

Climate Change, Smoke and Mirrors

May 10, 2017

A civil society briefing on Geoengineering
Climate change, smoke and mirrors

For the past decade, a small but growing group of governments and scientists, the majority from the most powerful and most climate-polluting countries in the world, has been pushing for political consideration of geoengineering, the deliberate large-scale technological manipulation of the climate.

Geoengineering is inherently high-risk and its negative effects will likely be unequally distributed. Because of this, geoengineering has often been presented as a “Plan B” to confront the climate crisis. But after the Paris Agreement, which set the ambitious goal of keeping the temperature to well below 2°C and possibly even 1.5°C, the discourse has changed. Now, geoengineering is increasingly being advanced as an “essential” means to reach this goal, through a mix of risky technologies that would take carbon out of the atmosphere to create so-called “negative emissions” or take control of the global thermostat to directly lower the climate’s temperature.

It should be to suppose that geoengineering is getting political attention in comparison to the Paris Agreement. It is not. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, and as of 2016 it has been ratified by 112 countries. The Paris Agreement is a landmark agreement in the history of international climate change negotiations. It is the first time that all major emitting countries have agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The Paris Agreement is a landmark agreement in the history of international climate change negotiations. It is the first time that all major emitting countries have agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The Paris Agreement is a landmark agreement in the history of international climate change negotiations. It is the first time that all major emitting countries have agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

This briefing was produced as a background for civil society events on the 10th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany. The briefing was produced as a background for civil society events on the 10th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany. The briefing was produced as a background for civil society events on the 10th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

A civil society briefing on Geoengineering
Climate change, smoke and mirrors

For the past decade, a small but growing group of governments and scientists, the majority from the most powerful and most climate-polluting countries in the world, has been pushing for political consideration of geoengineering, the deliberate large-scale technological manipulation of the climate.

Geoengineering is inherently high-risk and its negative effects will likely be unequally distributed. Because of this, geoengineering has often been presented as a “Plan B” to confront the climate crisis. But after the Paris Agreement, which set the ambitious goal of keeping the temperature to well below 2°C and possibly even 1.5°C, the discourse has changed. Now, geoengineering is increasingly being advanced as an “essential” means to reach this goal, through a mix of risky technologies that would take carbon out of the atmosphere to create so-called “negative emissions” or take control of the global thermostat to directly lower the climate’s temperature.

It should be to suppose that geoengineering is getting political attention in comparison to the Paris Agreement. It is not. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, and as of 2016 it has been ratified by 112 countries. The Paris Agreement is a landmark agreement in the history of international climate change negotiations. It is the first time that all major emitting countries have agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The Paris Agreement is a landmark agreement in the history of international climate change negotiations. It is the first time that all major emitting countries have agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

This briefing was produced as a background for civil society events on the 10th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany. The briefing was produced as a background for civil society events on the 10th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany. The briefing was produced as a background for civil society events on the 10th of May 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

For the past decade, a small but growing group of governments and scientists, the majority from the most powerful and most climate-polluting countries in the world, has been pushing for political consideration of geoengineering, the deliberate large-scale technological manipulation of the climate.

Geoengineering is inherently high-risk and its negative effects will likely be unequally distributed. Because of this, geoengineering has often been presented as a “Plan B” to confront the climate crisis. But after the Paris Agreement, which set the ambitious goal of keeping the temperature to well below 2°C and possibly even 1.5°C, the discourse has changed. Now, geoengineering is increasingly being advanced as an “essential” means to reach this goal, through a mix of risky technologies that would take carbon out of the atmosphere to create so-called “negative emissions” or take control of the global thermostat to directly lower the climate’s temperature.

A new [briefing paper](#) by ETC Group and Heinrich Böll Foundation in advance of the UNFCCC intersessional meetings in Bonn, May 2017, gives an overview of what geoengineering is and why it is dangerous, as well as up-to-date information on proposed geoengineering technologies and governance.

A crucial read for anyone engaged in the fight against climate change.

[Download the briefing here.](#)

(A German version of this briefing in pdf format is also available.)