

# "Countdown to global catastrophe" via Tim Harberd

Climate change report warns point of no return may be reached in 10 years, leading to droughts, agricultural failure and water shortages. The report has been put together by a new international group, The International Climate Change Taskforce with scientific advice being given by Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The aim is to motivate international policy ministers into action. The report's ten key recommendations can be found at the end of this article.

"The report, Meeting The Climate Challenge, is aimed at policymakers in every country, from national leaders down ... it breaks new ground by putting a figure - for the first time in such a high-level document - on the danger point of global warming, that is, the temperature rise beyond which the world would be irretrievably committed to disastrous changes ...

The report says this point will be 2°C above the average world temperature prevailing in 1750 before the industrial revolution ... global average temperature has already risen by 0.8 degrees since then ... so the world has little more than a single degree of temperature latitude before the crucial point is reached."

"More ominously still, it assesses the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere after which the two-degree rise will become inevitable, and says it will be 400 parts per million by volume (ppm) of CO<sub>2</sub>. The current level is 379ppm, and rising by more than 2ppm annually - so it is likely that the vital 400ppm threshold will be crossed in just 10 years' time, or even less (although the two-degree temperature rise might take longer to come into effect)." The full report can be ordered from Central Books on 0845 458 9910 for £5.00. The ISBN number is 1860302645.

Channel 4 News continued its poor coverage of climate change issues by omitting the story. The Guardian had the story tucked away as a minor item on page 7. BBC Newsnight ran a feature.

The report has ten key recommendations for policy makers:

1. The G8 and other major economies, including from the developing world, form a G8+ Climate Group, to pursue technology agreements and related initiatives that will lead to large emissions reductions.

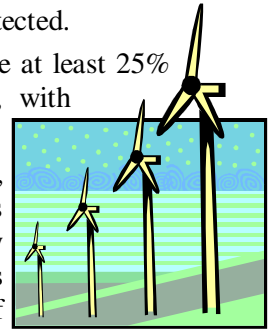
2. The G8-Plus Climate Group agree to shift their agricultural subsidies from food crops to biofuels, while implementing appropriate safeguards to ensure sustainable farming methods are encouraged, culturally and



ecologically sensitive land. preserved, and biodiversity protected.

3. G8 governments establish national standards to generate at least 25% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025, with higher targets needed for some G8 governments.

4. G8 governments increase their spending on research, development, and demonstration of advanced technologies for energy-efficiency and low- and zero-carbon energy supply by two-fold or more by 2010, at the same time as adopting strategies for the large-scale deployment of existing low- and zero-carbon technologies.



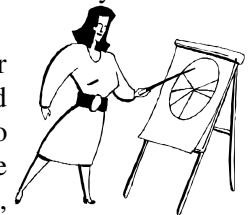
5. All industrialised countries introduce national mandatory cap-and-trade systems for carbon emissions, and construct them to allow for their future integration into a single global market.

6. A global framework be adopted that builds on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, and enables all countries to be part of concerted action on climate change at the global level in the post-2012 period, on the basis of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.

7. A long-term objective be established of preventing global average temperature from rising more than 2°C (3.6°F) above the pre-industrial level, to limit the extent and magnitude of climate-change impacts.

8. Governments remove barriers to and increase investment in renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and practices by taking steps including the phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies and requiring Export Credit Agencies and Multilateral Development Banks to adopt minimum efficiency or carbon intensity standards for projects they support.

9. Developed countries honour existing commitments to provide greater financial and technical assistance to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate change, including the commitments made at the seventh conference of the parties to the UNFCCC in 2001, and pursue the establishment of an international compensation fund to support disaster mitigation and preparedness.



10. Governments committed to action on climate change raise public awareness of the problem and build public support for climate policies by pledging to provide substantial long-term investment in effective climate communication activities.