



# Scientists On Pandemics: 'Nature Is Sending Us A Message'

The UN says, “governments must seize the opportunity to ‘build back better’ after the pandemic by creating more sustainable and resilient societies. No matter what the problem, Sustainable Development is always the answer.

The obvious bias of some radical, activist scientists is wearing thin in the public mind. These scientists have turned science into a religion closely associated with the myth of Gaia, the primordial Greek goddess that personifies the earth. The earth is believed to be a living organism capable of sentient thoughts. □ TN Editor

The coronavirus pandemic is likely to be followed by even more deadly and destructive disease outbreaks unless their root cause - the rampant destruction of the natural world - is rapidly halted, the world’s leading biodiversity experts have warned.

“There is a single species responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic - us,”

they said. “Recent pandemics are a direct consequence of human activity, particularly our global financial and economic systems that prize economic growth at any cost. We have a small window of opportunity, in overcoming the challenges of the current crisis, to avoid sowing the seeds of future ones.”

Professors Josef Settele, Sandra Díaz and Eduardo Brondizio led the most comprehensive planetary health check ever undertaken, which was published in 2019 by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). It concluded that human society was in jeopardy from the accelerating decline of the Earth’s natural life-support systems.

In an article published on Monday, with Dr Peter Daszak, who is preparing the next IPBES assessment, they write: “Rampant deforestation, uncontrolled expansion of agriculture, intensive farming, mining and infrastructure development, as well as the exploitation of wild species have created a ‘perfect storm’ for the spillover of diseases.”

These activities cause pandemics by bringing more people into contact and conflict with animals, from which 70% of emerging human diseases originate, they said. Combined with urbanisation and the explosive growth of global air travel, this enabled a harmless virus in Asian bats to bring “untold human suffering and halt economies and societies around the world. This is the human hand in pandemic emergence. Yet [Covid-19] may be only the beginning.”

“Future pandemics are likely to happen more frequently, spread more rapidly, have greater economic impact and kill more people if we are not extremely careful about the possible impacts of the choices we make today,” they said.

The scientists said the multitrillion-dollar economic recovery packages being rolled out by governments must be used to strengthen and enforce environmental protection: “It may be politically expedient to relax environmental standards and to prop up industries such as intensive agriculture, airlines, and fossil-fuel-dependent energy sectors, but doing so without requiring urgent and fundamental change essentially

subsidises the emergence of future pandemics.”

A global “One Health” approach must also be expanded, they said. “The health of people is intimately connected to the health of wildlife, the health of livestock and the health of the environment. It’s actually one health,” said Daszak.

Furthermore, surveillance programmes and health services need to be properly funded in nations on the frontlines of pandemic risk, they said: “This is not simple altruism - it is vital investment in the interests of all to prevent future global outbreaks.”

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