

Correspondence

IPCC decolonization call – policymakers must listen

The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) cites “ongoing patterns of inequity such as colonialism” as drivers of vulnerability to climate change (see go.nature.com/3xy7gzy). Colonialism is also frequently embedded in current schemes to mitigate climate change (see, for example, J. C. Young *Environ. Plan. E* **4**, 230–251; 2021).

The push to reach net zero emissions can encourage rich countries to shift their carbon burdens to low-income nations. These ‘imported emissions’ account for one-quarter of global carbon dioxide emissions (see go.nature.com/3min1mr) and disregard the requirement for low-income nations to meet basic needs of their own people (see go.nature.com/3bizrji). Those needs include education, health care, housing, clean water, sanitation and transport – all of which are human rights that depend on use of energy and production of CO₂.

Moreover, leading Western multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations, scientific bodies, think tanks, consultants and business lobby groups seeking to mitigate climate change are connected to the international financial system. That gives them and their climate solutions scientific legitimacy, moral authority and economic dominance. As a result, the West is prone to falsely viewing lower-income countries as climate-change culprits and as places to enact – rather than to generate – such solutions (see, for example, H. Nagendra *Nature* **557**, 485–488; 2018).

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Nature-based solutions for global climate adaptation

The Biden–Harris US presidential administration has signed an executive order to tackle climate change through nature-based solutions (NBS; see go.nature.com/3nub5ea). We call on other nations to tap into their adaptation potential and adopt similar strategies to help inform decision-makers about the cost-effectiveness of NBS and ways to implement them at scale.

The executive order includes three major efforts: to conduct the first US national nature assessment; to devise a system of natural-capital accounting that establishes the economic value to society of natural assets such as forests, urban parks and reefs; and to draw up a federal report that identifies opportunities to implement NBS.

This builds on the 2022 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II, which highlights the importance of NBS for addressing climate impacts and risks over the next two decades (go.nature.com/3xy7gzy). The power of NBS to resolve biodiversity loss and climate change is also evident in joint reports from the IPCC and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (go.nature.com/3xi95uz), the World Economic Forum (go.nature.com/3fzhqss) and the European Commission (go.nature.com/3xpi4fp).

Similar assessments by other nations will help to clarify the amount of investment needed to support the climate-adaptation power of NBS.

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Misinformation: broaden definition to curb its societal influence

Researchers are increasingly adopting a definition of misinformation that assumes it comes from questionable or bogus sources. But using that as its sole defining characteristic overlooks accidental misinformation from reputable and therefore potentially more influential sources. This oversight poses a threat to the understanding by scientists, laypeople and policymakers of how to prevent the spread and influence of misinformation.

Scholarly reliance on narrow and largely unrepresentative definitions of misinformation limits the applicability of findings (see G. Pennycook *et al. Nature* **592**, 590–595; 2021). Moreover, information does not need to be completely false to be misleading. And misleading information from popular sources could be more convincing than extreme falsehoods, and so potentially more harmful to beliefs and behaviour.

Psychological differences in susceptibility to misinformation (see U. K. H. Ecker *et al. Nature Rev. Psychol.* **1**, 13–29; 2022) are masked by the restrictive, source-based definition of misinformation. This could have dire knock-on effects for the applicability of results from psychology research to politics, public health and, indeed, democracy.

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Could artificial intelligence hijack author contributions?

Artificial intelligence (AI) translator services can help authors by checking the logical structure and content validity of their research manuscripts. But as AI advances, it could reshape pivotal discussions in the paper and undercut the authors’ input. Employing such services to interpret the data or ‘spin’ the findings for greater impact could have serious implications for research integrity.

A paper’s discussion section is forged from new data presented and analysed by its authors. The AI service SciNote Manuscript Writer, for instance, cannot rewrite a discussion section because that is the “most creative and original part of the scientific article and greatly depends on the scientist’s style and way of thinking” (see go.nature.com/3zdfgyv).

Currently, authors usually hire professionals with extensive reviewer experience to check manuscripts that have been written and reordered by AI. Researchers with sufficient funding can delegate them to draft discussion sections, too.

A researcher’s contribution becomes unclear when crucial components of their published paper have been ghost-written by an external service (human or otherwise), threatening to undermine authenticity and conventional publication ethics.

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