



## DrumBeat: March 9, 2009

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Oil Industry Strives to Limit Its Layoffs](#)

As oil companies cut costs amid slumping energy prices, they are determined not to repeat the mistakes of the 1980s oil bust, when mass layoffs left the industry ill-prepared for the eventual rebound.

The lack of a clear consensus on how long the slump will last has presented the industry with a difficult choice. Companies can lay off workers and risk being understaffed if prices recover quickly, or bear the cost of employing more workers than needed during what could be a prolonged period of slow activity and lower revenues. A few of the largest oil companies, such as Exxon Mobil Corp. and Chevron Corp., have large cash reserves after years of high oil prices, but most smaller companies spent heavily during the boom years and are now scrambling to cut back.

### [Will OPEC Production Cut Come?](#)

Exactly why oil traders are so beholden to these updates from El-Badri and his underlings is a mystery. The group is notoriously inconsistent, and is infamous for its internal infighting. History suggests that there are many better sources for information about OPEC than the OPEC members themselves.

"If there is any consistency at all in OPEC's forecasts, it is a lack of consistency," said James Williams, energy analyst at WTRG Economics in London, Arkansas.

### [Fertiliser firms cry foul over RIL gas contract](#)

NEW DELHI: Weeks before India's biggest gas field is to go on stream off the Andhra coast, the government finds itself in a spot as fertiliser companies are refusing to ink deals with Reliance Industries Ltd -- the operator -- saying the draft of the agreement is heavily loaded in favour of Mukesh Ambani-controlled company and puts conditions that do not suit Indian entities.

### [Capitalism's crisis and our response - part 1](#)

The approach of peak oil — or, to be more precise, the beginning of the end of oil reserves which are easy to extract — is another major development and alters the basic arithmetic for oil-based economies. It was the major factor behind the invasion of Iraq, of course, and is the reason US bases are likely to remain after 'withdraw'.

Whilst the crisis has brought the price of oil and gas down the upward pressure exerted by peak oil will remain long term. The conditions of the 1990s where the price of oil fluctuated between \$10 and \$20 a barrel will not return. The policy of OPEC is to cut production in order to push the price back to around \$70 a barrel even during the crisis. Peak oil, therefore, represents a sea change in energy costs for the future.

### [Peak oil - Energy opportunities amid crisis](#)

Speakers at MIT's fourth annual student-led Energy Conference on Saturday emphasized the historic opportunity now open to proponents of clean energy: a global economic crisis that can be directly addressed by sweeping changes to the way we produce and use energy. And research universities, they said, could play a major role in helping to bring about such a transformation.

### [Government could speed grid projects at no cost](#)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Instead of laying out billions to upgrade the nation's power grid, the U.S. government could stimulate investment without spending a dime by streamlining the process for getting infrastructure projects started, the chief financial officer of Sempra Energy said on Monday.

...A shortage of power lines is widely considered to be the major challenge to expanding development of "green" power sources such as wind farms and solar plants, which need to be built in deserts and on plains far from population centers.

The major obstacle, however, Snell said, is the "not-in-my-backyard" mentality of residents who don't want unsightly power lines put up in their communities.

"For all of the talk about environmental impacts and all of it, it's all about aesthetics," Snell said. "People just don't want to look at it."

### [Stimulus may get small wind turbines spinning](#)

(CNN) -- The gale force of President Obama's \$787 billion economic stimulus package could breathe new life into an emerging industry: small wind turbines.

The bill provides a 30 percent investment tax credit to consumers who buy these turbines, which are typically used to help power homes or small businesses.

Even amid a recession, this tax credit "is going to blow the top off the market," said Ron Stimmel, a "small-wind" advocate with the American Wind Energy Association.

### [Companies rethink coal plants](#)

WASHINGTON — Even as demand for electricity rises, energy companies are delaying or scrapping plans for new coal-burning power plants because of the prospect of restrictions imposed by federal global warming legislation.

Power use in the USA could grow 22% during the next 20 years, according to the Energy Department. To help keep the nation's laptops and TVs humming, dozens of new plants that burn coal — by far the nation's largest source of electricity — were in the works.

President Obama and many members of Congress vow to cut U.S. emissions of carbon dioxide, the major "greenhouse gas" warming the Earth. Coal-burning power plants are the USA's single largest source of carbon dioxide.

