

The latest CO2 report

The latest UN report on CO2 reveals what some of us have been saying for several years. CO2 output continues to rise year by year. The large emitters led by China and India are producing a lot more, and the USA remains at a high level. Total world CO2 output is now 54% higher than in the base year of 1990, when it is meant to be falling from that level. It demonstrates that many countries have not offered a realistic target to reduce their emissions to assist the world plan, and demonstrates that some countries do not even deliver what they have promised. Meanwhile the UK producing under 1% of the world total is one of the few that has made major reductions. In 2020 CO2 output was just half the 1990 level though it presumably went up a bit in 2021 as we came out of lockdown. It was down 38% on 1990 levels in 2019. As the press releases based on the Report state, on this basis the world will not come anywhere near hitting the targets they say we need to hit to avoid a temperature rise of more than 2 degrees.

The net zero movement is only going to succeed if all major countries participate fully and take actions that do actually reduce their CO2 output. Some of the UK's tough actions to cut its CO2 have probably served to raise total world CO2, as we have closed down industry at home only to import from places like China where they may produce more CO2 per unit of manufactured output. As I have often pointed out, keeping our own gas unused and importing LNG is a sure way to more than double the amount of CO2 generated in the overall process of extracting, transporting and using gas as a fuel.

In a world of energy shortages and high prices and food shortages the UK needs to take self sufficiency and security of supply more seriously. Making and growing more at home can also cut world CO2 at the same time, though UK CO2 will rise on the way of accounting adopted for this. Today the world economy is running on a model which maximises exports from high emitting economies and industrial processes, with imports into countries that could make and grow with less CO2 if the net zero rules were properly enforced in the exporting countries. It looks as if COP 27 needs to have more realistic tougher talks with the big emitters if it is serious about cutting overall world CO2 anytime soon.