



Only a complete overhaul of our economic growth and international negotiations can prevent sea level rises that will destroy coastal cities like New York and London experts warn

New York, USA, 28 April: Energy expert Ian Dunlop and policy-planner and scholar Tapio Kanninen delivered a stark message in New York at the end of April that even limiting global warming to 2°C could eventually produce sea level rises of up to 6 to 7 metres (23 feet), wiping out coastal cities like New York, London, Shanghai and Tokyo. They told shocked audiences at the United Nations that if we continue with current policies, temperatures could rise 4°C or more, leading to sea level rises of up to 70 metres (230 feet).

Kanninen and Dunlop were in New York to address a series of packed meetings and panel discussions, organised by the Finnish Mission to the United Nations, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Club of Rome, the Temple of Understanding and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

They presented new evidence demonstrating the severity of the crisis of global sustainability and global survivability and discussed with diplomats, political decision-makers, sustainable development experts and NGOs how to persuade the UN and other international institutions to take immediate emergency action.

Commenting on recent scientific findings, Ian Dunlop - with over 30 years' experience at the Royal Shell Group as engineer and senior executive and a former leader of Australia's Emissions trading panel said: "Today's leaders refuse to accept that climate change science and the concept of peak oil condemns the international community to a catastrophic future. Why are we still exploring for fossil fuels, since we can only burn of 20-30% of reserves if we wish to keep climate change to the 2 °C limit, while current policies will result in warming of 4-6 °C?" he asked.

This level of temperature rise means that the globe can only carry 0.5-1 billion people, not the present 7 billion, leading experts evaluate.

Tapio Kanninen, a former long time UN staff member and policy-planner, said that scientists have determined a number of "tipping points" that exponentially and dramatically accelerate global warming trends. As they begin to kick in, in a matter of years not decades, we must take action before it is too late to avert a catastrophe.

The severity of the global crisis goes unrecognised: we need a global emergency response and new policy models

Dr Kanninen said current international and national institutional and political systems are incapable of preventing the increasing severe global crises; it requires a change in the entire system plus an emergency response. If runaway climate change leads to rising sea levels the next move has to be to urgently overhaul the UN and our global governance system so it is capable of dealing with rapidly changing global and regional conditions.

Ian Dunlop said that many scientists and practitioners are wrongly dubbed 'alarmist', but diplomats, politicians and the whole intergovernmental system have failed to grasp the severity of the crisis. If we fail to act we could find ourselves like a 'ship of fools' floating on rising sea levels.

Failing to institute a major global policy change will inevitably lead to the gradual implosion of the economic, ecological and social structures on which we depend, and they called for "An urgent joint effort by member states, NGOs and scholars to improve the quality of global negotiations on climate change and sustainable development".

The Club of Rome raised similar issues 40 years ago and recent research has confirmed that its projections of industrial collapse in the early 21st century are surprisingly close to actually data gathered. In his recent book *Crisis of Global Sustainability* Dr Kanninen evaluates the Club's history and impact, as well as describing the future global crisis if no action is taken.

Setting up new structures

Faced with the reality gap between what scientists predict and what politicians are prepared to do, part of the solution to global inertia lies in creating an independent Global Crisis Network of regional, national and local centres with a global coordination unit that will interact with a revamped UN. Eventually, the UN Charter has to be totally rewritten to correspond to the new global reality.

The Club of Rome is an international think-tank, based in Switzerland, with 1500 members and over 30 National Associations. Its mission is to undertake forward-looking analysis and assessment on measures for a happier, more resilient, sustainable planet. www.clubofrome.org

The Limits to Growth, a 1972 report to the Club of Rome was written by Denis Meadows, Donella Meadows, Jorgen Randers and William Behrens III. It used computer models to project possible future scenarios with different assumptions of how humans would react to earth's physical limitations.

Dr Tapio Kanninen is Senior Fellow at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a Co-Director of the Project on Sustainable Global Governance. He was Chief of the Policy Planning Unit in the Department of Political Affairs (1998–2005) at the United Nations and worked earlier to set up a global environmental statistical framework in a UNEP-funded project in the UN Statistical Division. He is a member of the Club of Rome.

Ian Dunlop is an Australian Energy Expert, a fellow to the Centre of Policy Development and a former senior executive at the Royal Dutch Shell Group. He is Chair of Safe Climate Australia, Deputy Convenor of the Australian Association for the Study of Peak Oil and a Club of Rome member.

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is a German political foundation with over 100 offices around the world, including an active UN office. It is the Germany's oldest organisation to promote democracy, political education, and promote students of outstanding intellectual abilities.

The Temple of Understanding is an interfaith NGO working to promote global survivability, and an active member of the NGO community working on the inside of the United Nations to advance social justice.

Crisis of Global Sustainability is published by Routledge. Paperback: £18.99, \$29.95
978-0-415-69417-9; Master eBook ISBN10 : 0203071867. Master eBook ISBN13 : 978-0-203-07186-1. To order copies go to: <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415694179/>

For more information about the ideas behind the book: www.crisisofglobalsustainability.com

Ian Dunlop's presentation on same issues as he spoke at the UN can be seen here:
<http://vimeo.com/53540204>