



800 MILLION
PEOPLE WORLDWIDE ARE UNDERNOURISHED



AIR POLLUTION KILLS MORE THAN
3 MILLION
PEOPLE EACH YEAR

CITIES CONSUME
75%
OF THE WORLD'S
NATURAL RESOURCES



200 SPECIES OF PLANTS,
INSECTS, BIRDS, AND MAMMALS
BECOME EXTINCT
EVERY 24 HOURS



HOW WE'RE F***ING UP OUR PLANET



SEA LEVEL
HAS RISEN BY
7 INCHES
IN THE LAST
100 YEARS

THE FACTS visually explained



Tony Juniper

Content previously published as *What's Really Happening to Our Planet?*

**HOW WE'RE
F***ING UP
OUR PLANET**

TONY JUNIPER



**HOW WE'RE
F***ING UP
OUR PLANET**

TONY JUNIPER



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Contents



08-13 Introduction

1 Drivers of Change

16-17 THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

- 18-19 Population Shift
- 20-21 Living Longer
- 22-23 Slowing the Rise

24-25 ECONOMIC EXPANSION

- 26-27 What Is GDP?
- 28-29 Richer People
- 30-31 Companies vs. Nations
- 32-33 Global Power Shift
- 34-35 Trading Benefits
- 36-37 World Debt

38-39 CITY PLANET

- 40-41 The Rise of Megacities
- 42-43 Urban Pressures

44-45 FUEL FOR GROWTH

- 46-47 Surge in Demand
- 48-49 Power-Hungry World
- 50-51 Carbon Footprint
- 52-53 Renewable Revolution
- 54-55 How Solar Energy Works
- 56-57 Wind Power
- 58-59 Tidal and Wave Energy
- 60-61 Energy Conundrum

62-63 ESCALATING APPETITE

- 64-65 Farmed Planet
- 66-67 Fertilizer Boom
- 68-69 Pest-Control Challenge
- 70-71 How Food Is Wasted
- 72-73 Feeding the World
- 74-75 Threats to Food Supply

76-77 THIRSTY WORLD

- 78-79 Freshwater Scarcity
- 80-81 The Water Cycle
- 82-83 Water Footprint

84-85 CONSUMING PASSIONS

- 86-87 The Rise of Consumerism
- 88-89 Wasteful World
- 90-91 Where Does It All Go?
- 92-93 Chemical Cocktail

2 Consequences of Change

96-97 THE GLOBAL AGE

98-99 Mobile Technology

100-101 Taking to the Skies

102-103 BETTER LIVES FOR MANY

104-105 Clean Water and Sanitation

106-107 Reading and Writing

108-109 Healthier World

110-111 Unequal World

112-113 Corruption

114-115 The Rise of Terrorism

116-117 Displaced People

118-119 OUR CHANGING ATMOSPHERE

120-121 The Greenhouse Effect

122-123 Hole in the Sky

124-125 A Warmer World

126-127 Seasons Out of Sync

128-129 How Climate

Patterns Work

130-131 Extreme World

132-133 The Two-Degree Limit

134-135 Feedback Loops

136-137 How Much Can We Burn?

138-139 The Carbon Crossroads

140-141 The Carbon Cycle

142-143 Targets for the Future

144-145 Toxic Air

146-147 Acid Rain

148-149 CHANGING THE LAND

150-151 Forest Clearance

152-153 Desertification

154-155 Land Rush

156-157 SEA CHANGES

158-159 Farming Fish

160-161 Acid Seas

162-163 Dead Seas

164-165 Plastic Pollution

166-167 THE GREAT DECLINE

168-169 Biodiversity Hotspots

170-171 Invasive Species

172-173 Nature's Services

174-175 Insect Pollination

176-177 Value of Nature



3 Bending the Curves

180–181 THE GREAT ACCELERATION

- 182–183 Planetary Boundaries
- 184–185 Interconnected Pressures

186–187 WHAT'S THE GLOBAL PLAN?

- 188–189 What Is Working?
- 190–191 Nature's Spaces
- 192–193 New Global Goals

194–195 SHAPING THE FUTURE

- 196–197 Low-Carbon Growth
- 198–199 The Rise of Clean Technology
- 200–201 A Sustainable Economy
- 202–203 Circular Economy
- 204–205 A New Mindset
- 206–207 Restoring the Future

- 208–213 Glossary
- 214–219 Index
- 220–224 References and Acknowledgments

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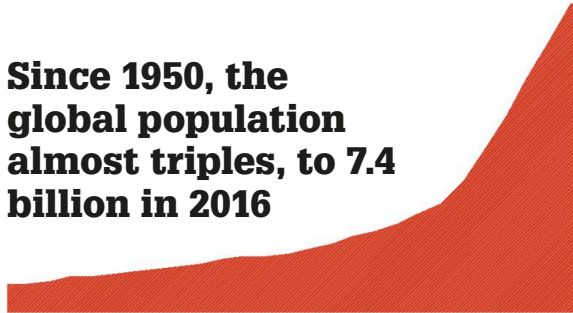
Introduction

In recent decades, the face of planet Earth has been changed forever. The effects of population and economic growth, coupled with rising demand for resources and environmental impacts, have left their mark. These trends and their repercussions now raise vitally important questions about the future of the world and how we can successfully manage and sustain it.

Understanding the scale and scope of the changes, and the connections between them, is vital to make sense of our modern world and anticipate where it is headed

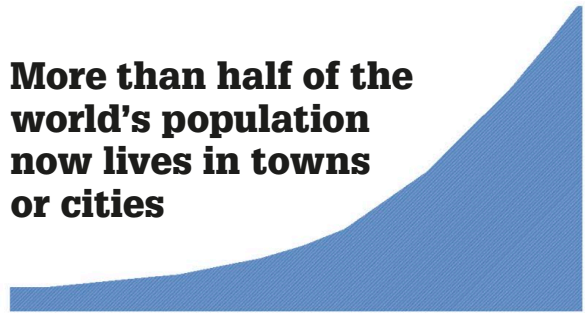
next. The implications touch all areas of our lives, from business and finance to politics and economics, and from science and technology to behavior and culture.

Since 1950, the global population almost triples, to 7.4 billion in 2016



POPULATION EXPLOSION

More than half of the world's population now lives in towns or cities



ESCALATING URBANIZATION



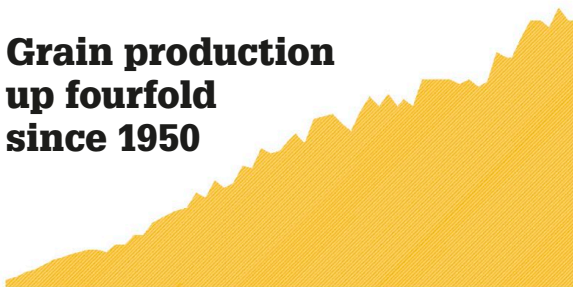
Population boom

The drivers behind the ongoing shifts shaping our future are fundamental. The number of people living on Earth is rising rapidly. In 1950, there were 2.5 billion people, and today this figure has almost trebled. Going forward, the global population is expected to rise by 80 million a year—about equivalent to the population of Germany. By 2050, our number is predicted to exceed 9 billion. But the impact of people on the world arises not only from how many of us there are but also from the standard of living that people experience. This is why the rapid expansion of the

global economy seen during recent decades is another fundamental driver, enabling more people to enjoy the comforts and benefits that come with increased income and consumption.

Economic growth and rising living standards have in part been fueled by rapid urbanization and the progressive shift of people from rural areas to towns and cities. During recent decades, the process that began with the industrial revolution in England during the 18th century has spread worldwide. In 2007, and for the first time in human history, more than half of the people on Earth lived in urban environments.

Grain production up fourfold since 1950



EXPANDING FOOD NEEDS

Tenfold expansion in the global economy since 1950



RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH

By 2050, the proportion will be closer to two-thirds. People living in urban areas tend to be higher consumers than those in rural environments, using more energy and materials, and generating more waste. Population growth, economic development, and urbanization have converged to rapidly increase the demand for a wide range of essential resources, including energy, freshwater, food, wood, and minerals.

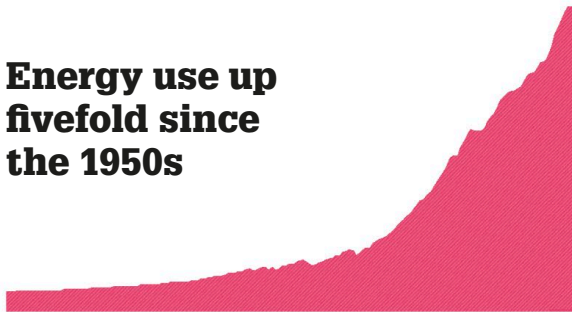
Progress and problems

Despite concerns as to our ability to increase the supply of resources to keep pace with demand, we have so far been broadly

successful and in the process most social indicators have improved. For example, billions of people have safer water supplies, the number of literate people has increased, the number of people living in abject poverty has gone down, and various health indicators, such as those relating to child mortality and contagious diseases, have improved. We are also more globally connected, with billions of people enjoying access to technology and consumer goods traded through supply chains that span the planet.

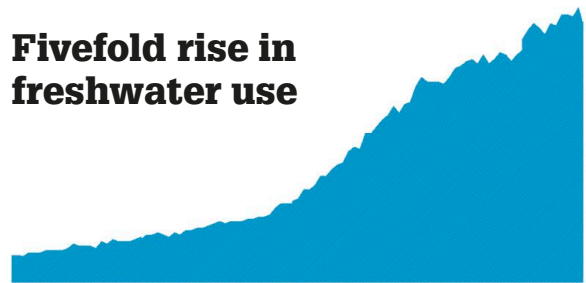
But alongside these measures of progress are a number of less positive consequences. Earth's atmosphere now has a higher

Energy use up fivefold since the 1950s



GROWTH IN FOSSIL FUEL USE

Fivefold rise in freshwater use



RISING FRESHWATER USE

concentration of greenhouse gases than at any time for at least 800,000 years. This is already causing climate change, leading to more extreme conditions, increased economic costs, and major humanitarian impacts. The fossil fuel combustion and forest fires driving climate change are also resulting in air pollution that kills millions of people every year.

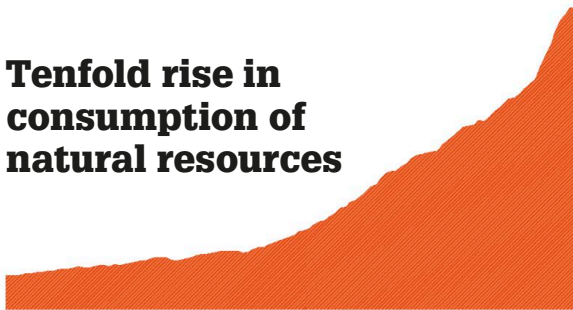
In addition, the depletion of different resources essential for human well-being is also leading toward economic and social strains. Freshwater and fish stocks are experiencing greater pressures. Soil damage is a worldwide problem, as is deforestation

and the decline of species diversity. The scale of ecosystem degradation means that a mass extinction of animals and plants is gathering momentum. This could soon lead to the greatest loss of diversity since the dinosaurs were wiped out 65 million years ago. All these changes and many more will increasingly affect economic growth and development and ultimately threaten to reverse social gains.

Saving the planet

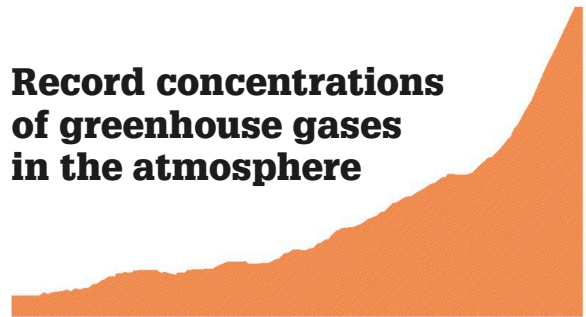
Increased awareness of these fundamental trends has resulted in attempts to find solutions. Some of these have had a positive

Tenfold rise in consumption of natural resources



RISING USE OF RESOURCES

Record concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere



ESCALATING CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

impact, although they have been rendered more difficult to realize because of advocacy for the status quo from vested interests, political short-termism, and the corruption that diverts essential resources from environmental and development programs. The need to find ways to overcome these barriers in order to reconcile the connected social, economic, and environmental trends becomes more pressing each day.

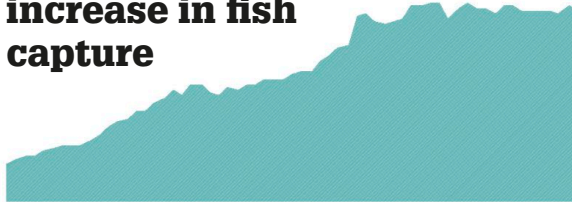
Fortunately, there is a rich body of data, analysis, and examples to show what can be done going forward. Drawing upon this in order to lay foundations fit for the

future will not be easy, but for everyone wishing to play a part in achieving positive and sustainable outcomes in the years ahead, understanding the full range of trends and developments is a vital starting point.

Future thinking

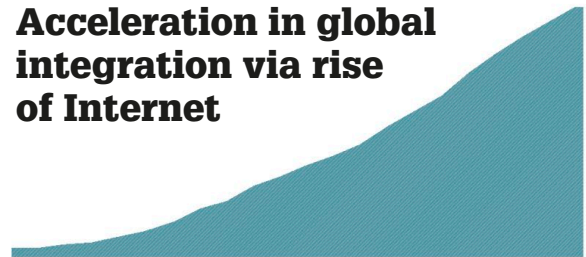
Together with many other goals and aims, the future will be shaped by the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Change Agreement, both adopted in 2015. In 2020 the world will also hopefully adopt a new accord under the United Nations

More than fourfold increase in fish capture



TAKING FISH FROM THE SEA

Acceleration in global integration via rise of Internet



GROWTH IN GLOBALIZATION

Convention on Biological Diversity to stop the mass extinction of wildlife that is now taking place. To achieve their aims of environmentally sustainable progress will require not only new levels of international cooperation, technology, and business models but also a rethinking of economics and political priorities.

To do this requires a broad understanding of the world today—and that is what this book is for. These pages provide a snapshot of what is happening on planet Earth, explaining the facts behind many of the most important issues. The most recent data and information have been

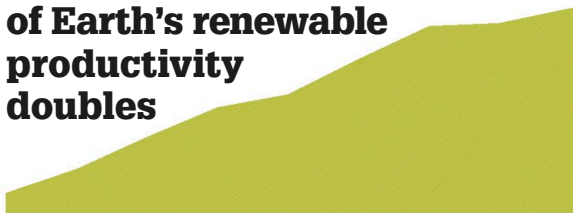
used to ensure that the current trends and developments are clearly explained and understood.

The hope is that readers will find the material both accessible and inspiring, using it to enlighten and empower as together we write the next chapters of human history.



DR. TONY JUNIPER

Human consumption of Earth's renewable productivity doubles



RISING LAND USE BY HUMANS

Mass extinction of animals and plants gathers momentum



SPECIES DECLINE

“The **grand challenges of our age**, such as climate change and the ever-increasing appetite of our planet’s **rapidly expanding population** for clean water and energy, require **scientific and engineering solutions** as well as political ones.”

.....

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX, BRITISH PHYSICIST AND BROADCASTER



The Population Explosion



Economic Expansion



City Planet



Fuel for Growth



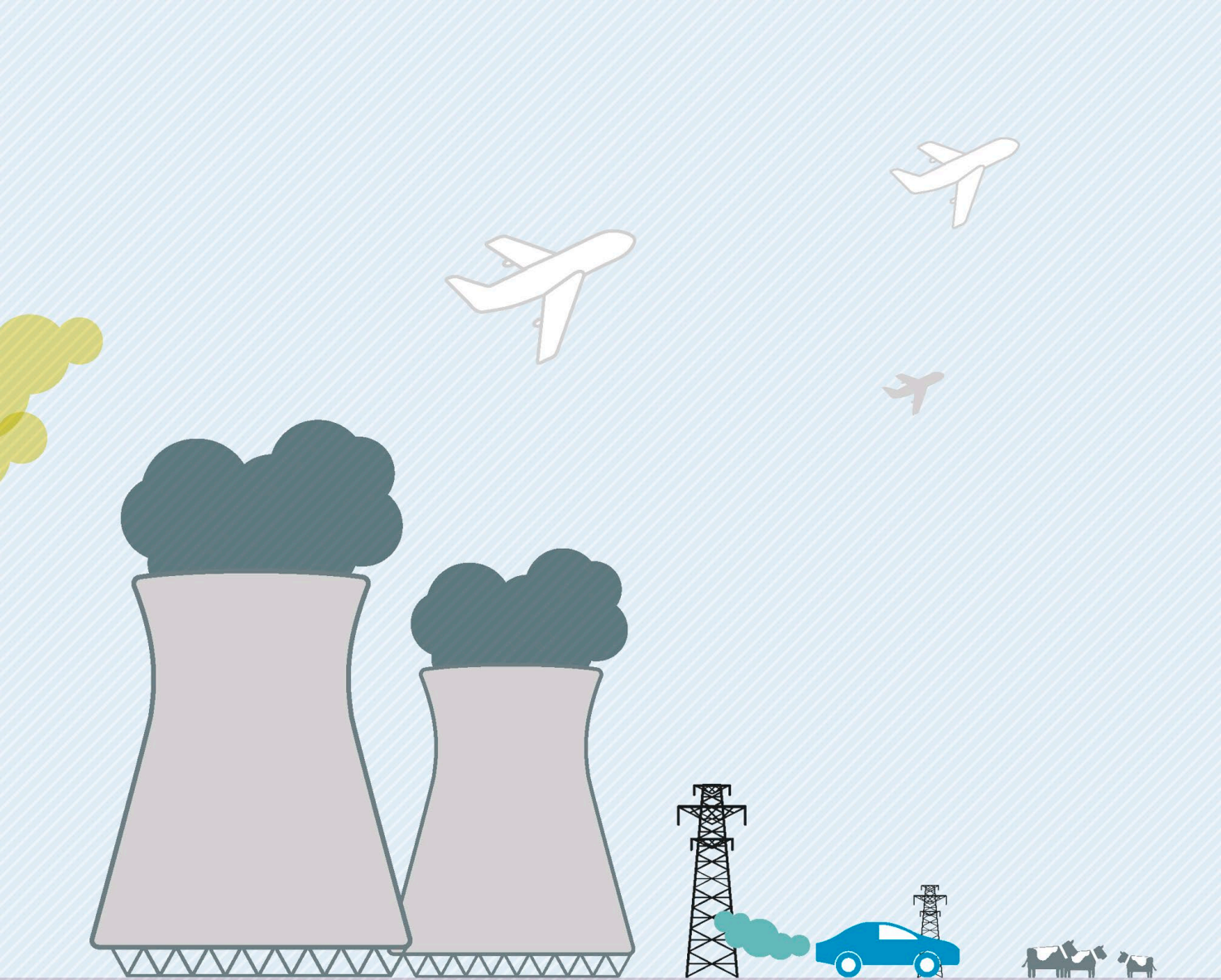
Escalating Appetite



Thirsty World



Consuming Passions



1 DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Rapid change is being driven by a series of powerful and interconnected trends. Working together, they are transforming humankind's impacts on the natural systems that sustain life.



The Population Explosion

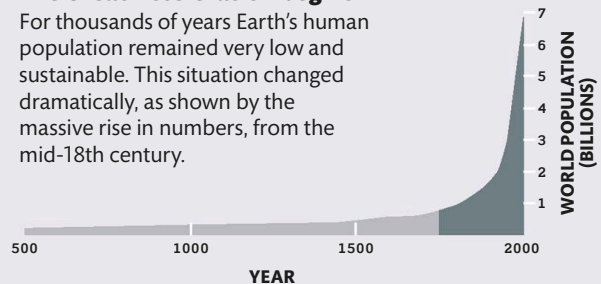
Of all the trends shaping our changing world, the rapid increase in the human population is perhaps the most fundamental. More people create a greater demand for food, energy, water, and other resources, driving pressures on the natural environment and atmosphere. Although the rate of increase is now slowing down, human numbers rose massively during the 20th century. Our population continues to increase at a rate of over 200,000 per day, or about 80 million a year—annually adding the equivalent of the population of Germany.

Expanding planet

Modern population growth began around 1750, with improved food production and distribution, which lowered mortality rates during the 18th century. The 19th century introduced improved sanitation and other developments that contributed to foster better public health, and during the 20th century the growth rate accelerated at an unprecedented level. It is expected that by 2024, there will be eight billion of us on planet Earth—and by 2050, over nine billion.

The Great Acceleration begins

For thousands of years Earth's human population remained very low and sustainable. This situation changed dramatically, as shown by the massive rise in numbers, from the mid-18th century.



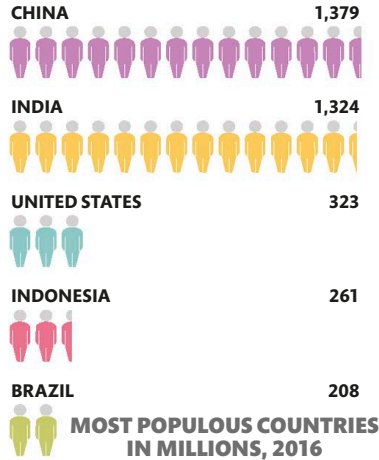
“Population growth is straining the world’s resources to breaking point.”

AL GORE, FORMER US VICE PRESIDENT AND ENVIRONMENTALIST



AN INCREASINGLY CROWDED WORLD

In the early years of the 19th century, the world's total population passed one billion. In 1959, the population crossed the three billion mark, and 15 years later, it reached four billion. By 1987, there were five billion people on the planet, six billion in 1999, and in 2011 that figure swelled to seven billion. Today, just five countries are home to more than 3.4 billion people—nearly half of the current global total, and three times the population of Earth in the 19th century.



The so-called "baby boom years" follow a post-war period of economic growth.

