



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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FOR THE FIRST TIME, AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

In many Latin American countries, environmental protests can be a matter of life and death for the activists involved. In a tally put out last year, the non-profit Global Witness reported that 200 people had been murdered in 2016 defending their land and the environment — a full 60 percent of whom were in Latin America. The numbers for 2017 were similar. A new, multinational agreement aims to prevent many of those deaths. Earlier this week, 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries adopted the “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean” — or the LAC P10. The agreement is the first in the world to put in place legally binding rules to protect environmental activists — or, as the UN and many civil society groups call them, “environmental defenders.” [Read more on UN Dispatch.](#)



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TOUGHER CLIMATE POLICIES COULD SAVE A STUNNING 150 MILLION LIVES, RESEARCHERS FIND

There is an overlooked benefit to greatly lowering carbon emissions worldwide, a new study says. In addition to preserving Arctic sea ice, reducing sea-level rise and alleviating other effects of global warming, it would probably save more than 150 million human lives. According to the study, premature deaths would fall on nearly every continent if the world's governments agree to cut emissions of carbon and other harmful gases enough to limit global temperature rise to less than 3 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century. That is about a degree lower than the target set by the Paris climate agreement.





WHO TO UNDERTAKE REVIEW ON DANGERS OF PLASTIC IN DRINKING WATER

The World Health Organization (WHO) will launch a review relating to the potential dangers of plastic in drinking water. "When we think about the composition of the plastic, whether there might be toxins in it, to what extent they might carry harmful constituents, what actually the particles might do in the body — there's just not the research there to tell us," the WHO's Bruce Gordon told BBC News. More broadly, the issue of plastic waste is an increasingly serious one. Europeans produce 25 million tons of plastic waste per year, according to the European Commission. But less than 30 percent of this is collected for recycling. [Read more on the CNBC.](#)

THE FUTURE HOLDS TWICE AS MANY HEAT WAVES — ALL BECAUSE OF US

In less than a decade, scientists could point to a specific heat wave — and possibly a death toll — and blame it on climate change. Heat waves are the deadliest type of extreme weather out there. Hurricanes are infamous for leaving a path of death and destruction, but heat waves have claimed tens of thousands of lives — and continue to do so in modern times. In 1995, a heat wave killed more than 1,000 people in Chicago. In 2010, more than 55,000 died when a heat wave sparked devastating wildfires in Russia. New research led by scientists at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science and NOAA shows that the future holds more heat waves in the U.S., thanks to human-caused climate change.

[Read more on Miami Herald.](#)



AN EXAMPLE OF CLIMATE AND ENERGY RESILIENCE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

In Bermuda, there are no cables; 100% of the transmission cables are underground and 50% of distribution cables are also below earth. BELCO, the electric utility in Bermuda, plans to have the rest of the distribution lines underground in the next years. Another important feature is the streetlight poles that are shorter in height than the traditional ones, and are designed to withstand category 5 hurricanes. Second, the building codes in Bermuda have been adapted to be resilient to climate change. The choices for constructing a house or an apartment are concrete or stone. No wooden construction is allowed. The roof has to be tiled, painted and protected with a characteristic white hard covering that prevents the wind damage as shown in the photos of a church and a shopping mall on the right. Bermuda has taken additional preventive measures: The Bermudians have a command and control center protected from storms and flooding; 24/7 storm monitoring to have enough time to prepare; preparation drills twice a year; specialized personnel training; and last but not least storm proof schools that can operate during and after the hurricanes without experiencing power and water outages. [Read more on Caribbean DEV Trends.](#)



HALF A MILLION MORE KENYANS TO FACE FOOD INSECURITY IN 2018

A humanitarian outlook by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the country also projects an increase in the number of children aged below 18 at risk of severe food insecurity to 1.8 million compared to 1.1 million in March and 1.6 million in August 2017. In mitigation measures, the UN agency aims at reaching 1.6 million adults and 1.1 million children through wide-ranging interventions. Among areas being targeted are nutrition, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene, child protection, HIV/AIDS and social protection. UNICEF is appealing for US \$ 34,235,000 million to respond to the humanitarian needs mostly arising in 23 ASAL counties. As of October 31, 2017, UNICEF had a funding gap of 27 per cent, having secured US \$31 million against its 2017 appeal of US \$ 42.4 million. Some 194,656 children within a similar age bracket will be put on treatment for Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). [Read more on Capital News.](#)

