






WHAT IS
CLIMATE JUSTICE?



WHO WE ARE

Earth in Brackets is an online space and a physical body for College of the Atlantic students participating in environmental politics, primarily at the international level. Since 2004 we have sent delegations to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We also have a presence in the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and the World Water Forum. Our positions are influenced by our educational program - human ecology - which is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the relationships humans have with each other and their environments. We are committed to climate justice, as we understand it. We are also keen to see a strong, radical youth voice in the UN, and work with the international youth movement to make this happen. It is our future on the line.

Images and text by Nathan Thanki

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Brackets are used to denote text that is not agreed upon. For over 20 years our earth has been in brackets. World governments have betrayed our generation by failing to reach agreements, by breaking promises, and by ignoring the demands of the people, especially youth. The long term interests of people and planet have been sacrificed for profit. The voices of the many are not heard in the halls of the few. We believe in the value of the multi-lateral system, and for that reason we engage. Injustices can be rectified, imbalances can be corrected. Another world is possible, we just have to make it...

WHY DO WE CARE?

AN OVERVIEW

To have any hope of avoiding an inhospitably hot world, prone to drought, floods, unpredictable weather and the myriad problems it will induce, we have to reduce emissions. But how? What is a fair way to do this? The UNFCCC established some principles and distinctions, such as the "polluter pays" principle and the division of industrialised nations such as the US(annex-I) and the industrialising nations such as China (non annex-I). The Kyoto Protocol legally binds annex-I nations to reduce their emissions, though not by much, and some like Canada haven't met those commitments.

WHERE IS THE WORLD?

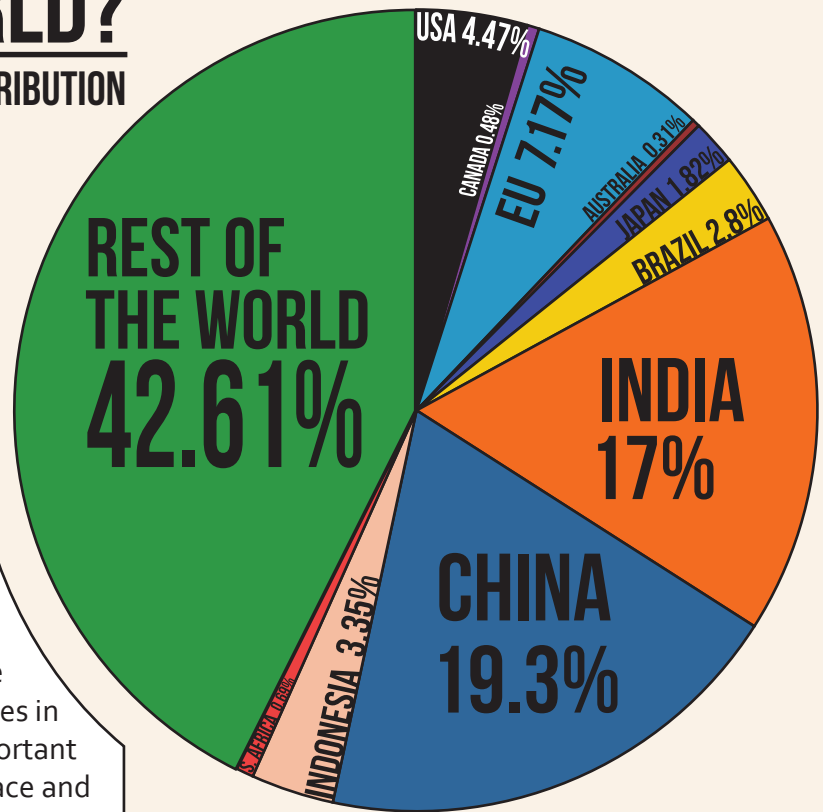
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION



GLOBAL SOUTH: 5.8 BILLION (83%)

GLOBAL NORTH: 1.2 BILLION (17%)

Let's start by taking a look at where the people live. We will focus on ten countries: 5 from the "global south" (S. Africa, India, China, Brazil and Indonesia) and 5 from the "global north" (USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, and the EU27). Together these 10 account for more than half the world's population. We can see that the vast majority of humanity lives in the South - in developing nations. This is important to remember as we consider atmospheric space and rights to develop.



