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Summary of the article "Global Warming" by Andrew C. Revkin in the New York Times dated 8th December 2010.

Overview

Global warming has become the most complicated issue facing the world leaders today. On the other hand, the scientific community has produced several warnings regarding excessive emission of greenhouse gases. On the other hand, there are technological, economical and political issues that need to be resolved by the world leaders. This has not been simpler either especially as the world faces economic slow down.

Even after the long term preparation that followed the Copenhagen talks which ran through Dec.18, 2009, leaders at the conference suggested that no formal treaty could be reached soon. They only pledged to reach a placeholder accord that would call for reduced emissions alongside helping poor nations cope with the effects of climate change. This would theoretically give the nations more time to deal with most important details.

At the centre of this debate is the war between the rich and poor nations over who should first take responsibility over greenhouse gas emissions. The United States of America congress is fighting the same war of introducing legislation on climate change. The stiff opposition from energy interests has stalled this newly proposed law.

President Barrack Obama has always urged other countries not to be discouraged by this slow pace of climate talks citing that heavy investments in energy efficiency, solar and wind power are already in place.

Meanwhile, recent fluctuations in temperature, seized on by opponents of emissions restrictions, have intensified the public debate over how urgently to respond. Scientists have been immersed in studying the climate patterns for long and their warnings are equally alarming. Activists are pushing harder for action to be taken while the public seem to be divided over the same issue with no common stand.

Background

Scientists learnt long time ago that the global climate has shaped the human history. However, humans have been found to be very powerful to influence climate as well.

A growing body of scientific evidence shows that the world climate has been warming since 1950 as a result of emissions from human activities related to burning of fossil fuels and forests. This has increased the volume of carbon dioxide. Methane is also another greenhouse gas capable of increasing the global temperature. Further evidence obtained from studies like glaciology and palynology support the theory of global warming.

Fluctuations in global temperature are also possible without human influence because of decade long ocean cycles. However, human emissions still account for this significant change in temperature. Despite all these scientific proofs, a lot of opposition is still evident from the energy interests.

Steps toward a Response

This debates over climate change pales next to the fight over what to do, or not to do. Nations of the world pledged to avoid disrupting climate through build-up of greenhouse gases way back in 1992 in a United Nations Conference although they did not define how much warming was excessive.

Nonetheless, realizing that the former treaties were ineffective, all the industrialized countries of the world except United States accepted a binding agreement under the Kyoto protocol in 10997.

Moreover, President Barrack Obama came into office vowing to take swift action on climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency has also declared that it will regulate carbon dioxide emissions despite several constraints.

Analysis of the Article

The concept of global warming has been debated for more than a decade now and has still remained a global issue up to date (Revkin par.1). The question whether global warming is real or not has become a subject of concern. However, scientists have produced enough supporting evidence of the raising global temperatures which may have devastating repercussions in future. For instance, rise in sea level and extreme weather events have been cited as potential risks the world might tussle with in decades to come.

Even with international meetings aimed at addressing global warming not being successful, it is high time world leaders teamed up and draw a master plan and strategies to deal with climate change once and for all. It is disgusting to observe the prevailing opposition between the energy interests and actions toward climate change.

However, there is some renewed hope even as President Barack Obama and other environmental agencies promising swift action toward global warming (Revkin par.14).

We have reached a crucial point in human evolution whereby our activities can endanger the very environment that nurtures us.



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Work Cited

Revkin C. A. "Global Warming" The New York Times. 8 Dec. 2009.



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