

GENERVISION CAPE



FEATURED ARTICLES

- 1** Food System Experiential Workshop At Local Farm
- 2** Is Carbon Tariff A Good Idea?
- 3** Genervision House x Middle East Green Action: Desert Ecotourism
- 4** Where Are We Heading Towards After The Pandemic?
- 5** 3 Key Facts About Refugees Worldwide
- 6** Final Call - About That Matter Of 1.5°C
- 7** Climate Book Sharing: Drawdown
- 8** China's Move Towards A More Sustainable Building Model: Prohibiting The Construction Of Skyscrapers Over 500 Meters High

FOOD SYSTEM EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOP AT LOCAL FARM

On July 25, in response to the United Nations 2021 Food Systems Summit Dialogue, Genervision House and the Society of Food & Environmental Health organized a workshop, hoping to provide a platform for people to think and discuss about food, which we cannot live without on a daily basis.

In Macau, because food is so available, we often forget the impact of what, how and how much we eat on our health, environment, ethics and biodiversity.

We hope to kick off with the concept of food literacy during the workshop, so that more people can enjoy delicious food while achieving health for themselves and the planet.

Special thanks to two local eco-friendly restaurants, ML Salad and Yun.wuyun, for their support to this event.





Is Carbon Tariff A Good Idea?

Samson Cheng

Imagine a scenario where country A has strict carbon emission standards, while country B has a more lenient policy, the operating costs of country A enterprises are likely to be higher than those of country B because they need to purchase more advanced and lower emission production facilities. This will lead to a situation where "environmental policies affect local economic development".

One solution for country A is to impose tariffs on goods imported from country B, or to subsidize goods exported by country A's own companies, in order to maintain the competitiveness of country A's companies. This mechanism to avoid the negative impact of strict domestic carbon emission rules on the participation of domestic industries in international markets is called the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).



After the Kyoto Protocol – an international agreement on climate change – came into effect, developed countries, led by the European Union and the United States, have proposed the idea of carbon border adjustment in the hope of maintaining a fair trade environment and reducing the risk of carbon leakage. Carbon leakage refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries causing an increase in emissions in developing countries, such as the relocation of production units from developed countries to developing countries by high-emitting companies to avoid being regulated by strict carbon policies.

Due to internal disputes, both sides failed to pass the relevant motion. Since she became President of the European Commission, Ms. von der Leyen has used several occasions to emphasize the important role of carbon border regulation and its inclusion in the European Green New Deal package as an important measure to achieve climate neutrality. Subsequently, the new U.S. President Joe Biden expressed his support for carbon border adjustment during his election campaign, explicitly stating that carbon border adjustment measures would be imposed on carbon-intensive products from countries that are not fulfilling their climate obligations, once again triggering widespread concern about carbon border adjustment.

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism seems to promote fair trade and encourage enterprises to reduce emissions, but is it actually "just"?

The World Trade Organization (WTO) explicitly requires member countries not to treat two "similar" imported products from different producing countries differently in any direct or indirect way, nor to treat imported products differently from "similar" domestically produced products, including taxes, other domestic costs and related regulations; and the criteria for determining whether they are similar goods include product characteristics, end use, conformity to tariff reduction standards, and conformity to consumer tastes and habits, but do not include the production method of the product.

In other words, the carbon footprint of the production process cannot be used as a criterion for similar products, nor can it be used as a criterion for differential treatment in tariffs.

In addition, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), signed by 197 countries, clearly stipulates that "measures to address climate change should not be considered as arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or hidden restrictions in international trade" is one of the principles that countries should follow.

At the same time, developed countries and developing countries are at different stages of development. Developed countries have taken the lead in completing industrialization and have overspent on climate and environmental "dividends" in the process, resulting in the accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions and irreversible damage to the global climate.

Developing countries are in the process of industrialization and urbanization and need labor and energy intensive industries to drive their economic growth. Thus, their exports of carbon-intensive products to developed countries are bound to increase.

If developed countries carry out border carbon adjustment in accordance with carbon emissions in the production process of imported products, it is tantamount to asking developing countries to bear the same or higher emission costs for manufacturing production and economic development – which is equivalent to measuring the emission standards of developing countries and the emission reduction or limitation measures to be implemented by developed countries with their emission reduction obligations.

Do you think the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is a good idea? Will the policy be implemented in the end and how will it be? Let us wait and see.

