MUN STUDY GUIDE
UNEP COMMITTEE

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAIRS

Hello and welcome to this year's NCYMUN. We will be your chairs Eva, Juliette and Djena in this United Nations Environment Program committee.The three of us are in the OIB section in Jeanne d'Arc high school and assisted once or twice at the MUN from previous years (therefore we know what it's like being delegate). Our role as chairs is to guide you through these two MUN days as well as keeping your debates flowing and ensuring that the rules are followed by all of the delegates. Naturally we will also assure that this experience will be fun and interesting for all of you. We hope you will enjoy it !

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Environment Programme or UNEP is an assembly which headquarters are located in Nairobi, Kenya. It was and still is a completely dependent organization of the United Nations. It was a governing council founded in June 1972 by Maurice Strong, after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Its main goals were coordinating organizations activities regarding environment, and assisting developing countries in making environmental policies. In June 2012, this assembly was strengthened and upgraded in the course of the United Nations Conference of the Sustainable Environment or Rio+20 : environment was now a big issue and at the center of discussions.

During these 47 years of activity, the assembly did multiple notable achievements :

Limiting emissions of gases in 1987 because of its impact regarding the ozone layer.

Limiting toxic mercury with a treaty in 2012.

Sponsoring solar loan programmes that helped 100,000 people in India.

With the UNESCO they promoted and were heavily involved in raising environmental awareness in education from 1975 to 1995.

In a forum held in Germany in 2008, UNEP called for facilities for electric vehicles.

Regarding protection for seas, education about this topic and interventions had taken place in countries affected by an alteration of the sea levels.

Up to this day UNEP is still working on future achievements for the environment.

UNEP has no executive powers but on the other hand has many mandates such as :

- integrating climate change solutions within countries
- post-conflict and disaster management
- ecosystem management and restoration and sustainable development
- environmental governance, implementing through laws, institutions and policies a sustainable development
- minimizing the impact of harmful substances
- resource efficiency : ensuring natural resources are produced and consumed with respect towards the environment.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

- 1) Ensuring the protection of wildlife

Wildlife includes animals, but also plants, insects, molluscs… that haven't been domesticated and live in a wild area. However, the important place taken by humans on Earth tend to modify their habitat and create situations of great danger.

Wildlife can be put in danger in several ways: it's sensitive to great climate or landscape changes, hunting, pollution…

Hunting was the very first method humans used to feed themselves. For years, our ancestors were living according to animal migrations. Nowadays, we feed ourselves using agriculture and farming, as sedentary beings, but still hunt as a hobby (trophy hunting, so it can become lucrative) or an additional way to bring food at home. But if hunting was necessary for our ancestors, is it dangerous nowadays?

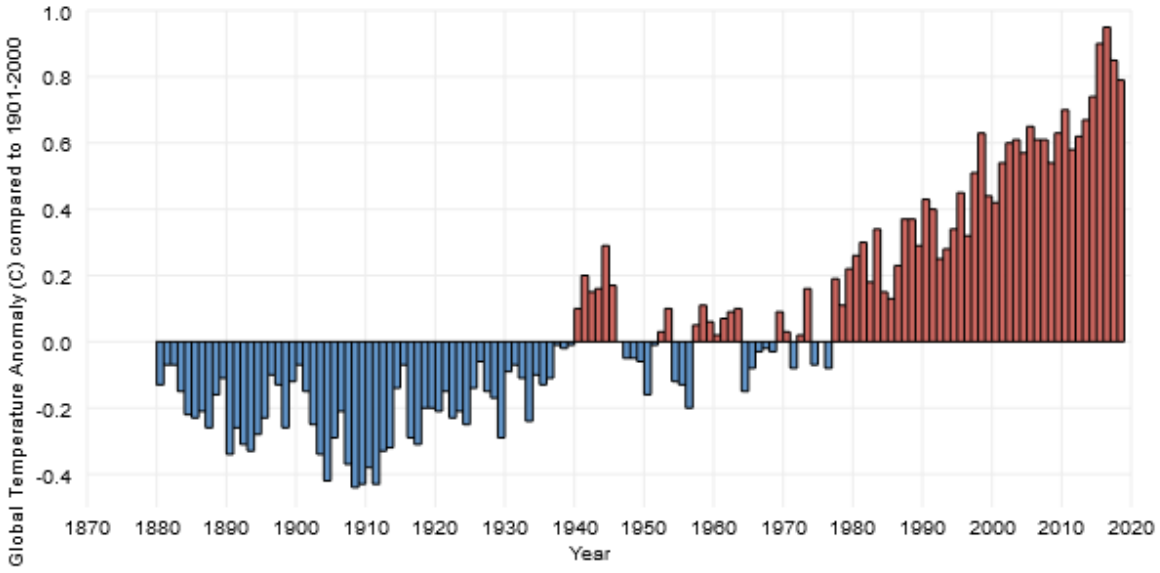
Hunting today is unnecessary, and most of those practicing it aren't professional and only get an agreement for it. It's the same for fishing. When it's not done right, killing an animal may cause it intense suffering before death.

Hunting is also a way to gain money: excepted for indigenous people (and it's still very regulated), whaling is forbidden since 1986.

Can we hunt everywhere? No, it depends of the countries or the territories. For example, in the USA, around half of the states allow hunting and fishing, while the other half only allows fishing, or nothing at all. In France, you've to go through a test to make sure you're able to hunt or fish legally.

But even performed a legal way, hunting is a real danger for the biodiversity, as it led to the extinction of several species, as the Caspian tiger or the passenger pigeon.

