

The Intense Effort Needed

To stay below an atmospheric CO₂ level of about 550 ppm, the current increase in total CO₂ emissions of 3% per year must be reversed by 2020. Even steeper reductions will be needed to keep most polar waters from becoming corrosive to the shells of key marine species and to maintain favourable conditions for coral growth.

If negotiations at the UN Climate Change Conference — Conference of the Parties in its fifteenth session (COP15)— in Copenhagen in December 2009, fall short of these objectives, still higher atmospheric CO₂ levels will be inevitable.