1918
Spanish Flu epidemic (up to 5 percent of world population killed)

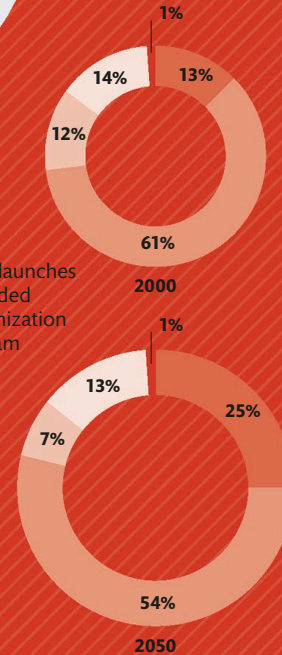
1928
Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin, the first antibiotic

1980
China's population reaches 1 billion

1974
WHO launches expanded immunization program

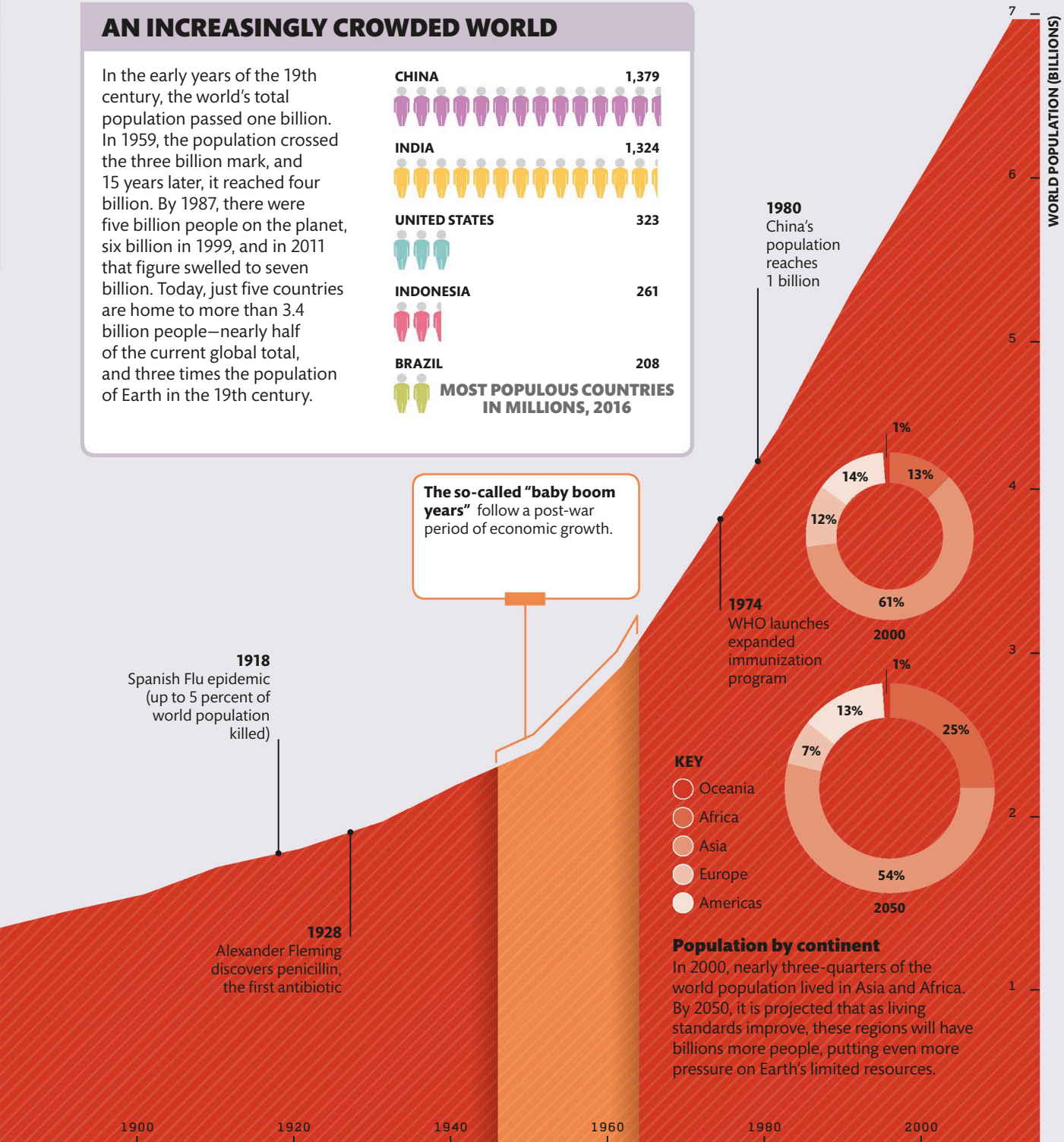
KEY

- Oceania
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Americas



Population by continent

In 2000, nearly three-quarters of the world population lived in Asia and Africa. By 2050, it is projected that as living standards improve, these regions will have billions more people, putting even more pressure on Earth's limited resources.



1900

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000

WORLD POPULATION (BILLIONS)

7

6

5

4

3

2

1



Population Shift

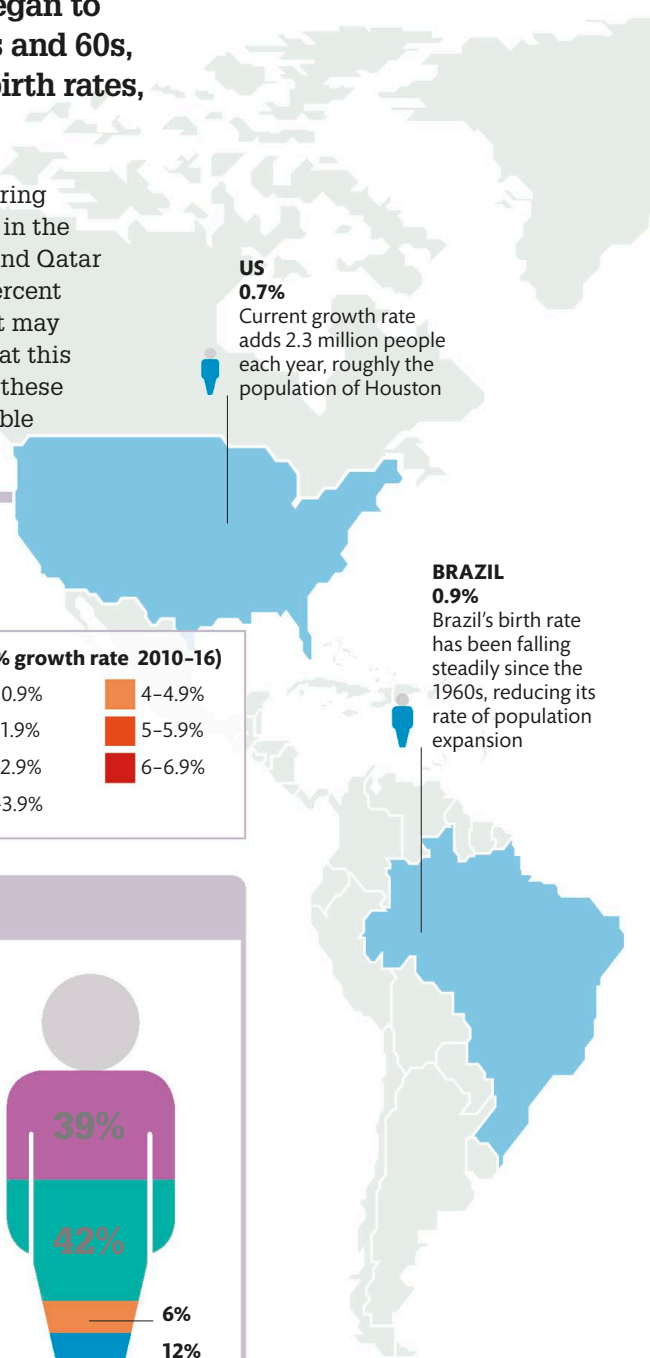
From 1800, population grew in all regions. It began to slow down in richer countries during the 1950s and 60s, as wealth, health, and education drove down birth rates, but growth continued in developing countries.

High birth rates, improvements in medical care, and the influence and movements of migratory workers all contribute to high population growth rates around the world. In the past five years, the biggest population shift has taken place in the Middle East, where the promise of jobs as well

as conflicts in neighboring countries has resulted in the populations of Oman and Qatar rising in excess of 6 percent a year. While 6 percent may not sound impressive, at this rate, the population of these two countries will double in 12 years.

Earth's changing profile

Populations in many of the most developed countries are now either stable or growing, primarily because of immigration. The highest percentage growth rates are currently mainly in Africa, which is why the number of people living in that continent is set to more than triple from about 1.2 billion today to more than four billion by 2100. In 2050 roughly 90 percent of the world population is expected to reside in countries currently regarded as developing (up from about 80 percent today).



US
0.7%
Current growth rate adds 2.3 million people each year, roughly the population of Houston

BRAZIL
0.9%
Brazil's birth rate has been falling steadily since the 1960s, reducing its rate of population expansion

KEY (% growth rate 2010-16)

- 0-0.9%
- 1-1.9%
- 2-2.9%
- 3-3.9%
- 4-4.9%
- 5-5.9%
- 6-6.9%

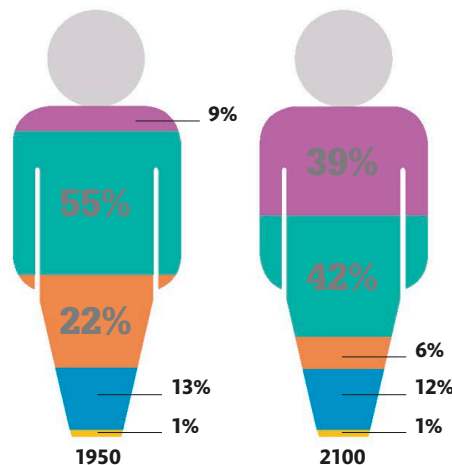
WHO LIVES WHERE, PAST AND FUTURE

In 1950, more than 20 percent of the world's people lived in Europe. By the end of this century that proportion will have shrunk to around 6 percent. A bigger, opposite scenario is expected in Africa, which by 2100 could be home to almost 40 percent of humankind. As was once the case in current developed countries, falling death rates will be the major factor driving its population growth.

KEY

Percentage (%) of world population

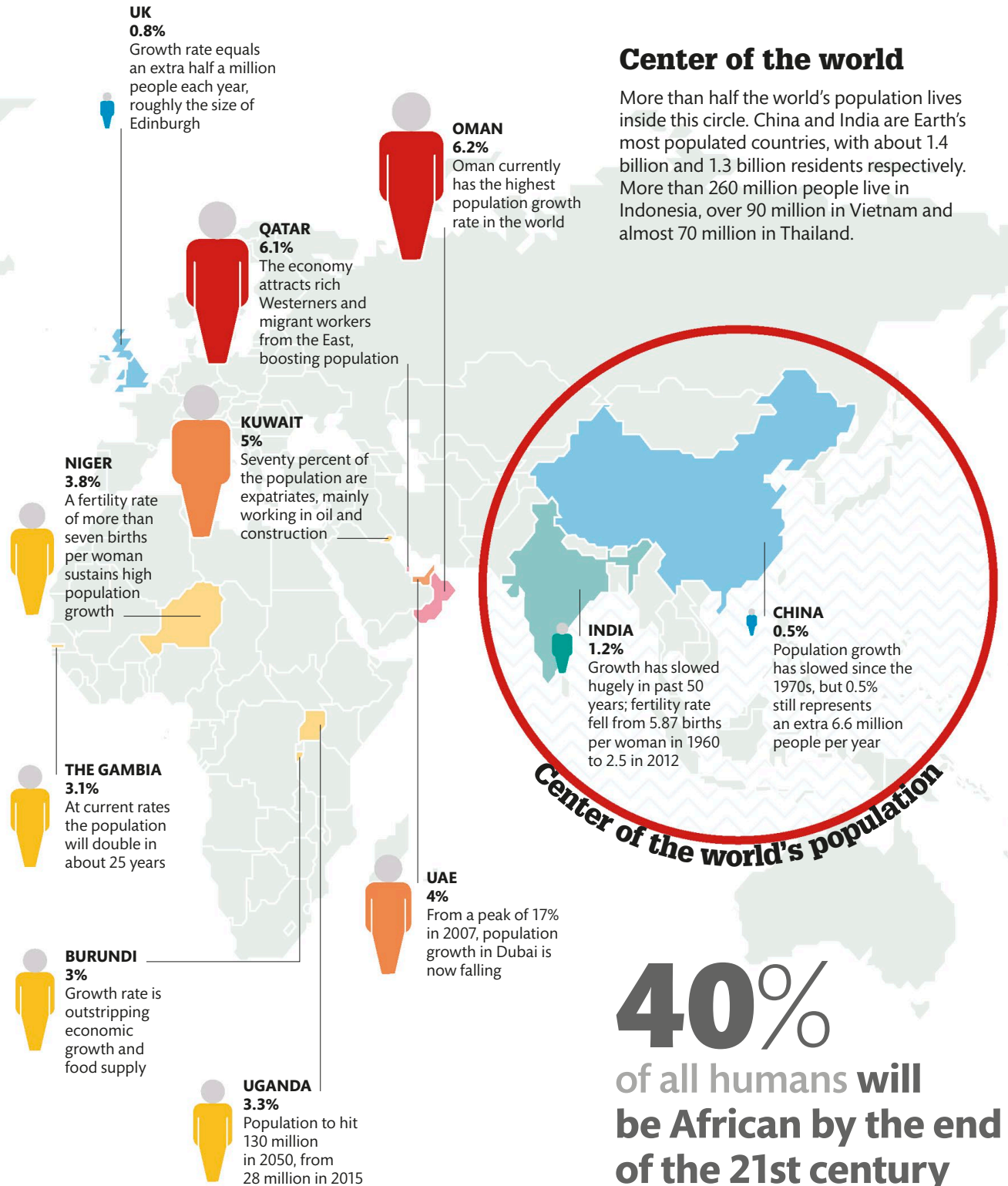
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Americas
- Oceania





Center of the world

More than half the world's population lives inside this circle. China and India are Earth's most populated countries, with about 1.4 billion and 1.3 billion residents respectively. More than 260 million people live in Indonesia, over 90 million in Vietnam and almost 70 million in Thailand.



40%
of all humans will
be African by the end
of the 21st century



Living Longer

Since the beginning of recorded history, young children have outnumbered those reaching old age—at least until very recently. Today, there are more people on the planet aged 65 and older than those aged five and under.

As both the average length of life and the global proportion of older people have increased, a situation without precedent has emerged, raising many important questions we have no way of answering. For example, will the aging trend be accompanied by longer periods of good health in old age? Will there be new opportunities for different roles for older people in society?

How will societies cope with a much higher proportion of retired people, many of whom will not be paying income tax?

Driven by falling fertility rates and a remarkable increase in life expectancy, population aging will continue to accelerate. Where today's employed population falls typically between the ages of 20 and 65, in future a higher

proportion of healthy older people may remain employed, vying with younger workers trying to find jobs.



SEE ALSO...

- **Slowing the rise** pp22-23
- **Better lives for many** pp102-103
- **Healthier world** pp108-109

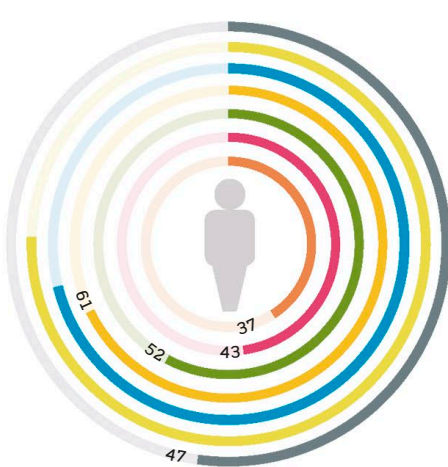
Life expectancy at birth

Increased life expectancy in the past 100 years reflects a shift in the principal causes of death. In the early 20th century the main causes of mortality were related to infectious and parasitic diseases. Improved public health, nutrition, and medical breakthroughs such as antibiotics and vaccines have since transformed the situation. Today, people are far more likely to die from noncommunicable illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

KEY

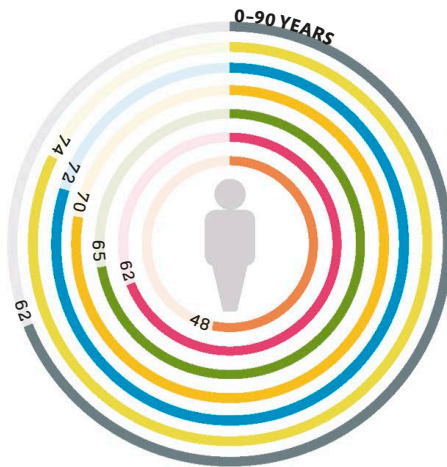
Life expectancy at birth (years)

- World average
- North America
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Europe
- Oceania
- Asia
- Africa



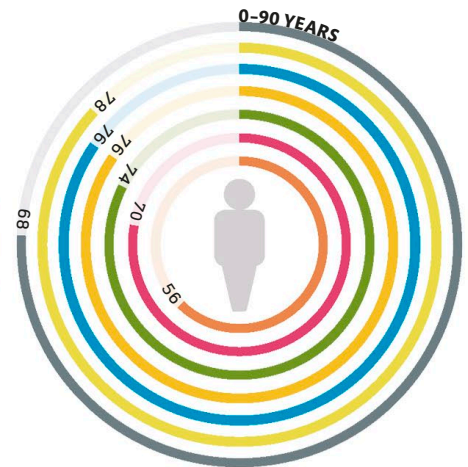
1950-55

North America and Europe exceeded the global average longevity of 47 years by the largest margins. War, disease, and malnutrition all played their parts in shortening lives.



1980-85

Increasingly affluent lifestyles in developed countries, and improved food security and better access to medicines elsewhere, increased average lifespans throughout most regions.



2005-10

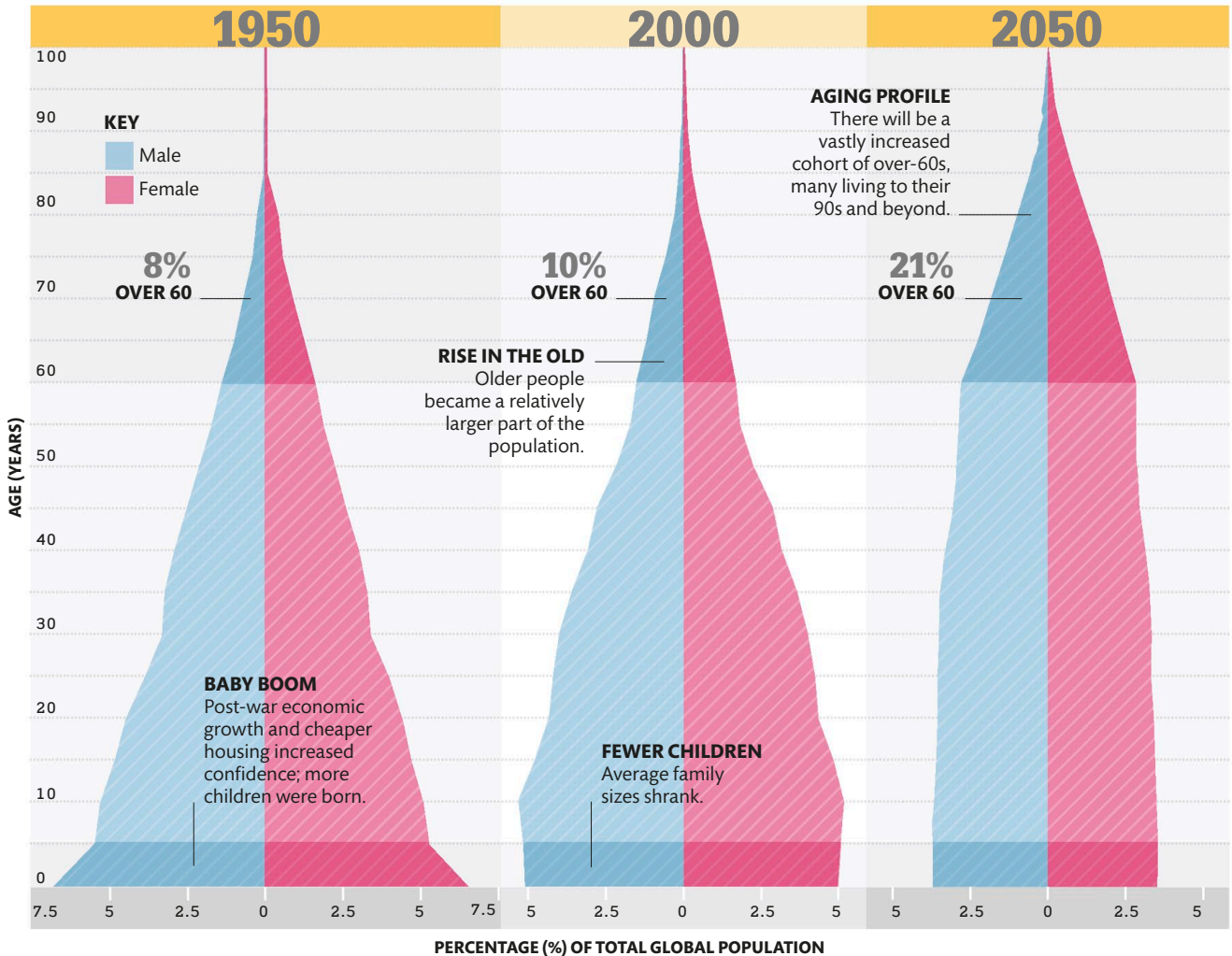
Economic growth, better nutrition, and disease control achieved rising longevity worldwide. Africa still has the shortest average lifespan, as many countries remain affected by HIV/AIDS and other diseases.



The world's population in pyramids

The shape of the global population age profile is changing rapidly. The rising proportion of people aged over 60 has caused the pyramid to become not only taller than in earlier decades but also wider at the top. Compared with the situation in 2000, the proportion of people aged 60 years or over is expected to more than double by 2050 to about 21 percent of the world total. By 2100, that proportion is expected to be about triple.

By **2047**
people aged over 60
will outnumber children



1950

The global population growth curve was steep. With an increase of nearly 19 percent during the course of the 1950s, the high rate of growth persisted through the 1960s and 70s.

2000

The 50 years up to the new millennium saw the proportion of over-60s grow by 2 percent. Declining fertility rates and changing causes of death heralded more rapid change ahead.

2050

Another demographic time bomb explodes. This one is not just about the overall increase in population, but includes a simultaneous doubling in the proportion of over-60s since 2000.



Slowing the Rise

How best to manage population growth has been one of the most discussed and most controversial questions of modern times. But what might actually work to reduce the rate of increase?

The steep population increase of the 20th century led to alarming predictions about its impact on the global environment, resources, and food supplies. While the humanitarian disaster some expected has thus far been avoided, there are still good reasons to reduce population growth.

A number of steps have been taken in pursuit of this goal, including forced sterilization (in India), greater access to contraception (many African countries), and a legal limit on family size (China, see box, right). Less controversial—and ultimately more successful—has been access to education, especially for girls and young women.

Women's education and birth rates

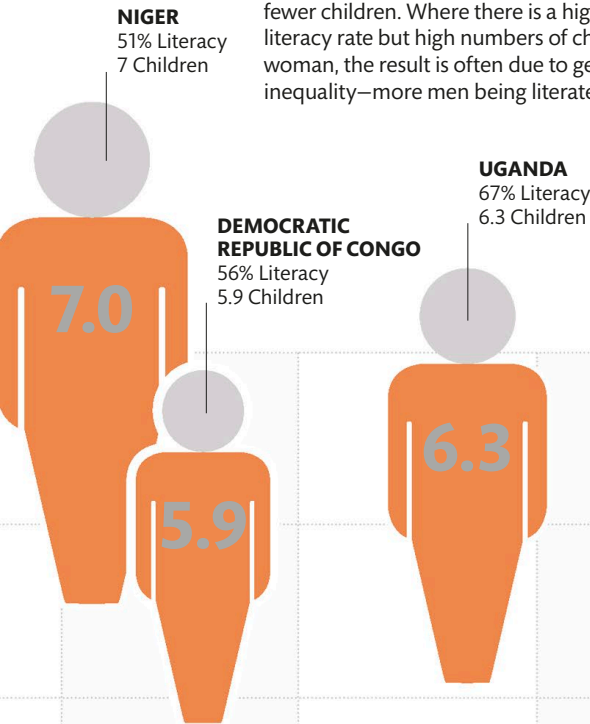
Generally speaking, literate women average two children per family, while those who cannot read or write often give birth to six or more. The situation can be self-perpetuating, since female children of illiterate women are less likely to receive education themselves.

Other benefits come with greater education. For example, families of women with at least some education tend to have better housing, clothing, income, water, and sanitation. Increased access to education thus emerges as a key area for investment, bringing social, economic, and—ultimately—environmental benefits.



The literacy link

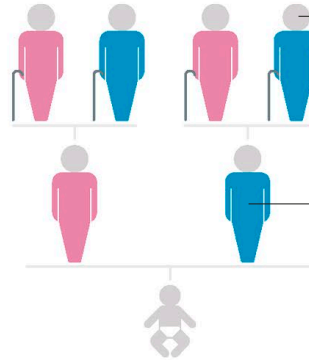
On average, women who read and write have fewer children. Where there is a higher adult literacy rate but high numbers of children per woman, the result is often due to gender inequality—more men being literate than women.



CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY

During the early 1980s, the Chinese government took official steps to slow the country's rapid population increase, limiting each family to one child. This was done to protect food and water supplies while improving individual prosperity—yet the move had unforeseen impacts. The policy is now two children per family.

4:2:1 SOCIETY: 1 CHILD SUPPORTED...