### [NYMEX-Crude ends up on naval incident;eyes on OPEC](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - U.S. crude futures ended higher for the second session in a row on Monday, amid jitters following a Chinese-U.S. naval incident, supportive technicals and expectations OPEC may lower output targets again.

"Crude prices are up, I think, in a knee-jerk reaction to the news of Chinese vessels harassing a U.S. Navy ship in the South China Sea," said Phil Flynn, analyst at Alaron Trading in Chicago. "Also, people are rolling over positions due to the narrowing contango."

Gains were pared after a Saudi-owned newspaper reported that Saudi Arabia wants OPEC to discuss stricter compliance with existing supply curbs. The paper also cited sources as saying OPEC should not discuss another cut.

### [Shell Suspends Export Obligations for Nigeria's Forcados Crude](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Europe's largest oil company, suspended export obligations for Nigeria's Forcados crude after a pipeline was sabotaged last week.

Shell's Nigerian unit declared a so-called force majeure on exports in the remainder of March and April effective from March 7, company spokesman Rainer Winzenried said in a telephone interview today. Force majeure is a legal clause that allows producers to miss contracted deliveries because of circumstances beyond their control.

### [Kuwait: Oil above \\$50 if OPEC cuts 1mn bpd](#)

KUWAIT CITY - A senior Kuwaiti oil official says an OPEC production cut of a million barrels a day would raise prices over \$50 a barrel by the third quarter of 2009.

### [Worst Mexican Peso to Tumble 17% as Deficits Grow, Says Ramirez](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Mexico's peso, the worst performer among the world's most-traded currencies in the past six months, will weaken another 17 percent by year-end as the nation's twin deficits swell, said Rogelio Ramirez de la O, the economist who predicted the 1994 devaluation.

### [Exxon Says Qatargas Train 4 to Ship LNG Within Days](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Exxon Mobil Corp. Chief Executive Officer Rex Tillerson said the fourth train at the Qatargas project will ship its first liquefied natural gas within days.

Qatargas's fifth train, as LNG production units are known, will start later this year, Tillerson said today in an interview in Doha, Qatar.

### [Sasol, Petronas Studying Fuels Plant in Uzbekistan](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Sasol Ltd. and Malaysia's Petroliaam Nasional Bhd. are studying a possible gas-to-fuels plant in Uzbekistan that could be bigger than Sasol's Qatar facility, the largest such plant in the world.

### [Federal court vacates Alaska drilling decision](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - A federal appeals court has vacated an opinion issued last year that halted Shell Oil Co. drilling plans for the Beaufort Sea off Alaska's northern coast, leaving both sides in the case wondering what the action means.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday gave no indication whether a change in the Nov. 20 ruling would mean exploration drilling will be allowed, or whether the ruling by a smaller panel of the court's judges will be replaced with a similar decision.

### [Cheap summer airfare to Europe, Australia plentiful, but costs to carriers may be heavy](#)

"This is unprecedented," said Jean Covelli, president of The Travel Team Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Buffalo-based conglomerate Rich Products Corp.

"I think we might be seeing a forever-changed industry when we come out on the other side of this in terms of mergers, consolidation, frequencies and the routing of flights, with perhaps a number of cities being cut out of air service."

### [US carbon emissions by state](#)

As President Obama plans new measures to allow US states to crack down on carbon emissions, it's worth looking at the big polluters in the US. The figures are from the US Energy Information Administration, which keeps the world's best data on global carbon emissions too. We've also broken out figures for emissions from cars, too.

### [Kurt Cobb: Complications](#)

Some advocates for a sustainable future claim that the fulfillment of their vision will result in a simpler, healthier, happier existence when compared to our current consumption- and status-oriented unsustainable present. They may very well be right about healthier and happier. But will that sustainable future seem simpler to the individual?

The bright green high-tech globalized future imagined by some may result in lives that will seem no simpler than what we currently experience (that is, assuming we could achieve such as future). But a future characterized by a reversal of globalization and a return to more regional and local economic activity, or relocalization as it is often called, may actually make life suddenly much more complicated than we are used to. Let me explain.

