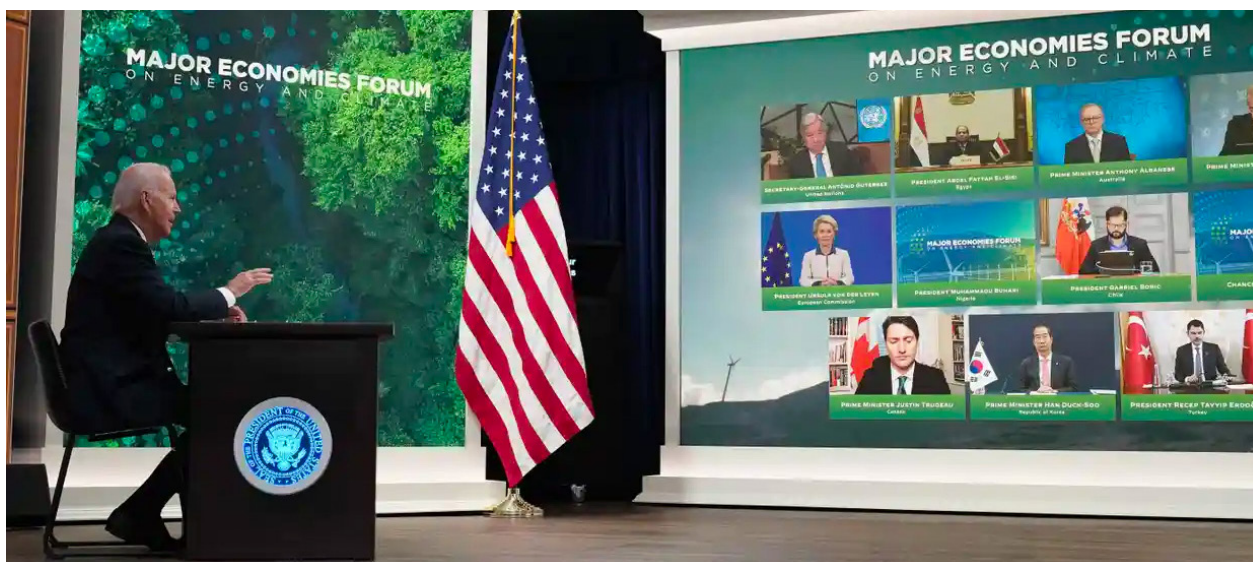


“Fossil fuel producers and financiers have humanity by the throat”



Joe Biden addresses the Major Economies Forum at the White House. António Guterres told the conference fossil fuels ‘don’t make political or economic sense’. Photo: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images.

June media attention to climate change or global warming in newspapers around the globe was down 3% from May 2022 and down 8% from June 2021. Coverage in international wire services increased 2% and radio coverage was up 13% from May 2022. Compared to the previous month coverage increased in Asia

(+8%), Latin America (+22%), Africa (+24%), and the Middle East (+34%), while coverage decrease in North America (-2%), the European Union (EU) (-2%), and Oceania (-62%). Figure 1 shows trends in newspaper media coverage at the global scale - organized into seven geographical regions around the world - from January 2004 through June 2022.

