

## **David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet**

Climate change has been an ongoing topic over the decades, with vivid environmental changes showing the extinction of certain plant and animal species. *A life on our Planet* is a documentary by Sir David Attenborough, describing the climate from three perspectives, the past, present, and the future. At the beginning of the documentary, Sir David terms it as his witness statement for the environment because it traces over sixty years of his career as a naturalist. He describes how the Planet's biodiversity has steeply degenerated while he watched. Thus, this documentary is encouraging, and at the same time, a haunting plea for people to help restore the balance of nature.

*A life on our Planet* shows nature in the past, the present, and the future. At the beginning of the film, Attenborough is standing in a deserted location around the Chernobyl nuclear plant. In the past, the area was once buzzing with nature before human mistakes rendered the place inhabitable. This is the first indication of changes that have occurred on the Planet. The film also illustrates the changes that have occurred in oceans. This is done by showing the emptying of oceans, whereby the film directors compare thriving coral habitats with images of dead fish that have been cut, frozen, and poorly stacked to be sold in the market. Another change is the end of rainforests, which have been compared to the flourishing rows of oil palms that people have planted for profit. There are also before picture of orangutans swinging through the rainforests of Borneo, while the after photographs show the end of rainforests, with one orangutan attempting to climb up a tree stump with no branches. These are cinematic juxtapositions that have been used in camera to persuade the viewer of the current state of their environment. These persuasions' main aim is that a dying planet is ugly while an ecosystem full of flora and fauna pleases both the earth and the eye.

The documentary also informs the reader of the future that awaits them with the destruction of the environment. Attenborough claims that the disaster that awaits future generations is a crisis that even he, in his nineties, will not experience. He visualizes lack of water due to dried rivers and oceans and lack of food due to dead vegetation. However, he includes hopeful messages by stating the small successes that would allow people and the ecosystem to survive. For example, sustainable farming in the Netherlands has led to the country becoming one of the best food exporters in the world. There has also been the restriction of fishing around the Pacific in the Palau nation, which has allowed marine life to flourish. The hope-inducing aspect of the film during the last twenty-five minutes of the film shows the future of the ecosystem. Attenborough explains what people can do to save the ecosystem, such as considering being vegan, utilizing natural energy, and find ways to improve their living standards without raising their impact.

*A life on our Planet* involves Attenborough's ethos, which is primarily a scientific belief that if people look beyond themselves, they can thrive when they ensure that everything else around them thrives. Attenborough states that the earth is finite and so are our lives. He delivers the warning that time is running out for the Planet, and if they -we- do not take care of it, they will perish with it.

While the film indicates that Attenborough is advising people about the destruction of the earth and its consequences, there is also the display of anger in his tone that has not been witnessed in his previous work. Attenborough agrees that it was naïve of him to think that he was exploring an untarnished paradise because the development and decline in his career have coincided with the ecosystem's mass destruction. Based on his previous work and memories of his career as a young man walking through forests and writing documentaries about animals, Attenborough

appears more hopeful in the universe compared to the documentary *A Life on our Planet*. His recent films show a depressing environmental message indicating that he is not as hopeful as he used to be about the environment saved. That makes the film appear like a horror film that begins happily with a world that looks like paradise and worsens quickly. Due to Attenborough being in the last stages of his years, it ends in horror because he will not be around to see a future where people finally learn to take care of the environment.

Therefore, the documentary *A Life on our Planet* is an educational piece on the consequences of climate change. Attenborough shows the before pictures of the ecosystem where animals, springs, various plant species, and aquatic life is thriving in the much cleaner environment of the past. Photographs used to indicate the aftermath of a destroyed ecosystem show dried rivers, dead fish, and artificial plants planted for profit. Attenborough advises of a future where people practice sustainable agriculture and use natural resources to conserve the environment. The documentary is a wake-up call for people to take care of the environment and to wisely use the time they still have.