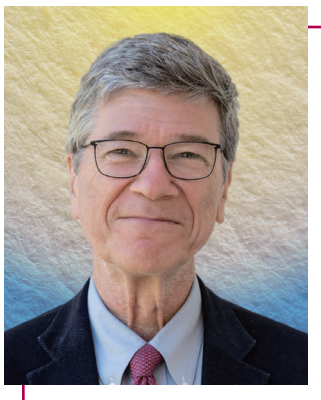


Honorary Doctor of Social Science Professor Jeffrey D. SACHS



Public Orator Professor Richard M. WALKER

Mr Council Chairman:

Early travel experiences profoundly impacted Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs and his subsequent career. A family trip to the then Soviet Union, not a traditional destination for an American family in the late 1960s, fuelled Professor Sachs' nascent intellectual curiosity, promoting him to reflect on the differences between capitalist and socialist economic systems and on matters related to society, the economy, and how people live their lives.

Then, when he was a university student, he experienced first-hand the levels of extreme poverty that blighted parts of India, scenes that were quite shocking to someone who had grown up in the relative affluence of North America.

Decades later, having logged trips to more than 140 nations around the world, often to places where some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities reside, the impact of those early exchanges with people from other nations on Professor Sachs is still felt.

Professor Sachs is now the most pre-eminent economist working today in the field of sustainable and economic development and the fight to end poverty. His influence is truly global. When he speaks, people listen. Thanks to the reach of his publications, speeches and interviews, his views are widely disseminated, reaching millions across the planet.

As the Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University and President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, or SDSN, he is a fervent supporter of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN eight years ago. He has been an advisor to three Secretaries-General of the UN, and today is an SDG Advocate for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and an advisor to many UN organisations. Recently, he was a featured speaker at a panel discussion of the Human Rights Council on sanctions and human rights.

Among his numerous awards, Professor Sachs was awarded the Tang Prize in Sustainable Development in 2022 for “leading transdisciplinary sustainability science and creating the multilateral movement for its applications from village to nation and the world”.

A glance at the titles of his numerous book publications reveals where his passions lie. His books include *The End of Poverty* (2005), *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (2008), *The Age of Sustainable Development* (2015), *A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism* (2018), *The Ages of Globalization* (2020), and *Ethics in Action for Sustainable Development* (2022).

So great is his renown that he has been named among *Time* magazine's 100 most influential world leaders on two occasions, and he has received more than 40 honorary doctorates.

At this point, I must add that City University of Hong Kong is incredibly proud to be listed now as one of these many universities worldwide to have honoured Professor Sachs with such an award!

Talk about sustainable development can be depressing. The challenges are enormous, the suffering great, and the world still has not found the collective will to solve the problems we face. We see images of extreme poverty, but for most people, there seems little we can meaningfully do to address poverty, hunger, health, education, and gender equality, the first five of the 17 SDGs. Yet where many see intractable challenges, Professor Sachs sees practical, scalable solutions that can move the world towards sustainable development.

Although Professor Sachs continues to spread the message about sustainable development with good grace, tolerance, patience and good humour, he doesn't pull his

punches. He does not lecture the world; he lays out the facts. As the lead writer for this year's *Sustainable Development Report*, SDSN's annual review of progress towards SDGs, Professor Sachs and his colleagues state that "all of the SDGs are seriously off track", in part due to the pandemic and other global crises. He recommends initiating urgent economic reform of the global financial architecture to address the "chronic shortfall of international SDG financing". As we pass the mid-way point to reaching 2030, the target date for achieving all 17 of the SDGs, he calls on all countries to bolster investments in the SDGs based on national strategies and increased international financing. Most importantly, he calls for a "new politics" at the global level to achieve the needed cooperation among nations.

At the same time, Professor Sachs urges optimism. The 17 SDGS are not beyond reach. Time is running out, but it's not too late. Despite the setbacks, he writes: "Let's solve the problems. We can do amazing things. It's really important for our children and for our children's children that we make the world a better place; and if we pay attention, if we take a moral position, and if we mobilise knowledge and the technology, wonderful things can happen."

His words of encouragement – warm, inclusive, inspirational – embody a genuine belief in our capacity as fellow humans to overcome differences and work toward achieving these common SDG goals.

Mr Council Chairman, Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs is one of the world's foremost thinkers on matters related to sustainable development, renowned for his insight and lifelong dedication to improving the lives of the most vulnerable people on Earth and to promoting cooperation and peace across the planet.

It is my honour to present to you Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs for the conferment of a Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.