2004–2022 World Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming

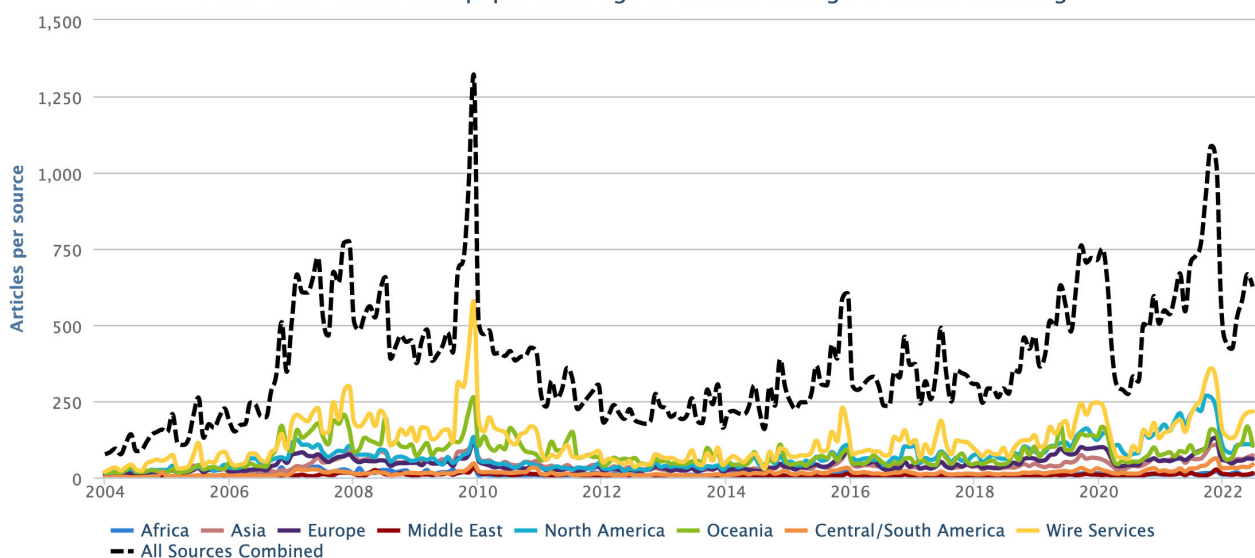


Figure 1. Newspaper media coverage of climate change or global warming in print sources in seven different regions around the world, from January 2004 through June 2022.

2000–2022 Japanese Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming

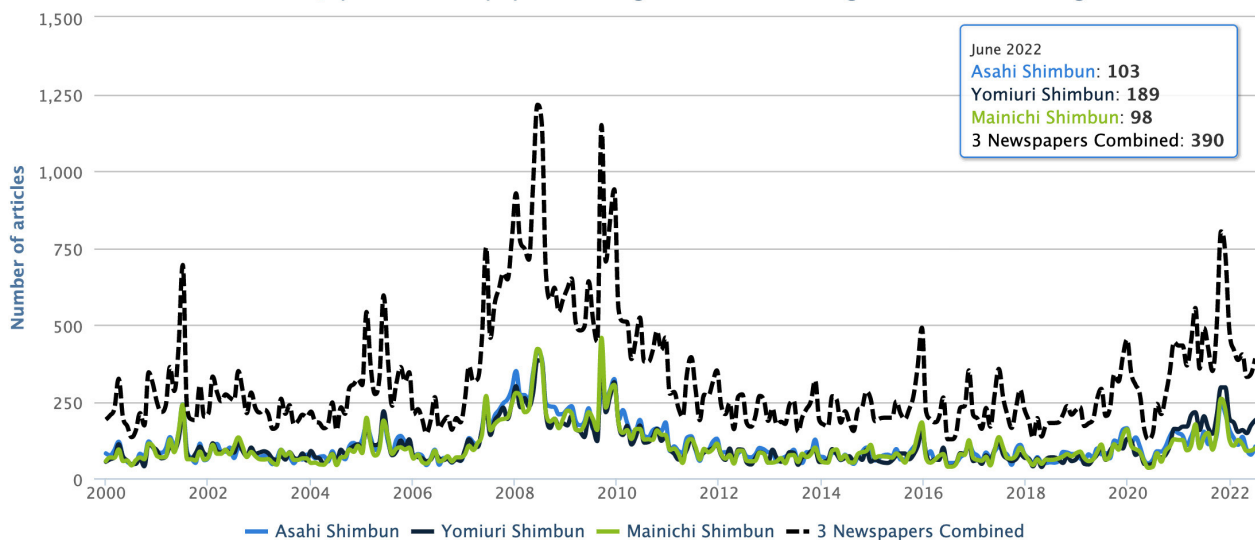


Figure 2. Japan newspaper coverage of climate change or global warming in *Asahi Shimbun*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and *Mainichi Shimbun* from January 2000 through June 2022.

At the country level, United States (US) print coverage decreased 3% while television coverage increased 16% from the previous month. Among other countries that we at the Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) monitor, coverage dropped in Sweden (-3%), India (-5%), Russia (-6%), the United Kingdom (UK) (-12%), Germany (-13%), Norway (-19%), New Zealand (-34%), Denmark (-34%), and Australia (-40%). However, coverage in June 2022 increased in Canada (+2%), Finland (+12%), Japan (+15%) (see Figure 2), and Spain (+17%).

