YET ANOTHER ROUND OF INTERNATIONAL TALKS



- Cop 29, held in the wrong place and very disappointing in its outcome.
- G7 Conference, where the Climate Crisis was barely mentioned, but to be fair, there are a lot of wars going on right now, which seemed to take up most of the timetabled discussion.
- A conference, noticeably untitled, regarding some kind of control of the amount of plastic being produced globally, which, much to my shame, I was not aware of taking place.

I will start with COP 29.

Holding this conference in a land-locked country whose roads were all closed, meant that the only way in was by flying, which prevented climate activists from attending (keeping to their strict no-flying principles) was a big mistake, as was holding it in an oil producing country whose prime minister described the discovery of oil there as a ‘God given gift’.

This unpromising start and complete lack of any commitment, led to a walk out by representatives of the Alliance of Small Island States and from ‘The Least Developing Countries, which made it quite a sizeable protest. Eventually talks resumed and a deal was thrashed out, in which it was decided that $300 billion per year until 2035 would be paid to developing countries. This was considered a long way short of the $500 billion that was called for by these nations.

A spokesperson for the groups, who walked out, claimed that this action proved that we are a “force to be reckoned with.” Whilst this statement may be a tad optimistic, I feel that

standing up to the Big Boys and rattling cages is a tactic I hope will be seen more often in the future. Tact and diplomacy don't always work when dealing with hard cash for a vital cause.

Aside from that limited success, there was another plus. It seems very likely that the incoming President of the United States will withdraw his country from the COP organisation altogether. However, China was far more forthcoming with facts and figures than they have ever been before and revealed that over a few years they have donated a substantial amount of money to developing nations in order to green their economies. Whilst there is no simple way to substantiate the figure given ($34 billion) it seems highly likely that China intends to play a much larger role in the fight against the Climate Crisis. With a greatly diminished input from the United States, it is clear that Europe and many other countries will have to make a far greater contribution to the fight. Although China has an appalling record on human rights and freedom for the individual, a large percentage of its' ruling hierarchy are scientists, which means that, unlike their opposite numbers in certain countries, they do know something about the position on the Climate Crisis. China has never branded the Climate Crisis a 'hoax' and definitely not a Communist one.

Just one statement came out of the G7 Summit regarding Climate Crisis and that was merely 'a commitment to fostering collective action in the pursuit of common solutions. The whole statement lumped it together with the problems of hunger, poverty and emerging and disruptive technologies. No figure was quoted for achieving these aims, so, to quote Greta, "Blah, blah, blah".

The untitled Plastics Conference was held in Busan, South Korea. I was somewhat surprised to have not heard of this event. It was supposedly the fifth and final round of an effort to produce the first legally-binding treaty on Plastics pollution including that of the oceans by the end of 2024.

Like nearly all these conferences, it failed, spectacularly. To achieve its' original target. Time ran out and it was agreed to hold another conference next year. It broke up with no firm agreement on the table. However, this was the largest session of the talks to date, with more than 3,000 participants at the Intergovernmental Committee on Plastic Pollution, including delegates from over 170 countries and representatives of almost 450 organisations.

INC Executive Secretary Jyoti Mathur-Philipp said, "We have tested the resilience of our planet to the limit. Now it is time for us to push our own limits and honour the trust placed in us".

The most contentious issue was regarding placing a limit on the amount of plastic that companies are allowed to produce. The representative from Panama put forward a text that set no numerical target or production cap. It stated that countries would adopt a global target at a later conference. This proposal quickly gained the support of more than 100 nations.

Yet another example of kicking the can down the road. The problem is that we are running out of road and will soon be kicking a brick wall, possibly made out of Lego!

BY JEFF WHITE