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FOR LIFE, BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS

POISONED REALITIES: HOW SOUTH AFRICA'S FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENCY IS DAMAGING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND FUTURES

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SOME OF OUR MAJOR SUCCESSES OVER THE YEARS

2024

Our greenwashing complaint against TotalEnergies' spurious. claims of 'sustainable development' was upheld by SA's Advertising Regulatory Board after their appeal.

2022

UCT became Africa's first major university to pledge divestment after our nine-year campaign

2021

We supported the launch of SA's first and only fossil-free equity fund which outperformed its bench mark for three years

2018

Our lobbying, with the endorsement of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, successfully pushed the university of Cape Town to become the first African niversity with a responsible investment committee

2017

Cape Town pledged to divest from fossil fuels after our campaign with 350 Africa

THE PROBLEM WE'RE TACKLING: THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY



Just 57 companies linked to 80% of greenhouse gas emissions since 2016

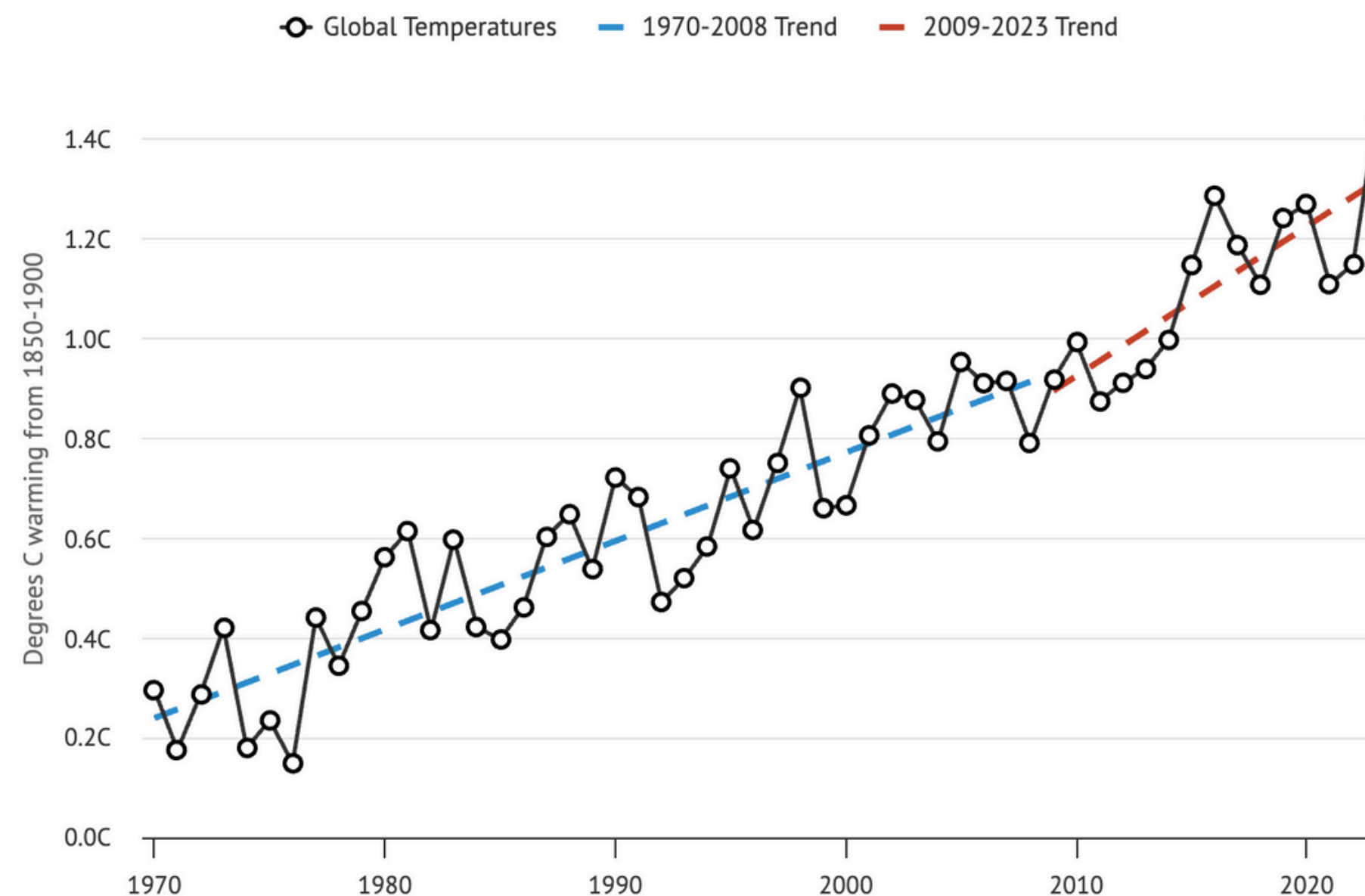
Analysis reveals many big producers increased output of fossil fuels and related emissions in seven years after Paris climate deal

 The Guardian / Apr 4, 2024



The fossil fuel industry has successfully sold South Africa a 'fossil fuel development myth'.

