

[View in browser](#)**CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH****Volume 5, Number 40** <https://planetaryhealthweekly.com>**October 3, 2019**

Hi,

I've read that the Global Climate Action Strike crowd in Montreal last Friday was the biggest ever demonstration in Canada for anything. Amazing! I wasn't there but did have a quick trip to Ottawa and attended the Strike there, being amazed too at the large crowd that I was part of, perhaps upwards of 20,000 participants. How encouraging with such a display of determination and commitment to having Canada pull up its boots and get further into action in a serious way. Way to go students, like I've said before. How interesting that we need to be led by our youth for such an important issue affecting everyone.

I always tell my students, including the 62 I now have at York University, that they are in a privileged position and have more power than they think. It's often been my experience over a 35+ year academic career that senior university administrators listen more to students than faculty. And why not?! We're there for them.

Like the millions around the world out marching for our Planet, they are not only demanding action but accountability. They are going to school and investing themselves in their and our future. They must be listened to.

This all, too, while yesterday was the hottest October day ever recorded in Toronto and various other North American cities, and while India experiences its heaviest monsoon rains in 25 years and a trail of destruction. No matter where one lives, the times, they are a changing.

Today's **Planetary Health Weekly** (#40 of the year already!) has stories of accountability and action. From finding more mercury poisoning at Grassy Narrows, putting a ceiling on wealth, listening to an Amazon cattle farmer, medical services for seniors, micro and nanoplastics in tea bags, TB in India, building science in Africa, smog in Toronto to Canada's largest hospital's commitment to social determinants, and more...there's enough to get you more motivated and out marching too, or at least being in solidarity with those great students.

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher



Credit: David Zakus

GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION STRIKE

PARLIAMENT HILL, OTTAWA

SEPTEMBER 27, 2019

[See Greta Thunberg give advice to world leaders at the United Nations at Reuters \(1:43\)](#)

Rich Countries Aren't Stopping Climate Change. Can Poor Nations Save Themselves?



Credit: CNN Health

Tongan leader Akilisi Pōhiva is not someone you'd expect to break down in tears at an intergovernmental summit. At a meeting of Pacific leaders last month in the tiny

island nation of Tuvalu, other attendees said Pōhiva was overcome with emotion as he tried to secure Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's support for a more forceful approach to tackling the climate crisis. He was not the only one frustrated by Morrison's apparent lack of concern for the danger that smaller Pacific nations face as sea levels rise. "You are concerned with saving your economy," said Tuvalu's Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga to Morrison. "I'm concerned about saving my people." Fijian leader Frank Bainimarama later summarized the meeting as settling "for the status quo. For many countries already experiencing the effects of how we have changed the planet for the worse, the drive to just try something -- even if it's dangerous -- to attempt to make it better may become increasingly strong. [Read More at CNN](#)

Toronto-Based Hospital Network Commits Land To Building Affordable Housing



Credit: Tijana Martin/ The Globe and Mail

The University Health Network (UHN) in downtown Toronto (Canada's largest hospital) has committed a plot of land worth nearly \$10 million to a unique affordable-housing project designed to ease overcrowding at the network's two acute-care hospitals. Last month, the UHN signed a memorandum of understanding with the City of Toronto and the United Way Greater Toronto to launch what they are calling a "social-medicine initiative." Leaders in community health have long recognized how hard it is for patients to stay healthy if they're homeless or couch surfing, said Kate Mulligan, director of policy and communications for the Alliance for Healthier Communities, which represents community-governed primary-care clinics across Ontario. But this is a first for a Canadian hospital, said Dr. Mulligan, who is also an assistant professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. "It's important materially and symbolically," she said. "We literally need community housing here in Toronto and the symbolism of Canada's biggest hospital investing in housing is also very important." [Read More at The Globe and Mail](#)

