

# Plan urgently needed to meet threats to human survival

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[A new report](#) is calling for humanity to urgently prepare a plan so our species can survive and thrive well into the future in the face of multiple catastrophic risks.

The report, from the Commission for the Human Future (CHF), identifies 10 potentially catastrophic global risks, including pandemics of new and untreatable diseases.

Other major risks include ecosystem collapse, rising [food insecurity](#), nuclear weapons, and [global warming](#), sea level rise and a changing climate.

CHF Chair, Professor John Hewson, also based at The Australian National University (ANU), said the current COVID-19 pandemic has put these global risks and humanity's need to act into sharp focus.

"The global pandemic we now face shows how short-term and blinkered are our horizons, how vulnerable and unprepared we are for threats that can shake or collapse our civilization, even extinguish us as a species," he said.

"At present, no government in the world has a plan

for meeting all these risks, for dealing with them as a total system and for finding the best and safest way out of them.

"This lack of preparedness means humanity will continue to be ambushed by unforeseen crises.

"This report is a call to all nations and all people."

The new report stems from a roundtable held at ANU in March which brought together leading experts across a range of fields including health, climate change, economics and public policy.

Dr. Arnagretta Hunter, the inaugural ANU Fellow for the Human Future and CHF board member said while the threats were "grim," the Commission had a message of hope.

"We can turn things around if we can get the right people out in the front, giving the right messages. If we clearly understand the nature and causes of the risks, devise integrated solutions—and take early action to defuse them," Dr. Hunter said.

"The longer the delay, the greater the penalty, both economic and in human lives.

"We need to convince our fellow citizens of Earth of the necessity to commit ourselves and every belief system we hold, to survive and thrive. We must recruit the best and brightest young humans, not to make arms, but to build the process for surviving and thriving for the whole of humanity."

The report outlines a roadmap for how humanity can survive and thrive, including ending climate change.

"An emergency climate action plan must be adopted globally. The coronavirus experience provides, at a smaller scale, a template for the type of action required, and offers current leadership an opportune moment to abandon the present delay in

responding to climate change," Dr. Hunter said.

"It is strongly urged that countries adopt, at a minimum a 50 percent CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target by 2030. This is achievable, both economically and technically."

Other steps humanity can take include ending food security, banning [nuclear weapons](#), repairing the global environment and cleaning up the planet.

"To survive and thrive we also need to develop a more eco-centric vision of our future rather than an anthropocentric or econo-centric one, one that fosters a natural world that is capable of sustaining not only humans, but all the other species, habitats and ecosystems which support life on the planet," Professor Hewson said.

"For this it is essential that humanity develops a shared understanding of the nature and causes of the risks, that we devise integrated solutions—and that we take early action to defuse them. The longer the delay, the greater the penalty, both economic and in human lives."

Provided by Australian National University

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