Climate change has an impact on the repartition of species all around the Earth. This graph shows how the temperature evolved from 1880 to nowadays:



https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-temperature

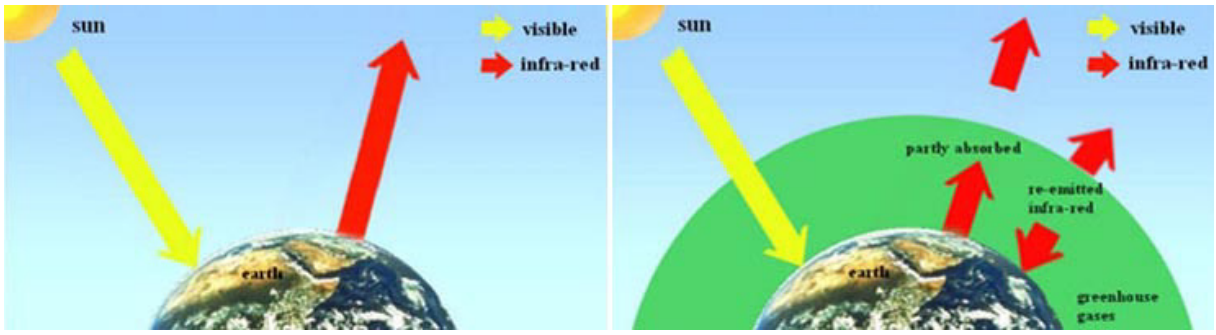
We can observe a great and fast increasement of the global temperature since the 80s. Such increasement leads to major changes for wildlife, as Earth's biodiversity adapts itself to the temperature. High temperatures dry lakes or seas and kill dozens of species living in it, when it doesn't totally extinguish them. Natural hazards, such as earthquakes, also cause changes in the landscapes and destroy species' habitat.

Human activity is as deadly as natural hazards. Wood, for example, is used in numerous ways to respond to needs, or simply to the consumer's demand. But deforestation includes the destruction of biodiversity and habitats. It also creates pollution which endangers the biodiversity a lot: the presence of fuels and materials in ecosystems is unnatural, putting their species in danger. They can also choose to run away, creating lifeless zones.

Biodiversity can also be responsible of its species' disappearance. By adding new species in an ecosystem, the whole territory's food chain becomes unbalanced. This can cause damages to the ecosystem itself, threaten species and even endanger humanity or its economy.

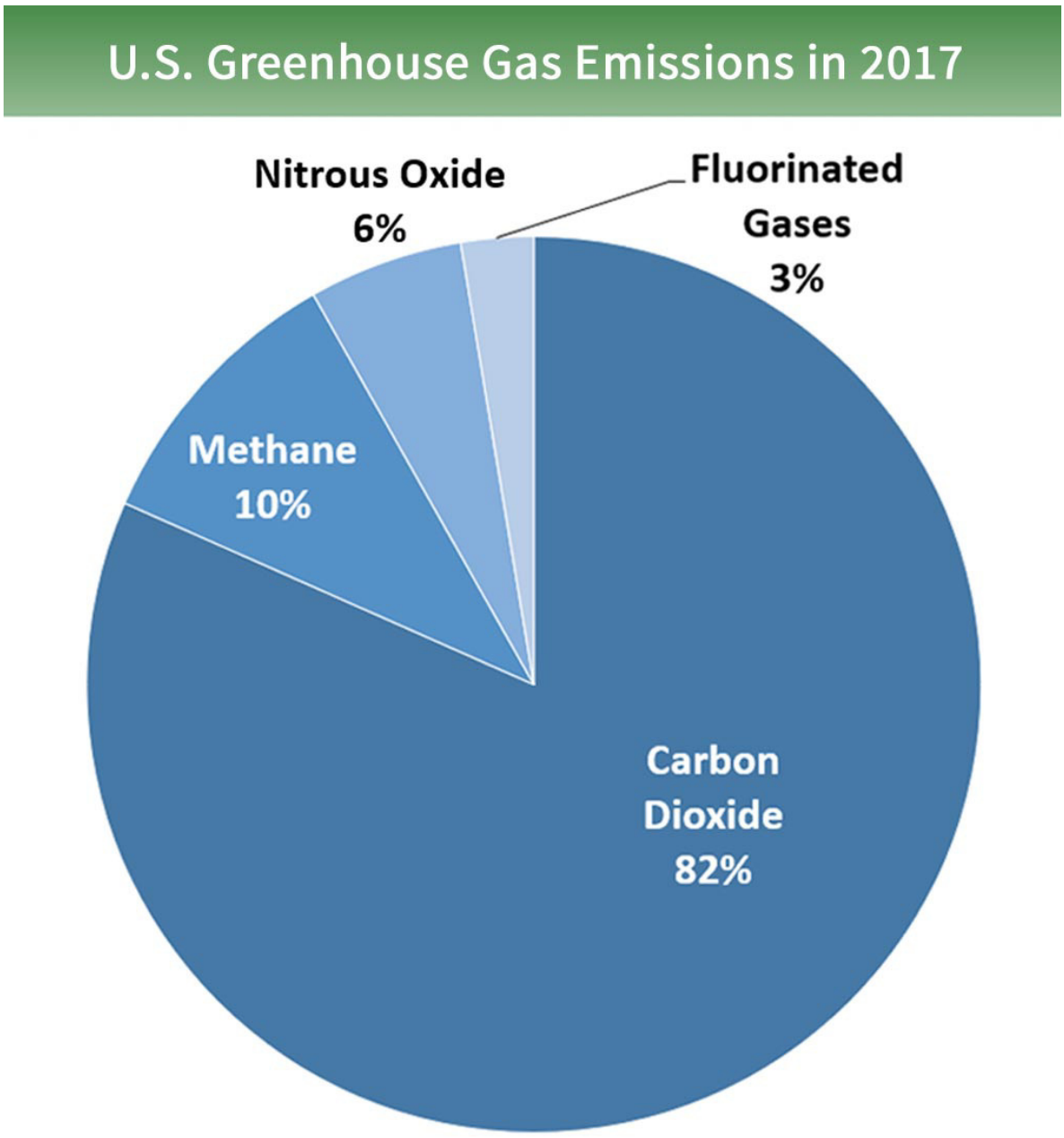
- 2) regulating the greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow down climate change