Starting HIV Treatment In ERs May Be Key To Ending HIV Spread Worldwide



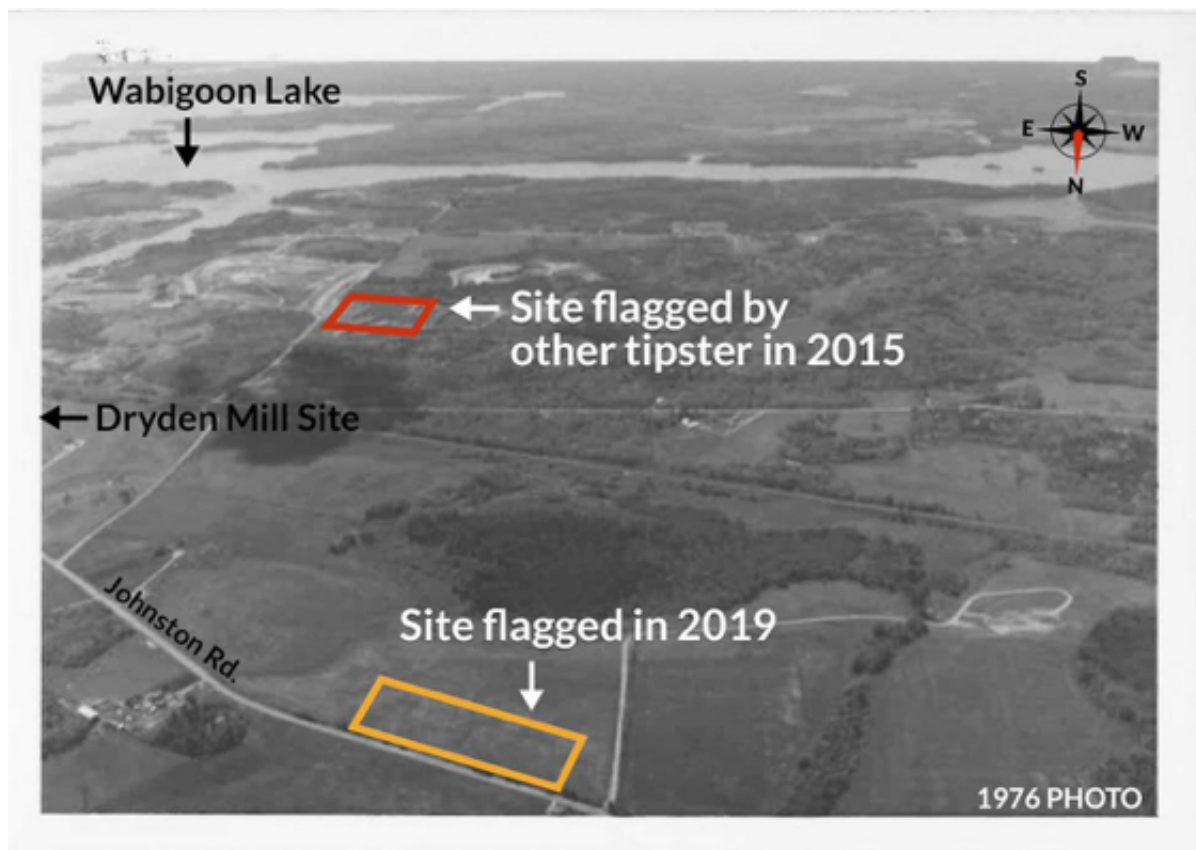
Credit: Johns Hopkins Medicine

Researchers say they have evidence that hospital emergency departments (EDs) worldwide may be key strategic settings for curbing the spread of HIV infections in hard-to-reach populations, if the EDs jump-start treatment and case management as

well as diagnosis of the disease. A report on the findings of a study in South Africa was published in August in *EClinicalMedicine*. "Our research shows there are many patients with HIV in the emergency department who are untreated, undertreated and undiagnosed," says Bhakti Hansoti, MBChB, PhD, MPH, associate professor of emergency medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and lead author of the research paper. [Read More at Science Daily](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

Second Mercury Dump Site Alleged Near Grassy Narrows Being Probed By Ontario



Credit: FAO/Min Qingwen

The province of Ontario is investigating an allegation of another mercury dump site near the riverside paper mill upstream from Grassy Narrows First Nation, [The Star](#) has learned. The mill, now owned by Domtar, got the tip by phone on May 10 from a

former employee of a previous mill owner. The tipster alleged that decades ago mercury was dumped in barrels and buried in a plastic-lined pit. He said he helped prepare the alleged dumping site. The company spokesperson said the Environment Ministry recently sampled the Wabigoon River, which runs past the mill toward Grassy Narrows, and results show that the “overwhelming, ongoing source” of mercury in the river is from contaminated sediments downstream of Dryden. “With each month it becomes more clear that our fears are real and that the government does not have this mercury problem under control.” [Read More at The Star](#)

See Also: [Ottawa ordered to compensate First Nations children impacted by on-reserve child welfare system at CBC](#)

