

# INTERNATIONAL ICE-CLIMATE EDUCATION 2008

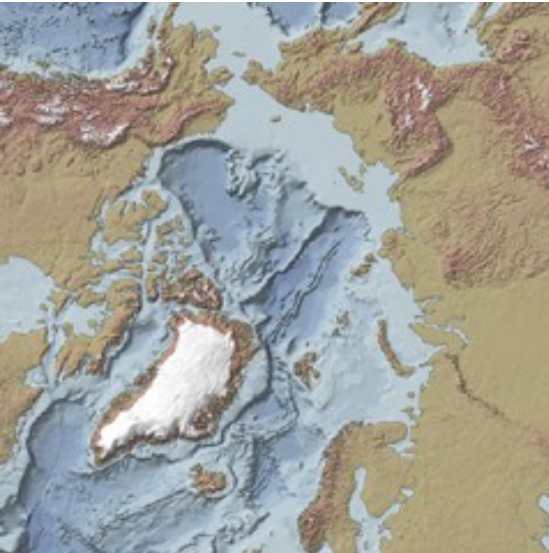


## Impact of Climate Change A Look In The Future

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# Introduction

The arctic is of special importance to the world and it's changing rapidly. Ice cores and other evidence of climate conditions in the distant past provide evidence that rising atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are associated with rising global temperatures. Human activities, not only the burning of fossil fuel like coal, oil and natural gas , but also the clearing of land, have increased the concentration of carbon dioxide, methane and other heat-trapping



gases in the atmosphere which cause the "greenhouse" effect. Since the start of the industrial revolution, the atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration has increased by about 35%-37% and the global average temperature has risen by about 0.5-0.6°C. Scientists from all over the world agree that most of the warming observed over the last 40-50 years is attributable to human activities.

Additionally, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are projected to lead to significant changes in climate, including an increase in average global temperature of 1.5 to 6°C until the end of this century. Climatic changes are expected to include an accelerating rate of sea-level rise and shifts in atmospheric circulation patterns. All together, these changes are going to lead to a wide-range of consequences including significant impacts not only on coastal communities, animals and plants but also on human health.

A percentage of 80% of the world's energy is currently obtained from burning fossil fuels. Carbon dioxide emissions from these sources are growing quickly. As excess carbon dioxide persists in the atmosphere for centuries, it will probably take at least a few decades for concentrations to decline even if efforts to reduce emissions are begun immediately. As a result of the warming, the world will face some

degree of climate change and its impacts for many centuries.



# Living in 2040 – Cyprus

April 24, 2040

The sun has risen up. Its hot rays are coming into my room through the window. I woke up. This light is way too bright for one to sleep and those hot rays can't let me stay in bed. As I open the window I realize that it will be a really hot day unlike the freezing night I have been through.

I bring back to my memory the years I was still attending school. A teacher had told me that we would be responsible for destroying our own home, the Earth. The consequences of the uncontrolled production, emissions, burning fossils and so on are now visible.

After dressing and getting ready for work, I took my keys and left home. I was driving slowly as there was traffic and thinking of what was going to happen next. I decided to take the seaside road to avoid any other congestion. I could see the sea. It looks so different than it used to be. The water level has gone up and water now covers the old square. Fast-food stores and café-bars have been closed since 2035 and demolished in order to construct a road. I always wonder how that happened. Everything is so different but yet the same. Nobody seems to care about all this.

As I reach the overflowed by now medieval castle I remember when I was a child. My parents used to bring me here once a year to admire the architecture of this excellent fort. Now I can't even get close to it. There are sometimes I just want to stay and watch it from distance and sometimes that I want to get away from it and get back to reality.

I'm finally at the airport. As a pilot of the police force I fly with a new generation helicopter, equipped with the latest technology such as automatic Uzi, advanced radar, auto-pilot v2, GPS and many more. I fly every day not only for training purposes but also for checking my country's area, both air, sea and land, for anything weird. My personal

assistant is getting my helicopter ready for taking off as I am wearing the pilot uniform.

It's about time we took off. As soon as I had the permission from the control tower I took off. My plan for today was to fly over the whole island in 5 hours and check for illegally incoming boats and then inform the officer. I'm finally in the air. The view from up here has always been fantastic!! But not any more. Not since the fumes have almost covered the land and you can hardly see through them. Fortunately I can still do my job using my advanced equipment but nobody cares about those fumes which gradually poison the inhabitants of the island. Pollution exists everywhere, in every corner, even at the most isolated places. Eleven people, only this year, have died from pollution and breathing problems. Nobody has complained about this condition. "We" all love and admire technology and development and don't think of our health.

Looking through my "fumoscope" I can make out countless factories, shops and some gas stations which are still open after the lack of petrol but only one hospital and a small solar plant. How is it possible to live in a planet like this?

I remember reading the IPCC forecasts. They knew what was going to happen and tried to make it clear for us but as long as money exists nobody cares about health and environment. Our emissions have intensified the greenhouse effect and we can feel it. Our normal average temperature in 2007 was 20-24°C but now in 2040 it's about 30-35°C and it is still spring. The difference is remarkable not only in reality but also in numbers. We now have freezing nights and hot days that we can hardly get through. And this is only the beginning.

Cyprus used to be one of the biggest islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Even though it is still one of the biggest, it has shrunk by about 65km<sup>2</sup> and it still shrinks. I can see it smaller than normal. "Is this my country or am I just dreaming?" I wonder every time I am up there. Everything changed as IPCC had foreseen and there is nothing we can do now.

On my way back to the airport I was thinking again for what was

in store for us in the next years. I wanted to complain about this condition. I could not stand it anymore but on the other side who was going to be there for me to help me? None! Everyone believes that development is more important than health and they are all waiting from scientists and technology to cure Mother Nature and save us all before the End! I reached the airport and took permission to land my helicopter. After I had landed I went to take off my pilot uniform and get ready to inform my officer. "Only the end is coming, sir, nothing else" I said unpleasantly "The end is near, we have to get ready" I ended my sentence. The officer was staring at me as if I were a crazy young boy who didn't know what he was saying. He confusingly asked for an explanation to this. It was then when I told him what I felt. All those fumes, gases, poisons from the burning of fossils and so much more have pushed our planet-home to its limits. For a moment he seemed to understand me but afterwards I could see in his face that he didn't. I was desperate. I knew that soon Earth was going to take revenge for what we have done to her, and everybody had to pay.

I decided to return home and rest after all those I had seen today wondering why we have done this to ourselves. How will the revenge look like? Chaos? Panic? Disaster? Or Fast and quiet? Who knows....?

Doing something about all this is hard but somebody has to make a start and that will be me. I will do my best to sensitize more people. The end draws near and we have to fight against it.

Back home I am lying on my soft bed watching the "sky" out of the window and thinking of the reason we have destroyed our future. Are we getting bored of living or is it just us?



*This is how Europe will be after the sea-level rise. The comments are yours!*



*No more ice to walk on...*



# SOURCES

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