BREAKTHROUGH REPORTED IN SOUTH AFRICA'S WORST LISTERIA OUTBREAK

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports a major breakthrough in efforts to contain South Africa's longest and largest recorded listeria outbreak. The current outbreak of listeriosis in South Africa began more than one year ago in January 2017. As of March 12, the WHO has recorded 978 lab-confirmed cases of this foodborne disease, including 183 deaths. WHO food safety expert Peter Ben Embarek says it is very difficult to investigate outbreaks of listeriosis because the disease has a very long incubation period. He says it can take several weeks before people show any symptoms, get sick and are hospitalized. [Read more on VOA News.](#)



NURSING NOW CAMPAIGN IS LAUNCHED TO PROMOTE NURSING AS A CAREER

In an effort to raise the profile of nursing as a career and as a worldwide factor in improving health, the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization are launching Nursing Now across the globe. Nursing Now is organized by the Burdett Trust for Nursing, a UK-based charitable trust. As nurses' status increases, their influence will be felt in policy, reputation, and the status of the professional nurse. Nurses themselves can begin to tackle some of the biggest challenges that are facing humanity in the next century. No matter what location nurses practice, they face similar challenges. They want the best opportunity and training to offer their patients top-notch care so they can lead better and healthier lives on their own and within their communities. Nursing Now will push for those changes, but nurses will see them happen slowly in their own communities and then on a broader national level before becoming a worldwide trend. [Read more on Minority Nurse.](#)



ATTACKS AND KILLINGS: HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AT GROWING RISK

Human rights defenders who challenge big corporations are being killed, assaulted, harassed and suppressed in growing numbers, researchers have claimed. A survey by the Business and Human Rights Resource Center recorded a 34% global rise in attacks against human rights activists last year, including 120 alleged murders and hundreds of other cases involving threats, assaults and intimidation. The number of incidents were found to have risen sharply, with 388 attacks recorded in 2017 compared with 290 the previous year. something that is meaningful. Something that speaks to the life they strive to lead, and what they believe to be fulfilling. The research focused on attacks against activists involved in protests against corporate activities. Victims included unionists, protesters, whistleblowers and indigenous communities. [Read more on The Guardian.](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY: WATER SCARCITY: INDIA'S SILENT CRISIS

As Cape Town inches towards 'Zero Hour' set for July 15, 2018, the real threat of water scarcity is finally hitting millions of people worldwide. An ominous cocktail of deficient rainfall, devastating droughts and poor planning, say conservationists, have made Cape Town the first major city to run out of fresh water. But even as the world is letting out a collective sigh for Cape Town, spare a thought for India. By 2040, there will be no drinking water in almost all of India. A UN report on water conservation published in March 2017 reveals that due to its unique geographical position in South Asia, the Indian sub-continent will face the brunt of the water crisis and India would be at the epicentre of this conflict.

[Read more on IPS News.](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: DETERMINANTS OF TUBERCULOSIS TRENDS IN SIX INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS OF THE USA, CANADA, AND GREENLAND FROM 1960 TO 2014

Tuberculosis continues to disproportionately affect many Indigenous populations in the USA, Canada, and Greenland. We aimed to investigate whether population-based tuberculosis-specific interventions or changes in general health and socioeconomic indicators, or a combination of these factors, were associated with changes in tuberculosis incidence in these Indigenous populations. Population-based BCG vaccination of infants and LTBI screening and treatment were associated with significant decreases in tuberculosis notification rates in these Indigenous populations. These interventions should be reinforced in populations still affected by tuberculosis, while also addressing the persistent health and socioeconomic disparities. [Read more on The Lancet.](#)



Sylvia Earle, 82, oceanographer professor and former chief scientist at NOAA who has spent thousands of hours underwater studying corals, algae and wildlife.

What do you say to people who are not convinced by the evidence [about climate change]?

"I think about poor Galileo, 500 years ago or so, when he had evidence that Earth is not the center of the universe and was ostracized. Now, we have evidence that we are totally dependent on the natural systems that hold the planet steady within the temperature range that is safe for us. You can measure the shrinking Arctic and Antarctic ice. Half the coral reefs have either gone or are in a state of sharp decline. I think it's getting easier, because the ocean is beginning to speak for herself."

