



Cambridge Society for the Application of Research

Rethinking Research Objectives for the 21st Century

Professor Sir David King

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WOLFSON LECTURE THEATRE CHURCHILL COLLEGE

7.30 p.m., Monday 30th April, 2012

Unprecedented improvements in human wellbeing over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been driven largely by developments flowing from advances in engineering, medicine, agriculture and technology, and by political and economic developments coupled to consumerism. But a necessary consequence of these successes has been an equally unprecedented growth in the global population. The twenty first century will be dominated by the challenges posed by a mid-century population of around 9 billion people, all seeking a high standard of living. Climate change, driven by fossil fuel usage and by deforestation, provides the biggest challenge of all, since it requires a collective response of the global population, to mitigate the effect and to manage the growing impacts upon our societies.

Well designed technological solutions are desirable and are compatible with the continued growth of human wellbeing. The socio-political challenges in directing such a collective response are beyond anything previously managed. This may well lead to a mid-century slide into conflict caused by environmental and resource-driven challenges on a scale not previously experienced. The thesis presented here is that meeting these challenges will require a global cultural and technological transformation on much the same scale as the European Renaissance or the Industrial Revolution itself, and a clear understanding by all societies of the need to adapt and strengthen global governance procedures. Decision making at all levels will require significantly enhanced knowledge and understanding.

About the speaker:

Professor King became the Smith School's first Director in Jan 08. He has drawn together an elite group of full-time, associate and visiting academics from all over the world to be part of the School. With them, he is forging links with global businesses and politicians from every continent to achieve the Smith School's aims – to help leaders in business and government make well-informed decisions to secure a sustainable low carbon future.

Sir David was the UK Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of the Government Office of Science from Oct 00 to Dec 07. He raised the profile of the need for governments worldwide to act on climate change and was instrumental in creating the new £1bn Energy Technologies Institute. In 2008 he co-authored *The Hot Topic* on this subject. As Director of the Government's Foresight Programme, he created an in-depth horizon scanning process which advised government on a range of long-term problems, from flooding to obesity.

He chaired committees managing the government's Global Science and Innovation Forum on the foot-and-mouth epidemic of 2001, post 9/11 risks to the UK, GM foods and energy provision and was heavily involved in establishing the government's Science and Innovation Strategy of 2004-14.

Additional note

The CSAR Lectures are open to all; CSAR members are admitted free. Non-members are asked to make a nominal donation of £3.00.

Coffee and biscuits will be available in the Wolfson Foyer from around 7pm until the start of the lecture. Location information: <http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/about/visitors/directions.php>

The talk will be held in the lecture theatre in Wolfson Hall (4):

