



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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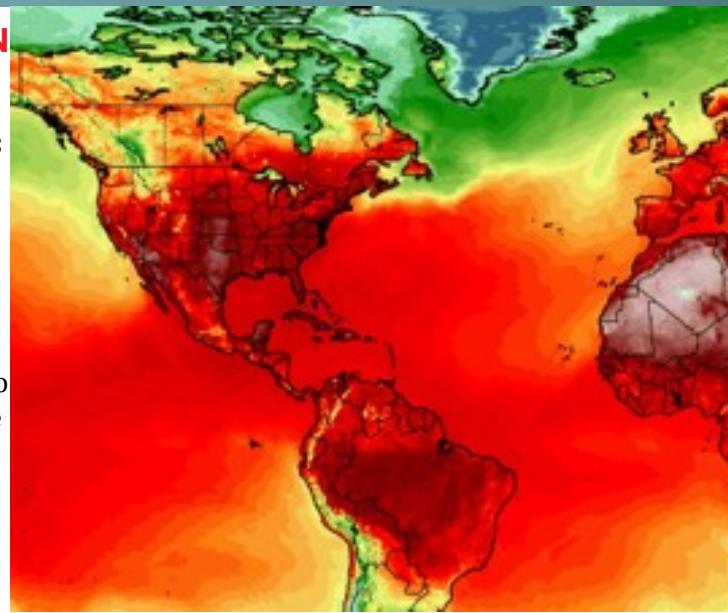
<https://planetaryhealthweekly.com>

July 12, 2018

## RED-HOT PLANET: ALL-TIME HEAT RECORDS HAVE BEEN SET ALL OVER THE WORLD DURING THE PAST WEEK

From the normally mild summer climes of Ireland, Scotland and Canada to the scorching Middle East to Southern California, numerous locations in the Northern Hemisphere have witnessed their hottest weather ever recorded over the past week. Large areas of heat pressure or heat domes scattered around the hemisphere led to the sweltering temperatures. Heat is to blame for at least 54 deaths in southern Quebec, mostly in and near Montreal, which endured record high temperatures last week. On June 28, Africa likely witnessed its hottest temperature ever reliably measured. Ouargla, Algeria soared to 124.3F (51.3C), possibly an African record. AND many more. No single record, in isolation, can be attributed to global warming. But collectively, these heat records are consistent with the kind of extremes we expected in a warming world.

Read more on [The Washington Post](#). See also:  
UK heatwave helps solar power to record weekly highs.



Credit: University of Maine Climate Reanalyzer

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## FRACKING LINKED TO INCREASED RATES OF STIS

Fracking is linked to increased rates of sexually transmitted infections in Ohio, according to research published in PLoS ONE by academics at the Yale School of Public Health. Hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, uses pressurized liquid to penetrate deep into rock and extract natural gas. The practice is controversial, and often met with opposition by residents in affected communities. In May 2018, residents in Colorado protested a proposed project near a school in Weld County. They expressed worries about safety and the environment. Now research points to another indirect concern. Because fracking requires the in-migration of trained labourers to operate drilling rigs, it "commonly involves the formation of 'work camps' composed of relatively young male workers." They cite previous research that has established links between other migratory labor movements and the spread of sexually transmitted infections, and produce evidence for a similar trend within this industry. [Read more on Journalists Resource.](#)



Credit: Pixabay





Credit: Jorge Saenz

## PLUNDERING THE GUARANI: COKE, NESTLE NEAR OWNERSHIP OF WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST AQUIFER

A concerted push is underway in South America that could see one of the world's largest reserves of fresh water soon fall into the hands of transnational corporations like Coca-Cola and Nestlé. Talks to privatize the Guarani Aquifer – a vast subterranean water reserve lying beneath Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay – have already reached an advanced stage. The deal would grant a consortium of U.S. and Europe-based conglomerates exclusive rights to the aquifer that would last over 100 years. This aquifer is the world's second largest underground water reserve. Environmental groups, social movements, and land defenders warn that the exploitation of this freshwater reserve could see the 460,000-square mile (1.2 million sq. km.) reservoir sacrificed for the short-term profits of agribusiness, energy and food-and-drink giants.