### [Oil Tanker Strikes Submerged Ensco Jackup](#)

Ensco International Incorporated has been informed by the U.S. Coast Guard that an oil tanker, the SKS Satilla, apparently struck a submerged object which the U.S. Coast Guard has identified as the sunken hull of the ENSCO 74. The ENSCO 74, a jackup rig, was lost during Hurricane Ike last September. The U.S. Coast Guard has advised Ensco that the oil tanker reportedly suffered damage to its ballast tanks and was listing slightly, but its cargo tanks were not ruptured. ENSCO 74 reportedly is submerged in 115' of water approximately 65 miles south of Galveston.

### [Ali Naimi: Achieving Energy Stability In Uncertain Times](#)

Oil market stability has long been a central pillar of Saudi Arabia's own oil policy. By maintaining spare production capacity and investing for the long-term, we believe our policies have made a positive contribution toward stable markets. But we also recognize that market dynamics are rapidly changing and that there are new challenges that must

be confronted if our efforts to achieve stable energy markets are to be successful.

I believe oil market stability is enhanced when the following four conditions exist. First, oil prices should be low enough to facilitate economic growth, particularly in low income developing countries. Second, they should be high enough to provide sufficient return to producers that ensures adequate and timely investment. Third, prices should also be at a level high enough to provide an incentive for consumers to use oil efficiently. And finally, prices must be sufficient to encourage production from marginal fields, non-conventional sources and renewables.

### [ExxonMobil eyes starring role in Iraq](#)

ExxonMobil is in talks with Baghdad to create the investment climate that would allow it to become a significant player in Iraq's energy sector, the US supermajor's chief executive Rex Tillerson said today.

Iraq, which sits on the world's third-largest oil reserves, needs billions of dollars of foreign investment to overhaul its oil sector and boost output after years of sanctions and war.

### [Petrobras Voting Shares Cut to 'Neutral' at JPMorgan](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA's voting shares were lowered at JPMorgan Chase & Co., which cited the Brazilian state-controlled energy producer's 15 percent rally since the start of the year and a lack of "positive catalysts."

### [The rise of the Islamic world?](#)

According to the most recent tally by *Oil and Gas Journal*, Iran houses the second-largest pool of unexploited petroleum in the world, an estimated 125.8 billion barrels. Only Saudi Arabia, with an estimated 260 billion barrels, possesses more; Iraq, the third in line, has an estimated 115 billion barrels. With this much oil -- about one-tenth of the world's estimated total supply -- Iran is certain to play a key role in the global energy equation, no matter what else occurs. It is not, however, just sheer quantity that matters in Iran's case, no less important is its future productive capacity.

Iran, on the other hand, has considerable growth potential: it is now producing about 4 million barrels per day, but is thought to be capable of boosting its output by another 3 million barrels or so. Few, if any, other countries possess this potential, so Iran's importance as a producer, already significant, is bound to grow exponentially in the years ahead.

### [Kosovo Serb protesters clash with police, leaving over 20 injured](#)

BELGRADE (Xinhua) -- Kosovo Serb protesters clashed on Sunday with the local police, leaving more than 20 people injured, local media reported.

At least 14 Serbs and five police officers were injured in the eastern Kosovo village of Silovo where police tried to stop several hundred Serb protesters from blocking a main road, the official Serbian news agency Tanjug reported.

...Tanjug reported that the Silovo villagers have not had electricity for seven days due to a malfunction in the electric power grid, which is why they have decided to hold protests to demand that the Kosovo Electric Power Corporation repair the grid.

However, other reports indicated that Kosovo's power company cut off electricity in Silovo because of unpaid bills that date back to 1999.

### [Opponents eye options in wind farm fight](#)

CONCORD – Opponents of a proposed wind park in Coos County are looking at their federal options to halt the massive project, even as a state hearing begins today on licensing.

### [Boat made of plastic bottles to make ocean voyage](#)

SAN FRANCISCO, California (CNN) -- Imagine collecting thousands of empty plastic bottles, lashing them together to make a boat and sailing the thing from California to Australia, a journey of 11,000 miles through treacherous seas.

You'd have to be crazy, or trying to make a point. David de Rothschild is trying to make a point.

De Rothschild hopes his one-of-a-kind vessel, now being built on a San Francisco pier, will boost recycling of plastic bottles, which he says are a symbol of global waste. Except for the masts, which are metal, everything on the 60-foot catamaran is made from recycled plastic.