Evidence of accelerated warming in recent years



Sources: Berkeley Earth, GISTEMP, NOAA GlobalTemp, HadCRUT5, and ERA5

CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

GLOBAL HEATING IS NOT UNDER CONTROL - IT'S ACCELERATING

**'sea levels were 15
metres higher and
Arctic summer
temperatures were 14
degrees higher'**



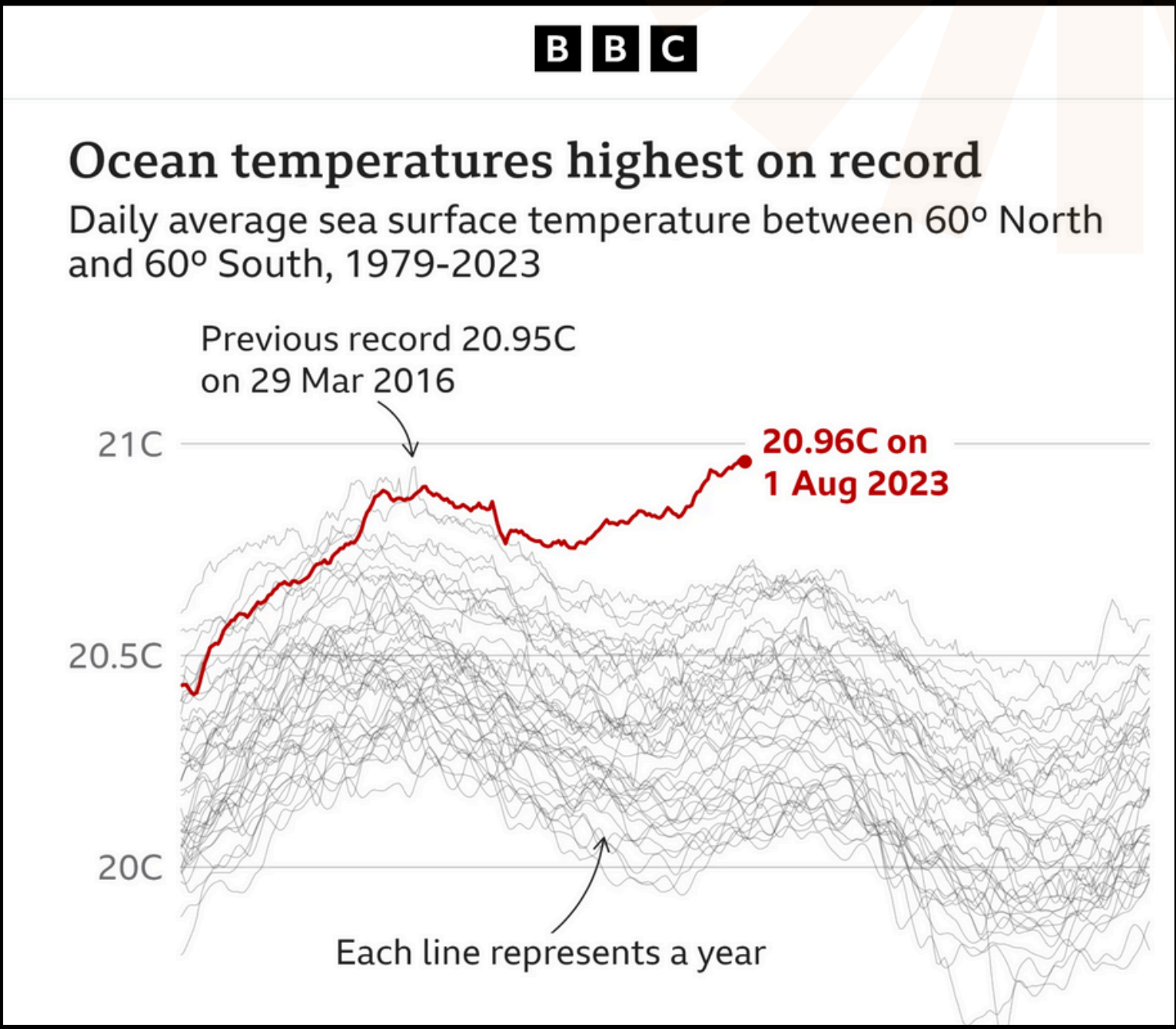
National Meetings ·

The Pliocene: The Last Time Earth had >400 ppm of Atmospheric CO₂

The last time carbon dioxide was so plentiful in our planet's atmosphere was in the Pliocene era, around 3 million years ago. Life on Earth was dominated by giant mammals; humans and chimps had shared their last common ancestor. Although the sun's force was about the same, the sea levels were 15 metres higher and Arctic summer temperatures were 14 degrees higher than the present

WE ARE PUSHING EARTH TO A CLIMATE UNSEEN FOR THREE MILLION YEARS

THE HEATING EFFECT OF OUR EMISSIONS IS SMASHING GLOBAL TEMPERATURE RECORDS



WIRED

MATT SIMON SCIENCE FEB 15, 2024 7:00 AM

Ocean Temperatures Keep Shattering Records—and Stunning Scientists

Sea surface temperatures have been skyrocketing beyond expectations. That may be a bad sign for hurricane season—and the health of ocean ecosystems.



