

THE 1.5°C CHALLENGE

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion & Climate Change

A Millennial Reveals 5 Secrets To Winning At Life

If there is one message from the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it's this: Checking global warming will require major changes in the Paris Climate Pact's targets. The 2015 agreement, which has become the cornerstone of climate change mitigation efforts worldwide, proposed to keep the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. But the report that was released on Sunday has found this threshold to be inadequate. A more than 1.5°C warming will be precarious, and a 2°C rise would be catastrophic, the report warns. The world, already 1°C hotter than what it was 150 years ago, could witness greater frequency of droughts and floods, more intense tropical cyclones and increased ocean acidification and salinity if the planet heats by a further 0.5°C. That could happen anytime between 2030 and 2050, the report cautions. This means that current mitigation efforts — calibrated to stave off calamitous events by 2075 — will require drastic up-scaling.

What is worrying is that the world is not even on course to meet the comparatively conservative demands of a 2°C-rise-in-temperature scenario. In fact, one of the criticisms of the Paris Accord-mandated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is that they are insufficient to meet these demands. The IPCC, however, reckons that complete decarbonisation is not an impossible goal. In a break from its tradition of not recommending policy prescriptions, the global body has called for up-scaling low-carbon technologies and increased energy efficiency. But such interventions will not be enough and investments will have to move towards afforestation and technology-centred approaches, including ones that involve sucking the greenhouse gas before it reaches the atmosphere. The report also emphasises adaptation methods.

The imperative of making communities resilient in the face of global warming and the focus on novel technologies require that urgency is accorded to shoring up climate finances. Unfortunately, however, funding has been the Achilles' heel of global climate change negotiations. As of December 2017, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) — the main instrument of fulfilling the developed countries' collective promise of putting \$100 billion annually into the hat by 2020 — had disbursed less than 10 per cent of its commitment. And in July, a meeting of the fund's board ended without a decision on how to bolster the agency's pool. The rulebook of the Paris Climate Accord, that is slated to be finalised by the end of the year, is mandated to take care of these concerns. It will now also need to factor in the challenges laid out by the IPCC report.

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