



Time is running out



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» **It is very urgent. System collapse is a real danger.** We face tremendous challenges due to rapid population growth, the overuse of resources and associated pollution, the loss of biodiversity, global warming and overall we are experiencing a gradual loss of our basis of existence.

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman. Book: Come on! - Capitalism, Short-Terminism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet. 2017

» Human development has ushered in an era of converging crises: climate change, ecological destruction, disease, pollution, and socioeconomic inequality.

Propelled by imperialism, extractive capitalism, and a surging population, we are speeding past Earth's material limits, destroying critical ecosystems, and triggering irreversible changes in biophysical systems that underpin the Holocene*) climatic stability which fostered human civilization.

A critical paradigm shift must occur that replaces exploitative, wealth-oriented capitalism with an economic model that prioritizes sustainability, resilience, and justice.

Charles Fletcher et al. Earth at risk: An urgent call to end the age of destruction and forge a just and sustainable future. PNAS Nexus, Volume 3, Issue 4, April 2024

*) The **Holocene** is a period in the Earth's history that began around 12,000 years ago and continues to the current day. Global temperature fluctuations during this period averaged only around 1° C.





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» Our planet has capacity limits for air pollution, biodiversity, the extent of climate change, and other factors. These are boundaries that must be respected if we are to preserve the basis for human life. We have already crossed seven out of nine planetary boundaries.

[Seven of nine planetary boundaries now breached - ocean acidification joins the danger zone. Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. 24.09.2025](#)

» Given the *existential threat* of climate change, severe weather events, rising sea levels, loss of biodiversity, resource depletion and increasing economic inequality, we are reminded of the importance of developing a sustainable economy that balances economic issues with social and environmental responsibility.

Swiss National Science Foundation. National Research Programme 73: Transition to a Sustainable Economy. 2023



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» **The burdens – from mounting government debts, underfunded pensions, inadequate health and social care to environmental calamity – that we are pushing on to the next generation are *unfair, inequitable and irresponsible.***

Mark Carney. Book: Value(s) – Building a Better World for All. 2021



» Why does the endless number of widely known problem diagnoses, strategy proposals and calls for action have so little effect in practice and the socio-ecological transformation simply doesn't take place?

Translated from: Ingolfur Blühdorn. Haben wir es gewollt? Book: Nachhaltige Nicht-Nachhaltigkeit. 2020. Pages 31-45



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» Since the Enlightenment, and massively more so over the past fifty years, traditional ways of life with their associated restrictive norms have been increasingly called into question and replaced by unbounded individualist lifestyles.

Liberation from obligations and the convenience that comes with the new freedom are felt to be entitlements and contribute to our ignoring the ecological consequences of our way of life. This is especially the case since excess is the ultimate principle behind economic activity under capitalist modernity.

Unbounded individualism sells the future for the next quarterly figures, the next election result, or today's passing pleasure.

Jens Beckert - Director Max-Planck Institute for the Study of Societies Cologne. Book: How We Sold Our Future. The Failure to Fight Climate Change. 2025

» In other words: the economy can't and won't let go of its pursuit of profit. Politicians do not want to mess things up with the economy and be re-elected. Citizens do not want to give up their individual freedom and the prosperity they have acquired.

Translated from: Thomas Brandenburg. Rezension: Das Wissensbuch des Jahres? Verkaufte Zukunft. hpd Humanistischer Pressedienst. 21. Oktober 2024

» Limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels is essential for avoiding increasingly severe and widespread climate change impacts.

Doing so requires cutting greenhouse gas emissions 42% by 2030 and 56% by 2035, relative to 2023. Current policies alone will achieve less than a 1% reduction by 2030 and 2035.

Sophie Boehm et al. 2024. By the Numbers: The Climate Action We Need This Decade. World Resource Institute



» Any further delay in forward-looking global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a *narrow and rapidly closing window of opportunity* to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.

IPCC Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change. Climate Change 2022 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability.

Unlike financial crises or pandemics, the damage done to the climate is *irreversible*. What we fail to do now cannot be made up for later.



“Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment in time we created a lot of value for shareholders.”

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