

Creating a safe and just space for humanity

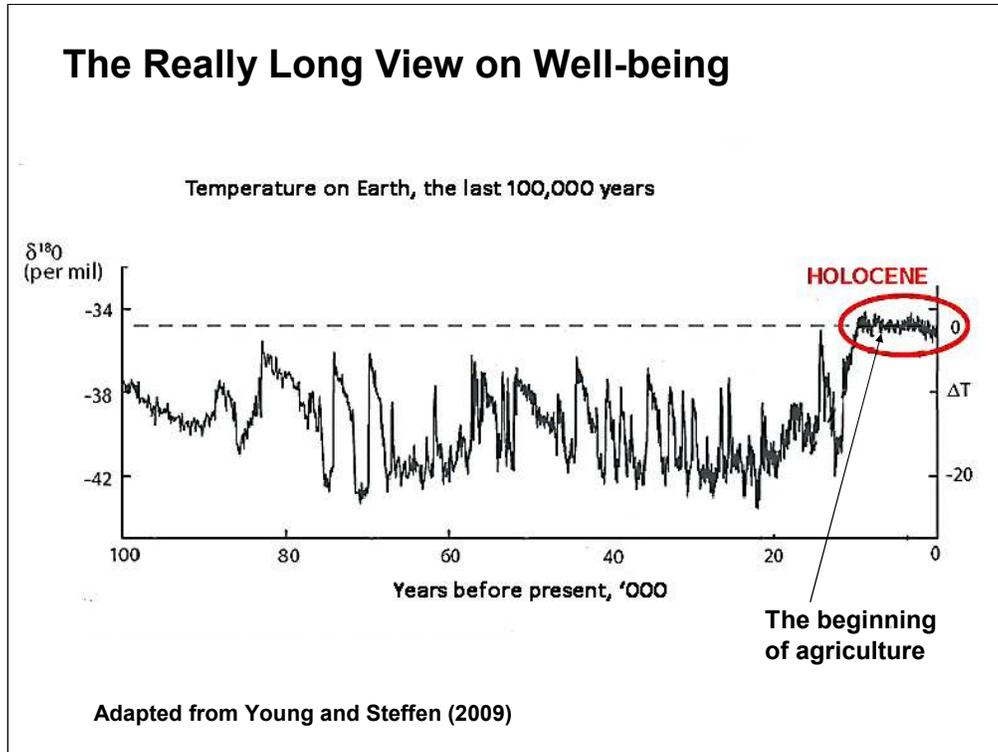


Kate Raworth, Senior Researcher, Oxfam
UNGA 17 October 2012



If we are going to be the generation that creates an ambitious set of global development goals, we need to I wrote a discussion paper for Oxfam earlier this year which sets out a framework for integrating environmental approaches to the vision we need, I'm going to present the ideas set out in that discussion paper now. I believe we need a compass to help us steer through the 21st century, and I think the compass we need looks like a donut. If we are going to vision, we have to take the long view, so let's start with the really really long view.

The Really Long View on Well-being



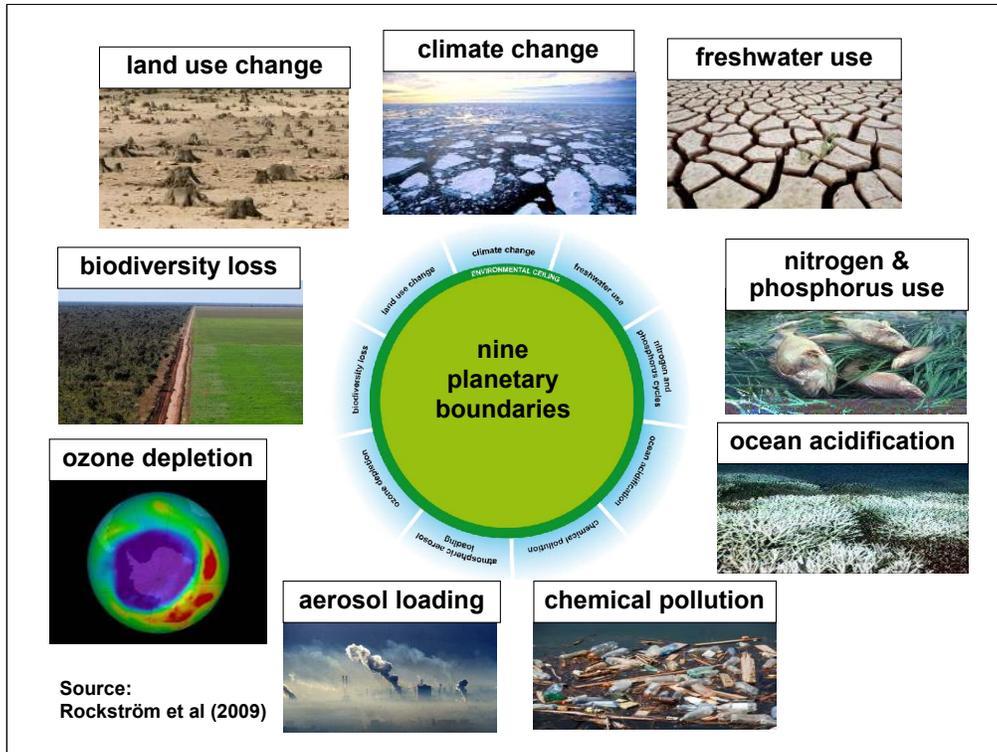
Here's the last 100,000 years of the planet, and its temperature.

