

P Brink – Written Evidence (LBC0063)

COVID-19 has been a huge shock to our systems and has caused much death and a lot of suffering. It could have been worse but it could have been a lot better. If government really listened to the warnings by scientists and experts and acted, we could have been a lot better prepared. Not only for our own country but to help others around the world. This highlights the short term thinking and blindness to threats that we have not experienced, favouring a little more comfort now to being well prepared for predicted disaster. As usual disaster effects the poorest in our society most and highlights the inequality we accept as normal. Should we consider it normal or should it be unacceptable? I think a sufficiently advanced civilization would look at the inequality we accept today and see it as barbaric as now we look back at much of our human history. We have shown how in times of crisis we can do the unimaginable to mitigate the effects. Lets now use this fresh perspective to do what is necessary to uplift our civilization and humanity. To build back much better.

We have another catastrophe predicted by an overwhelming scientific consensus. The wording of scientific reports can appear to the layperson as non-conclusive. However the IPCC, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a very clear and scary warning about where we are headed if we don't make drastic changes. These changes can't wait, right now the scale of the change needed to prevent likely global catastrophe is massive. Each year we delay it gets harder and more expensive. But we have the technology, now we just need the will to invest well for a future where we can not merely survive, but thrive as a species. Very large amounts of money are now being planned in the UK, Europe and elsewhere to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have to make sure this is building a future that we need and want. It has to go to a just green recovery. Investing in technology to replace the fossil fuel industry and machinery that uses it. To replace other GHG (greenhouse gas) use such as refrigerants, even to replace our high meat consumption and the GHG toll that takes. We need to make this a just recovery, not exporting our problems to the developing world, but dealing with the whole problem. Working towards sustainable circular economy, improving education, training and the minimum wage, while creating new "green" jobs. I know this may be tough in the short term. But we have demonstrated what we can do in times of crisis. Lets do more to prevent a catastrophe.

Unfortunately we have another disaster happening. We are seeing a mass extinction of species. Habitats are being lost to increased need for human use of land as our world population climbs higher. This will cause more Zoonotic disease outbreaks like COVID-19 at a higher frequency. They could be much worse even and we never know when the next will come. When we find a vaccine or cure for COVID-19 we have to look to the future and try to learn the lesson. We need to find a balance on earth with nature, it has to be sustainable. I could point to all the loss we are seeing around the world from rainforests, to ocean acidification and coral reefs, to massive wildfires in Australia and on. But think for a minute about what we have lost so far. The species that we as humans have caused to go extinct have created a biodiversity and genetic loss that will take several million years to recover through evolution. We are just at the start of this human caused mass extinction. This is a huge sentimental loss but has very practical influences as well. We may be losing species right now that hold the key to big solutions in the future or are themselves keys to a whole ecosystem that may fail without them. Some species majorly effect our basic needs, such as pollinators, needed to fertilise our food crops that sustain our populations.

Again we have solutions, they are just not the easy choices in the short term We have

to listen to the science, even if it is an effort to understand. Not just hope for the best, but be our best and try to uplift each other and our species. Not just our country but the whole world. This can be a heavy burden, but don't we all want to do the right thing for our future and future generations?

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