



Radical new plan needed to fix broken global systems

Rising nationalism and global migration among seven trends impacting future of sustainability, according to report from Forum for the Future

00:01 GMT, London, 27 February 2019 – Entire systems change and fewer ‘sticking-plaster’ solutions from world leaders are urgently needed to address global challenges, reveals a report from sustainability non-profit, Forum for the Future. The report calls for urgent collaboration between governments, businesses, NGOs and investors to avoid climate change disaster and secure the future of our society and economy.

The Future of Sustainability 2019: Driving systems change in turbulent times reveals a ‘perfect storm’ of seven factors that are set to impact sustainability in the future - including climate migration, nationalism, plastics and biodiversity loss. It highlights that:

- **Rising nationalism** around the world threatens to undermine progress in sustainability, while climate change itself may fuel nationalist politics for years to come.
- The recent **anti-plastics movement** has only scratched the surface of change. Efforts must be combined with a focus on radical innovation and behaviour change to tackle the world’s “throwaway” culture.
- Global **migration** of at least 100 million people¹ driven by climate change has the long-term potential to exacerbate geopolitical instability, leading to greater inequality and the need for a radical change in mindset to cope with transient populations.
- More urgent, scaled up and systemic action is needed to protect and enhance **biodiversity**, with new ways of reflecting nature’s value and importance to our survival. The extinction rate of species is now thought to be about 1,000 times higher than before humans dominated the planet.²

Drawing on the social, economic and environmental shifts happening in these areas, the report highlights the opportunities to overhaul current systems of behaviour and practice, as well as the implications of doing so.

Sally Uren, Chief Executive at Forum for the Future, commented on the report:

“To tackle sustainability issues, we need to understand how the world is changing and what we’re seeing is a convergence of trends that will shape the 2020s. Rapid climate breakdown could trigger mass migration, which in turn could fuel growth in nationalism. On the positive side, the rise of participatory democracy is prompting people to act on the causes they most care about, which will be a vital part of efforts to tackle global issues such as climate change.”

At Forum for the Future, we specialise in taking a systems approach to address these challenges. But the clock is ticking and we have a limited window of opportunity that we can’t afford to miss. Now is the time for all of us –business, non-profits and more – to step up and skill up if we’re to create a more sustainable future.”

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/03/19/climate-change-could-force-over-140-million-to-migrate-within-countries-by-2050-world-bank-report>

² <https://news.brown.edu/articles/2014/09/extinctions>



The report highlights the ways in which business, investors, non-profits and government leaders can help address critical global challenges. These include building greater connections outside their usual networks, identifying the root causes of the current challenges they are dealing with and moving beyond competition to experiment, share and collaborate.

Fiona Ball, Head of Sky Ocean Rescue and Responsible Business, Sky, commented:

“The need to enact major environmental change cannot be denied but to ensure that we’re reaching our goals, businesses, governments and the public need to work together. A co-ordinated approach is the only way to guarantee results.”

Sunny Verghese, Co-founder and Group CEO of Olam International, and current Chair of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, said:

“The interconnected nature of the trends in this report shows us that nothing short of systemic change will help us prepare for the future and sustain the agricultural systems we all rely on. At Olam, we know it’s time for the agriculture industry to re-imagine the status quo and value Forum for the Future’s insight on building futures thinking into our business strategy. Together, we are working to deliver prosperous farmers and farming systems, thriving communities and a regenerated living world.”

-ENDS-

For more information, interviews or comment, please email flora.hancox@greenhousepr.co.uk.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the *Future of Sustainability 2019* report

The Future of Sustainability 2019 report was written by Forum for the Future’s team of futures experts, led by James Goodman. It draws on contributions from multiple sources, including a year’s worth of signals of change curated and analysed by the [Futures Centre](#), extensive research into the future of a range of sectors and issues, and insights from the non-profit’s ongoing work with collaborative partners to drive system change. [Read the report here](#).

The seven dynamic areas of change examined in the report are:

- The plastics kickback
- Migration and the climate crisis
- Nationalism marches again
- The onlife
- The rise of participatory democracy
- Changing consumerism in Asia
- Biodiversity in free fall

What is sustainability?

Forum for the Future’s definition of sustainability is:

“Sustainability is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways that simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth’s life support system.”

About Forum for the Future

Forum for the Future is a leading international sustainability non-profit with offices in London, New York, Singapore and Mumbai.



We specialize in addressing critical global challenges by catalysing change in key systems.

For over 20 years, we've been working in partnership with business, governments and civil society to accelerate the shift toward a sustainable future. Together we are reinventing the way the world works.

Find out more at www.forumforthefuture.org or by following [@Forum4theFuture](https://twitter.com/Forum4theFuture) on Twitter.