Many climate change or global warming stories focused on *scientific* themes in the month of June. To begin, a study published in early June made connections between life expectancy, air quality, and climate change. This generated media attention. For example, *Washington Post* journalist Claire Parker wrote, “Breathing is more dangerous than smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol. That’s according to the latest report from the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, which says that air pollution now takes more than two years off the global average life expectancy – more than cigarettes, alcohol, or conflict and terrorism. The annual report, known as the Air Quality Life Index, or AQLI, was released Tuesday. It found that particulate air pollution – a mixture of contaminants such as smoke, fumes, dust and pollen – has remained

high, even as the coronavirus pandemic slowed the global economy and brought blue skies to some of the world’s most polluted areas. At the same time, evidence of the health risks associated with pollution has grown, the index says, adding that world leaders aren’t treating the problem with the urgency it deserves...” “Among the fossil fuels, coal is the champion in terms of producing particulate air pollution that causes people to lead shorter and sicker lives today, and increasing the rate of climate change,” he said. Air pollution is “deeply intertwined” with climate change, the report says, so tackling it can kill two birds with one stone. “Policy can simultaneously reduce dependence on fossil fuels that will allow people to live longer and healthier lives and reduce the costs of climate change,” the researchers wrote”.

Then in mid-June, a *new study* in the *New England Journal of Medicine* about vulnerability of children and fetuses to the effects of burning fossil fuels grabbed media attention. For example, *CNN* reporter Rachel Ramirez noted, “When Aaron Bernstein became a pediatrician 15 years ago, it didn’t occur to him that the climate crisis would grow into a critical health problem for his young patients. But over the years he started to notice more children visiting emergency rooms for heat-related illnesses, and some even suffered from climate-induced mental health issues... Frederica Perera,

lead author of the review and the founding director of the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health at Columbia University, said the purpose of the study was to not only show the link between the planet's heavy reliance on fossil fuels and children's health, but to also point out the available solutions that could prevent climate change-fueled disasters from putting the world's youngest people at risk...And as parts of the world continue to ramp up fossil fuel production, which will worsen the already accelerating crisis, Perera said she hopes the paper would motivate physicians and healthcare providers, who are a "trusted voice" around the world, to take on a larger role in advocating for climate policies to protect children from a warming planet.

Also in June, stories of record high carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere in the month of May made news. For example, [Associated Press journalist Seth Borenstein reported](#), "The amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has shot past a key milestone -- more than 50% higher than pre-industrial times -- and is at levels not seen since millions of years ago when Earth was a hothouse ocean-inundated planet, federal scientists announced Friday. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said its long-time monitoring station at Mauna Loa, Hawaii, averaged 421 parts per million of carbon dioxide for the month of May, which is when the crucial greenhouse gas hits its yearly high. Before the industrial revolution in the late 19th century carbon dioxide levels were at 280 parts per million, scientists said, so humans have significantly changed the atmosphere. Some activists and scientists want a level of 350 parts per million. Industrial carbon dioxide emissions come from the burning of coal, oil and gas. Levels of the gas continue to rise, when they need to be falling, scientists say. This year's carbon dioxide level is nearly 1.9 ppm more than a year ago, a slightly bigger jump than from May 2020 to May 2021".

June media coverage also featured many [cultural](#) stories relating to climate change or global

warming. Social movements of various kinds pushing for climate action peppered coverage throughout the month. For example, [New York Times correspondent Jeffrey Gettleman reported](#), "a different brand of activist -- young, mostly female and mostly from Eastern Europe -- who believes that the Ukraine war is a brutal manifestation of the world's dependence on fossil fuels. They have joined two causes -- antiwar activism and climate change -- to take full advantage of this moment when the world's attention is focused on Ukraine...They circulate around the continent, riding trains, staying in cheap hotels, powering themselves on cornflakes and almond milk, trying to corner Europe's top politicians and business people. While perhaps not as famous as Greta Thunberg, they are cut from the same hardy cloth and work closely with her Fridays for Future movement. Their message, which Ms. Thunberg and Ms. Lasota emphasized in a recent video, is that humankind's addiction to fossil fuels is driving misery and bloodshed. They point not only to Russia but also to Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and other petrostates with long histories of conflict and repression. "These things are connected," Ms. Thunberg said. "More and more fossil fuel expansion means more power to autocrats. This enables them to start wars like the one in Ukraine"."

