



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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CAN CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS CELEBRITIES INFLUENCE OUR EATING HABITS?

In an attempt to draw attention to the carbon footprint of meat production, a group of celebrities including Paul McCartney and actors Woody Harrelson and Joaquin Phoenix resorted to an elaborate ruse. Co-signing an impassioned letter by a 12-year-old California eco-activist named Genesis Butler, they challenged Pope Francis to go vegan for Lent. Whether or not the Pope has taken the bait, the Million Dollar Vegan stunt will undoubtedly shine more light on the issue of meat production. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, farming livestock accounts for about 18% of global carbon emissions. While people are unlikely to stop eating animal proteins, eating fewer of them, and diversifying into plant-based ones, certainly benefits the planet. A vegan diet could cut greenhouse gas emissions from food in half and reduce water use by 19%. Celebrities are also getting into the act.

[Read More at CBC](#)



Credit: Food Resolution Network

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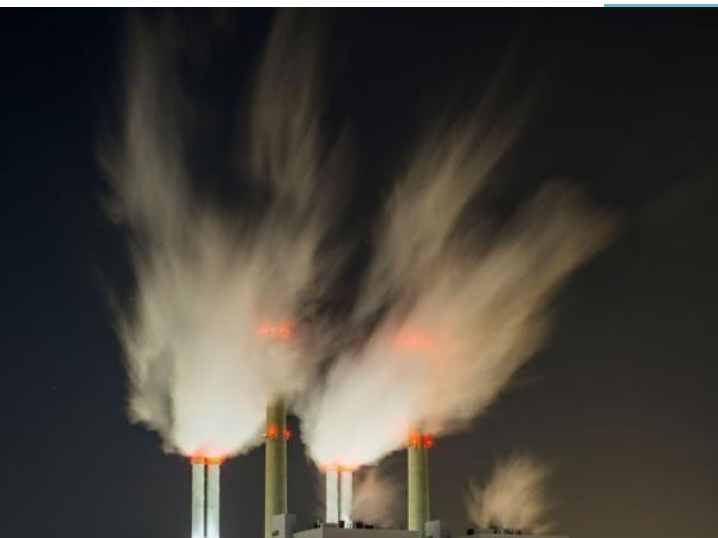
WORLD BANK REPORTS FULL GENDER EQUITY RIGHTS IN ONLY SIX COUNTRIES

Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, France, Luxembourg and Latvia are the only countries in the world that have comprehensive gender equity labour laws. Women should play a part in creating prosperity but can only do so if laws support them in doing so, says World Bank interim President Kristalina Georgieva. "Gender equality is a critical component of economic growth. Women are half of the world's population and we have our role to play in creating a more prosperous world. But we won't succeed in playing it if the laws are holding us back." Women's rights advocacy groups play a key role in driving reforms. [Read More at SmartBrief.](#)

See Also: [UN agency warns against gender-related killings](#)



Credit: Getty Images



OUR PLANET JUST SET A SCARY NEW CARBON DIOXIDE RECORD

Our planet's level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached a new, jarring record last month. Scientists from Scripps Institution of Oceanography announced that February's average carbon dioxide measurement was 411.66 parts per million as measured in Mauna Loa, Hawaii. "In most years, the previous maximum is surpassed in March or April. The February record breaking is a measure of just how fast CO₂ has been rising in the past months," said Scripps CO₂ Group Director Ralph Keeling. The suddenness of this year's record is the result of "the combination of weak El Nino conditions and unprecedented emissions from fossil-fuel burning." In recent years, the rise in the planet's carbon dioxide levels has picked up speed. That's in line with predictions of a planet creeping toward dangerous and irreversible tipping points, and highlights the dangers of collective foot-dragging on shifting to a carbon-free economy. [Read More at National Observer](#)

Credit : Mischa Keijser / Getty Images

WHY TROPHY HUNTING IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AS A 'CONSERVATION TOOL'

It's claimed that trophy hunting is a good conservation tool, but after many decades trophy hunting has done nothing to solve the causes of poaching in Africa. Often, trophy hunting concessions block ancient wildlife migration corridors, and poaching is uncontrolled even in the countries where trophy hunting goes on. Yet organisations such as WWF and Peace Parks support trophy hunting as a 'useful conservation tool' when in fact it causes more problems than it solves. According to the World Wildlife Fund's 2018 report, global wildlife population shrank by 60% between 1970 and 2014! Trophy hunting has been going on for decades but has not helped to stop poaching inside the National Parks of Africa. The international community needs to help to solve the causes of poaching by calling for the urgent elimination of all demand for endangered/threatened species or their body parts. [Read More at Africa Geographic](#)



Credit: Roger Bamber / Alamy Stock Photo.