-New York Times

March 21 2018

By:

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EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Available Now	Global Health Watch 5 Launch	Online-available now	http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10778
April 6-7	Closing the Gap: The Next 150: Reconciliation and Health	Ottawa Canada	https://www.upstreamconference.ca/
April 20-22	BioVision Alexandria 2018	Alexandria Egypt	http://www.bibalex.org/bva2018/home/StaticPage.aspx?page=69
April 27-29	Pegasus Conference	Toronto Canada	https://www.pegasusconference.ca/
May 25-27	Bethune Round Table: The Role of the Trainee in Global Surgery	Toronto Canada	https://bethuneroundtable.com/
June	McGill University Summer Institutes in Infectious Diseases and Global Health	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/tuberculosis-research-methods/
June 22-24	Annual Conference, The Council of Canadians	Ottawa Canada	https://canadians.org/conference
Oct 8-12	5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Liverpool England	http://healthsystemsresearch.org/ hsr2018/
Nov 15-19	4th People's Health Assembly	Dhaka Bangladesh	http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10805
November 19- 21	Canadian Conference on Global Health	Toronto Canada	http://www.csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health



FYI

NEW BOOK:

2018 GLOBAL FOOD POLICY REPORT: THE RISE OF ANTIGLOBALISM



IFPRI's flagship report reviews the major food policy issues, developments, and decisions of 2017, and highlights challenges and opportunities for 2018 at the global and regional levels. This year's report looks at the impacts of greater global integration—including the movement of goods, investment, people, and knowledge—and the threat of current antiglobalization pressures. Drawing on recent research, IFPRI researchers and other distinguished food policy experts consider a range of timely topics.

The 2018 Global Food Policy Report also presents data tables and visualizations for several key food policy indicators, including country-level data on hunger, agricultural spending and research investment, and projections for future agricultural production and consumption. In addition to illustrative figures, tables, and a timeline of food policy events in 2017, the report includes the results of a global opinion poll on globalization and the current state of food policy.

[Read more on IFPRI.](#)



BRIDGING THE GAP: EXAMINING DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN FOUR AFRICAN COUNTRIES



This research builds upon previous work undertaken by the Leonard Cheshire Centre, including in the DFID-funded Cross-Cutting Disability Research Programme, which identified a series of common systemic barriers that disabled people encounter when accessing services, ranging from attitudinal, financial and non-financial resources, and lack information and inclusion in national level poverty reduction strategies. This research will build upon this work to inform understanding of the correlation that between these barriers, disability, and multidimensional poverty.

It must be recognized that in settings where everyone is poor, where few people access wage labour, where school attendance is paltry, healthcare access is limited and social protection is almost non-existent then disabled people are not necessarily very different from their neighbours. Yet, as countries develop, there is emerging evidence of a 'development gap' (Groce and Kett, 2013; Groce et al., 2011; Lang and Murangira, 2009), whereby disabled people fall behind. Building on the World Report on Disability (2011), this study will contribute to understanding how this development gap occurs, and what can be done to bridge the gap - a key and original theme of this study

The research focuses on 4 low-income Sub-Saharan African countries: Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. All have shown some development over the past decades, but there is still variation within their rankings in the Human Development Index (HDI) to enable cross-country comparisons to be made and provide an in-depth, nuanced understanding of how disabled people are more at risk of being excluded as social and economic development increases.

The research focuses on exploring the nexus between disability, lack of inclusion, barriers and multidimensional poverty; provide guidance as to how the data gaps can be filled; and identify ways of overcoming barriers. The results will be of primary benefit to disabled people and their families as the direct targets of policies and practices that can be improved as a result of the research, and indirectly through the expected impact of the research on governments, policymakers, national statistics offices, researchers, disabled people's organizations, and other stakeholders working to alleviate poverty in Africa.

[Read more on Gateway To Research.](#)



LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN EDGING TOWARDS ELIMINATING TUBERCULOSIS



Tuberculosis is an ancient disease. Results from a 2014 DNA study of remains in southern Peru suggest that human TB was present 6,000 years ago. This chronic familiarity of the disease no doubt makes it more difficult to generate the attention required to eradicate it from the human experience.

Anyone can catch TB, which is spread when an infected and untreated person coughs, spits or sneezes. However, it is still mostly spread in conditions of poverty and therefore more prevalent among populations in the global south.

In the LAC region, eight of 33 countries made the list in 2016: Haiti with 194 cases per 100,000 followed by Peru with 119; Guyana, 93; Dominican Republic, 60; Ecuador, 52; El Salvador, 43; Honduras, 43; and Brazil and Paraguay with 41 each. While the incidences are far less than in parts of Africa and Asia, the disease remains a problem, correlated with conditions of poverty and particularly among indigenous populations and people living with HIV.

