



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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COP24: KEY OUTCOMES AGREED AT THE UN CLIMATE TALKS IN KATOWICE

This year's COP24 annual UN climate conference concluded late on December 15 in Katowice, Poland, after two weeks of tension-filled talks. It was mostly agreed, to start a new international climate regime under which all countries will have to report their emissions – and progress in cutting them – every two years from 2024. The final outcome included hints at the need for more ambitious climate pledges before 2020, leaving many NGOs disappointed at the lack of more forceful language. Meanwhile, new research released at the COP showed global emissions were going up, not down. COP24 also agreed on how countries should report their efforts to adapt to climate change. And the COP decided that the “adaptation fund” – a financial mechanism set up under the Kyoto Protocol – should continue under the Paris Agreement. There is disappointment at its failure to align climate pledges with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

[Read More at Carbon Brief](#)



Credit: IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth

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TOXIC SMOKE IS AFRICA'S QUIET KILLER. AN ENTREPRENEUR SAYS HIS FIX CAN MAKE A FORTUNE

Inyenyeri, a Rwandan company, aims to replace Africa's overwhelming dependence on charcoal and firewood with clean-burning stoves powered by wood pellets. The business has more than 5,000 customers and needs perhaps 100,000 to break even. In much of the developing world, initiatives aimed at sparing the environment tend to pit the livelihoods of poor people against the protection of natural resources. Yet in Inyenyeri's designs, the everyday concerns of poor households are aligned with environmental imperatives, because people prefer to cook with the stoves. Signs of the charcoal industry were inescapable. Fires wafted up from supposedly protected national forests. Steep, verdant hills once covered in rain forest were denuded and exposed to the elements. Rivers were choked with brown silt, the soil and nutrients stripped off the land by pounding rains. [Read More at New York Times](#)



Credit: Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi



Credit: JEREMY HARBECK/NASA

THE RACE TO UNDERSTAND ANTARCTICA'S MOST TERRIFYING GLACIER

In December 2008, a Penn State University scientist named Sridhar Anandakrishnan and five of his colleagues made the epic journey to Thwaites, two days from McMurdo by plane, tractor and snowmobile. All glaciers flow, but satellites and airborne radar missions had revealed that something worrisome was happening on Thwaites: The glacier was destabilizing, dumping ever more ice into the sea. As Anandakrishnan puts it, "Thwaites started to pop." By the end of the mission in 2009, he and his colleagues had collected data from about 150 boreholes. The new information didn't precisely explain what was hastening Thwaites' acceleration, but it was a start. Now, the prospect of Thwaites' rapid collapse seems enough of a possibility that a few scientists have suggested buttressing it. Saving Thwaites, or even finding out whether the Ghost Ridge looks stable, won't save the world.

[Read More at Wired](#)

CENTRAL AMERICAN FARMERS FACE CLIMATE CHANGE WITHOUT INSURANCE

Alberto Flores told IPS that as a result of the rains, which hit El Salvador and the rest of Central America in mid-October, he lost some 2,000 dollars, after nearly a hectare of his plantain (cooking bananas) crop was flooded. Other parts of the country and the Central American region were also hit hard. Central America has been described in reports by international organisations as one of the planet's most vulnerable regions to the onslaught of climate change. Experts pointed out that the high cost of agricultural insurance premiums, which is about 13 percent of an agricultural loan or investment, is one of the reasons, as well as a lack of information on and culture of using insurance. In July, Seguros Futuro, together with the state-run Agricultural Development Bank, launched the Produce Seguro programme, with coverage for earthquakes, droughts and excessive rainfall. This kind of insurance pays a set amount for a specific event.

[Read More at IPS News](#)



Credit: Edgardo Ayala/IPS

AS RHINO POACHING DECLINES, OTHER KRUGER SPECIES ARE TARGETED IN SNARING SPREE

Coming on the heels of a rhino poaching crisis, the snaring surge is a new battlefield in the wildlife wars and one that suggests poverty and joblessness remain entrenched around the park in eastern South Africa. "We believe strongly that there is a bushmeat trade developing outside the park. It's linked to the general lawlessness challenge outside the park," Glenn Phillips, the Kruger's managing executive, said. Local police and park officials have launched a wide-ranging investigation into the commercialisation of the bushmeat trade, which Phillips said is likely linked to organised crime. The numbers, rough as they are, bear this out: in 2014 about 180 snares were collected in the southwest boundary area of the park. In 2018, that number has soared to 1,600, snaring far more abundant species and feeding a local market in which demand clearly exists.

