





**Tom Pegram** 06:02

So the heat wave in London was a shocking event, it was something which did capture the headlines. But it seems that the trajectory that we're on now is for a warmer and warmer world, that's what the science tells us. But it seems that a lot of people struggle to understand why there is this sort of lag effect between carbon emissions and increases in global temperature. And I was wondering if you could explain to a non-expert audience, why are we locked into a degree of warming? And what are the implications, the governance implications of this lag in terms of climate stabilisation?

**Mark Maslin** 06:43

So the problem is that it's one of

**Mark Maslin** 09:34

Unfortunately, only in the very short term. So there is a small dip in the global emissions of carbon dioxide from the financial crash, but within four years, it was back on track. So the problem with the global economic system is that it's very resilient, it bounces back, and therefore we actually got no gains for the environment. For that actual financial crash,

**Tom Pegram** 10:02

And at the moment, I understand that we're on a trajectory to cross 1.5 degrees around 2035. Is that correct?

**Mark Maslin** 10:10

So the problem is at the moment, we are still increasing CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. So last year 2018, increased by 2.7%. This year, we think it will be the same, we'll have the numbers in, in the spring, but we think it's going to be about 3% increase again. And so the problem is that this decade, we've increased CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere more than the previous decades. And the problem there is we're now looking at a 2020, when we're supposed to actually stop the increase, and actually start dropping global emissions by anything from five to 10% per year, which seems a bit odd when we're already continuing to increase. So there is a real juxtaposition between what the global economy is doing, and what scientists and politicians actually want it to do.

**Tom Pegram** 11:07





more scary interviewing my daughter than it was sort of Al Gore, when I interviewed him for a blog as well.

**Jessica Knezy** 21:28

You've spoken in the past about how we're ushering into a post capitalism era? Do you feel that the sort of determination of this next generation will expedite our society moving into this new era that maybe isn't as consumers simply focused?

**Mark Maslin** 21:45

Right? That is a huge question and has multiple heads like a Hydra. So the first thing is that if we are to solve climate change, I personally think we do not have time for the revolution. So at the moment, we now have to use every political tool we have, depending on what sort of country you live in, what sort of leadership what sort of power base you have, we need to instigate all the changes now. So if you are fully signed up to capitalist society, and believe full-heartily in the neo-liberal sort of ideal, absolutely brilliant, therefore, remove all subsidies from fossil fuels, and let the market basically drive renewables, tick, if you happen to be in a more sort of dictatorial top down type society, then put lots of regulation and then enforce change. We need those changes now, because we need the CO2 to drop, what we need to do in a more longer term approach is actually have a more sustainable global economy. So we need to work out how by 2050, we can make sure that there are, there'll be 10 billion people on the planet? How do we make sure that they have access to decent shelter, decent food, decent clean water, health care, and also what's really important aspirations for them and their children. So this is something you have to actually build into any society, which means we have to think about consumerism, about how we actually use, how much stuff we use, and how we can actually rebalance that. Because the problem is that if everybody gets a Western lifestyle, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, or even America, then we do not have enough energy or enough stuff in the world to actually fuel that sort of type of society. So there is a real need to shift that society and how we actually perceive humanity into the future.

**Tom Pegram** 24:00

So I just want to, before we move into the future, perhaps just to pause and reflect on this mom noumo



**Mark Maslin 29:19**

So it's always difficult to answer the question, how important is the next decade? Because when you're living in it, it feels like the most important, what is a shame is because if we had dealt with this, i.e. climate change at the beginning of the 1990s. Actually, the problem would be a lot less difficult to deal with. So the problem is, by keep putting it off, it means what we have to do is more and more extreme. So had we dealt with it say from Copenhagen, that would have been brilliant, 2009, we've lost another 10 years. So the reason why I think scientists, activists, and a lot of political commentators and politicians are now saying, "This is now the decade we have to actually act on is because of the trajectory." If we can change the trajectory, if we can change the direction of the this huge ship called the global economy, and just gently start nudging it towards low carbon, then we have actually a way of modifying the future to the extremes that we have already predicted. And so for example, one of the key things in the one and a half degrees report is 2020 is seen as the year when we need to start dropping CO<sub>2</sub>. And the key thing there is scientists will tell you, what are the consequences of not doing something. So if we want a one and a half degree world, the slower we turn the ship round, the slower we drop the actual CO<sub>2</sub> globally, and the later we hit zero, the more we have to suck out of the atmosphere for the rest of the century. So it's a, it's a sort of balancing act, the more we do now, which is then cheaper, quicker and easier, the less we have to do in the future, when we have to suck out tonnes and tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere, which A we don't have the technology to do. And B, probably the only meaningful way of doing that is massive reforestation, which we should do anyway. But that's not going to be the full solution. That's a good sidestep from your question.

**Jessica Knezy 31:40**

So you're quite a unique academic, because you're quite interdisciplinary. Do you feel that the singularity of the components of our global governance system is an issue and what would an interdisciplinary global governance system look like?