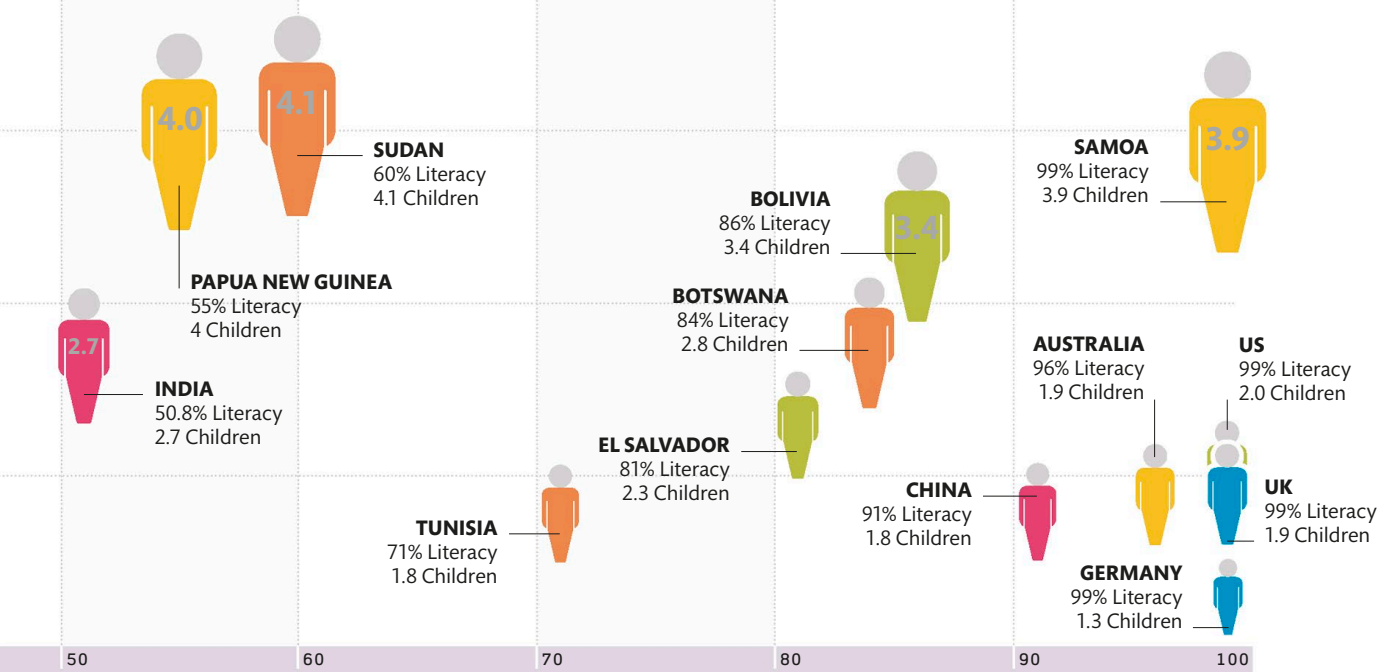


...4 GRANDPARENTS

The policy exacerbated challenges caused by proportionately fewer working-age people supporting a rising retired population.

...2 PARENTS

Those caught with an extra child could be charged a "social upbringing fee" to cover education and health-care costs.





Economic Expansion

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution in the late 18th century the world has witnessed a period of staggering economic growth. New methods of production and innovation developed over the last 200 years have allowed for efficient use of labour and resources, producing more output per person. Increased productivity has allowed for higher incomes, better quality of life, and greatly reduced poverty worldwide. As fast-growing countries in Asia, South America, and Africa progressively industrialize, the global economy is set to grow further still.

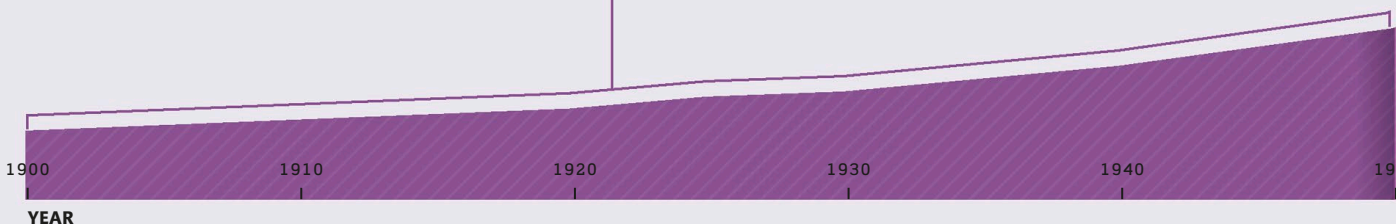
A more productive world

The total economic output of the world, its GDP, has been growing steadily, especially during the past 100 years. Major drivers of economic growth are increasing populations, providing more workers to produce goods and services, and more advanced technologies, allowing labor to be more efficiently utilized. Since 1950, the global economy has grown ever more rapidly, and in 2000, global economic output was 10 times its 1950 level. Even as growth has slowed with the recent global recession, economic output is at an all-time high.

“We have allowed the interests of capital to outweigh the interests of human beings and our Earth.”

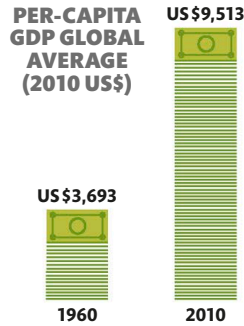
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ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU, SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER

The introduction of widespread electricity provides artificial light, allowing for working hours to stretch beyond daylight.



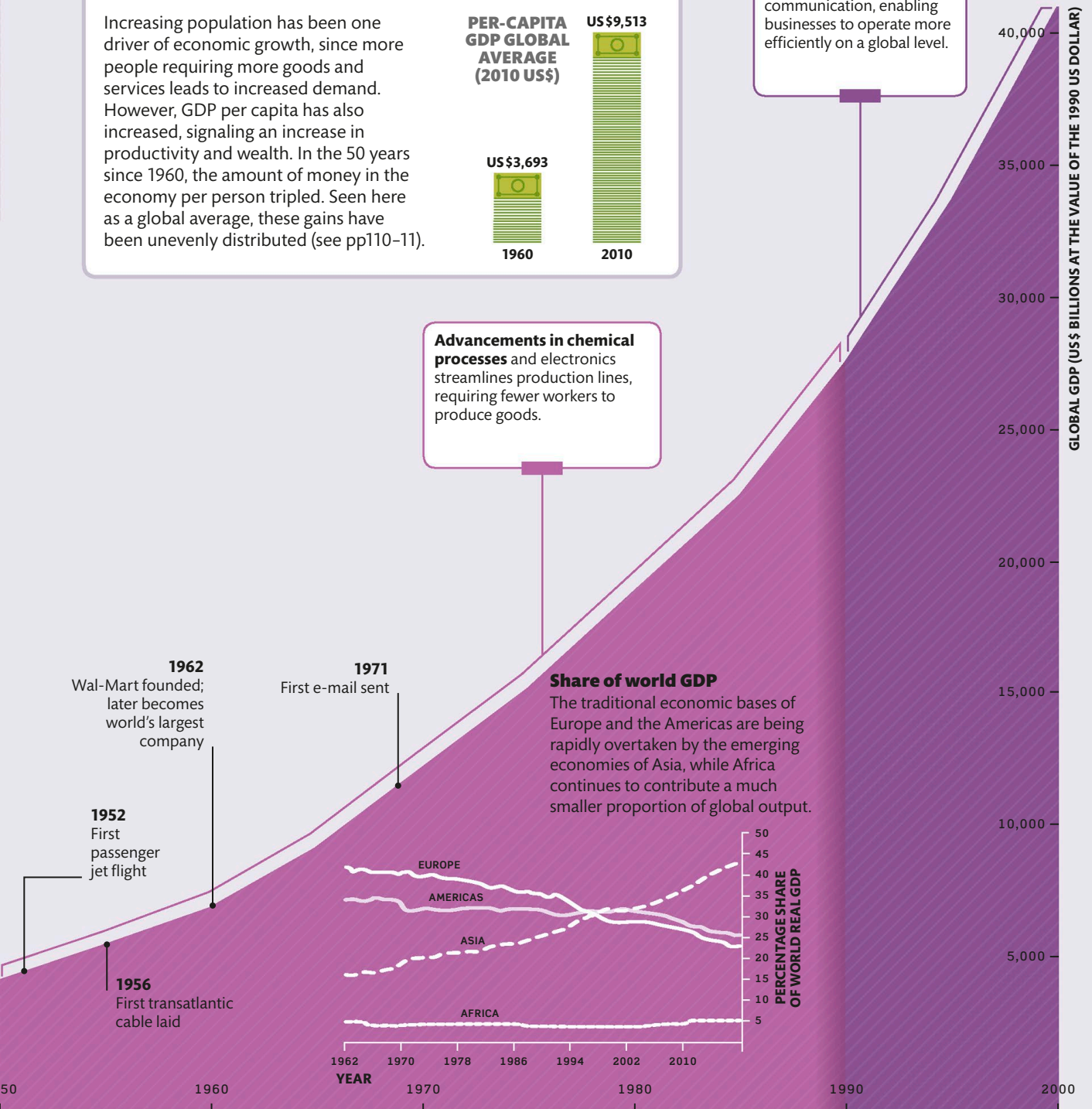
INCREASING PERSONAL WEALTH

Increasing population has been one driver of economic growth, since more people requiring more goods and services leads to increased demand. However, GDP per capita has also increased, signaling an increase in productivity and wealth. In the 50 years since 1960, the amount of money in the economy per person tripled. Seen here as a global average, these gains have been unevenly distributed (see pp110-11).



The rapid adoption of the internet revolutionizes communication, enabling businesses to operate more efficiently on a global level.

Advancements in chemical processes and electronics streamlines production lines, requiring fewer workers to produce goods.



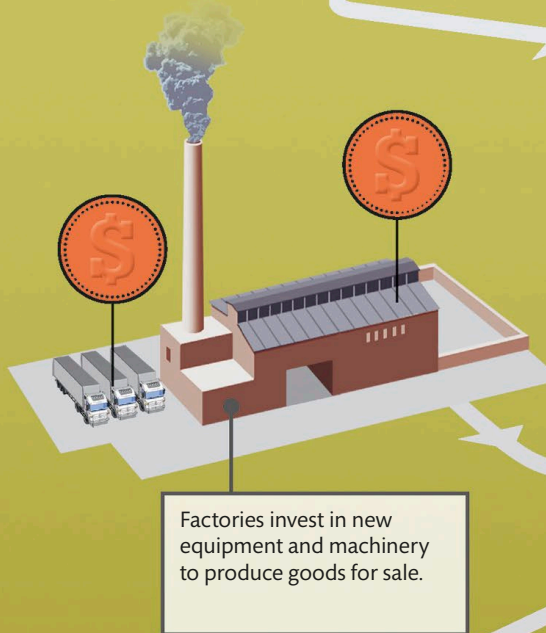
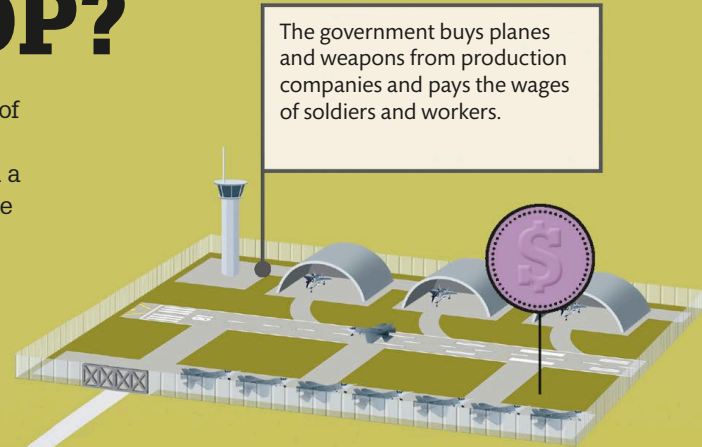


What Is GDP?

Gross domestic product, or GDP, is a measure of the output of an economy, which is defined as the total value of all the finished goods and services produced within the borders in a specific time period, usually a year. It is used to compare the relative size of economies and to judge the health of an economy over time. There are several ways in which economists measure this output—here we look at the expenditure method. This assesses the output by adding up the total amount spent by the government, individuals, businesses, and organizations in the economy.

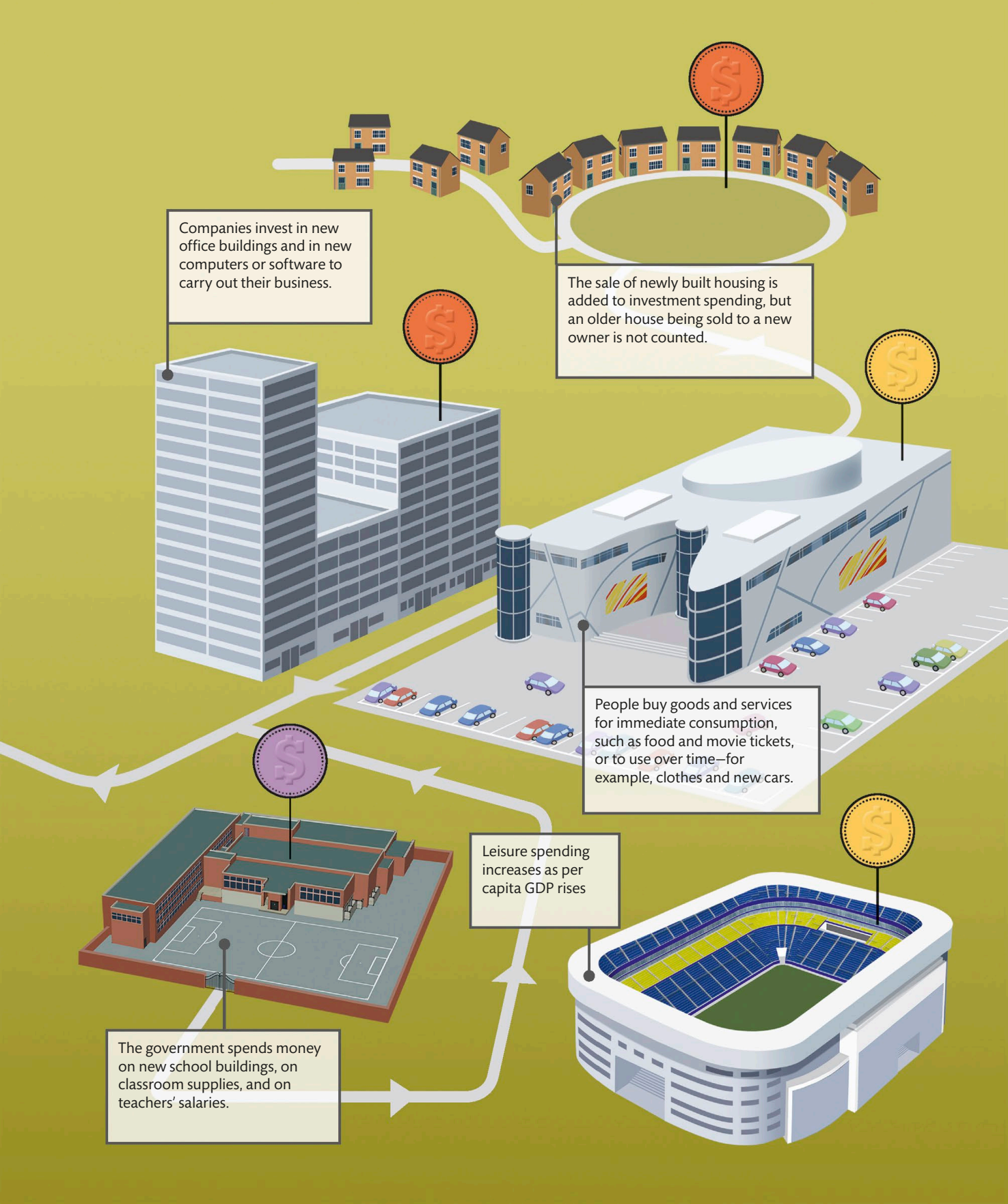
KEY

- (C) Consumer spending**
The total value of all goods and services bought by individuals and households
- (I) Investment spending**
Money spent by companies on equipment to enable them to provide goods and services in the future; new residential purchases
- (G) Government spending**
What the government spends on public services and public sector salaries
- (X) Net exports**
The value of goods and services the country produces and exports for sale in other countries, minus the value of imports



There are several ways to calculate GDP. Here it is shown as the sum of expenditure in four components: consumer spending, investment spending, government spending, and net exports.

By trading with other countries, the economy can sell its domestically produced goods and services abroad.



Companies invest in new office buildings and in new computers or software to carry out their business.

The sale of newly built housing is added to investment spending, but an older house being sold to a new owner is not counted.

People buy goods and services for immediate consumption, such as food and movie tickets, or to use over time—for example, clothes and new cars.

Leisure spending increases as per capita GDP rises

The government spends money on new school buildings, on classroom supplies, and on teachers' salaries.



Richer People

Across the world, many people are earning more money and can afford a better standard of living, but the gulf between the richest and poorest among us continues to grow wider.

A useful way of gauging how economic growth or decline is impacting on individual quality of life in different countries is to look at gross domestic product (GDP—see pp26–27) per capita. This is the measure of a country’s annual economic output divided by its population. GDP per capita figures give an indication of individual average income and quality of life, allowing for comparisons over time to see if people are generally living

better or worse lives. Globally, average GDP per capita rose from US\$4,271 in 1990 to US\$10,804 in 2014, signaling an overall rise in household earnings. This is in part due to the rise of emerging economies—such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China—and has led to significant reductions in poverty in some of the poorest countries in the world. However, by far the biggest factor in rising average GDP during this period is the continuing

growth of the world’s richest economies. Established economies, such as the US and UK, may have slower growth rates but have much higher GDP per capita.

SEE ALSO...

- **Global power shift** pp32–33
- **Rise of consumerism** pp86–87
- **Unequal world** pp110–111

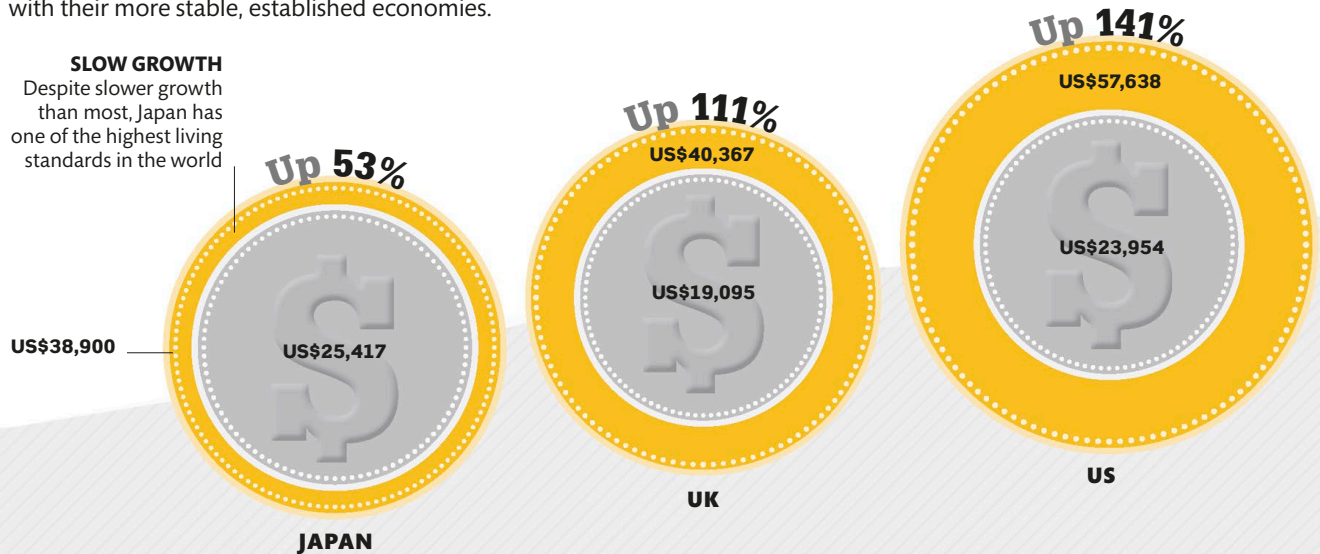
Global inequality

Despite the fact that global GDP per capita is increasing, and few countries have negative growth rates, the gap between rich and poor countries is growing. In the years 1990–2014, the most dramatic growth came in the emerging economies of China, Vietnam, and Qatar. Vietnam’s growth has given rise to a tenfold increase in per capita GDP, while China has increased per capita GDP by more than 2,000 percent. These are successes, but they are outstripped in absolute terms by countries like the US and Norway with their more stable, established economies.

KEY
Percentage growth of GDP per capita, 1990–2016

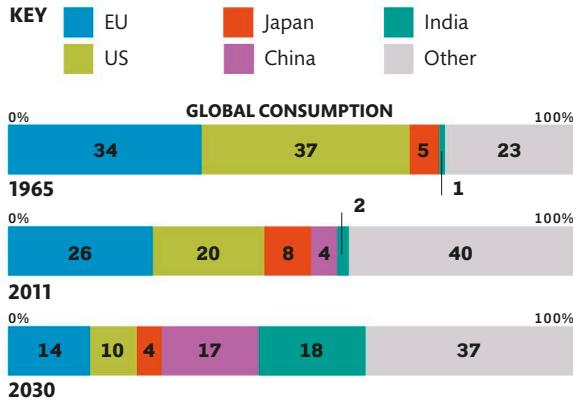
● 1990 GDP per capita ● 2016 GDP per capita

SLOW GROWTH
Despite slower growth than most, Japan has one of the highest living standards in the world



MIDDLE CLASS WORLD

The global middle class, those with a daily spending power of US\$10-100, is expanding. Around 1.8 billion people were categorized as middle class in 2009 and this is expected to rise to 4.9 billion by 2030. The influence of middle-class consumers in the developing world is growing too. By 2030, it is estimated that around 35 percent of global middle-class consumption will come from India and China.



Up 2,455%

LARGEST GROWTH

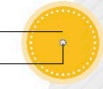
China has become a major economic player in the last 20 years, but inequality between rich and poor is still a big issue



CHINA

US\$2,171
US\$95

Up 2,076%



VIETNAM

US\$2,415
US\$479

Up 404%



SUDAN

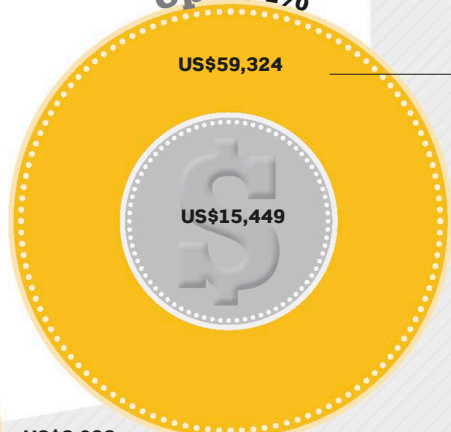
US\$364
US\$1,710

Up 370%



INDIA

Up 284%



HIGH GDP
This Gulf state has large funds, but many people still live in poverty

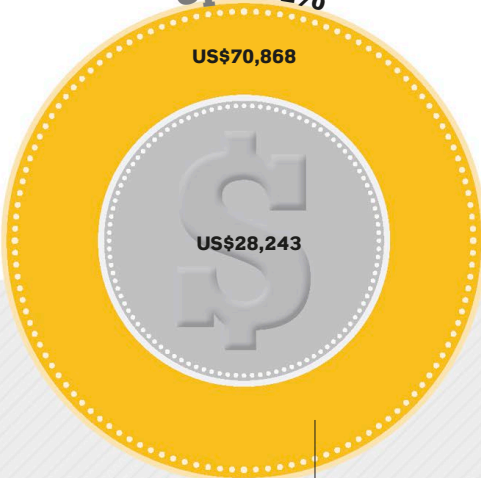
QATAR

Up 180%



BRAZIL

Up 151%



NORWAY

HIGHEST GDP

Norway's large economy is mostly due to their access to North Sea oil, which is in government ownership



Conspicuous consumption

While China's GDP per capita has soared, the gap between rich and poor has grown. Only a small minority can afford luxuries such as this attention-grabbing Ferrari.