[Read more on Mint Press News.](#)

## ANTARCTICA HAS ENORMOUS MOUNTAIN RANGES AND VALLEYS DEEP BENEATH ITS ICE

Mountain ranges and valleys hundreds of miles long are hidden deep beneath Western Antarctica's vast ice region, a discovery that scientists say shows Antarctica could contribute even more to rising global sea levels. By mapping the subglacial landscape, they have added a key piece of evidence for understanding the frozen continent. They discovered three valleys linking two major ice regions. The newly discovered land forms prevent ice from East Antarctica from flowing through West Antarctica and to the coast. But as ice sheets thin because of warming temperatures, these valleys and mountain ranges could "increase the speed and rate at which ice flows out from the center of Antarctica to its edges, leading to an increase in global sea levels."

[Read more on The Washington Post.](#)



Credit: Ice Stories



## TESLA GETS GREEN LIGHT TO CREATE THE WORLD'S LARGEST VIRTUAL SOLAR PLANT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The government of South Australia, which changed hands after an election this March, just announced that it would move forward with a previous agreement with Tesla to install solar panels on 1,100 houses. The original deal – to create what's being called the world's largest virtual power plant – was first struck in February. But with a new government, it was unclear if they would honour that agreement, or move forward with their own plan to subsidize 40 thousand home battery units to bring renewable energy to people who couldn't otherwise afford it. In good news for clean energy innovation, the government decided to do both.

[Read more on Futurism.](#)



## MONGOLIA'S FIRST SURVEY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS SOBERING

Mongolia's first nationwide survey on gender-based violence reveals high rates of violence against women across the East Asian country. One in 10 women experienced nonpartner sexual violence before the age of 15, and 1 in 4 women, regardless of her social and economic status, agreed that a husband may beat his wife if she is unfaithful, according to the national report published Thursday. They are sobering statistics for a vast country where very little was previously known about the prevalence and patterns of VAW and domestic violence, according to the United Nations Population Fund's Mongolia office, which provided technical support for the survey process.

[Read more on Devex.](#)

Credit: Marco Fiebeir

## BRITISH COLONIAL LAW LINKED TO HIGHER HIV RATES AMONG WOMEN IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The likelihood that a woman in sub-Saharan Africa has HIV today is linked to whether her country was once colonized by Britain or a continental European country, according to a June 2018 study published in American Economic Review. Siwan Anderson, a professor at the Vancouver School of Economics, hypothesized that "weaker marital property rights" in common law countries "make women less able to negotiate safe sex with their husbands." She found that HIV rates among women are significantly higher in sub-Saharan African countries that adhere to common law rather than civil law — a difference that depends on which European countries once colonized them. "Uniquely, Africa is the only place in the world where more women than men live with HIV". Sub-Saharan African women aged 15–49 are, on average, three times more likely than men to be infected with HIV.

[Read more on Journalists Resource.](#)



Credit: DrRandomFactor



## INDIA IS PANICKING ABOUT A VIRUS PASSED BY BAT POOP

The Nipah virus now spreading in southern India has claimed 17 lives, all in the southern state of Kerala, and authorities there have placed 2,000 people under observation. Among the deceased was a 28-year-old nurse who became infected while treating the first Nipah cases — adult brothers from a rural district. The Indian outbreak has now spawned outsized fears of spread and contagion around the world (if not yet in the West). It already dominates the news on the Indian subcontinent and in Middle Eastern countries with large Indian and Bangladeshi labor forces. The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain, in particular, have all banned import of various Indian foods and livestock and asked the estimated 1.6 million members of the Kerala diaspora living in the three countries to avoid traveling home.

[Read more on Foreign Policy.](#)

Credit: AFP

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## ETHIOPIA'S GREEN GROWTH GOALS: A LAUNCHPAD FOR WIDER CLIMATE ACTION IN AFRICA

The vision for a sustainable future in Africa is being realized at a time of great possibilities and this vision is underpinned by a shift in continental focus towards sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development. This focus highlights strategic efforts towards poverty alleviation, resilience building, promoting sustainable infrastructure and efficient management of natural resources. Ethiopia's current rapid economic development is largely attributed to a public investment-led development strategy that has produced tangible growth and has measurably improved social circumstances. These interventions have been guided by a series of targeted macro-economic planning instruments, which outline the goals and benchmarks for Ethiopia to reach middle-income status by 2025.

[Read more on IPS News Agency.](#)

See also: [Public Private Pacts Open Doors To Climate Finance in Rwanda and Ethiopia.](#)

Credit: GGGI

### SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

#### NEW FISHING RULES AIM TO PROTECT GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE RIGHT WHALES

Not since the days of whaling had so many North Atlantic right whales died in one year. In 2017, 17 of the animals died or were entangled live in fishing gear in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a large region of ocean that borders all five Canadian Atlantic provinces. At the same time, new research showed the population of 458 individuals was in decline — with the females dwindling faster than males. Scientists became concerned that the North Atlantic right whale might become functionally extinct — unable to produce new calves — in less than two decades. Researchers, conservationists, industries, managers, policy-makers and public citizens from Canada and the United States rallied in an unprecedented collaborative response to help reduce risk to the remaining animals.