OPINION

For The Sake Of Life On Earth, We Must Put A Limit On Wealth



Credit: Bill Bragg

Immense wealth translates automatically into immense environmental impacts,

regardless of the intentions of those who possess it. The very wealthy, almost as a matter of definition, are committing ecocide. A series of research papers shows that income is by far the most important determinant of environmental impact. It doesn't matter how green you think you are; if you have surplus money, you spend it. The only form of consumption that's clearly and positively correlated with good environmental intentions is diet: people who see themselves as green tend to eat less meat and more organic vegetables. But attitudes have little bearing on the amount of transport fuel, home energy and other materials you consume. Money conquers all. We should strive for private sufficiency, public luxury. Life on Earth depends on moderation. [Read More at The Guardian](#)

A Livestock Farmer's Response To The Amazon Fires



Credit: Civil Eats Amazon

This is a headline the environmental movement has both been dreading and waiting for: a "See that? Now can we talk?" that is getting the international attention needed

and desired. But, what do we actually talk about when we talk about the Amazon Rainforest? The Deep Ecology concept is crucial for an all-around successful environmental movement, and it is crucial right now as the Amazon fires continue to spread and ravage. This is not just about us, it simply cannot be. Home to so many plants and animals, the Amazon needs us for them. And as there is discussion of carbon sinks and water systems, I cannot help but think of the animals in ground zero, caught in waves of smoke and flame. Where are those headlines? [Read More at The Drew Acorn](#)

See Also: ['Unprecedented' monsoon rains leave 14 people dead in western India](#)

Who Is Caring For Canada's Seniors? New Report Provides Insights On Physician Services For Our Aging Population



Credit: Stephen Morrison/EPA

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada released a comprehensive report focusing on the care physicians provide to seniors. The study, *Health Care for an Aging Population: A Study of how Physicians Care for Seniors in Canada*, is based on an analysis of 216 million medical services provided by almost 54,000 physicians and honours in on fundamental questions, such as how much care do physicians provide to seniors, how intensively do different specialists focus their practice on seniors and what types of medical care do seniors receive. "If we do not know how seniors are accessing care and how we are delivering it, then we do not have an accurate idea of how effective we are caring for this population with distinct needs," says Dr. Andrew Padmos, chief executive officer at the Royal College. [Read More at Royal College](#)

Rwanda Selected As Long-Term Home For African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF), Infusing Continent's Premier Gathering Of Agriculture Leaders With A New Commitment To Progress



Credit: African Green Revolution Forum

Following a competitive bidding process, the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF)

Partners Group unanimously agreed and announced that the Republic of Rwanda will host the AGRF 2020 and serve as the long-term home country of the Forum going forward. “We are honoured to be the home country for AGRF and are committed to working closely and collaboratively with our many partners across Africa and around the world to ensure the continued growth and influence of AGRF as the voice of Africa’s smallholder farmers and agriculture businesses,” said Hon. Minister Geraldine Mukeshimana, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Rwanda. [Read More at African Green Revolution Forum](#)

One Tea Bag Can Leak Billions of Pieces Of Microplastic Into Your Brew



Credit: Fox 31 Denver

Plastic tea bags are shedding billions of shards of microplastics into their water, according to a new study. Researchers at McGill University in Montreal analyzed the effects of placing four different commercial tea bags into boiling water. They found that a single bag releases around 11.6 billion microplastic particles, and 3.1 billion even smaller nanoplastic particles, into the cup -- thousands of times higher than the amount of plastic previously found in other food and drink. "We urgently need to know more about the health impact of microplastics because they are everywhere -- including in our drinking water," said Dr. Maria Neira, director of the Department of Public Health, Environment and Social Determinants of Health at WHO. [Read More at CNN](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

What Happened To The Smog Days Of Summer In Toronto?



Credit: RICHARD LAUTENS / TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

In 2005, smog hung over Toronto for 48 days during what was then one of the warmest summers on record, with 38 days when the temperature soared to 30C or above. Six people died due to the heat, humidity and air pollution. It was the worst year for smog — a record — but only one of many from 2003 to 2013, a period when the city had so many smog days they added up to nearly half a year, according to air quality data obtained by the Star from Ontario's environment ministry. [Read More at The Star](#)



Credit: Jelajah Pangandaran

Quote Of The Week

Ban Ki-moon, Leader of the Global Commission on Adaptation and former UN Secretary-General said **Climate change "doesn't respect borders. It's an international problem that can only be solved with co-operation and collaboration, across borders and worldwide. It is becoming increasingly clear that in many parts of the world, our climate has already changed and we need to adapt with it."**

[Read More at BBC](#)

