



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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More than Two-Thirds of Americans Accept Climate Science, Regardless of Trump

The new U.S. administration has made it clear that it does not accept the scientific consensus on climate change. Those views, however, are not shared by the American public. An article published by the Brookings Institution before the recent inauguration notes that survey results show seven out of 10 Americans accept the scientific evidence of global warming. [Read More on Green Car Reports](#)



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2016 Was Planet’s Hottest Year on Record, Third New High in A Row

Despite scientists having reached a consensus years ago, considerable debate still appears to be raging over the reality of climate change. Climate-science deniers can count several people appointed to key environmental-regulatory positions in the incoming presidential administration among their ranks. Despite their views, it is impossible to deny that the world is getting hotter. On Wednesday, NOAA and NASA both announced that 2016 was the Earth's hottest year on record. That makes 2016 the third year in a row for record-setting global temperatures.

[Read More on Green Car Reports](#)





New Malaria Vaccine Just Passed A Critical Milestone Using GM Parasites

In recent years, the world has recorded tremendous progress in the fight against malaria. The World Malaria Report 2015 shows malaria mortality rates have fallen by 66% among all age groups and by 71% among children under five in Africa since 2000. But there is still work to do and a new vaccine developed by a US-based team is showing promising results, and could accelerate progress. Creating the vaccine, researchers infected people with weakened, genetically modified forms of the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite in safety trials. The weakened malaria parasite, while unable to complete its lifecycle and develop into full-blown malaria, exposes the immune system to the disease and stimulates a response that could block an actual infection.

[Read More on QZ](#)

Clean Fuel Cookstoves May Improve Cardiovascular Health in Pregnant Women

Replacing biomass and kerosene cookstoves used throughout the developing world with clean-burning ethanol stoves may reduce hypertension and cardiovascular risk in pregnant women, according to new research published online in the American Thoracic Society's *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. In "Randomized Controlled Ethanol Cookstove Intervention and Blood Pressure in Pregnant Nigerian Women," researchers report that the frequency of developing hypertension and diastolic blood pressure were decreased in pregnant women who cooked with ethanol, rather than with traditional cookstoves fueled by wood or kerosene. [Read More on Science Daily](#)



100 Women: Why I fought Being Banished To A Hut During My Period

An ancient Hindu tradition in which menstruating women are banished to an outhouse is under the spotlight in Nepal after the death of a 15-year-old girl. The practice was banned in 2005 but still continues in western areas. BBC Nepali reporter Krishnamaya Upadhyaya, 24, describes how she has fought against the tradition, known as *chhaupadi*. Women are not allowed to enter their courtyard for seven days, consume dairy products or even go to school. As well, food is thrown at you because of the belief that one must not touch their elders during menstruation.

[Read More on BBC News](#)



Vertical Farming May Not Feed The World,

Aware of population growth's growing impact on global food security, many agricultural experts are debating the use of vertical farming – and its ability to feed the world – but don't deny its potential in urban agriculture. Vertical farming is a relatively new term that, at its core, simply means growing more food in smaller spaces. Instead of having a single layer of crops over a large land area, for example, stacks of crops climb upward, typically in highly controlled indoor environments. The method usually grows crops without soil or natural light. It's dramatically different from how humans grew food just a few decades ago, but has the potential to produce drastically higher yields with significantly less space.

[Read More on Humansphere](#)

All Dutch Electric Trains Now Running on 100% Renewable Energy

While modern electric cars have only been available in large numbers for a few years, electric trains have been commonplace for some time. As with electric cars, the source of the electricity used to power these trains impacts their overall carbon footprint. The cleaner an energy source, the cleaner the vehicles it powers. In that respect, The Netherlands may be setting the standard. As of January 1, all electric passenger trains on the Dutch rail network have been run on wind energy, according to a statement from operator NS (via EcoWatch). The 600,000 daily passengers trains are supplied with 1.2 billion kilowatt-hours of wind energy.

