

A vibrant outdoor market scene, likely in Southeast Asia, featuring a long street lined with stalls covered by numerous orange umbrellas. People are walking and shopping, and many motorcycles are parked along the right side of the street. The background shows traditional buildings and a distant landscape under a clear sky.

# What is *Our Common Future*?

Professor Paul van Gardingen  
Edinburgh International Development Centre  
The University of Edinburgh

# Outline

1. Our Global Challenges.
2. Setting the scene.
3. Three departure points influencing *Our Common Future*.
4. Three ways to start building *Our Common Future*.



# Our Global Challenges



Urbanisation



Poverty



Energy



Infectious Diseases



Population /  
Demography



Water



Climate Change



Biodiversity



Food Security




# Another set of Global Challenges!

## Millennium Development Goals

“We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected.”

*United Nations Millennium Declaration - September 2000*

- 
- 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
  - 2 Achieve universal primary education
  - 3 Promote gender equality and empower women
  - 4 Reduce child mortality
  - 5 Improve maternal health
  - 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
  - 7 Ensure environmental sustainability
  - 8 Develop a global partnership for development

# When we talk about the future

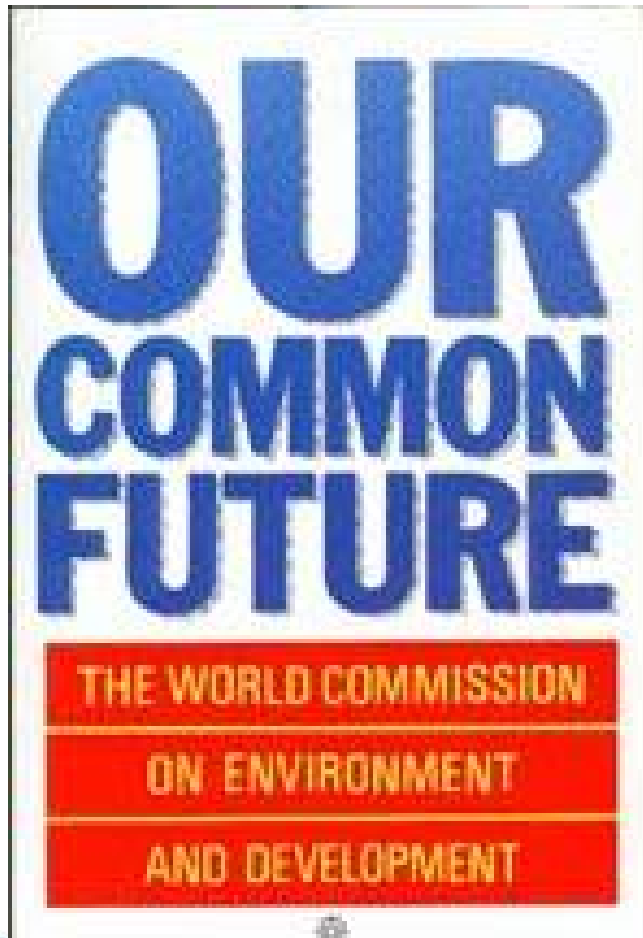
One World...

One Outcome...

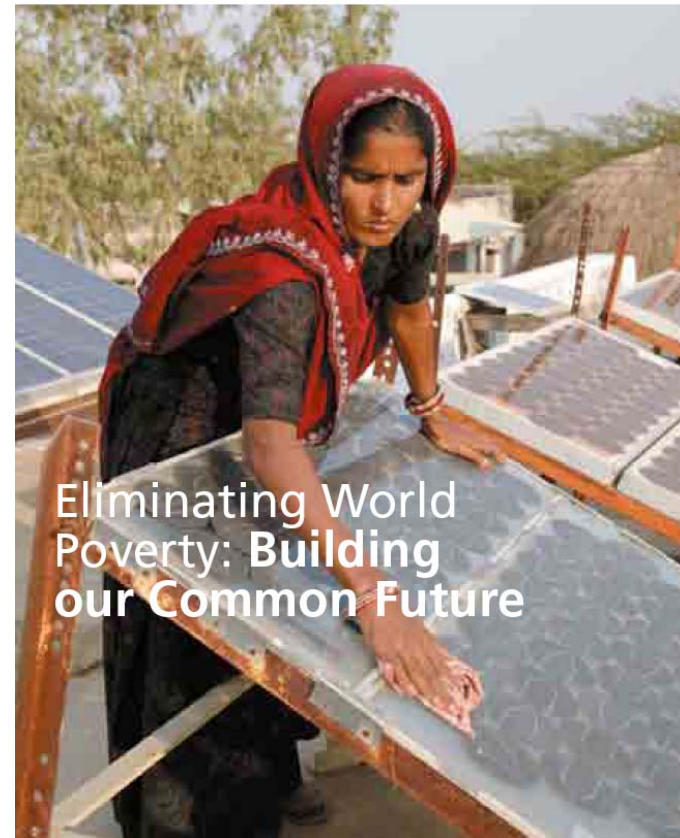
One Chance!



