

THE LOOKING GLASS WORLD OF “CLIMATE INJUSTICE”

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When Alice went through the looking glass, she found a world where things were completely the reverse of what they are in the real world. Of course, Lewis Carroll’s masterpiece was intended as a parody of the mendacious politicians of the day.

Today we have something beyond parody, and that is the U.N. climate bureaucracy and its acolytes. Because the U.N. agencies are bureaucracies, it is perhaps understandable that they should seek at all times to increase their own power and control over the world’s people. But what is not understandable is when that quest turns into a campaign to keep the poor people of the world in poverty. Yet that is exactly where the U.N. now finds itself with the campaign for what it calls “climate justice.” That campaign is based on completely false premises, and could not have been better designed to keep the poor poor than if that had been the principal and only purpose. The advocates of so-called “climate justice” seem to be totally unaware of the reprehensible morality of their campaign. Instead, they flaunt their own high levels of consumption, and look to as leaders those at the very most extreme levels of high consumption.

Poverty, in the sense of deprivation of basic goods and services, in very large part is a result of insufficient access to energy. Access to energy means electricity for our homes, businesses and computers; it means transportation, in the form of automobiles, trains and planes; it means heating in cold weather and cooling in hot weather; it means functioning hospitals and health care facilities; it means mechanized agricultural methods that ameliorate the effects of bad weather and pests; it means access to information; and many other things equally important. Without access to energy, people are trapped in local areas to lead a life of basic subsistence if not periodic hunger and starvation.

Current data published by the World Bank with respect to access to energy show that even today over 1.2 billion people, 20% of the world's population, lack access to electricity.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTENERGY2/0,,contentMDK:22855502~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:4114200,00.html> This includes about 550 million people in Africa and over 400 million in India. Here is the World Bank's description of what it means to lack access to electricity:

Without access to energy service, the poor will be deprived of the most basic of human rights and of economic opportunities to improve their standard of living. People cannot access modern hospital services without electricity, or feel relief from sweltering heat. Food cannot be refrigerated and businesses cannot function. Children cannot go to school in rainforests where lighting is required during the day. The list of deprivation goes on.

The World Bank actually projects that the number of people in Africa without access to electricity will increase, not decrease, between now and 2030!

And electricity is just one piece of the energy access puzzle. The 1.2 billion figure who lack electricity is far exceeded by the numbers who lack access to modern transportation (automobiles, trains, airplanes), to air conditioning, to heat, to hospitals, to mechanized agricultural equipment, and to the internet. For example, according to 2013 data from the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva (<http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>), only about 2.4 billion people out of the 7.0 billion in the world (34.3%) had internet access; that leaves some 5.6 billion without access. In Africa, only 16.3% of people had access to the internet, and only 6.7% had access to the internet at home.

Given the serious hardship faced by the world's poor in the absence of energy access, one would think that a top priority of the U.N. would be finding ways to achieve that access as quickly, as cheaply, and as reliably as possible. But in fact, under the banner of so-called "climate justice," the U.N. is doing exactly the opposite. It is doing its best to hobble, hinder and obstruct development of the cheapest and most reliable sources of energy in the third world, while instead advocating for massive transfers of wealth from rich countries, not to the poor people themselves, **but instead to the governing cliques and wealthy elites in the poor countries.**

So what is this U.N. "climate justice" campaign? On its public face, it is a campaign to have rich countries pay money to governments of poor countries to compensate the poor countries for alleged harm resulting from "climate change." A U.N. agency called UN-NGLS (UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service) is leading the charge. Their home page for "Climate Justice for a Changing Planet" can be found at <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=climatejustice>. The basic idea of the campaign is that the big problem facing poor countries is not poverty or lack of energy access, but rather climate change, and that the solution to climate change is to have taxpayers in rich countries transfer money to governments of poor countries so they can supposedly spend the money to ameliorate the climate change. Here is an excerpt from the Climate Justice home page of UN-NGLS:

There is little doubt that climate change will lead to unprecedented changes in the natural environment, which will in turn affect the way we live, with potentially dramatic consequences on our health, energy sources and food production systems. There is also increasing recognition that these impacts are being felt disproportionately by poor people who already live under precarious conditions.

Climate change, with its many facets, further exacerbates existing inequalities faced by these vulnerable groups.

Also involved is the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), whose Fifth Assessment Report (available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>) was issued in late March 2014. The IPCC's Report predicts a list of horrible natural disasters that supposedly will be associated with climate change, but have not yet occurred, including increased droughts, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes. With that ammunition, worldwide campaigners for "climate justice" go forth to make their case for wealth transfers to the poor country governments. For example, the large organization known as CARE put out a release (<https://www.careinternational.org.uk/news-and-press/latest-press-releases/2610-ipcc-impacts-report-global-injustice-of-climate-change-is-unfolding-before-our-eyes-says-care>) promptly following the IPCC's report. Here are some excerpts:

From more extreme and intense weather-related disasters, to reduced food security, to rising sea-levels, climate change is fast becoming a scandal of epic proportions for the world's poorest people – and it's unfolding right before our eyes. But overcoming climate poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. . . .

The latest IPCC report, compiled by hundreds of the world's leading climate experts on behalf of the UN, describes how climate change constitutes an additional burden for the rural and urban poor and has the potential to push people into chronic poverty, undermining and reversing development gains made over many years. It also shows that, as global temperatures rise, there is increasing risk of passing critical 'tipping points' which may lead to abrupt and irreversible large-scale changes to major ecosystems on which millions of people rely.

