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UN's umpteenth climate report: Not quite like Moses and the Ten Commandments

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In releasing its new climate report ("umpteenth" means "the latest in an indefinitely numerous series"), the United Nations, led by its secretary-general Antonio Guterres, essayed an imitation of Moses when he descended from Mount Sinai and unveiled the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

The UN officials bellowed as though they were sounding absolutely the last word on the climate controversy. They tried to be as stentorian, as certain and as prophetic as the prophet himself.

Reversion to global warming

The officials were so excited about the report, they reverted to "global warming" as their term of choice and forgot that they had already officially replaced warming with "climate change."

At the announcement on Monday, the UN said:

"Earth is getting so hot that temperatures in about a decade will probably blow past a level of warming which we call a 'code red for humanity.'

"It's just guaranteed that it's going to get worse, nowhere to run, nowhere to hide."

The new report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) makes more precise and warmer forecasts for the 21st century than it did last time the report was issued in 2013.

Each of five scenarios for the future, based on how much carbon emissions are cut, passes the more stringent of two thresholds set in the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Under each scenario, the report said, the world will cross the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming mark in the 2030s, earlier than some past predictions.

"Our report shows that we need to be prepared for going into that level of warming in the coming decades. But we can avoid further levels of warming by acting on greenhouse gas emissions," it said.

In three scenarios, the world will also likely exceed 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial times - the less stringent Paris Agreement goal - with far worse heat waves, droughts and flood-inducing downpours.

The 3,000-plus-page report from 234 scientists said warming is already accelerating sea level rise and worsening extremes such as heat waves, droughts, floods and storms.

As the planet warms, places will get hit more not just by extreme weather but by multiple climate disasters at once, the report said.

Scientists have issued this message for more than three decades, but the world hasn't listened, said UN Environment Program (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen.

Nearly all of the warming that has happened on Earth can be blamed on emissions of heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and methane. At most, natural forces or simple randomness can explain one- or two-tenths of a degree of warming, the report said.

Will this blockbuster climate report reduce the climate skeptics and climate realists to silence? Will the United Nations be allowed to preside over the future of the planet and all humanity?

Hardly. The UN is an unelected organization and is not a world government. Before the ink was dry on the new IPCC report, climate skeptics and realists were already busy putting together their two-fisted reply to it.

There is a formidable literature of climate skepticism that has accumulated for a decade as scientists and public intellectuals took turns in blasting the errors and idiocies in the theology of global warming and climate change.

Crystallizing the skeptics rebuttal are the words of the late famed physicist and Nobel laureate Richard Feynman, who said: "I can live with doubt and uncertainty and not knowing. I think it is much more interesting to live not knowing than to have answers that might be wrong. I would rather have questions that can't be answered than answers that can't be questioned."

Critiques of the UN report rapidly multiplied in the press and on the web this week. For now, I will just call attention to a very strong and revealing editorial in the Issues and Insights website on Aug. 9, 2021, "Pants on fire: UN issues another climate report":

IPCC's discredited hypothesis

"The hysterical responses to the Summary for Policymakers from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report were exactly what we expected.

"A hotter future is certain, climate panel warns. But how hot is up to us,' says the New York Times' screamer headline.

"The BBC dutifully quotes UN Secretary General António Guterres, a member of Portugal's Socialist Party, who said the report 'is a code red for humanity.'

"CNBC says, 'the world's leading climate scientists on Monday delivered their starkest warning yet about the deepening climate emergency.'

"Despite the alarms, and claims that some irreversible damage has been wrought, the IPCC says there is still a small chance to avoid devastation. If we act now. If we make deep cuts in

greenhouse gas emissions. If we enact policies that just happen to be identical to the pieces of the policy lineup the political left has been pressing for decades but hasn't been able to pass by other means.

"To better understand what the UN and its political and media allies are up to, let's backtrack to a previous climate report.

"Eight years ago, when the IPCC issued its Fifth Assessment Report, Chip Knappenberger, then the Cato Institute's assistant director of the Center for the Study of Science, called it an 'embarrassment of internal inconsistency,' and an "entirely self-serving" document that was "beyond misleading."

"That's because the IPCC is more intent on maintaining the crumbling 'consensus' on global warming than on following climate science to its logical conclusion; a conclusion that increasingly suggests that human greenhouse gas emissions are less important in driving climate change than commonly held.

"That's still the IPCC's goal: to further the narrative that human activity is overheating Earth, so that left-wing politicians can gain further control of economies, and more effectively restrict the liberty of those who aren't part of the global elite.

"At roughly the same time as Knappenberger's observation, a pair of scholars who contributed to the report were appalled by the methods used to produce what is in effect an executive summary.

"Robert Stavins, a Harvard professor, said the process for generating the report's Summary for Policymakers, which condenses thousands of pages of text and more than a dozen chapters from the full report into a document of a few dozen pages, created an 'irreconcilable conflict of interest.'

"It has got to the point, 'he wrote in an online letter in 2014,' where it would be reasonable to call the document a summary by policymakers, not a summary for them, and it certainly affects the credibility of the IPCC.'

"Sussex University professor Richard Tol, who had 'been involved with the IPCC since 1994, fulfilling a variety of roles in all three working groups,' 'stepped down' in September 2013 from the team that prepared the draft of the Summary for Policymakers from the Fifth Assessment Report.' He called it a 'debacle.'

"His criticisms of the process included the eventual removal of references that don't 'support the political agenda for greenhouse gas emission reduction,' which appear in early SPM drafts, and the development of 'later drafts' that 'put more and more emphasis on the reasons for concern about climate change, a concept I had helped to develop.'

"The IPCC does not guard itself against selection bias and groupthink, 'Tol concluded. 'Academics who worry about climate change are more likely to publish about it, and more likely to get into the IPCC. Groups of like-minded people reinforce their beliefs. The environment agencies that comment on the draft IPCC report will not argue that their department is obsolete. The IPCC should therefore be taken out of the hands of the climate bureaucracy and transferred to the academic authorities.'

"In short, the IPCC has a habit of doctoring the summaries in an effort to frighten and manipulate the public. And it's been doing so for some time. According to Canadian academic and author Tim Ball, while the 2001 IPCC report 'was the most influential in establishing global warming as a serious threat demanding political action,' it also achieved another distinction, unknown to the media, public and politicians. A 'disconnect between the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) and the Science Report Of Working Group 1,' he said, was particularly extreme.

"So much of the so-called science the IPCC created was to amplify the threat of human-produced CO2 to global warming,'Ball wrote. 'The political mandate was the ultimate arbiter of what and how an issue was included.'

"When Ball wrote that six years ago, he wondered 'how long the IPCC can stay in business and continue to push' its 'totally discredited' hypothesis that man is warming his planet. The 2021 report unfortunately indicates that the answer might be 'forever.'"

Naturally, the UN will not answer this. Its climate dogma cannot be questioned."