It's varied a great deal – then the last 10-12,000 years has been an unusually stable period known as the Holocene.

It's no coincidence that it was in the Holocene humanity that began to practice agriculture, to master our use of the planet's resources, and we began to thrive.

We would be crazy to kick ourselves out of this benevolent stage of the planet's history without realising it.

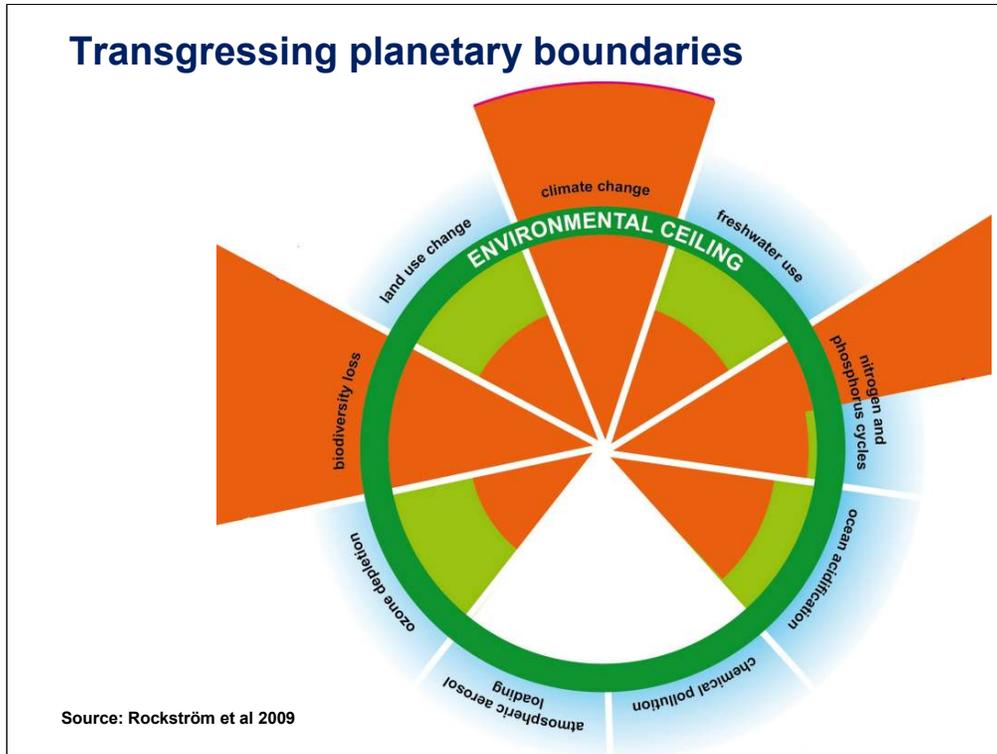
So in 2009, a group of leading Earth system scientists (led by Johan Rockstrom of the Stockholm Resilience Centre) got together and asked, what are the most critical Earth system processes that humanity depends upon to keep us in this state - and they came up with nine.



We need to keep humanity's pressure on these nine processes below safe boundaries so that we don't cross dangerous tipping points and cause catastrophic changes to the very natural resources that we depend upon.

It's important to say here that this is not an environmentalist agenda – it is a humanist agenda. These boundaries were not designed to protect tree frogs and polar bears – they need them too, but these boundaries are designed to protect humanity.

The scientists proposed safe levels for each boundary then asked, where are we at today?