[Read more on The Conversation.](#)



Credit: Flickr

### SPOTLIGHT ON ABORIGINAL HEALTH:

#### CANADA'S INDIGENOUS POPULATION IS OVERREPRESENTED IN FEDERAL PRISONS — AND IT'S ONLY GETTING WORSE

For more than two decades, Canada's crime rate has been steadily declining. And since hitting an all-time high in 2012, Canada's incarceration rate is slowly trending downward, too. But a report released June 19 from Statistics Canada, the country's national statistics agency, paints a grim picture that has been described as "unacceptable" by the chief justice of Canada's Supreme Court: the increasing overrepresentation of indigenous people behind bars. The report shows that while indigenous people account for roughly 5% of Canada's population, they represented 27% of its prison population in 2016-2017 — an increase of 8% over the previous decade.

[Read more on The Washington Post.](#)

Credit: Fred Chartrand



**“There’s no other issue at an international level, besides security and nuclear proliferation, more important than climate change.”**

**Youba Sokona from Mali, an environmental expert and the vice-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).**

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/05/will-climate-change-cause-migrants-wars/>

## EVENTS TABLE

|                  |  |                   |   |
|------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| Jul 13-14        | Joint Symposium on Global Health and Care, Department of Sociology, UofT                 | Toronto Canada    | <a href="http://sociology.utoronto.ca/events-2-2/joint-symposium-on-global-health-and-care/">http://sociology.utoronto.ca/events-2-2/joint-symposium-on-global-health-and-care/</a> |
| Sept 29          | 7th Annual Action Global Health Network Conference                                       | Ottawa Canada     | Early Bird deadline for abstract is July 20th, 2017, please email <a href="mailto:aghn2017.research@gmail.com">aghn2017.research@gmail.com</a> for more information                 |
| Oct 8-12         | 5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research  | Liverpool England | <a href="http://healthsystemsresearch.org/hsr2018/">http://healthsystemsresearch.org/hsr2018/</a>   |
| Oct 18           | Integrative Health Institute Conference  | Edmonton, Canada  | <a href="https://www.ualberta.ca/integrative-health-institute">https://www.ualberta.ca/integrative-health-institute</a>   |
| Nov 15-19        | 4th People's Health Assembly   | Dhaka Bangladesh  | <a href="http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10805">http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10805</a>   |
| Nov 19-21        | Canadian Conference on Global Health   | Toronto Canada    | <a href="http://www.csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health">http://www.csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health</a>                                       |
| March 8-10, 2019 | 10th annual CUGH Conference - Translation and Implementation for impact in Global Health | Chicago USA       | Panel and Abstract proposal deadline - August 25, 2018  |





# CARIBBEAN SYLLABUS: LIFE AND DEBT IN THE CARIBBEAN



Credit: Jack Delano

More than one hundred years after enslavement, emancipation, and nation-building, many of the twenty-six countries that today make the Caribbean rank among the most indebted in the world. In 2014, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), a regional group of 14 island-nations sued its former colonizers—Britain, France, and the Netherlands—for slavery reparations. The group also sought an official apology, debt cancellation, and financial support for cultural and educational institutions. A year later, the governor of Puerto Rico, a colonial possession of the United States since 1898, declared that its debt of \$72 billion was “unpayable.” Under the rubric of “people before debt” Puerto Ricans on the island and mainland mobilized in support of debt cancellation as the region re-emerges as a site of new forms of capital extraction.

Given the deep effects of debt in the Caribbean and the ways that this debt has enabled wealth accumulation in other parts of the world through more than five hundred years, the Caribbean Syllabus provides an entry point into the complex and constitutive relationship between debt and the modern Caribbean through an exploration of several questions.

At present, the Syllabus contains 15 units, each structured under a specific theme and inclusive of scholarly, journalistic, primary, and multimedia sources (visual arts, video, literature, and music). We envision the Syllabus as a living document, and hope to add to it as new resources, interventions, and materials become available. We especially welcome suggestions for materials in languages other than English, including French and Spanish. Units on education and the arts are forthcoming.

Caribbean Syllabus is the second in a series of three.

