

TRANSCRIPT

Global Sustainability Challenges: Part 1

Rohan Hazell:

In the last chapter, we explored the origins of this thing we call sustainability. Building on this understanding, we'll now look at the major sustainability challenges we face with two of the world's leading voices on the topic: Dr. Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace, and Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

In this chapter, Dr. Goodall introduces the global sustainability challenges she has encountered across her lifetime of work in promoting a better relationship between people and the planet.

Dr. Jane Goodall:



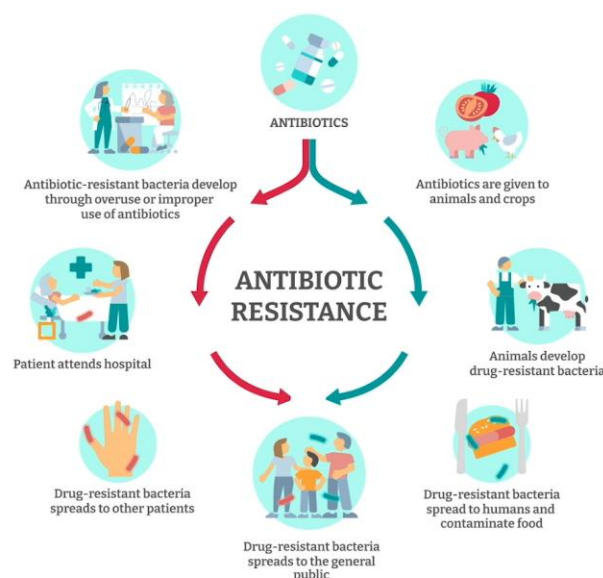
I think the important thing is to say that right now, the world is a pretty grim and bleak place, environmentally as well of course, as socially and politically. And right now, we face two major threats, existential threats, and that's climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Most people concentrate on climate change, but it's irreversibly linked with the loss of plant and animal species. So climate change, of course, as most people know now, is due to the so-

called greenhouse gases that blanket the surface of the globe and trap the heat of the sun. And that's led to these sometimes terrifying changes in weather patterns around the world. The more and worse storms, hurricanes, typhoons, the more and worse flooding and heat waves and droughts and wildfires.

Then another problem is industrial agriculture, with its reliance on pesticides and herbicides, which are actually killing the soil, and its artificial fertiliser, which is causing tremendous problems as it washed down into the rivers, the lakes, and the ocean, where the phosphorus is causing dead zones and massive loss of life.

And then commercial animal agriculture, the factory farms, huge areas cleared to feed these billions of animals. Masses of fossil fuel used to get the grain to the animals, the animals to the abattoir, the meat to the table. They produce an awful lot of methane in their digestion. And then, in addition, antibiotics are typically used just to keep them alive so that the bacteria build up resistance and people are getting sick, and antibiotics don't work. It's leading to the superbugs, which is killing many people, even in hospitals.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

So then we get commercial fishing. We get the long lines and the drift nets. We get the bottom dredging, which is destroying the seabed, the corals, and everything else, and overfishing. And then we've got disease, which comes from our disrespect of the natural world. And then finally, there's corruption. And that has a huge role in allowing many of these things to actually happen. People, politicians, and businesses are paid off to allow unethical procedures.

We're in a mess. And it's affecting just about everyone, especially anyone living in those areas especially affected in the Global South. Then there's poverty, often not taken into consideration.



But if you're very poor and you're living in some kind of wilderness, you're going to destroy the environment in order to survive. Let me take for example, Gombe Stream National Park. In 1960, it was part of a great forest belt. By the late 1980s, it was a tiny island of forest and all the hills around were bare. More people living there than the land could support. Too poor to buy food elsewhere, struggling to survive. Cutting down the trees to make money from charcoal or timber or to make more land to grow more food. And that's when it hit me. If we don't help these people, these local communities find ways of living without destroying the environment, we can't save chimpanzees, forests or anything else, but we need to alleviate poverty.

And then there's the unsustainable lifestyle of so many of us. And I include myself, I have far more than I need. And some people take this to excess, and they have way, way more than they could ever possibly need. And this is something that somehow we have to change.

Rohan Hazell:

Dr. Goodall has highlighted the major sustainability challenges as she sees them, starting with climate change and biodiversity loss, which are made worse by economic activities from industrial agriculture to overconsumption. Importantly, she pointed out that these issues are not independent from socioeconomic factors that impact us every day. For example, she stressed that only by alleviating poverty can we get communities around the world to think of sustainability, and not just meeting their basic needs.

In the next chapter, we'll hear from Professor Jeffrey Sachs, who gives us his view on global sustainability challenges from the perspective of development, economics and governance.