### [World Bank offers dire forecast for world economy](#)

WASHINGTON: In a bleaker assessment than those of most private forecasters, the World Bank predicted Sunday that the global economy would shrink in 2009 for the first time since World War II.

...Lower commodity prices have caused great problems in many African and Latin American countries. The steep slide in oil prices - 69 percent between July and December of 2008 - has spurred growth in poorer oil-importing countries but has

caused immense difficulty in poorer oil-exporting countries.

Brazil, an exporter of oil as well as many other commodities and manufactured goods, reported its first trade deficit in eight years as exports dropped 28 percent in 2008.

### [Oil rises to near \\$46 as investors eye OPEC cuts](#)

Oil prices rose to near \$46 a barrel Monday as investors anticipated another OPEC production cut will shrink global supplies. Gains were kept in check by the strengthening dollar, which drew investors away from commodities.

### [Oil at \\$50 Looms as OPEC Plans Cut, Keeps to Quota](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OPEC's record production cuts are draining the glut in world oil markets, leading traders to bet that \$50 crude is two months away.

Ever since oil began its 69 percent plunge from a record \$147.27 a barrel in July, traders have been looking for a bottom. Now that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries reduced supplies 13 percent since September, inventories are falling 1.4 million barrels a day, according to PVM Oil Associates Ltd., the world's biggest broker of energy trades between banks. OPEC will limit exports again when the group meets March 15, according to a survey by Bloomberg News.

### [OPEC Needs to Cut Oil Output 800,000 for Compliance](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OPEC needs to cut oil output by an additional 800,000 barrels a day to comply with existing quota reductions, the group's secretary-general said.

The group will lower its 2009 demand forecast to a drop of 1 million barrels a day this year, compared with 600,000 barrels a day it predicted in its February report, Abdalla el-Badri said. OPEC's March report will be published later this week.

### [India Rejects Goldman Sachs Criticism on ONGC Subsidy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Indian government rejected criticism by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. analysts that it failed to consult minority shareholders on \$20 billion of subsidies for refiners taken from Oil & Natural Gas Corp.

"The government is the majority shareholder in ONGC and in every company, the majority shareholder decides," R.S. Pandey, the senior-most bureaucrat in the nation's Oil Ministry, said by telephone from New Delhi today. "It is not illegal."

### [Price of gasoline continues to edge upward](#)

CAMARILLO, Calif. - The average price of gasoline continues to creep upward and is about 1.8 cents a gallon higher now than it was two weeks ago, according to the national Lundberg Survey of fuel prices.

### [Gas drilling feeling the economic pinch](#)

PICEANCE BASIN, Colorado — A good deal of work has disappeared with 40 to 60 percent fewer natural gas drilling rigs working in the Piceance Basin this year compared to last.

Rigs working in the Piceance Basin dropped from a high of 102 in the third quarter of 2008 down to about 38 in February, which has led to a “sharp decline” in oilfield services, according to a presentation last month by Carter Mathies of Arista Midstream Services. He expects the count to fall further.

### [Louisiana energy industry is fighting back against new taxes proposed by Obama](#)

The state's oil and gas industry has launched a crusade against President Barack Obama's proposed 2010 budget, which critics say will increase the tax burden on fossil-fuel producers to the tune of \$30 billion.

### [Total confirms Nigeria Akpo oilfield startup](#)

ABUJA (Reuters) - French oil major Total's Akpo deep offshore oilfield in Nigeria has started operations with production expected to reach 175,000 barrels per day this summer, the company said on Monday.

An official with Nigeria's state-run oil firm NNPC told Reuters on Thursday the oilfield, located 200 kilometres off the coast of the restive Niger Delta, had pumped first oil earlier in the week.

### [Years of distrust hurt chances of Nigeria oil reforms](#)

ABUJA (Reuters) - Nigeria's parliament is considering legislation that will drastically transform Africa's largest oil and gas sector, but years of political distrust and corruption are likely to delay passage for months if not longer.

### [Build resource reserves](#)

In early February, I predicted that a global inflationary trend would come on the heels of the subprime crisis, and suggested that investors put their money into natural resources. China's decision-makers seemed to have done just that with a national plan to stock up on national reserves of oil, coal products, and other important minerals such as copper, chrome, manganese and tungsten. The plan (2008-15) was promulgated on Jan 7.