[Read More on Green Car Reports](#)



Lead Emissions From Planes May Be Costing Billions in Lost Earnings

Airplanes are now the largest source of lead pollution in the United States. A new study suggests Americans hurt by lead exposure may be suffering billions in lost wages. Decades of research have shown how lead correlates with aggressive behavior, lower intelligence, learning problems in children and lower earnings later in life. Cars used leaded gas until the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandated it be phased out in the 1980s. Federal law banned lead in house paint in 1978. Scientists have not identified any safe amount of lead in children's bloodstream.

[Read More on Journalist Resource](#)



Fighting Climate Change May Need Stories, Not Just Data

Alex Evans was an adviser on poor-world economics to Tony Blair's government in Britain, and a co-organizer of a UN climate-change summit. Mr Evans has an unusual diagnosis as to why the Copenhagen summit in 2009 failed and Paris succeeded. One of the problems, before the Danish disaster, was that green activists, even the most lively-minded ones, could be seen boring people to death with pie-charts, acronyms and statistics. By the time world leaders had gathered in France, environmentalists had begun to grasp the message that they could only touch people's hearts by telling stories. In other words: by using the method of religious prophets of old, the marketing gurus of the 20th century and the science-fiction writers gazing into the future. [Read More on Economist](#)

China Suspends 104 Planned Coal Power Plants

The Chinese government is taking dramatic steps in order to comply with the coal capacity target laid out in its latest Five Year Plan. The National Energy Administration has announced that 104 planned and under-construction coal power projects – with a total capacity of 120GW – have been suspended. Around 54GW of suspended capacity comes from projects already under construction. And that's just in 13 provinces. In the last year China has grappled with a coal overcapacity crisis, and has taken a number of steps and introduced several policies designed to tackle it.

[Read More on Energy Desk](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in Australia

Universal health coverage provides a framework to achieve health services coverage but does not articulate the model of care desired. Comprehensive primary health care includes promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative interventions and health equity and health as a human right as central goals. In Australia, Aboriginal community-controlled health services have pioneered comprehensive primary health care since their inception in the early 1970s. A five-year project on comprehensive primary health care in Australia partnered with six services, including one Aboriginal community-controlled health service, the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

[Read More on Research Gate](#)



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“There is a saying in our religious tradition, drawn from Indigenous wisdom, that asks us to consider the impacts of what we do today and how that will affect the seventh generation that will follow us. This is a lesson we teach our children...we speak of climate change with our children. We want our kids to have a finely tuned sense of the world around them, to be critical about the conditions we live in, and to carefully notice and interpret the world around them. This extends to people and the environment. We make explicit the relationship between the two, and we do our best to connect the dots so our children understand the root causes of what we see on the surface.”

Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons is director of APANO, the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon.

EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
March 1-2	24th Global Nursing and Healthcare	Amsterdam Netherlands	http://global.nursingconference.com/
April 6-9	2017 Annual CUGH Global Health Conference	Washington USA	http://www.cugh.org/events/2017-annual-cugh-global-health-conference
April 22-23	Global Health & Innovation Conference	Connecticut USA	http://www.uniteforsight.org/conference/
June 12-23	McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Disease and Global Health	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca/
June 12-16	Global Health Diagnostics	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/global-health-diagnostics/



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NEW BOOK: THE BATTLE FOR ACCESS TO MEDICINES FOR ALL



Ellen F.M. t'Hoen talks about her experience regarding HIV infections in South Africa in her book, "Private Patents and Public Health." In *Private Patents and Public Health*, t'Hoen corrects the widely held misperception that the Doha Declaration has been underused and that it has only been used for HIV medicines. On the basis of exhaustive research, she summarises 34 instances of developing country use of compulsory licenses in 2001–2014, 51 examples of government use, and 32 instances of 24 least-developed countries using their TRIPS waiver. Although the use of these flexibilities waned after the establishment of the Medicines Patent Pool by UNITAID in 2010, in other ways, the reach of the access to medicines movement has broadened considerably. t'Hoen meticulously describes activists' increasing concentration on other TRIPS flexibilities, including the adoption of stringent patentability criteria and opposition procedures to reduce the incidence of low quality, secondary patents on new forms, uses, and formulations of known medicines. t'Hoen also documents the expanding scope of the access to medicines movement beyond HIV/AIDS to include medicines to treat and cure hepatitis C, cancer, and other diseases.