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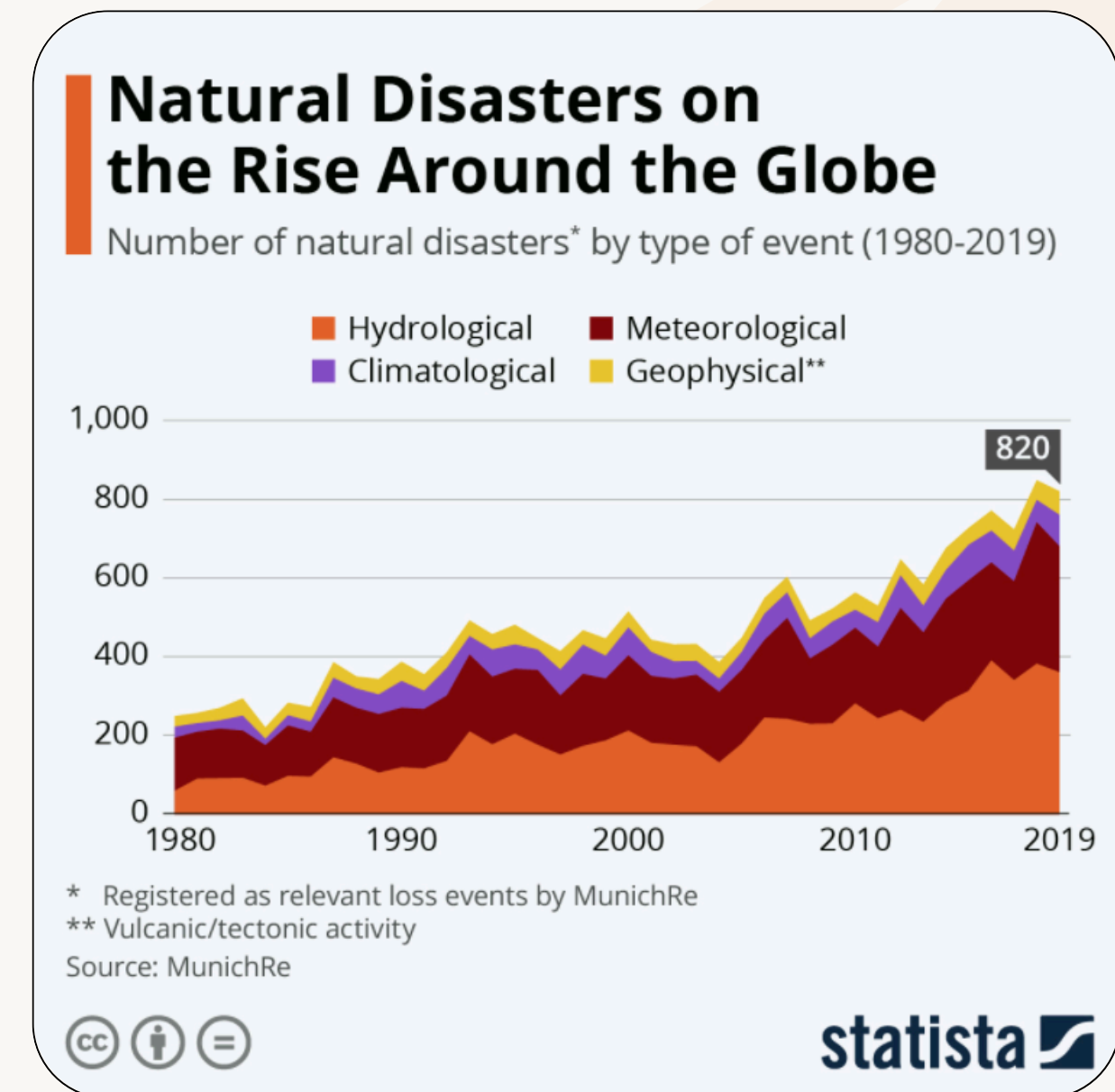
Energy
Politics
Environment
Green Living

Genevieve Guenther / January 23, 2025

FALSE IDOLS

Climate Change Could Cut the Economy in Half. We're Not Ready for It.

A new study suggests global warming's effect on GDP has been vastly underestimated. Will it finally break through the religion of infinite growth?



