

Climate Change and Financial Disparity

By Rayne Lyl Renney

North Seattle College

Faculty Adviser: Dr Alif Laila Tisha

About the Presentation:

There is an intersection between climate change, financial disparity, and responsibility.

There is a notable correlation between increases in the GDP, increases in emissions, and increases in financial disparity.

Globally, climate disasters adversely affect the poorest in greater proportion than the wealthy. This is true of financially disadvantaged individuals and of less developed countries. The poorest are also proven to be the lowest contributing force to the climate crisis. Much of the financial distress experienced by the poor correlates with the environmental distress created by the financially well-off.

Billionaires produce 1 million times more carbon than the average person, and the top 1% of wealthiest individuals create 2 times more emissions than the poorest 50% of people combined. – Oxfam International

Economic successes do not mean environmental ones, nor do they mean benefits for everyday people. Globally, increases in the GDP also usually mean increases in emissions, increases in profits for the rich, and increases of the poor. Pollution, resource losses, and environmental mismanagement in developing countries and amongst the most financially destitute are directly related to their exploitation and their being ‘downriver’ from over-consumptive and over-productive countries and wealthy elite.

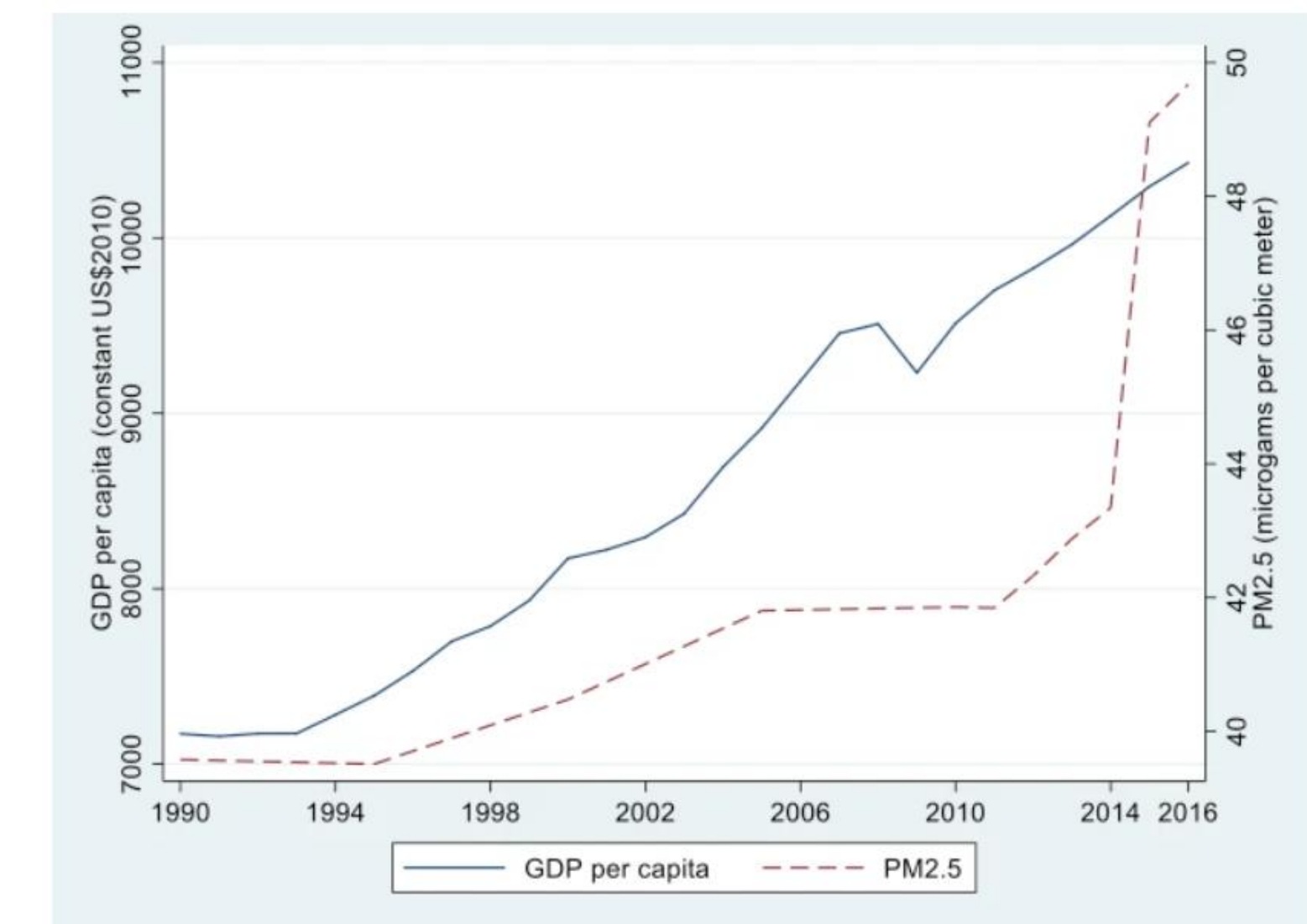
Food waste, which is a leading contributor to emissions and water waste, is offered as an example of where hope can be found, both as an environmental and financial solution, for even the disadvantaged. We produce enough food in the United States to feed the world if we didn't waste half of it each year. By addressing some small measure of personal responsibility, we can help create a shift that will reinforce hope for bigger, more far-reaching changes in the systems producing systematic responsibility for the climate crisis.