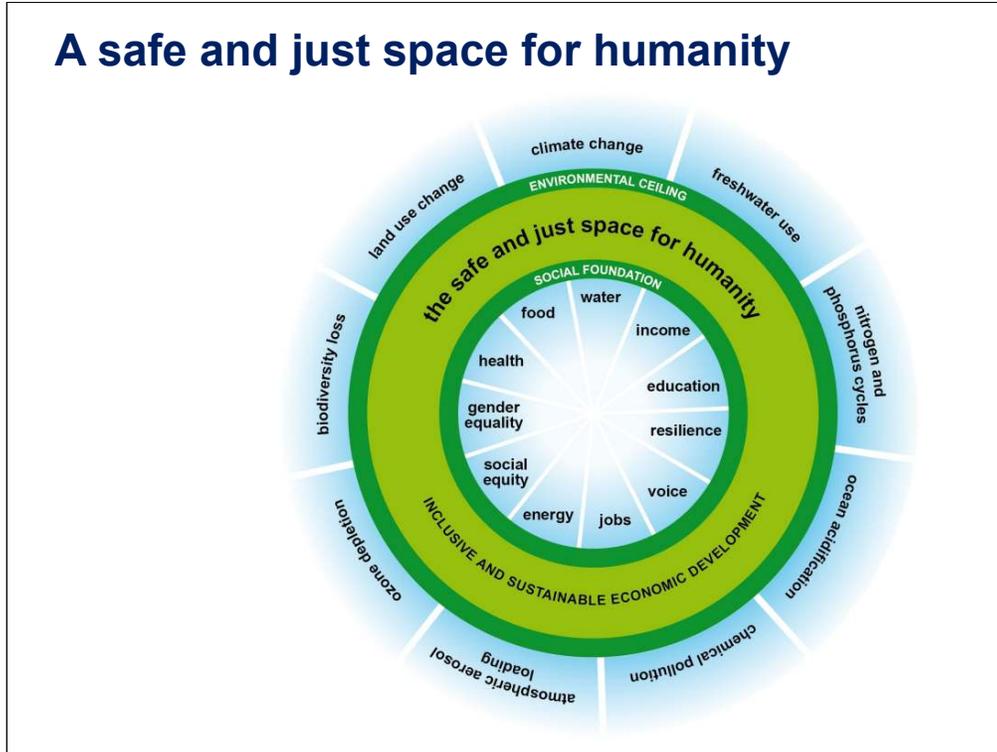
We are over at least 3 of the nine estimated boundaries – for climate change, for biodiversity loss and for nitrogen use.

And on many others, we are moving fast towards the estimated global boundary.

Even for those where we are still within the global boundary, many regional or local boundaries may have been passed. For water use, think of the Aral Sea or Lake Chad.

So we must bring our collective resource use back within these boundaries. But this is only half of the challenge we face.

A safe and just space for humanity



Just as there is an environmental ceiling beyond which lies unacceptable resource degradation - so too there is a social foundation, below which lies unacceptable human deprivation, where people lack the resources they need to meet their rights to the 11 dimensions shown here.

Who defined these social dimensions? You (the world's governments) did, because these are the top 11 social issues that the world's governments raised in their submissions to the Rio+20 conference. These overlap strongly with many of the Millennium Development Goals, which are the top priority to be achieved by 2015.

And here's the essential task of our time: to ensure that every person has the resources they need to meet their human rights but that our collective resource use stays within planetary boundaries.

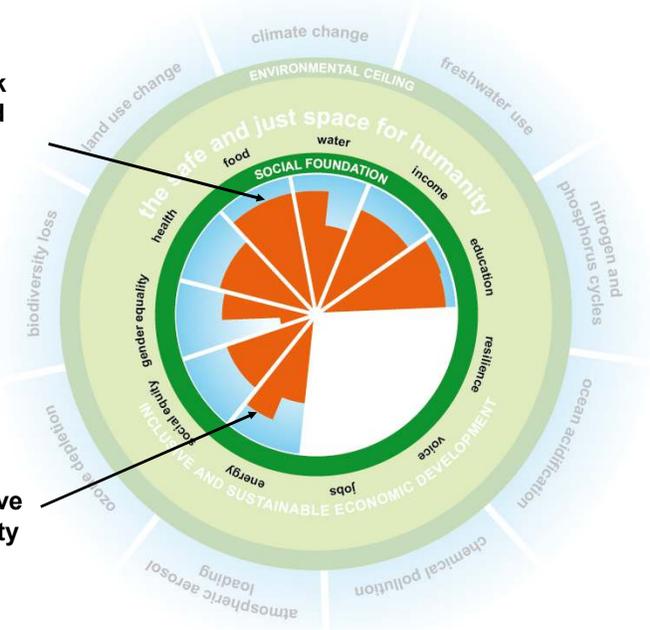
The challenge is to get into the safe and just space for humanity, shaped like a doughnut, because that, by definition, is where we all can best thrive. And surely the aim of economic development is to bring us there.