“Sometime around 2070–2090, climate change could be doing so much damage to ecological and human systems, and the links between them, that **the global economy could contract by half.**”

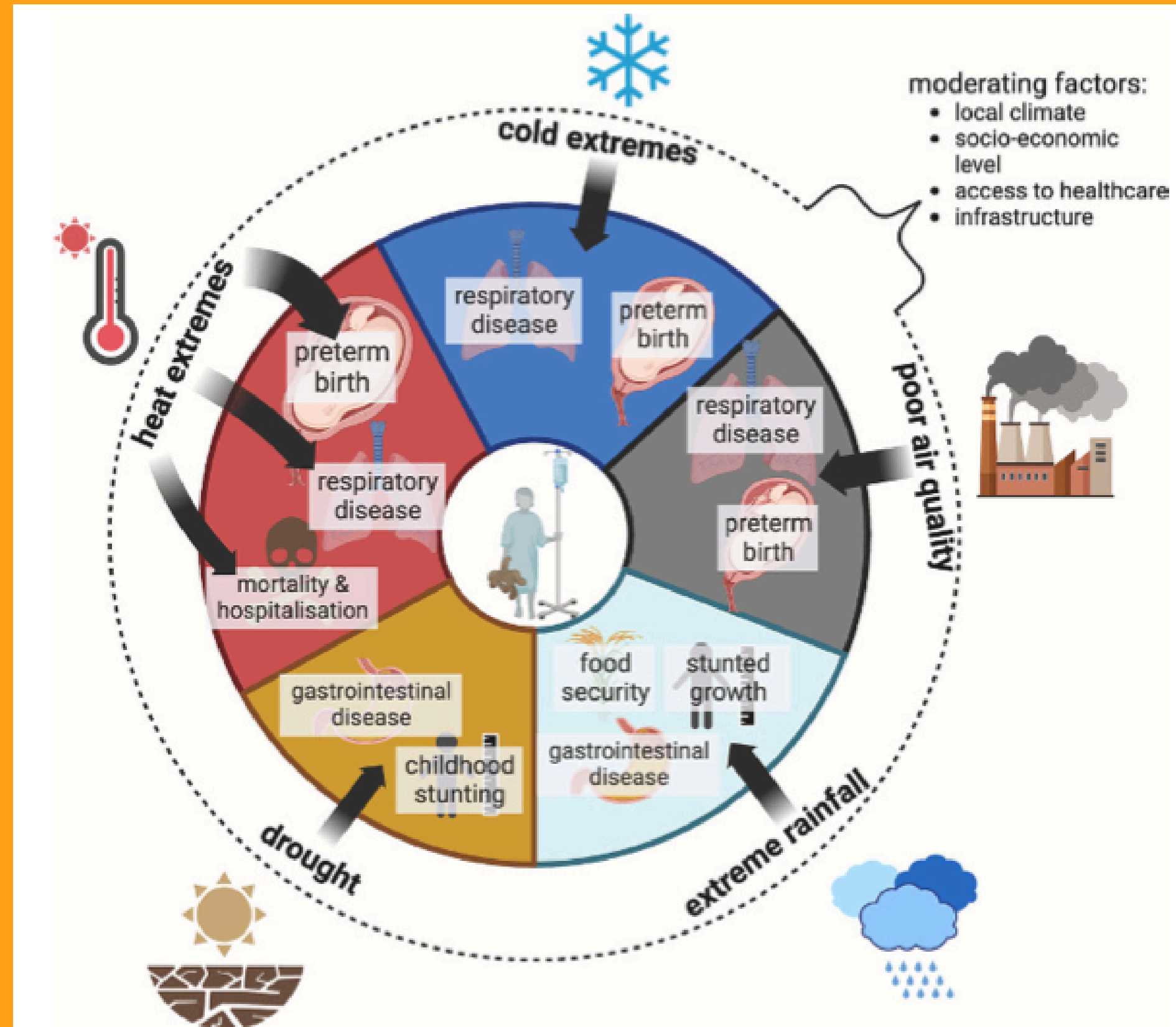
"We are losing the war against the fossil fuel industry very badly, due largely to the fact that most people still don't even know they're in a war with the fossil fuel industry."
– Peter Kalmus, 31 May 2023.
Kalmus is a climate scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab.

'Ecological breakdown is being driven by the capitalist economic system, and – like capitalism itself – is strongly characterized by colonial dynamics... the climate crisis cannot be solved within capitalism, and the sooner we face up to this fact the better.'
– Jason Hickel

"I used to think the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation, and we scientists don't know how to do that."
– US law professor James Speth

The roots of the 'climate crisis' – the fossil fuel industry, capitalism, mainstream economics and a spiritual crisis