(Published in Plataforma Macau)

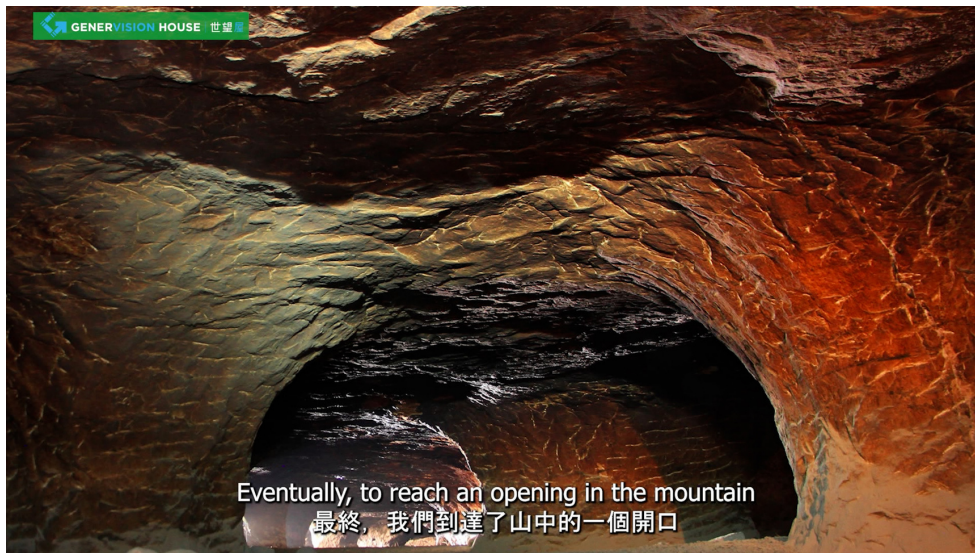
Genervision House X Middle East Green Action: Desert Ecotourism



Most people must have watched the famous movie Star Wars before, but do you know that the movie was filmed in Jordan's vast desert land? This desert has also been converted into a 40-day hiking trail called Jordan Trail, which brings ecotourism alive.

Genervision House is honoured to invite Mohammad Asfour, who is the board member of the Jordan Trail Association, to share his experiences and insights in converting the Jordan Trail into eco-tourism, and to talk about his adventurous experiences. He has once discovered a small cave that is barely known to public during his journey, and the locals told him that it was a Roman copper mine where the Romans chopped the prisoners' legs and exploited the prisoners to excavate copper.





Eventually, to reach an opening in the mountain
最終，我們到達了山中的一個開口

In the video, Mohammad expressed how the Jordan Trail's speciality lies in how it has changed the way others look towards tourism because local communities are incorporated in the experience. By launching the Jordan Trail, the Association is able to highlight the archeological, natural and different aspects that need to be preserved into the product that they developed. To make ecotourism happen, he stressed the importance of putting in place the right policies and regulations and having local tour guides who are knowledgeable of nature, environment and various skills such as first aid. Technology can also be applied to make the tourism experience more dynamic and interactive - for example, the Jordan Trail app ensures that travellers know where to go if they are travelling on their own.

Remarking on the future trend of ecotourism, Mohammad highlighted a few interesting points. "During the post-COVID era, people will less and less want to be staying in closed hotels and, alternatively, they will seek other experiences," Mohammad said. "And I think this is why eco-tourism will become even more important because a lot of the activities will occur in open air, where the risk of getting sick will be less and the opportunity to do activities that impact your health will positively increase...like walking and hiking etc."



the Jordan trail is a long distance hiking trail in Jordan
約旦步道是約旦的長距離遠足小徑



Where Are We Heading Towards After The Pandemic?

Dino Mok



Fast food packaging causes the surge of global plastic waste © Jasmin Sessler

Have you been reflecting on your spending habits amid the COVID-19 pandemic? Do you know that global warming is closely related to our daily life? Are you aware that the world is changing? Macau is a special city - while the rest of the world lives in a chaotic environment of financial, health and social insecurity, the people here live in a relatively stable and carefree environment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the extreme vulnerabilities of the contemporary world, particularly the financial and ecological vulnerabilities.

The post-pandemic world must change. Of course, everything can go back to the way it was before. But if we follow the same mindset of consumerism and profit maximization, we will also go from one crisis to another. The only solution is to reflect, change our thinking and break free from consumerism.