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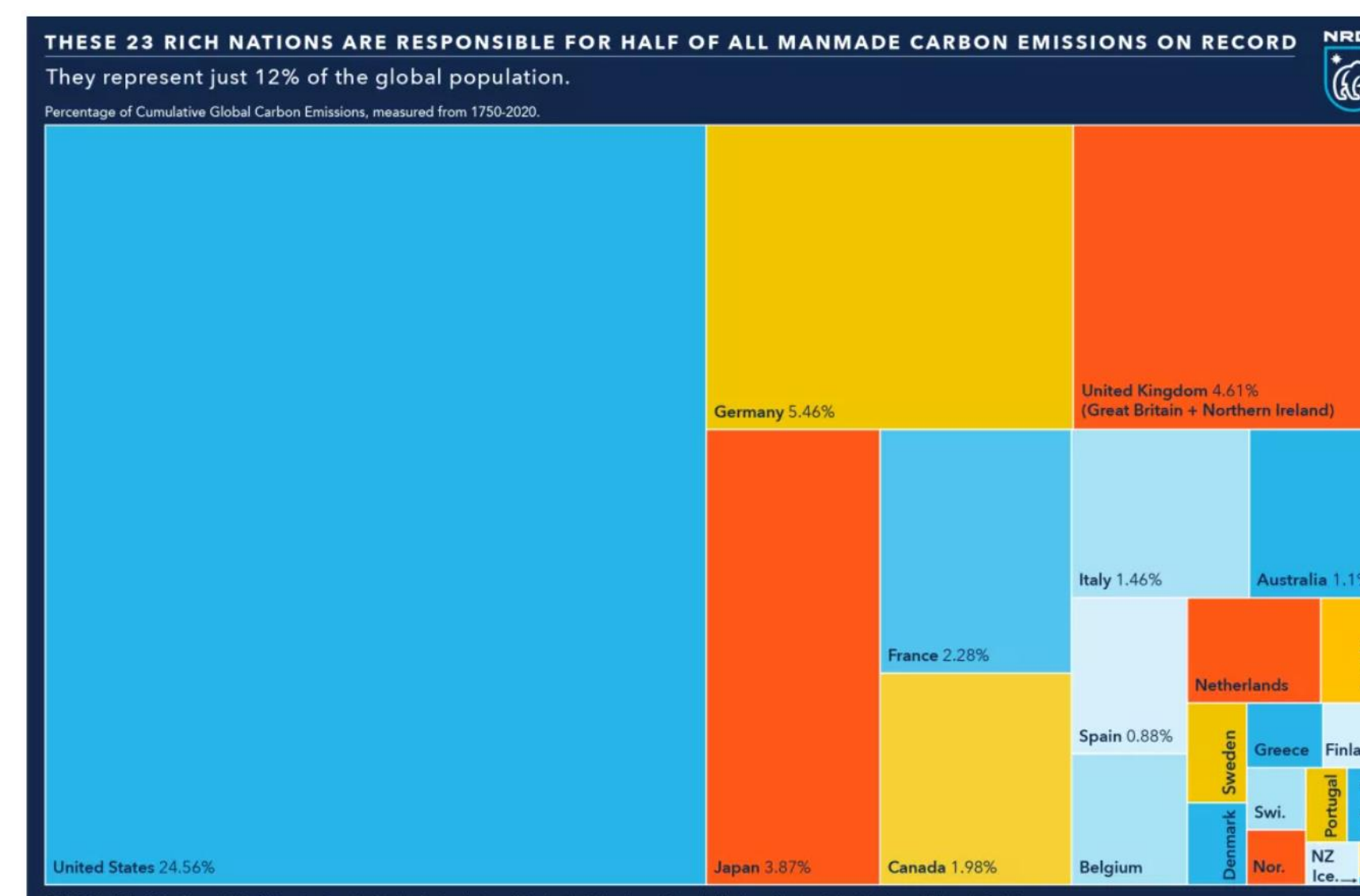
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When the GDP of almost all countries go up, emissions also go up. There are some rare examples of a country with a growing GDP and lowering emissions, but globally, the trend is persistent.