CLIMATE CRISIS = CHILD HEALTH CRISIS



CLIMATE CRISIS = CHILD HEALTH CRISIS



The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis

Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index

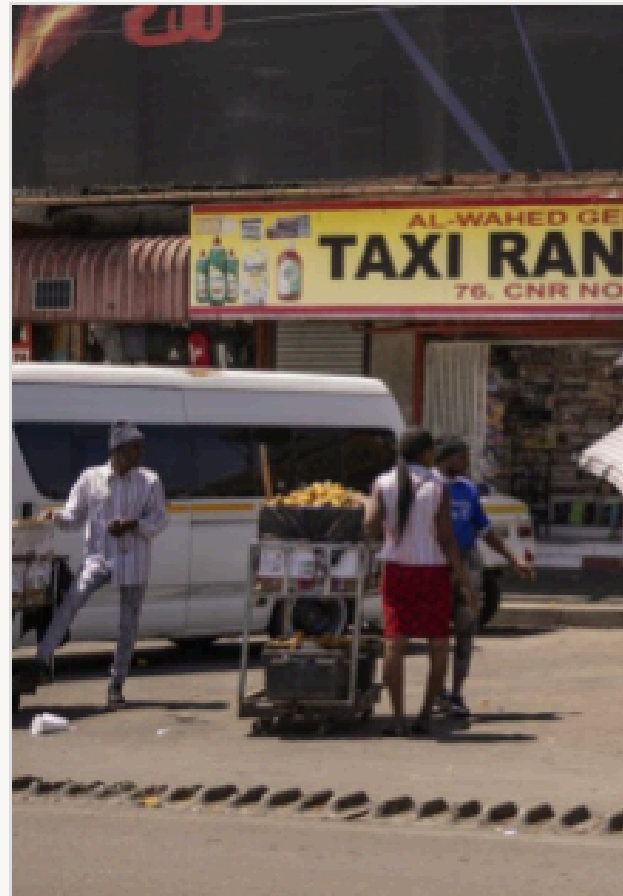


Climate change

The global failure to confront the climate crisis – the greatest threat of this generation – has created a child health crisis.

Children's Environmental Health Collaborative

'A child born today will face an increased risk from severe floods, prolonged droughts, heat stress and changing patterns of disease. Weather-related disasters have displaced at least **43 million children over the last six years and destroyed critical infrastructure, crops and contaminated or disrupted water supplies.'**



South Africa

Air pollution is a huge threat to clean air movement to advance

 Clean Air Fund



GREENPEACE
AFRICA

GREENPEACE
غرينبيس

The Toxic Air We Breathe: Greenpeace Maps Africa's Air Pollution Hotspots

"The ten largest NO₂ point sources identified in Africa are all thermal power stations, with nine in South Africa owned by ESKOM and the tenth in Côte d'Ivoire".

 Greenpeace Africa /

'Air pollution contributes **10% of child pneumonia deaths nationally**, and children in coal-heavy regions suffer much higher rates of respiratory illnesses.'

'Public health facilities will continue to take strain, while children's lungs continue to suffer **irreparable damage...**'

AIR POLLUTION (COAL BURNING) = RESPIRATORY ILLNESS IN CHILDREN

RISING TEMPERATURES = INCREASED CHILD MORTALITY

'...each 1°C rise in temperature in South Africa correlates with a **5% increase in infant mortality** due to heat stress and diarrheal diseases due to reduced access to clean water.'

'Clinics in rural areas face shortages of **IV fluids and neonatal care** during heatwaves.'

Effects of ambient heat exposure on risk of all-cause mortality in children younger than 5 years in Africa: a pooled time-series analysis

Chloe Brimicombe, Katharina Wieser, Tobias Monthaler, Debra Jackson, Jeroen De Bont, Matthew F Chersich, Ilona M Otto

Summary

Background Reducing child mortality is a Sustainable Development Goal, and climate change constitutes numerous challenges for Africa. Previous research has shown an association between leading causes of child mortality and climate change. However, few studies have examined these effects in detail. We aimed to explore the effects of ambient heat on neonate, post-neonate, and child mortality rates.

Science of the Total Environment 920 (2024) 170944



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Science of the Total Environment

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/scitotenv

Review

How climate change degrades child health: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Lewis J.Z. Weeda^{a,*}, Corey J.A. Bradshaw^{b,c}, Melinda A. Judge^{d,e}, Chitra M. Saraswati^d, Peter N. Le Souëf^{a,d}

Burden of infant mortality associated with flood in 37 African countries

Received: 25 December 2023

Yixiang Zhu ^{1,7}, Cheng He ^{1,2,7}, Jovine Bachwenkizi³, Zafar Fatmi ⁴, Lu Zhou¹, Jian Lei⁵, Cong Liu¹, Haidong Kan ^{1,6} & Renjie Chen ¹

Accepted: 14 November 2024



Flash floods survivors are thirsty, traumatised and exposed to disease | MSF

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 MSF Southern Africa

‘The 2022 KwaZulu-Natal floods (linked to climate change) led to a **cholera outbreak** with **40% of cases in children under 15.**’

(WHO, 2023)

‘...overburdened hospitals **lack surge capacity...**’

