



# Hothouse Earth<sup>1</sup>

“We are now so abusing the Earth... the outcome [will be] the probability of disastrous global change.”<sup>2</sup>

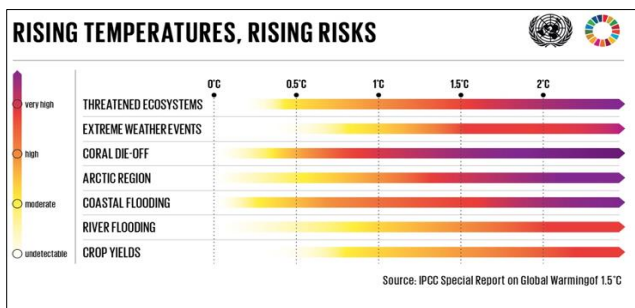
You can't have missed it! The news that the Earth is threatened by an existential environmental crisis is there for all to see on primetime television. But we need to take care not to be lulled into a false sense of security - Climate Change is not a crisis that is somewhere else, at some time in the future— it is here and now. We witness it every night on the news channels as examples of serious weather events occurring around the world. All are disastrous symptoms of Climate Change – all are the direct consequence of human activity. Climate Change is nothing less than the slow and steady destruction of the planet that we live on.

“Increasing levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are raising the Earth's temperature.”<sup>3</sup>

Scientists have been warning for decades that emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases are altering the Earth's Climate – emissions that are largely attributed to humanity burning coal, gas and petroleum.<sup>3</sup> This is not a future threat but a current reality.<sup>4</sup> The continued warming and consequential destabilization of the climate is inevitably creating a “Hothouse Earth.”<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that human activities have already caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels. Computer models predict that global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.<sup>6</sup>

We have also been warned of the dire consequences. These include increased melting of polar ice sheets and mountain glaciers and a consequential rise in sea levels. Also, extreme weather events ranging from increased droughts and widespread fires in some areas to more intense storms, high winds, and rainfall in others.<sup>3,7</sup> According to some prediction's whole regions of Africa, Australia, and the United States, parts of South America and Asia would be rendered uninhabitable.<sup>8</sup> Sadly, many of the impacts caused by global warming are already being observed.<sup>6</sup>





“We are destroying the planet every day. Climate Change is ...an enveloping crisis sparing no place and leaving no life undeformed.”<sup>8</sup>

The reality is that Climate Crisis is now underway. Human activities have already disturbed the delicate balance of the Earth’s atmosphere. The real threat is that it will also destroy the comfortable environment to which all life is adapted – upon which everything is dependent. Industrial civilization – our way of life – is causing the planet and all its creatures to slowly, and inevitably slide towards death.



Humanity as a species - you and I as individuals – need to urgently recognize the profound and tragic effects our activities have wrought upon the Earth. We have reached a point in time where fundamental decisions and changes are now required.

“The five-year period 2016-2020 [was] one of the warmest on record – with an average surface temperature of 1.1°C above pre-industrial era.”<sup>7</sup>

Even as I write another “hottest year” has been announced – another in a long sequence of similar tragic milestones. The threat of Climate Change and the associated breakdown of the climate of the Earth casts a dark shadow over our future and the prospect of all life on the planet. These are not abstract events they will have a direct impact on all our lives as large areas of the planet are made uninhabitable, food production is disrupted, and millions of people displaced. We cannot continue “sleepwalking to extinction”<sup>9</sup> – we need end our dependency on fossil fuels – and quickly.

“The basic fact [is] that human activity is causing the planet to dangerously warm.”<sup>4</sup>

Human activities have been the principal influence on climate and the dominant cause of global warming since the mid-20th century.<sup>6</sup>



The choice we now face is stark and simple - either humanity continues its selfish and destructive ways - or we decide to take an alternative path that will demand institutional changes to many aspects of our society - economic, political, industrial, and agricultural.

“We have just ten years to halt  
global temperature rise.  
If we leave it any longer,  
it will be too late.”<sup>10</sup>

The age of fossil-fueled civilization needs to end. We need to make a “Great Transition”<sup>3</sup> to a clean, green and sustainable, future. We only have few years left to act - we need to act now to save our lives and all life on the Earth.

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