# Our Common Future?



**DFID** Department for  
International  
Development



# A Perfect Storm by 2030?

## Averting a perfect storm of shortages

Overview

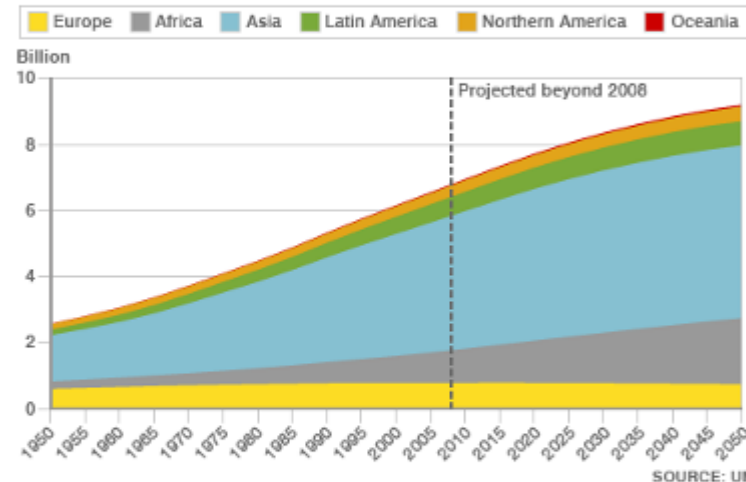
Science's role

Mega-cities

Lifestyles

By Stephen Mulvey  
BBC News

### The world's rising population, 1950-2050



As the world's population grows, competition for food, water and energy will increase. Food prices will rise, more people will go hungry, and migrants will flee the worst-affected regions.

That's the simple idea at the heart of the warning from John Beddington, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, of a possible crisis in 2030.

### PERFECT STORM 2030

BBC correspondents explore the forecast by UK chief scientist John Beddington, of a "perfect storm" of food, water and energy shortages in 2030. They also consider what

### PERFECT STORM 2030

#### THE PROBLEM



#### A grim forecast for 2030

There will be two billion more people, and not enough food



#### Cities drain resources

Migrants swell cities that suck in water, food and energy



#### China's energy hunger

China is investing in wind - but coal remains king



#### California's 'dust bowl'

Farms in California's Central Valley are steadily drying out



#### Leasing Ukraine

Foreigners are taking over tracts of the ex-breadbasket

#### SOLUTIONS



#### How to grow more food

Scientists say new crops can help - and GM would be useful



#### Will we change our ways?

Some will - but many remain climate-change sceptics



#### Viewpoint: EU 'not helping'

Advances in agriculture risk being 'hampered by regulators'



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## Middle East & Africa

### East Africa's drought

## A catastrophe is looming

Sep 24th 2009 | NAIROBI

From *The Economist* print edition

**Governments are at their wits' end to keep their hungry people alive**



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## Hijacked by climate change?

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website



Have China's population curbs helped the global environment

As the UN climate summit in Copenhagen approaches, exhortations that "we must get a deal" and warnings that climate change is "the greatest challenge we face as a species" are to be heard in virtually every political forum.

