

## EDITORIAL

**The carbon challenge**

If one has a passion for the planet, then this is the right time to drastically lower the carbon emissions. A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by our actions. The average carbon footprint for a person in the United States is 16 tons, one of the highest rates in the world. Some carbon emissions will probably never be eradicated entirely from certain industries, such as air travel or construction. When emissions cannot be further reduced, carbon offsetting is the next best thing, says Winters (1). Offsetting emissions is paying for or investing in organisations that can extract carbon from the atmosphere to help others reduce their footprint. It could include investing in reforestation projects or new technologies that suck carbon out of the atmosphere and sequester it underground permanently, technologies to replace jet fuel with alternative green fuels, or switching fossil-fuel-powered facilities with hydrogen-powered facilities.

Unless the global economy meets the aims of the Paris Agreement, keeping climate change well below 2°C, the world is expected to suffer extreme weather conditions leading to mass migration and global catastrophe. The argument for global companies to reduce their greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions is clearer than it has ever been. Business operations around the world are now subject to greater climate and transition risks. Consumers are insisting for eco-friendly products and responsible corporate behaviours. Investors are increasingly embracing capital-allocation strategies that take environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues into account. Policy makers and government organizations are exploring the potential regulation of carbon emissions. The more aggressive the targets, the better the results.

In COP26 climate summit in Glasgow held in November 2021, it was made clear that the current climate crisis has been precipitated by unsustainable lifestyles and wasteful consumption patterns mainly in the developed countries. The world needs to awaken to this reality. Globally, the building and construction sectors account for nearly 40% of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in constructing and operating buildings (2). Current building codes address operating energy but do not typically address the impacts of embodied carbon in building materials and products. However, more than half of all GHG emissions is related to materials management (including material extraction and manufacturing) when aggregated across industrial sectors (3).

In order to reduce our carbon footprint, we can start an eco-friendlier life. In winter, instead of heating, insulate the loft and walls which will make sure our home retains heat during the winter and stays cool in summer. By switching to a company that provides electricity from solar, wind, or hydroelectric energy, we can reduce our household emissions. Buy energy efficient electrical appliances. Additionally, make sure to turn off and unplug anything we are not using. It takes energy and resources to process and deliver water to our homes. So, by using less water, we can help the environment and lower our carbon footprint. The food we eat can have a significant impact on the environment. For example, meat and dairy products require a lot of land, water and energy to produce. They also create a lot of methane, a greenhouse gas. Moreover, food shipped from overseas uses a lot more resources than local produce. By eating fewer animal products, especially red meat, (or choosing a plant-based diet) and shopping for locally sourced food, we can make a big difference. Why not support our local farmers' market?

Powering empty rooms and office space is a huge energy drain. By making sure we turn off lights and appliances when they are not in use, we can make sure we are not wasting power. we can also request to install automatic, movement-sensing lights and energy-saving LED bulbs to address the issue. It has never been easier to collaborate with others online. Whether through sharing documents using cloud storage or video conferencing instead of travelling, we can reduce our waste and emissions. Try moving away from printed documents where possible, and encourage others to work on their digital skills for the workplace. Cycling and walking are two of the most environmentally friendly ways to travel. And, not only are they good for the planet, but they are also good for our health. If we can, choose to cycle or walk to work where possible. 'Reduce, reuse, recycle' is a popular slogan. Companies of all sizes use a host of different products in their day-to-day running. Whether it has things like paper, electronic devices, packaging, or water, it all has a carbon footprint. By reducing the amount of waste, we generate, reusing IT equipment, and recycling waste, we can make a real difference. Single use plastics may be convenient, yet they are fairly dreadful for the environment. Not only do they pollute our waterways and oceans, but they also require energy to produce and recycle. We can stop using things like disposable coffee cups and cutlery to reduce our company's carbon footprint. Instead of preaching, let us practise and bring a change.

**REFERENCES**

1. Bill Winters, Group Chief Executive officer of Standard Chartered.
2. UNEP and IEA, “Global Status Report 2017: Towards a Zero-Emission, Efficient, and Resilient Buildings and Construction Sector,” 2017.
3. OECD, “Global Material Resources Outlook to 2060: Economic Driver.

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