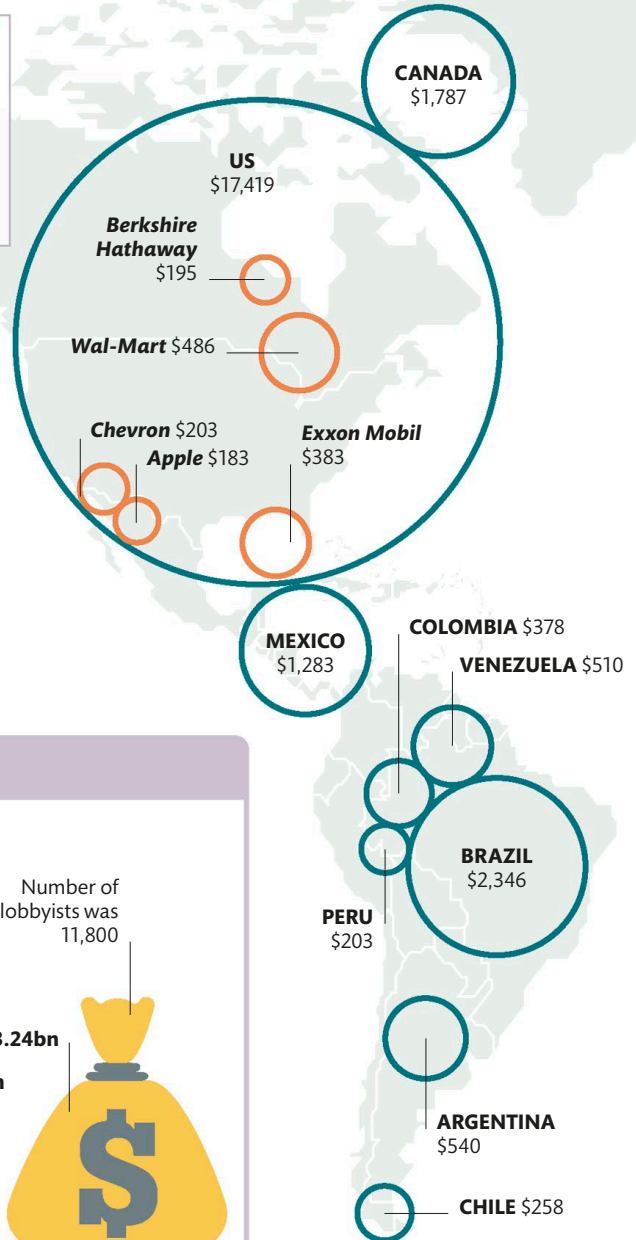
Companies vs. Nations

The rise of global markets over recent decades has enabled a number of multinational corporations to grow larger than most countries.

Of the top 100 economies based on GDP (see pp26–27) and revenue, 60 are countries and the rest companies. Wal-Mart, the largest public company in the world, ranks as the 28th biggest economy, just below that of Norway. Such vast economic clout gives companies power and leverage. For example, oil companies have lobbied governments against policies geared to combat global warming because of the threat posed to their businesses.

KEY Data from 2014

- Country (GDP in billions)
- Company (revenue in billions)

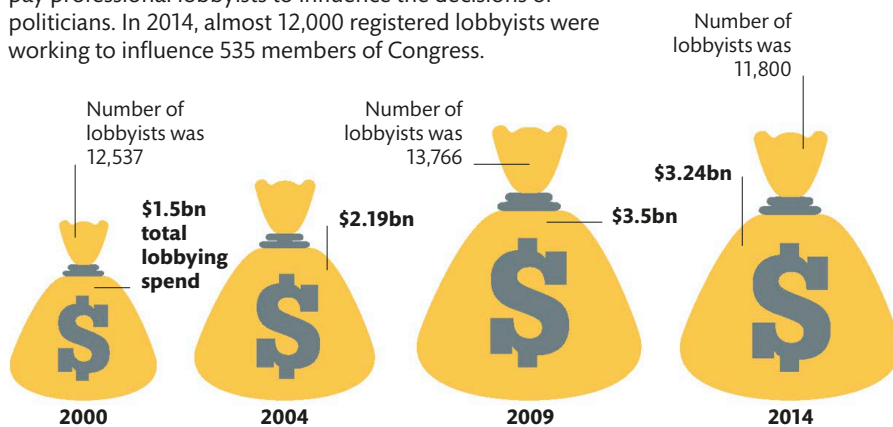


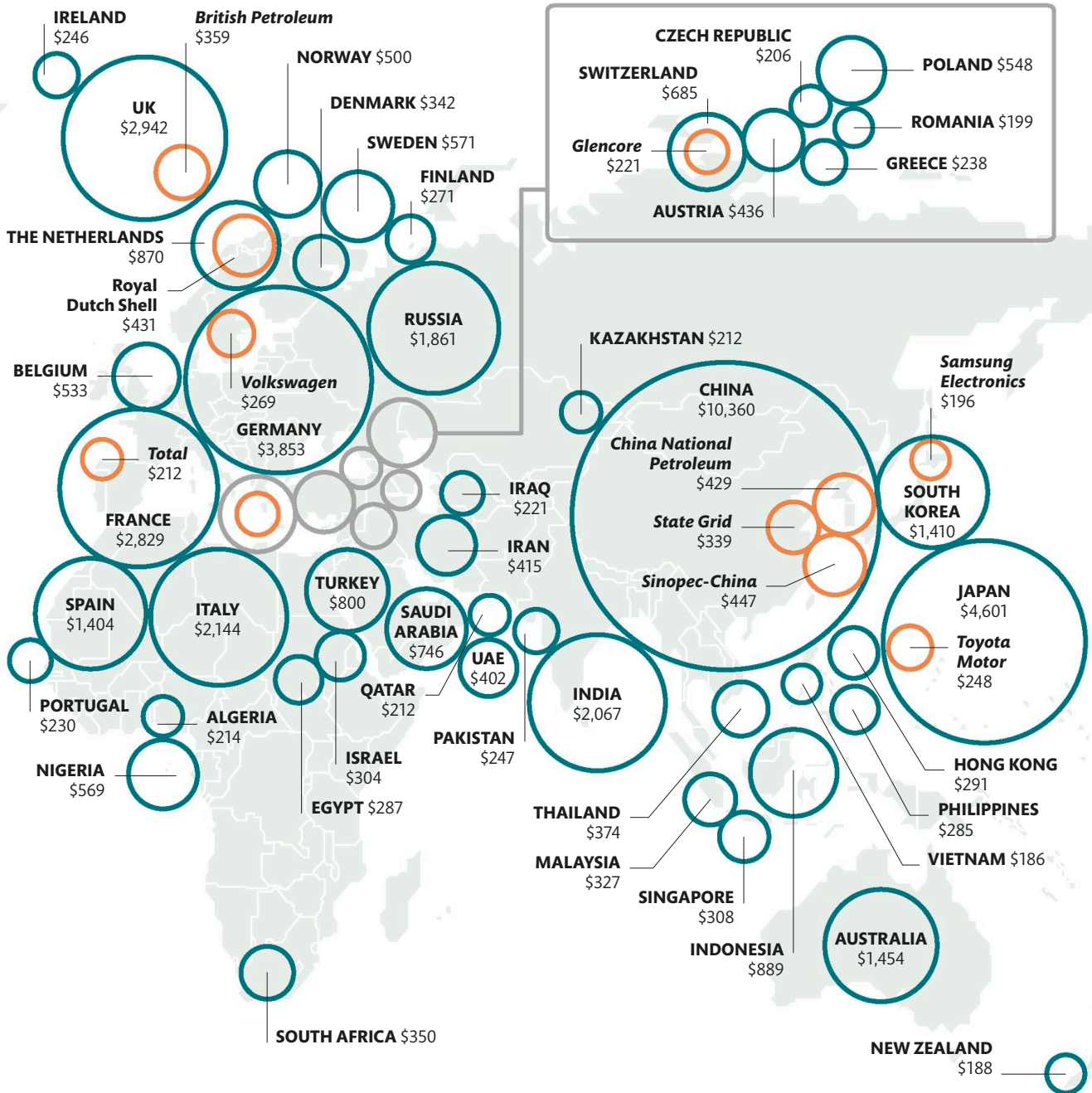
Top money makers

This map plots the top 70 economies in the world. It compares World Bank rankings of national GDPs with the Fortune 500 list of corporations by revenue. The largest of these companies operates in the retail sector, but many of the front-runners are in petroleum refining and vehicle manufacturing—in second place on the Fortune 500 list is the Chinese oil and energy giant Sinopec, closely followed by Shell.

POLITICAL LOBBYING

In the US, political lobbying is big business. Many corporations pay professional lobbyists to influence the decisions of politicians. In 2014, almost 12,000 registered lobbyists were working to influence 535 members of Congress.





The annual turnover of Wal-Mart (\$486 billion) is almost twice the size of Pakistan's GDP (\$247 billion)



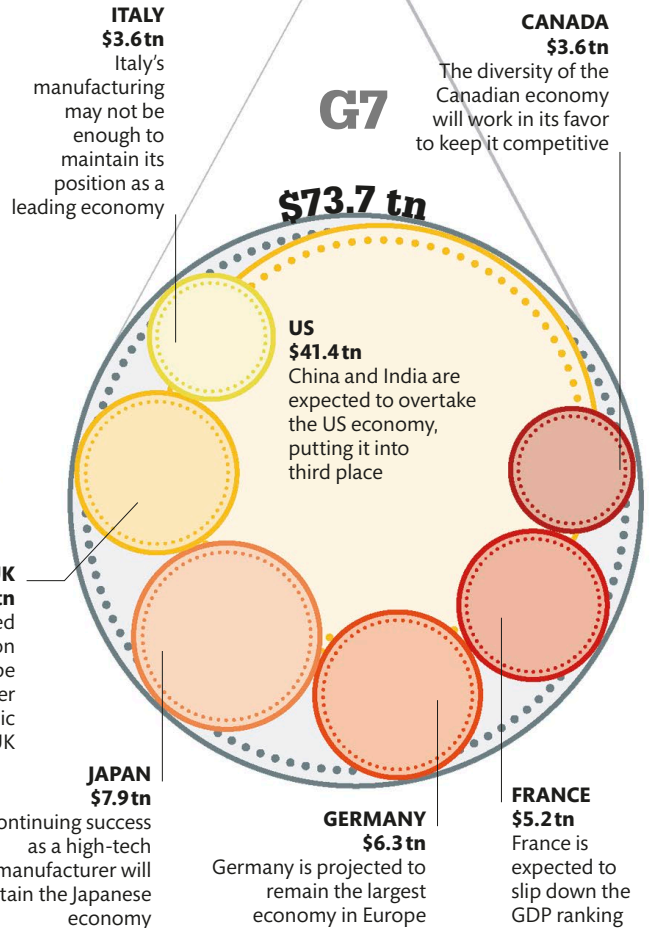
Global Power Shift

For the past 40 years, seven countries (the G7) have been accepted as the world's most important economies, but emerging economies are beginning to overtake them.

Since the late 19th century, the US has been widely accepted as the world's largest economy and the leader in terms of output and innovation. Other traditional economic powerhouses joined with the US to become the Group of 7, or G7, in the 1970s. The E7 group (or "Emerging 7"), identified in 2006, consists of the most important developing economies.

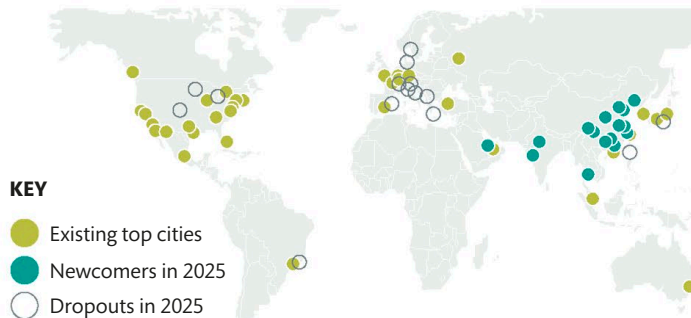
Growth of the E7

By 2050, the G7 economies are expected to be greatly overtaken by the seven emerging economies of the E7. In China, the reform of socialist economic policies and rapid expansion of manufacturing capabilities has led to huge economic expansion, which is predicted to continue. By 2050, India will also overtake the US and become the world's second largest economic power. The G7 economies will continue to grow but at a much slower rate than their emerging counterparts.



THE WORLD'S RICHEST 50 CITIES

The economic rise of the East is well illustrated by forecasts of where we will soon find the world's richest cities. In 2007, eight of the richest 50 cities ranked by annual GDP were in Asia. By 2025, this is predicted to rise to 20. More than half of Europe's top 50 cities are expected to drop off the list entirely, as will three in North America, creating a new landscape of urban economic power.



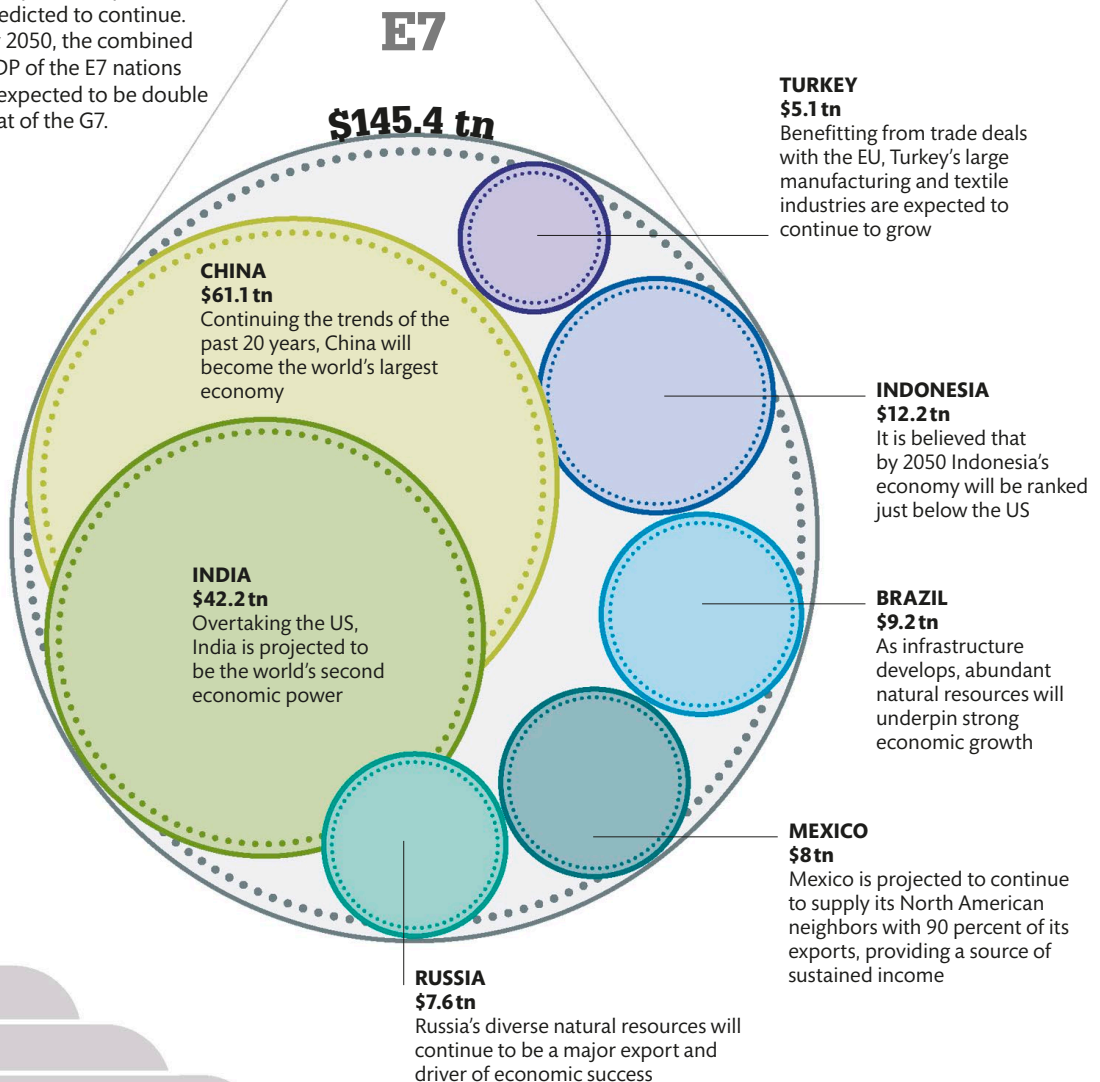


2050

The EU and US's share of world GDP is expected to fall from 33% in 2014 to around 25% by 2050

Tipping the balance

An economic power shift away from the established advanced economies in North America, Western Europe, and Japan is predicted to continue. By 2050, the combined GDP of the E7 nations is expected to be double that of the G7.





Trading Benefits

Trade has been a powerful driver of economic growth around the world for centuries. Countries described as major traders have larger economies than the smaller trading nations.

Trade enables countries to make the most of their natural and human resources. Modern transportation is now so fast and efficient that even perishable foods and flowers can be harvested in southern Africa and sold in European supermarkets within days. The use of instant Internet communications means that many services are no longer restricted by location. These technological advances have resulted in a boom in the value of international trade.

World trade

The majority of international trade (measured here as total exports) takes place among the richest countries. They benefit from efficient infrastructure and supportive treaties and are able to produce goods of high value. The ease of trade and transportation today means that almost any product or service is available across the world.

TRADE VERSUS AID

Some experts believe international aid should be reduced in favor of investment in trade with poorer countries to support their development.

Trade



- › Establishes a partnership rather than a one-way dependent relationship
- › Fosters development of industry and infrastructure in poorer countries
- › Can leave countries heavily dependent on powerful foreign countries

Aid



- › Provides relief and support in a crisis
- › Can be used to encourage policies for sustainable development
- › Foreign aid can leave economies unequipped and dependent on assistance

Least developed countries

The 48 least developed countries, as set by the UN, are impeded in trade by a lack of infrastructure and supportive government. Goods and services of low value are often traded here.



IMPORTS

Lack of manufacturing capacity in many poorer countries prevents them from participating in key global markets. These nations must import manufactured goods, such as vehicles and medicines.



EXPORTS

The leading exports of many less developed countries are often natural resources, used abroad to produce manufactured goods. Tourism brings in income as a service export.



LABOR

The countries concentrated on extracting raw materials may suffer from so-called "Dutch disease," whereby exporting raw materials is at the expense of jobs in more stable or lucrative manufacturing industries.

\$236 billion
Least developed countries

\$23.6 trillion
World trade

\$23,300 billion
Rest of the world

90% of world trade is carried by the shipping industry

Developed countries

Trade agreements and open borders often make it cheaper for groups of richer countries to trade together. Good infrastructure and communication links ensure that trade is easy to conduct.

IMPORTS

Food, raw materials, and machinery are all imported regularly to produce manufactured goods. Rich countries can afford to import basic goods and services, allowing them to specialize in high-value industries.



EXPORTS

The highest-value exports of many developed countries are consumer electronics and vehicles. Services are exported in the form of financial services and travel, as well as the tourism industry.



LABOR

Many large economies, such as China and the US, produce large amounts of consumer goods for export. This supports millions of skilled jobs in these countries.



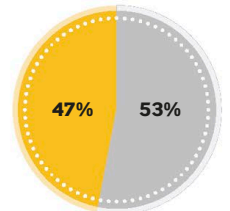
American agreement

The US is the world's largest international trader, with trade valued at more than \$3,900 billion in 2014. With the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the US's biggest partner is Canada. A third of US exports go to Canada and Mexico.

KEY Imports Exports

CANADA

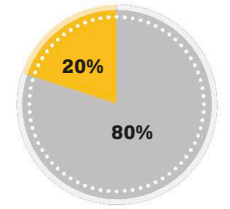
Trade with Canada is vital for both economies, and the two countries share the highest-value trade relationship in the world.



\$660 BILLION

CHINA

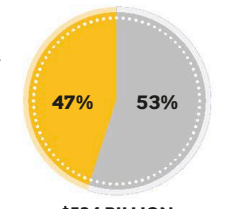
The US's largest source of imports come from China. Exports are also growing rapidly, making China the third biggest market for US goods and services abroad.



\$590 BILLION

MEXICO

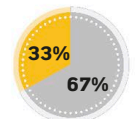
The third member of the NAFTA, Mexico has cheaper labor and production costs. This means many consumer goods are exported to the US.



\$534 BILLION

JAPAN

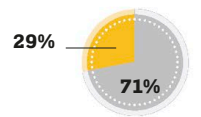
Imports from Japan are almost exclusively manufactured goods, with cars and electronics the most popular items.



\$201 BILLION

GERMANY

The US's largest European trading partner is Germany, known for exporting high-quality consumer goods.



\$173 BILLION



World Debt

Government debt exerts a huge influence on political policy. The drive to generate surplus and repay debt leads to fewer measures geared to meeting environmental and other sustainable development goals.

Governments often raise money by issuing bonds that are bought by private banks and other financial institutions. The money is used to invest in public services and build infrastructure. Creditors are repaid with interest, as long as the country remains solvent. When spending

exceeds tax receipts and finance to repay debts dries up, governments often prioritize economic growth, cut spending, and downgrade long-term plans. The 2008 global financial crisis revealed the impact of debt on environmental goals as low carbon energy programs were cut back.

SEE ALSO...

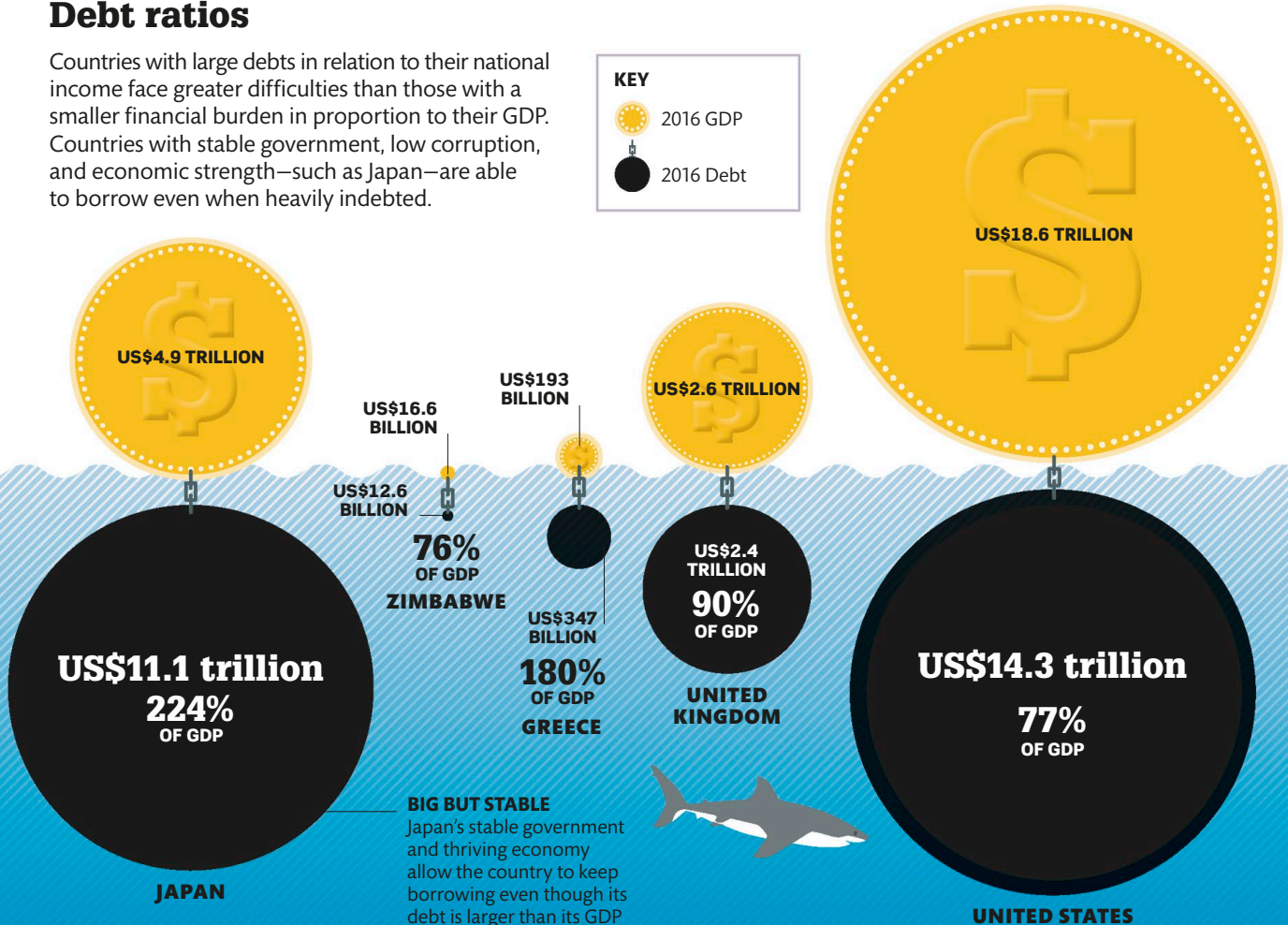
- **What is GDP?** pp26-27
- **A sustainable economy** pp200-201

Debt ratios

Countries with large debts in relation to their national income face greater difficulties than those with a smaller financial burden in proportion to their GDP. Countries with stable government, low corruption, and economic strength—such as Japan—are able to borrow even when heavily indebted.

