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MailOnline

Could scientists reverse global warming? The U.N. discusses plans to reflect the sun to cool the Earth

By [Paul Milligan](#)

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A group of scientists, philosophers and legal scholars are looking into radical geoengineering plans to artificially cool the Earth in a bid to reverse global warming.

A U.N. climate conference in South Africa on Friday said that - in theory - reflecting a small amount of sunlight back into space before it strikes the Earth's surface would have an immediate and dramatic effect.

Within a few years, global temperatures could return to levels of 250 years ago, before the industrial revolution began dumping carbon dioxide into the air, trapping heat and causing temperatures to rise.



© NASA

Could geoengineering save Earth from global warming? Some scientists thinks so

But no one knows what the side effects would be.

They could unintentionally changing weather patterns and rainfall.

The idea of solar radiation management 'has the potential to be either very useful or very harmful,' said the study led by Britain's Royal Society, the Washington-based Environmental Defense Fund and TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world based in Trieste, Italy.

The final report is the climax of a year-long dialogue spanning experts in 22 countries.

It was prompted by the failure of a 20-year U.N. negotiating process to take decisive action to curb greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from burning fossil fuels, responsible for climate change.

'The slow progress of international climate negotiations has led to increased concerns that sufficient cuts in greenhouse gas emissions may not be achieved in time to avoid unacceptable levels of climate change,' the report said.

But geoengineering is not an alternative to climate action, said John Shepherd, a British oceanographer from the University of Southampton who was the lead author of the report.

'Nobody thought this provides a justification for not reducing carbon emissions,' Shepherd told AP.



Heating up: A panel on Climate change has predicted temperatures rising as much as 6.4deg Celsius by 2100

'We have to stick with Plan A for the time being, and that could be a very long time indeed,' he said. 'This would buy time for people to make the transition to a low-carbon economy.'

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sees temperatures rising as much as 6.4 degrees Celsius (11.5 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2100, swelling the seas with melted glacial water and disrupting climate conditions around the globe.

Deliberately tinkering with nature to counter global warming can only be a stopgap measure, and is fraught with danger, the report said.

Action such as spraying sulfur into the air or brightening clouds with sea water to reflect more sunlight would have to be sustained indefinitely because 'there would be a large and rapid climate change if it were terminated suddenly,' the report said.

Theories of manipulating the climate to impede global warming have been on the fringe of scientific discussion for some time, but is now moving towards the mainstream.

In the United States, a group of 18 U.S. experts from the sciences, social sciences and national security unveiled a report in October urging the federal government to begin research on the feasibility and potential effectiveness of geoengineering.

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Ha ha ha. I can see Lord Attenborough installing the mirrors to reflect back the sun into space.....and Lord Lawson taking them down.

- Steven, Surrey, 04/12/2011 09:49

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Intergovern-mental Panel on Climate Changes.??!??...another white elephant like EU, where members are doing nothing and earn bucketts of money. It is not global warming it simply is Climate Change.

- Steven, Surrey, 04/12/2011 09:47

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If climate change is a danger they say it is, then let's go for this plan. Hate to sound pessimistic, but mankind's far too greedy to cut living standards to merely save the planet!

- Ifreethink, UK, 04/12/2011 09:29

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For goodness sake its not warming its actually cooling and has been since 1998 don't be fooled by these Green activists they are nothing more than anarchists who would see us all back in the dark ages.

- gwl , Stoke on Trent , 04/12/2011 09:27

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The sun is my god.and I worship the sun. Any attempts to prevent the sun from shining on our world, - is against my human rights !

- DAVID, YEOVIL UK, 04/12/2011 08:48

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Why not simply remove the desulphurisation equipment from coal fired power stations. This would create sulphur aerosols which would be carried high into the atmosphere. They are known to have a cooling effect by reflecting the sun's heat. It would save money and cool the planet at the same time - two birds with one stone.

- dibble, Newcastle upon Tyne, England, 04/12/2011 05:15

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A group of LEFTIST scientists, COMMUNIST philosophers and MONEY HUNGRY legal scholars are looking into radical AND STUPID geoengineering plans to artificially cool the Earth in a bid to reverse global warning WHICH NATURE IS ALREADY DOING. That, DM, would be the correct Reporting on this latest outrage from IPCC. Why dont you remind your readers of the cooked data and the destroyed e-mails that show this so called man-made global warming to be a hoax?

- NM, Ontario, 04/12/2011 04:09

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man did not warm the eart, man cannot cool it! The folks at East Anglia, IPCC and Penn State etc have been cooking books and destroying evidence. This is shoule be more widely publicized - a task that DM and other news outlets should undertake.

- NM, Ontario, 04/12/2011 03:33

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Why oh why can't they just leave things alone? This world on which we all live has done very well looking after itself for billions of years and is quite capable of doing so without these so called eggsperts sticking there noses into things they still know very little about.

- Richard, Khon Kaen Thailand, 04/12/2011 02:27

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I have no doubt that when they interfere in the natural cycle of things there will be unforeseen consequences that will be worse than the problem they are trying to solve. Humans are very short sighted and only look to the immediate benefit, without carefully thinking through all the possible outcomes.

- Zapata, Canada, 04/12/2011 01:53

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