**You might think it’s a bit odd for someone like me, who’s been banging on about the climate crisis for the best part of five years now, to be asking whether the UN climate targets are a bit pointless.**

**I mean our wise and noble leaders have, after all, just concluded the twenty-seventh annual global climate conference, known as COP27, in Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt. They all seemed jolly pleased with what they’d all decided to achieve, including really very sincere commitments to work super-duper hard to put in place policies that would definitely address the idea of thinking about doing things that might contribute towards the possibility of reducing greenhouse gas emissions with the aim of maybe limiting global temperatures to only one point five degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.**

**So that’s got to be a positive, hasn’t it?**

**And then there were the six hundred and thirty-six lobbyists I MEAN delegates at COP27 representing the fossil fuel industry, who reassured us all that increasing oil and gas exploration was actually an extremely important part of the transition towards achieving the one point five-degree Celsius target. So that was an important clarification too, wasn’t it. I mean, who knew?**

**So, maybe all this speculation in the media about whether or not we’ll be able to keep global temperatures within safe limits in the twenty first century is all just a bit of silly hype and hysteria from the woke brigade in comfortable western suburbia.**

**Well, yeah, maybe…**

**Who wrote this shi..?**

**Hello and welcome to Just Have a Think.**

**You may remember we had the COP conference here in the UK in twenty-twenty-two, and there too, just like in so many of the previous twenty-five years, our politicians bigged themselves up for the herculean effort they and the thousands of minions who had also jetted into the event had put in to achieve ‘truly historic’ progress. Last year that translated into a last minute stitch up by a few of worlds largest greenhouse gas emitters that changed the wording of the final conference declaration from “the phasing out of coal and subsidies for fossil fuels” to “the phasing down of unabated coal and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels”, which means the declaration now contains a couple of loopholes about the size of a small developing nation, enabling fossil fuel producers to more or less continue business as usual simply by jumping through a few extra regulatory hoops.**

**In the run up to this year’s COP27 event in Egypt, we got some fairly blunt updates from the likes of the United Nations and the International Energy Agency.**

**The UNs environment agency published their Emissions Gap report, which concluded that there is now “no credible pathway to 1.5C in place”.**

**The report shows that the updated national pledges made at COP26 in Glasgow make a negligible difference to predicted 2030 emissions. It says only an urgent system-wide transformation can deliver the enormous cuts needed to limit greenhouse gas emissions by that date. We’re talking about a 45 per cent decrease to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and a 30 percent decrease to limit warming to 2 degrees C. Even if all 2030 political pledges were carried out in full then we’d still be on track for 2.5 degrees Celsius, and of course most countries are missing even those pledges by some margin. The report goes on to provide an in-depth exploration of how this astonishing level of transformation might be achieved via improvements in energy, industry, transport and buildings, and through major changes in food and financial systems.**

**Now of course, our friends in the fossil fuel industry have been greatly encouraged and emboldened over the course of the last twelve months, partly by the wishy washy language of the COP 26 Glasgow declaration, and largely by a global energy crisis brought about by a horrible little maniac bully troll mafia boss dictator sitting in a big sad in the Kremlin, which in my view should be kitted out with padded walls and securely locked from the outside. Anyway, the result is that the global oil and gas cartel has shown us that it has absolutely no intention whatsoever of curtailing its activities in the near future. Quite the opposite in fact. Yet another report, released by a German NGO called Urgewald, found that no fewer than six hundred and fifty-five of the six hundred and eighty-five fossil fuel exploration and production companies have expansion plans, which have increased by 20% since 2021. That expansion would result in an extra one hundred and fifteen billion tonnes of CO2 being pumped out into our atmosphere, equivalent to more than twenty-four years- worth of emissions from the United States of America, which brings me nicely to this report, published just prior to COP27. This one’s from the International Institute for Sustainable Development. It provides the breathtakingly astute revelation that there is now what they call a “large consensus” across all published studies that developing new oil and gas fields is “incompatible” with the 1.5 degrees Celsius target but that, in stark contrast, if the capital expenditure that the fossil fuel industry currently has earmarked for opening up NEW oil and gas fields was instead diverted into renewables, it’d be enough money to FULLY fund the scale-up of solar, wind and energy storage to a level that WOULD actually limit global warming to one-point-five-degrees Celsius in the twenty-first century.**

**And they wonder why kids are out demonstrating on the streets eh?**

**And just to bring us up to date with the LATEST state of play in our atmosphere, the World Meteorological Agency also chipped in with a wonderfully uplifting analysis ahead of the pointless Egyptian talking shop, I mean crucial climate conference.**

**It tells us that ALL the main greenhouse gases hit record highs in twenty-twenty-one. CO2 was just shy of 416 parts per million, nitrous oxide hit three hundred and thirty-four parts per BILLION, and, perhaps most worryingly of all, methane reached nineteen hundred and eight parts per billion, which represents two-hundred- and sixty-two percent of the levels we had in pre-industrial times. The agency said**

**“The reason for this exceptional increase [in methane emissions] is not clear, but seems to be a result of both biological and human-induced processes.”**

**What it is, as we’ve talked about several times on this channel, is a combination of fugitive emissions from the fossil fuel industry, which are currently the equivalent of more than twice the entire carbon footprint of the European Union; belching from one-point five billion cows in the global beef industry, and permafrost in the arctic circle that covers an area of land two and a half times the size of the United States and which is rapidly thawing out because the Arctic is warming at least three times faster than anywhere else on earth.**

