty Clock builds upon the combination of new estimates of country-by-country income distributions that can be summed to a world income distribution, and macroeconomic projections of population by age and educational attainment level as well as income per capita. The online tool provides a platform that monitors progress and possible challenges to the eradication of extreme poverty. The analysis and visualization tool contains information on 187 countries and territories, covering 99.7 percent of the world population. There are three steps in estimating poverty by country.

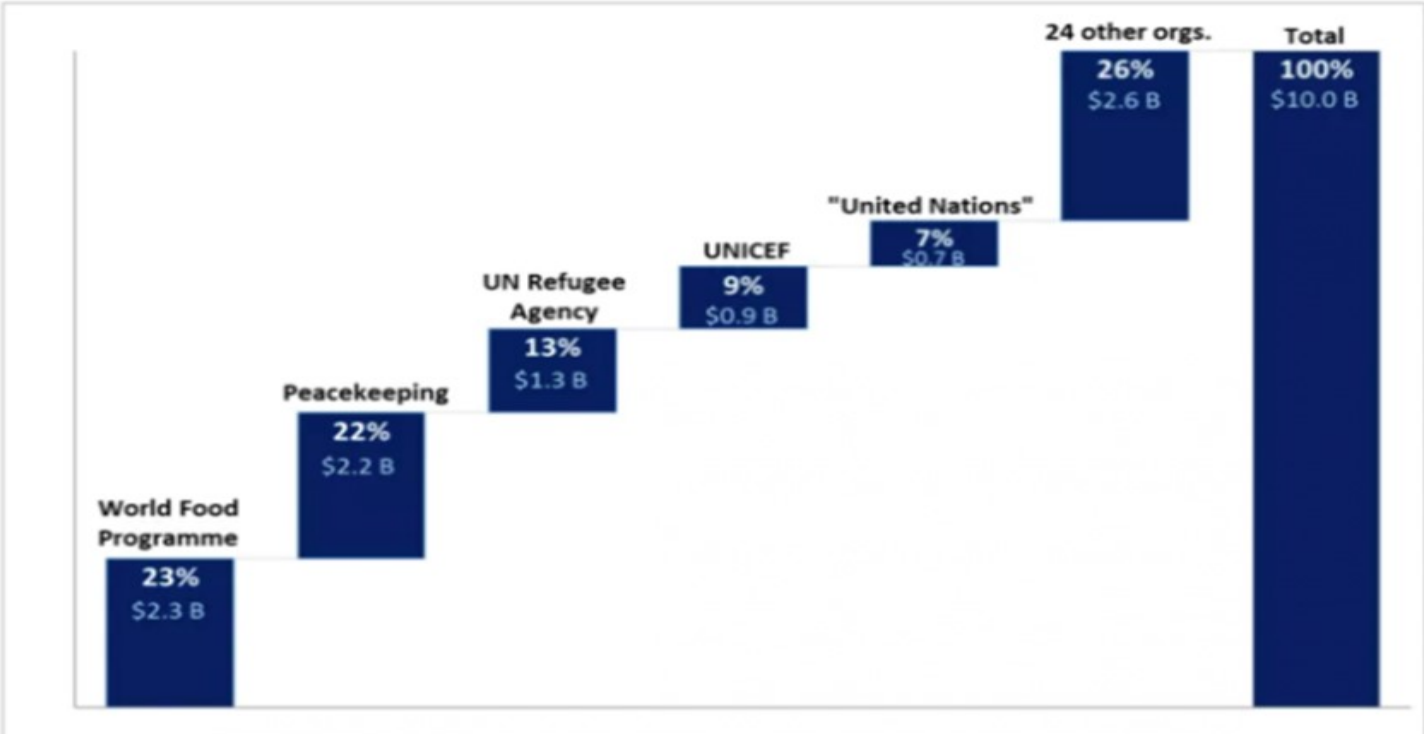
First, we established a baseline for the number of poor people in each country using the latest household survey. (There are now 143 countries with a representative household survey taken within the last decade. For countries without a survey, we model the average relationship between income levels and poverty headcounts and interpolate poverty rates from that.) Second, we “now-casted” the figure to the present assuming everyone’s income grows at the same rate as aggregate household expenditure per capita. Third, we projected poverty forward to 2030 using GDP growth forecasts made by the IMF, complemented by long-term shared socio-economic pathways developed by the OECD and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis.

[Read More on The Brookings](#)



# CHART OF THE DAY: HOW THE UNITED STATES FUNDS THE UNITED NATIONS

**Figure 1: The distribution of U.S. funding allocations across U.N. organizations**



How much does the United States spend at the United Nations? Where in the United Nations system does that funding go? How dependent on the United States are the 34 various branches, agencies and entities of the United Nations? Answers to these questions and more are included in this fresh article from John McArthur and Krista Rasmussen of Brookings, which includes two useful charts that demonstrate how US funding is allocated across the UN system and how much each agency depends on US funding.