Haiti's high numbers are attributable to the country's desperate problems of poverty including overcrowded living conditions, poor sanitation, and inadequate healthcare services. The high cost of drugs and difficult treatment regime exacerbates conditions for those who become infected. In the aftermath of the devastating magnitude 7.0 earthquake in 2010, which destroyed the health infrastructure in the Haitian capital, Port-Au-Prince, and left 1.5 million people homeless, the number of cases skyrocketed.

A 2015 WHO report said the increase was first noted among children. In 2010, 242 children younger than 10 years old were diagnosed with TB, compared to 72 in 2009—a 336 percent increase. While the incidences remain high overall, they are decreasing from those immediately after the earthquake.

With the second highest incidences in the region, Peru's TB cases include virulent multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) at around 2,300 patients per year, or 35 percent of all cases in the region; and extensively drug resistant TB (XDR-TB), strains of the disease that do not respond to frontline treatment, affect around 100 patients per year, or 75 percent of all cases in the region.

[Read more on IPS News.](#)

VIETNAM: UN EXPERTS CONCERNED BY THREATS AGAINST SAMSUNG FACTORY WORKERS AND LABOUR ACTIVISTS



UN human rights experts express their concern about reports that women workers at two Samsung Electronics factories in Vietnam, as well as labour activists who have been subjected to intimidation and harassment after they raised concerns about working conditions at the plants.

Among their concerns was the possible exposure of workers to toxic chemicals at the factories in Yen Phong Industrial Zone, Bac Ninh province, and Pho Yen Industrial Zone in Thai Nguyen province.

A report published by the Centre for Research on Gender, Family, and Environment in Development (CGFED) and the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) indicated that Samsung factory workers were not adequately informed or trained to protect themselves from toxic chemicals used in the manufacturing of electronic equipment.

Some of the surveyed women reported adverse health consequences associated with unhealthy working conditions including miscarriages, extreme fatigue and fainting. Reportedly, Vietnamese labour authorities are currently investigating the findings of the report.

[Read more on UN Human Rights OFHC.](#)



'SO MUCH PLASTIC!': BRITISH DIVER FILMS DELUGE OF WASTE OFF BALI ONE MINUTE VIDEO



1:16

Diver Rich Horner has captured video of himself swimming through water densely strewn with plastic waste and yellowing food wrappers, with the occasional tropical fish darting around.

The footage was shot at a dive site called Manta Point, a cleaning station for the large rays on the island of Nusa Penida, about 20km from the popular Indonesian holiday island of Bali.

[See the video on The Guardian.](#)

HOW UNIVERSITIES CAN PREPARE WORKERS FOR THE COMING TECHNOLOGICAL TSUNAMI



The change in the workplace is of such magnitude that many have likened it to a tsunami. At Davos this year, participants discussed technology-driven disruptions that are upending the marketplace: Uberization and the sharing economy, blockchain and cryptocurrencies, fintech and artificial intelligence. Equally important was the focus on the theme of "Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World", on the social disruptions that are creating an uncertain future for many people across the world.

The Global University Leaders Forum, a group that brings together 27 university leaders from around the world, has as one of its main items of discussion the following question: "How can universities be motors of social inclusion in the Fourth Industrial Revolution?"

In Canada, the Advisory Council on Economic Growth, under the leadership of Dominic Barton, has spent a lot of its time focusing on the social policies, education and working structures needed to help our country prepare for the change ahead. This is reflected, in particular, in two of the Council reports: *Building a Highly Skilled and Resilient Canadian Workforce through the FutureSkills Lab* and *Learning Nation: Equipping Canada's Workforce with Skills for the Future*.

According to the Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a very large percentage of Canadian jobs are at risk of being redefined, or even eliminated, due to automation. Both blue- and white-collar jobs are in play. Technological shifts are happening so fast, and affecting so many sectors, that a large proportion of the work force can expect major challenges preparing for the new realities of work.

For leaders in the higher-education sector, the challenge is to create a learning environment that responds to the need and constraints of workers. One tangible action would be the development of innovative new tools in Canada and across the world that allow working adults to keep learning throughout their careers. Distance learning is not new, of course, but online programs are providing more options for learners to hone both professional and personal requirements. Modular and part-time programs can be completed by taking little if any time off work. "Nanodegrees," focusing on developing targeted, in-demand, high-tech skill sets and cumulative or "stackable" graduate certificates are now part of the learning kits.

[Read more on The Globe and Mail.](#)



Playful Jellyfish

Ripley's Aquarium of Canada

Downtown Toronto

March 25, 2018

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