Our Dressing Habits

In recent years, "fast fashion" has become a trend in the clothing sector. It started in the 1970s with big fashion brands such as Zara and H&M, which have become increasingly popular due to their popular styles and low prices. Fast fashion takes the form of mass production, with factories all over the planet and products circulating around the world; the garment has a short life cycle from the fashion runway to the shop window, from the wardrobe to garbage dump. This type of production and exploitation of human desire and impulse buying tendency ultimately drive the increase in the production of non-essentials and waste.

The clothing industry is the second-largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 10 percent of the global carbon emissions – a proportion that is expected to increase due to the growing popularity of fast fashion. The production and transportation of garments cause serious pollution to the environment. Not only does fast fashion produce 400% more carbon emissions than ordinary clothing, but the production of textile fibers also involves environmental pollution such as deforestation, the use of fertilizers and pesticides, animal husbandry, and oil extraction. In addition, fast fashion clothes made in third world countries are sent to chain stores around the world, creating huge carbon emissions in the process of transportation.

But can fashion last? Of course, but only if we act step by step. As individuals, we can consider carefully from every shopping decision, cherish our choices, buy high-quality products, reduce consumption, reuse and recycle and so on. Only in this way can we gradually develop new habits of sustainable consumption and protect our environment.



Behind every fast fashion garment is a worker working in tough conditions ©Rio Lecatompessy

Our Diet Habits

In addition to the impulse to buy, our eating habits are also a serious problem. Overproduction and over-consumerism are rapidly depleting the earth's resources and destroying the planet. With the acceleration of the pace of city life, fast food and packaged food have become an indispensable part of our daily life. However, countless amounts of food are wasted in retail stores or expire on supermarket shelves, while others are lost during production and transportation. Between 33% and 50% of all food produced globally is wasted before being eaten, at a loss equivalent to more than US\$1 trillion.

This is not only a waste problem, but also an environmental disaster. If global food waste were a country, it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. Like textile production, the food industry is involved in deforestation, pollution from animal husbandry, the consumption of freshwater resources, the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and the transportation of products. In addition, the disposal of food waste is a major pollution to the environment. Because burning food waste in the incinerator releases carbon dioxide, and food in landfills gradually decomposes to form methane, a greenhouse gas that is 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

In developed countries, households are the biggest source of food waste. More than 50% of food waste occurs inside households for several reasons: spoilage, over-preparation, over-buying, and poor planning. We are the half to the food waste problem. But at the same time, it means that we can be a major part of the solution.

During the pandemic, as human activity on the planet decreases and economic development slows, the closure of companies and factories has alleviated the environmental problems and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. However, this relief is only temporary and there has been no pause in climate change. Emissions are expected to reach even higher levels once the global economy begins to recover. At this time, we should rethink our old habits and plan how to develop in the future to make the world more sustainable.

(Published in Plataforma Macau)

3 Key Facts About Refugees Worldwide

1. Over the past 10 years, the number of refugees has more than doubled from 15 million in 2011 to 30 million in 2020.

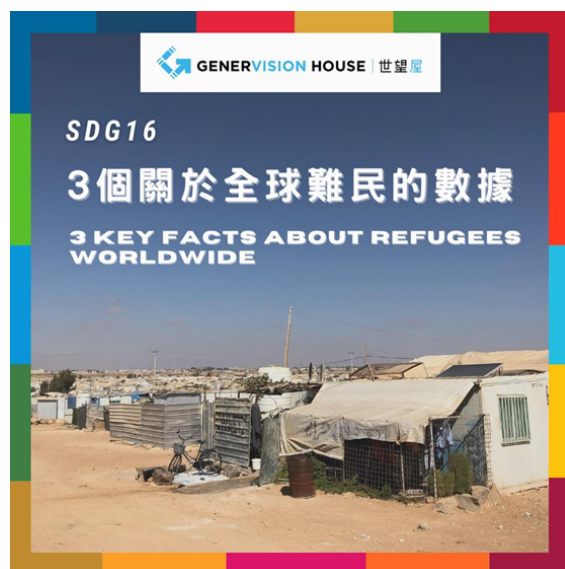
2. As shown in the photo, 55% of the refugees come from 3 countries: Syria, Palestine and Venezuela.

In Syria, what started off as a peaceful uprising against the country's President 10 years ago turned into an ongoing civil war, pushing nearly 80% of the country below poverty line.