Falling far below the social foundation

13% of people lack the food they need

19% of people live without electricity

Source: UN data

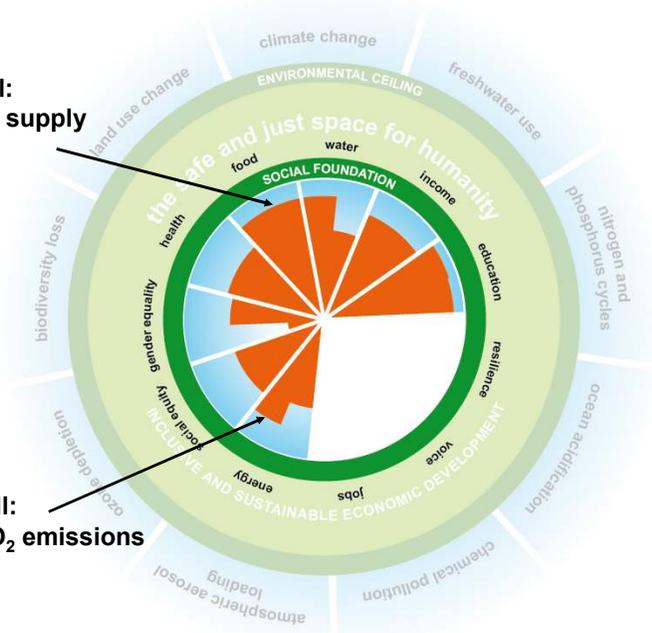


Just as we are over 3 of the planetary boundaries, UN data show that we are falling below the social found
 13% of people lack the food they need. 19% of people live without access to electricity.
 Millions of people still live in appalling deprivation, but we have already pushed the planet beyond its safe

Ending poverty: no pressure on the planet

**End hunger for all:
3% of global food supply**

**Electricity for all:
1% of global CO₂ emissions**

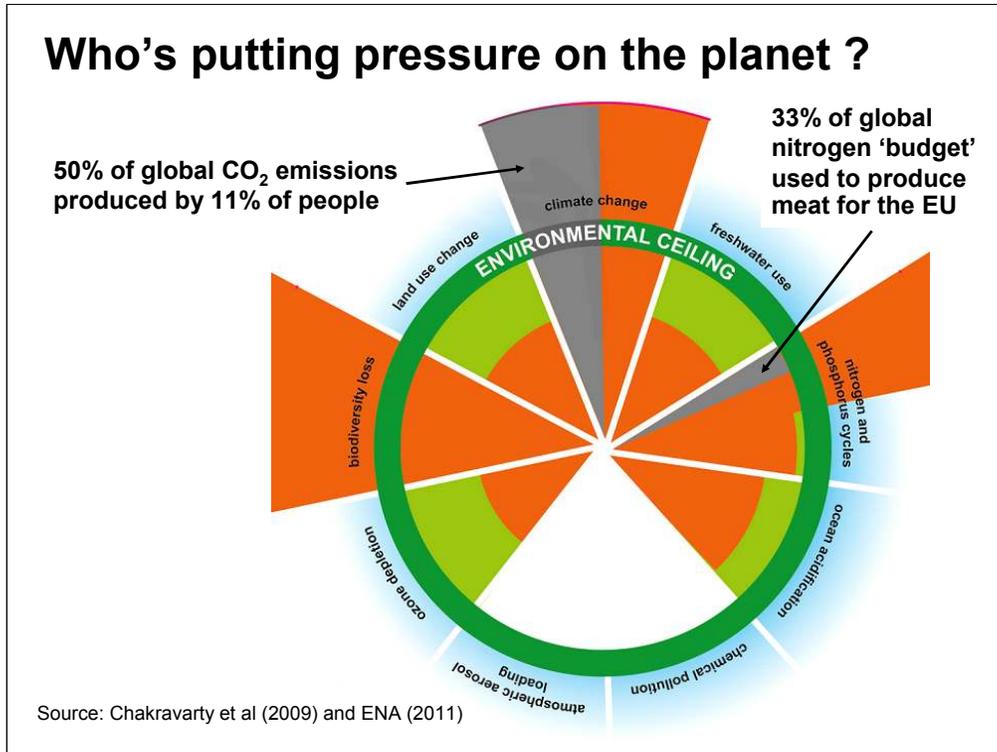


Source: FAO and IEA

So here's the good news.

