



The world we leave for the next generation

by Gerard Triesman
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*At the end of the day, when we leave this world, the only valuable legacy we leave behind is the love we gave to others and the love others gave to us.*¹

That is a delightful thought, and yes, love is far more valuable than money, or any other worldly goods. But it's equally important to leave a liveable world for the ones that come after us. A healthy planet that was created for us to enjoy, is a wonderful world where love will have an excellent chance of blossoming. Without love, life will have little or no purpose.

It will be very difficult to share love and kindness in a world that is no longer liveable. Sadly, we're dangerously close to the destruction of our planet through self-interest, greed, hatred, perceived personal glory, pollution and wars.



This ain't pretty.

All those good intentions and treaties, hammered out at each international climate meeting by the Conference of Parties (COP) by the United Nations, aren't adhered to seriously enough. It is true that El Niño contributes to record temperatures, but heat-trapping greenhouse gases are the main culprit.

The naturally occurring climate pattern alone, cannot explain the persistent and unusually high ocean surface temperatures in all parts of the world. It will continue to impact the global climate, powering the heat trapped greenhouse gases from human activities.²

Agriculture has been identified as one of the sectors where urgent action is needed to drastically reduce the causes of floods, droughts and heat waves. For this reason, environmental rules were put in place by the European Commission to improve the quality of the soil, groundwater and biodiversity and to combat climate change.

For example, planting ground cover between seasons is intended to reduce the need for fertilizer. Growing different crops on the same land in successive seasons is intended to improve the quality of the soil.

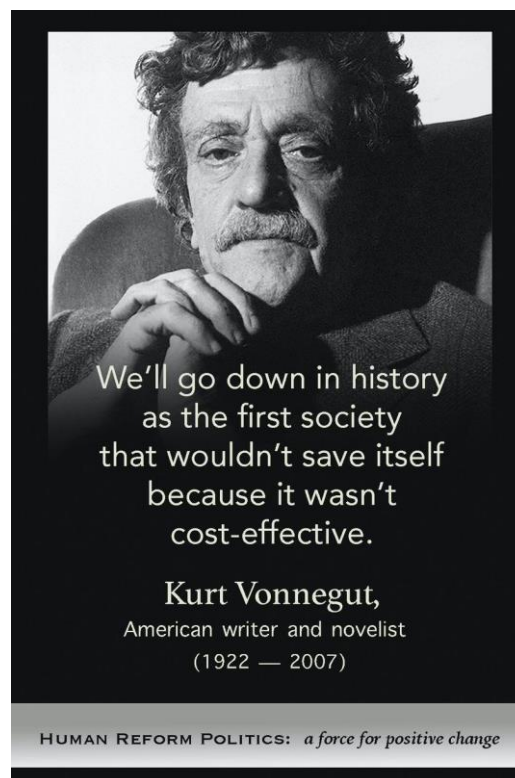
¹ Quote by unknown, unknown to me.

² Review by Nathan Howes, digital reporter for The Weather Network.

Leaving at least 4% of agricultural land enhances biodiversity.

Regrettably, the farmers were bitterly complaining about the “Brussels regulatory pressure” to implement the ambitious climate policy. Governments were confronted with drastic protest actions, and violent clashes with the police occurred around meetings of European leaders. Centre-right parties stood up for the farmers and distanced themselves from the climate policy that the EU had pursued.

The far-right is increasingly getting into power across Europe and the European Commission significantly relaxed the rules for farmers. In December of last year, an agreement was reached on the watered-down version of the proposed law, which received the green light by the European Parliament this month.³



The EU countries were expected to approve the watered-down version on March 25, but during a meeting of the ambassadors of EU countries in Brussels last week, it became apparent that there was no longer the required qualified majority. This is sad. The EU has put the nature restoration law “in the drawer,” and it’s unclear whether it will ever be released.⁴

Climate change efforts in this country are going from failure to failure as well. Canada was once a leader in the fight against climate change. However, after a series of missed opportunities, it has become the worst performer of all G7 nations since the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted in 2015.⁵

Some of the main sources of pollution are oil sands and pipelines, road

³ Algemeen Dagblad (General Daily Paper), Dutch newspaper based in Rotterdam.