Figure 1: Global Trends of GDP and Air Pollution (PM2.5), 1990-2016

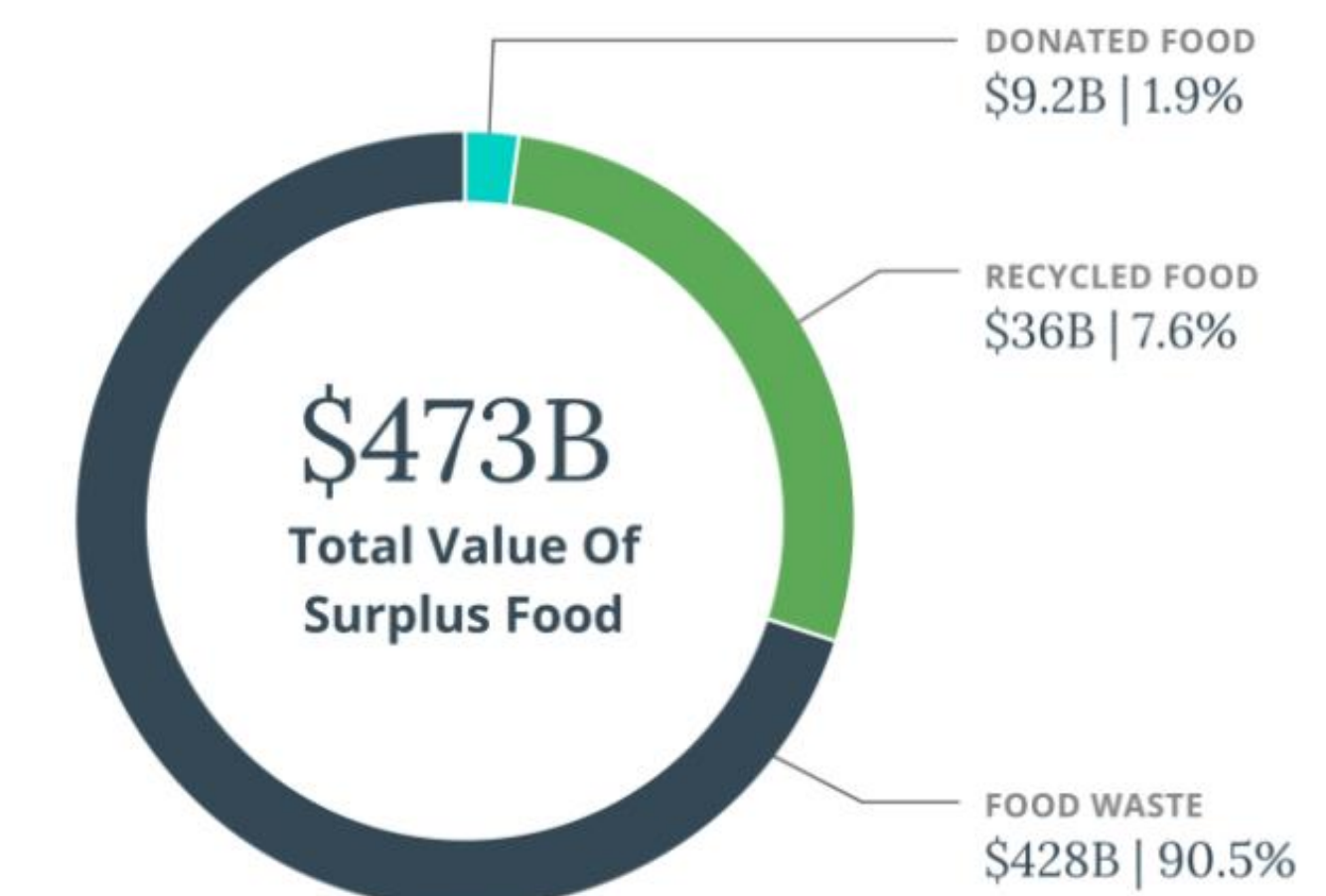


Source: Dang and Serajuddin (2020).



The US is the leading producer of all these correlating problems. Those with low socio-economic status in most countries do not contribute to emissions production, but in the US, even those with low incomes contribute to food waste.

GDP growth and emissions growth also correlates with financial disparity and consumption growth, yet it is not healthy growth because billions are based on waste, not progress. This creates actionable opportunities for change even everyday people can make, which could help them financially and help the climate crisis.



Source: ReFED/2022 Data (Published 11/23)