Furthermore, in June several news reports surfaced that discussed punishments for climate protestors. For example, in Australia, [New York Times journalist Yan Zhuang wrote](#), "When climate protestors took to the streets of Sydney this week, including blocking one of its busiest traffic tunnels for over an hour, they faced the fury of government officials who labeled them "professional pests" and warned that they'd see "the book being thrown at them." The 24 people arrested during the protests this week face up to two years in jail and fines of up to \$15,000 under a new state law passed in April covering protests that disrupt economic activity. Previously, the penalty was a fine of up to \$400, with no jail time. Human rights activists and legal groups are now questioning whether the law imposes an overly harsh punishment for

nonviolent protests and is primarily being used against climate activists”.

Then, in the month of June, there was media coverage of citizen initiatives related to the climate. For example, several Spanish outlets ran stories about proposals of the Citizen Assembly for Climate. For example, [journalist Antonio Cerrillo wrote in *La Vanguardia*](#), “the independent civic think tank made up of 100 people chosen at random and promoted by the Government, proposes in its final conclusions that the administrations promote teleworking and the four-day working week” and also “recommend that electricity companies be forced to make most of their production from renewable sources and that the macro-farms of industrial livestock be reduced and that domestic flights be ‘minimized’ when there is an alternative by train and that the law against waste in the food system”.

Several [political](#) and [economic](#) themed media stories about climate change or global warming continued in June. To begin, media stories emanated from the Summit of the Americas early in the month. For example, [Washington Post journalist Maxine Joselow reported](#), “President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday will announce two initiatives at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles aimed at tackling climate change and boosting clean energy in a region often overlooked in U.S. foreign policy. The initiatives showcase the White House’s push to promote cooperation on climate change across the Western Hemisphere, even as Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador skips the summit in a blow to Biden’s pleas for regional unity. Harris will unveil the first initiative, dubbed the U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030, before meeting with Caribbean leaders on Thursday. The goal of the partnership is to “elevate U.S. cooperation with Caribbean countries to support climate adaptation and strengthen energy security, while building the resilience of critical infrastructure and local economies to the climate crisis,” according to a White House fact sheet. The second major program, dubbed the Renewable Energy in

Latin America and the Caribbean initiative, calls for reaching 70 percent installed capacity for renewable energy generation in the region’s electricity sector by 2030. Five new countries – Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana, Argentina and Brazil – will announce their intent to participate on Thursday, joining 15 existing members”.

Following that meeting, media coverage emanated from the Major Economies Forum – a climate conference organized by the White House – making links between climate challenges and several connected issues. For example, [Guardian journalist Fiona Harvey reported](#), “António Guterres compared fossil fuel companies to the tobacco companies that continued to push their addictive products while concealing or attacking health advice that showed clear links between smoking and cancer, the first time he has drawn such a parallel. He said: “We seem trapped in a world where fossil fuel producers and financiers have humanity by the throat. For decades, the fossil fuel industry has invested heavily in pseudoscience and public relations – with a false narrative to minimise their responsibility for climate change and undermine ambitious climate policies. They exploited precisely the same scandalous tactics as big tobacco decades before. Like tobacco interests, fossil fuel interests and their financial accomplices must not escape responsibility.”

Similarly, climate-related discussions from the Group of 7 (G7) summit earned media attention in June. In particular, the formation of a ‘Climate Club’ generated news stories. For example, [journalist Carmen Valero from *El Mundo* noted](#), “a new intergovernmental forum has been proposed by Germany with the aim of accelerating the application of measures to curb climate change and with a focus on the industry sector. “We note with concern that at this time neither global climate ambitions nor their implementation is sufficient to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement through the reduction of greenhouse gases,” they said in a statement. The members of the Climate Club, which will be established before the end of the year, will collaborate to mitigate climate change, in particular by promoting the

energy transition and accelerating the coal phase-out process.” Also, discussion of climate change and the ongoing invasion of Ukraine also prompted news accounts. For example, [journalist La Vanguardia journalist Celeste López wrote](#), “There is not one [challenge], there are three: the war in Ukraine, which has depleted the continent of cereals, climate change (four years of drought have destroyed agriculture) and COVID-19 (the flow of humanitarian aid is minimal)”.