[Read More on The Lancet](#)

BC FIRST NATION GETS ACTIVE ABOUT PASSIVE HOUSING



Many First Nations in Canada, including the Yale First Nation has struggled to provide its members housing. Yale receives a maximum of \$169,000 from the federal government to build a house. That's enough for a single-family, wood-frame house or, as Yale First Nation Chief Ken Hansen calls them, "B.C. box houses."

The houses meet the basic B.C. building code. Such "stick-built" on-site houses can take six months to a year to put up, so long as the Yale area's frequent rain delays co-operate. And even when complete, the to-basic-code structures are drafty. Linger moisture leads to mould and rot. Nonetheless, Yale has built 14 "B.C. box houses" of three or four bedrooms each for rent to members in three different reserve communities. Those tenants pay for the structures' poor quality on an ongoing basis, said Crystal Sedore, housing manager for the Yale First Nation: "In the winter, we have a couple of houses that are over \$200 a month to heat."

For many tenants, that's a lot of extra money to come up with. Often it falls to the band to bail them out by paying the bill. "It's just one more thing that the band should not really be doing, but we have an obligation to make sure that our membership has heat and hydro," Sedore said. "So we do it."

So when the band decided to invest in building some new rental housing, they knew what didn't work. What were needed were homes that would cut down on energy costs, withstand the wet climate, and be suited to singles and smaller families. That led Yale to Langley, B.C., in the Vancouver suburbs, and to Britco, a modular building company. Yale contracted Britco to build 10 two-bedroom units in a pair of buildings that meet the high-efficiency Passive House design requirements. Passive House is a home designed to be so energy-efficient that it can stay warm at 17 C with residents' body heat, energy from the sun, and turning on the lights.

[Read More on Tyee](#)



NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA GHG CALCULATOR CONFIRMS NOVA SCOTIA FOREST BIOENERGY SCHEMES ARE WORSE THAN COAL



Just under a year ago a Press Release from NSP (Nova Scotia Power) indicated NSP planned to increase the proportion of electricity derived from biomass to 7% of the total, up from 2.8% in 2015, while reducing use of fossil fuels. Most of this would come from clearcutting living trees, including whole tree clearcuts, rather than from forestry and sawmill wastes. Public concern about clearcutting forests for bioenergy was reflected in a petition launched in February of 2016 to Stop destroying Nova Scotia's forests for biomass power generation . It quickly garnered over 20,000 signatures and mobilized the formation of the Healthy Forest Coalition (HFC).

Two major concerns were expressed in the petition and by HFC related to clearcutting forests to produce electricity: first, about the clearcutting itself which is highly destructive of Nova Scotia Acadian forest biodiversity and ecosystem services; and second, it was contended that burning forest biomass for bioenergy is not carbon neutral but actually increases the output of CO₂, even compared to coal.

The science on forest bioenergy GHG emissions, although often denied, has only grown stronger. Canada has committed to a 2030 climate change target of 30 percent reduction in GHG emissions below 2005 greenhouse gas levels. Nova Scotia claims to have already met those targets and under a special agreement will be allowed to continue to use coal at existing levels until some time after 2030; after 2030 Nova Scotia will be required to compensate for any ongoing coal-based emissions (i.e. find reductions in other areas) AND meet further reductions which have not yet been specified.

[Read More on Nova Scotia Forest Notes](#)

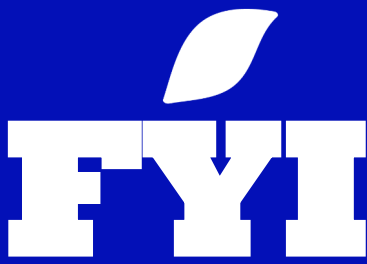
NATURE IS NOT GOOD TO HUMAN BEINGS



Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, the outgoing chairman of the world's large food company, has staked his flag, casting Nestlé—with its \$88.8 billion in annual revenue—not as the purveyor of natural foods or conveniently-available snacks, but as the vessel to deliver a new, scientifically engineered Garden of Eden. Nestlé, of course, has been fortifying food since founder Henri Nestlé began selling an iron-enriched infant cereal called “Farine Lactée” in 1867. And the company will still make chocolates, ice cream, and most of the pizzas and meals found in supermarket freezer sections. But it is also investing billions of dollars in healthcare firms. In steering the company in this direction, Brabeck-Letmathe has forged into new territory, carving out a “nutrition, health, and wellness” industry.

