Greenhouse gas emissions growing faster

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A new report from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) says that man-made global greenhouse gas emissions increased by 15% between 2000 and 2005, a sharp increase in the expected rate of growth. It also shows that global annual emissions of greenhouse gases increased from 24 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents in 1970 to 33 billion tonnes in 1990 and 41 billion tonnes in 2005.

The new report takes its figures from EDGAR (the 'Emission database for global atmospheric research'), a joint project between the JRC and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL).

EDGAR is a detailed overview of 35 years (from 1970 to 2005) of greenhouse gas emissions by country and emission sector. It covers not only carbon dioxide but also other groups of chemical compounds known to have a detrimental effect on the environment, such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs).

EDGAR used the latest international statistics and data on greenhouse gas emissions to model emissions for every country in the world. It reports on energy production and consumption, industrial manufacturing, agricultural production, disposal of waste materials and the burning of biomass. It also provides data on greenhouse-gas emissions for the 20 years preceding the 1990 Kyoto protocol.

The EDGAR database shows conclusively that greenhouse gas emissions have been rising faster in developing countries than in industrialised ones since 2004, even though developing countries emit lower levels of the gases. Levels of emissions in

developing countries are now 3 times higher than they were in 1970 (from 7 billion tonnes in 1970 to approximately 21 billion tonnes in 2005). At the same time, man-made emission levels from industrialised countries have slowed down.

Carbon dioxide showed the greatest growth, but levels of gases such as methane and nitrous oxide have also increased. Emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gases (such as hydrofluorocarbons, which are extremely powerful and long lasting in the atmosphere) have increased by up to 40%.

The EDGAR database fills a gap in current greenhouse gas statistics as it gives consistent information on both industrialised and developing countries. Previous versions of EDGAR have been used for the past 15 years, but information on emission rates in developing countries has been inconsistent in terms of both amount and quality.

The EDGAR statistics will be used to provide a global perspective on worldwide trends in greenhouse gas emissions at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15), which will take place in Copenhagen in December 2009.

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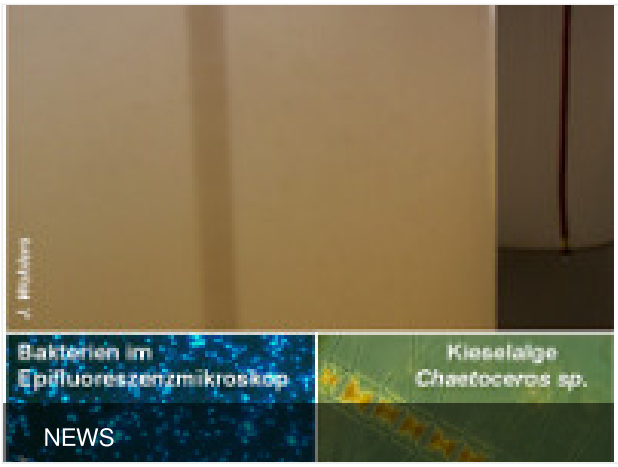

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