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The Council of Parties COP26 took place in Glasgow from Oct 31- Nov 12. It was the first since the 2015 Paris meeting, which laid out guidelines and voluntary commitments to hold global climate warming as low as 1.5-2°C. Many of these commitments have not been kept, and the climate crisis from the burning of the fossil fuels has deepened in the past six years. This year has brought climate disaster after disaster. We have known for decades this was coming, but atmospheric CO₂ keeps rising, as most societies make promises they do not keep.

The first part of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) was released in draft form in August 2021 in preparation for this COP26 meeting. It was described by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres as nothing less than "a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable".

The key issue is rapidly phasing out the burning of fossil fuels that increases long-lived CO₂ which drives the warming of the planet. This energy imbalance is stored in the oceans and evaporation increases, which increases global water vapor, a powerful greenhouse gas (GHG); and reduces global ice cover that cools by reflecting sunlight. Rapid action has been postponed for decades because our business-as-usual growth economy depends on fossil fuels, and cutting the use of fossil fuels threatens the very powerful fossil fuel empire that controls the government in the US, as well as global policy. In thirty years, none of the first 25 COP reports even mentioned the fossil fuels!

Methane leaking from the expanding fossil fuel infrastructure (as well as decaying waste at landfills and livestock farming) has become a growing GHG threat that now contributes about a quarter of the current warming. It is a much more powerful GHG than CO₂, but its atmospheric lifetime is much shorter, so it is removed more rapidly if emissions are reduced. 105 countries joined the U.S.-led Global Methane Pledge, which aims to reduce methane emissions 30% by 2030. Reducing methane emissions is thus one of the few levers the world has to slow warming in the critical next decade or two, while in principal we accelerate the transition to a net-zero carbon economy. China and Russia were absent.

Similarly 100 leaders representing over 85% of the world's forests, including the Amazon rainforest, Canada's northern boreal forest and the Congo Basin rainforest pledged to end deforestation by 2030. The pledge is backed by almost \$20 billion in public and private funding, which seems way too little. Talking about these "cathedrals of nature and lungs of the planet" is fine rhetoric, but similar promises made in 2015 have not stopped the ongoing destruction of forests by logging, mining and conversion to agriculture.

More than 40 countries pledged to move away from coal, and committed to end investment in new coal-fired power plants. In Europe, Germany, the largest coal user, has a 2030 phase-out goal and Poland and Ukraine advanced their goals of phasing out coal use to 2030 and 2035. Notably many major economies including the United States, China, India and Japan have set no formal dates for ending the use of coal.

The dark reality is that there were at least 500 fossil fuel lobbyists with official access to the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow. That's more than the largest country's delegation. By lying to deceive the public and bribing politicians, they have delayed action on phasing out the fossil fuels for decades. They intend to remain in control, since they can make trillions of dollars in profits from destroying the stable climate of the planet. They made sure the COP26 meeting did not discuss how much fossil fuel we need to leave in the ground to keep global climate warming below 2°C. It is considered 'progress' that the COP26 report has for the first time an evasive reference to accelerate phasing out "inefficient" subsidies for fossil fuels!

So instead of real progress on eliminating the burning of the fossil fuels, the final COP26 text calls on countries to submit more ambitious carbon-cutting plans by the end of 2022. Some progress was made on the transparent accounting of emissions.

There was a lot of talk about climate justice and distributing the long-promised \$100 billion a year to poorer countries that now experience some of the worst effects of climate change; despite the fact that they are not responsible for most emissions now or in the past. Some promises were made to fund the phase-out of coal fired power plants in developing countries and replace them with renewable power. But the rich nations (who got rich burning fossil fuels) resist any commitments for compensation to poorer countries, as they do not want to accept liability. The injustice is very clear, but most poorer countries face the climate crisis without much help, since most rich countries lack the resources to protect even their own infrastructure against climate extremes and rising sea level.

Huge numbers of citizens, protesters, as well as religious groups and scientists, who have no seat at the table, came to Glasgow to make their cases in demonstrations. Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who has listened to so many meetings in the past few years, urged the leaders gathered for COP26 to act, and stop their "blah blah blah." There were 100,000 people at the protest march on November 6th, the largest demonstration Glasgow has ever seen. The police described the demonstrators as "good-natured and in high spirits", but their impact on the meeting is unclear. They know they are the sacrificial pawns of capitalism. Their role is critical however, as it will be up to protesters and indigenous people around the world to hold governments to their promises, when they try to backslide.

Unfortunately fossil fuels are the basis of business-as-usual consumerism that is the source of wealth for the powerful, who are content to destroy the climate and much of life on Earth for trillions in profits. The "Fossil fuel Empire" has the power and money to bribe politicians, and limit action in the US Congress. Most recently it has shifted to greenwashing adverts to mislead the public. One from Exxon-Mobil cheerfully says: "Every technology we're working on helps lower our carbon footprint. Because when it comes to addressing climate change, our actions make a difference." Since their actions have been driving the climate crisis for 40 years, this is just criminal lying.

The history is very sobering, but worth reviewing. At the first Earth Summit in 1992, President George H. W. Bush signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which committed the world to preventing "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the

climate system.” However the US insisted that the convention included no timetable or specific targets for action. In 1997 President Bill Clinton signed the Kyoto Protocol which said the US would cut its annual GHG emissions by seven per cent, but the Senate wouldn’t ratify it, and under George W. Bush, the country withdrew from the agreement, and US emissions rose. By 2009, the planet was headed for dangerous warming and President Barack Obama pledged that the U.S. was at last ready to act. Nevertheless, COP15 ended with no agreement, and at COP21 in Paris, nations were invited to just submit their own voluntary emissions targets. This meant the U.S. Senate did not have to approve a new binding agreement. These voluntary targets were not met. In reality Obama was proud that US oil production rose by 77% during his administration from advances in fracking technology. Imports fell by less so US consumption increased. Then Donald Trump announced that the U.S. wouldn’t honor its commitments, and scrapped many environmental laws.

Now at COP26, the world cheered when the two biggest polluters China and the US agreed to cooperate on key issues, but in reality their global power struggle may conflict with saving the Earth!

It is obvious that the climate crisis is out of control. The Earth will likely cross the upper 2°C temperature threshold in the Paris agreement, heading for 3°C. We must choose between the Earth and the Fossil Empire and business-as-usual capitalism. The choice is obvious: we must choose the Earth. Indigenous people have known this for thousands of years, but ‘modern western society’ has done everything it could to destroy the indigenous mindset. The deep shift in consciousness to back the Earth, who is in charge, is still heresy; and almost impossible for our society, obsessed with human power and greed. So in parallel we must support the protest movements, and encourage our youth to simply shut down the financial and business interests that intend to destroy both them and life on Earth for profit. In time the Earth will win by destroying our fossil infrastructure, but simply replacing it quickly would be much wiser.