Without the participation of the private sector, the government will only achieve limited success in this effort. Private investment and reserves are an important part of the country's overall resources.

If the Chinese government or a Stated-owned enterprise were to purchase resources in a foreign country right now, it may cause alarm and disrupt the deal. If private businesses were involved, the process would be much smoother.

#### [How per barrel cost of oil becomes price per gallon](#)

While most of us don't pay attention to the fluctuating price of commodities, almost all of us know the daily price for a barrel of oil.

It's curious since the cost of wheat determines the price of bread and the cost of pork bellies affects the price of bacon, but we're more concerned about those 42 gallons of sweet light crude.

And while we all know the closing price for a barrel of oil, most don't understand how and when that will translate into price changes at the pump.

#### [Medvedev: Russia will move forward despite crisis](#)

Medvedev says the crisis in the Russian economy, which has been devastated by plunging prices for oil, has forced him to defer his goal of turning Moscow into an international financial center.

But he says Russia is continuing with other ambitious tasks, including efforts to boost childbirth rates and reduce the population's death rate. Russia's population has declined every year since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

#### [Coalition deaths from IED attacks soar in Afghanistan](#)

Insurgents, who in the past have fled to havens in neighboring Pakistan in the winter, now appear to have stocks of explosives and other supplies in Afghanistan and have stayed to fight, McMinn said.

IEDs are the top killer of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Since the war began, 589 U.S. servicemembers have been killed there, 434 of them in combat. More than 2,700 have been wounded in action, according to the Pentagon.

### [New study: Most of Syria viable oil reserve already produced](#)

According to SANA, Arbash clarified that the geological reserve of oil in Syria certainly amounts 24.3 billion barrels and the vast majority of them IS located in the north-eastern Syria. The viable production oil reserve is estimated at 6.9 billion barrels, 4.5 billion barrel of them were already produced.

### [Ethiopia - Ministry warns oil operators after fuel shortage hits major towns](#)

The Ministry of Trade and Industry of Ethiopia on Friday warned oil companies operating in the country after a week-long fuel shortage took hold in major towns including Dessie and Bahir Dar. In a letter he wrote on Wednesday, stae minister Ahmed Tusa indicated that over eight major towns are for a week now suffering from shortage of fuels, particularly gas oil, benzene and kerosene, and ordered the oil companies to urgently address the problem.

### [Economic challenges on conference's agenda](#)

This year's conference will also include a strong international flavour with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) confirmed as guest nation for 2009. Representatives from the UAE will share their insights into the developments and innovations taking place in their region, with David Harris, Director, Logistics Sector, Department of Economic Development (DED), UAE, to outline the potential for Dubai as a global logistics hub. Other renowned overseas presenters include Kjell Aleklett, Professor of Physics at Uppsala University, Sweden and President of ASPO, The Association for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas, and Richard Wilding, Professor of Supply Chain Risk Management, Cranfield School of Management, United Kingdom.

Professor Aleklett is set to explore the problems confronting global transport as oil production reaches its peak, while Professor Wilding will discuss how companies can gain competitive advantage through innovation and collaboration in the supply chain process.

### [Can you survive economic crisis?](#) - Booming preparedness industry says Americans are stockpiling

To some, the term "survivalist" conjures images of camouflage-clad men stockpiling freeze-dried food in a mountain cabin, but in the current economic crisis, the people quietly preparing to survive catastrophe may just be your next-door neighbors.

In his column in last month's Financial Times, business and technology expert Ade McCormack writes, "The world is in crisis and with it the world of business. Many of us have two plans. Plan A involves President Barack Obama performing some economic magic. Plan B involves a revolver, a vegetable patch and a subscription to Survivalist Monthly."

### [Auto parts supplier looks beyond industry for survival](#)

BURTON, Mich. — In 2001, Laurie Schmalld Moncrieff gave her 35 workers some homework.

Moncrieff, a third-generation family owner of auto supplier Schmalld Tool & Die near Flint, Mich., asked her workers to read *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, a self-help book that deals with big life changes.

Moncrieff worried her employees were too accustomed to making car parts to quickly adjust to changes she saw coming.

"They looked at me as if I was nuts," she says. "But I have been saying that change is coming. It felt like I was there on a track watching the train coming, and no one was listening to me."