At the end of June, a US Supreme Court decision to strike down an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tool to regulate carbon dioxide from power-generation plants garnered many news stories. For example, [PBS Newshour anchor Judy Woodruff reported](#), “Many environmental advocates acknowledged today the decision is the EPA – in the EPA case is a significant blow in the government’s efforts to limit greenhouse gases in the near term”. She interviewed US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan who commented, “I am deeply disappointed in the Supreme Court’s decision today, actually very frustrated. The decision does constrain what we do. But let me be clear. It doesn’t take us out of the game. We still will be able to regulate climate pollution. And we’re going to use all of the tools in our toolbox to do so. The constraint that we’re seeing today just prevents us as a country from making the progress as quickly as we need to. Climate action presents an opportunity for this country to ensure global competitiveness, create jobs, lower costs for families and protect people’s health and well-being, especially those who have suffered from the burden of inaction for far too long. And so, yes, today’s action is a disappointing action. It’s devastating in many ways, as the president has said, but it doesn’t take us out of the game. And we’re going to continue to use every tool we have to keep pace with tackling the climate crisis”. Meanwhile, among several media reports around the US and the world, [Washington Post correspondent Maxine Joselow pointed out](#), “the decision did not go as far as many climate advocates had feared. In particular, the majority did not take away the

EPA’s ability to regulate greenhouse gases from power plants, vehicle tailpipes or other major sources of planet-warming pollution. Instead, the justices said the agency cannot resurrect President Barack Obama’s Clean Power Plan, a now-defunct rule that would have forced utilities to engage in “generation shifting,” or switching from coal-fired power generation to natural gas or renewable energy”.

June media coverage about climate change or global warming with [ecological](#) and [meteorological](#) themes also kept pace with science stories. For instance, heavy flooding in Asia – with connections to climate change – earned media interest. As an example, [Guardian journalist Helen Davidson wrote](#), “Record-breaking rains that have battered parts of China and east Asia in the last week are expected to worsen, with authorities warning of an increased risk of floods. In the first week of China’s flood season, extreme rainfalls have caused floods and landslides, destroyed roads and infrastructure, and led to the deaths of at least 15 people. Floods, landslides and disruptions to water and electricity were reported in Shaoguan, in northern Guangdong province, and more than 800,000 people in Jiangxi were reportedly affected by torrential rains that have so far hit 80 of the province’s counties and damaged more than 76,000 hectares (188,000 acres) of cropland...China experiences extreme weather events, in particular flooding during the rainy seasons, but the climate crisis is exacerbating the severity and impact”. As a second example, [Associated Press journalists Aniruddha Ghosal and Al-Emrun Garjon wrote](#), “Scientists say climate change is a factor behind the erratic and early rains that triggered unprecedented floods in Bangladesh and northeastern India, killing dozens and making lives miserable for millions of others. Although the region is no stranger to flooding, it typically takes place later in the year when monsoon rains are well underway. This year’s torrential rainfall lashed the area as early as March. It may take much longer to determine the extent to which climate change played a role in the floods, but scientists say that it has made the monsoon – a seasonable change in



Figure 3. Front pages of European newspapers *El País* (Spain), *Le Monde* (France) and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany) covering heat waves in June.

weather usually associated with strong rains – more variable over the past decades. This means that much of the rain expected to fall in a year is arriving in a space of weeks”.

Also in June, many media stories covered early summer heatwaves across several Northern Hemisphere regions on the planet, such as in Europe and North America. For example, [CNN reported](#), “Spain is seeing its hottest early summer temperatures, one area of France banned outdoor events, and drought stalked Italian farmers as a heatwave sent Europeans hunting for shade and fretting over climate change. Such was the heat that England’s upscale Royal Ascot Racecourse even saw a rare change of protocol: guests were allowed to shed hats and jackets once the royals had passed... Mediterranean nations are more and more concerned about how climate change may affect their economies and lives”. As another example, [Washington Post](#) journalist Matthew Cappucci reported, “A stubborn and unrelenting dome of excessive heat and humidity is languishing over the Lower 48 for the third calendar week in a row, bringing record temperatures and heat index values topping 110 degrees in spots. Heat advisories and excessive-heat warnings blanket the Upper Midwest, including Milwaukee and Detroit, a prelude to even more intense heat

