

Winning Earth – what *has* changed / response to *Losing Earth* from NYTimes

By Dr. Ingo Stuckmann, Zero Emission Think Tank, August 18, 2018

“Losing Earth” is about “the decade we almost stopped climate change”, recently published by the New York Times (1). “We knew everything we needed to know, and nothing stood in our way. Nothing, that is, except ourselves. A tragedy in two acts.”

It is the story of a handful of people including activist Rafe **Pommerance** who learned about climate change in the late 1970ies for the first time, and, together with top scientist James **Hansen**, they were able within a decade to get climate change from the unknown into Congressional Hearings in Washington and into the headlines of national newspapers. And, they almost got the White House to lead negotiations of a generally consented global climate treaty at the summit in the Netherlands 1989.

However, the new Bush administration at the time chose instead, and for the first time, to falsify scientific evidence, the markup of Hansen’s congressional statement 1989, **science fraud** discovered by Al Gore then, and, at the summit in the Netherlands later in the year the Bush administration chose to boycott any specific international carbon reduction, the summit failed. Tragically, the key arguments of “no need for immediate (costly) action” as climate change seemed decades away, this **costs** aspect, and, secondly, a following bold **denial** of any climate change science facts by industry groups, both have for 30 years paralyzed politics, decades of helpless inaction, the article concludes. Losing Earth, the 1980ies, the decade we almost stopped climate change.

Today, climate change is here, we cannot prevent it anymore. Hansen’s most recent paper “announced that Earth is now as warm as it was before the last ice age, when the seas were more than **six meters** higher than they are today.” It is a common misperception thinking that our populated coastlines can still be saved from rising sea levels. For **Miami** for example, it is already too late. Science tells us pretty clearly that with current carbon greenhouse levels in the atmosphere today, Miami **will be** flooded as sea levels catch up with the heated up atmosphere in the coming decades. It is not a **question** of if anymore, but **when**. Science tells us Miami flooding may likely occur prior to the end of the Century which is within the lifetime of our children. Miami will be lost and with it trillions of dollars in real estate (2). And, as the New York Times article concludes, **climate change is here**, we have failed to act on it in time.

As terrific, as tragic, and as alarming and morally devastating the article is for all of us, it only tells **half** the story.

And even though the worst of the upcoming heat age is still coming, and, even though the moral issue is almost unbearable - just imagine that day in your lifetime when that toddler in your family has grown up and will ask you the most simple, however most disturbing question for a loving parent, “how come you did – nothing??”
Judgement day.

Even though we are running out of time, there **still is time** to change, but it does actually require a change for each of us. Here are the choices, and, the other **half** of the story:

What **has** changed

The good news is **Renewable Energies** are **cheaper** now, finally defeating the “costs” argument of past climate inactions. So, we are not talking about “costs” for carbon reductions anymore, we are now talking about a **for profit** “investment” into cheap renewables. A change in paradigms. Critical **turning point** in history. Renewables are cheaper now (3).

To illustrate this critical turning point further, the differences between the 20th failed world climate summit in Copenhagen 2009 and the Paris summit 2015 is a cost reduction of about 70% (!) for wind and solar energy during that period of time. Make or break it. A key catalyzer for the global climate treaty that was approved by 190 nations in **Paris 2015** – where we all agreed to a **zero emission world by 2050**, cap the heat at 2 degrees. Paris was a success. We all won. Renewables won. Actually, **Cheap** Renewables may have won Paris!

And here is the second argument, **denial** - no longer relevant. It actually became irrelevant, the moment renewables became cheaper. Denial is **history**. Defeated.

Secondly, in addition to the rise of cheap renewables in the past 30 years, everybody can now **see** and **feel** a **changed climate**. It is not something theoretical anymore: California burning, heat waves, droughts, flash floods, super-hurricanes - it is all in the news on a daily basis. Just compare the **places you grew up** with, decades ago: They are warmer now, it often does not snow (or much less) anymore in the winter. Only a few decades later. Summers are often hot with unprecedented droughts and heat waves. Everybody sees these changes today. So – what has changed? The climate has changed! Pretty obvious: Climate change is here.

Easy solutions to climate change

With cheap renewables and the daily personal experiences of a hotter climate – we are finally in a pool position to act. Indeed, the solutions to climate change are easy now, because they are **for profit**:

- i) **100% cheap renewables` power;**
- ii) **cheap 5 inch superinsulated homes** with triple glass windows, often no need for a furnace anymore and even without AC, for decades to come, carbon free;
- iii) **EVs** (in Europe already cheaper than combustion cars);
- iv) **veggieburger**, less meat in the diet

These are perhaps the easiest 4 solutions to climate change. And they illustrate a **new** lifestyle, a carbon free, **zero emission lifestyle**.

However, with economics on our side now, **politics** are still **slow**.

White Paper @go zero – 3 key missing elements

Zero Emission Think Tank is working on a **white paper**, identifying at least **3 key missing elements** on the route to Paris, to make Paris work (4).

The first key missing element is **media coverage** – if everybody knew how cheap renewables/superinsulated homes/affordable EVs are, everybody would buy in.



The second key missing element is for **people to participate**, we need more **consumer choices**. If I want to reduce my carbon footprint, I need to see this. We need a *zero-footprint label* for products made with zero emissions, made with 100% renewables.

This will give us new consumer choices. And, because renewables are cheaper now, zero-footprint products should actually be **cheaper** than their fossil-made peers. Again a **for profit** solution to climate change. Consumer choices - absolutely critical, to make Paris work!



A new **zero-footprint** label for zero emission products.

www.zero-footprint.com

The third key missing element is for **pop stars** to finally join in and sing about the vision of a zero emission world! We need to create a **culture** for Paris, for 100% renewables, for zero footprint choices, for **zero emission people** – *people who care!*



Call to action – **think zero**

The good part of it is that everybody can easily help with these 3 key missing elements: **Spread the news!** Talk about 100% cheap renewables, find and promote **zero-footprint** products or convince companies to make them, be a leader and calculate your own carbon footprint and how to reduce it down to zero. **think zero**

Call to action – **go zero!**

90% of our lifestyle is still based on carbon emissions, causing a daily carbon footprint, almost like a shadow trailing behind me. However, with **economics** in our back, with **cheap** renewables, it is **easy** to change now:

Go for 100% green power.

Go for an electric car and charge it with 100% renewables.

Go for LED lights and energy efficient appliances, especially fridges.

Go for 5 inches superinsulated homes with triple glass windows.

Go for zero-footprint parties and events.

Go for consumer choices, go for zero-footprint products.

And, most importantly, **talk** about it. The holy grail is **100% cheap renewables**. Change is easy now. **go zero!**

This is easily a decade-long project for each of us, we will not change overnight, but whenever there are choices for a new car or for a new home or a new fridge – **think zero**. And, more importantly - **go zero!**

It is easy to change the world, but it takes all of us.

References

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