

Sustainability: introduction



Introduction

The Earth's population is soaring, but its resources are finite. Can we provide food, water, energy - and televisions, cars and holidays - for everyone, and leave future generations more than a planet-sized rubbish tip?

Source:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/world/2002/disposable_planet/slideshow/default.stm

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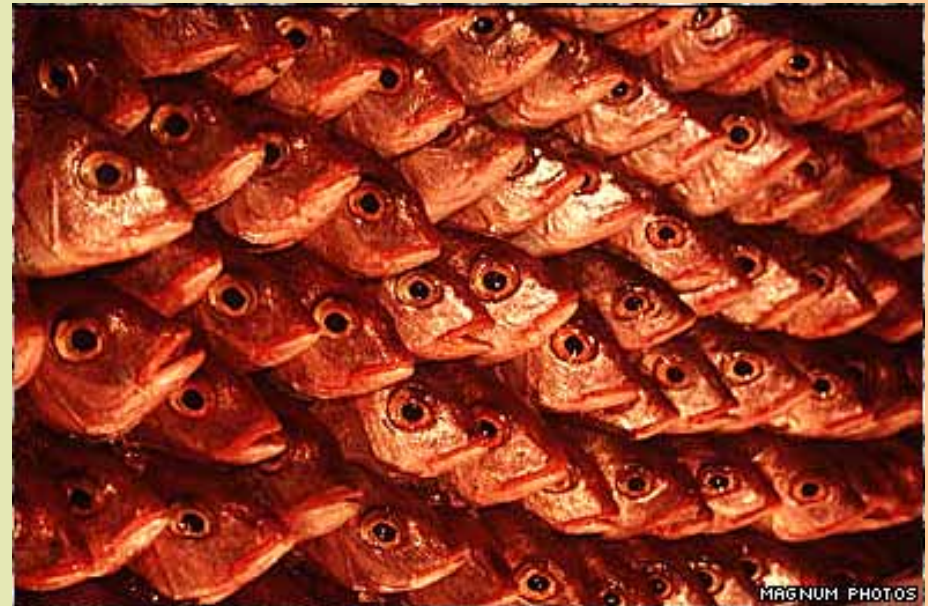


Population

In the next 10 years about 800 million people will be added to the global population.

Food

Food production will have to nearly double to meet the demands of this growth.



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Cities

At the beginning of the last century, only one in 10 people lived in cities. Now it's close to 50% - and it's still rising.

Pollution

Half the world's urban residents are exposed to potentially harmful amounts of sulphur dioxide, ozone and particulate matter in "smogs".



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Biodiversity

Every year thousands of species become extinct due to human activity and the loss of natural habitat.

Forestry

Logging and land conversion to accommodate human demand has shrunk the world's forests by half.



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Wetlands

Urban and industrial development claimed half the world's wetlands in the 20th Century

Water

Within 25 years, half the world's population could have trouble finding enough fresh water for drinking and irrigation.



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Refugees

By 2025, the number of refugees fleeing floods and natural disasters could quadruple to 100 million.

Energy

For global development to be both fair and sustainable, the rich world may need to cut energy and resource use by 90% by 2050.



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Transport

In the last 20 years there has been a two-thirds increase in global household energy use, road vehicle fleets have doubled, and air traffic has quadrupled.

Waste

As population, consumption and wealth increase, so does the quantity of waste we produce. The rich countries of the OECD produce an annual total of almost two tonnes of waste for every person.



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Exercise

Relate the previous topics to the climate change (global warming) topic.

Topics:

- Forestry or deforestation
- Energy consumption
- Transport