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Please contact gudrun.freese@earthscan.co.uk to interview Professor Tim Jackson, and for review copies.

It's time to re-think economic growth for advanced nations

LONDON - In *[Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet](#)*, published by Earthscan this week, Professor Tim Jackson raises fundamental questions about the economics needed to tackle climate change. Jackson argues that, faced with the limits imposed by carbon sinks and the scale of 'de-carbonization' of the world's economy required to stay within them, continued economic growth in the already affluent world does not offer the solution; it represents the problem.

Speaking in London on Thursday 12th November, at an event to mark the publication of his book, **Tim Jackson said,**

"Governments are locked into defending growth in a system where stability depends on growth. Chasing growth makes it incredibly difficult to chase climate goals too. So what we urgently need is an economic system that doesn't rely on growth. Right now the one we have is undermining the ability of governments to function properly. It is undermining wellbeing in the richest nations and failing those in the poorest. It has already led us to the brink of economic collapse and it is driving us rapidly towards catastrophic climate change."

Jackson says his book is primarily a message for the advanced nations. "There is no case to abandon growth universally. But there is a strong case for the developed nations to make room for growth in poorer countries. It is in these poorer countries that growth really does make a difference. In richer countries the returns on further growth appear much more limited; for example subjective well-being diminishes rapidly at higher income levels."

Jackson's book draws on the findings of a two-year research programme he coordinated for the UK's Sustainable Development Commission (SDC), where he is economics commissioner. The research programme was commissioned by the former chairman of the SDC, Jonathon Porritt, who also addressed the event on Thursday.

Jonathon Porritt said: "The idea that today's model of consumption-driven economic growth will secure sustainable, equitable and decent lives for 9 billion people between now and 2050 is literally laughable. The refusal of all the major parties even to acknowledge this incontrovertible reality, let alone explore its implications, is disgraceful."

In the past few months, a number of leading figures have come out in support of the call to re-think economic growth. **President Nicolas Sarkozy** has asked world leaders to join a revolution in the measurement of economic progress, and **Sir Nicholas Stern** has warned “at some point we would have to think about whether we want future growth”.

David Cameron, the UK’s opposition leader, has said, “The Spirit of the age today demands social values as well as economic value. This means focusing not just on GDP, but on **GWB – General Well-Being**.... Improving our society’s sense of well-being is, I believe, the central political challenge of our lives.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury said in his lecture, *The Climate Crisis: Fashioning a Christian Response*, “We have to ask whether our duty of care for life is compatible with assuming without question that the desirable future for every economy, even the most currently successful and expansionist, is unchecked growth.”

Prince Charles has added his voice to the debate calling for an end to unlimited growth and a new economic model to end the “consumerist society where growth is an end in itself.”

Last week, **George Soros** – backed by distinguished academic economists including Nobel laureate economists – launched the Institute for New Economic Thought, an independent think-tank charged with reinventing economics.

[Prosperity Without Growth](#) calls for a new vision of prosperity based around providing the capabilities for people to flourish – within the ecological limits of the planet. Key recommendations include the need for:

- an economics fit for purpose on finite planet
- a massive uplift in ‘ecological’ investment: renewable energy, energy efficiency, local infrastructure, low-carbon transport, climate adaptation, ecological protection
- support for ‘ecological’ enterprise – resource efficient, community-based activities that offer meaningful employment and deliver low-carbon goods and services
- clear restraints on unbridled consumerism
- the protection of public spaces and a renewed vision of social goods
- investment in the capabilities for people have to participate in society in less materialistic ways
- the overhaul of national accounts to measure the things that matter
- real commitment by the richer nations towards low-carbon development in the poorer nations

DOWNLOADS: Preview [Chapter 1](#) of *Prosperity Without Growth* and read the full [Table of Contents](#). More [pre-publication endorsements](#) from Bill McKibben, James Gustave Speth, Herman Daly, Oliver James and others.

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Notes to Editors

1. For extracts and review copies of [*Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*](#) (Earthscan) or to set up interviews with Prof Tim Jackson, please contact gudrun.freese@earthscan.co.uk / Tel: +44 (0)20 7841 1930 / +44 (0)782 5600 487.
 - *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet* by Tim Jackson; Published by Earthscan; November 2009; HB 9781844078943; £12.99; 280pp
 - Please reference the book as follows: *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet* (Earthscan, £12.99) is available from all good bookshops and www.earthscan.co.uk/pwg
 - Download the cover: <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/Portals/0/PR/9781844078943.jpg>
2. Professor Tim Jackson is the Sustainable Development Commission's Economics Commissioner. He is also Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey and Director of the ESRC Research Group on Lifestyles, Values and Environment (RESOLVE). More information about Professor Jackson can be found on his profile pages at:
 - [University of Surrey Profile](#)
 - [SDC Profile](#)
 - [FCRN Profile](#)