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# Time for Reflection

***Business As Usual* will probably lead to the heart of the perfect storm**



# Avoiding the “Perfect Storm”



Urbanisation



Poverty



Energy



Infectious Diseases



Population /  
Demography



Water



Climate Change



Biodiversity



Food Security

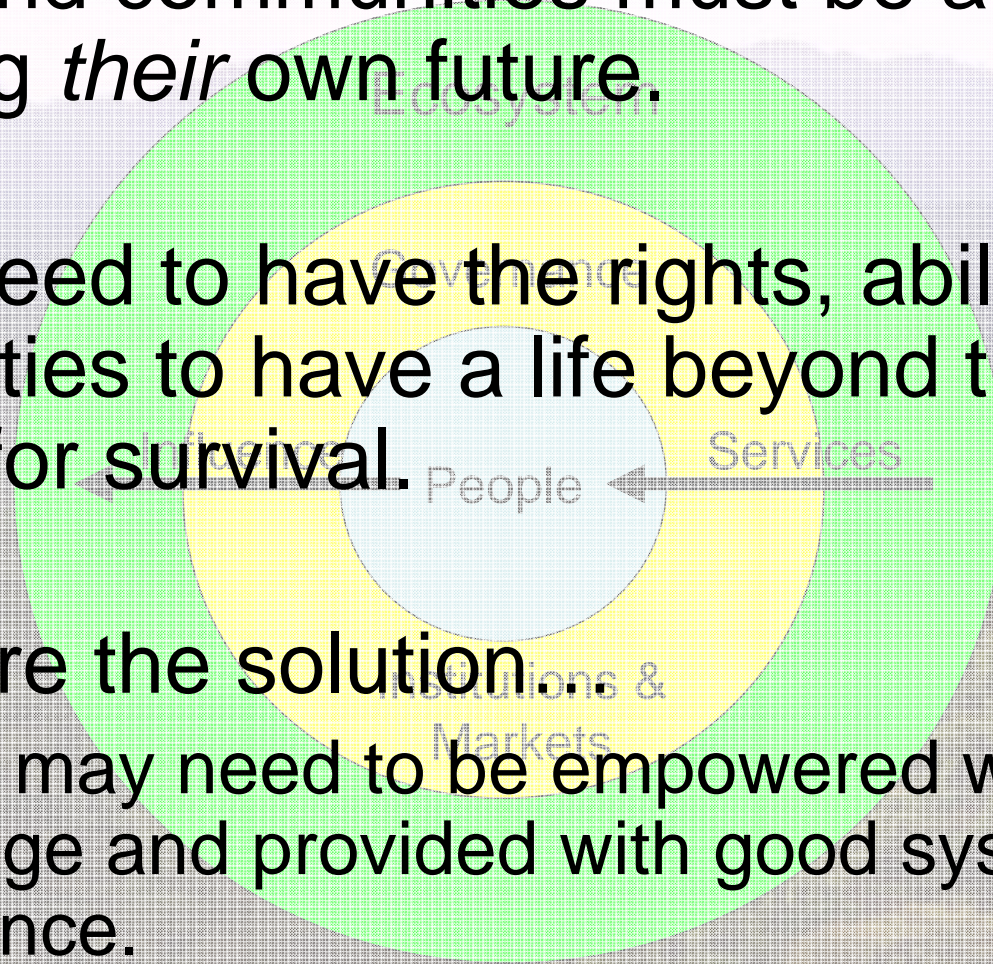


# Three Starting Points



# 1. Put People First

- **People** and communities must be at the heart of building *their* own future.
- **People** need to have the rights, ability and opportunities to have a life beyond the minimum required for survival.
- **People** are the solution.
  - but they may need to be empowered with skills and knowledge and provided with good systems of governance.



## 2. Our Future will be *Radically Different!*

- We are living through a time of unprecedented change.
  - The rate of change.
  - The amount of change.
- The recent past may be a very poor predictor of the immediate future.
  - The financial crisis demonstrated the risks associated with statistical prediction of the future.
- Global Challenges need to be addressed together, not in isolation.



## 3. We Need Scenarios!

- We need *integrated* “models” exploring the linkages between the global challenges.
  - Providing scenarios to inform debate about the future.
- The models need to explore practical policy options to address the main global challenges.
- The models need deliver scenarios that are relevant to people and society.
  - What could *Our Common Future* look like?
  - What are the positive messages to engage the public?

# Three Starting Points

- It's all about people.
- The future will be radically different from the recent past
- We need to build a shared vision for *Our Common Future*
  - Scenarios will help us do this



# Our Personal Futures.

- Researchers:
  - Can help by putting people and society at the heart of their work and developing the integrative science required to address the major global challenges.
- Policy Makers:
  - Can help by asking the right questions; being willing to work over longer time-scales, and by adopting joined-up responses to global challenges.
- The Media:
  - Can help by communicating the issues, promoting positive debate and engaging the public.