Greenhous gases, fleeting in the atmosphere, catch infrareds due to the heat emitted by Earth. Those infrareds, because of the greenhouse gases, cannot leave the atmosphere and cause an increasement of the planet's global temperature. This causes major problems as the melting of icebergs, north and south poles, and great changes in ecosystems. Here is a scheme of how this works:



Scheme: https://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/misc/ehk08/en/crossboundary/index.html

What are greenhouse gases made of? As said in the name, it reunites different types of gases:



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2019). Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2017

Graph: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjOqIvYiILkAhWFxoUKHWi1AG0QFjACegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.epa.gov%2Fghgemissions%2Foverview-greenhouse-gases&usg=AOvVaw0WIm9EUef5flWSfz467az9
(as said on the website, the percentages don't hit 100% due to automatic rounding of the data.)

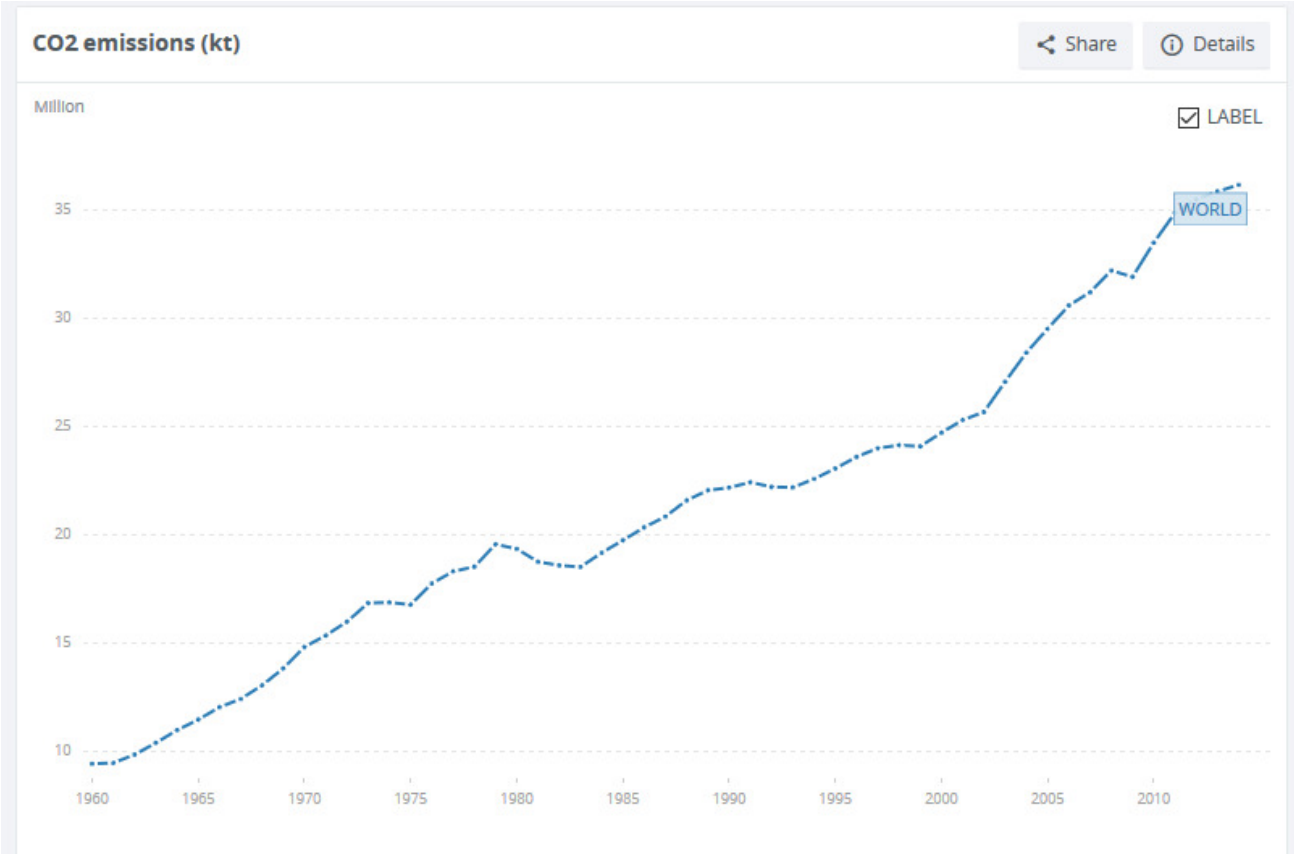
The presence of those gases in the atmosphere is due to several factors: the production or use of fossil fuels, agriculture, chemical reaction and industrial activities (= mainly human activities) The big issue here is to find a way to reduce the gas emissions while conserving those activities, which can be essential for our economy.

