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Graciela Chichilnisky on Climate Change

Blooker Comments - Climate Change

OurBlook interview with Prof. Graciela Chichilnisky



In 2007, 489 members of the American Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical Union were surveyed for the Statistical Assessment Service at George Mason University. About 84 percent said that they personally believed human-induced warming is occurring and it poses a very great or moderate danger, 74 percent believed that currently available scientific evidence substantiates its occurrence. Do you agree with the views of these scientists? Why or why not?

GC: These scientists could very well be right. There are thousands of scientists from all over the world ... part of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ... who agree on the whole. Yet uncertainty persists because the study of global climate conditions is rather new as a science and a complex subject, and it is natural that difference of opinions would persist.

The issue is not whether every single scientist in the world agrees. This is not true for some of the most basic scientific facts in physics ... in science you can expect evolution of ideas and skepticism.

The real issue is whether the risk is realistic and how damaging it can be. For example, few scientists would be able to predict whether your house will burn tomorrow ... and this is irrelevant. There is a real (albeit small) risk, and if it happens the damages are catastrophic. Therefore everybody I know insures their homes against fire. Even though they are not sure it will happen.

The risk of climate induced change is real ... a much larger risk than your house burning tomorrow ... and potentially catastrophic. Therefore we have to take action ... it is the responsible thing to do. The cost and benefits indicate that a small enough investment ... less than what one pays for catastrophic insurance ... would suffice. We are talking about 1-2 percent of the value of the assets at risk.

The exact computations for the cost of insuring against climate change, the risks and the investment needed to manage the risk are in my book "Saving Kyoto" with K. Sheeran, which just appeared in London.

Why do you believe that such radically different opinions exist regarding an issue that should ideally be gauged by scientific data?

GC: The global weather is a complex mathematical system, and therefore by its own nature exact predictions are difficult to achieve if not impossible. The same is true of many other physical phenomena. As I explain above, this does not matter ... this is not the main issue. The main issue is that there is a realistic probability that climate change is being caused by our carbon emissions and the risk is potentially catastrophic. This suffices to justify taking action. This is the way we behave with respect to our lives, our homes, our cars, our health, financial risks, etc.

There has been record-breaking cold weather across the northern half of the earth so far in 2010. Do you see greater scientific skepticism toward the global warming concept, greater support building, or about the same?

GC: About the same. It is well known that climate change induces large weather volatility ... more extreme weather faster and more violent oscillations, storms, draughts and floods, tornadoes and also arctic weather shifts.

What are your views of the U.S. participating in a multilateral agreement with other countries?

GC: This is essential. Every nation can cause climate change to others, and therefore we are facing a global problem that requires a global solution. This is what is called multilateralism. Climate change is the single most important global problem we have ever faced. For example, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris estimated that just by burning its fossil fuels, African nations can cause trillions of dollars of losses in the U.S. Miami itself is the largest city at risk, involving three trillion of dollars in potential losses according to 2009 OECD data. So we all need to cooperate, everybody is needed as part of the solution because we are all part of the problem.

Do you believe human activity is a more important factor or less important factor than natural geophysical activity in determining the temperature of our atmosphere? If you DO NOT believe climate change, do you believe that humans have any impact on the environment. Additionally, do you believe that green efforts are necessary or a waste of time?

GC: Green efforts are important and they have no measurable negative cost ... on the contrary, they can improve the economy. A green economy is the future of the world economy. Silicon Valley ... the largest center of business investment activity in the U.S. ... is heavily investing in clean technology for this reason ... it is the

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largest investment sector for new businesses today. It involves trillions in investment, globally. The global power point infrastructure involves \$50 trillion worth of equipment and structures according to the International Energy Agency ... which need to be restructured. There is a solid economic reason behind clean tech investment ... it is the future of the world economy.

Some experts argue that climate change will hit developing countries the hardest. Regardless of your current opinion, do you believe that first world nations have a responsibility to help those countries?

GC: Yes. And we can do it in a way that favors the creation of technology jobs in our economy and the expansion of our exports, as explained above. We are already behind China in the development and exports of solar power equipment ... we need to move fast to keep our competitive edge in this direction.

Do you believe companies have a responsibility to protect the environment? Do you believe laws should be implemented to ensure this?

GC: Yes.

Anything else you want to add?

GC: Yes, I could explain the crucial role played in all this by the carbon market that I designed and drafted into the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 ... which is now international law and trading since 2005 in Europe, called the European Union Emissions Trading System. This carbon market is currently trading \$120 billion/year and is believed to become soon the largest commodity market in the world.

(Graciela Chichilnisky co-authored the book "SAVING KYOTO: An Insider's Guide To The Kyoto Protocol" and attended the summit in Copenhagen in December. A professor at Columbia, she has Ph.Ds in economics and math from Berkeley.)

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WRITTEN BY TECHNOLOGY GUIDE, JUNE 21, 2011

This post has been extremely insightful & useful to increase my knowledge in the field of knowledge & its many facets. Well, I'm so happy that I have found this post because I have been seeking some information about it. Here's a good resource that is also worth a look.

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The new Dirivites Bubble

WRITTEN BY ROBERT D PONDER, APRIL 08, 2010

I'm glad Dr. Chilinski mentioned the carbon trading market. She points out one of many new and enterprising markets that would be pushed into a hyper state of existence of the Copenhagen treaties were to be globally enacted. Now, who is behind these markets? George Soros, the owner of CNN and MSNBC in addition the largest hedge fund operator world wide and convicted felon of insider trading in French markets. Then you have Rupert Murdoch, the Media king on multiple continents, plus he adds a combination of leading the US in Faux, I mean, Fox news. The idea that two media kinds are running an end around scam on the US is appalling and was stopped by Lord Monkton and insiders of the EAU who could see their part in what would have been an absolute tragic move.

I would like to conclude that I myself live minimally and understand that saving and conserving is viable to the earth's long-term good. However, when a movement is started under the face of a lie, we, the human race suffer at the hands of tyrants and many of us have to die in the process. Maybe its time for the human race to remember that we can't trust anyone that tells us that "we know better than you" or "the science is in and no one can change the outcome" both of which were Al Gores hubris before we found that Kashpari, the head of the IPCC, submitted a phony thesis on global warming that he split a Nobel prize with Al Gore over. Now, I just ask people to please think for themselves and understand that we, Americans, have been jerked around by government, our own, for far too long so an IGO like the UN is perhaps not a great choice for a leader in morals and ethics. Hopefully, we as Americans have not become so separated by PC campaigns and hatred for what one another has and the other doesn't. Just maybe, Americans can find their way to the voting booth and remain a republic for years to come.



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