

Taking the Temperature episode 2

Hi, thank you for tuning in to our latest episode of "Taking the Temperature", where we at Julie's Bicycle update you on some recent climate and environmental issues that are making the headlines. My name is Charise, my pronouns are she/her. I'm a brown skinned woman in her 30s, I have curly dark hair with blonde highlights. I'm wearing a black shirt and a black jacket, and I'm sitting in front of a dark grey wall with a gold lamp behind me.

The temperature on climate policy is hot. In the previous segment, we delved in to the priority themes and topics for this year's UN International Climate Change Conference, COP26, which is hosted by the UK in Glasgow from October 31 until November 12. This year's COP is unique, taking place during a global pandemic, that's laid bare systemic injustices all across the world, and further mobilised actions against the interlinked injustices and inequalities of climate change. So justice is huge on the agenda, with more people beginning to understand the need for a just transition, which means it is paramount that rich nations provide adequate financial assistance and resources to the nations and communities who are hit the hardest and contribute the least to climate change. We're told this will be the most inclusive COP yet. But is it all lip service?

Frontline activists have reported being denied visas and accreditation, and an unequal rollout of COVID-19 vaccines means many activists from low income countries won't be represented for this momentous event. So let's see how it goes. The spotlight will be on the landmark report released in August by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC for short. that highlights the urgency for world leaders to step up ambitions for climate plans - we will recap the top line findings as well as the importance of COP26. In national news, we'll discuss the key aspects of the UK has recently released Net Zero strategy and we'll explore what the culture sector is doing to respond.

The first instalment of the IPCC six assessment report draws from over 14,000 peer reviewed studies to summarise the physical science basis for climate change - past, present and future. The report brings together the latest advancements in climate science to examine how the earth responds to climate change. It strengthens the links between human-caused warming and the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events. It also focuses much more on connecting the global to the local than previous reports have, which will help policymakers to assess regionally specific risks and develop place-based solutions. The report does not split hairs when it states "it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land." This is a powerful statement of confidence. For example, the report has clearly linked the following to human influence, all of which will worsen with further warming.

1. The continued thawing of permafrost, loss of seasonal snow cover and summer Arctic sea ice and melting of glaciers and ice sheets
2. Sea temperature rise ocean acidification and reduced oxygen levels, all of which will and are affecting ocean ecosystems and the people that rely on them
3. Changes in rainfall patterns, which will likely lead to an increase of precipitation in some areas and droughts in others
4. Increase sea level rise, coastal erosion and frequent severe coastal flooding in low lying areas and
5. Hotter cities that will be at a greater risk of flooding after heavy rain events.

The big takeaway is that we no longer need to argue about attribution. Heat makes weather much worse. That's it. A "code red for humanity" is what UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called the IPCC report, saying "the alarm bells are deafening. And the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk. Global heating is affecting every region on Earth, with many of the changes becoming irreversible." Temperatures are rising fast and global warming will hit 1.5 degrees Celsius in almost all emissions scenarios. As soon as the early 2030s.

The outlook sounds pretty bleak, but don't despair just yet. We have solutions. We know that the real immediate action is not happening behind closed doors at mostly inaccessible global conferences, but within communities, culture and localities. Communities are taking action everywhere with renewable energy projects, mutual aid, reclaiming green spaces and using their voices to demand justice and real change from governments and industries. People are rising up with indigenous and marginalised communities and young people leading the way. Local councils and the Transition Town movement are calling it out as the emergency it is, they're supporting local businesses, cycling, renewables, greenspace and walkable streets. Climate assemblies all over the country are mobilising through awareness raising and participatory democracy. And we mentioned the youth, they're killing it.

And crucially, strong emissions reductions in the near term can reduce this rate of warming to stabilise or even bring down surface temperatures, which is why it is essential that the highest emitters do more, that's countries like the US by the way, and the UK. Sorry, I'm American. This is why COP26 is so important for global climate action, we need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. But to do so, global emissions must have by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. That's hard. And even that might not be enough.

The UK's goal and COP26 catchphrase is "keep 1.5 alive", because every increment of a degree higher increases risk for people and planet substantially. But to do that countries have to significantly raise their nationally determined contributions, or NDCs. That is each country's

commitment and plans to reduce national emissions and adapt to climate change. According to the new updated UN NDC synthesis report, it seems that even with all the updated NDC since September synthesis report, greenhouse gas emissions would be would rise by a whopping 16% - that could be 2.7 degree rise by the end of the century. And not only do we need countries to raise their NDCs. But for this COP to be successful, richer countries must mobilise \$100 billion per year to support developing countries that they promised in 2009. And again in 2015. The promise was that the money would hit the bank accounts by 2020. But surprise, surprise, this target will likely not be met until 2023. In the meantime, this isn't a great start and will understandably stoke resentment from developing nations.