Describing the IPCC's latest report as "another clarion call to action," CARE wants to see:

- 1. Governments working harder than ever to keep global warming to as close to 1.5 degrees C as possible to avert extreme climate change.*
- 2. Developed countries providing far greater financial support to help poor countries address climate impacts, with actions focussing on helping the most vulnerable people and communities to build their resilience to increasing climate disruption, and greater support to help people deal with the loss and damage already occurring.*

Other voices for "climate justice" spoke out at a U.N. conference on climate change held in Warsaw, Poland in November 2013. The New York Times reported on that conference in a November 18, 2013 article titled "Growing Clamor About Inequities of Climate Crisis." (http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/11/17/world/growing-clamor-about-inequities-of-climate-crisis.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20131117) For example, the Times quoted John Kioli of Kenya as follows:

John Kioli, the chairman of the Kenya Climate Change Working Group, a consortium of nongovernmental organizations, called climate change his country's "biggest enemy." Kenya, which straddles the Equator, faces some of the biggest challenges from rising temperatures. Arable land is disappearing and diseases like malaria are appearing in highland areas where they had never been seen before. Developed countries, Mr. Kioli said, have a moral obligation to shoulder the cost, considering the amount of pollution they have emitted since the Industrial Revolution. "If

developed countries are reasonable enough, they are able to understand that they have some responsibility,” he said.

But is there any actual evidence of a connection between rich country industrial activity and natural disasters or even bad weather in poor countries? The answer is, simply, no. Indeed, for those willing to slog through the IPCC full Fifth Assessment Report, the admission of lack of connection is actually there, although buried deep in the multi-hundred-page Report and couched in bureaucratic gobbledegook. A scientist named Roger Pielke, Jr. compiled many of the statements from the section of the Report known as Working Group I, Chapter 2, for purposes of testimony given before the Senate; he also posted many of them in a blog post (<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/2013/10/coverage-of-extreme-events-in-ipcc-ar5.html>):

- *“There is limited evidence of changes in extremes associated with other climate variables since the mid-20th century”*
- *“Current datasets indicate no significant observed trends in global tropical cyclone frequency over the past century ... No robust trends in annual numbers of tropical storms, hurricanes and major hurricanes counts have been identified over the past 100 years in the North Atlantic basin”*
- *“In summary, there continues to be a lack of evidence and thus low confidence regarding the sign of trend in the magnitude and/or frequency of floods on a global scale”*
- *“In summary, there is low confidence in observed trends in small-scale severe weather phenomena such as hail and thunderstorms because of historical data inhomogeneities and inadequacies in monitoring systems”*
- *“In summary, the current assessment concludes that there is not enough evidence at present to suggest more than low confidence in a global-scale observed trend in drought or*

dryness (lack of rainfall) since the middle of the 20th century due to lack of direct observations, geographical inconsistencies in the trends, and dependencies of inferred trends on the index choice. Based on updated studies, AR4 conclusions regarding global increasing trends in drought since the 1970s were probably overstated. However, it is likely that the frequency and intensity of drought has increased in the Mediterranean and West Africa and decreased in central North America and north-west Australia since 1950"

- *"In summary, confidence in large scale changes in the intensity of extreme extratropical cyclones since 1900 is low.*

Pielke goes on to call the attempt to associate things like floods, droughts, hurricanes and tornadoes with climate change "Zombie science," and says that "Climate campaigners would do their movement a favor by getting themselves on the right side of the evidence."

But the "climate justice" campaign continues and even accelerates, based entirely on Zombie science. And equally because of the Zombie science, the corollary idea that use of fossil fuel energy harms poor people is seriously impeding efforts to bring them access to energy. Thus, for example, the United States has severely restricted the ability of its international aid agencies to participate in financing of fossil fuel developments, and instead has limited them strictly to so-called "renewables" that are more expensive and less reliable. Here is an excerpt from testimony of Todd Moss of the Center for Global Development given before the House energy and Commerce Committee on February 27, 2014:

Just as the U.S. is seeking to expand energy access, other policies are increasing restrictions on financing for natural gas and hydropower. This comes at the exact moment when many African countries are discovering natural gas and want to use

part of their reserves to produce electricity at home. Indeed, all six of the Power Africa focus countries are either producing, developing, or exploring for oil and gas. Ghana is a good example. The country is a close U.S. ally which recently discovered natural gas and would like to use this resource to expand access and grow its industry. Yet current U.S. policy restricts our ability to assist them in building any new gas plants and many advocacy groups want to prevent Ghana from generating additional power via natural gas out of concern over potential greenhouse gas emissions. As we consider the U.S. position on this, it is worth keeping in mind that we currently have more than 3,400 power plants running on fossil fuels in the United States. Ghana has two.

Separately on the website of the Center for Global Development, Moss calculates a small piece of the effect on the poor of restricting new power development in poor countries to only renewables in lieu of environmentally-incorrect alternatives like natural gas and hydropower. Based on commitments from the U.S. OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) of \$10 billion, Moss calculated that access to electricity could be provided to 60 million more people if investment in natural gas and hydro were allowed, as opposed to just renewables.

(<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/natural-gas-vs-renewables-opic-whats-tradeoff>)

Meanwhile, the advocates of “climate justice” look to as their leaders the likes of Al Gore, who preach abstinence for others while living in multiple massive high-carbon-footprint mansions

(<http://www.snopes.com/politics/business/gorehome.asp>)

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/17/photos-al-goree-new-8875_n_579286.html) and flying around the world on private jets.

It is time for the advocates of “climate justice” to recognize the immorality of their campaign to keep the poor poor.