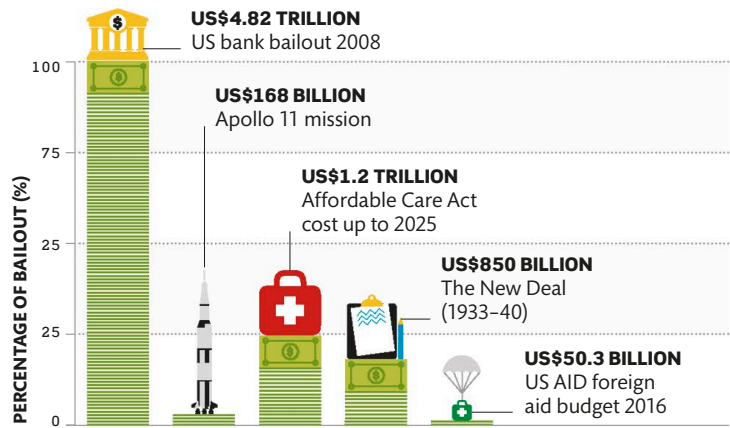
KEY

- 2016 GDP
- 2016 Debt



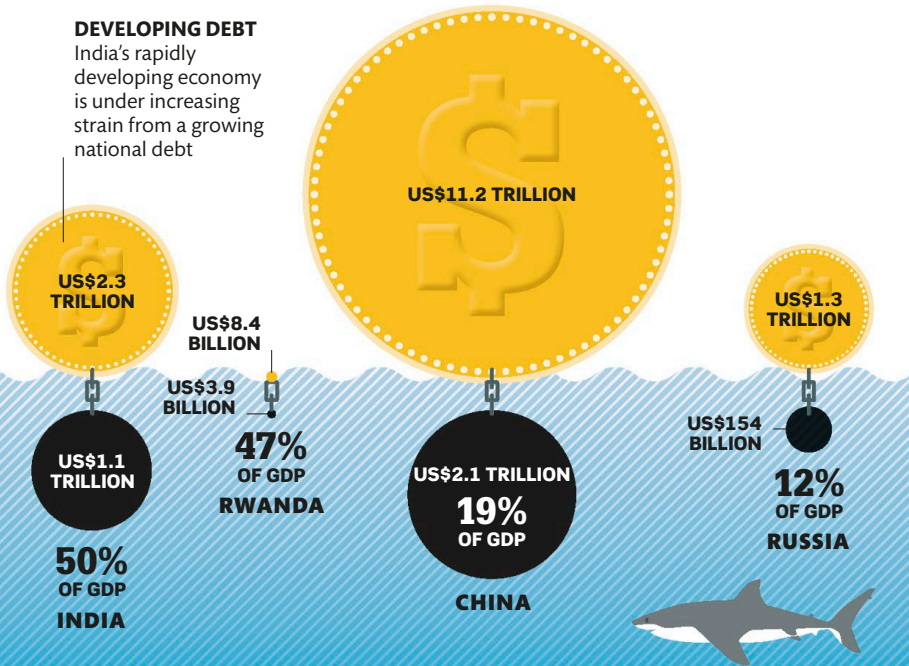
Bailing out banks

Following the financial crisis of 2008, the US government provided bailouts of \$4.82 trillion to financial companies. This became public debt and has placed a huge burden on the US economy. The scale of the bailout is revealed by comparing it with other government-backed programs. In 2015 dollar-equivalent terms, the bailout would fund President Obama's Affordable Care Act for 40 years. Even the Apollo Program that took people to the Moon cost a tiny fraction of the 2008 bailout.



DEVELOPING DEBT

India's rapidly developing economy is under increasing strain from a growing national debt



THIRD WORLD DEBT

During the 1980s, excess borrowing, reckless lending, and rising interest rates led to a Third World debt crisis. Nations across Latin America, Africa, and Asia defaulted on repayments. The creditor banks in the West, rich countries' finance ministries, and global institutions pressed for reforms to promote growth and reduce spending. These included calls for the increased export of natural resources and cutting back on social programs.



LUMBER EXPORTS FROM BRAZIL

Global public debt reached more than **US \$57 trillion** by 2015.



City Planet

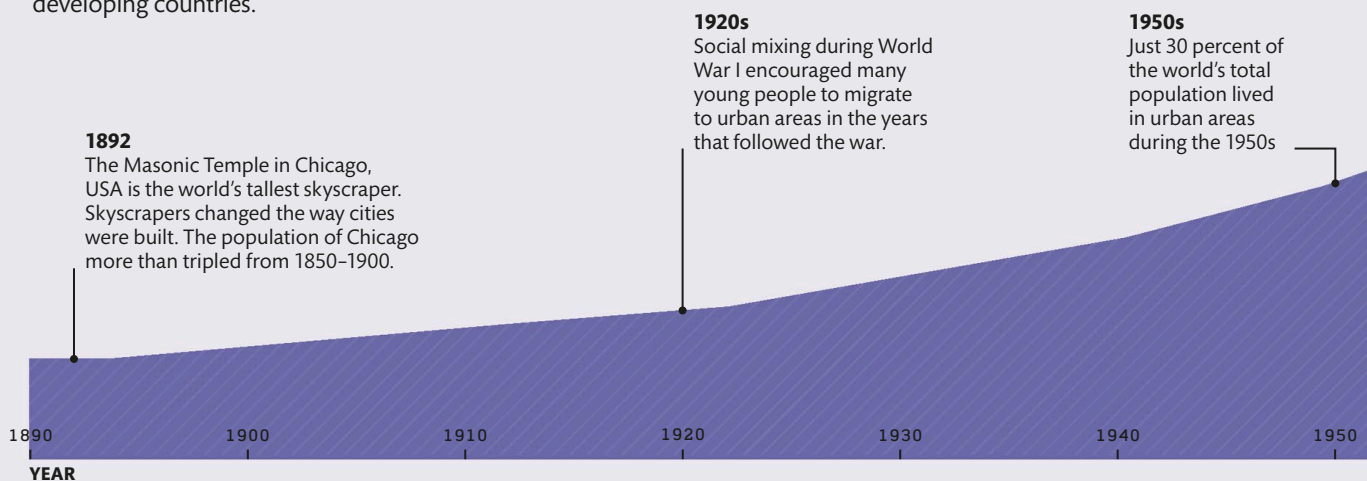
The first organized urban centres were founded over 10,000 years ago. They arose in parallel with agricultural advances that enabled farmers to produce the food surpluses required to feed the new urban populations. Urbanization gathered pace with the Industrial Revolution and the intensive agriculture that enabled farmers to produce more food. Urban migration continues to increase, but so do concerns about its sustainability. By 2050 new urban capacity equivalent to 175 times the size of London will be needed to accommodate town and city dwellers.

Rural-to-urban shift

In 1800 about two percent of the world's population lived in urban areas. Over time, millions of people who once farmed have moved to urban areas in search of better lives, or have been forced to move because of falling incomes. In 2007, for the first time, more than half of us lived in towns and cities. Continuing population growth and urbanization are projected to add 2.5 billion people to the world's urban population by 2050. This works out as about 180,000 people every day, mostly in fast-growing developing countries.

“In many cities the strain on both infrastructure (housing, water, sewerage, transportation, electricity supply) and the quality of life ... is becoming unbearable.”

GEORGE MONBIOT, UK WRITER AND CAMPAIGNER



UNEVEN URBANIZATION

In some countries, urban growth is nearly double the rate of overall population increase, particularly in the urban areas of less developed regions. Europe, North America, and Oceania have all experienced stable rates of urbanization in the last 15 years, while South America has witnessed continuously decreasing rates. Africa and Asia, meanwhile, are responsible for bringing the developing world's average up in recent years, with Africa expected to be the fastest-urbanizing region from 2020 to 2050.



2007
In 2007 the historic point was reached when more than half the world's population lived in towns and cities.

Industrialization, more intensive farming, and new infrastructure facilitate an unprecedented period of urbanization.

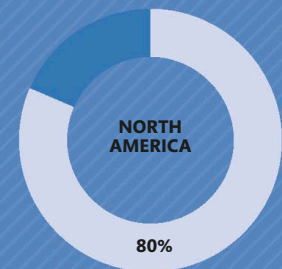
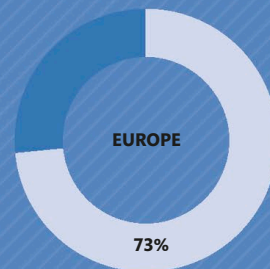
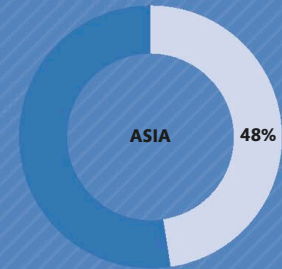
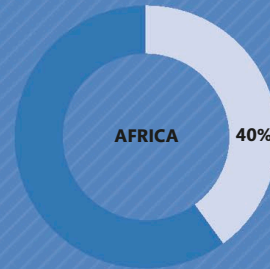
Developing trends

Africa and Asia remain mostly rural, but they are urbanizing faster than other continents. Their urban proportions of their total populations are expected to rise to 56 and 64 percent, respectively, by 2050.

1980s
The 1980s saw a rapid growth in the urban population, including in China

KEY
Proportion of total population (percent 2014)

- Urban
- Rural





The Rise of Megacities

The past 25 years have seen a huge growth in the number of megacities—cities with a population of more than 10 million. In 1990, there was only one in the world—New York City. By 1990, there were 10. This number has more than tripled to 31 today.

In recent decades, the centers of world urbanization have shifted from the developed countries of Japan, North America, and Europe to the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and South America.

This shift is reflected in the United Nations projection that by 2030 there will be another 10 megacities, all of which are in developing countries. These new megacities are anticipated to be

Lahore, Hyderabad, Bogota, Johannesburg, Bangkok, Dar es Salaam, Ahmanabad, Luanda, Ho Chi Minh City, and Chungdu.

Africa is experiencing rapid urbanization. For example, Kinshasha, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will see its population rise from 200,000 in 1950 to a projected 20 million in 2030, up from around 12 million in 2016. Some megacities will be

poorly prepared for such rapid growth, placing great strain on natural resources, food, and transport.

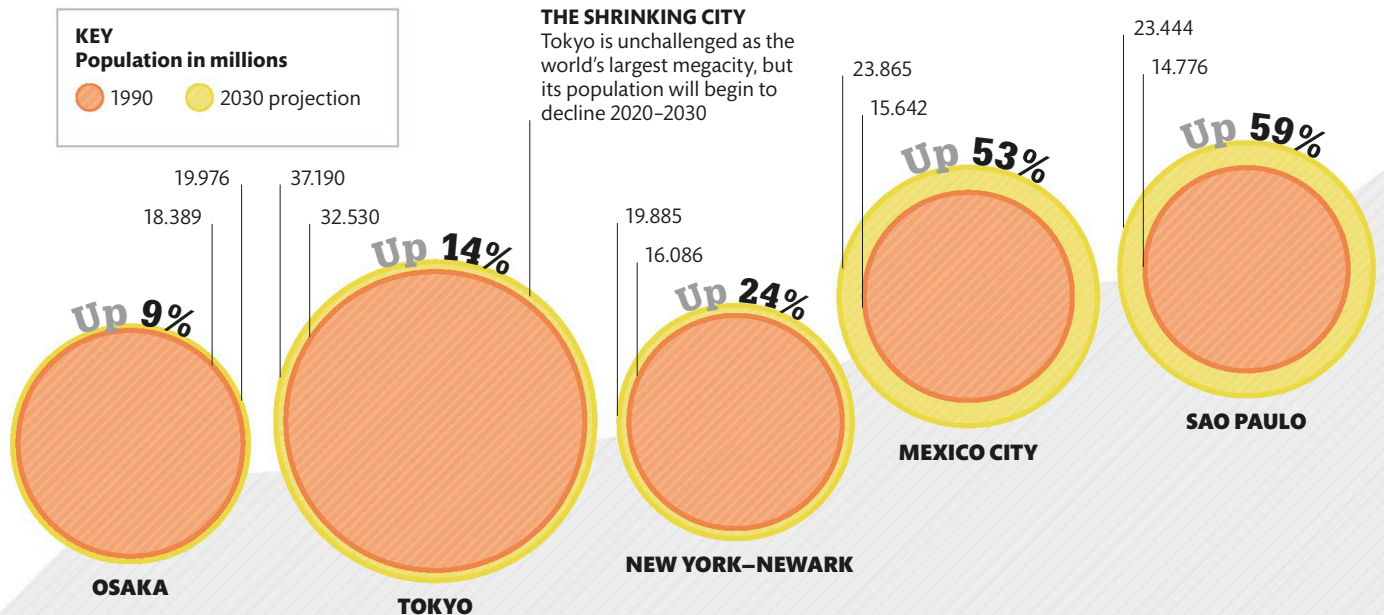
SEE ALSO...

- **Global Power Shift** pp32-33
- **Rise of Consumerism** pp86-87
- **Unequal World** pp110-111

Changes in the 10 largest cities

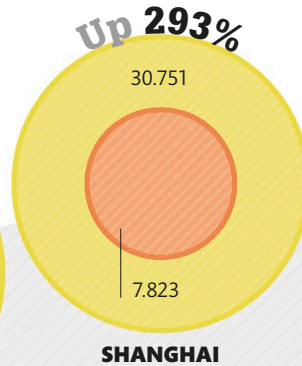
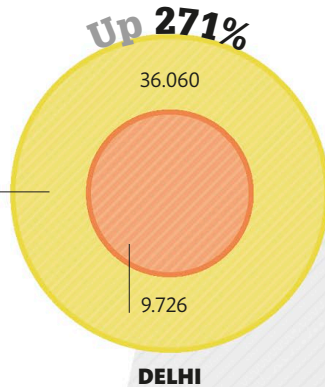
Asia has already seen spectacular growth, with 11 of the 31 cities that now exceed 10 million people located in China and India alone. However, not all of Asia is growing at such a rapid rate. Rising life expectancy and a relatively low birth rate will have a profound impact on Japan. Tokyo is currently the largest megacity and will continue to be in 2030, but Delhi is catching up.

In 1990, there were **10 cities with more than 10 million inhabitants**. Today, the number has **tripled**.

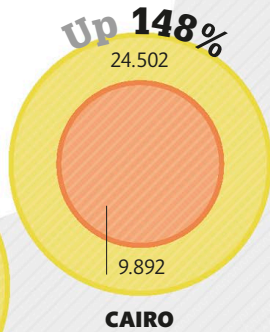
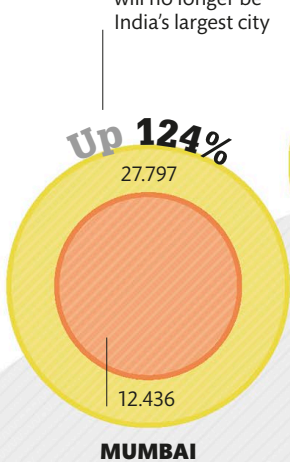




NEW CHALLENGE
Delhi's population is expected to nearly quadruple, challenging Tokyo's dominance as the largest megacity



PUSHED INTO SECOND
Mumbai's population is projected to more than double, but it will no longer be India's largest city



Multiple megacities

This chart shows the countries containing multiple cities with more than 5 million inhabitants as of 2016. As many of these cities continue to expand, they will begin to play as significant a role as entire nations.

China has six cities of 10 million people and 8 cities of 5 million people



DISTRIBUTION OF MEGACITIES

The current distribution of the 31 megacities is concentrated strongly in Asia. There are now 18 megacities in Asia, four in South America and three each in Africa, Europe and North America. Given that only 48 percent of people in Asia live in cities, and this is expected to rise to 64 percent by 2050, the number of megacities in this part of the world will continue to rise. Pressure on finite resources will be unprecedented.





Urban Pressures

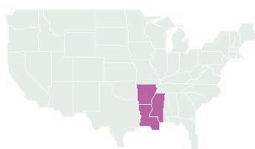
People living in cities tend to consume more energy, water, food, and resources than those in rural areas. Urban populations are responsible for about three-quarters of total consumption and half of all waste.

Cities are economic engines. Fueled by natural resources, they generate most of the activity that leads to growth and wealth creation. This in turn leads to more people migrating from rural areas to the cities, which brings with it some disadvantages. The increase in the number of city dwellers requires more food, water, and energy. The

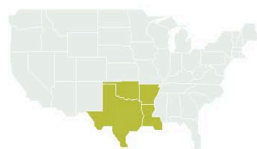
use of private and public transportation also increases, and more pollution is produced. Often, former rural dwellers adopt higher-consumption lifestyles in the cities, further increasing the demand for natural resources. All these factors can lead to the destruction of natural habitats and damage the environment through increased consumption.

URBAN DENSITY

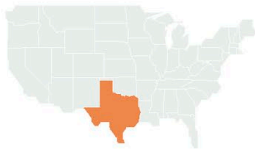
Cities vary hugely in population density. An interesting way to compare urban density is to consider how large a city would need to be to accommodate all 7.3 billion people in the world, concentrated at the same rate. A city with the population density of New York would fit neatly into the state of Texas—an area of 250,400 sq miles (648,540 km²), whereas a city with the low population density of Houston would occupy most of the landmass of the US at 1,769,085 sq miles (4,581,910 km²). Paris has a population density four times that of London.



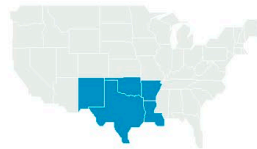
PARIS, FRANCE



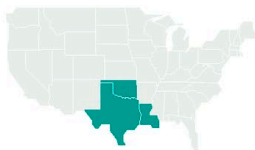
SAN FRANCISCO, US



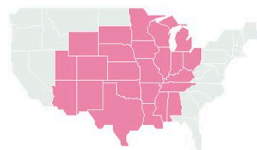
NEW YORK, US



LONDON, UK



SINGAPORE



HOUSTON, US

Ecological footprints

An ecological footprint measures the impact of human activities on the natural environment. It is essentially an area measurement, represented in global acres (hectares), which places a value on how much biologically productive land and water is needed to both produce the resources we consume and to dispose of the waste. Every person, activity, company, and country has an ecological footprint. London's ecological footprint was analyzed as part of a report titled "City Limits." Published in 2002, it outlined the changes needed to turn London into a sustainable city.

2%

of the world's land surface is occupied by cities, which **consume 75% of the world's natural resources**





44%

MATERIALS AND WASTE

The biggest part of London's ecological footprint was in the consumption of 54 million tons (49 million tonnes) of materials. The construction sector consumed the most materials at 30.6 million tons (27.8 million tonnes) and also produced the most waste at 16.3 million tons (14.8 million tonnes).

LONDON'S ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT (2000)

At 293 times the size of London's geographical footprint, its ecological footprint is 121 million global acres (49 million global hectares, gha)—equivalent to the area of Spain. London's population in 2000 was 7.4 million.

41%

FOOD

The consumption of 7.6 million tons (6.9 million tonnes) of food comprised the second largest part of London's footprint. Of the total food consumed, 81 percent was imported from outside the UK. By far the largest component in the food ecological footprint was meat, followed by pet food and milk.

LONDON'S GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTPRINT

The physical area covered by London measures 659 sq miles (1,706 km²) or 1,796 acres (170,680 hectares).



10%

ENERGY

Londoners consumed energy equivalent to that present in 14.6 million tons (13.3 million tonnes) of oil, which in turn led to the release of about 45 million tons (41 million tonnes) of CO₂.



0.3%

WATER

London used 229 billion gallons (866,000 megaliters) in 2002, half of which was piped to houses. Water lost through leakage (about a quarter) was more than that used by businesses.

5%

TRANSPORTATION

Londoners traveled more than 40 billion passenger miles (64 billion km), of which 27 billion miles (44 billion km) were by car and light truck. Transportation caused 9.8 million tons (8.9 million tonnes) of CO₂ emissions.



0.7%

DEGRADED LAND

This is land that has had its bioproductivity degraded through contamination or erosion, including roads, runways, and railroad tracks.





Fuel for Growth

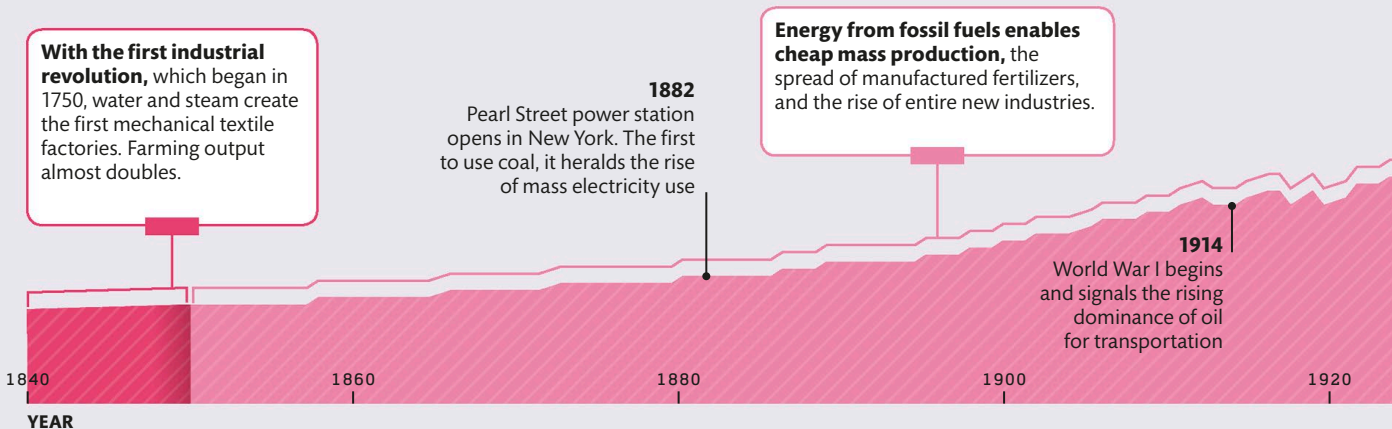
Since our ancestors' first use of fire, the human race has continually sought access to ever-more-diverse energy sources. For centuries, economic development depended on the energy provided by animals, wood, wind, and water. Today, however, we rely on access to vast quantities of fossil energy from oil, coal, and gas to fuel electricity generation and power manufacturing, industrial farming, and long-distance transportation, as well as to drive the higher-consumption lifestyles that have developed as a result of each of these activities.

The energy revolution

The 20th century saw a massive surge in demand for energy, and this continues today, with the emergence of major economies such as China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. Meanwhile, other energy types have more recently begun to play important roles, including nuclear power, hydropower, and modern technologies that harness energy from the wind and the sun. Meeting any rising future demand presents a range of challenges, including those that relate to affordability, climate change, and air pollution.

“We can no longer continue feeding our addiction to fossil fuels as if there were no tomorrow. For there will be no tomorrow.”