You've probably heard the term net zero a great deal lately. So let's be clear on what net zero is. It's not the same as zero carbon. It means not adding to existing greenhouse gases. As it currently stands, it's going to need a lot more action to stop Net Zero becoming greenwash for buying carbon credits. There's just isn't enough credit to go around and the amount of carbon debt stacking up just won't work. Nature's atmosphere balance sheet is real - GDP isn't. But net zero carbon has been a really good way of charging up and getting people up to scratch. So all for net zero as long as that net doesn't get too full of holes.

Speaking of net zero, right at the COP26 buzzer, the UK has released its net zero strategy setting up policies and proposals for decarbonizing sectors in order to meet the net zero target by 2050. Here's the breakdown. The strategy builds on the Prime Minister's 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution, setting out a comprehensive sector-by-sector, economy-wide plan for lowering Britain's fossil fuel reliance by transitioning to renewable and nuclear energy and green technology. The strategy commits to support British businesses to lead the way and to support the public in adopting and adjusting to the changes. The government says it will create 440,000 jobs and £90 billion of private investment by 2030. Low carbon technologies - such as heat pumps and electric vehicles- are prioritised. Along with carbon capture and hydrogen, which are controversial and uncertain carbon reduction methods.

This net zero strategy is being criticised for being technology heavy, relying on some technologies that are not even proven yet and avoiding the critical low hanging fruit that say insulating homes will provide, whatever you think of the activist group "Insulate Britain", the point they're trying to make is a good one. In their 2019 report "UK Housing: Fit for the Future", the government's own Committee on Climate Change said that "ensuring existing homes are low carbon and resilient to the changing climate is a major UK infrastructure priority" but emissions reductions from the UK is 29 million homes have actually stalled. While energy used in homes, which accounts for 14% of total UK emissions - have increased. We know that subsidies for heat pumps will cover 90,000 homes and we need millions more to replace gas boilers, and that without rethinking roads investment, we might be cutting off our nose to spite

our face. On the other hand, there is a plan with some money behind it and public commitments to making it work. These policy commitments are exactly what COP26 is about.

So what are the opportunities for cultural policy around Net Zero Most of the innovation funding is targeted specifically at energy and related low and zero carbon technology. However, the UK innovation strategy has set ambitions for government departments to deliver innovative solutions, stating that departments will need to produce clear policy statements, describing priority outcomes they want to solve or achieve. This would then include the department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, which could potentially open up opportunities for discussion about funding cultural initiatives. Furthermore, there's a commitment to extending funding for the public sector decarbonization scheme, which is relevant to all publicly-owned cultural venues. The scheme extension would also help with developing climate capabilities across government and to ramp up skills-building.

As for arts and culture involvement in achieving net zero, there's little to no mention aside from the nod to the role that some small and medium enterprises are playing by highlighting the need for climate transformation in their communities. By joining initiatives, like the government's "Together for Our Planet" campaign that encourages small businesses to pledge to cut their emissions to net zero by 2050 or sooner, while helping them grow, adapt and seize new opportunities.

In the strategy itself, there's lots of mentions of culture. Well, lots of agriculture, lots of horticulture, even polluted culture, which is peatland agriculture in case you're wondering, but culture without a prefix - not there yet. However, this doesn't mean that the culture sector has not responded to the climate and environmental crisis with its own policies. For example, Arts Council England has clearly outlined its strategy and delivery plans, which include deliberate themes, principles and actions related to environmental responsibility. "Let's Create" is Arts Council England's 10 year strategy to create creative people, cultural communities and a creative and cultural country - try saying that five times fast. Environmental responsibility is what are the investment principles of the strategy necessary to build a cultural sector "Fit for the Future". To resource their delivery plan Arts Council England recently launched a capital investment programme to invest in organisations' projects. This programme will provide online tools and resources to develop climate literacy across the sector, and assist organisations in their development of clear pathways to net zero carbon. Arts Council England has also set a goal to reduce its own environmental impacts - leading by example.

Julie's Bicycle has been busy working on a report that's found national policies for culture and the arts are still not yet aligned to climate science, nor to national commitments under the Paris Agreement. We've just released the executive summary of the forthcoming report entitled

"Culture: The Missing Link to Climate Action. If you'd like to learn more about our new report, you can find the executive summary on the Julie's Bicycle site under "News".

