

# critical

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Critical Threats to the Global Environment

1

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## Critical Threats to the Global Environment

The global environment matters a lot to the inhabitants of the earth regardless of where they are. It is important to both people and animals. However, one fact that stands out is that there are ever-rising threats to the global environment. Such threats have negative impacts on people. They affect residents of both developed and developing countries. However, there are some disconnects between the issues of developed and developing countries. It's the role of the United Nations to work on such issues and bring lasting to each of them. However, since solving all of them at once is impossible, priority should be given to the most critical ones. Two such issues that are threats to the global community are <sup>2</sup> the use of fossil fuels as an energy source and insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries. For the United Nations to be able to combat these issues, factors that make them serious risks to the environment, how humans have aggravated this threat and initiatives that can be used to mitigate them need to be understood. The paper will focus on explaining the factors that make the two threats <sup>2</sup> (use of fossil fuels as an energy source and insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries) serious risks to the global environment, the role of humans in aggravating them, and possible initiatives that the global community can take to mitigate the severe effects of the threats.

### <sup>2</sup> 1. Factors that Make Use of Fossil Fuels as an Energy Source and Insufficient Educational Opportunities in Developing Countries Serious Risks to the Global Environment

Global Environment is very crucial for people. However, it has been put at risk by the two threats stated here. Each has its part of how it puts the global environment at risk. These are the risks that the United Nations need to be aware of to avail the solution for and improve the global environment.

## <sup>1</sup> 1. Use of Fossil Fuels as a Source of Energy

Fossil fuels have been a source of energy in various parts of the world for a long time. Despite the emergence of other renewable and environmentally friendly energy sources, such as wind and solar power, people still seem to have deviated from using fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are those that have been formed from fossilized living organisms and are naturally occurring. The most commonly known ones are coal, oil, and natural gas. However, there are lesser-known ones, such as tar sands, oil shales, heavy oils, and bitumen. <sup>3</sup> The use of fossil fuels poses a lot of risks, especially to the environment and to the people themselves.

One of the risks of fossil fuels is pollution. In order to derive energy from fossil fuels, they have to be burned. Burning them produces a lot of emissions in the form of gases and smoke released into the air. These emissions pollute air and water in a number of ways. Pollution is a huge threat to the environment and its ecosystems. For example, burning fossil fuels such as gas, oil, and coal produce carbon dioxide, which leads to the greenhouse effect after blanketing the earth's atmosphere (Shelley, 1). The greenhouse effect has other impacts, such as the dangerous rise in sea levels and the change in vegetation growth. Also, the combustion of coal results in the release of sulfur dioxide into the air. When it combines with water and oxygen, it creates acid rain (Shelley, 1). Acid rain has many harmful impacts on the environment. It harms and kills fish in the water bodies. It also affects natural vegetation and crops planted by a human. To humans, it has many detrimental effects on their health and well-being. It also has some negative impacts on the health of domestic and wildlife. Apart from the impacts it has on the environment, its extraction is very dangerous to people. A lot of accidents are involved in the extraction of oil, gas, and coal, which causes injury and sometimes death of the people doing the extraction (Shelley, 1). For

example, coal mine explosions and collapses have led to the death of many employees working at the extraction sites.

## **2. Insufficient Educational Opportunities in Developing Countries**

In the current world, education and literacy are becoming critical requirements for the citizens of any country. It is key for survival, especially for the young generation and is becoming one of the basic requirements they should be provided with. Insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries come with a lot of risks to the global environment and the citizens of those countries. For example, illiteracy is linked to low health outcomes for individuals (Suhani, 4). This is because illiterate individuals do not know nor do they observe effective health promotion habits and lifestyles. This is especially when it comes to physical activities and good health. When it comes to adherence to directives and prescriptions in medical settings, illiterate individuals are unable to adhere to the medical prescriptions issued to them by medical practitioners (Suhani, 4). This results in further deterioration of their health. Illiteracy also leads to the risk of financial instability. Illiterate individuals do not secure permanent or meaningful employment and, therefore, keep languishing in abject poverty.

## **2. Role Humans have Played in Aggravating these Threats to the Earth's Environment**

Most of the issues lay within the hands of the people. Humans have the capability to lessen or make worse of any situation. Humans have played major roles in aggravating the issues of using fossil fuels as sources of energy and insufficiency of educational opportunities in developing countries. The following is an explanation of how humans have contributed to the aggravation of the threats.

