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| **Meeting summary for CACOR Live | Dr. Melissa Kenney| US Climate Adaptation with Equitable and Just Action: Insights from the 5th US National Climate Assessment |18 December 2024 at 13:30 ET (2024-12-18)** |

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| **Quick recap** |
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| Dr. Melissa Kenney discussed the findings of the 5th US National Climate Assessment's adaptation chapter, emphasizing the need for transformative adaptation and effective adaptation governance. The team also discussed the importance of adaptation and mitigation strategies in managing climate change, the complexities of climate change adaptation, and the potential use of hydrogen as an energy source. Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact of the incoming US administration's views on the environment, and the need for a collaborative approach to address climate change and other environmental issues. |
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| **Next steps** |
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| • Melissa to share the link to the Yale and George Mason climate communication opinion polls. |
| • Ted to connect his daughter, who is in charge of the climate change adaptation program for the National Research Council, with Melissa. |
| • Ted to invite Sylvia Zimmerman Del Castillo, the new co-president of the Club of Rome, to speak on the show in the coming months. |
| • Art to share the AI-generated summary of the discussion with the group. |
| • CACOR team to follow up on membership payments and encourage YouTube subscriptions and sharing. |
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| **Summary** |
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| **Climate Adaptation and Decision Support** |
| Claude introduced Dr. Melissa Kenney, an environmental decision support scientist, who discussed the findings of the 5th US National Climate Assessment's adaptation chapter. Melissa explained her research focus on complex decision-making processes and the integration of scientific information into public and private sector decisions. She emphasized the importance of climate adaptation, which involves adjusting to environmental changes to minimize harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. Melissa also provided an overview of the US Global Change Research Program and the National Climate Assessment, highlighting its role in assessing the effects of global change on various sectors and projecting future trends. She concluded by stating that the assessment does not prescribe specific policy interventions but aims to provide decision-makers with the types of risks that could be avoided or reduced. |
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| **Addressing Climate Change and Adaptation** |
| Melissa discussed the key messages from the US National Climate Assessment. She highlighted that adaptation efforts are insufficient to keep pace with the impacts of climate change, and that transformative adaptation is needed to address climate-related risks. She also emphasized the importance of equity in adaptation, noting that adaptation processes and decisions often fail to address the uneven distribution of climate harms and social injustices. Melissa further discussed the need for effective adaptation governance, which empowers multiple voices to navigate competing goals, and the importance of decision-relevant climate information and evidence-based decision-making approaches. Lastly, she pointed out that adaptation investments and financing are difficult to track and may be inadequate, and that proactive adaptation can reduce severe costs of future climate change. |
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| **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation** |
| Melissa, a chapter lead of the 6th National Climate Assessment, discussed the importance of adaptation and mitigation strategies in managing climate change. She emphasized the need for a combination of adaptation, mitigation, and resilience measures to effectively respond to climate change. Melissa also highlighted the role of the US Global Change Research Program, which is required by law, and its potential vulnerability under the incoming administration. She expressed her commitment to delivering the report on time, regardless of the political climate. The discussion also touched on the importance of considering rapid shifts in environmental conditions or social conditions, and the potential for disruptive technological innovations to impact adaptation strategies. Anitra raised concerns about the consumption of fossil fuels and the need for a focus on equity in adaptation strategies. Melissa responded by emphasizing the importance of win-win strategies that reduce climate risk and lock in greenhouse gases, and the need for rapid decarbonization across various sectors. |
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| **Climate Adaptation, Equity, and Financing** |
| In the meeting, Melissa discussed the complexities of climate change adaptation and the need for equitable access to scientific information and financing. She highlighted the importance of supporting climate-resilient decisions that allow communities to make choices that reduce climate risk. Art expressed his admiration for Melissa's work and discussed the challenges of balancing nature and human behavior in the face of climate change. David raised questions about the granularity of data and the intersection of adaptation and mitigation, to which Melissa responded by explaining the importance of understanding the science of response management. She also clarified that while economic data is not always available, the focus is on reducing climate risks and protecting lives and livelihoods. |
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| **Addressing Climate Change With Diversification** |
| In the meeting, Jon expressed concerns about the potential negative impact of the incoming US administration's views on the environment. Melissa responded by emphasizing the importance of diversifying funding sources and collaborations with various sectors to manage risks and adapt to changing priorities. She also highlighted the need for a diverse portfolio of solutions to address climate change. Ted, who has experience in sustainable development research, agreed with Melissa's points and added that it's crucial to focus on solutions rather than just convincing people about the problem. He also mentioned the importance of assembling success stories and case studies to support effective strategies. The team agreed on the need for a collaborative approach to address climate change and other environmental issues. |
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| **Electric Vehicles in Rural Areas** |
| In the meeting, Raymond and Melissa discussed the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in remote, rural, and colder areas. Raymond argued that EVs make more sense in these areas due to the ease of charging at home, while Melissa acknowledged the challenges of battery life and infrastructure in dense urban areas. They also discussed the importance of looking at a broad range of data sources and the role of the insurance industry in risk management. Ted expressed his appreciation for Melissa's presentation and invited her to speak again in the future. Anitra made an announcement about the new co-presidents of the Club of Rome from the Western Hemisphere. |
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| **Hydrogen's Role in Energy Transition** |
| The group discusses the potential use of hydrogen as an energy source, with a focus on its viability for transportation and agricultural applications. Raymond is skeptical about the efficiency and feasibility of using hydrogen for transportation, citing high costs and low overall efficiency compared to alternatives. Melissa highlights efforts in places like Germany and Minnesota to explore "green hydrogen" produced from renewable sources, suggesting it could be useful for decarbonizing industries like steel and aviation. The debate centers around whether investments into hydrogen represent a pragmatic transition path or an attempt by fossil fuel companies to prolong demand for their products. Ultimately, Melissa advocates for having open discussions about different technology pathways to achieve climate goals rapidly and equitably. |
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| *AI-generated content may be inaccurate or misleading. Always check for accuracy.* |