



*11 September 2019* - Radical and urgent changes are needed if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved by 2030 according to a major scientific report published today.

Achieving the goals is still possible, but only if there is a fundamental—and urgent—change in the relationship between people and nature, and a significant reduction in social and gender inequalities between and inside countries according to the report.

This new United Nations report is the work of an independent group of scientists at the request of member states and is the first of its kind since the landmark Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted four years ago.

Entitled “The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development,” the report finds that the current development model is not sustainable, and the progress made in the last two decades is in danger of being reversed through worsening social inequalities and potentially irreversible declines in the natural environment that sustains us.

Creating economic growth just by increasing consumption of material goods is no longer a viable option at the global level: Projections indicate that the global use of materials is set to almost double between now and 2060, with correspondingly increased levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

The present model of development has delivered prosperity to hundreds of millions. But it also has led to continuing poverty and other deprivations; unprecedented levels of inequality that undermine innovation, social cohesion and sustainable economic growth; and it has brought the world close to tipping points with the global climate system and 2 biodiversity loss. To change course, the scientists say the world must transform a number of key areas of human activities, including food, energy, consumption and production, and cities.

These transformations can come about through coordinated action by governments, business, communities, civil society and individuals. Science has a particularly vital role to play—a role that can be further strengthened by increasing investment in science for sustainability and in natural and social science institutions based in developing countries.

Developed countries need to change their production and consumption patterns, including by limiting the use of fossil fuels and plastics, and to encourage public and private investments that align with the SDGs.

The scientists suggest that the UN could promote a new sustainable development investment label, with clear parameters and guidelines, to encourage and reward investment in industries and financial markets that advance sustainable development and discourage investment in those that do not.