

LOOKING TOWARD GLASGOW

Webinar-Opening remarks of Roma Stibravy, President, NGO Sustainability, October 27, 2021

The question before us as we anticipate the opening of the Glasgow Conference, COP 26, in a few days, is whether the decision makers there will listen to the science, reflect on the many climate related catastrophes the world has experienced since the Paris Agreement in 2015, and agree to action plans to match all our aspirations. What are those aspirations.....to slow, then reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the increasing, nearing irreversible climate tragedies that we have all witnessed in these past years.

The first environment conference was in Stockholm 1972. In 1988 Dr. James Hanson told a group of US Senators that carbon emissions was disrupting people's lives and raising global temperatures. At the Rio Conference in 1992 world leaders agreed to stabilize emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to avoid a deterioration of the global environment.

Many studies and conferences followed, with member states trying to agree on legally enforceable targets while at the same time there was an ongoing rise in carbon in the atmosphere, and warming temperatures.

Paris negotiated a changed approach with the 197 participants making modest voluntary pledges on climate action to be reported on annually, which are called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Few countries if any reached their declared targets, and these targets would not have in any case kept average global temperatures to 1.5 celsius above pre-industrial levels. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report stated that this goal can only be reached by sharply increasing the use of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels, while driving electric vehicles, creating smart buildings and smart streets.

In this regard, the United Nations Environment program report found that governments are still planning to extract double the amount of fossil fuel by 2030 than would be consistent with the goal of keeping the rise of global temperature rise below 1.5* celsius

There is increasingly exciting talk about making nuclear fusion energy commercially viable to replace fossil fuels. So, perhaps by the time of our next webinar or in person event this might be the optimistic subject of discussion.

I should mention that eleven leading oil companies have formed a consortium to work together on carbon capture. We also have the tools available of carbon pricing and carbon tax, which have been implemented on a small scale. in fits and starts. There is also active rethinking of food production and water use. One of the most favorable advances is the spiralling downward cost of solar and wind energy.

Ultimately our greatest hope are the increasing technological advances - some of which we look forward to hearing about today.