Now for some good news from around the world. Did you know another Conference of Parties just happened? That's right. Part one of this year's UN biodiversity conference known as COP15 was held earlier in October. COP15 laid the foundation of a global biodiversity framework for urgent action to halt and reverse the loss of the planet's plants, animals and ecosystems, a framework that also recognises the rights of indigenous peoples and communities. A coalition of nations, including the UK, are pushing for the target of protecting 30% of the world's lands and oceans by 2030 in the final biodiversity treaty. China announced a fund to help developing countries to implement a new 10-year nature protection framework and of the creation of 230,000 square kilometres of national parks. The UK also announced they will ramp up spending to protect and restore nature to reach net zero emissions, with plans to protect 400,000 hectares of land.

The World Health Organisation has updated its global air quality guidelines, with recommendations reducing levels of key air pollutants, including ozone and particulate matter. This change could help protect public health and mitigate climate change if nations adopt the guidelines.

"The Walk with Little Amal" made it to the UK after a long journey through here. Little Amal, the three and a half metre living artwork of a refugee child, is a puppet meant to spotlight the millions of young people forced to put their lives on the line to leave hostile environments. With climate change on everyone's minds before COP. She poignantly raises awareness of the people living in climate vulnerable communities, who have been displaced or at risk of displacement - often without recourse.

For a bit more climate optimism, on Thursday, October 14 at the TED countdown in Scotland, Lauren MacDonald, an activist with the UK-based Youth Climate groups "Green New Deal Rising" and "Stop Cambo", interrupted Royal Dutch Shell CEO Ben van Beurden during a panel discussion to give a powerful speech, calling up the hypocrisy of having Shell represented on a panel discussing climate action, considering their contribution to anthropogenic climate change.

The Oxford English Dictionary has added new climate related words, including terms, like degrowth, co2, and natural capital among others. They've also added new sub-entries and additions to words like eco-anxiety, net zero, climate justice, climate strike, climate denier and many more. Effective climate communication relies on clear language and shared understanding. So this is a welcomed change.

Glasgow will be popping for the next few weeks, with lots of great events in store at the COP blue and green zones, as well as, outside of the COP venues, in the fringe. The Blue Zone is behind the velvet ropes UN space, where the negotiations happen, especially in week two. The green zone is the area managed by the UK Government and where NGOs, trade unions, youth groups, artists, the general public and more, can interact and get their voices heard. The Fringe... is the fringe, events on the periphery of COP. Creative Climate Leaders, justice advocates and so many other amazing groups will be in Glasgow representing the arts and culture.

In the blue zone, the British Council will have an exhibition space and the climate heritage network will be launching the "Race to Resilience" campaign. Inside COP 26, we'll be broadcasting daily to give listeners behind the scenes access to the blue zone, with the interviews from key players at the heart of the summit, dissecting decisions and discussions in an accessible way to engage audiences outside of the environmental bubble. Join Sophie Shnapp of EarthPercent, top climate scientists Saleemul Huq, their co-hosts activists Tori Tsui and Love Ssega, with independent Glasgow radio station Clyde Built Radio in conversation with delegates politicians, scientists, youth delegates, indigenous delegates, activists, artists and musicians and let them become your eyes and ears on the ground. The indomitable Farhana Yamin - JB board member, climate lawyer, expert advisor and activist extraordinaire will be there with the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

Our friends at Albert have a whole series of in person events that will also be broadcasted online. Looking at the role TV programming can play and telling different stories of climate action. The music community will be out in force. Enter Shikari will be doing two gigs in Glasgow with Music Declares Emergency and presented by nonclassical and Verbier festival. Gabriel Prokofiev will be doing a special performance. Meanwhile, Sam Lee will be hosting a daily "No Music on a Dead Planet" show on COP26.tv, and JB's Chiara will be joining this panel at the UMA Entertainment Special COP26 Event with artists Faye Milton, AURORA, Nick Mulvey, and Groove Armada's Andy Cato.

And of course we got to shout out JB friend's Music Declares Emergency, Eco Arts, EarthPercent and Season for Change, who will also be present. Finally, if you'd like to join the conversation from home, JB will be broadcasting live from COP26 on Friday, November 5 at 10am. For our panel event "Culture: The Missing Link" panellists include author Elif Shafak, Friday's For Future India founder, Disha A. Ravi, polar conservationist and PhD student Prem Gill and Nova Ruth, founder of Arka Kinari.

We'll also have musician and EarthPercent ambassador Love Ssega as MC, performances from poet Selena Nwulu and Zena Edwards and musician Nova Ruth and scientists, IPCC author and creator of the ubiquitous climate stripes, Ed Hawkins. There's still time to register

for a virtual seat online via the Julie's Bicycle events page. So please do join in. Whew! That's it for this pre-COP26 edition of "Taking the Temperature".