'NO WAY TO DEFEND OURSELVES AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT OF CLIMATE CHANGE'

Surinam First Lady Ingrid Bouterse-Waldring and Speaker of the National Assembly Jennifer Geerlings-Simons say their and other countries in the region are feeling the brunt of the effects of climate change. "If we go to the interior of our country, we see that we have had a lot of floods in those areas. These floods are destructive for the people who are living there. The effects are clearly noticeable especially to the women and the children," Bouterse-Waldring told IPS. "In the coastal area . . . we have had a lot of very strong winds [which] actually we never had before, so it's also new to us. These are all things that we are facing now with climate change." "You can start rebuilding your economy . . . but next year another hurricane might come and wipe you out again. Did you contribute to climate change? No, you just get hit by it.

[Read More at IPS News](#)

Credit: Desmond Brown/IPS



THE WORLD IS NOT PREPARED FOR A GLOBAL FLU PANDEMIC, EXPERTS WARN

Speaking at the launch of the World Health Organization's new global influenza strategy Martin Friede, co-ordinator of immunisation, vaccines and biologicals at WHO said that although the world is in better shape to combat a flu pandemic than ever before it is still "not prepared enough". Better tools to prevent, detect, control and treat both pandemic and seasonal influenza are urgently needed. More effective vaccines and antivirals, particularly for low and middle income countries, are top of the list. "A universal flu vaccine is the 'holy grail' but there are other ways to develop vaccines more quickly." The last major pandemic was the 2009 H1N1 swine flu outbreak which is estimated to have caused between 100,000 and 400,000 deaths. [Read More at The Telegraphic](#)

Credit: Byebyetokyo/ISTock Photo

MEASLES EPIDEMIC IN MADAGASCAR KILLS MORE THAN 900

According to WHO figures, there have been more than 68,000 cases of measles in which 553 deaths were confirmed and another 373 suspected since the outbreak began in September. Those most at risk are infants from 9-11 months. The epidemic is blamed on a low immunization rate across the island nation over a period of many years. The vaccination rate is estimated to be less than 60%. Madagascar has launched a nationwide campaign to try to bring the outbreak under control, through mass vaccination campaigns and surveillance.

[Read More at AP News](#)



Credit: Picture Alliance/ Getty Images



HOW CROWDSOURCING SEEDS CAN HELP FARMERS ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE (IN ETHIOPIA AND ELSEWHERE)

Van Etten's study of "crowdsourced" seed in the developing world was not confined to Ethiopia. He and his colleagues analyzed 12,400 farmer-managed experimental plots, including also trials in Nicaragua and India that evaluated the official variety recommendations for bean and wheat, respectively. The collective findings confirmed that farmers, acting as citizen scientists in vulnerable, low-income areas, could pool their knowledge to identify varieties that performed best under current climate conditions.

[Read More at National Observer](#)

Credit: Bioversity International



SPOTLIGHT ON OPINION

AGRIBUSINESS IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION

Humanity now faces a major challenge as global warming is expected to frustrate the production of enough food as the world population rises to 9.7 billion by 2050 (we're now at 7.7 billion). Timothy Wise's new book (*Eating Tomorrow: Agribusiness, Family Farmers, and the Battle for the Future of Food*. New Press, New York, 2019) argues that most solutions currently put forward by government, philanthropic and private sector luminaries are misleading. *Eating Tomorrow* addresses related questions such as: Why doesn't rising global food production feed the hungry? How can we "feed the world" of rising populations and unsustainable pressure on land, water and other natural resources that farmers need to grow food? Undoubtedly, many new agricultural techniques offer the prospect of improving the welfare of farmers, not only by increasing productivity and output, but also by limiting costs, using scarce resources more effectively, and reducing the drudgery of farm work. [Read More at IPS News](#)

Credit: Shutterstock

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

WHAT IF CHILD MARRIAGE MEANS OLDER TEENS MAKING CHOICES?

New research in Tanzania is adding an important level of nuance to the global movement to end child marriage. In a pair of papers, lead author Schaffnit and David Lawson, a UCSB assistant professor of anthropology, report on a study of the timing of marriage, bride wealth payments (transferred from the groom's family to the bride's family), and women's wellbeing in rural Tanzania. The papers appear in *Nature Human Behaviour* and in *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*. "We find that marrying early brings a higher bride wealth, which may incentivize early marriage of daughters for parents to some extent," Schaffnit says. The research findings are based in rural Mwanza Region, where 35% of brides marry before age 18 and 2% before age 15. Lawson hopes that future research will distinguish between early marriage in late adolescence and very early marriage. [Read More at Freedom United](#)



Credit: Flickr



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

CANADA'S PLAN TO ELIMINATE TUBERCULOSIS IN INUIT COMMUNITIES: WILL IT BE ENOUGH?

