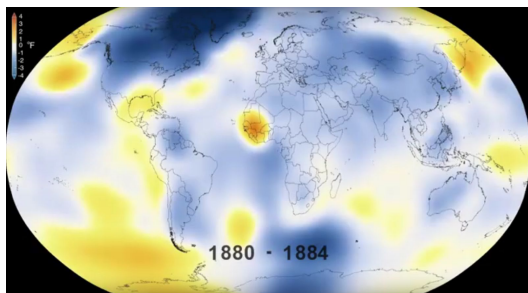


Let's do more in Change, let's do more in Climate

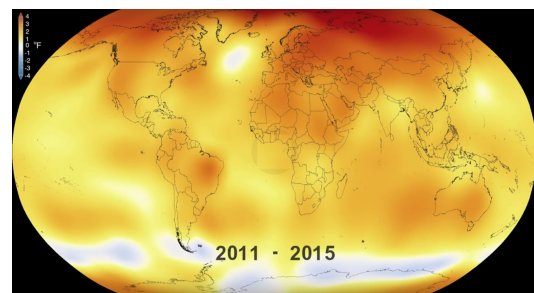
Recently, there have been many talks about climate change. Climate change is defined as a sudden or gradual change in climate regionally or globally. The biggest problem now attributed to climate change is global warming.

Ever since the industrial revolution in the early 1800s where machines that run on coal gradually replaced human labor, the CO₂ levels in the atmosphere has increased drastically. Before the industrial revolution, the CO₂ levels, as measured by ppm (parts per million), is at 280 ppm. Now, due to coal plants, deforestation by burning and various human activities, the levels skyrocketed to 400 ppm in September 2016.¹ A number that has not been broken for 15 million years. This is especially alarming as more carbon dioxide means rising average temperatures which jumped 0.85°C from 1880 to 2012.

The chart below shows it all:²



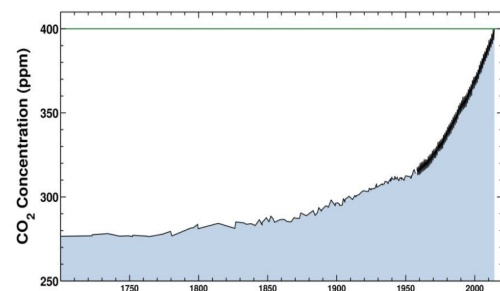
Earth in 1880, CO₂ levels are lower so Temperature is under control



High CO₂ level causes rising temperatures

Here in Singapore and Southeast-Asia, we are not insulated from the effects of climate change. Higher CO₂ means higher air temperature causing the much hated heat that was a record 37°C in 1983 and more recently in April 2016, 36.7°C recorded in the Seletar region³ and the much more intense thunderstorms. Climate change also caused floods in Singapore and many of the low lying cities like Bangkok in Thailand. Typhoons are also prevalent and Singapore first experienced the power of a typhoon in 2001 when Typhoon Vamei struck northern Singapore and caused extreme floods.

Another major problem is that the burning of forests using the slash-and-burn method has created huge problems. Not only does it destroy trees that can absorb the CO₂ and bring the temperature down, it can also cause severe air pollution and smog that the wind blows to other Southeast Asian countries and we get a lot of lung and health problems.⁴



¹ (Scripps Institute of Oceanography, 2016)

² (Source: Five-year global temperature anomalies from 1880 to 2015 by NASA, 2015)

³ (Source: The Straits Times. Article by Chew Hui Min, 2016)

⁴ (Source & Chart: MESAS, 2013)

Let's do more in Change, let's do more in Climate

The one thing attributed to all these happenings can be summarized in one word. Greed. Greed has caused mankind to turn against nature. We take what Mother Nature has given us for granted. ASEAN have promised us that they will do everything they can to stop deforestation and war on climate change but so far, the haze is still coming. This only shows one thing, they have failed in their quest to stop climate change. There is only one way. We have to engage in an all out war on climate change.

The reason why there is not much changes is because some countries, like Indonesia, who have a large palm oil industry, are worried how it would affect their GDP.⁵ They give excuses that there are just too many loggers over a large area to patrol, but I dug deeper to find the truth.

Here is my plan on Climate Change

Rainforest trees are the lungs of Earth. They release fresh oxygen and absorb the carbon dioxide. But we are burning them down at an alarming rate. Now, not only is harmful smog produced, the trees cannot cope with rising CO2 levels and the temperature of the Earth rises. They may think they have the resources to burn trees for agriculture but that is only in the short term. Contrary to popular beliefs, rainforest land are not very fertile. The nutrients are stored in plants rather than in the soil. When the rain wash away the top layer that were nourished by the plants, there will be nothing left if the trees are no more there.



Photo: Haze in Singapore by Ian Chee Wee, 2013

In the long run, there will not be enough fertile lands and trees to make way for agriculture, creating famine throughout the world. We must harshly crack down the illegal burners.

⁵ (Source: Wikipedia, Palm Oil Production In Indonesia.)

Let's do more in Change, let's do more in Climate

Recently, the Trump Administration has planned to decrease government's spending on environmental protection by 31% to 5.6 billion USD.⁶ This will be a huge setback in our quest against climate change. Apparently, Trump has increased the budget on military spending with most of the cut from environmental protection.⁷ He thinks that fighting with ISIS is more important. Yes, in the short term. But in the long run, humans will soon realize that environment and Mother Nature always comes first. We will have no more resources in the future if we keep using them now. Future humans may not be able to survive for Long.

Hence, I think all countries should use more of their GDP on environmental protection. If they use on military or other purposes now, we will see that Mother Nature will get her revenge on us, by taking away our fossil fuels.

Instead, we should relocate these loggers to fully fledged cities so they would not have to illegally chop down trees and get a decent job. We can also send assistance to these loggers and check on them regularly to make sure they do not go back to their old job.

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⁶ (Source: The Atlantic. Article by Robinson Meyer, 2017)

⁷ (Source: CNBC. Article by Jeff Daniels, 2017)