Upcoming Events

- October 7th - 11th: [Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power](#) (Vienna, Austria)
- October 15th - 18th: [Global Symposium of Citizenship, Governance and Accountability in Health](#) (New Delhi, India)
- October 17th - 19th: [Canadian Conference on Global Health](#) (Ottawa, Canada)
- November 4th -5th: [International Conference on Global Healthcare](#) (Tokyo, Japan)
- November 7th - 8th: [Global Experts Meeting on Healthcare and Nursing](#) (Melbourne, Australia)
- November 7th - 8th: [Global Summit on Healthcare and Nutrition](#) (Melbourne, Australia)
- November 13th - 14th: [World Congress on Mental Health](#) (London, UK)
- November 22nd -24th: [2nd International Symposium on Community Health Workers](#) (Dhaka, Bangladesh)
- February 19th - 20th, 2020: [2nd World Congress on Primary Healthcare and Medicare Summit](#) (Paris, France)
- April 6th -7th, 2020: [17th World Congress on Paediatrics and Neonatology](#) (Tokyo, Japan)
- April 18th -20th, 2020: [CUGH Conference 2020: Global Health in a Time of Worldwide Political Change](#) (Washington, D.C., USA)
- April 24th - 26th, 2020: [PEGASUS IV Migration - Climate Change - Sustainable Development](#) (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA: NEW REPORT ON CANADIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL HEALTH

CanWaCH Global Health Impact Report



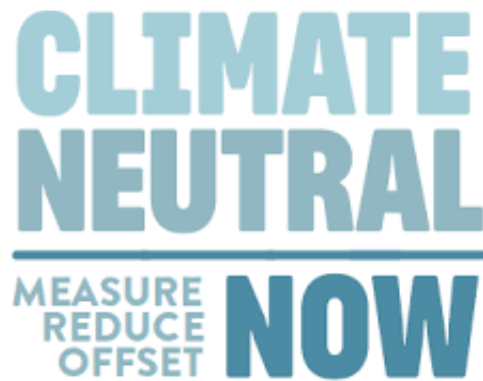
Credit: UnSplash

The Canadian government's leadership and that of Canadian organizations and institutions is cutting edge: together, we are transforming gender relations, delivering life-changing health interventions, and addressing the systemic barriers holding women and girls back from reaching their full potential. Since our inception, the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH) has consulted with our sector partners to identify obstacles to achieving the SDG targets. Repeatedly, questions around data and information challenges emerge as a common theme. All stakeholders - whether implementers, researchers, policy makers, or Canadian public - want to make better, more impactful, and evidence-based decisions. This inaugural Global Health Impact Report explores in-depth the amazing achievements, creative thinking, and inspirational leadership of Canadians working in this sector. Check out this innovative presentation.

Read More at CanWaCH

FYI #2

Climate Neutral Now | UNFCCC



Credit: UNFCCC

Climate Neutral Now is an initiative launched by UN Climate Change in 2015 to encourage everyone in society to take action to help achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement. Climate Neutral Now invites organizations, governments and citizens to work towards global climate neutrality by addressing their own climate footprint through a 3-step method:

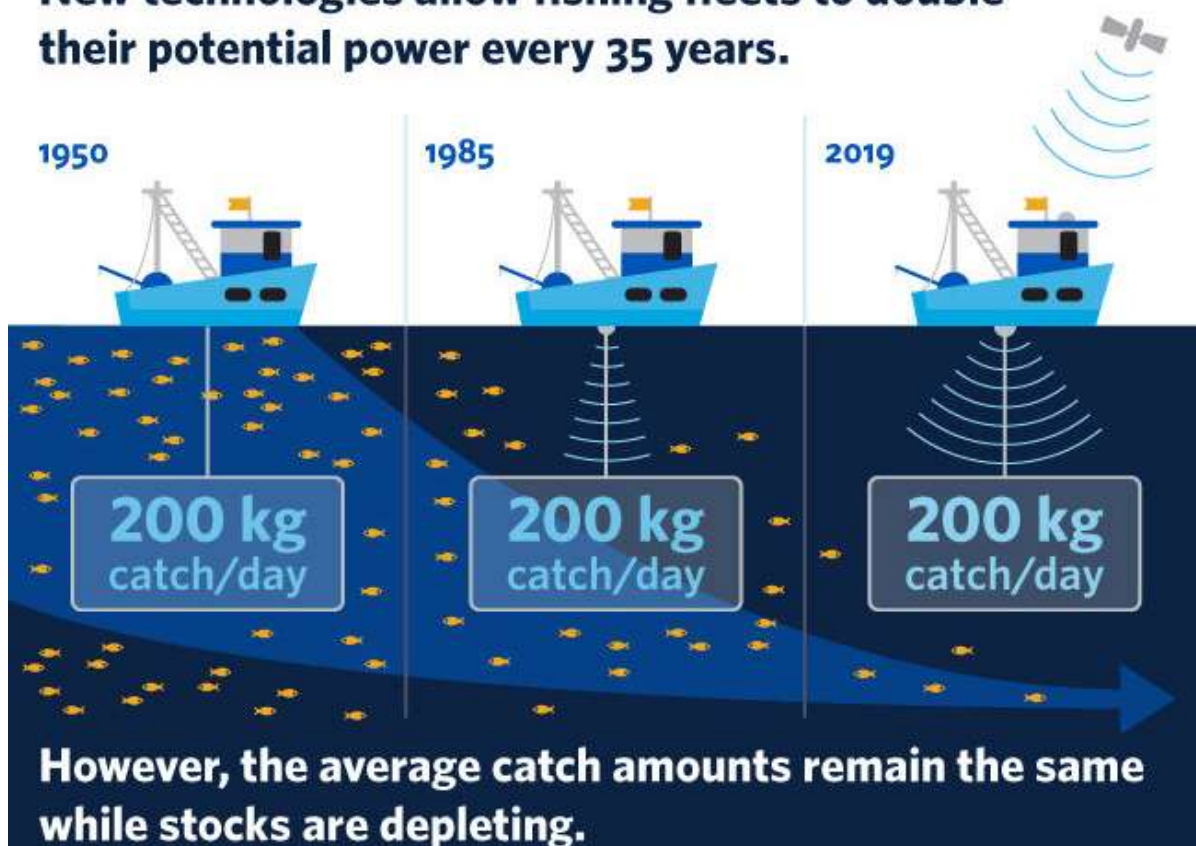
- Measure their greenhouse gas emissions, also called the carbon footprint;
- Reduce them as much as possible through their own actions; and
- Compensate those which cannot be currently avoided by using UN certified emission reductions (CERs), a type of carbon credit.

Read More at UNFCC

FYI #3

New Technology Allows Fleets To Double Fishing Capacity -- And Deplete Fish Stocks Faster

New technologies allow fishing fleets to double their potential power every 35 years.



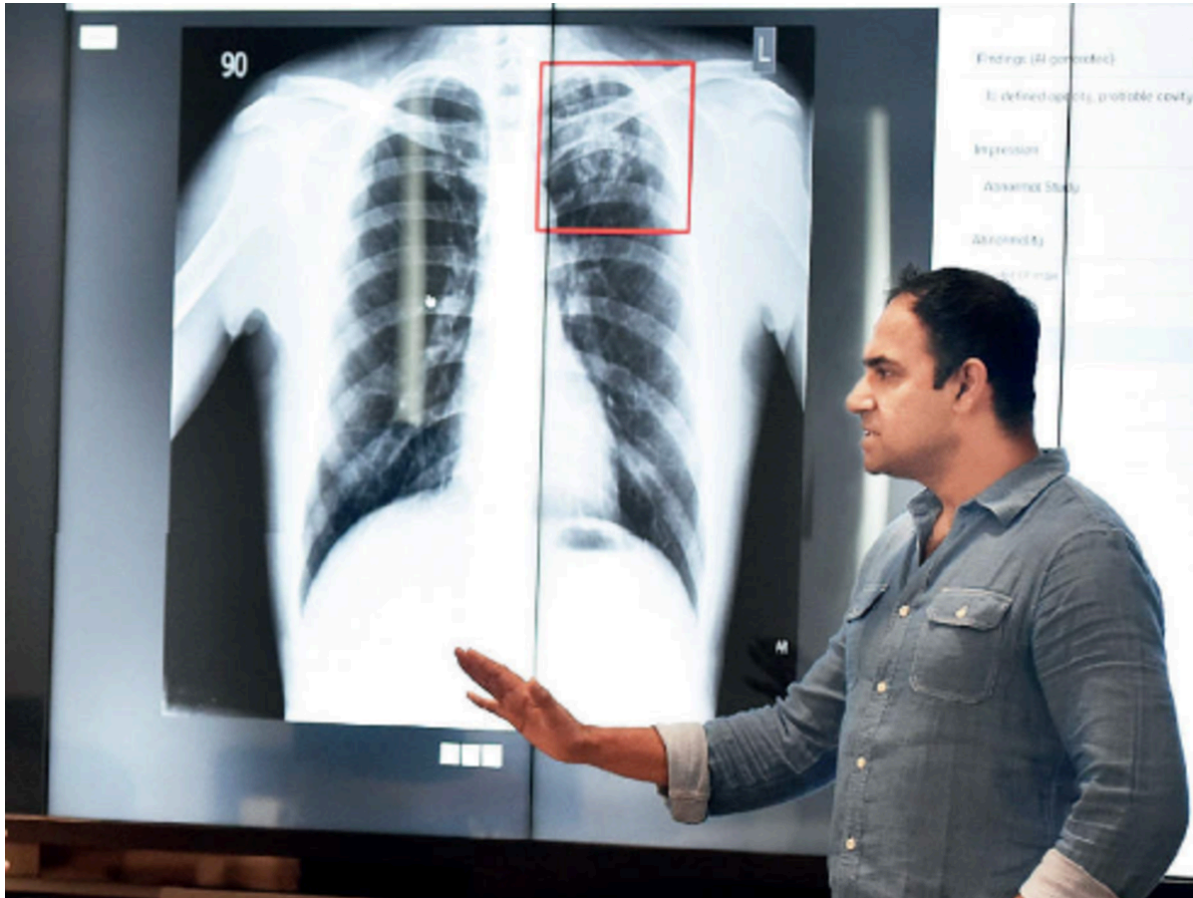
Credit: The University of British Columbia / Sea Around Us