AVERAGE GLOBAL SOUTH TONS PER CAPITA

3.9T



AVERAGE GLOBAL NORTH TONS PER CAPITA

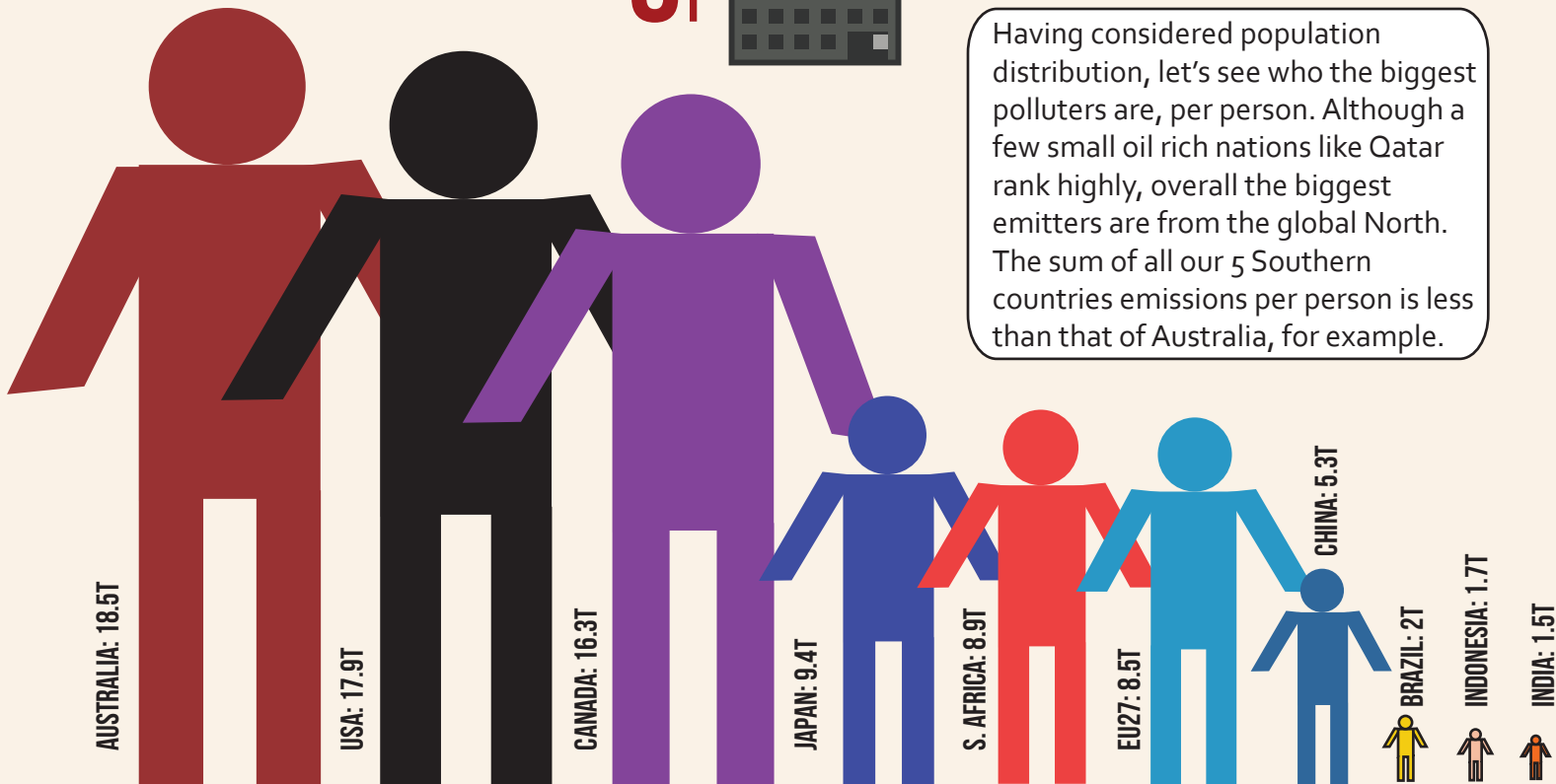
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WHO POLLUTES?

PER CAPITA EMISSIONS 2008

Having considered population distribution, let's see who the biggest polluters are, per person. Although a few small oil rich nations like Qatar rank highly, overall the biggest emitters are from the global North. The sum of all our 5 Southern countries emissions per person is less than that of Australia, for example.