### [GFEI outlines 50 per cent improvement by 2050](#)

GFEI expects technologies to arrive that will improve the efficiency of cars by 30 per cent by 2020 and 50 per cent by 2030. The efficiency of the global car fleet will improve by 50 per cent by 2050 mainly due to incremental change to conventional internal combustion engines and drive systems as well as better aerodynamics and weight reduction.

### [Transit outlook grimmer after record '08](#)

The number of people riding buses and trains hit a 52-year high in 2008 as skyrocketing gas prices and a faltering economy pushed riders toward less expensive travel.

Public transit ridership last year increased 4% to 10.7 billion rides, according to a report released Monday by the American Public Transportation Association.

The outlook is gloomy, though. Ridership growth in the fourth quarter slowed as more commuters lost their jobs and budget shortfalls pushed transit systems to reduce service or raise fares.

### [Nuclear power industry sees opening for revival](#)

With the Obama administration staking the nation's energy future on clean sources, the U.S. nuclear power industry aims to make a comeback by building dozens of new reactors that supply plentiful, carbon-free electricity.

### [Ghana: Biofuels do far more harm than good](#)

A number of foreign businesses have been storming Ghana in their quest to invest in the cultivation of sugarcane and jatropha for the production of biofuels for export. While this looks good for a country that is in need of foreign exchange, the country's history of managing environmental challenges of development is not encouraging.

### [Ethanol producers look to rebound from bankruptcy](#)

As ethanol producers battle compressed operating margins and volatile commodity markets, some have been forced to file for bankruptcy. According to data compiled by EPM, four ethanol plants representing approximately 443 MMgy filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in January.

### [Ethanol: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly, the Beautiful](#)

*The Good:* The 9 billion gallons of ethanol that Americans used last year helped drive down oil prices. For those of us who fuel our vehicles with gasoline, as much as 10 percent of that gasoline is ethanol. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 requires that more biofuel be used every year until we reach 36 billion gallons by 2022.

### [Siemens wins major renewable energy order](#)

BERLIN (AFP) – German engineering giant Siemens said Friday it has won one of its biggest ever renewable energy contracts, worth more than two billion euros (2.5 billion dollars) for wind turbines.

"The agreement with Dong Energy (of Denmark) is one of the biggest orders in the history of Siemens," a statement quoted the head of Siemens' renewable energy division Rene Umlauf as saying.

### [Drought, recession scorch Texas cattle ranchers](#)

PANDORA, Texas (Reuters) - Frates Seeligson recalls when his ranch last saw rain: September of last year.

That was around the time he took on an extra 200 cows to help a farmer whose fields were ravaged by Hurricane Ike.

Talk about a perfect storm. The worst drought on record in this parched part of south-central Texas means his withered land can hardly support his own dwindling herds.

Meanwhile, the worsening recession means that low-priced hamburger meat is replacing high-priced steak on American shopping lists, driving down beef prices.

#### [Bulgarian air most polluted in Europe: ministry](#)

SOFIA (AFP) – The air in Bulgaria is the most polluted in the whole of the European Union, the ministry of environment and water found in a new report published Friday.

..It blamed the high level of pollution on the large number of old vehicles in Bulgaria without catalytic converters and the lack of restrictions imposed on second-hand cars imported from western Europe.

In addition, central heating and gas heating is used primarily in big cities, while smaller towns and villages still rely on coal-fired heating.

#### [Nigeria: potential gas hotspot, on frontline for climate change](#)

LAGOS (AFP) – Nigeria, tipped to be the world's next natural gas powerhouse, is on the frontline for climate change as it is ranked Africa's largest producer of greenhouse gases.

Experts meeting in the country last week said the west African powerhouse, which has the seventh largest proven natural gas reserves in the world at 187 trillion cubic feet, could become a key player in the international gas market.

But the gas is mainly found in the Niger Delta -- an oil-producing area of swamps and creeks the size of Scotland -- that occupies an unenviable position of being Africa's largest gas flarer and one of the continent's lowest-lying areas.

#### [DR Congo signals reversal of forest reforms: NGOs](#)

KINSHASA (AFP) – Democratic Republic of Congo authorities have signaled their intention to reverse forest reforms and expand industrial logging, a statement from major environmental groups said Friday.