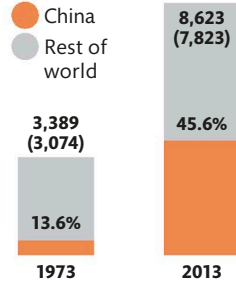
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ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU, SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER



CHINA CRISIS: THE RISE IN COAL BURNING

China's demand for energy has risen dramatically in recent decades. In addition to fueling rocketing domestic demand, this has been linked with economic growth in other countries via its vast export-oriented manufacturing sector. Because it is abundant and cheap, coal has been vital to China's export-oriented development and its burgeoning middle classes. Reliance on coal has, however, come at a price: for example, the resultant air pollution causes problems on a global scale as well as for the Chinese people in health terms.

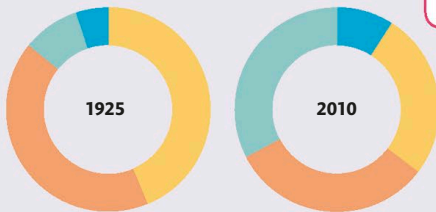
KEY
Regional share of coal production
millions of tons (tonnes)



During the digital age, digital technologies spread. They relied on the continuing rapid increase in access to electricity.

KEY

- Biomass
- Coal
- Oil
- Other (gas, nuclear, hydro, other renewables)



The changing energy mix

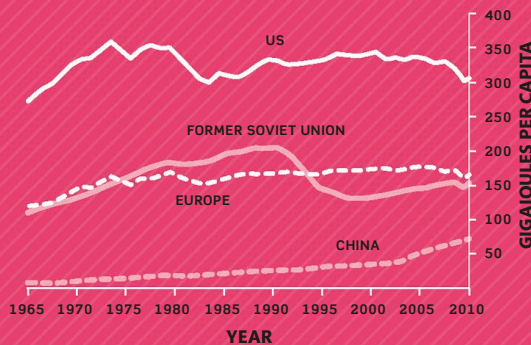
Global use of fuel types is constantly evolving, as can be seen by the shift from biomass (wood, plant material, manures) in the early 20th century to a major reliance on oil in the early 21st.

Mass-produced electrical goods, including more affordable TVs, washing machines, and refrigerators, boost energy use.

1991
The collapse of the Soviet Union causes a temporary slow down in the rate of growth in global energy use

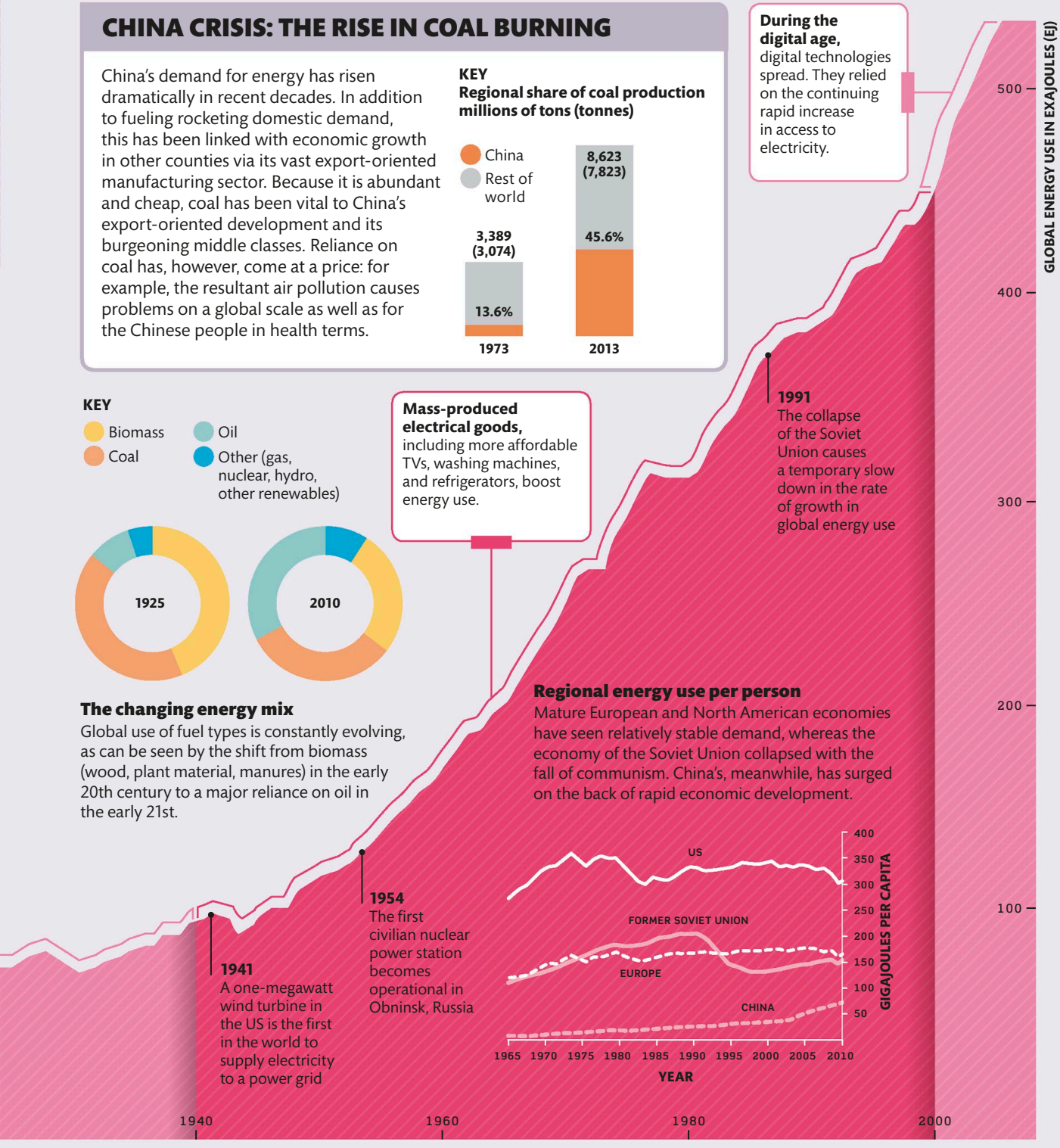
Regional energy use per person

Mature European and North American economies have seen relatively stable demand, whereas the economy of the Soviet Union collapsed with the fall of communism. China's, meanwhile, has surged on the back of rapid economic development.



1941
A one-megawatt wind turbine in the US is the first in the world to supply electricity to a power grid

1954
The first civilian nuclear power station becomes operational in Obninsk, Russia





Surge in Demand

Economic growth has depended on access to vast quantities of cheap energy to generate electricity, produce heat, and provide transportation needs. Further development and urbanization mean demand will continue to rise.

Based on current figures, most of this projected increase is expected to occur in the fast-growing economies of the global East and South, such as Asia and Africa. It is believed that fossil energy will continue to make the greatest contribution toward meeting the world's rising demand.

In the past, the human world was powered mainly by renewable energy in the form of wood, water, wind, and animal power. Since industrialization, we have increasingly relied on fossil fuels, and, to a limited extent, nuclear power. The increased use of natural gas to generate power (at the expense of coal) is helping curb emissions to levels that are below what they would have been otherwise. However, it is clear that if we are to prevent global warming by limiting the average planetary temperature increase to below 3.6°F (2°C) compared with the preindustrial period, then we will need to see a much lower reliance on fossil fuel sources and a much faster growth in renewable energy technologies.



SEE ALSO...

- **Carbon Crossroads** pp138-139
- **Renewable Revolution** pp52-53
- **Toxic Air** pp144-145

Energy usage: present

The world's demand for energy continues to rise. By 2030, the amount of energy we need is expected to be about double the demand in 1990 and a third greater than that used in 2015. Today some countries are maintaining economic growth without causing rising emissions, but global demand for all energy types is increasing.

KEY



RENEWABLES

This category includes wind, solar, wave, tidal, and geothermal technologies. Some are still at small scale but growing fast.



BIOENERGY

Includes wood, sugarcane, and agricultural byproducts used as fuel sources to power transport and generate electricity and heat.



HYDRO ENERGY

Hydroelectric dams already generate substantial quantities of relatively low-carbon power. Expansion, however, is limited.



NUCLEAR ENERGY

Low-carbon at point of generation, this power source is expensive, with many technological and waste-management challenges.



NATURAL GAS

Although cleaner than coal, demand for gas is not compatible with strategies for limiting climate-changing emissions.



OIL

Used mainly to fuel road, sea, and air transportation. Demand can be reduced through more efficient technology and electric vehicles.



COAL

By far the "dirtiest" power source, coal has played a major role in the development of many fast-growing countries, such as China and India.

TOTAL IN MILLION METRIC TONS OF OIL EQUIVALENT (MTOE)

8,789

36 MTOE

905 MTOE

184 MTOE

526 MTOE

1,672 MTOE

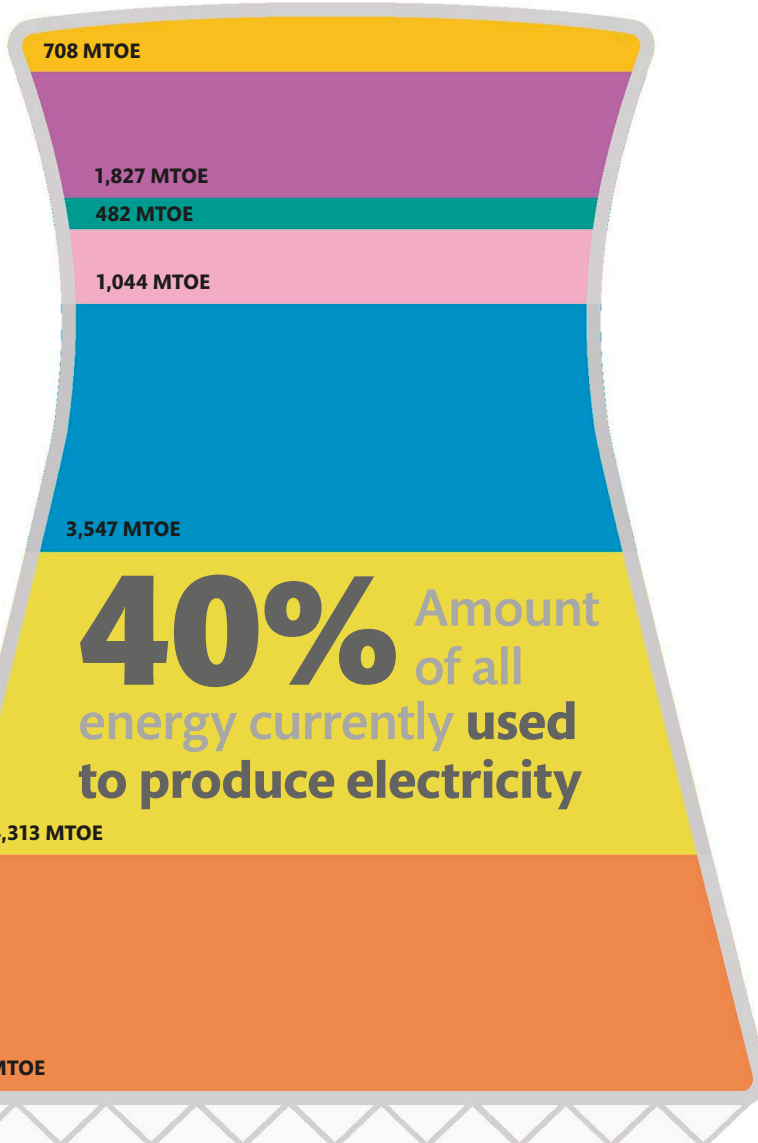
3,235 MTOE

2,231 MTOE

1990



TOTAL IN MTOE
15,369



2030

The future of energy

By 2030, global energy consumption will be almost twice that used today; projections divide it into the segments shown (left). Yet the future energy mix can be changed to increase renewables while reducing reliance on fuels such as high-polluting coal. Renewables also face challenges, however. For example, hydroelectric power is at risk from droughts caused by climate change, while energy-storage technologies still need to be refined to cope with the intermittency of some renewables.



What can we do?

- **Governments and international agencies** can use policies to create a faster transition to cleaner energy sources, while encouraging more efficient energy use among the industries that are the biggest consumers.
- **Governments** can shift public subsidies away from fossil fuel production toward cleaner, renewable energy alternatives.



What can I do?

- **Buy electricity** from companies generating power via renewable sources.
- **Reduce your energy use** Turn down heating, use air conditioners less, unplug unused appliances, switch off unneeded lights. Walk or bicycle whenever possible.



Power-Hungry World

Developed countries run on reliable energy supplies. In developing countries with widespread poverty, a high proportion of the population are energy poor and lack access to regular electricity.

Although access has spread widely in recent years, especially in Asia and Latin America, 1.4 billion people remain unconnected to grid-based power systems. Around 2.7 billion people, most of them in Africa and South Asia, depend on

wood or dried animal dung for cooking, and millions use paraffin for lighting. In both cases, the resulting air pollution poses major health threats that kill huge numbers of people each year, especially women and children.

SEE ALSO...

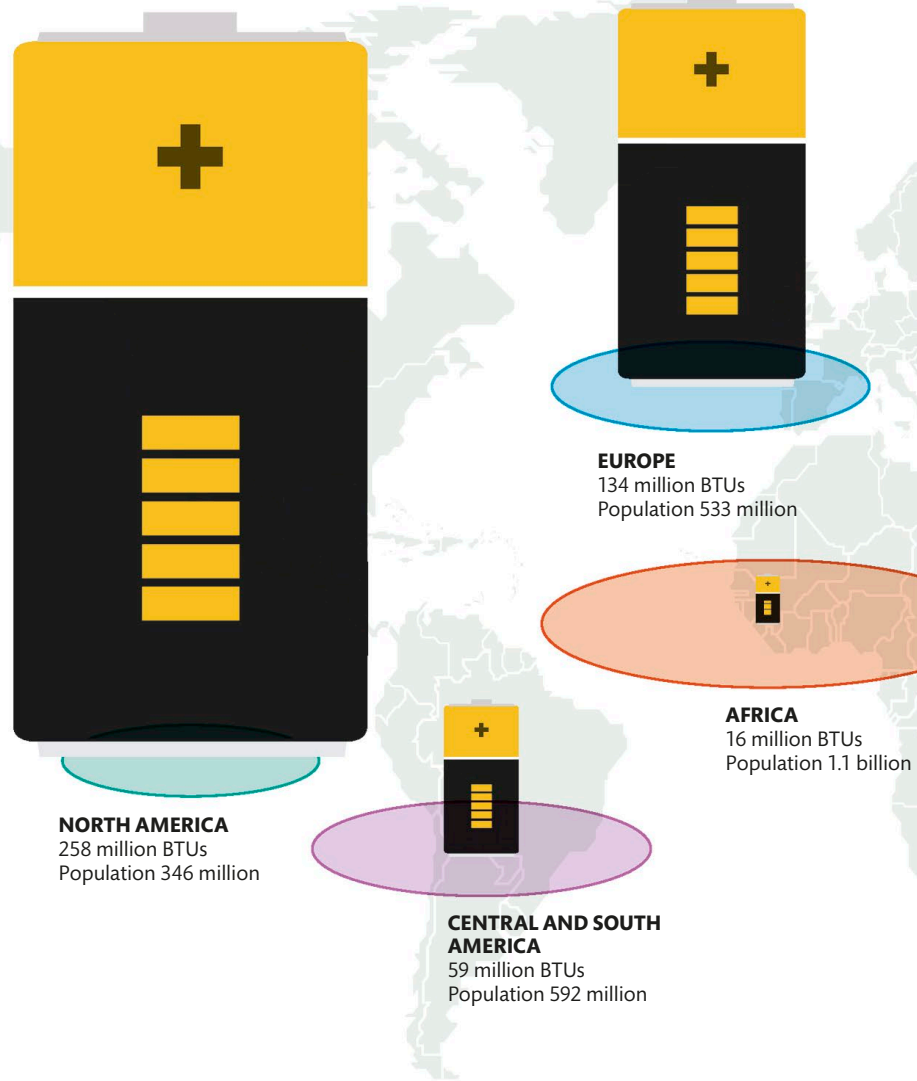
- **Surge in Demand** pp46-47
- **Renewable Revolution** pp52-53
- **Energy Conundrum** pp60-61

The global divide

Huge disparities in world energy use are revealed by measuring how much energy is used per person. This shows the biggest users consuming hundreds of times more energy as those using the least. Population size and economic development rate affect energy use. Asia, for example, outstrips all other regions; as more of China's and India's 2.7 billion people achieve middle-class lifestyles, their energy use increases. Africa, meanwhile, uses relatively little energy—most of the continent is still without grid-supplied electricity and plunges into darkness at night. Clinics cannot refrigerate medicines, and schoolchildren don't have enough light to read. Clean, affordable power for all is vital for ending poverty.

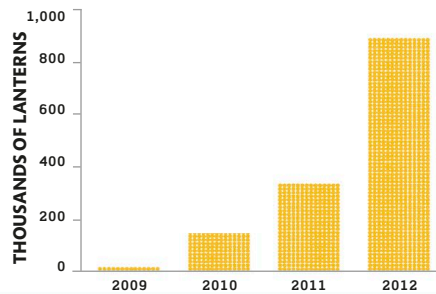
KEY

- Energy use in British thermal units (BTUs) per person. A BTU is about equivalent to the heat generated by one lighted wooden match.
- Total population by area



KEEPING IT CLEAN USING SOLAR POWER

Some developing countries are bypassing traditional grid-based power systems altogether. For example, solar-powered lantern sales in Africa have soared, helped by low-cost support from microfinance projects, bringing emission-free lighting to millions.



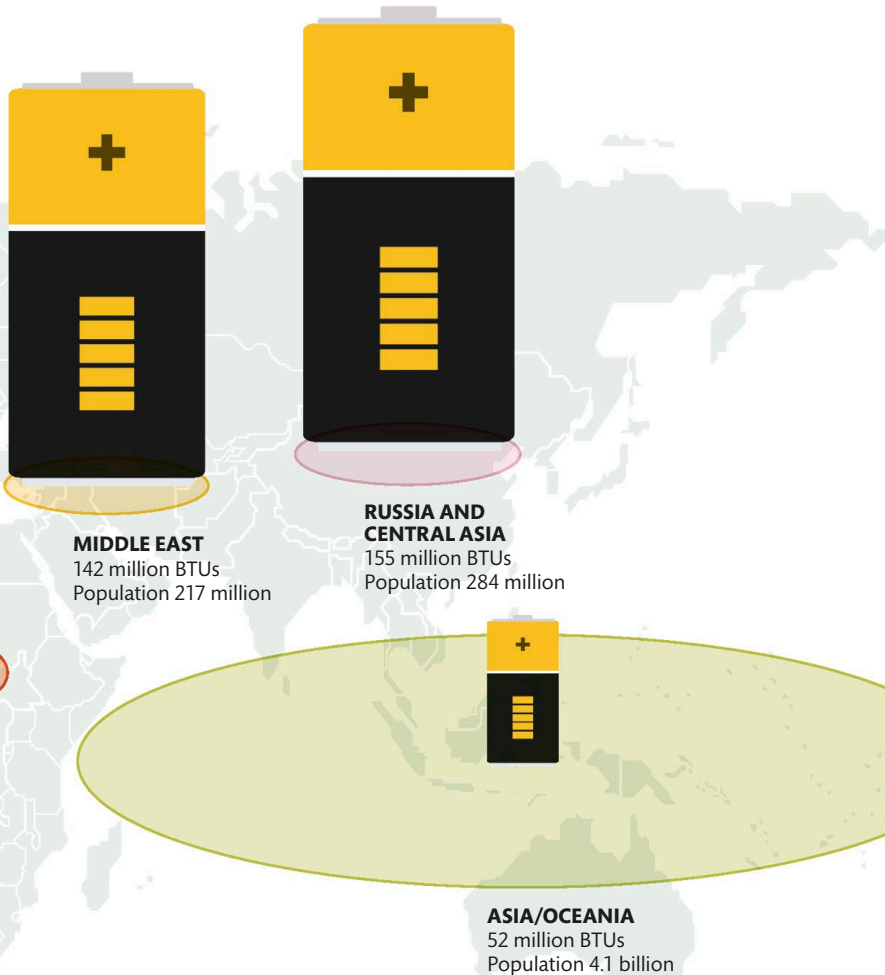
What can we do?

- **Governments** can encourage companies to invest more in clean and renewable energy sources.
- **International development agencies** can adopt stronger policies to avoid fossil energy and instead help countries build clean energy systems.



What can I do?

- **Urge your pension fund** to invest in companies that bring clean power to developing countries.
- **Join campaigns** that call on companies and governments to support the spread of clean energy to developing countries.



Dark divide

At night, the lights of wealthier countries shine in satellite imagery, while developing nations with limited access to electricity are dark.



Carbon Footprint

Many of the things we do generate a carbon footprint. This footprint describes the quantity of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions arising from particular products, activities, or services.

Carbon footprints vary hugely. For example, that of an average American citizen is more than a hundred times that of a poor person living in sub-Saharan Africa. Some activities, such as a flight on an

airplane, have a major short-term footprint, whereas other carbon-heavy decisions, such as buying a new car, will be spread over years and depend on how much the car is driven. Carbon footprints can be

difficult to calculate very precisely, but still give a helpful indication of where the biggest impacts arise. This enables choices to be made by people, companies, and governments in limiting emissions.

Personal footprint

The average carbon footprint of a UK citizen reveals that consumption of food, transportation, heating, recreation, electricity, and products are among activities that generate a total of around 11 tons (10 tonnes) of emissions per person per year. Higher-consumption lifestyles are spreading across the world and, consequently, carbon footprints are rising fast.

Watching TV for an hour on a 24-inch plasma screen **8 oz (220g) CO₂e**
A trip to the gym **21 lbs (9.5 kg) CO₂**
Buying a CD album online **14 oz (400g) CO₂**

KEY

● Carbon dioxide (tons/tonnes)

CO₂ quantity of carbon dioxide emitted as a result of the activity specified.

CO₂e carbon dioxide equivalent. Carbon dioxide plus other greenhouse gases emitted, converted to the common unit of carbon dioxide.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE
(Including bathing, showering, washing, and health services)

1.47
(1.33)

2.13
(1.93)

RECREATION AND LEISURE
(All leisure activities from watching television to vacations, but excluding flying)

1.62
(1.47)

SPACE HEATING
(All forms of heating at home and at work)

5-minute hot shower **3.5 lbs (1.5 kg) CO₂**
Bath **9 lbs (4 kg) CO₂e per day**
Laundry washed at 104°F (40°C) and tumble-dried **5 ½ lbs (2.5 kg) CO₂**

Sending an email **4g CO₂e**
Annual cell phone use at 1 hour per day **44 oz (1.25 kg) CO₂e**

COMMUNICATION
(Telephone and internet)

1.8
(1.6)

CLOTHING
(Production, road transportation, retail and washing/drying of clothes and shoes)

10.8
(9.8)

HOUSEHOLD
(Including lighting, do-it-yourself, decoration, gardening)

1.50
(1.36)

Standard 100W light bulb **140 lbs (63 kg) CO₂ per year**
Lawn mower **160 lbs (73 kg) CO₂ per acre per year**
Building a new house (2-bedroom) **88 tons (80 tonnes) CO₂e**

FOOD AND CATERING
(Agriculture, food transportation, cooking, restaurants)

1.51
(1.37)

Cappuccino **8 oz (235 g) CO₂e**
2 ¼ lbs (1 kg) lamb **86 lbs (39.2 kg) CO₂e**
2 ¼ lbs (1 kg) chicken **15 lbs (6.9 kg) CO₂e**
2 ¼ lbs (1 kg) vegetables **4 lbs (2 kg) CO₂e**
2 ¼ lbs (1 kg) fruit **2 ½ lbs (1.1 kg) CO₂e**
2 ¼ lbs (1 kg) lentils **2 lbs (0.9 kg) CO₂e**

COMMUTING
(Traveling to and from work by car or public transportation)

0.9
(0.8)

Annual car use **5 tons (4.7 tonnes) CO₂e per year**
Bus trip **3 ¾ oz CO₂e per passenger mile / 66 g CO₂e per passenger km**
Commuter rail **6.1 oz (172 g) CO₂e per passenger mile**
Bicycling **1 oz per mile / 17 g CO₂e per km**

AVIATION

0.67
(0.74)

Long flight **7 ¾ oz per mile / 138 g CO₂e per km**
Short flight **6 ¾ oz per mile / 120 g CO₂e per km**

0.53
(0.48)

EDUCATION
(Schools, and books and newspapers)
Daily newspaper, recycled, **14 oz (400 g) CO₂e**

0.32
(0.29)

GOVERNMENT AND DEFENSE

A T-shirt from manufacture to disposal **22 lbs (10 kg) CO₂**



What can I do?