- 3) fighting against atmospheric and water pollution caused by urbanisation

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

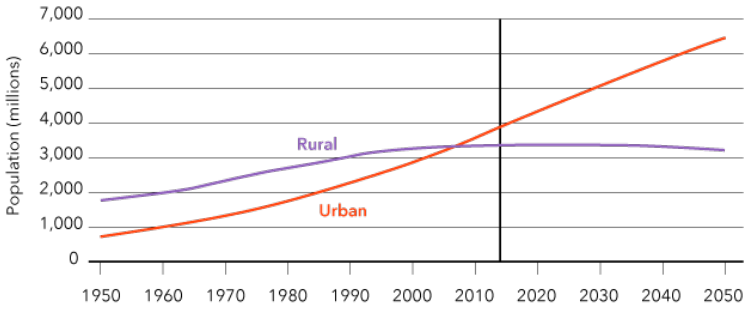
Between 1960 and 2010, the global CO2 emission was multiplied by 3.5 (from 9 396 705.835 to 33 472 376 kilotons). During the same period, the part of people living in urban areas was multiplied by 4 (from 1 to 4 billion). This implies the creation of buildings, quarters and city and the use of numerous resources such as raw materials, human strength and vehicles.

CO2 emissions in kilotons (1960-2014)



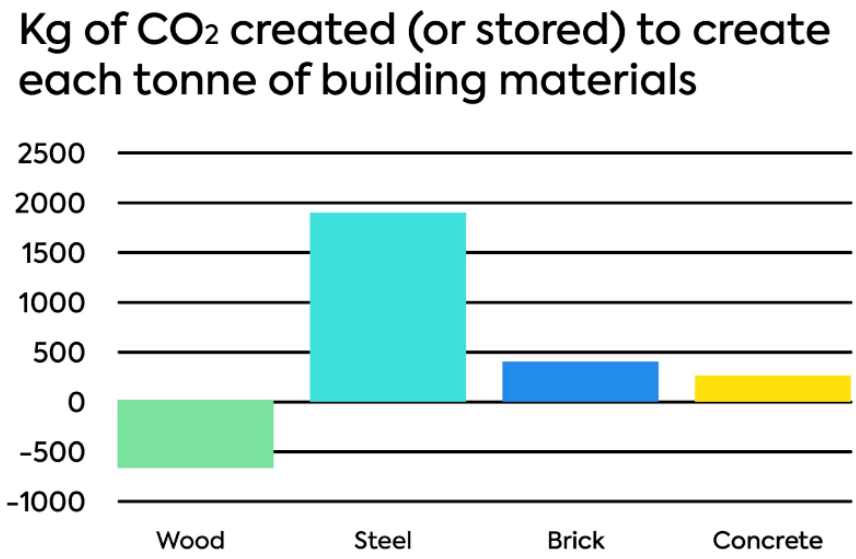
Source: https://data.worldbank.org/topic/climate-change

Percentage of the population living in urban/rural areas between 1950 and 2050 (predicted data)



Source : https://www.blackrock.com/ch/individual/en/themes/megatrends/urbanisation

All those factors have an impact on the environment. To build a house are needed the equivalent of 500 tons of CO2. Below is a graph showing the quantities of CO2 created according to the material that is used. The negative data correspond to the CO2 stored in the process.



Source : https://citu.co.uk/citu-live/what-is-the-carbon-footprint-of-a-house

The main issue here is to provide the respect of environment while people keep moving from the countryside to the city. Cities are consuming 78% of the produced energy and produce themselves 60% of the emitted CO2. Climate change is also an important factor of development for those cities: climate hazards are a danger for the inhabitants, the buildings and the green spaces (such as gardens, parks or agriculture in urban areas.)

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an NGO publishing every year a report about world climate. Here's the link to the 2018 report published this year : https://library.wmo.int/doc_num.php?explnum_id=5789

In this report, it is said that 2018 knew periods of intensive warmth, mainly in the Arctic, where it reached over 3°C higher than usual. The presence of air pollutants creates global warming and saturate the ozone layer.

In developing or poor countries, cities lack of decisions and acts about environment and climate change. People live in unstable and unhealthy areas, sometimes in shanty towns when the areas are poor.

However, they try to adapt to climate change and, for those having the adequate resources, to attenuate its consequences. Cities must invest in infrastructures that could manage the climate change while having a minimal impact on it. To reduce the impact, another solution is to use the appropriate resources and energies (mostly renewable ones).

Organisations and actors (such as UN-Habitat) help the less-developed countries to face the change and to adapt themselves. Shapes taken by the solutions are numerous: ecocities, intensive use of solar panels…

WATER POLLUTION

A water is considered polluted when it contains harmful substances that make it undrinkable, dangerous for health, and unwelcoming to the development of life forms. Urbanisation is one of the main causes of water pollution. The implantation of building has a direct effect on soil and water composition. Fertilizers use for agriculture can reach rivers, lakes… and cause the appearance and rapid growth of seaweeds that will choke all other life forms. Wastes and chemical products rejected by the industries and building are also carried by the water, sewage water isn't always perfectly cleaned.

Those changing are modifying the main factors that make water drinkable or welcoming: pH, temperature, clarity, amount of nutrients and minerals.

Today, it's around 80% of the sewage water that's rejected in the environment, we may drink a part of it every day. In fact, not only sensible, poor or developing countries are threatened by the presence of chemical products in the water they drink. In America were found residue of arsenic directly in 'drinkable' water.

This pollution of water has various bad effects on the environment.

Changing its temperature means changing the feature of life forms' habitat. They may not be prepared for it and disappear. Increasement of the water's temperature also leads to the melting of icebergs and the development of seaweeds or aquatic flora.

Water pollution leads to air pollution: when water evaporates, the particles of potential chemical products mix with those already floating in the air.

1. HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

- 1) Ensuring the protection of wildlife

As said in part III.1, dangers threatening wildlife can be caused by human activity. In a report of the North Carolina States University, it's stated that in America, the disappearance of various species in the past is linked to the arrival of Europeans in the 1400s, while Natives (Amerindians) were already occupying the territory. They disappeared because of the diseases carried by the Europeans, and wildlife became threatened when they started to destroy their habitats to build ranches and hunt wild species.

In America, movements for the protection of wildlife started in the 1930s, funded by numerous groups including scientists, clubs and engaged associations. This led to acts about reducing the use of pesticides, hunting or chemicals in agriculture. This report also highlights the fact that, even before the 20th century, movements of resistance against massive hunting (of bison for example) started but were rarely taken seriously. At the origin of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, a judge from New Jersey quoted in 1842 the Magna Carta, decreeing that available wildlife was everyone's propriety, and was a crucial element ensuring our alimentation.

Such actions for the protection of wildlife also occurred by the past in other countries. For example, in Sri Lanka in 1889, when were shown the disastrous effects of commercial exploitation of wildlife.

In a global way, when did movements of conservation of wildlife begin? John Evelyn, an English writer, presented in 1662 to the court a work entitled "Sylva or a discourse on forest trees and the propagation of timber in His Majesty's dominions", about deforestation. What's known as modern conservatism tend to be linked to the late 18th century, at the same period as the industrial revolution. Example of France and Prussia, where intensive agriculture and forestry developed as the same period, are often quoted. A link is also established with the technological development of the tools used by scientists, who could make more precise studies and make concrete climatology studies. Their investigation allowed them to see that human activity, increasing with the industrial revolution, was clearly damaging the environment.

Conservation includes the creation of protected zones such as national parks. The first one was created in Mongolia in 1778.

- 2) regulating the greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow down climate change

The production of greenhouse gases was linked to global warming in 1896, when the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius exposed the similarities between the concentration of those gases in the atmosphere and the global temperature. Chamberlain and him studied the case together and concluded that doubling the concentration of greenhouse gases in the air would add 5°C at the global temperature. However, their researches weren't taken seriously at that time, due to a lack of knowledge on the subject and the global thought that our actions couldn't be toxic for the environment (The human brain has difficulties to represent itself things that don't belong to its scale, such as planets. For that reason, it's even harder to imagine such consequences as the one we know today without scientific supports).

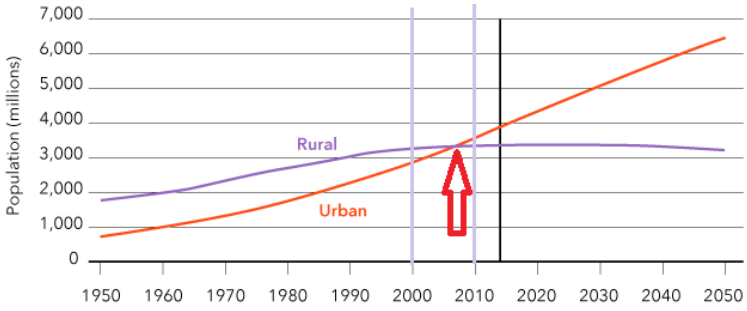
72 years before, similar researches were made by the French scientist Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier. However, the same lack of scientific progress made those researches barely known by everyone, even if it became the basis of future researches on the subject, such as John Tyndall's ones in the 1850s.

With the development of infrared spectroscopy (the encounter of infrareds and matter is a way to study chemical substances), it was revealed that greenhouse gases were intercepting infrareds. As we know today, this reduces the chances of infrareds to leave our atmosphere and participates to global warming.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, data began to be seriously collected, which led to the creation of the very first CO2 concentration curves made with data collected with modern technology. At that time, what was detected is a tendency for the global temperature to lower. 20 years later, the same curves started to show an increasement of the global temperature. If before people were fearing a new Ice Age, they then questioned the existence of a potentially dangerous global warming in the future. Numerous studies on the subject were made in the 90s, the media also worked on showing how negative the impact of greenhouse gases could be (in their own way). Nowadays the case is still studied with attention, as temperatures tend to rise faster than by the past.

- 3) fighting against atmospheric and water pollution caused by urbanisation

In part III/3, the graph about population living in the urban/rural areas shows us that, between 2000 and 2010, the number of people living in urban areas increased quickly and became higher than the number of people living in rural areas, which stabilised and started to lower.



It's important to define the reasons of this change. First, human population is naturally increasing over time, because death rate is lowering faster than birth rate, and we tend to live longer due to the progresses of medicine and quality of life. This leads to the creation of infrastructures for services and new homes, so to a form of urbanisation, as cities are more attractive than rural areas in term of access to those services. Cities also have more employment opportunities, which leads to migration from the countryside to the cities.

In the past, people started to live in 'cities' when they understood they could live using product from agriculture, and not only from hunts. This led to the creation of towns, cities, in which people could stay without having to move to find food. As sanitary infrastructures weren't very developed, most of the wastes were directly left outside. With time, populations learnt how to deal with their wastes and most of the organised cities remained very rural and centred around agriculture until the first Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century. In the following century, many changes in air and water quality were observed: smog, acid rain… Nowadays, the atmosphere is full of particles of numerous gas and materials used for the factories. The presence of those particles is sadly favouriting asthma, heart attacks and reduces life expectancy.

For centuries, the respect of water potability was also a mystery for humans. Unwillingly, we polluted sources and ground water with our wastes and excrements, delivering there an incredible quantity of bacteria, diseases and chemicals. Some very dangerous, as cholera or typhoid, are the cause of deadly epidemics that occurred in history. Water pollution was also intensified by the Industrial Revolution, as the factories decided to throw their wastes literally in the water, or to bury them. Nowadays, according to the UNESCO, it's 70% of those wastes that are rejected in the environment.