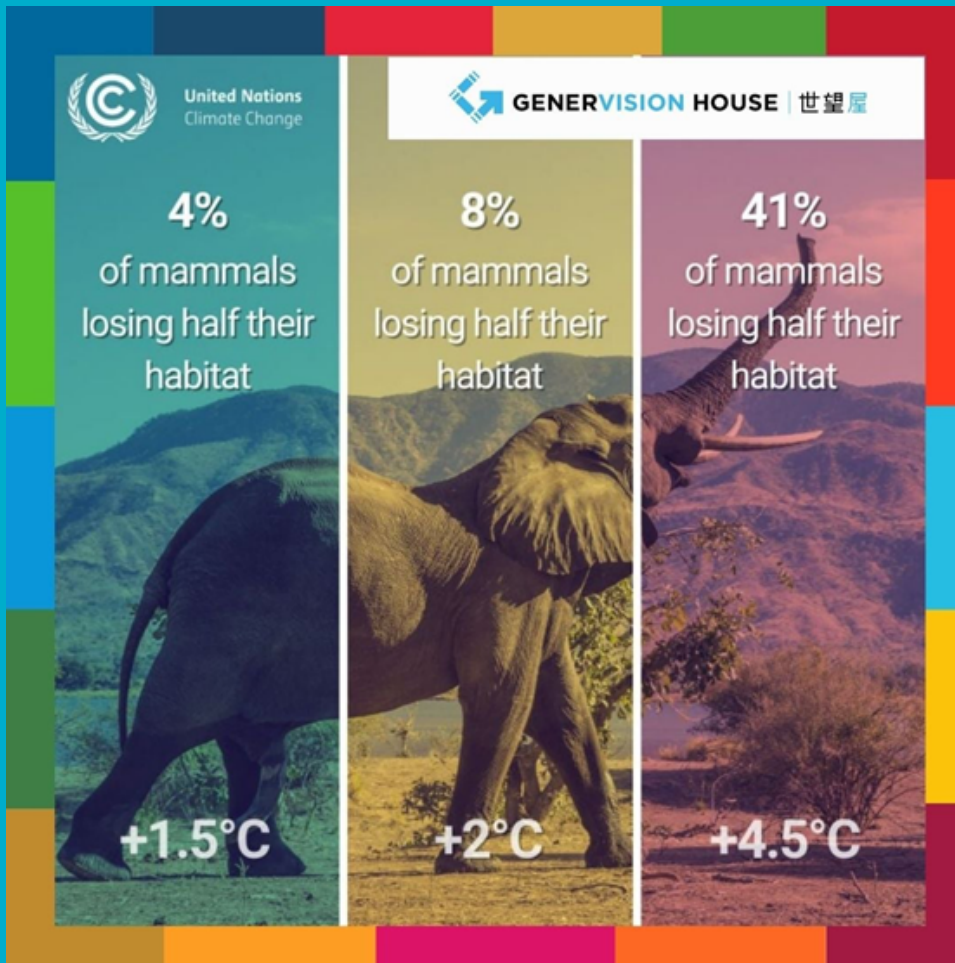
In Palestine, following the expiration of the British Mandate for Palestine in 1948, the Arab-Israeli territorial conflicts have turned the situation into one of the gravest humanitarian disasters worldwide. Inside Gaza alone, 7/10 of the Palestinians are refugees and have been cut off in an from the outside world.

In Venezuela, the ongoing contestation over the leadership and the legitimate President of Venezuela has caused 1/3 Venezuelans to be under food insecurity, in addition to problems such as political corruption and unemployment.

3. Developing countries host 86% of the world's refugees, with Turkey as the largest host country (3.7 million), followed by Jordan (3 million) and Columbia (1.7 million).



Final Call - About That Matter Of 1.5°C



For the past 1.5 years, COVID has been stealing the spotlight of the globe, media covering infected rates 24/7 all year round. Without a doubt, it is crucial and concerning to humanity. Sadly, the world is in deep water than just dealing with this pandemic.

Climate change is no longer a “far-away” problem (well, it has never been), but it is a global emergency that attacks each species on earth. Heatwaves in Canada’s BC, floods in Southern Germany and Central China, wildfires in California...and all these catastrophes only happened over the course of a few months and the intensity of the disasters will accelerate when global temperature is at 1.5°C warming. Countries have to quickly commit and implement a net zero-emission, and all of us have to be aware of energy-saving and reduce the use of plastic, consume less meat and just leave the forests alone.

