

Text 8. Climate change threatens poor

Facts and figures

- ◆ Climate change is a significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns.
- ◆ Climate change is caused by factors that include oceanic processes, variations in solar radiation received by Earth and human-induced alterations of the natural world; their effects are currently causing global warming.
- ◆ Heatwaves, droughts, floods, intense rainfall, rising sea levels and melting glaciers are now causing widespread disruption and are having an impact on a wide range of fronts including health services, infrastructure, water supply, agriculture and transport.
- ◆ The cause of these rising temperatures is due primarily to human activities, predominantly the burning of fossil fuel, according to a recent report by the US National Climate Assessment. As carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere soar, temperatures rise and air pollution intensifies.
- ◆ 2012 was among the ten warmest years on record, according to data released by NASA and the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). Each year of the 21st century has ranked among the 14 hottest since record keeping began in 1880, as we are pumping increasing amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
- ◆ The earth is set to become a hotter, drier, unhealthier, more uncomfortable and dangerous place which is likely to suffer from various disasters in the coming years.
- ◆ The world's food crisis will worsen as increasing heatwaves may jeopardize the crop yields.

Words you might need

Challenges and catastrophes : **les défis et les catastrophes**

to assess : évaluer
an assessment : une évaluation
balance : l'équilibre
to damage : causer des dégâts
damage : des dégâts
global warming : le réchauffement planétaire
a greenhouse gas : un gaz à effet de serre
the ozone layer : la couche d'ozone
groundwater reserves : les nappes phréatiques
the rainfall : le taux de précipitations
a shower : une averse
a storm : une tempête, un orage
a tornado : une tornade
a hurricane : un ouragan
drinking water : l'eau potable
to deplete : épuiser, diminuer
depletion : la diminution
to endanger : mettre en danger
to impair : altérer, mettre en danger
to be at risk : être en danger
a public hazard : un danger public
to jeopardize : compromettre
to threaten : menacer
to meet standards : répondre aux normes
to regulate : réglementer
to take steps : prendre des mesures
drastic steps : des mesures radicales
drought : la sécheresse
a flood : une inondation
an environmentalist : un écologiste
a shortage : une pénurie
heat : la chaleur
a heatwave : une vague de chaleur
a shift : un changement, une inflexion
a species : une espèce
sustainable development : le développement durable

growth : la croissance
zero growth : la croissance zéro
a threshold : un seuil
a warning : un avertissement
to ban : interdire
to forecast : prévoir
the weather forecast : les prévisions météo
to implement : mettre en œuvre, appliquer
to heighten/increase awareness : accroître la prise de conscience
Damocles' sword : l'épée de Damoclès
the writing on the wall : l'annonce inéluctable
damp : humide
deadly : mortel
lethal : mortel, léthal
rampant : galopant, incontrôlé
devastating : dévastateur
dire : atroce, terrible
to harm : nuire à
harmful : nuisible
noxious fumes : des émanations nocives
occasional : intermittent
unpredictable : imprévisible
worldwide/global : mondial
environment friendly : respectueux de l'environnement
ozone-friendly : respectueux de la couche d'ozone
health : la santé
disease : la maladie
an epidemic : une épidémie
a famine : une famine
malnutrition : la malnutrition
malnourished : sous-alimentés
to starve : mourir de faim
starvation/famine : la famine
the life expectancy : l'espérance de vie
medical care : les soins médicaux
an NGO (Non-governmental organization) : une ONG
unbearable : insupportable
to cure a disease : guérir une maladie

Farming : l'agriculture

to farm : cultiver

to grow : 1. pousser
2. faire pousser, cultiver

industrial products : des produits industriels

farm produce : des produits agricoles

to produce : produire

to supply : fournir

wheat : le blé, le froment (la plante)

corn : le blé (GB), le maïs (US) (la récolte)

