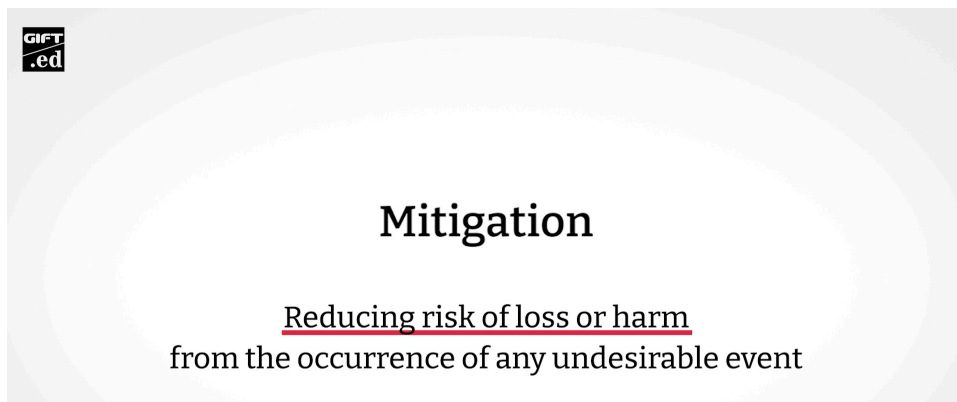


Adaptation and Mitigation as a Green Transformation

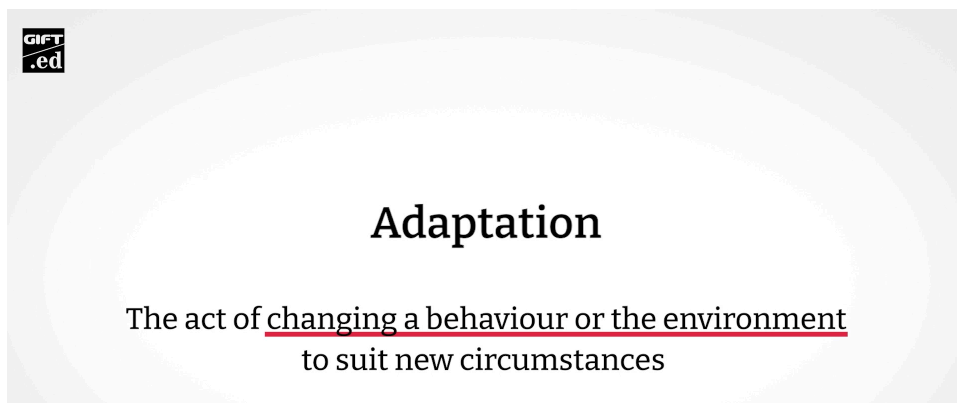
Elaine Fernandez:

To combat the sustainability challenges of our time, countries around the world are increasingly looking to develop mitigation and adaptation strategies.

But what exactly are these? Mitigation strategies limit the risk of threats occurring in the first place. For example, by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide we produce, we mitigate the risk of runaway climate change.



Adaptation strategies on the other hand, are actions that reduce the impacts of threats even while they're affecting people and the planet. For example, several countries, including Singapore and the Netherlands are building costly seawalls to protect their coastlines against rising sea levels.

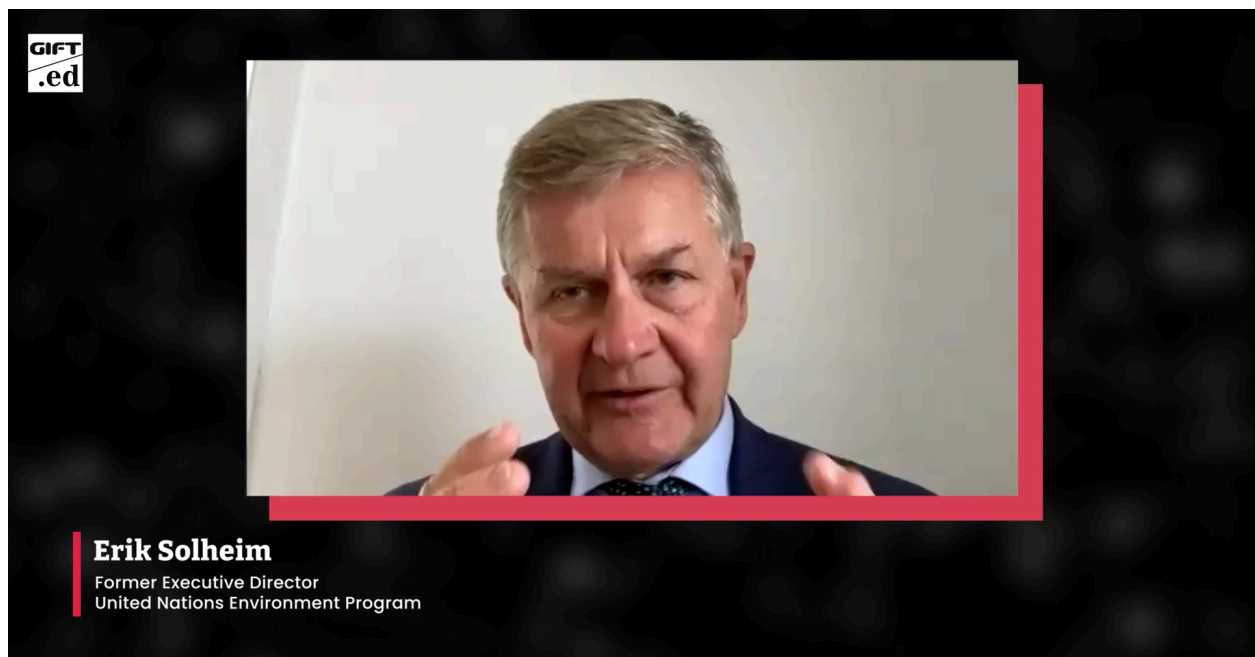


Mitigation and adaptation strategies often work in tandem to minimise the risk and impacts of sustainability challenges, like pollution. It's also important to bear in mind that these strategies may not address the root causes that lead to sustainability challenges in the first place.

