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Illustration: Rohit Phore

COVID-19 v CLIMATE CRISIS: molehill versus mountain!

by Duncan Gregory

Covid-19 is a global catastrophe! Nobody of sane mind remains to argue that case. But how does it rate with other pending disasters? What for example, comes after Covid on President Biden's 'fix-it' list? Answer: The Climate Crisis!

Some would contend that climate-related concerns should be first on that list, but most people would not see it that way. Why is this so? The answer in short is *human nature*: we inhabit the present rather than think about the future. Covid-19 is acute pain, the climate crisis, chronic illness. We strive, justifiably, to fix the acute, when it's the long-running, potentially terminal illness, we really need to worry about.

What if media could link deaths **caused by climate crisis** directly to source : one day 10,000 die in Indonesian tsunami, the next, 20,000 perish in Kenyan drought? It would be never-ending headline news! But while scientists have clear evidence, proving the correlation is not easy, due to the circuitous route from start point to end result:

... burning fossil fuels (coal/oil) in factories or cars, emits gases (chiefly carbon), forming a layer in Earth's atmosphere, increasing temperatures and unpredictable weather patterns, impacting on the phenomena we experience (such as Australia bushfires or Bengali floods).

By 2050, fatalities resulting from climate change could make today's deaths from Covid look like a drip in the bathtub. In addition, an ever-heating climate will have devastating implications for the world around us:

... massive decline in flora and fauna species; dwindling food and water supplies; increased poverty; forced migration and torrid inter-ethnic relations, resulting in intra and inter-nation wars.

For future generations, tomorrow's climate crisis could be their *Apocalypse Now!*

But back to Biden. He understands that effective measures are urgently required to tackle this man-made crisis. He also realizes this presents a chance to steer our planet (and his administration) onto a better track, offering untold opportunities, such as green business and green jobs, and providing enormous benefits for our planet that redress those negative aspects listed above.

Not quite Utopia perhaps, but certainly better than *The Apocalypse*.

Most of us of course do not have the influence of presidents, but we can all help to tackle the climate crisis through individual actions at the local level (which will be the focus of next month's article by *Duncan Gregory*, in *Madafu*).

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