ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE RESOURCES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Current projections for levels of warming:

Predictions vary according to assumptions regarding whether climate commitments will be met, and the effect of tipping points. Climate Action Tracker has made the following predictions regarding levels of warming by 2100, which are in line with those from many other reliable sources:

- **The current policies in place across the world are projected to result in 2.7°C warming**
- Nationally Determined Contributions alone will limit warming to 2.4°C
- If binding long-term or net-zero targets are met then warming would be limited to 2°C

How climate equity is being tackled:

The poorest people and nations are the worst affected by climate change despite having contributed the least to its causes. One suggested solution to this gross injustice is that richer countries should provide financial support to developing countries to deal with the 'loss and damage' from climate change.

- The Loss and Damage Fund agreed at COP27 is the most prominent effort to enforce this.
- Funds provided by developed countries and global institutions, but details of scale are missing.
- Even with such finance, many countries are unlikely to be able to cope with the impact of climate change. The IEP has found that a significant portion of the 1.2 billion people who live in these countries could be displaced.

Possible definitions of environmental governance:

Reaching net-zero emissions at one static point in time will not be enough to ensure a long-term sustainable future, as emissions could then rise again. So, a system of governance that sets out a method for governing our interactions with the environment is key. But what does good governance look like?

- The UN defines good governance as 'participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law ... corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account...responsive to present and future needs'
- While this definition does implicitly refer to our governance of the environment it does not set out principles of good environmental governance explicitly, and there is significant debate regarding how much these should differ from the principles above.

Geoengineering and tech-based ideas for tackling climate change:

There are two key immature technologies that are looking to mitigate climate change:

Nuclear fusion: could provide unlimited, low-carbon flexible energy. However, the technology is immature, and far from ready for commercial use.
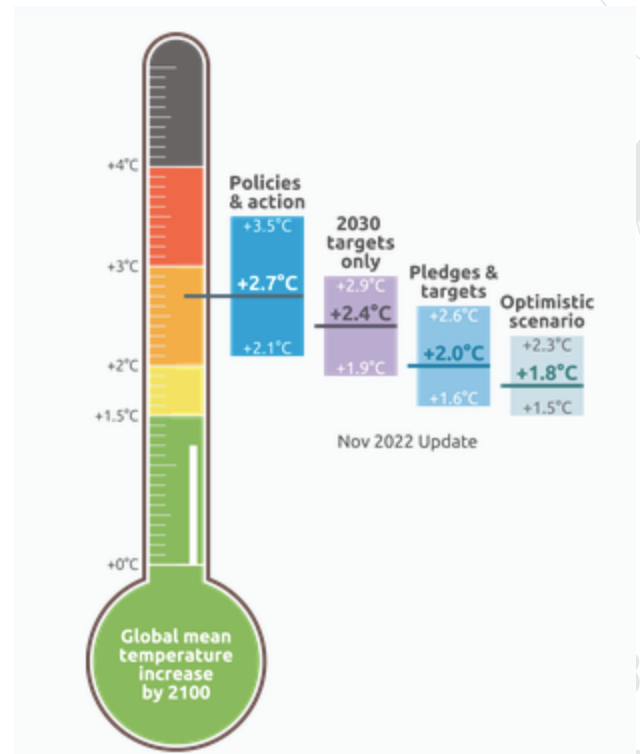
Carbon Capture & Sequestration (CCS): Similarly, it is an immature, expensive technology that is unlikely to be ready in time to limit warming above 2°C. However, it has the potential to mitigate portions of global climate emissions that cannot be averted.

Biodiversity

A key part of environmental governance is governing our approach to nature and biodiversity. CBD COP15, the latest meeting of the parties to the Convention on BioDiversity, agreed the following key outcomes:

- **30 by '30:** a target to conserve 30% of the world's land, oceans and biodiversity by 2030
- **$30 billion Financial Target:** Developed countries agreed to mobilize $30bn for developing countries in order to aid them in halting biodiversity loss

However, these commitments are not legally binding. As in the operation of the Paris agreement, voluntary targets express good intentions that are rarely met.

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[1]Lieberman, Amy, "SDGs show slow progress, not on track to reach 2030 targets, UN reports", June 22, 2018, Accessed March 8, 2023, URL - https://www.devex.com/news/s-dgs-show-slow-progress-not-on-track-to-reach-2030-targets-un-reports-9297

Quick Wins:

- Add the crime of ecocide to the Rome Statute;
- Use the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for more environmental rulings
- Get more member state governments to agree to abide by ICJ rulings
- Permit UN Bodies to raise funds directly from people and businesses so that they are not 100% dependent on governments for their running costs

Set up an Earth Governance Regulatory Body to protect and regenerate the Global Commons.

Issues to be tackled by Strengthened Environmental Governance :

A just transition from industries that pose an existential threat to the biosphere (most obviously fossil fuel production)

A Decarbonisation Agenda

A transition to a society based on property sharing, rather than property ownership

Robust management of Geo-engineering with support and sponsorship for scientifically proven, peer-reviewed proposals, and strict prohibition + enforcement of initiatives that have not been proven, and pose great risks to the planet.

Transformative Education: lessons that live in the heart and mind for a lifetime:

Compelling, innovative learning experiences at the heart of all National Curricula, throughout all key stages, that address the Planetary Emergency

Where possible, young people and teachers should be empowered to deliver transformative education programmes to their communities to generate the universal solidarity needed to save the Biosphere from further degeneration.

Discussion Points:

How to implement these recommendations? The outcome of the consultation proposed the following: We recommend the time-honoured methods used by Civil Society to deliver the Landmine Ban and the creation of the ICC: build a smart coalition or Coalition of the Willing to advance a proposal for the Authority by getting sympathetic governments to raise the issue in the UN Security Council or General Assembly – and push through an agreement by generating widespread public support through transformative education programmes in the media and mass mobilisation of civil society.

Prioritisation? The obvious priorities are the quick wins but, beyond them, the other priorities are yet to be finalised.

Enforcement? This is a major gap in environmental governance. Global emissions continue to rise despite the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Climate agreement. Only robust regulation with universally agreed enforcement mechanisms can stop that rise. How do we get national governments to agree to be governed by a Supra-national Environmental Governance body that can effectively regulate all human interaction with the environment? Achieving that is perhaps the greatest challenge of environmental governance.

New Institution or Reform of Existing Agency? The question of what a governance body would look like was also discussed, with differing opinions on the subject. Two possible options are as follows: a new Global Governance Agency or a repurposed International Agency that already exists, for example a re-purposement of UNEP.