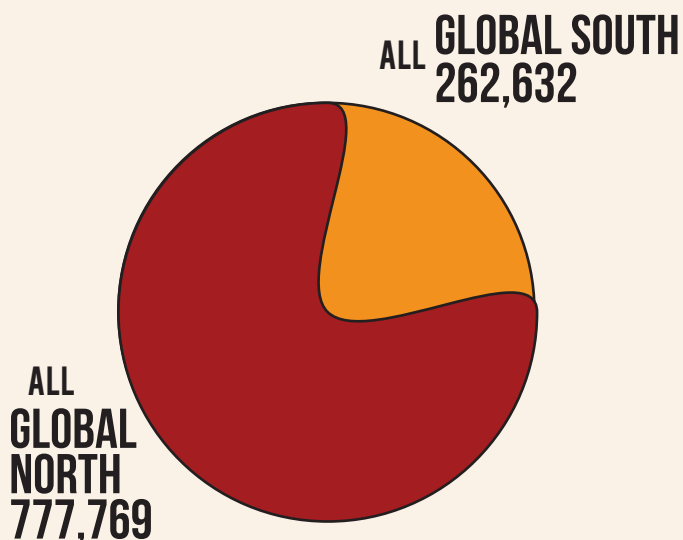
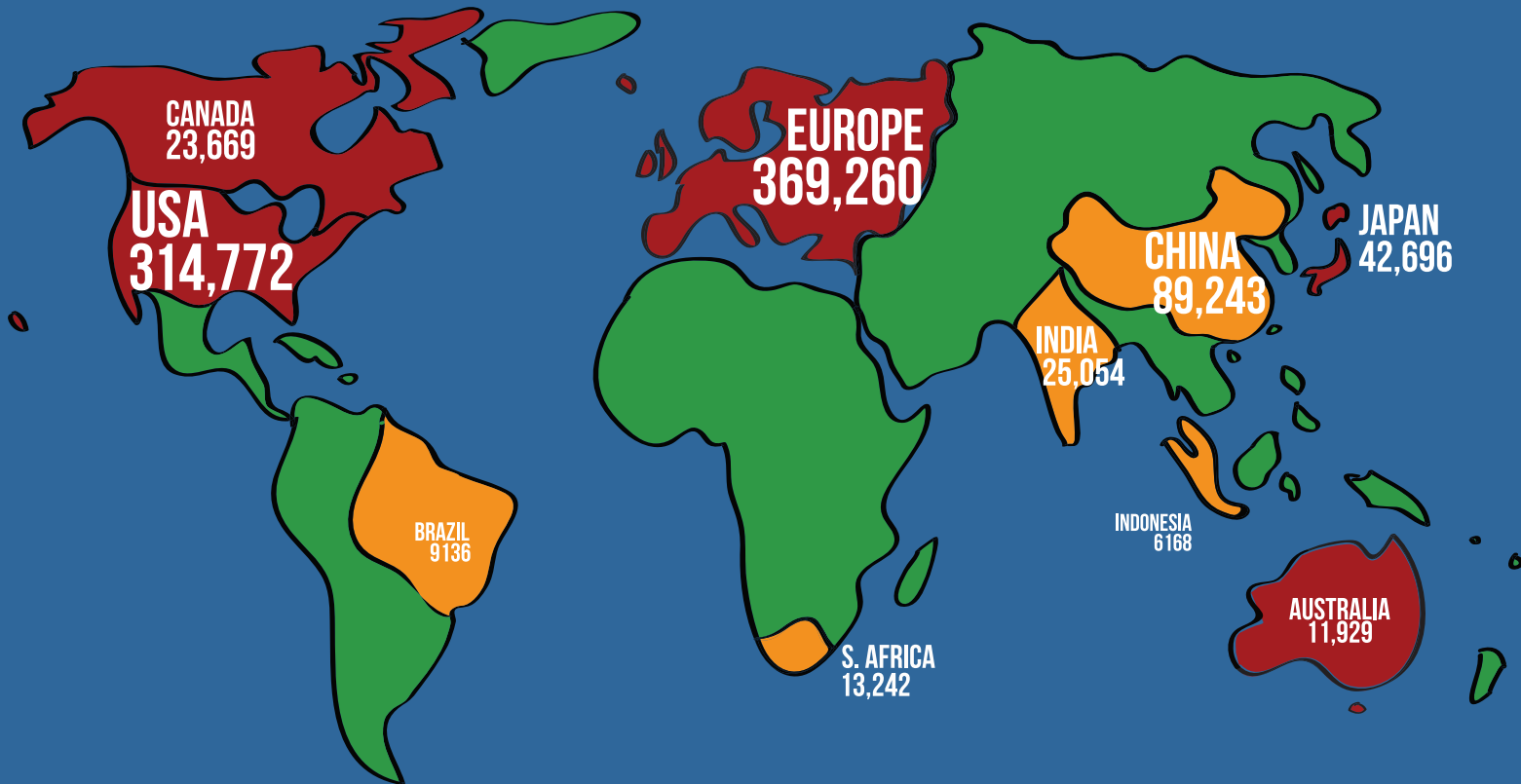


