

Sir,

The Independent's leading story 'On the edge' and article by Jim Hansen, the director of the NASA Goddard Institute, on the 17th February 2006, confirms the escalating threat of global warming and climate change.

It is little more than a year ago that scientists spoke about a possible 50-100 year window of opportunity to deal with global warming. In yesterday's article, Jim Hansen suggested that unless we dramatically curb carbon emissions in the next ten years, climate change will lead to rapidly rising sea levels and the loss of the world's major coastal cities such as London, New York and Sydney.

The admission that we have less than a decade left to act spells the end for the Kyoto protocol, as it does not achieve sufficient cuts in CO₂ emissions quickly enough. Mr. Blair may decide to keep it alive for political reasons, but it can no longer be considered an effective tool. It also spells an end to the claims that new technologies are going to save the world. Time is clearly running out and no amount of money can guarantee that the required technology can be developed and deployed before global warming has caused significant and irreversible damage to the planet.

We have come a long way - from ignorance to denial and to acceptance of the scientific evidence. But we urgently need to move the process forward to the next stage: Resolution and action. It is time for Governments everywhere to take on the global warming challenge head on. We urgently need to get on with the job, utilising the tools available to us today - taxation, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources - before it truly is too late.

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