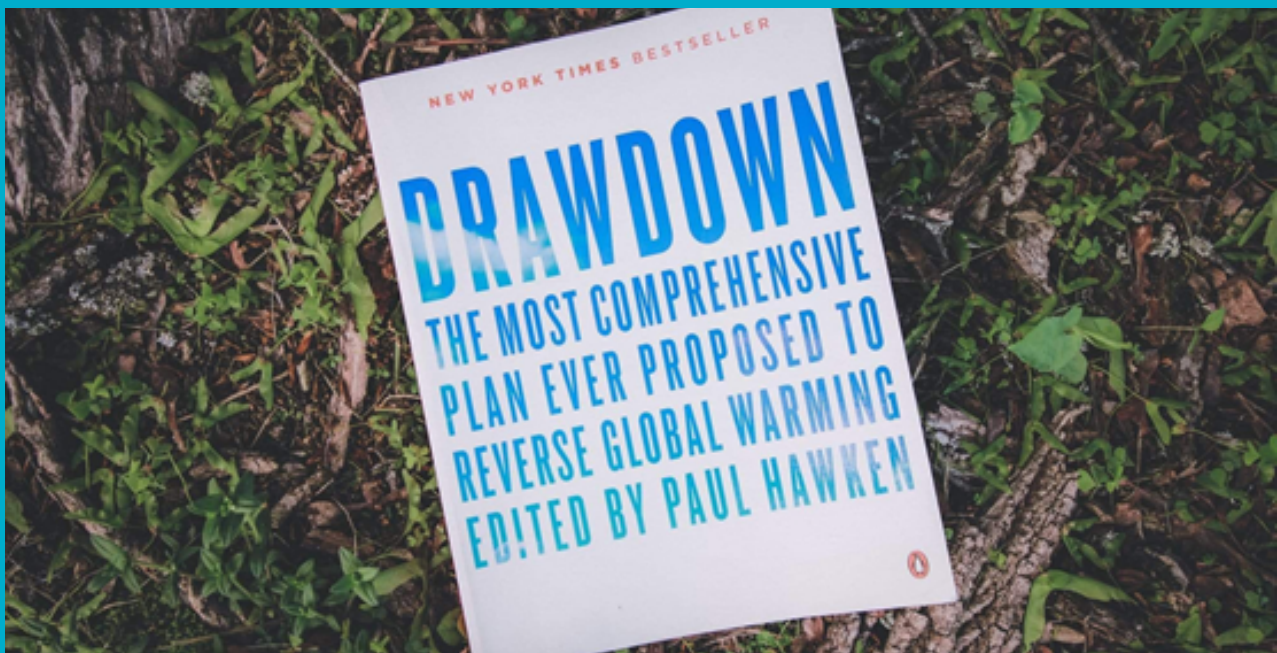
Climate Book Sharing: Drawdown

In 2013, American environmentalist, entrepreneur, journalist and author Paul Hawken created the Drawdown Project, inviting a group that included 200 researchers and expert advisors to gather and model the 100 most substantial solutions to reverse global warming, with the goal of seeing if humanity can reach its emissions reduction goal by 2050, that is, if greenhouse gas emissions can peak and then begin to decline.

All of these solutions – some well known, some you've probably never heard of – are economically feasible and are being tried by communities around the world on a wide range of topics, such as revolutionary production methods, food consumption patterns, women education in low-income countries, and more.

Drawdown is currently in its 14th printing, has become a New York Times bestseller, has been translated into 14 languages, read and quoted by heads of state, put into a course at MIT, and placed next to the Bible in a hotel chain in New Zealand.

Drawdown is a target. Prior to the publication of this book, the goal and the word, was not mentioned in climate literature, but the term Drawdown is now widely employed – it is now used and cited thousands of times a day.



China's Move Towards A More Sustainable Building Model: Prohibiting The Construction Of Skyscrapers Over 500 Meters High



In the past few decades, China has continuously built super skyscrapers, which has caused construction safety concerns and resulted in a city full of empty buildings with high vacancy rates. Of the 100 tallest buildings in the world, 44 are located in China, of which the most famous building in mainland is the Shanghai Tower - the second tallest building in the world. In Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, everyone will be able to spot the world's top ten tallest buildings, but in the second quarter of this year, the commercial vacant area in these cities has totalled 7.9 million square meters. For businesses and residents, taller buildings mean smaller floor space, which leads to the phenomenon of numerous vacant buildings.

Recently, in order to deal with these problems, the National Development and Reform Commission has announced the prohibition of the construction of skyscrapers over 500 meters high in the country, and tall buildings over 250 meters must be strictly restricted. Buildings exceeding 100 meters must be strictly in line with the scale and fire rescue capability of their locations. These measures show that China is moving towards a more sustainable urban planning and construction model.