1. DISCUSSION OF THE TOPIC

- 1) Ensuring the protection of wildlife

There's no doubt wildlife in its entirety is something sensitive and flimsy, but its existence is crucial for the stability of food chains, life itself, and economies. No doubt either that, because of human activity, hazards, progresses or simply time, our Earth is changing. Wildlife, as does mankind, must adapt to those changes. Or is this the contrary?

Most of those changes are due to human activity. It deteriorates habitats, as do the factories by rejecting their wastes into the ecosystems, or directly help the extinction of species, as do abusive hunting or fishing. Regulating those activities would be a way to protect wildlife, but it means finding a brand-new way to organise our economies and our way to work, develop ourselves, and respond to major or minor needs.

What are, today, the major issues we encounter while trying to protect wildlife? First thing to quote is the relative will of some governments to take this danger seriously, as some also still refuse to see the changes occurring on our planet. The problem is that both are linked and ignoring them will lead to irreversible and important phaenomenon and extinctions.

Wildlife was there a long time before humanity's appearance: there is no more concrete example that it's able to take care of itself. Humans introduced monoculture (in agriculture) while the natural way to grow plants is using polyculture (growing several species sharing the same environment, just as we can observe in forests). Nowadays, we can observe conflicts or encounter between wildlife and humanity often leading to destruction. For example, small animals we may kill while driving (because roads were constructed near forests or lakes), wild animals unintentionally killed during safaris to prevent attacks, or even the settlement of humans in ecosystems. That's what the African Wildlife Foundation depicts, using the following example:

"In our Kilimanjaro landscape in Kenya, for example, only three elephants died in 2015 from poachers engaged in the illegal wildlife trade—but 24 were killed due to human–elephant conflict."

They are also quoting the Kilimanjaro Landscape Manager Noah Sitati, saying:

"The historic Amboseli–Chyulu corridor that is used by elephants is shrinking quickly due to human settlement and agriculture,"

Even if we all live on the same planet, it's crucial to consider putting some distance between humanity and wildlife, not to segregate (because we also need each other) but to protect and assure the longevity of both of us.

- 2) regulating the greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow down climate change

According to the main causes of greenhouse gases' production nowadays, the solution would be to lower as much as possible human activities including fuel combustion or chemical reactions. The issue here is to maintain a lowered level or such actions without putting our economy, mainly working with those factors, in danger. What would be interesting is finding substitutes to the fuels at the origin of greenhouse gases' creation that aren't harmful for the environment, or to develop sustainable fuels working as fossil fuels.

Despite all the technological advancements we have today, it's still impossible to reduce directly the presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. However, lowering its production will help this reduction. Taking in consideration it could be possible without any issue, it could even lead to a lowering of global temperatures, which could avoid heat waves as we saw this summer. The contrary would however lead to an increasement of the probability of knowing such long periods of heat waves (2 weeks this summer).

The countries targeted are those emitting the most greenhouse gases, which also are those (logically) relying the most on fossil fuels. To reduce their use of such fuels, they have to choose an alternative offering a low cost and the same result.

As fossil fuels are greatly used in exportation, we can link this phenomenon to the increasement of greenhouse gases' quantity in the atmosphere. Nowadays, the most developed countries are partly ruled by the idea that consumerism is one of the bases of the society and that buying must be a pleasure, which's

the reason consumers are always looking for the lower prices. More and more, the production of goods is the job of workers living in developing countries with low wage and bad treatment.

In such society, the consumer isn't really the one to blame, expect for keeping the same consuming habits. An individual move has to be done to reduce our own impact on the environment, while warning the big societies about how dangerous their actions can be is a global move to be done.

- 3) fighting against atmospheric and water pollution caused by urbanisation

The main issue here is to contain and lower the production of atmospheric and water pollution, to ensure everyone's (including Earth) health and longevity. For this, it's important to find a balance between the human activity (often linked to the production of goods, necessary or not) and the means used to preserve environment. In fact, some states would prefer one factor to the other, but an unbalanced use of them could lead to even bigger issues.

The WMO's annual report allows us to have a chronological view on the changes that occur, and of the danger that those changes mean. The 2018 report contains a statement of the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres worried about the future, and saying:

"These data confirm the urgency of climate action. This was also emphasized by the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C. The IPCC found that limiting global warming to 1.5 °C will require rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities, and that global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide need to fall by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching "net zero" around 2050"

The UN are allied to NGOs such as the WMO to fight against pollution. But how about urbanisation? Nowadays, our planet knows a massive urban growth, and it's hard to think about stopping this phenomenon. First, urbanisation very often leads to an economic development of the territories, which benefits to the populations. According to the human rights, people have the right to choose where they want to live, either in the countryside or in town. They are also free to choose the job they want, and cities offer way more propositions. If urbanisation was stopped, people would have to find a job in their area, while they could deserve a better place.

In a way, it doesn't pollute more to live in a city. As studied in the USA, people living in the countryside use more energy than those living in the cities. The big problem is to lower the production of gas, and the releasement of dangerous products in the environment. Another feature of urbanisation is that it tends to lower birth rate, as city-dwellers dispose of less space to live.

About the environment, it's clear that some infrastructures have been created to fight against pollution: but they cannot handle the totality of what's produced, and their creation result of some financial sacrifice.

Is stopping totally urbanisation the good solution? Can we remain confident and trust the already created infrastructures? Again, it's a question of balance between human production and environment protection.

1. BLOC POSITIONS

A few treaties concerning the conservation of wildlife, the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions and the cleaning of polluted water.

1. The Bern Convention

The Convention aims to ensure the conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats. Special attention is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species specified in appendices.