FOOD INSECURITY = CHILD MALNUTRITION

The global climate crisis is a child nutrition crisis

UNICEF Agenda
for Child Nutrition
and Climate Action

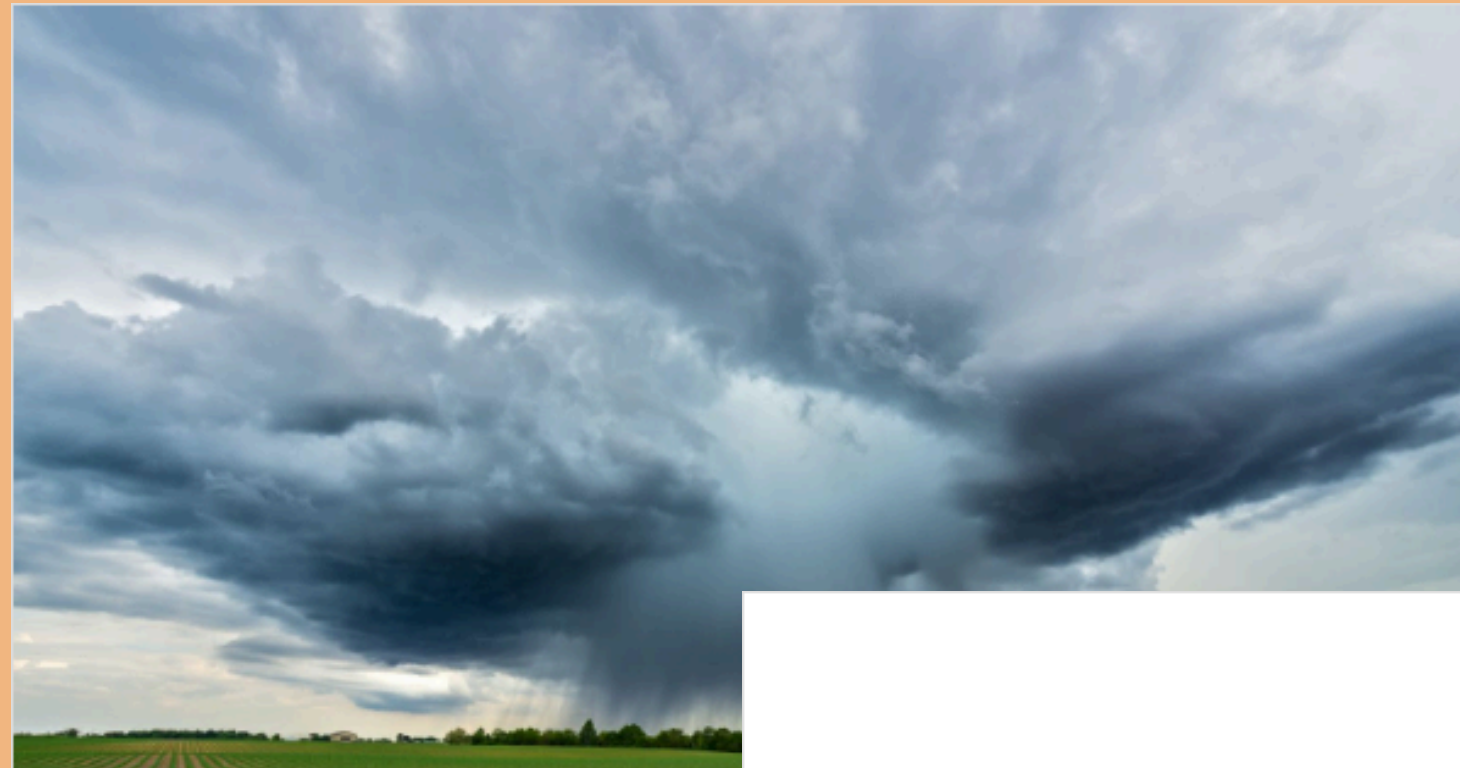
23 per cent of children in South Africa live in severe child food poverty

Children experiencing this level of food poverty are up to 50 per cent more likely to suffer from life-threatening malnutrition, new analysis finds.

[unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org)

'...27% of South African children under 5 suffer from stunting, exacerbated by climate-driven food price spikes.'

'Fossil fuel-linked climate shocks could increase child malnutrition by 20% by 2050 in Southern Africa.'



The Climate Crisis: Helping You

Numerous initiatives exist to help you overcome powerlessness and anxiety regarding

PT Psychology Today

The climate-changed child

A Children's Climate Risk Index supplement

unicef

'...lead and mercury (from coal plants) correlate with **lower IQ scores** in South African children.'

'...300% increase in child **therapy requests** after the 2022 KZN floods.'

'...reported feelings of **sadness, anxiety, anger, powerlessness, helplessness, and guilt**; 75 percent expressed **fear of the future,**'

TOXINS AND TRAUMA = CHILD MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

THE FULL COST OF FOSSIL FUELS

- Global warming, extreme weather, and ocean acidification.
- Air, water, and soil pollution, leading to health problems, acid rain, and ecosystem damage.
- Noise pollution
- Biodiversity loss
- Destroys habitats and disrupts ecosystems, leading to species decline.
- Respiratory, cardiovascular, and neurological diseases.
- Economic and social costs: highly inefficient
- Rising energy costs, environmental injustice, and high cleanup and healthcare expenses.
- Resource depletion and inefficiency
- Non-renewable and wasteful.
- Corruption and state capture.
- Geopolitical conflicts and resource wars
- Plastic and chemical pollution

CONTINUED FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENCY = AN UNLIVABLE SOUTH AFRICA FOR CHILDREN



Fatal heatwaves, food shocks loom for SA without urgent climate action, warns commission

South Africa's temperatures are warming at nearly double the global average rate – which will have impacts on health, food production, water availability and infrastructure, says the Presidential Climate Commission.

News24 /



Deadly Air case in Supreme Court of Appeals

IMMEDIATE RELEASE DATE: 28 AUGUST 2024 CONTACT: ibalendran@cer.org.za An appeal in the legal battle waged by social and environmental justice groups

Centre for Environmental Rights / Aug 28, 2024

CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT FOSSIL FUELS? YES.