As a global community, we need to design our economies and our societies to consume less first and foremost.

To explore mitigation and adaptation strategies further, you'll hear from Erik Solheim, former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program, who shares his perspective on progress being made around the world.

Erik Solheim:



The old idea was of course that if you want to develop, bring everyone out of poverty, there was a price to be paid in the destruction of nature. There was no way to prosperity without basing your economy on coal. The United Kingdom, which started the industrial revolution has an abundance of coal under the water ways to bring the coal around. That's one of the main reasons why the industrial revolution happened in the United Kingdom in the 18th century.



We all get it wrong because economists tell us that you need to destroy nature and base it on oil, fossil fuels. If you want to go green, the environmentalists said yes, that's right. But to me protecting nature is much more important. But if the choice is between development and protecting nature, 95% of the population, every nation, has shown itself to be giving a priority to development. That's why we need to bring this into the win-win propositions of the future where we create prosperity and jobs, but at the same time taking much better care of Mother Earth, which feeds us all. Now with the 21st century, we have all the policies, all the technologies, and all the finances to bring everyone into prosperity while at the same time taking care of Mother Earth.



Green Economy

A resilient economy that provides a better quality of life
for all within the ecological limits of the planet

Source: Green Economy Coalition

And a green economy is a closer economy where you do not destroy nature. On the contrary, you repair nature and where you do not destroy people's health through pollution, you create economic growth without pollution. And the main areas are in energy transport, agriculture, and a circular economy where you don't throw away everything. We cannot continue to throw away every mobile phone that we have used but to use the components in the form for new products. So, when you add all these components, you have a complete green economy where we repair nature rather than destroy nature.

By far, the most important thing is to look for the win-wins. All the policies that are good for the environment, good for the economy, and good for people's wellbeing and life at the same time. One example may be city development - look to what cities people want to live in. Those are the cities where you can walk, where you can bicycle, where there is good public transport, and which are people-centred. Some European cities like Copenhagen, Amsterdam, some Eastern European cities, Ljubljana, they are like that. The same is Shenzhen in China, Singapore, Southeast Asia, and Hyderabad which was just declared a green city of the world, that's an Indian city, in 2022.



And that's focusing on the win-win because these cities attract more people, they prosper faster, they are among the richest cities in the world, while at the same time being among the greener cities and the cities with most joy and best health.

Because you can find the same in basically every other area but look for the win-wins. You cannot be successful if you try to see economy and ecology as opposite forces. They must be

seen as moving together into a future where the world is much greener, much more in harmony with nature, where we apply the learnings from all the great religions, whether it's Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity of taking care of Mother Earth. We apply that in the same way as we are bringing people into prosperity.

So, that change of thinking, I think, is the most important, and that's why I'm also quite optimistic because some of the top leaders like President Xi of China and Prime Minister Modi of India, and some western leaders that fully understand this win-win proposition.

Yes, you have some political leaders who don't understand it. You have some business leaders who don't understand it, but it's taking hold more.

If you look at the successful developing nations, China's one, but India is the other. They see an opportunity in going green. They don't see a huge problem and it's not a problem to be solved, but an opportunity to be had. And interestingly enough, while China and India are loggerheads in a number of issues when it comes to the green policies, they're very much in line because what President Modi is doing in India is a lot of the same as what President Xi is doing in China, using the state as a vehicle to drive green development.

In India, Prime Minister Modi has launched a number of what is called missions. That, in my view, is very much the same as what South Korea did at the time of their fantastic industrial development, using the state as a way to prioritise. He has made a mission for green hydrogen, a mission for electric battery production, a mission for electric vehicles, where some companies get access to the political leadership, and they get subsidies to drive the direction. Well, of course, any other companies are also welcomed to go in the same direction. But some companies are picked to be potential winners. And that's to see an opportunity to create jobs, bring every Indian out of poverty into prosperity by going green. If you see the green transformation as an opportunity, you will be the winner.

And that's why China and India are likely to be winners while some developing nations who basically sit down, ask for some handouts from the rich part of the world, they are unfortunately, highly unlikely to be successful because the handouts from the rich will be very limited. And you cannot base your development on development aid. It must be based on making the domestic conditions for green growth.

Elaine Fernandez:

The green transformation speaks to the fact that today, we have all the policies, technologies, and finances to deliver moderate prosperity while managing our impact on the environment.

But despite these steps in the right direction, most countries are still reliant on outdated models that see the economy and ecology as opposing forces.

To become more sustainable, we should see the green transformation as an opportunity to create new jobs, bring people out of poverty, and preserve the natural world.