

Stupidity and greed will kill off humans' Stephen Hawking makes terrifying prediction



FORGET artificial intelligence and nuclear war, Professor Stephen Hawking has sensationally warned it will be humans' stupidity and greed which will usher in the end of time.

The famed theoretical physicist says humans have “not become less greedy or less stupid” as we surge towards devastation of our planet.

The 74-year old was reminiscing with US TV legend Larry King about an interview the two held six years ago in which Prof Hawking lamented the population growth and said that people need to be more careful.

He said in 2010: “Mankind is in danger of destroying ourselves by our greed and stupidity.”

In the recent discussion, held at the Starmus science conference in Tenerife, the Oxford-born author has echoed similar sentiments and argued that the situation has in fact gotten worse.

When asked how to get around the sensitive issues to solve the problem, he said: “We keep on talking about the problem without putting names on it in that sense and getting it on the agenda of people.

“Because - you obviously can see it just as I can you know, that we are heading for disaster unless we do something.

Prof Hawking told Mr King: “We have certainly not become less greedy or less stupid.

“Six years ago, I was warning about pollution and overcrowding, they have gotten worse since then.

“The population has grown by half a billion since our last interview, with no end in sight.

“Just keep on about it. Just keep on about it,” he said, when asked about the next step to solving the problem. “You know, and I know that there are huge, huge sensitivities involved in this.

“To start with, it is the individual's great privilege to have children. And who am I to say that you shan't have children? That's one thing.

“Then the next thing is that there's a religious one, in the sense that the Catholic Church doesn't accept this. So that's another huge area of concerns.

And the last sensitivity and the trickiest of all is the fact, when you talk about world population, the areas we're talking about are Africa and Asia, you know.”

He agreed it could be construed as just being about “poor people”, adding: “And to have a European telling Africans that they shan't have children is not the way to go around things.”

“And if we don't do something, the natural world will do something. And you say that, but of course they've been doing it for a long time, the natural world.

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Some 650 million people, or one in 10 of the world's population, have no access to safe water, putting them at risk of infectious diseases and premature death. Take a look through the struggle for clean water across the world. “At this rate, it will be eleven billion by 2100.

Air pollution has increased by eight per cent over the past five years. “More than 80 percent of inhabitants of urban areas are exposed to unsafe levels of air pollution. “The increase in air pollution and the emission of increasing levels of carbon dioxide will be too late to avoid dangerous levels of global warming?”

However, Prof Hawking also said that AI is a threat, and that governments need to curb their enthusiasm in their race to make killing machines. Prof Hawking continued: “Governments seem to be engaged in an AI arms race, designing planes and weapons with intelligent technologies.

“The funding for projects directly beneficial to the human race, such as improved medical screening, seems a somewhat lower priority.

“I don't think that advances in artificial technology will necessarily be benign. “Once machines reach the critical stage of being able to evolve themselves, we cannot predict whether their goals will be the same.