- **Go online and use a carbon footprint calculator** to see where your emissions are coming from.
- **Identify where savings can be made.** Once you have calculated your carbon footprint, you can work out a plan to cut carbon while saving money.
- **Consider what you eat.** Food is a major part of a person's total carbon footprint in most western countries, especially where there is a substantial element of meat and dairy produce.



Renewable Revolution

Renewable energy sources are rapidly expanding, especially solar and wind power technologies. These and other clean energy sources will be vital for meeting rising demand while simultaneously combating climate change.

The advantage of renewable energy is that it can be replenished indefinitely, without depleting finite resources such as fossil fuels. Renewables can be used to provide electricity and heat and to make fuel for transportation.

At present, electricity-generating wind and solar power technologies form the biggest, fastest-growing areas of the renewables sector.

Biogas (the same as fossil natural gas, but made from organic matter such as food waste) and wood can be used for heating as well as electricity. Liquid biofuels provide a renewable alternative to fossil-derived diesel and gasoline.

Renewable energy can help address many environmental issues, as well as create jobs and drive technological development.

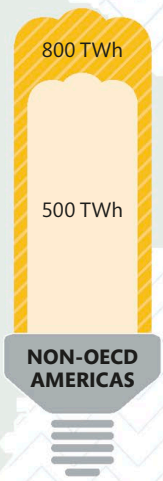
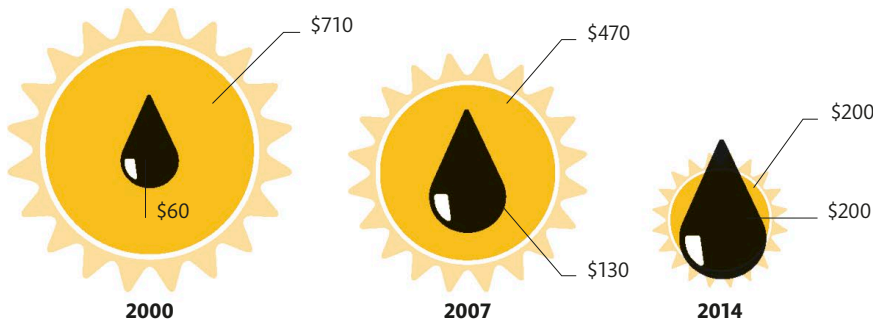
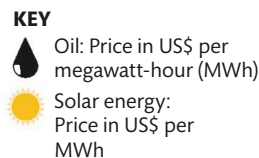
Growth of renewable energy

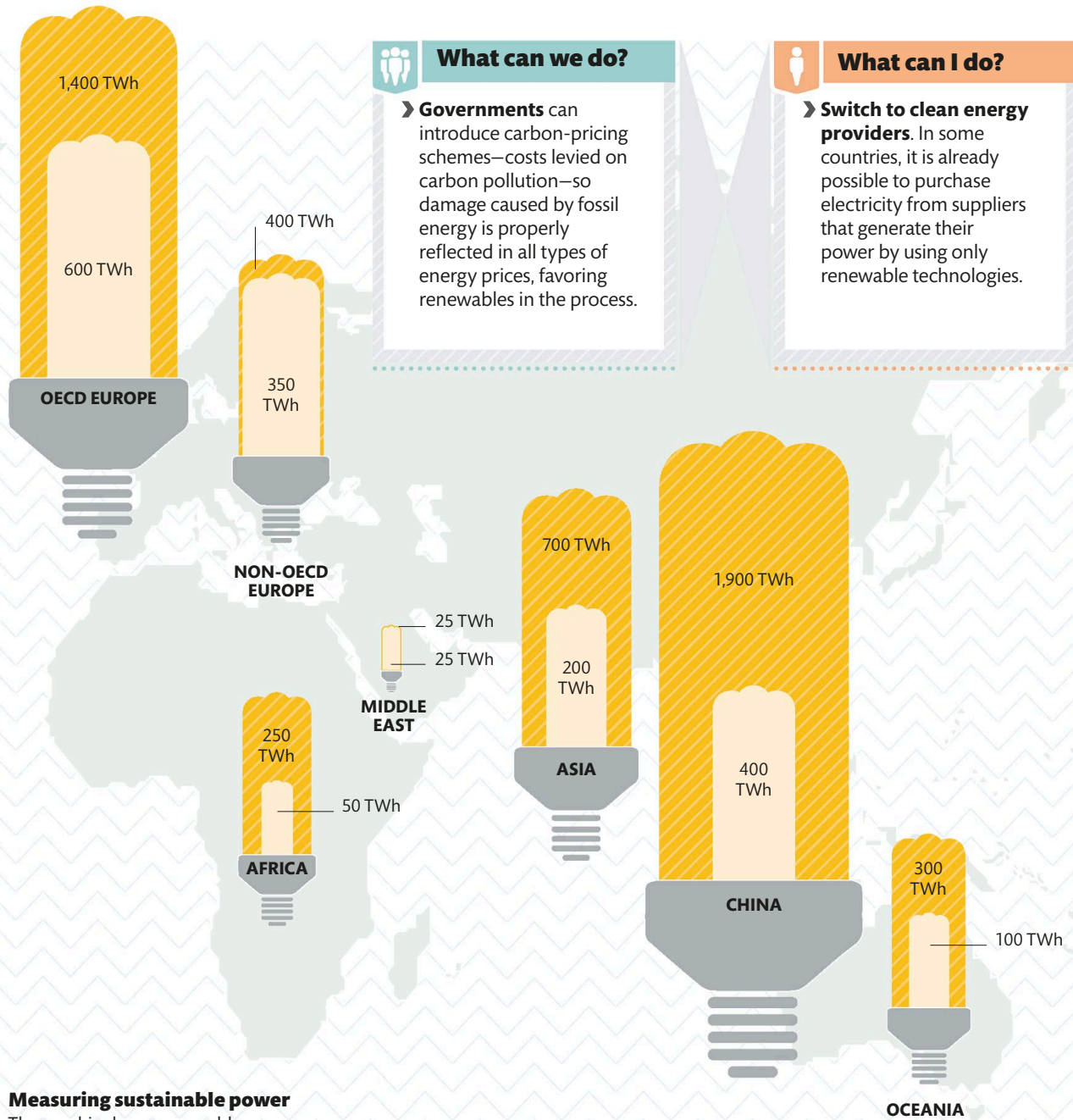
Renewable energy is the fastest-growing source of power worldwide. By 2016, it is expected to surpass the amount of energy generated from natural gas and be double that of nuclear power. Renewables are already the second most important global electricity source (after coal). By 2018, renewable energy generation is expected to comprise 25 percent of the world's gross power generation—an increase of 20 percent from 2011. By 2030, renewables will overtake coal.



FALLING COST OF SOLAR ENERGY

As the scale of renewable energy sources increases, market competition intensifies. As technology is refined, costs begin to fall. The cost of electricity sourced from solar photovoltaic power, for example, has dropped dramatically in recent years and is now level with that of oil.





What can we do?

➤ **Governments** can introduce carbon-pricing schemes—costs levied on carbon pollution—so damage caused by fossil energy is properly reflected in all types of energy prices, favoring renewables in the process.

What can I do?

➤ **Switch to clean energy providers.** In some countries, it is already possible to purchase electricity from suppliers that generate their power by using only renewable technologies.

Measuring sustainable power
The graphic shows renewable energy use by nine regions, including OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and non-OECD nations. The OECD is a coalition of the world's 34 most developed nations. (One terawatt-hour [TWh] is equal to 588,441 barrels of oil).

Renewables accounted for almost **22% of global electricity generation** in 2013—up 5% from 2012

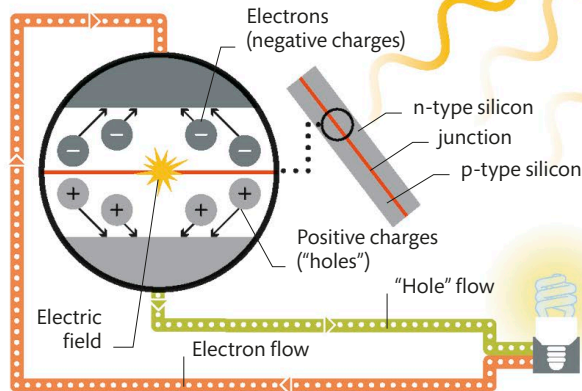


How Solar Energy Works

The sun is the ultimate source of energy for nearly all life on Earth. With the right technology, our home star could also be the main power station providing the energy needed to run the human world.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels

These use semiconducting layers, usually silicon, to capture solar energy. Light hits a panel, creating an electric field across its layers that creates a current by separating positive and negative charges. The stronger the sunlight, the more electricity produced.

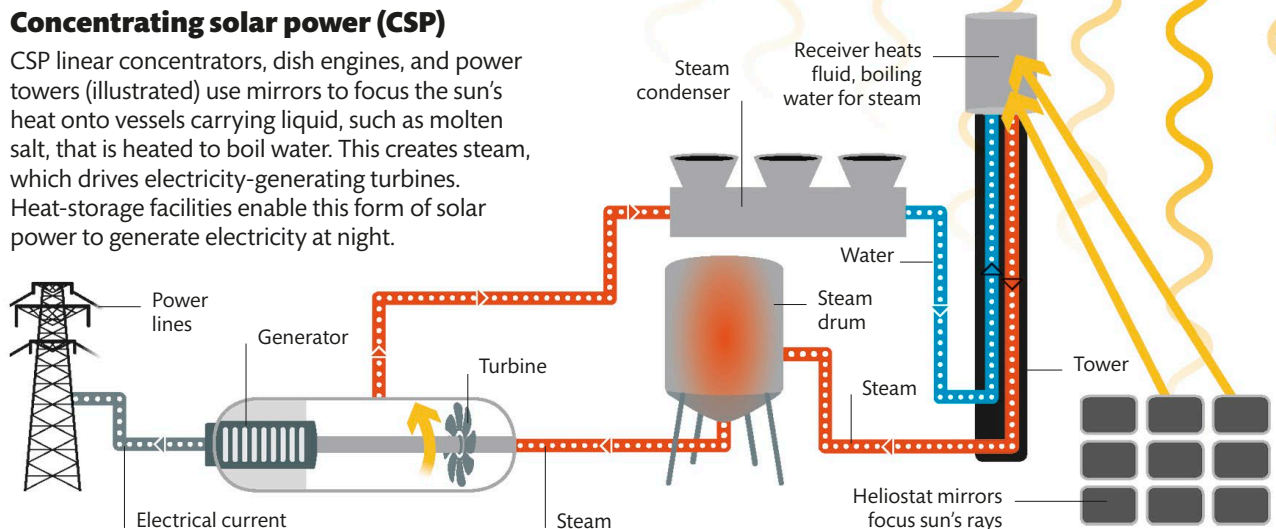


Solar powerhouse

The sun emits a vast quantity of energy. The solar energy hitting Earth is sufficient to power around 4 trillion 100-watt light bulbs. The recent refinement of solar energy technologies and the rapid growth in their use lead many experts to believe that, by 2050, solar will be the world's principal energy source.

Concentrating solar power (CSP)

CSP linear concentrators, dish engines, and power towers (illustrated) use mirrors to focus the sun's heat onto vessels carrying liquid, such as molten salt, that is heated to boil water. This creates steam, which drives electricity-generating turbines. Heat-storage facilities enable this form of solar power to generate electricity at night.





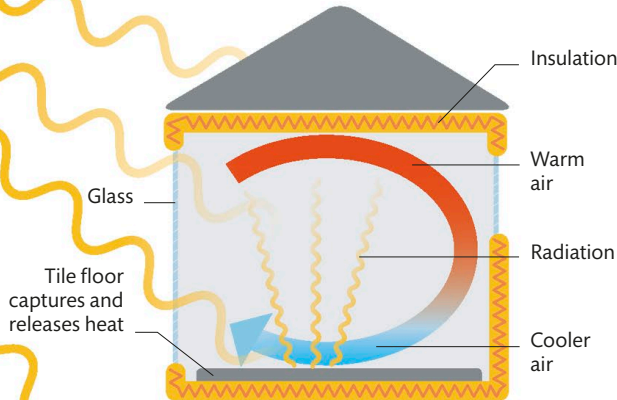
We have always relied on solar energy. For example, the horses that were once a main means of transporting people and goods were fed on grass and grains grown with sunlight. Today, however, new technologies are allowing us to make more use of solar energy, by converting heat or light from the sun into more usable forms of energy, such as electricity and

hot water. Solar technologies have pros and cons, but in all cases they also offer massive potential. Increased use and refinement will lead to falling costs and potentially vast growth in the years ahead.

As the world struggles to cut climate-changing emissions, solar energy technologies are positioned to take over from fossil fuels.

Passive solar energy

Windows positioned to receive maximum natural light can cut the electricity needed to power light bulbs. Solar heating of interior surfaces reduces the need for internal heating, especially if a building is carefully insulated.

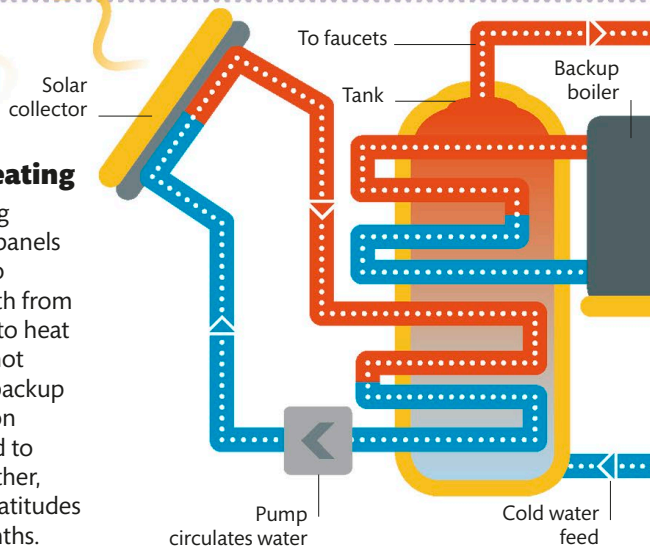


GLOBAL HOTSPOTS

Solar energy technologies can work almost anywhere there is a good amount of daylight. They are most effective, however, in regions where there is consistently strong sunshine and little cloud. Many desert areas and other sunny parts of the world have the potential to produce huge quantities of electricity by using existing solar energy technologies, such as solar PV and concentrating solar power. These include the southwestern US, western South America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Australia.

Solar water heating

Solar water heating systems use solar panels called collectors to accumulate warmth from the sun and use it to heat water stored in a hot water cylinder. A backup boiler or immersion heater can be used to heat the water further, especially at high latitudes during winter months.



1 hour
of sunlight
hitting the Earth
is roughly equal
to the planet's
annual energy
consumption



Wind Power

During recent decades, the use of wind-generated electricity has expanded rapidly in some parts of the world. Some countries, such as Denmark, now rely heavily on wind to supply much of their power.

In ancient times, wind energy was used to propel boats along the Nile River, pump water, and grind grain. By about 1000 CE, it was used to drain large areas of the Rhine delta. Wind was first harnessed to generate electricity in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1887. In 1941, the world's first megawatt turbine was connected

to the power grid in Vermont, followed by the first multi-turbine wind farm in New Hampshire in 1980, and the first offshore installation in Denmark in 1991. Since these pioneering wind farms were constructed, the technology has improved—and rapid growth has followed.

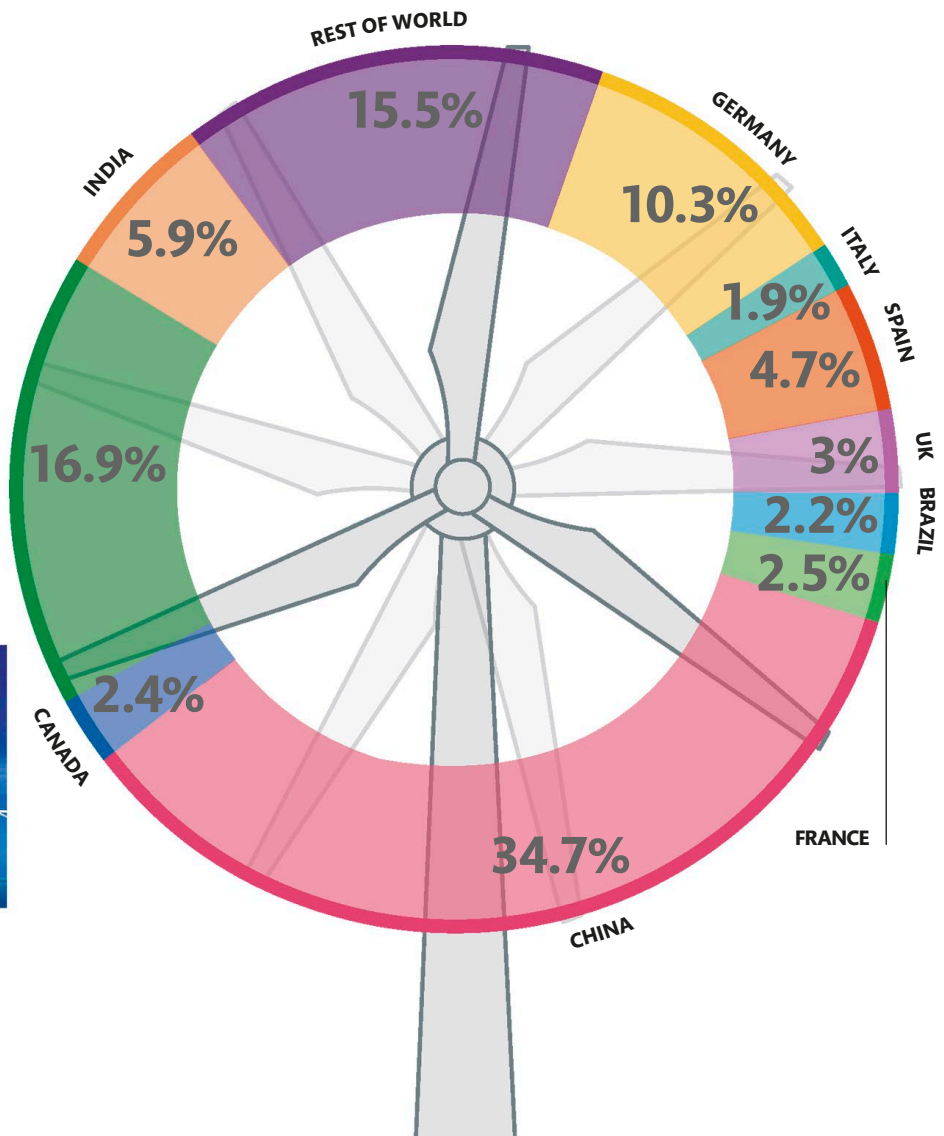
Who's generating the most?

A number of countries have adopted policies to encourage the installation of wind-powered electricity generation. Many have done so in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. China currently has the world's biggest wind-power sector, followed by the US, although during recent years the latter has added far less new capacity than China. Germany comes third, with 10 percent of the world's wind power, and other major wind energy producers include India, Spain, the UK, Canada, France, Brazil, and Italy.



Offshore wind power

Stronger ocean winds provide more electricity than wind farms on land, but offshore setup costs are higher.



How does wind power work?

Conventional generators use steam to drive turbines. With wind power, the process is powered by air instead of fuels such as coal or gas. The propeller-like blades are attached to a rotor that is connected to a main shaft, which in turn spins the generator. The whole assembly is mounted on a tower in order to take advantage of steadier and less turbulent winds.

1

Blades rotate


If the winds are sufficient, the passing air pressure causes the turbine blades to revolve.



2

Gears spin generator

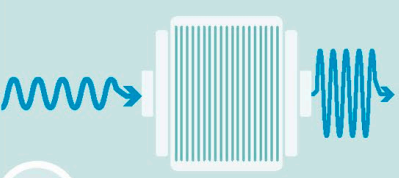
The blades turn a shaft connected to a gearbox, which increases the rotational energy produced.



4

Transformation

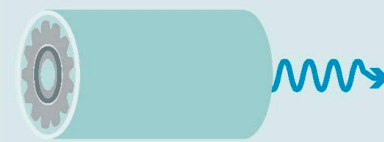
A transformer converts the electricity into the correct voltage for distribution.



3

Power out

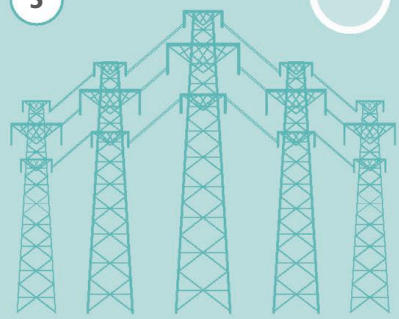
The rotational energy is converted into electricity by a generator.



5

Distribution

Electricity is sent throughout the country via a national grid network of cables.



“The future is green energy, sustainability, renewable energy”

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER,
FORMER GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

WIND-GENERATED ENERGY: PROS AND CONS

Pros

- It's clean, green, and pollution-free. Wind turbines create no emissions.
- It's renewable. Winds originate from solar energy, so promise an endless supply.
- Prices have decreased by 80 percent since 1980 and will fall further. Operating costs are low.
- Potential for rapid growth.
- Technology improving to produce more power more quietly.

Cons

- Turbines typically operate at 30 percent capacity.
- Can cause hazards to birds and bats. Soil erosion can be a problem during installation.
- Still more expensive than coal or gas-generated power in some countries.
- Can cause visual changes to landscapes.
- Viable only in areas of land and sea with sufficient steady wind.

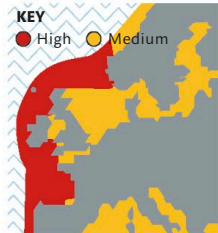


Tidal and Wave Energy

The seas hold vast quantities of energy that we are only beginning to convert into electricity through wave and tidal power systems. Like wind and solar technologies, they can produce pollution-free power.

Turning the tides

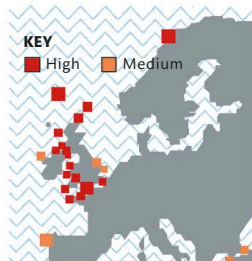
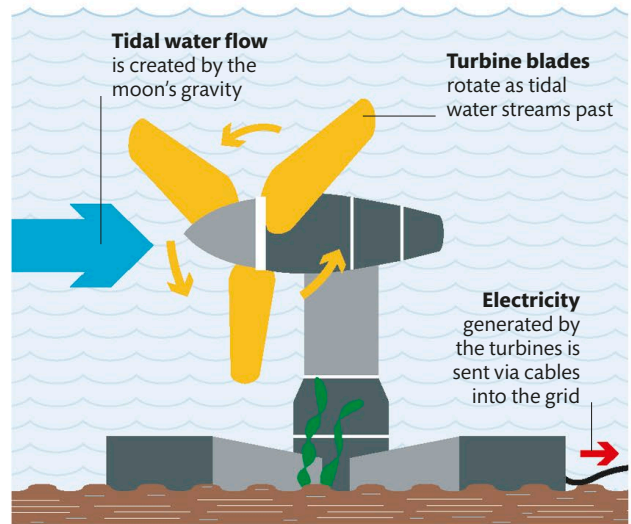
Tidal and wave energy technologies are becoming commercially viable power sources. The technology is advancing rapidly and has huge potential in coming decades. Wave farms and tidal energy systems harness the enormous power of the seas to generate power, and their global capacity could exceed that of about 120 nuclear reactors. Countries with the most potential for these reliable, renewable energy sources include France, the UK, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.



