

People and the Planet

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In 2010 The Royal Society commenced a study to explore the interaction of 21st century population change and the changing environment.

The context behind the study was that the 21st century is a critical period for people and the planet:

- Continued growth and widespread changes in the world's human population.
- Unprecedented and increasing levels of consumption, unequally distributed.
- Profound challenges to human health and wellbeing, and to the natural environment.

The Royal Society convened an international working group of 22 experts drawn from across the world regions, and from demography, economics and environmental science. Under the Chairmanship of Professor Sir John Sulston they considered the interactions of population, consumption and the environment. This 21 month study, which included a wide international consultation process with expert evidence from policy, practice and academic bodies, resulted in the report "People and the Planet".

The Nine high-level recommendations are

1. The international community must **bring the 1.3 billion people living on less than \$1.25 per day out of absolute poverty.**
2. The most developed and emerging economies must **stabilise and then reduce material consumption.**
3. **Reproductive health and voluntary family planning programmes** urgently require political leadership and financial commitment.
4. **Population and the environment** should not be considered as two separate issues.
5. Governments should realise the **potential of urbanisation** to reduce material consumption and environmental impact.
6. Financial and non-financial barriers must be overcome to **achieve primary and secondary education for all.**

7. Natural and social scientists should increase research efforts on the **interactions between consumption, demographic change and environmental impact**.
8. National Governments should **accelerate the development of comprehensive wealth measures**.
9. Collaboration between National Governments is needed to develop **socio-economic systems and institutions** that are not dependent on continued material consumption.

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