This is a shift from what food companies such as Danone, PepsiCo, and Kellogg have done for decades. The biggest companies have focused mainly on one goal: getting calories to people. They created new technologies to do it, drying and freezing food, then shipping it across the trade routes of an increasingly connected global economy. But as Brabeck-Letmathe would discover around 1995, that crude vision for calories only worked to a point.

[Read More on QZ](#)



A GUIDE TO STAYING ONLINE IF THE INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA GETS BLOCKED IN YOUR COUNTRY



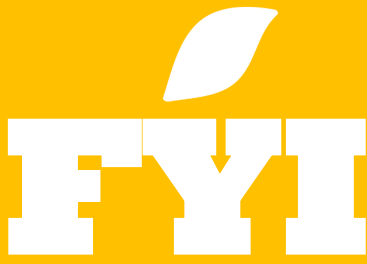
For digital rights activists, an important milestone came in 2016 with the adoption of the UN Human Rights Council resolution on promoting and protecting the freedom of users online. Yet, 51 intentional disruptions of the internet and electronic communications took place in the first 10 months of 2016 in countries across the world. For Africans, 2016 shaped up to be “the year of internet shutdowns,” as at least 11 governments interfered with the internet during elections or protests. Governments usually direct telecommunication companies to block certain websites or completely shut down the telephone and internet network. The next time that happens, here are a few things you can do to avoid the blackouts.

First is to learn which circumvention tools or proxies to use. There are numerous circumvention tools that can be used to evade censorship and to access the internet anonymously. These include Psiphon, an open source web proxy that helps users skirt content-filtering systems. There is also Tor, which essentially prevents people from tracing your location or spying on your browsing habits. Tor is available for Windows, Mac, Linux, and Android.

Next is to ensure the safety of your VPN. Many people use virtual private networks, or VPNs, to get secure access to a remote computer over the internet. For instance, VPNs constituted the top 12 apps downloaded during Uganda’s elections last February. VPNs can, however, differ from region to region, and it is important to know the safety and security of each specific networks before use. Access Now recommends That One Privacy Site as a source that compares different virtual networks.

Also, remember to protect yourself. Trying to circumvent an official shutdown to get online is a weighty task—but it all starts with the simple stuff. For instance, ensure that all the sites you are using are delivered over HTTPS. This allows you to access the original site and not an altered version of it. Quartz recently switched to HTTPS to make it secure for readers to browse our journalism. You can install the HTTPS Everywhere extension in your browser courtesy of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Tor Project.

[Read More on QZ](#)



WHAT A TRUMP ADMINISTRATION WILL MEAN FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT



Many in the aid community fear that a president who ran on a platform of “America First” and promised to slash government spending could usher in a new era of austerity, where U.S. aid budgets will shrink, even disappear, and spending on global priorities such as climate change and global health will be called into question. However, the effects of any funding changes will not likely have an immediate impact on jobs.

Aid funding is committed years in advance. Multi-year programs are just getting started, and a slew of U.S. Agency for International Development requests for proposals over the holiday break indicate the agency planned to lock in place further funding commitments as leadership changes hands. The consulting firms and NGOs implementing these programs will still need to staff these projects both in the field and in the home office. And while the U.S. is currently the largest bilateral foreign aid donor, it surely isn’t the only one.

There may be a more immediate impact on jobs working directly for USAID or other aid-related government agencies. Trump announced a federal hiring freeze and has warned of staff reductions across the federal workforce. However, new political appointee positions will also need to be filled. And if history is any indicator, when there is a reduction in the federal workforce, there is usually an increase in the use of contractors.

[Read More on Devex](#)



Stephen and son Avi Lewis talking of politically charged 'zones of permission' and the need for transformative change in Canada's approach to the environment.

**Ryerson University, Toronto
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