⁴ Algemeen Dagblad, March 22, 2024

⁵ Environment Commissioner Jerry DeMarco.

Peter Zimonjic · CBC News

salt, industrial and vehicular emissions, agriculture, construction, wood burning and energy production. Pollution has led to increased hazardous weather, the melting of ice caps and permafrost, shifts in precipitation patterns and climate change.

“We need action and results,” Commissioner Jerry DeMarco said, “not just more targets and plans.

On the sidelines of the COP26 (the 26th Conference of the Parties) in Scotland, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that his government fought hard to impose its carbon tax policy. Furthermore, he’d take that fight to the global stage.

The largest emitters are China, India, the U.S. and the EU. Canada is ranked 11th in the world for total GHG emissions (Greenhouse Gas emissions). But it has the second-highest GHG emission per capita rate among the 11 emitting countries and regions.

Research shows that putting a price on carbon-based fuels, in the form of a fee or tax, is an effective way of reducing GHG emissions and pollution levels across the globe. By placing higher taxes on carbon-based fuels, households and industries can reduce the level of pollution and look to alternatives like solar power and hydrogen engines. ⁶

The implementation of a carbon tax system provides an incentive for businesses and industries to develop more environmentally friendly production processes. The taxing of GHG emissions encourages investment in renewable energy

and leads to further technological developments.

Also, a carbon tax policy can raise significant revenue for countries, which can then be used to address the economic harm caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Governments could, for instance, use revenue derived from carbon taxes to reduce personal income taxes, future deficits, or to invest in clean energy and climate adaptation. ⁷

Meanwhile, another COP has come and gone, the one in Dubai last year, and we’re still killing our planet. However, we have shrunk the ozone hole. We have expanded protections for wildlife and ecosystems. We have ended the use of leaded fuel, preventing millions of premature deaths. And we launched a landmark global effort to prevent and end plastic pollution.

All that is encouraging, and perhaps worth it, even though our personal income taxes were NOT reduced, despite the regular Climate Action Incentive Payments that we receive.

Have I been getting a bit carried away with this essay? Perhaps I have, but the preservation of our planet for future generations is close to my heart. To prepare for this month’s “assignment,” I read many news stories and columns in Dutch and local publications, and searched the internet.

From what I gathered, I used what I considered the most relevant information to compile my story. I translated the Dutch articles and columns, and edited portions

⁶ A hydrogen engine transforms chemical energy into mechanical energy

⁷ World Economic Forum

thereof. I also edited the other news items, and added personal opinions.

I'd be remiss in my piece if I didn't utter a few words about another human activity which has many negative effects on our world. That is waging wars.



Israel Gaza conflict
One in five Palestinians killed is a child.

The following are some of the costs of war:

- Increased military expenditures that other sectors of the economy are lacking.
- Destruction of livelihoods and infrastructure (e.g. water supply and transportation system).
- Limitations regarding economic activities through insecurities, limited mobility and the allocation of civil labour to the military as well as flight of capital.

Aside from the economic ramifications, wars also lead to fragility, conflict, and violence, which affect two billion people worldwide. Last year, a record number of

68.5 million people were displaced due to violence and conflict, and 120 million people worldwide depend on some sort of humanitarian assistance.⁸

The loss of human life is among the worst impacts of war. During wars, a high number of casualties from both the military and civilian population is recorded.

Positive impacts of war can include the defeat of problematic governments, the correction of injustices, advances in technology and medicine and a reduction of unemployment.⁹

Notwithstanding these excellent attributes, it is my fervent wish that all wars end and new ones are avoided; irrespective of missing out on the positive impacts of war. We can live without such positivity, as a peaceful world is the greatest positive condition that humanity can hope for.

I fear for my grandchildren and their children if man does not work harder to heal our planet and spread love and kindness, rather than indulging in self-interest, greed, hatred, and perceived personal glory. We have to make great efforts leaving a liveable world for the next generation.

⁸ Oxfam International, Saferworld, and International Action Network on small arms.

⁹ Excerpt from an essay by LAGAS.