**And just to complete out little list of cheery publications, The International Energy Agency released their annual Global Energy Outlook report in October twenty-twenty-two as well.**

**One of the key charts we’re provided with in their analysis is this one, showing projected emissions and temperature rises under various stated scenarios. Let’s start with the green balloons on the left here. They represent what would happen by 2100 in a genuinely net zero emissions scenario, or NZE. Essentially, the world would immediately stop any new oil and gas exploration, cancel all new fossil fuel fired power plants and urgently plough all available funding into decarbonising the global energy, food, transport and manufacturing systems to get to net zero by 2050. If by some miracle we achieved that, then we would indeed limit the median temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100.**

**The yellow balloons represent what’s called the ‘Announced Pledges Scenario’, or APS. Now, this one includes all the aspirational, and extremely unlikely updates that were hurriedly announced by so many countries just before or even during COP26 last year in a desperate attempt to avoid looking like completely irresponsible dingbats. Even if every government achieved every one of those pledges, which virtually none of them are on target to manage at the moment, but even if they did, then we’d still miss the 1.5C target, coming in at about 1.8 degrees C by the end of the century.**

**The big red balloons in the middle are there to remind us what was happening prior to the Paris agreement in twenty fifteen, when greenhouse gases had risen by more than forty percent since nineteen-ninety and politicians seemed to suddenly and collectively realise that we really were in deep do-do! Annual global greenhouse gas emissions at that point were set to rise to more than fifty-three billion tonnes by 2050, with a consequent rise in global atmospheric temperature of at least three and a half degrees by the end of the century, and in fact some analysts projected it could have been more than five degrees.**

**The blue balloons at the end here represents what’s known as the ‘Stated Policies Scenario’, or STEPS. This is the trajectory based on the policies that are actually on the statute books in countries around the world. If we achieved those policies, which many countries are also failing to do, but if we did actually achieve all of them, then we’d reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions from thirty-seven billion tonnes a year today to thirty-two billion tonnes a year by mid-century, and global temperatures would rise by at least 2.5 degrees Celsius towards twenty-one-hundred.**

**The IEA does try to inject a note of cautious optimism into their reporting though, bless ‘em. They say that in the Announced Pledges Scenario or APS, peak oil moves forward from the mid twenty-thirties, which is where it’s predicted under the STEPS scenario, to the mid twenty-twenties, largely as a result of the faster adoption of EVs, which in the APS scenario would account for more than thirty five of global car sales by 2030, and for more than FIFTY PERCENT of sales in China, the European Union and the United States. That’d make the EV market six times higher in 2030 than it was in twenty-twenty-one.**

**But that one little glint of hope really is a bit like spitting into a hurricane. Politicians and UN representatives are desperate to keep one point five alive, and it’s entirely understandable why they’re still insisting it’s achievable. Not only will it be one of the most appalling political failures in human history if we do sail past that target, but it’ll almost certainly mean our delicate earth systems cross over some major tipping points that’ll bring about irreversible and catastrophic changes to our climate.**

**In a brutally frank article published in the Guardian newspaper at the start of the Egyptian COP meeting, Professor Emeritus of Geophysical and Climate Hazards at UCL, Bill McGuire pointed out the dangerous delusion being demonstrated by our global leaders, and I hope he doesn’t mind me stealing his words, because I couldn’t phrase it better myself. He says this**

**“In retrospect, it is clear that having a specific target, rather than fighting to stop every fraction of a degree in temperature rise, has actually been counterproductive. There is a perennial problem with targets, and that is that they are always still reachable – until they aren’t. In this way, they can be used to justify inertia right up until it is too late. And this is exactly how fossil-fuel corporations, world leaders and others have used 1.5C – as a get-out-of-jail card to justify inaction on emissions. Continuing to present this temperature threshold as an attainable target provides a fig leaf for business as usual. Take it away, and this dangerous jiggery-pokery is exposed for all to see.”**

**And even the United Nations own President Antonio Gutteres didn’t mince his words at the opening speech in Egypt either…**

**“we are on the highway to climate hell and our foot is still on the accelerator”**

**So, perhaps it really is time for all of us to get off the pot and start taking urgent and real action that will actually eradicate the combustion of fossil fuels from our human civilisation once and for all. That means looking at our own daily activities, it means harassing our elected representatives until they can stand no more, and heaven forfend, it may even mean a bit of non-violent civil disobedience.**

**No doubt there are all sorts of varying opinions on how to go forward on this one, and I’m quite sure many of you are now feeling a strong urge to express your views. If that’s you then, as always, the place to go and leave your thoughts is the comments section below. Let’s see what you think!**

**That’s it for this week though. If you’ve found this video useful and informative, then please do give us a like and hit that subscribe button if you haven’t already done so.**

**And if you want to get actively involved in guiding the content of the channel, and get exclusive monthly content from me, then you can do just that by joining the channel’s amazing team of supporters over at Patreon, who make these videos possible.**

**And, if you’re keen to learn more about the challenges we’re facing in this climate crisis, then I recommend having a look at this video too.**

**As always, thanks very much for watching, have a great week, and remember to Just Have a Think.**

**See you next week**