**Mark Maslin 31:59**

Right, so the big problem we have is that, firstly, academic disciplines separate themselves into silos. And therefore, the problem is they don't talk among each other. There are some unique events when academics are brought together. So for example, the Lancet report where we brought together all the academic fields at UCL, and we wrote a report on global health and climate change, that came out with some really stark and novel things because medics were assuming that climate change was about

strayed away from that sort of base. So rational decisions aren't necessarily made in western democracies, because they do



**Jessica Knezy** 41:27

Do you think that there is something more effective to ensure compliance than self-preservation?

**Mark Maslin** 41:34

So my view about how countries should be involved in the climate change debate, and also how we drive both mitigation-adaptation is by developing a completely new language, which is about win-win. So for example, I've been in South Korea, and South Korea is power comes from 60, coal fired power stations, they constantly have issues with, of course, air pollution. Weird thing is, if they use their technological base, and they move to a completely renewable system, they have huge amounts of sun, wind, tidal, hydro, they could completely remove those power stations within say, 10 to 20 years, they will then clean up their air, and that would actually have a huge effect on their health. So it's then building these win-win, again, why are we spending 5 billion US dollars on fossil fuel subsidies? Okay. That's according to the IMF, if you take into account both the direct subsidies and the climate change damage that they're causing, What, why are we spending that money? If you imagine stripping that money away, and actually then spending that on say, renewables, suddenly you have win-win, so it's moving towards, I think, supporting countries to say, "Actually, by implementing stuff that's going to help with climate change, you're going to improve both your citizens health, their economy and their outlook." And I think that's really important. Again, you mentioned say, how do we deal with Brazil, Brazil is a really interesting and problematic example. Because, again, it's their country, are we allowed to impose upon them our examples of what we think the environment should be? Now, problem is, of course, it's really problematic to be in the UK, and point fingers because of course, we deforested the whole of the United Kingdom, by 1919, we got down to 5% forest cover. Now we're back up to about 11 or 12%, purely because we set up the Forestry Commission that said, we need trees, because we need to have the wood for trenches, because there might be another war after the First World War. And so we have increased our reforestation, but to actually then turn around and say to Brazil, you can't deforest, without any support, or any reason or any financial bonus for doing that, I think is problematic.

**Jessica Knezy** 43:55

So you've spoken about the need for government regulation. Do you feel that there is a political ideology that best suits the stabilisation of the Earth's biosphere?

**Mark Maslin** 44:27

That's a huge issue. The problem is at the moment, we have a huge diversity of political systems in the world. Okay. And people argue passionately about which one is best and which one is going to be most successful in dealing with sustainable issues. And actually, they are not necessarily the same. Okay, so the idea of personal freedom versus sustainability actually can be in conflict. What I think is important is for me moving forward, is the idea of actually putting human rights, right at the basis of all political systems. And it's the idea that humans, as a single species on this planet, there must be some set of standards and principles that everybody should adhere to. And again, that is access to shelter, food, water, clean, safe water, and then also the ability to improve themselves, and support their family and improve their family. So these are real concepts. But for me, I think one of the interesting ideas that come out, which is if you say, people should have access to all of those, well, they should also have access to money. Because, again, money is generated by a country. And it's really difficult to pin down



probably stabilise about 10 billion by 2050, people are living in more dense settlements. So weirdly enough, even though the population is going up, the world is getting wilder. So therefore, a lot of that wild space, we can now rewild, we can reforest, we can actually start to think about how we actually manage the rest of the world, to produce the services that we require to keep and maintain a safe climate and environment for both us, but also all the other organisms on Earth. So it's that idea that we become the custodians of the earth, we look after it, both for ourselves and in a deeply selfish way, which is, we need a stable planet

**Mark Maslin** 53:57

My thoughts are that I think that UCL is a fantastic place to have these conversations. Again, you have things like the Institute of Global Governance, you have a real interdisciplinary mixture of both academics and students. And there aren't the same walls, there's still some walls, there aren't the same walls that you find at other institutions. So I think that some of these discussions and the solutions to these hugehe u62fs of the 21st century, UCL and students like yourself, this is where some of these solutions are going to come from. And I'm always fascinated to see where you and all the other students that I teach and look after are going to end up in the whole world because you're going to be the influences and the people that are actually going to instigate the change that To and I just talk about.

**Jessica Knezy** 54:51

Well, thank you very much. Hope we can live up to these very high expectations. Where can listeners learn more about your work?

**Mark Maslin** 55:00

So I have a website, I also write regular articles for the Conversation. So if you just type in, also as To will know I'm quite active on Twitter. So I try to put out tweets which are meaningful about climate change, sustainable development goals, and actually allow you to have access to different information. Occasionally, I have a few side iu62fs where I start having rants with climate change deniers, but for the most part, my Twitter iu relatively clean, and is where I try to provide as much information I can on climate change.

**Tom Pegram** 55:40

Well, we'll definitely link to that. Thank you again Mark.

**Mark Maslin** 55:42

Pleasure.

**Tom Pegram** 55:42

It'u been fantastic.

**Mark Maslin** 55:43

Thank you To. Thank you very much.

**Tom Pegram** 55:48

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