Technological advances are allowing commercial fishing fleets to double their fishing power every 35 years and put even more pressure on dwindling fish stocks. Researchers from the *Sea Around Us* initiative at the University of British Columbia analyzed more than 50 studies related to the increase in vessels' catching power and found that the introduction of mechanisms such as GPS, fish finders and echo-sounders or acoustic cameras, has led to an average 2% yearly increase in boats' capacity to capture fish.

[Read More at Science Daily](#)

FYI #4

TB Cases Increased By 16% In India In 2018



Credit: ET Healthworld

According to the 'India TB Report 2019', India accounts for a quarter of the Global TB burden with an estimated 2.7 million new cases in the year 2018. Of that 2.15 million were notified to the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), compared to 1.8m in 2017 -- an increase of 16% in one year. Nearly 25% of all deaths among people living with HIV are estimated to be due to TB. To mitigate the effect of dual burden of HIV and TB, the RNTCP and the National AIDS Control Programme have developed a collaborative framework. Since April 2018, over 2.08m beneficiaries have received benefits of US\$60m under a program where all such patients are given US\$7 per month for nutritional assistance during the course of treatment.

Read More at The Economic Times Healthworld

FYI #5: AUTUMN READING

Building Science In Africa



Credit: Eduardo Soteras/AFP/Getty

Africa's population is projected to nearly quadruple over the next century. And that is following a staggering increase over just seven decades — from 200 million people in 1950 to 25 billion in 2018. Meanwhile, temperatures across the continent are expected to rise by between 3°C and 4°C over the next century, bringing more drought, flooding, conflict and species loss. To cope with this and more, the continent urgently needs more home-grown researchers, argue Anagaw Atickem, Nils Chr. Stenseth and colleagues from Ethiopia and Norway. Developing science in Africa will improve global political and economic stability. And research as a whole will be strengthened — by different ideas born of different challenges and experiences — if many more African scientists become key members of the global scientific

community.

[Read More at Nature](#)

FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

Laszlo Radvanyi On Botany, Clinical Biochemistry, Cancer Biotherapeutics, And Student Advice



Credit: UToronto

In May 2018, Dr. **Laszlo Radvanyi** was appointed President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR). A scientist, professor and leader in the international biotech and pharma industry, he has worked in cancer immunology and immunotherapy for over 25 years. We asked him about what drew him to cancer research and immunology, the benefits of a good mentor, and his advice for students looking to discover their true path. He advises: Always see the big picture of why we're here. If you are a biomedical researcher, you are here to help people. In the end, it's about helping patients, helping the human condition and improving human health. You have to follow your heart. I always tell my graduate students, "If you are working on a research project or research problem that doesn't keep you up at night, then you shouldn't be working on it." Feeling that enthusiasm, that excitement, is what drives creativity.

Read more at UToronto Faculty of Medicine





Credit: David Zakus

GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION STRIKE

OTTAWA, CANADA

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