"Congolese government authorities are ... signalling their intent to backtrack on decisions and expand industrial logging activities in the DRC," a statement from Global Witness, Greenpeace and Rainforest Foundation said.

## [Jeremy Clarkson and Michael O'Leary won't listen to green cliches and complaints about polar bears](#)

Dr Myanna Lahsen, a cultural anthropologist at the University of Colorado, has specialised in understanding how professional scientists, some of them with highly respected careers, turn climate sceptic. She found the largest common factor was a shared sense that they had personally lost prestige and authority as the result of campaigns by liberals and environmentalists. She concluded that their engagement in climate issues "can be understood in part as a struggle to preserve their particular culturally charged understanding of environmental reality."

## [We Are Breeding Ourselves to Extinction](#)

All measures to thwart the degradation and destruction of our ecosystem will be useless if we do not cut population growth. By 2050, if we continue to reproduce at the current rate, the planet will have between 8 billion and 10 billion people, according to a recent U.N. forecast. This is a 50 percent increase. And yet government-commissioned reviews, such as the Stern report in Britain, do not mention the word *population*. Books and documentaries that deal with the climate crisis, including Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," fail to discuss the danger of population growth. This omission is odd, given that a doubling in population, even if we cut back on the use of fossil fuels, shut down all our coal-burning power plants and build seas of wind turbines, will plunge us into an age of extinction and desolation unseen since the end of the Mesozoic era, 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs disappeared.

## [Could climate prove a change too far for Obama?](#)

PARIS (AFP) — European enthusiasm for President Barack Obama's ambitious programme of US renewal does not hide deep uncertainty over the likelihood of his delivering on measures to combat climate change.

Nine months from UN talks in Denmark, where world leaders will try to wrap up agreement on a new global climate change treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol that expires in 2012, there are real fears that events may conspire against Obama.

The depth of the disaster that has befallen the US economy in particular -- witness Friday's announcement of over 650,000 jobs lost in February alone -- and the difficulties Obama has faced getting Congress to greenlight his rescue plans underscore significant obstacles ahead.

## [Hopes of climate change accord 'are sinking'](#)

Two leading climate scientists have broken ranks with their peers to declare that hopes of getting a meaningful deal on halting global warming this year are already lost.

Professor Kevin Anderson, director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, and Professor Trevor Davies, one of the centre's founders, told *The Times* that it was time to start looking for alternatives to an international deal.

### [Climate change: Acid oceans transform marine life, says study](#)

PARIS (AFP) – Ocean acidification driven by climate change is stripping away the protective shell of tiny yet vital organisms that absorb huge amounts of carbon pollution from the atmosphere, a new study has revealed.

Since the start of the Industrial Revolution, the calcium carapace of microscopic animals called foraminifera living in the Southern Ocean have fallen in weight by a third, the study found.

### [Climate scientists warn that world is heading for war of the resources](#)

There is a 50-50 chance of temperature rises reaching dangerous levels over the next century, climate scientists have warned.

Even with heavy cuts in greenhouse gas emissions of 3 per cent a year from 2015, the chance of preventing the temperature rise from exceeding 2C by 2050 is no more than half. And every decade's delay in reducing emissions will cause temperatures to go up by half a degree.

...Scientists fear that temperature rises above 2C would lead to wars over key resources, including water supplies, falls in crop yields in southern Europe and the spread of diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Almost a third of animal and plant species could become extinct. Warm-water corals are among the species most at risk; animals that will struggle to survive include polar bears and emperor penguins.

### [Warming skeptics face shrinking support](#)

NEW YORK (UPI) -- Climate change skeptics meeting at an annual conference in New York Monday are showing signs of internal disputes and weakening support, observers say.

### [Scientists to issue stark warning over dramatic new sea level figures](#)

Scientists will warn this week that rising sea levels, triggered by global warming, pose a far greater danger to the planet than previously estimated. There is now a major risk that many coastal areas around the world will be inundated by the end of the century

because Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets are melting faster than previously estimated.

Low-lying areas including Bangladesh, Florida, the Maldives and the Netherlands face catastrophic flooding, while, in Britain, large areas of the Norfolk Broads and the Thames estuary are likely to disappear by 2100. In addition, cities including London, Hull and Portsmouth will need new flood defences.



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