barley : l'orge

oats : l'avoine

rye : le seigle

rice : le riz

soy : le soja

grains/cereals : des céréales

the harvest : la moisson

to harvest : moissonner, récolter

a crop : une récolte, une culture

fertilizer : de l'engrais chimique

manure : du fumier, du purin

nitrates : des nitrates

to yield : produire

the yield : le rendement

barren land : du terrain inculte

dry : sec

parched : desséché

Exercises

1. **Find synonyms in the text for the following verbs**
 - a. to make a determined effort to deal with a difficult issue.
 - b. to put an end to a particular situations or particular circumstances
 - c. to deliver a judgment about the nature or quality of something
 - d. to delay or to stop a progress in something
 - e. to undergo, to go through a particular situation
2. **Find synonyms in the text for the following nouns and adjectives**
 - a. that cannot be continued at the same level or the same rate
 - b. the level at which something starts to happen or to have an effect
 - c. the amount produced on an area of land
3. **Exploring the text. Are the following statements right or wrong? Justify your answer**
 1. The UN issued a statement saying that one had continuously failed in making the lives of the poorest better.
 2. The way we consume has to be revised in order to deal efficiently with a climate shift.
 3. Human development hasn't really been hampered by the current financial crisis.
 4. The pace of human development isn't expected to change in the next forty years.
 5. The progress in life expectancy has been derailed in Russia
 6. The HDI improvement does depend on governments'choices
4. **General debates. Comment on these statements delivered by NASA's top climate scientist**
 1. There is a very concerted effort by people who would prefer to see business to continue as usual. They have been winning the public debate with the help of tremendous resources. There's a huge gap between the public's understanding of the situation and the scientific understanding.
 2. Solar and wind power cannot meet the world's voracious demand for energy, especially given the projected needs of emerging economies like India and China.
 1. Few countries are willing to make economic sacrifices to reduce their carbon emissions.
5. **Essay (200 words + or – 10 %)**
 1. Nuclear power is our best hope to get off of fossil fuels, which are primarily responsible for the heat-trapping gases cooking the planet.
 2. Could consumers in the developed world support a substantial reduction in the use of fossil fuels which might be necessary ?

6. Translation into French

From “The UN report...” down to “... human development.”

Climate change threatens poor

The UN warned last week that a continued failure to tackle climate change was putting at risk decades of progress in improving the lives of the world's poorest people. In its annual report on the state of the world, the UN said unsustainable patterns of consumption and production posed the biggest challenge to the anti-poverty drive. The close link between economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions needs to be severed; despite the financial crisis which has resulted in 34 million people losing their jobs and an additional 64 million people dropping below the \$1.25 a day income poverty threshold, substantial progress has been made in human development: even in countries facing adverse economic conditions, people's health and education have improved. The UN report assesses progress by using three main measures of well-being: income, life expectancy and education.

But there are risks and threats: climate change is the big one and it could derail progress; its adverse effects on grain yields would push prices up, more than doubling the price of wheat; in a worst case scenario, per capita consumption of cereals might fall by a fifth by 2050, leaving 25 million additional children malnourished. Climate change may make the future very different, impeding the continuing progress in human development.

Overall, poor countries are closing the human development gap with rich countries, particularly in health and education; the countries reporting the slowest progress are those in sub-Saharan Africa struck by the HIV epidemic, and parts of the former Soviet Union suffering increased adult mortality.

Over the past 40 years, a quarter of developing countries have seen their Human Development Index (HDI) increase less than 20%, another quarter more than 65%; half of this disparity is the result of different starting points, but countries with similar starting points experience remarkably different evolutions, suggesting that factors such as policies, institutions and geography are important. Asia's fastest growing economies (China, Indonesia and South Korea) are among the countries that have showed the greatest progress in improving their Human Development Index.