Ending this deprivation need put no pressure on the planet.

According to the FAO it would take just 3% of the world's food supply to end hunger – compare that to th
According to the IEA, electricity access could be extended to all for just a 1% increase in global carbon er



So where is the pressure coming from?

Researchers at Princeton University estimate that around half the world's CO₂ emissions are generated by just 11% of people across the world – the global carbonistas.

And the European Nitrogen Assessment found that one third of the world's sustainable nitrogen budget is currently used to grow animal feed to produce meat for the EU.

If you think that reflects badly on Europe, at least the EU has done the calculations, knows the scale of the challenge, and can now act. There is a dearth of data on these issues and we need those data in order to act.

A safe and just space for humanity



If we are going to get into the safe and just space, it calls for redistributing the world's resources towards the poorest people now living in deprivation. transforming the consumption and production patterns of countries and communities using resources excessively.

No country in the world is yet in that green space – with no one in poverty, and living within its share of environmental resource use. And from this angle, we are all developing countries now, because we must all create new pathways towards a shared prosperity together.

Imagine if this kind of vision actually shaped decision-making.



Imagine if companies asked, how can we get our products and our supply chains into this space? It could cause a revolution in business models.



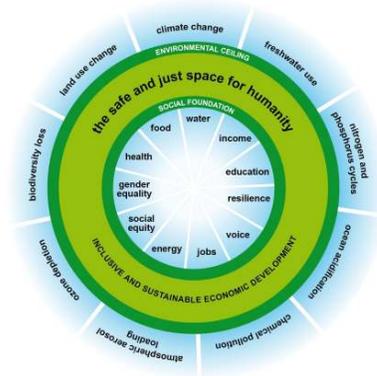
Imagine if governments created national policies on this basis.

Or indeed if the world's governments got together to draw up a set of goals to achieve it. And that is of course the fantastic opportunity we face now, in envisioning Sustainable Development Goals.

I have focused on envisioning the world we want to live it, but I'll end by saying what this implies for drawing up goals.

Towards Sustainable Development Goals

- One set of global goals
- Integrating social, environmental and economic pillars
- Targets needed in every country
- Reflecting national realities and capacities
- Thematic goals – with cross-cutting targets



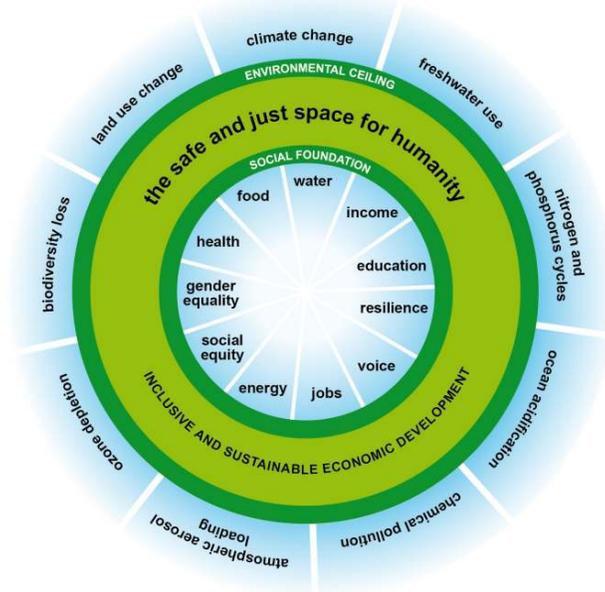
One set of goals – because our development and our environment are interdependent

Integrated – because we depend on all these for our well being

Targets for all – we all need to develop along new pathways, in low income and high income countries.

Reflecting each nation's realities and capacities

A safe and just space for humanity



Blog oxfamblogs.org/doughnut

Twitter [@KateRaworth](https://twitter.com/KateRaworth)

I want to end not on detail but on the vision.

We need to vision in order to be ambitious on the scale of urgency we face, and the opportunity we have. Some say we should have low ambition these days – but this is precisely the time to rethink our development pathways and our concepts of economic prosperity. Because we have the chance to design global goals that create a safe and just space for all of humanity.

Thank you.