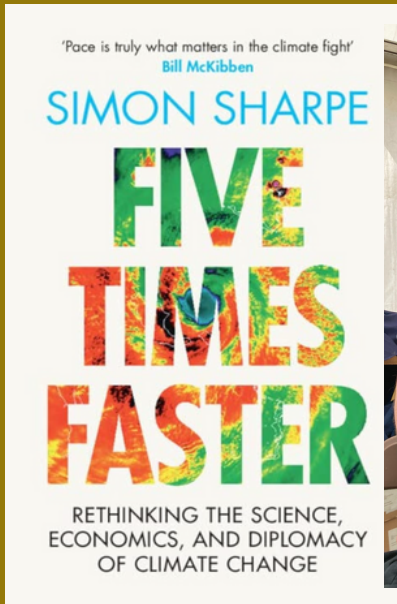


# Five Times Faster - A Review

ACADEMIC; FORMER CIVIL SERVANT; ENERGY AND CLIMATE POLICYMAKER; UK DIRECTOR OF CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS AT COP; DIRECTOR OF ECONOMICS FOR THE UN CLIMATE CHAMPIONS.

**AUTHOR SIMON SHARPE**



“We need to rip fossil fuel burning out of the global economy five times faster this decade, than we have the last two decades.”

“In the fight against climate change, speed is everything. Winning slowly is the same as losing”.

When it comes to climate change, it is a truism that we cannot expect to do the same things, using the same approaches, and expect to get a different outcome. Enter **Simon Sharpe's** brilliant book **“Five Times Faster”**, a manifesto for a fundamentally different approach to science, economics and diplomacy, if we are to reduce the emissions intensity of our global economy at the necessary pace. He poignantly describes the book in the intro as his response to the school striker with the sign **“We'll stop protesting when you stop being so shit”**. He writes **“This book is about why we are still being so shit at dealing with climate change, and how we can stop that”**.

**Simon Sharpe** brings a wonderful cocktail of experience to the debate; as an academic; a former civil servant; an energy and climate policymaker; a UK director of climate negotiations at COP; and as Director of Economics for the UN Climate Champions. This gives him a depth of insight into what is not working and how we might fix it. As you might expect, his analysis is detailed and insightful, but not at the cost of being accessible to the layperson. Just when you feel that your head might be beginning to stretch beyond its limits – he brings the discussion back to his brilliant and often repeated analogy of how to rescue a frog slowly boiling in the pan!

This is the most original and refreshing climate change book that I have read in a long time and it provides a welcome critique of some perceived wisdom. On science he argues that we need a shift from conservative predictions of will happen, to risk assessments of what might happen. From his international work, he presents what such a risk assessment might look like, and why this approach could provide both the information that policy makers need, but also the political motivation needed to act in a manner proportionate to the threat. It is important, he argues, to not just consider the best-case scenarios, but to squarely assess the high risk scenarios that we must do everything to avoid.

WE NEED TO ACT

# FIVE TIMES FASTER

TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

"Five Times Faster takes you on a captivating – yet alarming – journey through the complexities of climate change ... Simon's book is an important leap in the right direction."

Mariana Mazzucato, University College, London

"This book needs to be read, and its recommendations embraced, by all those seeking to make rapid progress in the fight to preserve a habitable planet."

Baroness Bryony Worthington, leading creator of the UK's Climate Change Act

He saves his strongest criticism for the role of traditional 'equilibrium economics' and how it has logically led us to take the minimum climate action possible. He demonstrates how it leads us to underestimate the economic impacts of climate change and to overestimate the economic costs of the transition away from a fossil fuel economy. He proposes instead an approach that views the economy as an ecosystem and that what we need to generate is positive tipping points in the energy transition. He gives useful examples from the UK renewables sector and the Norwegian transition to electric vehicles; as well as highlighting some potential tipping points ahead and the type of policy interventions necessary.

In the final section Sharpe gives a wide-ranging critique of the history of climate diplomacy, including a brilliant analogy of the Paris agreement as a tax return where you decide how much tax you want to pay. Based on his experience and reflections through a number of COPs, he gives some detailed proposals of how we should move to negotiating sector by sector (rather than dealing with everything simultaneously); how co-operation from key state actors on particular issues can have more impact than everyone moving in tandem (where you end up with the lowest common denominator); and how using shorter time frames would lead to quicker progress.

I thoroughly recommend 'Five Times Faster' as a read, but if you want to get more of flavour of the book, **[before diving in, then you can catch Simon presenting and discussing the book here](#)**