Tuberculosis has afflicted Inuit populations since it first arrived via colonizers centuries ago and has continued to affect Inuit peoples in Canada disproportionately ever since. In the 1930s and '40s, the death rate of tuberculosis in Inuit populations was above 700 per 100,000 cases, one of the highest rates ever reported. At present, Inuit peoples have a rate of new tuberculosis cases 296 times higher than Canadian-born non-Indigenous populations. Motivated by the recent tragedies, this past December the Canadian government and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the organization representing Canada's 65,000 Inuit, announced the first stage of their plan to eradicate tuberculosis in Inuit communities. Lessons learned and a better understanding of the needs of the community will be used to develop their regional plan. [Read More at Healthy Debate](#)

Credit: Gerda Selway

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Coal is getting beaten on price outside of the US too. New wind and solar are already cheaper than coal in Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Germany, India, Thailand, the UK and Vietnam. In Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland and Japan, the tipping point could come within months. In fact London hedge fund manager Per Lekander predicts that the combination of falling renewable costs and a rising carbon price will lead to coal demand in Europe falling to almost zero within three years. These market-driven solutions to environmental problems should be welcomed and encouraged.”

Joe Ware, Journalist, CapX

Read More at CapX



Credit: Dominick Reuter/AFP/Getty Images

EVENTSTABLE

| DATE | CONFERENCE | LOCATION | REGISTER |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Mar. 20th -22nd | 2019 Climate Leadership Conference and Awards | Baltimore USA | https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/ |
| Mar. 25th-29th | VI Global Conference on Family Farming | Derio-Bilbao Spain | https://www.ruralforum.org/en/vi-conference/presentation |
| April 15th-17th | Integrative Mental Health Conference | San Francisco California | https://integrativemedicine.arizona.edu/mentalhealth.html |
| Apr. 30th- May 2nd | Public Health 2019 (CPHA) | Ottawa Canada | https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-2019-program |
| May 7th-10th | Integrative Congress on Complementary Medicine Research | Brisbane Australia | https://www.iscmr.org/content/iccmr-2019 |
| 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/ |
| June 6th-9th | CNIS Bethune Round Table in Global Surgery: Ethics in Global Surgery | Edmonton Canada | https://bethuneroundtable.com/ |
| June 6th-9th | Society for the Advancement of Science in Africa | Toronto Canada | https://sasascience.org/conference/ |
| June 10th-21st | 5th McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Diseases and Global Health | Montreal Canada | http://mcgill-idgh.ca |
| June 14th-16th | North American Refugee Health Conference | Toronto Canada | https://facmed.registration.med.utoronto.ca/portal/events/reg/participantTypeSelection.do?method=load&entityId=1469515 |
| Oct 7th-11th | Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power | Vienna Austria | https://www.iaea.org/atoms4climate |
| Oct 15th-18th | Global Symposium of Citizenship, Governance and Accountability in Health | New Delhi India | http://copasahglobalsymposium2019.net/overview.html |



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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA: INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Credit: Peoples Climate March by Zack Embree

Indigenous communities across the Prairies are providing inspiring and practical leadership on climate action. In a new series of videos shared on the Climate Atlas of Canada, leaders from First Nation and Métis communities share their stories of resilience and transition.

Not only are Indigenous communities seeing and experiencing changes in their territories - due to climate change, extraction, and displacement - but they're taking action to mitigate challenges, strengthen their ancestral connections to land, and increase their social well-being and self-determination.

These short videos were made in collaboration with community partners, through a process of community-based research using participatory video methods. This collaborative research - facilitated through the Masters work of Laura Cameron at the Prairie Climate Centre - aims to support and share the initiatives and leadership of communities to educate and inspire others. [Read More at Climate Atlas](#)

Watch: [Renewables in the Heart of the Tar Sands; Bringing back the Buffalo; First Metis Community-owned solar project in Canada; Wind Power on the Prairies](#)



8 FEMALE ANTI-CORRUPTION FIGHTERS WHO INSPIRE US

The graphic features the word 'Women' in a black cursive script, 'AGAINST' in red block letters inside a light blue rounded rectangle, and 'CORRUPTION' in large blue block letters with red outlines. The background consists of soft, overlapping pink and yellow cloud-like shapes.