EMBER

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[Solar electricity every hour of every day is here and it changes everything](#)

Solar electricity every hour of every day is here and it changes everything

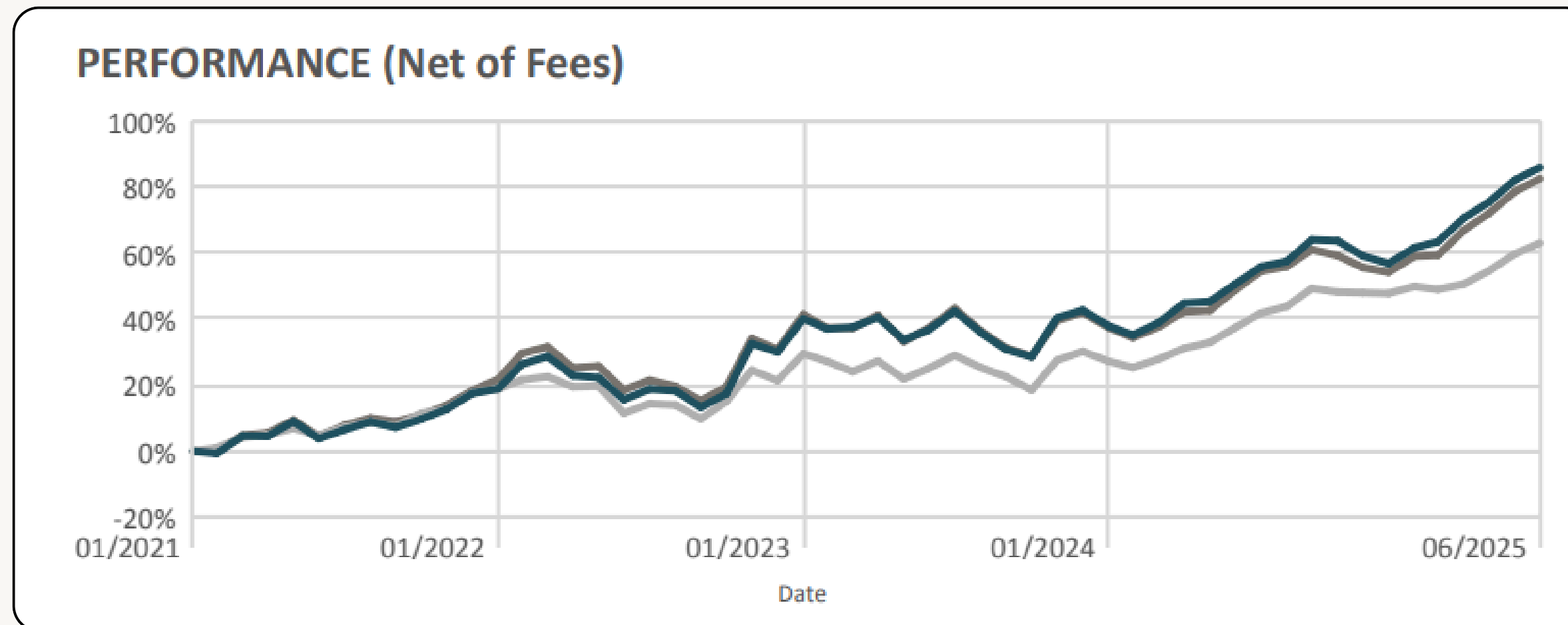
Batteries are now cheap enough to unleash solar's full potential, getting as close as 97% of the way to delivering constant electricity supply 24 hours across 365 days cost-effectively in the sunniest places.

21 Jun 2025 | 63 Minutes Read

- International Energy Agency: 33 million people employed in the fossil fuel industry globally in 2024
- 36 million people in clean energy (and growing fast)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO): '[B]y 2030... the share of total working hours lost will rise to 2.25% – **a productivity loss equivalent to 80 million full-time jobs**. The loss in monetary terms is then expected to total US\$2,400 billion (PPP).'
- Clean energy sector 3 times more jobs-intensive

Ember report, June 2025

CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT FOSSIL FUELS? YES.



Performance of the SELECT BCI ESG EQUITY FUND over three years. Fund excludes thermal coal and Sasol.

THE AGE OF EXTRACTION AND EXPLOITATION IS OVER: TIME TO 'GO TO WAR' ON HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL DEGRADATION

Meeting the SDGs: five transformational policies for a prosperous and sustainable world from the Stockholm Resilience Institute:

1. Halve global emissions every decade.
2. Transform food systems for sustainability and productivity.
3. Adopt development models that respect planetary boundaries.
4. Reduce inequality by redistributing wealth.
5. Invest in education, health, and gender equality.

These policies together align human progress with the planet's ecological limits.

WE OWE CHILDREN A LIVABLE FUTURE



WHAT CAN WE DO?