HISTORY MATTERS

SO DO RESPONSIBILITIES

Who put all that CO₂ in the atmosphere in the first place? Which nations have used up their share of the atmosphere - a shared resource? Consider the net historical emissions against the population distribution. The USA has 4.47% of world population, but has, in 104 years, emitted more than all 5 of our global South nations combined.

a map of historical cumulative emissions, in millions of metric tons. 1900-2004.

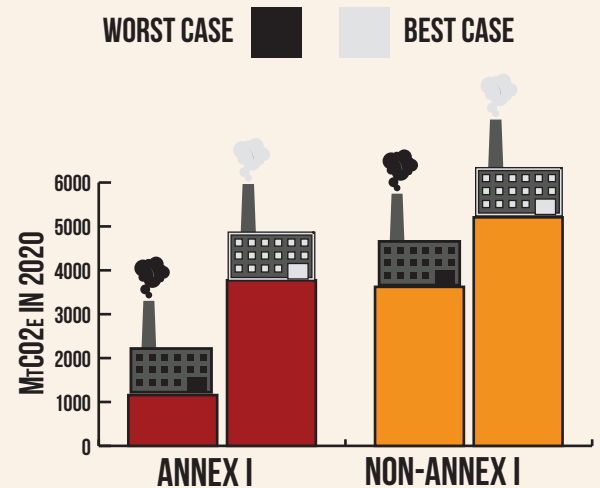


China and India, with more than a third of global population, emitted less than a third of what the USA did from 1900-2004. The industrialised world has based its development on carbon. The Southern countries have a right to develop, too. We need to reduce emissions: according to common but differentiated responsibilities. Efforts made voluntarily by the Southern, non annex-I countries have to be supported by adequate finance and technology from the developed ones.

EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

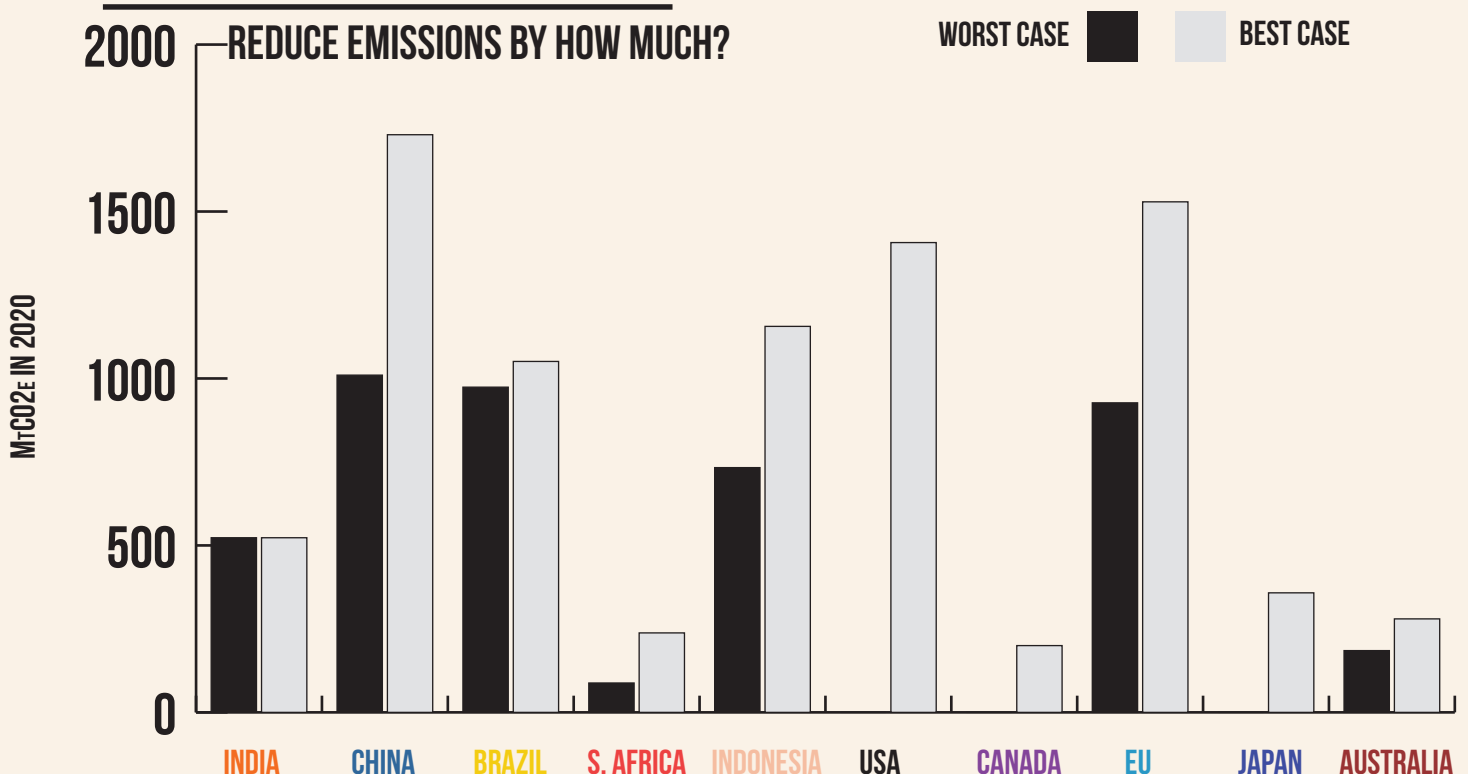
WHO'S DOING WHAT?

With the figures for per capita emissions and cumulative historical emissions in mind, let us now consider country pledges to reduce emissions. Is it the Northern countries, the annex-I nations, that are tackling the problem they contributed the most to cause? No. The graphs on this page are based on the Stockholm Environment Institute's review of pledges from the 16th climate change summit in Cancun, 2010. They show the amount of CO₂ equivalent in metric tons pledged to be reduced in best and worst case scenarios (depending on levels of ambition and levels of compliance) for global North and South. Interestingly, it is the Southern countries, with less capabilities and responsibilities, who are showing more ambition. While all nations must reduce emissions, it is the developed countries who should raise their ambition to be in line with what equity and science demand.



CANCUN PLEDGES

REDUCE EMISSIONS BY HOW MUCH?



CLIMATE JUSTICE IS...

Justice, in the context of tackling climate change, involves many principles. This page shows a selection of key ideas: ambition, historical responsibility, equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. At the climate summit in Durban, December 2011, we began to see a shift of responsibilities, away from the developed nations and onto the developing ones. This is unjust.



Climate justice demands that the industrial nations finally accept responsibility for their historical emissions and make deep cuts to their current emissions. They must go beyond merely recognising the different capabilities of the developing nations and actually be true to their promises of new and additional funding for adapting to and mitigating climate change. So far, the only thing the rich nations have wanted to share with the poor is the responsibility for this mess. Until that changes, our earth will remain in brackets. To read more about climate and environmental politics, visit our website earthinbrackets.org. And next time you hear the greenwashed lies of developed world leaders being pronounced as truth, challenge it. Welcome to the struggle.

SOURCES

Population: CIA World Fact Book.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2119.html#us>

Per capita emissions: World Bank.
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC/countries?display=map>
<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2008/2008wpds.aspx>

Historical emissions: The Guardian.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/datablog/2009/sep/02/co2-emissions-historical>

Cancun pledges: Stockholm Environment Institute.
<http://www.sei-international.org/publications?id=1899>

**ANOTHER WORLD
IS POSSIBLE...**