pushing into the South and Southeast. More than 55 million Americans are predicted to face triple-digit highs this week, and overnight lows could remain in the upper 70s to lower 80s in spots. That will contribute to heat stress that could be dangerous for vulnerable populations. The National Weather Service is calling the combination of heat and humidity “extreme” and “dangerous.” ...There are no immediate signs of the heat relenting. Instead, the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center continues to forecast odds of above-average temperatures through the end of June and perhaps into July. Warm weather and high pressure “heat domes” are a staple of any summer, but their intensity and duration are exacerbated by human-induced climate change.”

As another example that provided a larger context regarding these early summer northern hemisphere heat waves, [New York Times](#) journalist Raymond Zhong wrote, “Millions of Americans are once again in the grips of dangerous heat. Hot air blanketed Europe last weekend, causing parts of France and Spain to feel the way it usually does in July or August. High temperatures scorched northern and central China even as heavy rains caused flooding in the country’s south. Some places in India began experiencing extraordinary heat in

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March, though the start of the monsoon rains has brought some relief. It's too soon to say whether climate change is directly to blame for causing severe heat waves in these four powerhouse economies – which also happen to be the top emitters of heat-trapping gases – at roughly the same time, just days into summer. While global warming is making extreme heat more common worldwide, deeper analysis is required to tell scientists whether specific weather events were made more likely or more intense because of human-induced warming. (A team of researchers who studied this spring's devastating heat in India found that climate change had made it 30 times as likely to occur.) ...Simultaneous weather extremes in numerous locations aren't just meteorological curiosities. Individual heat waves can lead to illness and death, wildfires, and crop failures. Concurrent ones can threaten global food supplies, which have been under perilous strain this year because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While heat waves are shaped by complex local factors such as urbanization and land use, scientists no longer have much doubt about whether climate change is making them worse. Soon, the world's most devastating heat waves may simply have no historical analogue from the time shortly before humans starting pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, some scientists argue, rendering obsolete the question of whether climate change is a main driver".

Furthermore, *La Vanguardia* journalist Antonio Cerrillo noted, "the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) warned of that the current situation, which has brought temperatures above 40°C in Spain and France, "is a foretaste of the future" extreme weather that awaits humanity if there is no climate action by governments. The forecast is that more extreme weather events will occur due to global warming in a scenario of high greenhouse gas emissions."

With all this in mind, we thank you for your ongoing interest in our Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) work monitoring media coverage of these intersecting dimensions and themes associated with climate change and global warming. There simply are no comparable monitoring services for news coverage of climate change or global warming. We provide these monthly summaries, datasets and figures open source and downloadable so that they can be used widely; however, our ability to do so depends on financial support from those who can do so. If you are someone who can support MeCCO (any amount is helpful), follow this link: <https://giving.cu.edu/fund/media-and-climate-change-observatory-mecco>

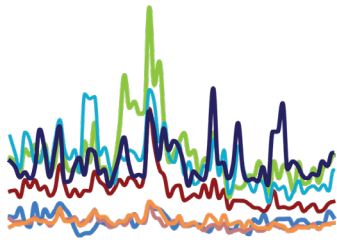
~ report prepared by Max Boykoff, Presley Church, Rogelio Fernández-Reyes, Jennifer Katzung, Ami Nacu-Schmidt and Olivia Pearman



Thank you for your ongoing interest in the work we do through MeCCO. We remain committed to our work monitoring media coverage of these intersecting dimensions and themes associated with climate change.

**Our ongoing work is dependent on financial support
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MeCCO

Media and Climate Change Observatory

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MeCCO monitors 126 sources (across newspapers, radio and TV) in 58 countries in seven different regions around the world. MeCCO assembles the data by accessing archives through the Nexis Uni, Proquest and Factiva databases via the University of Colorado libraries. These sources are selected through a decision processes involving weighting of three main factors:



**Geographical
Diversity**

favoring a greater geographical range



Circulation

favoring higher circulating publications



**Reliable Access to
Archives Over Time**

**favoring those accessible consistently
for longer periods of time**

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