[Read more on Caribbean Syllabus.](#)

## DRUG ABUSE: CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNNECESSARY MEDICATION



Credit: Money Life Digital Team

Doctors and academics are increasingly speaking up against patients being given unnecessary medication—such as statins, blood pressure pills and glucose-lowering drugs for type-2 diabetics which have no effect and burn holes in people's pockets. They leave many people suffering further, due to side-effects, or cause excess deaths. A Cambridge University study found half of over-65s take at least five drugs a day. Taking up to five drugs a day increased the dangers of premature death by an estimated 47%, researchers warned. Over-prescribing medications is now the third most common cause of death, after heart disease and cancer.

Esteemed panelists, presenting to the EU parliament, called for an urgent Europe-wide campaign to reduce the amounts of drugs people are taking. They discussed the need for an inquiry into biased information being issued by Big Pharma on medicines that is harming millions of patients. Between 2009 and 2014, GlaxoSmithKline was charged \$13 billion in fines for criminal behaviour which included hiding data on the side-effects of the drugs and manipulating results. [Read more on Money Life.](#)



Credit: Pixabay

Heat waves are expected to occur with increasing frequency, and older people are particularly imperiled by extreme summer temperatures.

This added vulnerability stems in part from the fact that older people are more likely to have chronic medical conditions that modify the body's ability to adapt to heat; they are also more likely to take medications that play a role in these processes. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has reported that since 1999, "people aged 65+ have been several times more likely to die from heat-related cardiovascular disease than the general population."

To help understand how heat waves affect the elderly on a local, national or international level, Journalist's Resource collected research on the subject, including studies on the changing climate's heat-related health effects, associated costs, which heat waves are most dangerous and potential interventions to mitigate these effects.

[Read more on Journalist's Resource.](#)

## SCIENTISTS FINALLY FIND THE 240-MILLION-YEAR-OLD 'MOTHER OF ALL LIZARDS'



Credit: Davide Bonnadonna

Scientists can finally fill in a long missing branch on the evolutionary tree for lizards.

A study led by Tiago Simoes, a PhD student at the University of Alberta, identified a 240-million-year-old fossil as the ancient ancestor of modern lizards and snakes. For the past 20 years, scientists thought the fossil, which was found in the Dolomite Mountains in northern Italy, was only related to, but not actually, a lizard.

"You can say it's a link between modern lizards and primitive reptiles," Simoes said. "That sweet spot between older groups of reptiles and modern families of lizards was pretty unknown."

Before now, he added, scientists knew almost nothing about the earliest stages of the evolution of lizards. They used to think the earliest known lizard was 170 million years old, but *Megachirella wachtleri*, the species Simoes helped identify, actually came 75 million years before.

Read more on [The Washington Post](#).

## LAOS ANNOUNCES NEW 268-HECTARE BOTANICAL CONSERVATION AREA



Credit: Vientiane Times

The Government of Laos has announced the establishment of the Huaynhang forestry conservation area in Dongmakkhai village, Xaythany district, Vientiane, with the aim of creating a protected forest area free from encroachment. To achieve the goal of restoring nationwide forest cover to 70 percent by 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will attempt to rehabilitate 517,500 hectares of degraded forest. The targeted 70 percent forest cover means that 16.5 million hectares of land will be forested. This will comprise 4.7 million hectares of conservation forest, 8.2 million hectares of protected forest, 3.1 million hectares of production forest (forests where commercial logging is authorised), and 500,000 hectares of commercial tree plantations. As a result of these efforts so far, forest cover increased to 60.4 percent in 2017. [Read more on Vientiane Times](#).

# HOW TO MEASURE DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT



Credit: Nugroho Nurdikiawan Sunjoyo

As life expectancies lengthen and child mortality rates are lowered, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) will escalate as an issue over the next 30 years. Given their long-term nature and complex causes, there is one group of health care professionals that is especially well-placed to manage the challenge of NCDs: Nurses. No other health professionals are closer to communities than nurses, who lead on the frontlines of care, doing all they can for those in need. With their person-centered approach to care, nurses instinctively put the needs of populations first, not just in a headline-grabbing crisis but also in those that unfold slowly behind-the-scenes, such as NCDs.

Whether it's keeping women cancer-free, championing healthier lifestyles, or supporting increased investment in mental health, nurses have a vital role to play. And as the burden of NCDs increasingly weighs on countries, governments, and health care systems must step up their efforts to nurture nurses to fulfill their full potential.

[Read more on Devex.](#)



**Beautiful Water Lily**  
**Whitefish Lake, Ontario**  
**July 9, 2018**

Credit: David Zakus

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