Credit: Transparency International

While corruption affects people across all genders, ages and races, it hits poor and vulnerable groups the hardest, especially women. Gender-specific forms of corruption deepen inequality, hinder women's empowerment, and are a violation of human rights. For International Women's Day we highlighted the exceptional work of eight women around the world who are setting a positive example, showing that women are not only victims of corruption, but also key players in the struggle against it. All of these women have taken up the fight, regardless of adverse circumstances, and they stand for a strong message: If you want to create change in the world, take action. Our movement proudly represents the voices of women across the world. Many of them suffer the consequences of corruption every day—but just as many and more stand up and fight back against it.

1. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
2. Claudia Escobar
3. Robtel Neajai Pailey
4. Khadija Ismayilova
5. Soledad Jarquín
6. Ana Garrido Ramos
7. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
8. All the women at Transparency International

[Read More at Voices for Transparency](#)



FUEL CELL ELECTRIC BUSES READY TO DELIVER ZERO- EMISSION TRANSIT THROUGHOUT USA



Credit: Leslie Eudy, NREL

Ballard Power Systems of Vancouver has announced that the New Flyer Industries Canada ULC and New Flyer of America Inc. 40-foot and 60-foot Xcelsior fuel cell-electric buses (FCEBs), powered by Ballard FCveloCity-HD 85 kilowatt (kW) modules, have completed rigorous testing at The Altoona Bus Research and Testing Center under a program established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). California's Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment - particularly in disadvantaged communities.

The current \$300,000 voucher incentive covers 40-foot transit buses and Class 8 trucks powered exclusively by hydrogen fuel cells. Both funding opportunities enable transit agencies to support the transition to zero-emission operations. Rob Campbell, Ballard's Chief Commercial Officer said. It's projected that 40% of new heavy duty transit buses in the U.S. will be electric by 2022.

Ballard provides zero-emission, high performance fuel cell modules to power FCEBs.

[Read More at Energy Daily](#)



THE SAFEST, MOST SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD TO EAT



Credit: BrightCove

As fish stocks continue to shift and decline in response to warming ocean waters, what types of seafood can one responsibly put on the table? To find answers, Sierra turned to Ryan Bigelow, senior program manager of the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program, and Peter Juusola and Vinny Milburn, who co-run New York City's Greenpoint Fish & Lobster Co., a market committed to transparent sourcing. Here's what's safe to eat . . . for the time being. If you like intense, briny flavors, consider humble bivalves. Clams, mussels, and oysters are easy to steam open with wine and herbs, and Milburn notes that they maintain their characteristic sea flavors.

Juusola recommends slender Boston mackerel on the East Coast and recommends mixing up your white fish repertoire with wild-caught, mild-tasting hake or pollack. Halibut can be sustainably sourced from carefully managed northern Pacific fisheries. For the West Coast, Milburn recommends king crab pulled from highly regulated Alaskan fisheries. On the East Coast, Juusola likes invasive, baby-clam-and-mussel-eating green crabs. If putting a dent in invasive species sounds like a worthy mealtime adventure, you've got plenty of nemeses to pick from besides green crabs: Lionfish, blue catfish, and snakehead fish are good pan seared, in tacos, and battered fish-and-chips-style, respectively.

[Read More at Sierra Club](#)





FIVE ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE EVENTS TO HAVE ON YOUR RADAR: 2019 FESTIVALS



Credit: Greenpop.

Are you looking for opportunities to brainstorm concepts and think about how to tackle environmental challenges differently in 2019? Applications for the Young Champions of the Earth Prize 2019 are now open. Seven winners aged 18-30 from around the globe will win seed funding and skilled mentoring for their ground-breaking ideas to create positive environmental impact. In the meantime, why not explore these events and festivals for 2019, which aim to inspire environmental action and positive opportunities to network?

1. Green Pop Eden Festival of Action
2. Thought For Food
3. We Love Green
4. Lollapalooza
5. Glastonbury Festival

[Read at UN Environment](#)





Credit: Maharishi Institute

This might sound like a trick question, but it's a question that Gabriella Geffen has to deal with every day. "Gabi" is a business development expert at the Maharishi Institute and is also a member of the National Task Team responsible for developing Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship in South Africa. The world has changed dramatically over the course of the past few decades, and many people are coming face-to-face with harsh truths. In a world that is increasingly dependent on college education and people skills, a lack of access to higher education can all but ensure the perpetuity of poverty. So how does one break that cycle?

The Maharishi Institute provides business education to thousands of students. These students have business skills, so why not use them? The Maharishi Institute has been building out businesses, essentially hiring its own students and then paying them. Founder Taddy Blecher recognized that students who were coming from such underprivileged backgrounds struggled to focus. Also, transcendental meditation training, however, has been proven to alleviate stress-related conditions.

[Read More at Change Creator](#)



Ultrasound Scan Project Team

Kagadi Hospital

Kagadi, Northwestern Uganda

March 18, 2019



Credit: David Zakus

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