Adapted from *The Guardian*, December 11th, 2010

15 Climate change is a hoax

global warming	le réchauffement planétaire
climate change	le changement climatique
a buzzword / a catch phrase	un mot / une expression à la mode
to be skeptical (of)	être sceptique (quant à)
to perpetrate / to play a hoax (on)	monter / perpétrer un canular (envers)
to tackle global warming	s'attaquer au réchauffement planétaire
climate science	la science du climat / la climatologie
to be man-made	être provoqué par l'homme
climate extremes	les dérèglements climatiques
a climate model	un modèle climatique
climate sensitivity	la sensibilité du climat / climatique
human activity / history	l'activité / l'histoire de l'homme
to be attributable to natural causes	mettre sur le compte de causes naturelles
a threat to the planet / future generations	une menace pour la planète / les générations à venir
to alter weather patterns	modifier les modèles météo
to drive up the temperature	élever la température
to heat up the earth	réchauffer la terre
to retain / to trap [trapped] heat	retenir la chaleur (prisonnière)
to exaggerate / to under-report	exagérer / minimiser
a climate change summit	un sommet sur le changement climatique
greenhouse gases (GHG) / emissions	les gaz à effet de serre (GES)
(a rise in) carbon dioxide (CO₂)	une hausse du dioxyde de carbone (CO ₂)
the build-up of carbon dioxide	l'accumulation de dioxyde de carbone
chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)	les chlorofluorocarbures (CFC)
to release greenhouse gases (into)	rejeter du gaz à effet de serre (dans)
a climate treaty / climate legislation	un traité / la législation sur le climat
the global warming controversy	la polémique sur le réchauffement planétaire
a warming trend	une tendance au réchauffement
the precautionary principle	le principe de précaution
an emitter of carbon dioxide	un émetteur de dioxyde de carbone
a carbon offset / a carbon credit	une compensation carbone
to avert a rise in temperatures	éviter une hausse des températures
to cut emissions	réduire les émissions
the sea level rise	la montée du niveau des océans
glacier retreat	la retraite des glaciers
the ice floe / the ice shelf	la banquise
an ice sheet	un inlandsis / une calotte polaire
to melt [melted]	fondre
Arctic shrinkage	la diminution de l'Arctique



for

- **climate doubters** : les sceptiques du réchauffement • **to refuse to acknowledge the climate change** : refuser de reconnaître le changement climatique • **a hoax** : un coup monté • **to express doubts (about)** : exprimer des doutes (sur) • **we have had reliable data only since the '70s** : on ne possède de données fiables que depuis les années 1970 • **the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** : le Groupe d'experts intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat (GIEC) • **to manipulate public opinion** : manipuler l'opinion publique • **to bar scientists from accessing data about global warming** : empêcher les scientifiques d'avoir accès à des données sur le réchauffement climatique • **to be unable to make accurate predictions** : être incapable de faire des prédictions précises • **adjustments made to the raw data introduce a warming bias** : les ajustements aux données brutes sont biaisées en faveur du réchauffement • **the effects of urbanisation have confused the data because towns, which are sources of heat, have grown up near weather stations** : les conséquences de l'urbanisation ont brouillé les données parce que les villes, sources de chaleur, ont été construites près des stations météo • **the urban heat-island effect** : l'effet îlot de chaleur urbain • **man is responsible for a part of global warming; most of it is still natural** : l'homme est en partie responsable du réchauffement ; la majeure partie est cependant due à des causes naturelles
- **a lack of credibility / serious investigation (into)** : un manque de crédibilité / d'enquête sérieuse (sur) • **to leave in doubt the validity (of a theory)** : mettre en doute la validité (d'une théorie) • **scientists are fallible / are human too / make mistakes** : les scientifiques sont faillibles / sont des hommes / font des erreurs • **to mitigate the risks posed by climate change** : minimiser les risques posés par le changement climatique
- **to conceal data** : dissimuler des données • **a distorted model** : un modèle déformé • **incoherent / invalid data** : des données incohérentes / invalides • **a conspiracy theory** : une théorie du complot • **worries about the Panel's partiality / transparency / leadership** : des inquiétudes concernant la partialité / la transparence / la direction du GIEC

against



- **unanimous agreement in the scientific community in support of human-caused global warming** : un accord unanime dans la communauté scientifique selon laquelle le réchauffement climatique est dû à l'homme • **to be endorsed by every national science academy** : être partagé par toutes les académies des sciences • **to make measurements** : prendre des mesures • **to fit with human history** : correspondre à l'histoire de l'homme • **analysis of carbon isotopes** : l'analyse d'isotopes de carbone • **the carbon dioxide from industry accounts for most of the build-up in the atmosphere** : le CO₂ d'origine industrielle représente la majeure partie de l'accumulation dans l'atmosphère • **water vapour** : la vapeur d'eau • **to provide further warming** : réchauffer davantage
- **in any complex scientific picture of the world there will be gaps / misperceptions / mistakes** : dans n'importe quelle description scientifique du monde, il y a des lacunes / de fausses perceptions / des erreurs • **data are vexatious** : les données sont vexantes • **theory is straightforward** : la théorie est limpide