As seen from the chart, the US spends about \$10 billion across the entire UN system. Lumped together, agencies that provide humanitarian relief including the World Food Program, UN Refugee Agency and UNICEF account for nearly half of US spending at the UN. UN peacekeeping is another key investment for the United States, with some 100,000 blue helmets (including fewer than 80 US personnel) deployed to 16 hotspots around the world. What's striking about this visualization is how small a percentage of US contributions to the entire UN system goes to what is known at the UN's "regular budget." This budget pays for the operations of the UN headquarters in New York, including staff salaries, office supplies, utility bills, etc. It turns out that a bureaucracy that some may consider to be bloated is not actually a major driver of costs to the US at the UN.

[Read More on UN Dispatch](#)



# IF WE DEVELOP AFRICA'S BIOECONOMY IT WILL BE AS TRANSFORMATIVE FOR US AS DIGITAL HAS BEEN



The late 20th century was a period of unprecedented advancement in information and communications technology. The rapid adoption of mobile phones in Africa laid the groundwork for a digital economy.

According to a new study by the Stockholm Environment Institute, *Creating Sustainable Bioeconomies: The Bioscience Revolution in Europe and Africa*, new opportunities for economic transformation are already being built on Africa's abundant biological resources. The emerging bioeconomy has the potential to transform primary production, especially in agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, health and industry. The key enabler of the digital economy was in advances physics and engineering. The drivers for the new bioeconomy are advances in genetics, biology, ecology, information technology, and engineering. The convergence of genetics and computer engineering has dramatically reduced the sequencing cost of genomes of organisms from \$100 million in 2001 to about \$1,000 in 2016. The ability to rapidly sequence plant genomes will enable enhancements in agriculture, while the ability to rapidly sequence human genomes will enable personalized medicines that are tailored to individual patients.

This makes it possible to have another look at Africa's biodiversity to identify new traits of economic and ecological significance. New tools such as gene editing have also lowered the barriers for entry and expanded opportunities for innovation.

[Read More on QZ](#)



# CLUES TO NEW ANTIBIOTICS COULD LIE IN MEDIEVAL TEXTS



For a long time, medieval medicine has been dismissed as irrelevant. This time period is popularly referred to as the "Dark Ages," which erroneously suggests that it was unenlightened by science or reason. However, some medievalists and scientists are now looking back to history for clues to inform the search for new antibiotics.

The evolution of antibiotic-resistant microbes means that it is always necessary to find new drugs to battle microbes that are no longer treatable with current antibiotics. But progress in finding new antibiotics is slow. The drug discovery pipeline is currently stalled. An estimated 700,000 people around the world die annually from drug-resistant infections. If the situation does not change, it is estimated that such infections will kill 10 million people per year by 2050.

As a result, a team known as the Ancientbiotics Team was formed. This team is composed of medievalists, microbiologists, medicinal chemists, parasitologists, pharmacists and data scientists from multiple universities and countries. They believe that answers to the antibiotic crisis could be found in medical history. And with the help of modern technologies, they hope to unravel how premodern physicians treated infection and whether their cures really worked.

[Read More on CNN](#)



# I QUIT MY JOB BECAUSE I DIDN'T BELONG THERE



Joan Erakit is a Kenyan-Ugandan born writer based in New York City. Her work has been published by Cool Hunting, The Huffington Post, The World Post, and Marie Claire among others. On the website, “Okay Africa” she shares her story about quitting her job.

Last Friday, I quit my job because I didn’t belong there. Unhappy and feeling as though I was not adding anything of value to the team, months progressed in a silent self-inflicted emotional jail as I entered into a deeply problematic cycle of anxiety, apathy and sadness. Once, while having a regular lunch with two of my colleagues I shared that I knew of a person in the building who upon crossing the busy street that led to our office, started to suffer from a panic attack because she could not fathom another day at her desk. The heartbreaking thing about that story is that I was that person, but I was too scared to admit it to my colleagues, let alone myself.

A week after that lunch with my colleagues, I was seated at my desk at about 5:15 pm as a flood of emails poured into my inbox; with my heart pounding and a pool of sweat forming around my temples, I burst into tears. It was the second time in my entire professional career that I had ever cried at work and I decided it would be my last. It’s easy to cite issues at work, office politics, and other personal/professional situations as reasons to leave one’s job. The hardest thing to do is to admit to yourself that you’ve had a role to play in all of it – simply because your life is a reflection of the choices you make. I do not feel like using this platform to delve into unnecessary details, but I do want to say this: you only do yourself and your colleagues a disservice by being unhappy and staying in role that is not fit for you.

[Read More on Okay Africa](#)



**Student Sexual Health Drama**  
**Natikiri Secondary School**  
**Near Nampula, Mozambique**  
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