## 1. <sup>1</sup> Use of Fossil Fuels as a Source of Energy

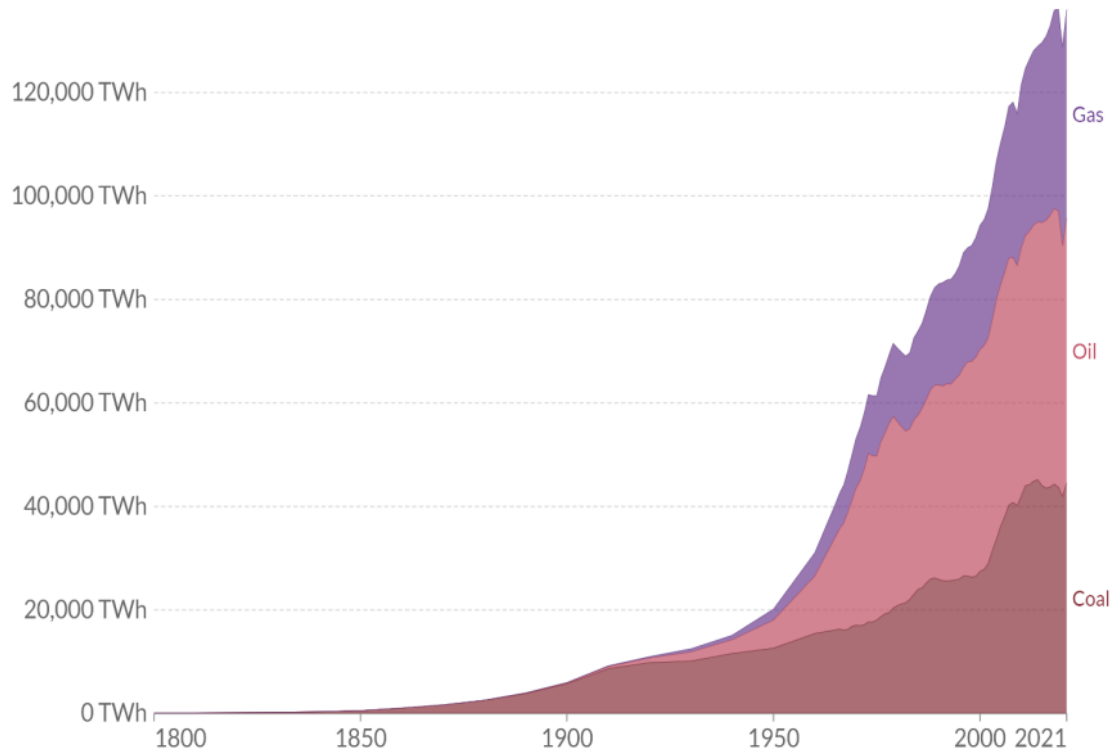
The use of fossil fuels as a source of energy has been promoted by human beings to a large extent. Humans aggravate this by using fossil fuels in a number of ways. Three widely used fossil fuels are oil, coal, and gas. The most widely used one is petroleum. People rely on petroleum and its by-products for a number of purposes. They have extensively relied on petroleum as a fuel for powering their motor vehicles (BYJUS, 2). They also rely on petroleum to power aircraft and jets. The heavy combustion of petroleum by automobiles, jets, and aircraft engines releases fumes and gases such as carbon dioxide into the air. Also, humans have been using petroleum to fuel industrial machines that release a lot of smoke and poisonous gases into the atmosphere.

Humans have also aggravated the use of fossil fuels by relying on petroleum by-products to produce other products. Such by-products are used in the production of medicines, chemicals, lubricants, waxes, plastics, and tars. Humans also use it to manufacture fertilizers and pesticides. This undying urge by humans to use petroleum by-products has promoted the use of fossil fuels. Many countries are also relying on the use of coal. The usage of coal has doubled since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (BYJUS, 2). Many countries have adopted it, and they use it for generating electricity. This has caused wide usage of fossil as a source of energy in many places. Also, the failure to recognize the effectiveness and safety of renewable energy sources by humans has made them stick to using fossil fuels. They ignore wind and solar and concentrate on using fossil fuels.

## Global fossil fuel consumption

Global primary energy consumption by fossil fuel source, measured in terawatt-hours (TWh).

Our World  
in Data



Source: Our World in Data based on Vaclav Smil (2017) and BP Statistical Review of World Energy

OurWorldInData.org/fossil-fuels/ • CC BY

Humans began burning fossil fuels at the onset of the industrial revolution. However, fossil fuel consumption has had significant changes over the past few changes. The interactive graph above by Our World in Data shows how fossil fuel consumption which has been broken into three, oil, coal, and natural gas, has increased with time over the past centuries (5).

### 2. Insufficient Educational Opportunities in Developing Countries

Insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries have also been partly aggravated by humans. Both the governance in place and the citizens contribute to this. The governance in place may not be very effective in the execution of its obligation to the citizens.