The Parties undertake to take all appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species. Such measures should be included in the Parties planning and development policies and pollution control, with particular attention to the conservation of wild flora and fauna. The Parties undertake to promote education and disseminate general information concerning the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats.

2) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (unfccc)

The UNFCCC is a "Rio Convention", one of three adopted at the "Rio Earth Summit" in 1992. Its sister Rio Conventions are the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. The three are intrinsically linked. It is in this context that the Joint Liaison Group was set up to boost cooperation among the three Conventions, with the ultimate aim of developing synergies in their activities on issues of mutual concern. It now also incorporates the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Preventing "dangerous" human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC.

Main actions of the convention :

- **Recognized that there was a problem**
- **Sets a lofty but specific goal.**
- **Puts the onus on developed countries to lead the way.**
- **Directs new funds to climate change activities in developing countries**
- **Keeps tabs on the problem and what's being done about it**
- **Charts the beginnings of a path to strike a delicate balance**
- **Kicks off formal consideration of adaptation to climate change**

3) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, also known as the Water Convention, is an international environmental agreement and one of five UNECE's negotiated environmental treaties. The purpose of this Convention is to improve national attempts and measures for protection and management of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. On the international level, Parties are obliged to cooperate and create joint bodies. The Convention includes provisions on: monitoring, research, development, consultations, warning and alarm systems, mutual assistance and access as well as exchange of information.

Environmental issues and taken actions in each country :

China →

The urgency of China's environmental situation has struck many people in the past year or so, especially since the Copenhagen climate conference. In the battle against climate change, China probably matters more than any other country, because it currently produces more greenhouse gas than anyone else.
China promised to meet the following four key targets by 2030:

- To reach a peak in annual carbon dioxide emissions.
- To cut carbon dioxide emissions (per unit of GDP) by 60% to 65% from 2005 levels.
- To increase the share of non-fossil fuels in its energy mix from about 11% in 2016 to 20%.
- To increase by about one-third the amount of total forest cover from 2005 levels.

Usa →

The environmental policy of the Trump administration represents a shift from the policy priorities and goals of his predecessor, Barack Obama. While Obama's environmental agenda prioritized the reduction of carbon emissions through the use of clean renewable energy, the Trump administration has sought to increase fossil fuel use and scrap environmental regulations.Trump's "America First Energy Plan", focuses on increasing the use of fossil fuels without mentioning renewable energy. People in America have a high standard of living, but this has come at a price to the environment. The USA is the second largest contributor to global CO_2 emissions, at 6870 million metric tons in 2014 alone. Furthermore, per capita (i.e. per person) emissions in the USA are very high at 16.49 tons in 2014. For comparison, the average emissions per person in China it is around 7.54 tons per person.

France →

A shift away from industry over the past 30-40 years has led to many improvements in France's environmental issues; however, a 2014 assessment by the European Environment Agency found that France can still improve. Although the reduction in industrial production has improved air quality in France since the 1990s, an increase in transportation infrastructure has caused the emissions produced from that sector to remain constant. Deindustrialization has also led to less water pollution from production facilities and urban wastewater. While this may be true, the water pollution that originates from agricultural sources has remained consistent in France. As a member of the European Union, France is trying to change resource usage and production habits to ultimately reduce environmental concerns. Many national and territorial action plans are being carried out by the French government in an effort to reduce emissions of pollution into water. In particular, the country's Ecophyto action plan and designation of nitrate vulnerable zones are leading to transformations in agricultural practices. Additionally, French wastewater treatment plants are being improved through the implementation of various infrastructure programs.

Germany →

The Paris Climate Agreement has a specific article on the protection of forests, and Germany plays a lead role in helping developing countries to save forests in the tropics. Germany, like the rest of the world, faces the consequences of global warming but the country has been one of the global leaders in battling carbon emissions.

The country does a lot of efforts, one effort involves the increasing the efficiency of the use of resources. The German government has set a goal of trying to use fewer resources while maintaining the same amount of prosperity and according to a 2014 report, efficient use of raw materials in 2020 is expected to be double that of 1994. Germany is often mentioned among the world leaders in clean technology and according to the United Nations Framework for Climate Change, the number of German clean technology patents more than tripled between 2007 and 2013.

An interesting video : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvceQ0T80Zc

Sweden →

Human settlements occupy just 3 percent of the land in Sweden, which is a country about the same size as California, and forests cover 69 percent of the land. About 7 percent of the land is used for agriculture as subarctic conditions make viable farming difficult in the northern reaches of the country. According to conservation groups, one of the biggest environmental issues in Sweden is the consequences of the

logging industry. Another major environmental issue facing Sweden is the pollution of the Baltic Sea caused by pollutants from agriculture sources and waste treatment facilities. Despite having several significant environmental issues, Sweden has positioned itself as one of the more progressive countries on environmental issues. Since 2005, Sweden has prohibited the selling of plastic drink bottles that do not comply with an approved recycling program.

Sweden hosted the first UN conference on environment, resulting in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which is the leading global environmental authority.

Singapore →

Environmental issues in Singapore include air, water pollution, and deforestation. The government established the Singapore Green Plan in 1992 to help with environmental problems. Since the founding of Singapore in 1819, more than 95% of its estimated 590 square km of vegetation has been cleared.

Qatar →

Environmental responsibility is vested in the Ministry of Industry and Agriculture. An Environmental Protection Committee was created in 1984 to monitor environmental problems. Conservation of oil supplies, preservation of the natural wildlife heritage, and increasing the water supply through desalination are high on Qatar's environmental priority list. Air, water, and land pollution are also significant environmental issues in Qatar. In addition to smog and acid rain, the nation has been affected by the air pollution generated during the Persian Gulf War. Pollution from the oil industry poses a threat to the nation's water. The nation's soils have been damaged by pesticides and fertilizers, and its agricultural land is in danger of desertification.

