



# Global Sustainability

## HRH The Prince of Wales

I have long been deeply concerned about the effect our modern, highly industrialised approach is having on nature's capacity to sustain life on Earth. There is a growing set of alarming problems which, if not addressed with real urgency, will severely affect nature's capacity to keep her life support systems running and thus guarantee the well-being of billions of people around the world.

It is worth bearing in mind that bodies like the UN have produced countless reports showing the damage we have so far been responsible for. In the last half century alone, not only have we depleted over a third of the world's farmable soil, we have so intensified the way we produce food we are now using far more water than we did, even though there is less fresh water available.

In that same 50 years we have also burned down over a third of the world's tropical rainforests and are still doing so - despite the fact that they are actually the lungs of the world. An area the size of a football pitch goes up in smoke every four seconds - that's over 26,000 football pitches a day! As a result, we have destroyed more than 80,000 species on which, did we but know it, we depend for our long term health and welfare. Everything is interconnected.

Thus, because these forests produce billions of tonnes of rainwater every day, we now risk big consequences for our ability to grow all the food we will need to feed what will soon be a global population of nine billion people. And all of these problems are being compounded by climate change, an effect the experts ominously call "a threat multiplier." For many years I have sought to highlight that this all adds up to something far more than an "environmental crisis." We are fast engineering a global *economic* crisis.

This film demonstrates the work of those initiatives I have set up through which I aim to bring together leaders of organizations and government and those from the corporate world to share their knowledge and forge practical solutions. They range from trying to establish more sustainable fisheries and better ways of managing farming within tropical forests, to the creation of more sustainable approaches to food production and more local forms of food distribution, not to mention clever financial mechanisms that enable global corporations to do things differently for the good of the Earth and for their profits. This is the work of my International Sustainability Unit and of the British Asian Trust.

The film also profiles the Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership, of which I have been patron for 20 years, and the work of a project I established in 2004, called Accounting for Sustainability. This works with the corporate world and within government to ensure we are not battling to meet the challenges of the 21st Century with the decision-making techniques and corporate reporting systems of the 20th Century. If we are to guarantee the well-being of our grandchildren and their grandchildren, then genuine sustainability has to become embedded in the DNA of business and government. As this film shows, without a resilient approach to business and economics, I am afraid we run the risk of bequeathing those who follow us something far worse.