[Read More at Business Live](#)



Credit: 123RF/SIMON EEMAN





Credit: STRINGER/AFP/Getty Images

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

US GETS A “C” ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE, NEW INDEX FINDS

The U.S. government’s overall grade on sexual and reproductive health and rights in its global health assistance dropped from a B in 2016 to a C in 2017, according to a new index published Wednesday by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Health and Gender Equity, or CHANGE. Grades ranged from an F for the White House on the family planning indicator to an A for the U.S. Agency for International Development on HIV/AIDS work. The SRHR index is a roadmap for how global health assistance can best promote sexual and reproductive health and rights. They hope that this tool for advocates and for governments alike will help make global health assistance the best that it can be. [Read More at Devex](#)



Credit: Emilee Gilpin

PARENTING THE CLIMATE CHANGE GENERATION

You might expect these premonitions to settle like sediment into family planning. And indeed, among the young and well-off in Europe and the United States, for whom reproductive choices are often freighted with political meaning, they have. Among this outwardly conscientious cohort, there is worry about bringing new children into a damaged world, full of suffering, and about “contributing” to the problem by crowding the climate stage with more players, each a little consumption machine. “Want to fight climate change?” the Guardian asked in 2017. “Have fewer children.” That year and the next, the paper published several variations on the theme, as did many other publications delivered to the Western bourgeois, including the New York Times: “Add this to the list of decisions affected by climate change: Should I have children?” [Read More at Intelligencer](#)



Credit: CGutierrez / USAID / CC BY-NC

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS:

"WE REALIZED NOBODY WOULD SAVE US"

In 1978, Chief Michell said, life was dim. “With over 150 years of settler government land and resource control, we experienced the harsh impacts of a boom and bust economy...We all knew what was written for us. We wanted to drink, do drugs, fornicate, commit suicide. It was preordained. Life was shitty and we wanted someone to save us.” But then came a moment of clarity. “We realized, nobody would save us,” Chief Michell continued. “Eight thousand years our people have been here and nobody ever saved us. We survived colonization. If we weren’t happy with the status quo, it was up to us to change it.” The first step to self-sufficiency, Chief Michell said, is awareness. It’s important to tell the stories of old, so that Kanaka members today know where they come from and who they come from, in order to understand how to walk forward in a good way. [Read More at National Observer](#)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The last time Earth had such high levels of carbon dioxide concentration was 3-5 million years ago...Without cuts in greenhouse gases, climate change will have increasingly destructive and irreversible impacts on life on Earth."

WMO secretary-general Petteri Taalas

[Read More at The Denver Channel](#)



Credit: Nina Kellokoski

EVENTSTABLE

| DATE | CONFERENCE | LOCATION | REGISTER |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Mar. 8th-10th | 10th Annual CUGH Conference—Translation and Implementation for Impact in Global Health | Chicago USA | https://www.cugh.org/events/2019-annual-cugh-global-health-conference |
| Mar. 20th-22nd | 2019 Climate Leadership Conference and Awards | Baltimore USA | https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/ |
| Mar. 20th-22nd | Think Indigenous International Education Conference 2019 | Edmonton Canada | http://www.thinkindigenous.ca/ |
| April 15th-17th | Integrative Mental Health Conference | San Francisco California | https://imhc.arizona.edu/conference.html |
| Apr. 30th- May 2nd | Public Health 2019 (CPHA) | Ottawa Canada | https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-2019-program |
| May 7th-10th | International Congress on Complementary Medicine Research | Brisbane Australia | http://iccmr2019.com/ |
| May 13th-15th | Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB): 2019 Biennial Conference | Ottawa Canada | https://cseb.ca/conferences/2019-conference/ |
| May 22nd-24th | 3rd International Integrative Nursing Symposium | Galway Ireland | https://www.integrativenursingsymposium.com/ |



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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA:

NEW COLLECTION: READINGS ON HEALTH SYSTEMS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES



Credit: Russell Walkins/DFID

The Thematic Working Group on Health Systems in Fragile and Conflict Affected States (TWG-FCAS), part of Health Systems Global, is working for better awareness and dissemination of current and new knowledge on health systems in FCAS, and its translation into policy and practice. This Collection of Resources and linked Key Issue Guides have been collated as part of the Eldis platform, to help those working in these challenging settings to better access relevant published literature and other resources, including relevant organisations, in support of their work.