Finland →

In addition to affecting forest biodiversity, the Finnish logging industry has played a part in contaminating rivers and groundwater, with fertilizers from the agriculture industry also adding to this pollution. In the 1980s, sulfur and nitrogen pollutants were greater in Finland than in many other European countries. In spite of the report, Finland has, like many European countries, embraced many progressive environmental protection and sustainability policies.. These policies are beginning to bear fruit as numerous reports show improvements in polluted lakes and rivers. Furthermore, air quality has risen significantly around industrial locations and the country has created a network of protected nature areas.

Spain →

Over the past 15 years, Spain has considerably improved its environmental policies. An environmental performance report from OECD highlights the following achievements of the country:

- Strengthened legislative and institutional environmental framework at regional and national levels, on the basis of EU directives and new laws
- Enhanced quality of coastal bathing waters and municipal water infrastructure

- More emphasis on biodiversity and nature in terms of Natura 2000 proposals, management of protected areas, a national biodiversity strategy, and better international co-operation
- Renewed commitments to climate change policies to match with EU and Kyoto commitments
- Recent revision of water management policies to adhere to the EU water framework directive

Portugal →

The Costa government remains committed to the development of renewable energy sources, but a renewal of the generous pre-crisis public support given to wind power appears unlikely. The government gave its approval to a nuclear facility in Spain that will draw on river water upstream of Portugal. The country ratified the Paris climate-change accord in late 2016. A National Strategy for Sustainable Development has long been under discussion, but implementation continues to be postponed. The country largely works through the European Union on international environmental issues, and is particularly active in promoting global protection of marine environments.

India →

Air pollution, poor management of waste, growing water scarcity, falling groundwater tables, water pollution, preservation and quality of forests, biodiversity loss, and land/soil degradation are some of the major environmental issues India faces today. Due to uncontrolled dumping of chemical and industrial waste, fertilizers and pesticides, 70% of the surface water in India is polluted. The country is unable to propose valuable solutions due to its limited budget.

Morocco →

The Kingdom of Morocco has introduced a sustainable development policy that shares a role in the long-term environmental strategy that it aimed to protect the country's environment and natural resources. Nevertheless, the country is facing

Useful docuement : https://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FS_Environment-Fact-Sheet.pdf

Malta →

Malta's most significant environmental problems include inadequate water supply, deforestation, and the preservation of its wildlife. The country's extremely limited fresh water resources have led to increasing dependence on desalination. The nation's agriculture suffers from lack of adequate water for crops due to limited rainfall. Malta's government has made recent efforts to control environmental damage including passage of the Environmental Protection Act of 1991 and the creation of a Ministry for the Environment. The Ministry of Health and Environment belongs to the International Union for The Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. In cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund, the Ghadira wetland area was made a permanent nature reserve in 1980. According to the United Nation reports in the mid-1990s, a significant proportion of Malta's animal and plant life is in danger of extinction.

Luxembourg →

The environment of Luxembourg has been affected by the country' rapid population growth (9% between 2000 and 2007, 34% in economy), its heavy road traffic (75% of fuel for vehicles from outside Luxembourg) and its lack of renewable energy resources. A recognized European leader in green and sustainable finance, Luxembourg is stepping up its commitment to support the efforts of the International Network of Financial Centers for Sustainability. Luxembourg's commitment to financial innovation and sustainable finance has led to the launch of a wide range of initiatives, including the first Stock Exchange dedicated to green, socially responsible and sustainable securities: The Luxembourg Green Exchange (LGX) in 2016.

Australia →

Land clearing is a major source of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, and contributed to approximately 12 percent of Australia's total emissions in 1998. The consequences of land clearing include dryland salinity and soil erosion. These are a major concern to the landcare movement in Australia.

More about it here : http://theconversation.com/the-state-of-australia-our-environment-26035

1. QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

As demonstrated in this study guide, the environmental issues we are facing nowadays are worsening as the years go by. Some small annoyances that we are occasionally facing (such as the heatwaves) could be part of our future daily life if we don't take action. The thing is, those issues are tricky and depending on each country's economic situation and climate, they are more or less easy to solve.
For example, some of the UNECE's water related problems are of water quantity and water quality, high water stress and overexploitation of water resources, increasing droughts and floods, contaminated water resulting in water-related diseases, etc. These issues are hard to solve due to transboundary nature of water sources. More than 150 major rivers and 50 large lakes are either shared or are situated along the borders of two or more countries. Among countless, another issue would be the fast fashion. Despite all its negative aspects it seems impossible to deny its usefulness, especially for middle classes in developed countries. Shops such as H&M or C&A achieve to produce "trendy" product at minimal costs and achieve to renew their collections almost weekly. Of course the business behind this practice is degrading both for the employees and the environment, but still we cannot underestimate the importance of such infrastructures in the modern society of developed countries. As for every issue, Our actions towards the climactic urgence are moderated by various factors including economic, geographical and societal ones. Not every country can afford to change and to use its resources sustainably, the same way past generations didn't see the need to worry for the environment. Our present generation has raised awareness about the matter, but maybe too late. During the conference, you will have to discuss various matters and possibly (hopefully) be able to find a solution that would permit every country to take action in the environmental field in order to stop the growing consequences of pollution, deforestation, etc. You will have to find compromises with countries who openly ignore the problem, to raise awareness even more and to find a solution concerning the poorest countries (indeed poverty and environmental problems often proceed together).

Good luck !

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