

Correspondence

Peat fires: emissions likely to worsen

The horrific haze from Indonesia's forest and peatland fires, started deliberately to clear land for planting and made worse by drought, has become a global crisis. Indonesia's government could stop this annual catastrophe, but it so far seems to lack the political will to do so.

In the past decade, Indonesia has destroyed its forests faster than any other nation (see go.nature.com/b9rhxz). By one estimate, daily carbon emissions from its forest and peatland fires now exceed those from the entire US economy (see go.nature.com/hpworu).

The situation is likely to worsen: Indonesia and Malaysia are planning to set up a Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries. This intends to force major forest-exploiting corporations to relax their zero-deforestation pledges (see go.nature.com/agvbhn). Oil-palm expansion is one of the biggest drivers of peatland and forest destruction.

Localized actions and belated half-measures by the Indonesian government are no longer enough. Aided by the global community, it must ban fires in peatlands and native forests; declare a moratorium on clearing peatlands; restore water to degraded peatlands; and create financial incentives for provinces to reduce deforestation.

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Peat fires: consumers to help beat them out

Southeast Asia's choking air pollution continues unabated, fuelled by the burning of peat swamps for agriculture. The issue flies in the face of long-standing regional agreements on land clearance by governments in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and is at last galvanizing

non-governmental organizations (NGOs), banks and businesses into action against the companies responsible.

Singapore's punitive Transboundary Haze Pollution Act has met with some success (see, for example, J. H. S. Lee *et al. Environ. Sci. Policy* **55**, 87–95; 2016). The Singapore Environment Council, an NGO, has suspended environmental certification of paper-pulp companies that might be connected with the fires. This has prompted some supermarket chains in Singapore to stop selling products containing raw materials from these companies, and banks are reviewing their policies for lending to them. Suspension could prompt companies to become more sustainable and to consider setting aside undeveloped peat-swamp forests for conservation.

Consumers should back this drive for corporate environmental accountability by using publicly available resources (see, for example, www.ethical.org.au) to ensure that their product choices do not result in peat clearance.

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Time for Russia to tap renewables

Russia's big territory and coastline are potentially huge sources of renewable energy from sun, wind, waves, tides and currents, but about 91% of the country's energy still comes from fossil fuels.

This must be urgently rectified if Russia is to honour its pledge, made ahead of this month's climate summit in Paris, to reduce its carbon emissions by 25–30% relative to 1990 levels by 2030.

Russia's carbon emissions have been increasing since 1998. Only

3.2% of its total primary energy supply came from renewables in 2013 (nuclear accounts for the rest; see www.iea.org/statistics). This compares poorly with industrial nations such as Brazil (40%), Sweden (35.7%), India (26.4%), Canada (18.6%) China (11%) and the United States (6.8%).

Russian environmental legislation is taking small, ongoing steps to protect its natural resources, clean up polluted areas, control air and water quality and advance green industrial technologies. Environmental penalties for pollution and illegal use of natural resources have increased sharply. More investment in renewable energy will help to protect Russia's natural environment.

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Cannabis: monitor policy changes

Policy changes that increasingly permit the medical and recreational use of cannabis have important implications for society and drug policies overall (see *Nature* **524**, 280–283; 2015 and *Nature* **525**, S1–S18; 2015). There is an urgent need to set up collaborative international monitoring of the effects of these changes in different countries to achieve a meaningful evaluation of their impact.

Monitoring should include differences in arrest numbers, imprisonment, public-health and social impact, supply and economic analyses, as well as co-dependence and substitution effects on the use of other drugs, alcohol and tobacco products (go.nature.com/jr5lgt).

The effects of cannabis policy changes might be influenced by, for example, a legal age limit, accurate labelling of contents and potency, restrictions on advertising, and law-enforcement practices.

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Cannabis: debated schizophrenia link

In our view, Matthew Hill's arguments against a causal link between cannabis use and schizophrenia fail to clinch this debate (*Nature* **525**, S14; 2015).

His contention that the increased societal use of cannabis over time is not reflected in increased rates of schizophrenia has been tested only once to our knowledge — and that study came to the opposite conclusion (J. Boydell *et al. Psychol. Med.* **36**, 1441–1446; 2006). In multifactorial conditions such as schizophrenia, an increase in one risk factor is not necessarily balanced by a decrease in another. Deaths from cardiac disease are declining in many countries despite increased obesity, but that does not mean that obesity is unrelated to cardiac disease.

Hill misinterprets our review of cannabis use by people with psychosis (A. Koliakou *et al. Intl J. Dev. Neurosci.* **29**, 335–346; 2011). Contrary to his inference that this group self-medicates to mitigate negative symptoms, we found that the most commonly reported use by these individuals was purely recreational.

He suggests that cannabis is a risk factor only for those with a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia (but see M. Di Forti *et al. Biol. Psychiatry* **72**, 811–816; 2012). Another explanation could be that some of the genes associated with a proclivity for cannabis smoking also show up among those who are predisposed to schizophrenia, because a genetic tendency for the habit could in turn increase the risk of schizophrenia.

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