This Collection will be kept as up to date as possible, and they welcome suggestions for additional relevant resources and other material, including organisations/projects. If you have suggestions for such additional material, please email twgfcascollection@gmail.com with details for consideration by the TWG-FCAS.

[Read More at Eldis](#)



TEN REASONS PEOPLE STOP ATTENDING HIV CARE IN ZAMBIA



Credit: Greg Lomas / Scholars and Gentlemen / Médecins sans Frontières

Patient-provider relationships are strained by poor working conditions and rigid application of one-size-fits-all models of care, according to an in-depth investigation of why people with HIV drop out of HIV treatment services in Zambia, recently published in *BMJ Global Health*. But patients rate antiretroviral services more highly than traditional healers, who are perceived to have problems of their own.

The study identified structural challenges (including resourcing, clinic facilities and clinical guidelines) and staffing issues (like attitudes and discretionary work practices) that discouraged people from remaining in HIV services. The failure of health services to keep people living with HIV engaged in life-long treatment and care has serious implications for individual and population health.

[Read More at Aids Map](#)



OILSANDS WASTE IS COLLECTED IN SPRAWLING TOXIC PONDS. TO CLEAN THEM UP, OIL COMPANIES PLAN TO POUR WATER ON THEM



Credit: RYAN JACKSON / EDMONTON JOURNAL

The Alberta's oil industry's strategy to deal with a trillion litres of toxic goop is centred on a process even the Alberta Energy Regulator calls unproven. One top scientist describes the claim that water capping will return land to a natural state as an "impossible fantasy." Despite years of public promises from officials that the tailings ponds would shrink and go away, they are growing. And in the meantime, troubling gaps are opening in the oversight system meant to ensure the oil patch cleans up its mess. Alberta has collected only \$1 billion from companies to help remediate tailings — a problem that is now estimated to cost about 100 times that. The ponds, meanwhile, are polluting the air and leaking out the bottom, possibly reaching surrounding groundwater and the nearby Athabasca River. "One day, because of the environmental impacts, my people will become environmental refugees," said Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam.

[Read More at The Star](#)





ANTARCTICA HUM: LISTEN TO THE EERIE SONG OF ICE MELTING



Credit: Richard McManus/ Getty Images

Sped up thousands of times into the frequency range of human hearing, it sounded as though the ice's warble faded to something like a dial tone — a moaning dirge that lasted for two of the warmest weeks on record for the polar continent. A song that warned of melting snow. "It collapsed between pictures of a satellite," Julien Chaput, a geophysicist at Colorado State University, told The Washington Post. "One picture, it was there.

