

# **Climate change: a bleak future**

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In early 2000, several scientists warned that global warming will melt the ice sheets and glaciers in the northern and southern pole within a period of around 100 years. The Fourth Assessment Report on Climate Change of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) published in 2007 warned that global warming may increase the sea levels by 0.4-3.7 m above the pre-industrial levels. By 2009, scientists became alarmed at the new data obtained from the poles—ice sheets were melting at a much faster rate than expected—the ice in the Arctic Ocean could be gone by 2020-2040.

Imagine now that we are in the future, in the year 2025, and the greenhouse gases have continued to be increasingly emitted.

In December 2009, global leaders met at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference where they decided to cut the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases and established a global carbon market system. The system was perfect on paper but failed to be implemented in reality—developing countries were not able to impose restrictions on big greenhouse gas emitters, many governments lacked political will and resources to implement the system, others just ran into economic hardship and so on. Greenhouse gas levels continued to rise unabated and global warming accelerated until 2025...

## **The effects of global warming in 2025: a possible scenario**

The effects of global warming are being felt all around the globe: temperate regions of the past suffer from extensive droughts during summer and heavy floods in the winter. As a result of droughts, floods, fires, famines and wars, millions of people have become climate refugees. Two thirds of Africa has turned into a stateless area with militias fighting for the last remaining resources and civilians are being killed indiscriminately. The Mediterranean region of Europe is suffering from summer droughts and frequent fires, causing millions to immigrate to the Nordic and Baltic countries where the climate has become milder and the economy is still on track. Many states have turned to protectionism and the borders of the EU are sealed off, seas are patrolled and borders are heavily monitored by the armies.

The temperatures have risen 2.5 degrees above pre-industrial temperatures. The ice in the northern pole is melting at an accelerating pace, creating massive rivers in Northern Canada and Greenland. Thousands of lakes were created and are still growing in Greenland, fed by the melting glaciers. In the summer 2025, something that scientists predicted and feared for a long time, finally occurred. The lakes in Greenland swelled and merged together, creating a mega-lake on the ice sheet, contained only by walls of ice. The volume of this lake increased tremendously, causing the southern ice-banks to break. A volume of water equal to that of ten Amazon rivers poured into the northern part of the Atlantic. Salinity immediately decreased in a large area of the Atlantic Ocean, northeast of Canada's coasts and south of Greenland, slowing down the Gulf Stream which, shut down after some days.

The consequences of this are dire for Europe and Northeastern America. Fall comes with low temperatures and blizzards in the Northeastern US, Ireland, UK and Western Europe. Trees are caught with their leaves still on, migratory animals are confused by the sudden onset of cold and ice, rivers are frozen, roads blocked and there are massive blackouts in the whole UK, US and Western Europe. By midwinter, Ireland is suffering its coldest winter in its modern history and can no more be called the Green Island, and could rather be referred to as the White Island, as snow and ice cover the entire island. The UK is paralyzed: temperatures fall to -20° C, traffic transportation fails, electricity lines and towers are

breaking and smashed under the weight of ice and snow, every day hundreds of people die from the cold, the river Thames is covered by thick layers of ice, the roofs of many houses crumble under the weight of snow and the infrastructure is heavily damaged. In Western Europe, cities are paralyzed - Russian gas which once heated them is no longer passing through their pipes and millions of old people are dying in their cold apartments. Others are freezing in the Northeastern US and Western Europe—it is the poor that bear most of the brunt of this catastrophe. Hundreds of thousands of people who became homeless as a result of a long economic crisis die from cold already on the first weeks of this harsh winter. The economy is on its knees, production and trade is paralyzed, power failures become a norm, and people start burning whatever combustible they can find. Having been entirely dependent on technology, people's lives are shattered as technology fails during this disaster.

As the ice melts in spring, the worst is about to come. Spring brings little rain; the summer is dry, hot and without any rainfall. Crops are destroyed in the fields—now by heat and drought, rivers are running dry and the economies of many countries in Europe undergo deep depression. Social unrest becomes a norm in many countries of the EU. The EU itself disintegrates as each country tries to protect its citizens in order to retain the remaining resources. A series of harsh winters followed by very hot summers devastate the central and southern Europe.

The climate continued to warm up in the following 10 years; by the end of this period the winters became warmer but summers became longer and longer with a little or no rainfall at all. Vast areas in Spain and Italy turned into deserts whereas other regions in the Balkans and Central Europe became semi-arid areas. Conflicts erupted in the Southern European countries for control of water resources and caused millions of refugees who attempted to escape to Northern Europe where the climate became more favorable to live with plenty of rains and warmer winters. Powerful dictatorships took power in the latter countries, which tried to prevent refugees entering their countries and protect their natural resources.

### **What should we do to slow down global warming?**

The above scenario may become a reality unless we take urgent actions and measures. Global warming is reality and data from the history of the Earth tells us that CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere are positively related with the rise of temperatures. It is also clear that we, humans are causing global warming. That being the case, we should then be capable of slowing it down or stopping it.

In order to do so, countries (especially developed ones) should:

- allocate more or at least achieve the 33% of the planned stimulus packages green investments target as proposed by UNEP in the New Green Deal;
- reorient their economies towards green and sustainable industries;
- allocate more technology, monetary aid and expertise to the developing and poor countries in order to combat and adapt to global warming and prevent humanitarian catastrophes;
- start a massive awareness raising campaign on the effects of global warming and actions to prevent this from happening;
- use “the stick and carrot” (incentives and fines) to orient the population towards a greener living.

The proposed recommendations should be implemented as soon as possible—humanity is running out of time and the tipping point is closer than ever; every passing day is a lost chance in the fight against global warming. However, if we act now, it is still possible to overcome the crisis.’