

Climate Solutions Group - Forum Report by Kate Bailey

With COP30 beginning in Belém, Amazonia, without the USA's participation, we heard about the Action Agenda proposed by Brazilian leaders. The smallest most vulnerable countries will have an equal say in discussions about civil society, social justice and global equity. Major themes will be agreements and partnerships for countries to transition to low carbon economies, together with finance to reward tropical forest conservation and funding for adaptation, particularly for small island states.

A recent book published by Anil Dasgupta, the CEO of the World Resources Institute, offers an optimistic view of a future economic transition. Economies based on oil have had 200 years of success; oil is in everything we use including clothing and cosmetics. But the remaining oil and gas reserves are concentrated in 3 regions - the US, Russia and the Middle East. The rest of the world, including China, India, developing countries in Africa and South America, have few long term reserves. These emerging economies and new partnerships no longer want to be in debt for their oil imports and they are all focusing on renewable energy for their future energy security.

Dasgupta's message to world governments is to ignore the oil and gas lobbyists who will inevitably continue to resist and oppose change in order to safeguard their companies' profits. He urges politicians to focus instead on policies that create employment and retrain people to move towards '*low carbon, people-centric, nature-positive economies*', in order to secure healthy food, clean air, clean water and clean energy for future generations.

There was lots of good news this month - many members are supporting our 'pilot' blister-pack recycling project - the big bin is already almost half full. Please don't forget to make a small donation when you bring your blister packs so we can buy another bin - after all most of us don't have to pay for our prescriptions !

A company in London, Emergent Energy, is working with Hackney Council to install solar panels on social housing; bridges are being built in Kent to connect fragmented habitats for bison to roam; in Wiltshire food is being grown on a former landfill site, using heat from waste; Sweden has succeeded in eliminating all 'caged hen' farming practices; an endangered Bonobo baby ape has been born at Twycross Zoo, the closest living relatives of humans; and massive rewilding schemes in Ukraine, including two new National Parks, are supporting a project called 'Nature for Veterans' that helps injured soldiers and their families by immersing them in nature far from the front-line.

News too of a new island, Surtsey, off the southern coast of Iceland. It began as an undersea volcanic eruption in the 1960s that built an island over the course of 3 years and then became dormant. Iceland declared Surtsey a nature reserve in 1965 and the island has become a natural laboratory for studying the colonization of plants and animals without human intervention. In 1986, 15 plant species were recorded but by 2008, that number had climbed to 69.

Surtsey demonstrates that *"Even in the harshest environments resilience and renewal are possible. If space is given, nature will always find ways to return, often faster and more creatively than we expect."* [source: <https://earthsky.org/earth/surtsey-and-the-birth-of-new-islands/>]