

Coronavirus having little impact on climate: UN agency

April 1 2020



The coronavirus crisis has cleared the streets—and the air—in cities like New Delhi, but the UN warns the change is only temporary

Though factories have shut, planes have been grounded and cars left in the garage, the coronavirus pandemic is having very little impact on

climate change, the World Meteorological Organization said Wednesday.

Any reductions in pollution and carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be temporary, said Lars Peter Riishojgaard, from the infrastructure department of the WMO, a United Nations agency based in Geneva.

"It does not mean much for climate," he told a virtual press conference.

Riishojgaard said there was a lot of media speculation about what impact the global pandemic might have on the climate, [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and longer-term [global warming](#).

"The answer to that is it probably does not mean very much," he said.

While in the short term, [carbon dioxide emissions](#) would go down as cars stay put and aircraft remain on the ground, "we expect the impact will be fairly short-lived," Riishojgaard said.

"The pandemic will be over at some point and the world will start going back to work and with that, the CO2 emissions will pick up again, maybe or maybe not to quite the same level."

He said visibility in cities such as New Delhi had improved because there were fewer traffic-emitting fumes, but cautioned that it was only down to an "artificial halt" to normal activity.

"You could see it as maybe science experiment: what happens if all of a sudden we turn the whole thing off?" said Riishojgaard.

"It will lead some people, and perhaps also some governments, to rethink."

He reflected on China shutting down much industrial production during

the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

"They demonstrated very clearly that you can absolutely, if you have enough control over the situation, you can turn off the air pollution," he said.

"But I don't think we should claim victory here yet because things will pick up again eventually."

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Coronavirus having little impact on climate: UN agency (2020, April 1) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-04-coronavirus-impact-climate-agency.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.