

## Foreword

Our world is on the verge of unprecedented economic and environmental change. While access to technology and opportunity are dramatically improving many parts of the planet, we also see climate change and widening inequality putting that progress in jeopardy. Even though new infrastructure investments—in roads, dams, pipelines and railways—promise economic prosperity for poorer countries, the risks such projects pose threaten to outweigh the benefits.

Look no further than what is happening to the world's population of apes across Africa and southeast Asia. The fragmentation and exploitation of tropical forests is a direct threat to apes—compromising their habitat, making food scarce, and bringing dangers like poaching and disease. As a result, their numbers are decreasing everywhere. Today, many ape species are on the precipice of extinction.

As this latest volume of *State of the Apes* argues, our well-being is inextricably linked to the well-being of our environment—and the well-being of all species that call our planet home.

That is in part because this same forest destruction is equally devastating to forest-dependent *people*. Industrial-scale infrastructure development has a significant, detrimental impact on local communities that have a long-term relationship with the forest. These rural and indigenous communities frequently don't see the economic benefits brought by new roads and power plants; instead they see their land taken away, without any just compensation or respect for their voices or rights.

Moreover, these developments have even wider ramifications for our environment. When we eliminate forests and fail to lift up the communities that protect them, we

dramatically increase the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere. When we abuse our lands, we severely weaken our position in the fight against climate change.

In other words, when apes are displaced—when their forests are degraded and their lives are devalued—humans are too. When we ignore the larger consequences of these massive infrastructure projects, especially in the name of inequitable and unjust gain, the whole world suffers.

Our planet and our communities are in urgent need of a more sustainable, equitable kind of economic development—one that empowers everyone, while protecting the planet's life and resources.

At the Ford Foundation, we understand that all these issues are deeply intertwined, and to address them comprehensively, the solutions must be similarly interconnected. The question is: how do we strike a balance that enables development while also allowing apes and other species, local communities, the environment and the economy to thrive?

This book is aimed at helping us answer that difficult question. Through reasoned, peer-reviewed science and practical examples, *State of the Apes* shows that though there may always be trade-offs, smart policy comes from considering what will create long-term benefits for all. It offers real solutions for how we plan, organize and educate to produce socially inclusive and green infrastructure. And it reminds us that both long-term environmental sustainability and long-term economic progress are the result of *equitable* and just solutions—not unsustainable or corrupt investments.

Most importantly, this volume demonstrates how equitable development is not only a possibility, but a necessity.

We know we can't stop the world from developing, but we can make sure inevitable and necessary developments in infrastructure also contribute to the larger march of progress for all people, and protect the

environment. It's up to all of us to ensure that these projects are executed thoughtfully, responsibly and sustainably—that they are not destructive, but truly constructive.

At this critical moment—when governments, businesses and civil society organizations across the world are coming up against the dual threats of climate change and economic inequality—it has never been more essential that we keep our shared future in mind.

The *State of the Apes* series makes clear that charting a path forward is not about the state, or fate, of any one species, but about the fair and sustainable solutions that our world so desperately needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Walker', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Darren Walker**  
President  
Ford Foundation