

The Human Environment

Human well-being depends on a healthy mind in a healthy body. However, a prerequisite for this condition is the health of the societies. Above all, a healthy environment forms the basis for societies and their people if prospering and enjoying a decent level of development. Human societies are built on a fragile ecological concept and depend upon clean air, fresh water, productive soil and a sustaining web of life.

Human development has eroded this ecological foundation to some extent, in some cases maybe beyond repair. For example, it has been predicted that, by the end of the century, the world's climate may change, with potential far-reaching consequences for humanity. For example, predictions are that one third (1/3) of the world's productive land will have eroded or turned to dust, air pollution will have caused increased human health problems, thousands of lakes and millions of hectares of forests will be destroyed, and unsanitary water will still kill about 25,000 people a day. On top of this, over a thousand new chemicals will likely be introduced to the market each year, with largely unknown effects on the human health. In addition to the traditional problems of environmental pollution, and the abrupt and subtle threats of chemical pollution in developed countries, developing countries also suffer from a growing population, water pollution, explosive urbanization and mismanagement of natural resources.

Human beings can successfully meet environmental challenges, if it incorporates the mobilization of a common effort. Opinion polls in many countries put environmental and health issues at the top of the public priorities. Growing public awareness brought a halt to some of the destructive spiral of resource wastefulness and also there is a public willingness to foot the bill for a healthier environment. Many people are beginning to realize that investment in the environment is investment in a more secure future. It is a moral and ethical issue to try to avoid costly environmental mistakes in the future.

Excerpted from *Environmental Management Handbook*; the Holistic Approach from Problems to Strategies by Sven – Olof Ryding, p. 235.

Vocabulary

Prerequisite: (here) condition préalable

Erode: to destroy

A- Guided commentary (20 points)

1. Referring to the text, what is essential for the well-being of the human societies?
2. According to the text, find out the consequences of human development on the environment.
3. Relying on the text, what are the solutions that the author suggests to fight environment problems?
4. Comment on the following statement: “Investment in the environment is investment in a secure future.”

B- Translation

Translate into French the passage from “Human beings can successfully meet environmental challenges...” down to “...a healthier environment”.