Most of the governments in developing countries have issues with prioritization. One government leadership aspect that contributes to insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries is ineffective educational curriculum and syllabus (Faryal, 7). Some developing countries have an educational curriculum that is not very helpful to students and professionals. Such curriculums need to be revised and reinvented for a better student educational system.

Another aspect of human contribution to insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries is poor development and inadequate funding for schools. Some of the schools in developing countries have deficiencies in their aspects. For example, the governments of such countries have failed to put the appropriate infrastructure to support learning. Such schools lack crucial facilities such as laboratories, enough classrooms, and research facilities. Lack of enough funding by the government causes such schools to lack the money to buy textbooks and other learning facilities. It contributes a lot to insufficient learning opportunities. Even the students who manage to go through the education system successfully do not have the right skills that scholars are expected to have. The government's insufficient funding of the schools may make the schools too expensive in these countries such that the citizens cannot afford them (Faryal, 7). In this case, many of them end up being illiterate.

Another way humans have contributed to the threat of insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries is through negligence by some people. Some of the people in these countries tend to ignore schooling even if education is being offered free of charge. They do not see the importance of going through schooling, so society ends up having so many illiterate individuals.



### 3. Initiatives that the Global Community can Take to Mitigate the Threats

Every problem has a solution. All the environmental threats can be mitigated. The global community can mobilize individuals, businesses and organizations to take part in solving the threats. The following are some of the ways in which the two threats can be mitigated.

#### 1. <sup>1</sup> Use of Fossil Fuels as a Source of Energy

The use of fossil fuels as an energy source can be mitigated to eliminate the threats and the negative environmental impacts associated with them. This will be a great initiative aimed at achieving environmental conservation. One of the ways to achieve this is by encouraging individuals, businesses, and organizations to turn away from using fossil fuels to use renewable energy sources. Most renewable energy sources do not emit fumes or dangerous gases into the atmosphere that may cause environmental pollution. They are environmentally friendly. Two such energy sources are wind and solar energy. Everyone should be encouraged to start using these two energy sources to ensure they give zero emissions to the atmosphere. For most activities like lighting, pumping water, and even light industrial activities, people should be encouraged to use solar or wind energy which should be harnessed and stored in batteries (Leonard 3). In the same context, automobile manufacturers should be encouraged to make the innovation of electric cars a reality. Such kinds of vehicles will not need petroleum and hence no emissions into the air.

Another way the global community can mitigate the threat of fossil use as an energy source is by advocating for an increase in fuel efficiency (Leonard 3). This applies in areas where the use of fossil fuels is a must. It will ensure that fossil fuels that must be used are used in the most efficient way possible. This will work by advocating for the manufacturer to make machine and vehicle engines that guarantee an efficient combustion process that produces the most energy with

very little fume and waste emissions for every task. It will ensure that less emissions are released into the atmosphere, thereby reducing the environmental pollution.

## **2. Insufficient Educational Opportunities in Developing Countries**

The threat of insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries can also be mitigated through a number of ways that need to be taken by the global community. One of the reasons why this insufficiency exists is due to the high cost of education. One of the ways to mitigate the threat is by reducing the cost of education. The United Nations can help in the achievement of cost reduction in two ways. One of them is encouraging developed countries to abolish their school fees completely (Liliana,6). Even if the fee cannot be abolished for all levels, they should try to abolish it for the basic levels of education. This way, everyone who is willing to learn will be in a position to access education. This has worked well in boosting literacy levels in the countries where it has been adopted. The other way it can be achieved is through the UN providing some of the schools in developing countries with funding or some of the learning facilities such as textbooks and laboratory equipment or construction of classrooms (Liliana,6). This will carry away the financial burden that could make education too expensive for the residents of these countries.

Another way to mitigate this threat is by advocating for a meaningful educational curriculum and syllabus that imparts most of the skills required in the current world and job market (Liliana,6). This will ensure that students will get helped by the school system before they come out of it. Relevant skills are essential for people in these countries. The curriculum should include other additional concepts, such as maintaining good health for oneself and the community. It should include concepts on environmental conservation.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the two threats, fossil fuel use as a fuel and insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries, have a lot of impressions on global stability. Hence, the United Nations should act quickly and boldly to effect the mitigation measures for combating them. Continued usage of fossil fuels will impact global stability through the effects it has on the environment. Impacts such as acid rain will result in low agricultural production due destruction of crops. It will also contribute to this by affecting aquaculture. The death of some animals will cause an imbalance in nature. The extreme pollution it causes to the environment is a threat to the existence of animals, plants and humans. Insufficient educational opportunities in developing countries are associated with extreme poverty for the larger population of these countries. The economic stability of such countries will always lag behind. In addition, there is the likelihood that income inequalities in these countries will be large.

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