

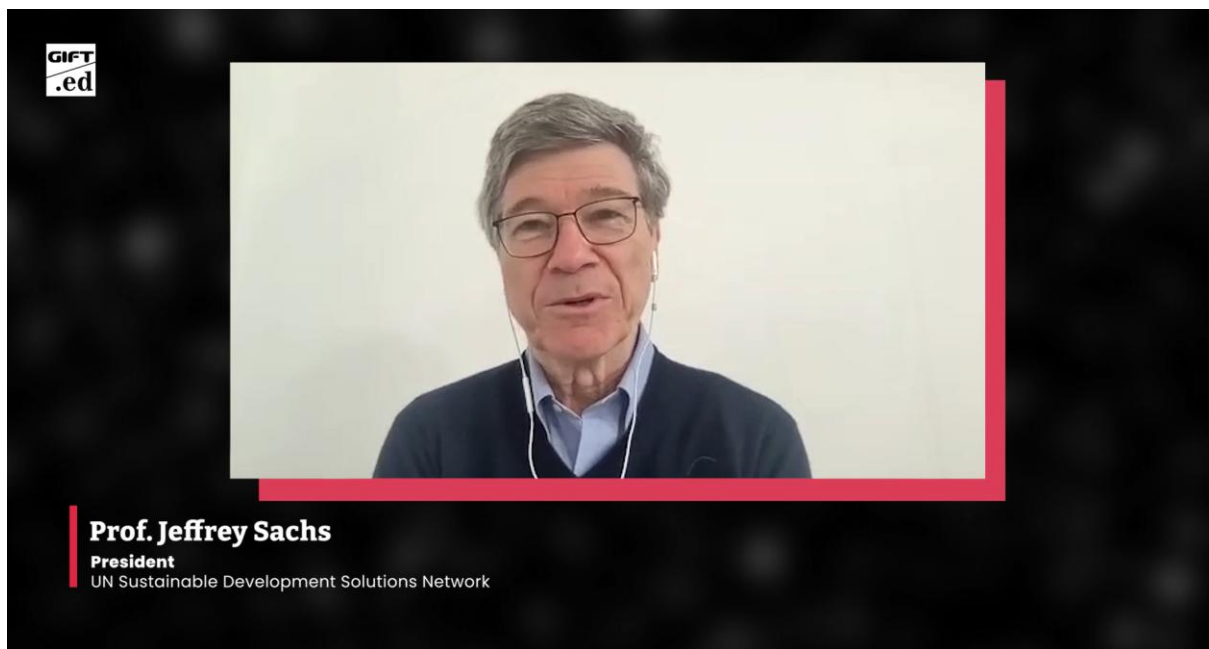
TRANSCRIPT

Global Sustainability Challenges: Part 2

Rohan Hazell:

Dr. Jane Goodall introduced some of the major sustainability issues the world is facing. Now, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, world-renowned development economist and President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, will share his view on our global sustainability challenges.

Professor Jeffrey Sachs:

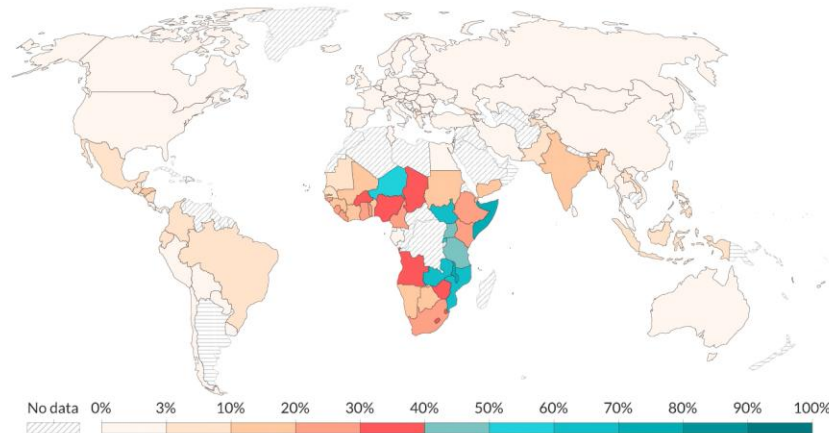


The world is deeply interconnected and facing some very major, even dire, challenges. But our international institutions and ways of thinking are not in line with our needs. We have a mindset about our own societies and cultures and place in the world. But none of this actually is delivering what the world really needs, which is material sufficiency so that people can survive and lead decent and dignified lives, social inclusion and justice, so that people find their suitable place as dignified members of society within their societies, an economy that operates within the so-called planetary boundaries, meaning that we're not wrecking the environment as we go about our economic affairs and peace, especially peace between the major powers of the world. We're not achieving any of that right now.



Share of population living in extreme poverty, 2019

Extreme poverty is defined as living below the International Poverty Line of \$2.15 per day. This data is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Note: This data is expressed in international-\$ at 2017 prices. Depending on the country and year, it relates to income measured after taxes and benefits, or to consumption, per capita.
Data Source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2022)

We're a rich world with a lot of poverty that remains, which is shocking because we have all the means, the know-how, the technology, the capital to end poverty. But we choose not to do it. We're a world that is deeply divided within our societies by wealth, by class structure, by educational attainment, by ethnicity, by religion, gender, race, lots of deep divisions and a lot of social injustice. And we are absolutely, fundamentally endangering the physical systems that we depend on for growing food, for safety of daily life, for availability of fresh water, for being able to escape from devastating storms and sea level rise, floods, droughts and other visitations that come with the human-made environmental crises.

And to top it all off, we have open war, a proxy war between Russia and the United States taking place in Ukraine, to the massive destruction of that country. We have incredible geopolitical tensions, the most in decades between the US and China.

So of all of these four objectives that I call sustainable development, material sufficiency, social justice, environmental sustainability and peace, we're off track on all of them. So, we have to understand that that is really the diagnostic challenge of the field of sustainable development in which I have spent my life. It's the practical challenge for businesses, government, civil society, international organisations to understand why we're off track and what we need to do.

In a short phrase, nothing about the international economy guarantees the end of poverty or social justice. This is the first point. Those goals of ending poverty and social inclusion are not going to be solved by the magic of the marketplace. They're going to be solved by deliberate social and political decision making. And we are not there yet.

Second, there's nothing in the global economic system that automatically protects the environment. The environment has been a free dumping ground for economic activity through much of history. We have regulations, but they're often very weak in the face of big money, greed, corporate irresponsibility, and the lack of regulation. So we don't have any guarantee of a safe environment unless we choose a safe environment.

And when it comes to war and peace, we think on the national level rather than on the global cooperative level. So each country says, what should I do to increase our national power? But when you add that up, each country ends up exacerbating the international tensions, which then sometimes spill over into open war.

So this system needs an overhaul. We have 8 billion people. We have powerful technologies, but we don't have the mindset or the institutions to achieve sustainable development. The world has adopted a common set of goals. Several of them, in fact. The Sustainable Development Goals, The Paris Climate Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, a new High Seas Ocean Treaty. Wonderful goals. But it has not yet adopted the means to implement those goals. And it has not yet achieved a high enough level of understanding of what it will take to achieve the goals.



Sustainable Development Goals



PARIS2015
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP21·CMP11

Paris Climate Agreement



Kunming-Montreal
Biodiversity Framework



High Seas Treaty

The mindset remains nationalism. The mindset remains greed. The mindset remains “me first”, whether it's at the individual level or at the national level. Not that “we're all in this together.” How can we cooperate to achieve the objectives?

So this is a big deal, because the crises are very significant. They're actually growing in severity, and we're not dealing with them effectively.

Rohan Hazell:

Professor Sachs has outlined sustainability challenges from a global systemic perspective. Material sufficiency, social justice, environmental sustainability and peace are core elements of sustainable development. If we continue with business as usual, governments and companies across the world will not be on track to meet any of these objectives. In fact, the collective efforts we have taken to become more sustainable have often been misguided. These sustainability myths are what we'll explore in the next chapter.