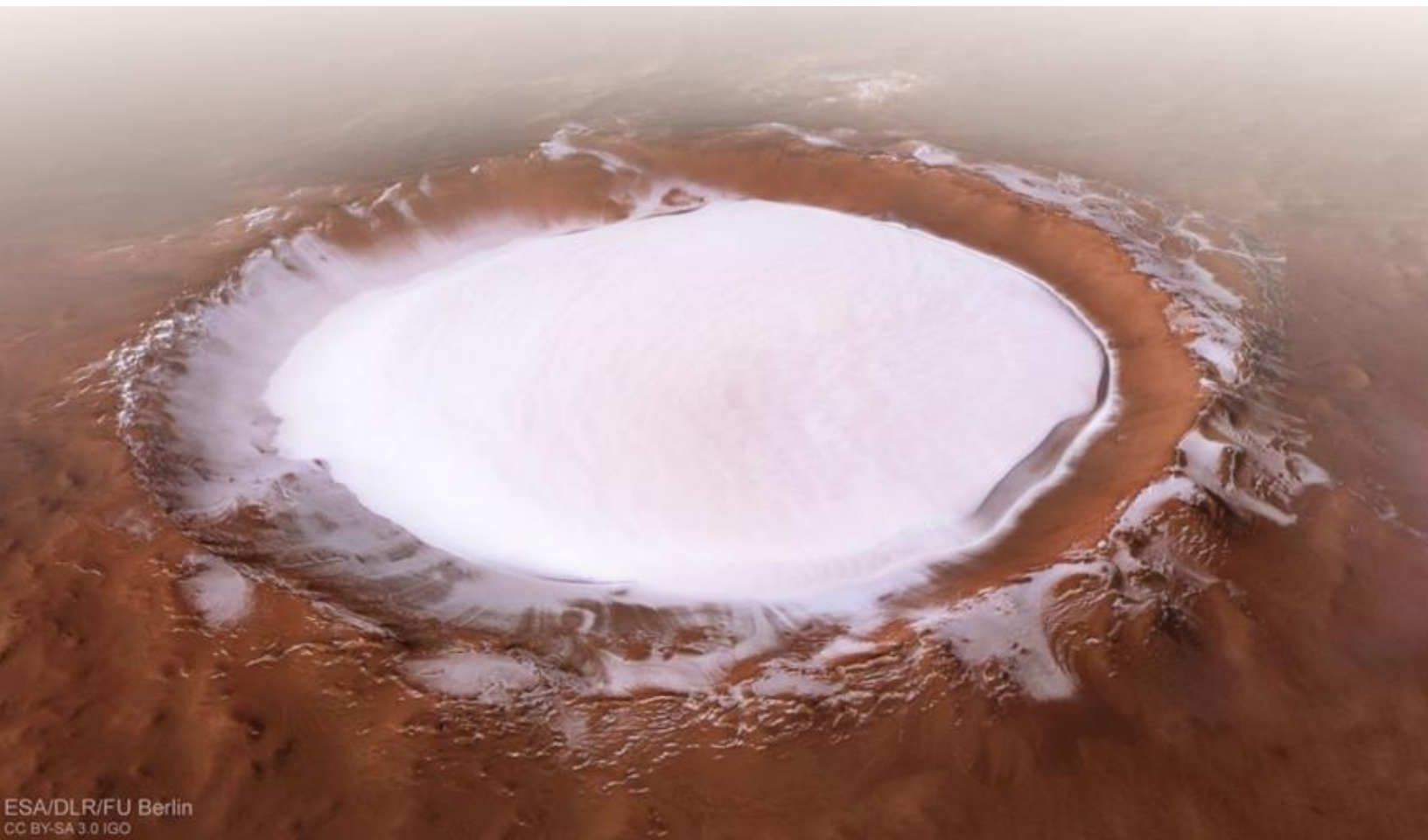
The next, it wasn't." But as Chaput and his team demonstrated in a paper published by the American Geophysical Union last week, a wounded ice shelf will sing about its troubles long before it shows them to us. All this might simply mean that Chaput found a depressing soundtrack for the melting of an ice cap. But as described in his paper, the music also holds potential as a measurement tool — something like a sonogram for the health of snow and ice in future warming events, of which he expects many.

[Read More at The Washington Post](#)





SEE STUNNING NEW IMAGES OF A MARS CRATER FULL OF MILE-THICK ICE



Credit: ESA/DLR/FU Berlin

Christmas is always white at Mars's Korolev crater. On Thursday, the European Space Agency (ESA) released several icy, snowy images of the crater, and they're stunning enough to adorn the cover of a Martian Christmas card. The ice at the center of the Martian crater is more than a mile thick. In total, Korolev contains 530 cubic miles of water ice.

That's more than four times the volume of Lake Erie. The fact that we even know such a massive ice-filled crater exists on Mars is remarkable. After all, less than two decades ago, we weren't even sure the Red Planet had any form of water at all. Now we have the technology in place to see a massive crater full of it — in stunning detail.

[Read More at Futurism](#)



SCHOOLS FOCUS ON LIFELONG LEARNING RATHER THAN TEACHING "FUTURE-PROOF" TECHNICAL SKILLS



Credit: Robin Zebrowski/Flickr

The world of work is changing so rapidly that it's become impossible for schools to offer future-proof programs, courses and credentials, writes Sarah Lysecki, which is why post-secondary institutions are now focusing on teaching students skills like teamwork, communications and building trust that they will use throughout their careers.

The author cites UOIT President Murphy, who points to Scandinavia as a place that has already adopted education models where people in the workforce come back to post-secondary institutions to learn new skills on an ongoing basis. Lysecki then provides a cross-section of initiatives being undertaken at various Canadian institutions to address this challenge.

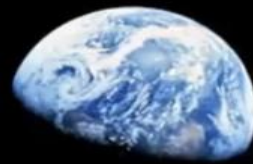
[Read More at Now Toronto](#)



Developing Planetary Consciousness

From Apollo 8 in Lunar Orbit

December 24, 1968



Credit: Astronaut Bill Anders, NASA

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