

Climate change - myths, realities and prospects of a global deal to curb climate change

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Abstract

Climate change has been a hot topic during the past few years. Although scientific factors play a vital role in understanding climate change and implementing appropriate actions to reduce its impact, it is also marred by political and business related issues. The effort at the present time is to contain the global average temperature increase to within 1.5o C by the turn of the century. It is a fact that the earth system has been undergoing changes and will continue to change with time due to a number of factors. Climate change is one of them and there are discernible changes in some parts of the earth system as evidenced from melting of glaciers, abnormal weather etc. However, it is premature to conclude that it is a global phenomenon and that talking about a global average temperature has no conceptual meaning. The temperature on earth has temporal variations from about -50 to 50 spatially and temporally. There are also uncertainties associated with projections made into the future with data from a short window of observations. Two important factors that have not received their due attention in this context are that anthropogenic climate change which many climatologists associate with global warming depends upon the per capita consumption of energy and the world (or regional) population. No concrete action to reduce either of these has been taken on a global scale. The objective of this paper is to highlight the uncertainties associated with the science of climate change, the realities of the past, and the insurmountable problems associated with finding a global solution to a seemingly local or regional problem.

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Biography

A. W. Jayawardena, a retired professor with over 40 years of experience in the fields of hydrology, water resources and environmental engineering in academia, government, consulting engineers and international organizations. He is a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the UK Institution of Civil Engineers, a Fellow of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers and a Life Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. At present, he is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) where he has been teaching for many years, and a Visiting Professor of the Department of Civil Engineering of Chu Hai College of Higher

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