Actions to take on climate:

1. Vote with your money: ensure that your investments are fossil-free. Ask your institution for fossil free investments.
2. Ask universities to become strident voices for climate action.
3. Vote as a citizen: Raise your voice on climate issues with politicians (challenging in our PR electoral system) and city councillors
4. Challenge the media to cover climate properly.
5. Lobby for your profession to boycott the fossil fuel industry (e.g., Clean Creatives, LSCA)

WE OWE CHILDREN A LIVABLE FUTURE

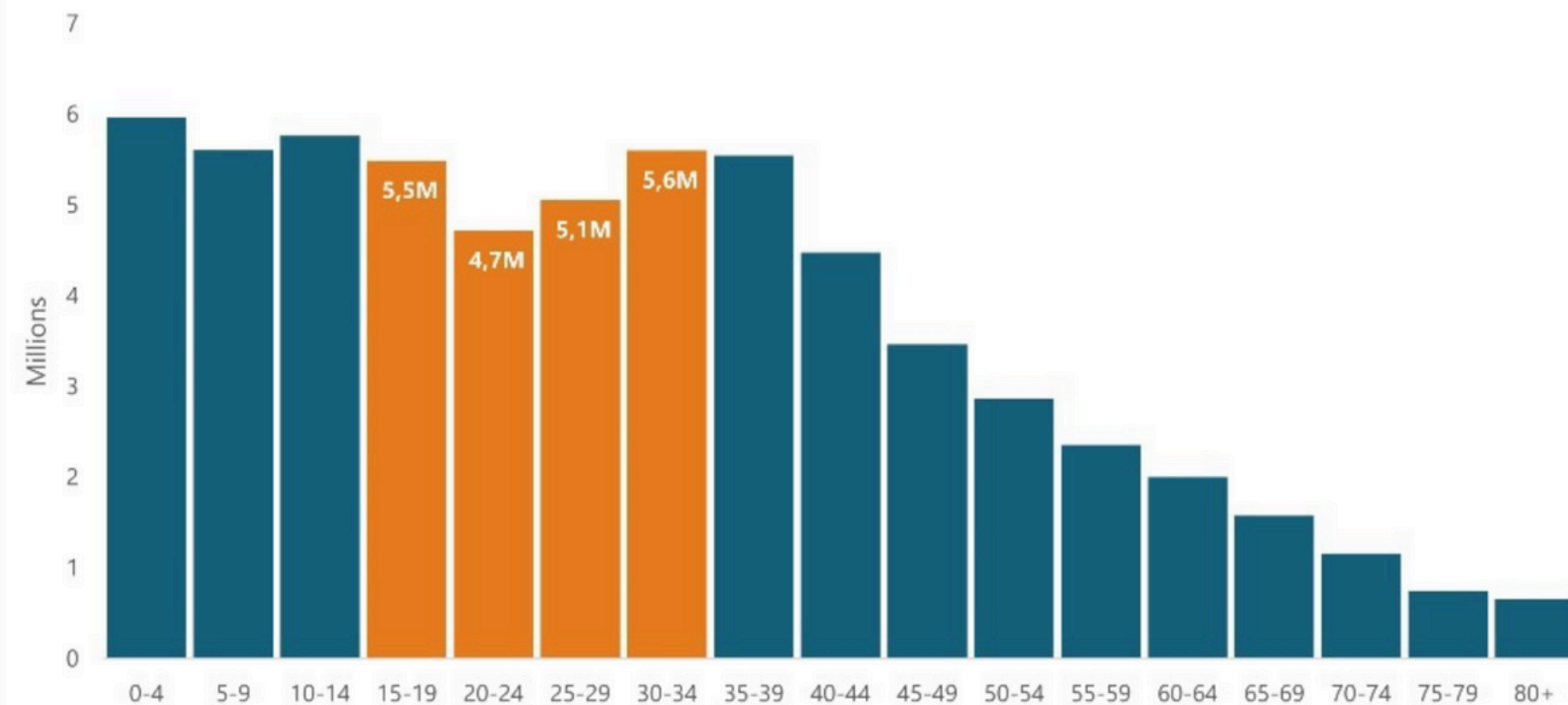


WE OWE CHILDREN A LIVABLE FUTURE



According to the 2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates, **approximately 21 million young people** (15 – 34) account for 33,1% of the country's population

Population age structure 5-year age groups, 2024



Source: Report-03-19-09 - Marginalised Groups Series VII: The Social Profile of the Youth, 2014-2024



Rising Voices: The African Youth's Fight for a Sustainable Future

Amidst the towering shadows of climate change, Africa's youth bear the brunt of its consequences despite making minimal contribution to global emissions. This has placed them at the forefront of climate action. As th...

APRI / Dec 1, 2023

We must **phase out fossil fuels**, enforce stricter air quality laws, and invest in renewable energy, because **our children's lives depend on it.**

Sandrine Mpazayabo
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JOIN THE MOVEMENT



www.fossilfreesa.org.za

MOBILISING UNIVERSITIES FOR CLIMATE LEADERSHIP



Scan this QR code to access the **Climate Leadership Platform** and more campaign information.

CATALYSING CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH FINANCIAL ADVOCACY



Scan this QR code to access the **#InvestFossilFree** petition, **Planet A Investment document** and more campaign information.