BEST SITES FOR WAVE POWER, EUROPE

Making waves

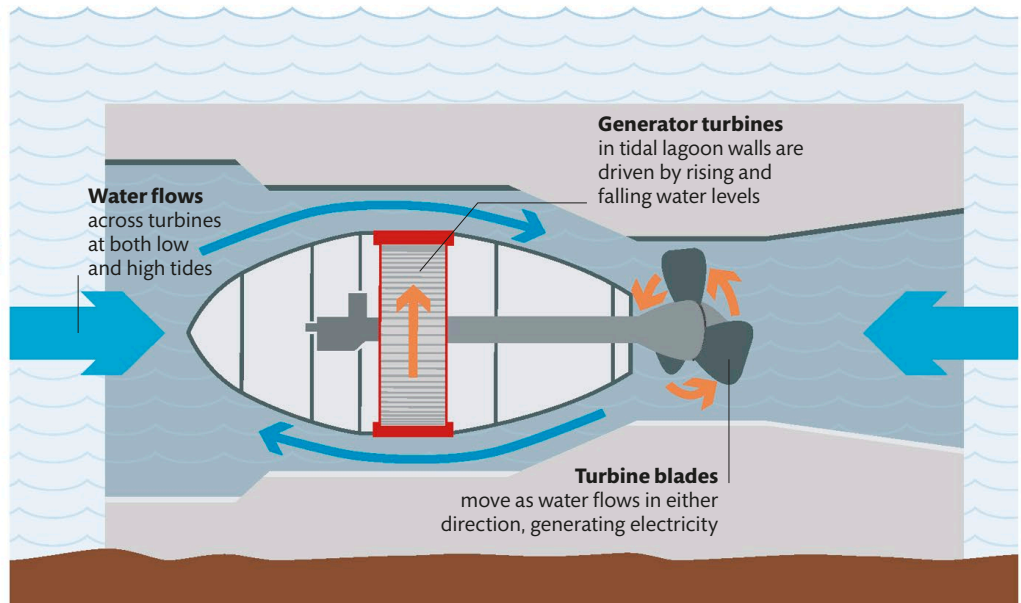
Europe's best areas for wave farms are along the western Atlantic coast, where strong, persistent winds create lots of large waves.



BEST SITES FOR TIDAL STREAM POWER, EUROPE

Streaming tides

Around the UK in particular, headlands, inlets, and channels funnel and increase the speed of tidal stream currents—ideal for tidal energy.



Tidal and wave technologies harness the movement of tides and waves to drive electricity-generating turbines. In addition to cutting carbon dioxide emissions, these technologies could offer energy security and create jobs.

Electricity produced by wave and tidal power is currently priced higher than that generated by fossil fuels—partly because fossil fuels are burned (and valued) without taking the costs of the climate change they cause into account.

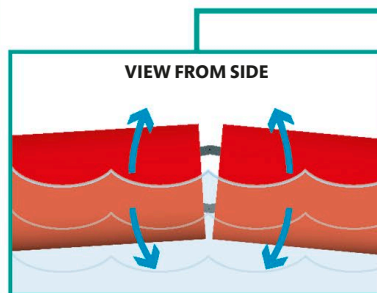
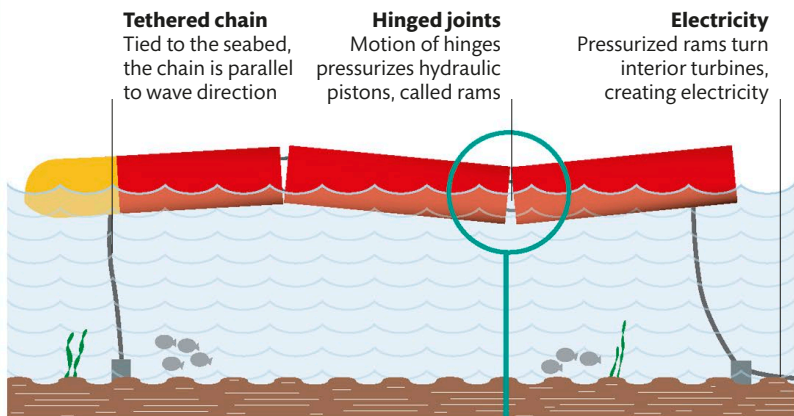
SEE ALSO...

- **Surge in Demand** pp46–47
- **Renewable Revolution** pp52–53
- **Energy Conundrum** pp60–61

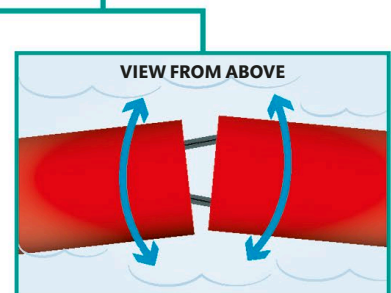
80%
The potential kinetic energy from waves that can be converted into electricity

HARNESSING SURFACE WAVES

One of the most promising designs for capturing surface wave power is the wave attenuator. Waves are best along western coastlines due to stronger, more consistent winds, so hotspots for this technology include the Pacific US, the UK, France, Portugal, New Zealand, and southern Africa.



Vertical bends
The semisubmerged sections of a wave attenuator move vertically up and down with wave motion, flexing at their hinges.



Oscillating motion
In addition to being forced up and down, attenuator hinges allow sections to “yaw,” capturing wave energy from rotational movement.

CASE STUDY

Swansea Tidal Lagoon

- Swansea Bay in South Wales is located on the Bristol Channel. Because this area of UK coastline has the second-greatest tidal range in the world, it provides an ideal location for a tidal lagoon.
- Sixteen underwater turbines are planned to be embedded in a breakwater wall extending 2 miles (3 km) out to sea.
- The tidal lagoon’s proposed power station will generate clean, predictable power for more than 155,000 homes for at least 120 years.



Energy Conundrum

Pros and cons accompany all of our energy choices. As rising demand leads to deepening tensions between competing priorities, it is vital that we see the full picture in order to make informed decisions.

Many different types of existing and emerging technologies play vital roles in meeting our energy needs. Parallel technologies will shape future choices: for example, carbon capture and storage in the case of coal and natural gas, and energy storage in relation to some renewables.




































Our approach to energy must address the issues of security, affordability, and environmental impact—three goals that often pull

in different directions. For example, coal provides cheap, secure power but causes high carbon dioxide emissions and air pollution.

Energy policy is a highly political issue. Decision making often favors short-term cost and security objectives at the expense of environmental concerns. Factors like these make it all the more challenging to put the most rational—and globally beneficial—long-term choices in place.

What are our options?

The simple comparison below is based on situations as they broadly prevail today. While circumstances for some technologies are highly variable—such as the potential for renewable energy sources in certain locations—some overall conclusions about each particular source of energy can be provided. Policy makers must decide which yield the best range of long-term results.

 Coal	 Oil	 Natural gas	 Nuclear	 Hydropower
 	 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 	 
<p>The single largest source of electricity worldwide, with recent massive growth in demand from fast-growing countries, including China and India.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Abundant supply fuels cheap electricity. ▶ High carbon emissions and local air pollution. 	<p>The world's main transportation fuel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A major source of carbon dioxide and urban air pollution. ▶ Oil produced by hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and tar sands creates higher carbon emissions than conventional oil. 	<p>Flexible, abundant, and used for electricity, heating, and cooking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Produces about half as much carbon dioxide as coal. ▶ Conventional gas and that produced by hydraulic fracturing (fracking) raise different issues. 	<p>Produces low-carbon electricity but is expensive and complex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Major issues are linked with long-term radioactive waste management. ▶ Tensions persist over the link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons. 	<p>Relatively low-carbon power source but limited by number of suitable rivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can lead to major ecosystem and social impacts. ▶ Vulnerable to prolonged droughts that are already affecting some regions.

KEY TO SYMBOLS AND RATINGS



Cost Energy costs often dictate choice and are especially important for those on low incomes



Tech ready? Some technologies are well established, while others are just coming on stream



Pollution and waste Some technologies are much cleaner than others



Energy security Access to reliable energy is a vital prerequisite for economic development



Land and ecosystems impact Energy supply can conflict with other resource and environmental goals

Overall rating the extent of long-term contribution to meeting the three goals of energy security, affordability, and environmental protection.

1 Best 10 Worst

Strong case

Advantages

Drawbacks

Major concerns

EFFICIENCY: THE INVISIBLE “FUEL”

The most neglected fuel source is efficiency. Cars that are more fuel-efficient, lights that use less power, insulation, and smart building technologies all save energy without affecting comfort or convenience. Efficiency can also save money, making this an obvious priority when it comes to finding the best ways of reaching the three energy goals.

In 2011, the amount of money saved by energy efficiency was \$743 billion*

* Compared to total fuel consumption in 11 countries: Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK, and the US

Liquid biofuel	Biomass	Wind	Solar	Wave / Tidal
<p>Can replace fossil oil and bring carbon dioxide savings—for example, by using sugarcane to make ethanol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can divert food supply from plates to fuel tanks. Can drive deforestation, leading to CO₂ emissions and biodiversity loss. 	<p>Wood can be burned in power stations and replace gas and coal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable, but can lead to high carbon emissions and soil damage. Can drive deforestation. 	<p>Very clean power source that is growing fast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermittent wind means other power sources are needed to meet constant demand, but energy-storage technologies are developing. Changes the appearance of landscapes. 	<p>Very clean power source that is growing fast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on daylight, so very large-scale use will rely on emerging storage technologies, such as large-capacity batteries. Its use is rapidly expanding worldwide. 	<p>Very clean and potentially very significant power sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technologies are emerging, with first commercial power stations being installed. Relatively expensive. Needs government backing during start-up phase.

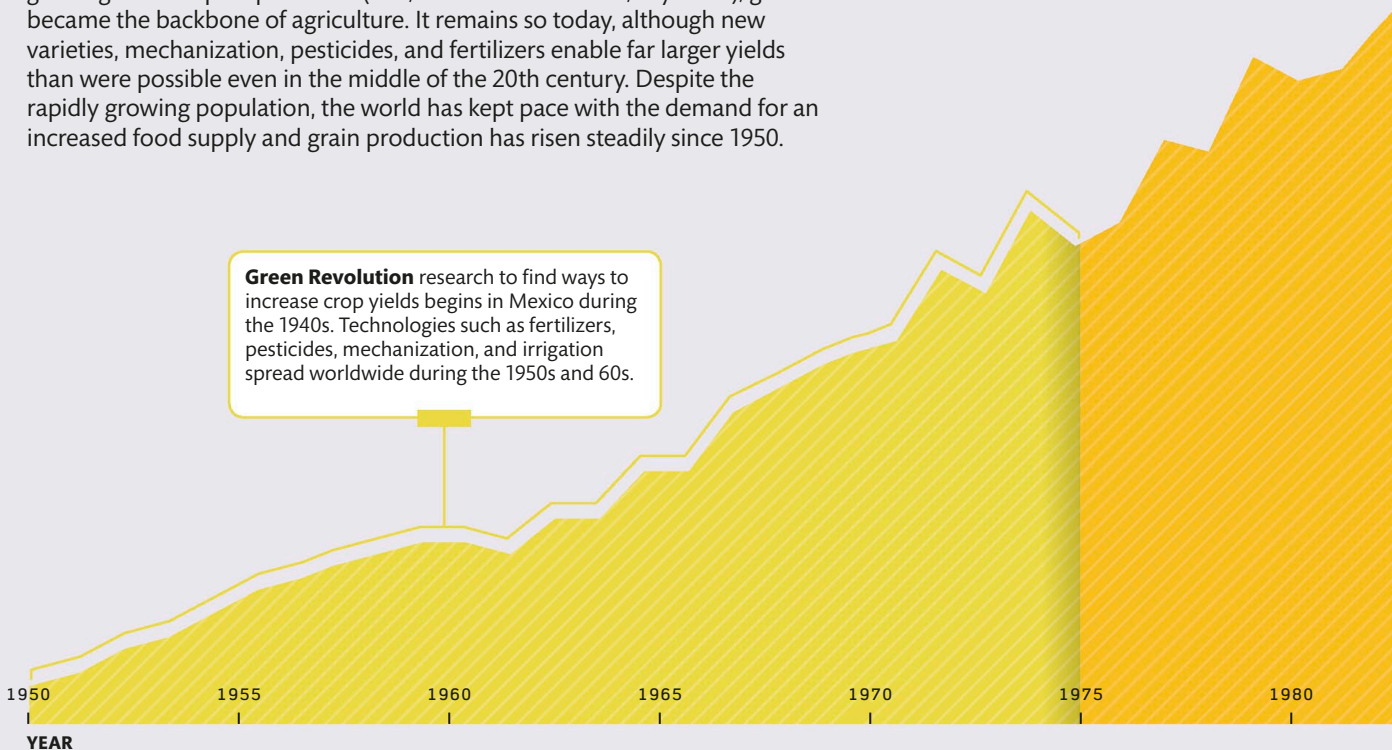


Escalating Appetite

The rise of agriculture has transformed the face of planet Earth and shaped the course of human history. Pre-farming, hunter-gatherer societies had a total population of a few million people, but today farming sustains more than seven billion people worldwide. The rise of high-productivity farming was a vital factor in the establishment of civilization and it enabled the continuing shift of people from rural areas to towns and cities. Sustaining the conditions that allow farming, including soil health and freshwater availability (pp78–79), are increasingly important challenges.

Grain production

Early farmers domesticated wild grasses to produce grains, including rice, wheat, and corn. Rich in carbohydrate and protein, easy to store, and fast growing even in quite poor soils (and, in the case of wheat, dry lands), grain became the backbone of agriculture. It remains so today, although new varieties, mechanization, pesticides, and fertilizers enable far larger yields than were possible even in the middle of the 20th century. Despite the rapidly growing population, the world has kept pace with the demand for an increased food supply and grain production has risen steadily since 1950.

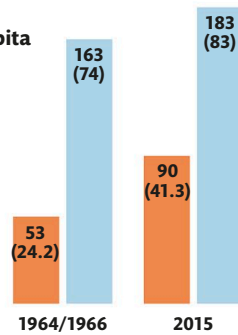


THE RISE OF MEAT AND DAIRY

As people have become wealthier the consumption of meat and dairy products has risen dramatically. This has had negative effects both on the environment and on human health. Compared with vegetable-based diets, livestock-derived foods require more land and water to produce. Increased consumption of meat and dairy foods, both of which are high in protein and fat, raises the risk of heart disease, some cancers, and type 2 diabetes.

KEY
lb (kg) per capita

- Meat
- Milk and dairy products



GLOBAL MEAT AND DAIRY CONSUMPTION

“Civilization as it is known today could not have evolved, nor can it survive, without an adequate food supply.”

NORMAN BORLAUG, AMERICAN SCIENTIST AND “FATHER” OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Global grain production

In 2016, nearly half of the world’s grain was produced by just three countries: China, the US, and India. Corn, wheat, and rice account for most of the world’s grain harvest.

1997
First genetically modified corn is produced



1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010

601
(600)



Farmed Planet

About one third of the world's land is now used for farming. Only about one quarter of that third is used to produce crops, however; the rest used to rear animals.

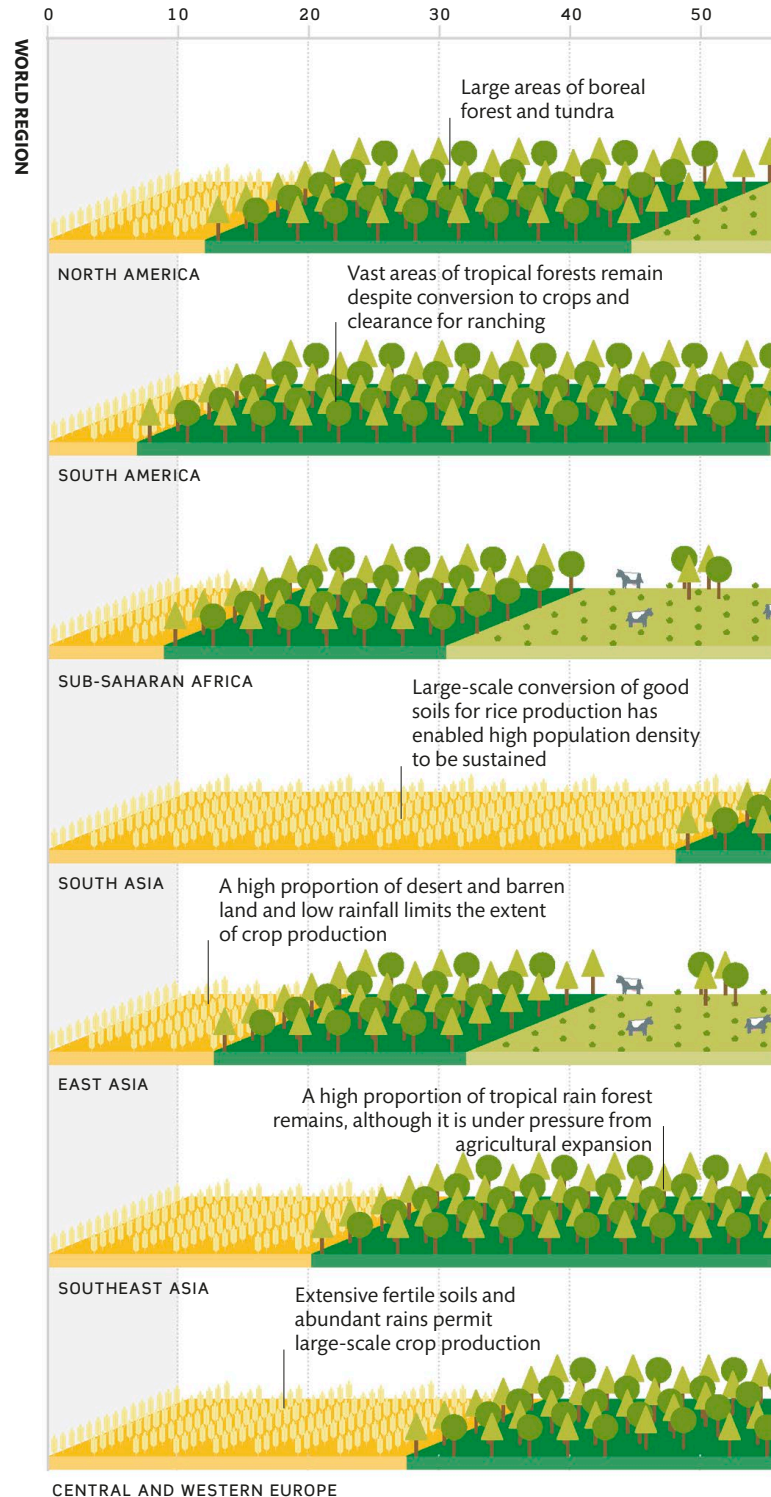
Most of the world's land is desert, ice-covered, or supports forests and grasslands, much of which is unsuitable for farming. Where conditions permit, there has been a steady expansion of agriculture, although the total land area with suitable soils and sufficient water for crop production is, in a global context, limited. Rising demand for food is leading to the continuing expansion of farming into the remaining unconverted areas, where there is suitable soil and sufficient water. The consequences of this include deforestation, declining wildlife, increased greenhouse gas emissions, declining water quality, and widespread soil damage (see pp74–75).

Crops versus meat

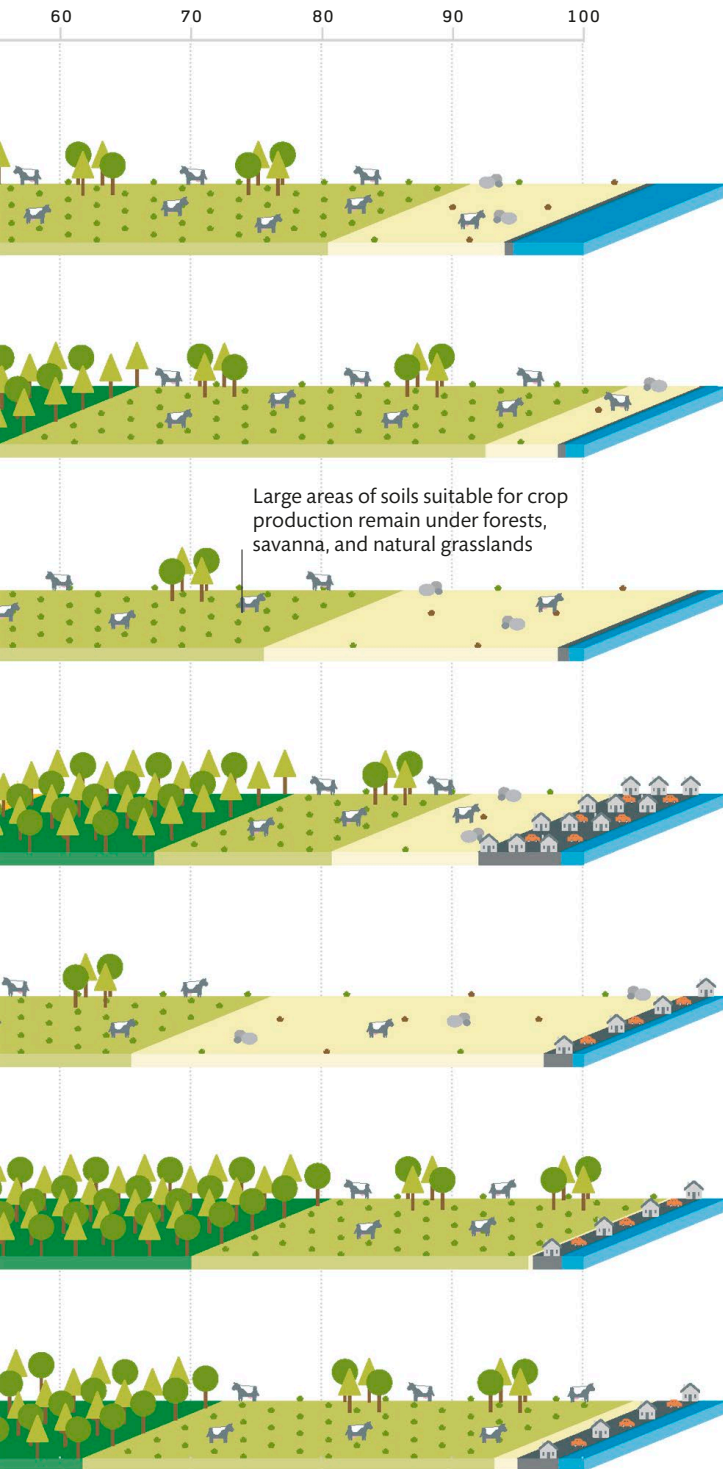
About three quarters of the world's land that is producing food is devoted to rearing livestock to supply meat and dairy products. The remaining land is used to produce grains, fruits, and vegetables. Consumption of livestock products has increased in line with the rise in the number of middle-class consumers. This trend is set to continue, as the major emerging economies shift their dietary preferences. Only a fraction of farmland is cultivated for grain and vegetable production, and a high proportion of the crops produced are fed to livestock. Grasslands, sparsely wooded country, and barren lands are also partly grazed by domesticated animals.

KEY

- Cultivated land
- Forested land
- Grassland and woodland ecosystems
- Sparsely vegetated and barren land
- Settlement and infrastructure
- Inland water bodies

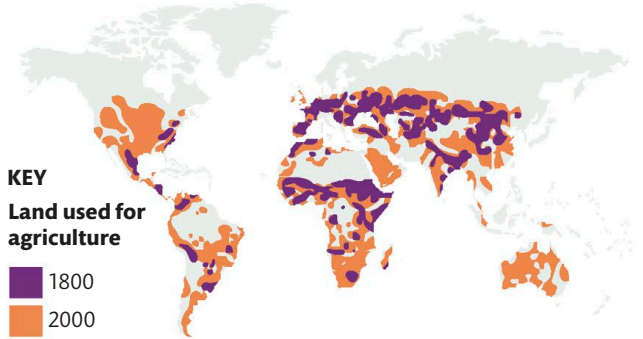


LAND USE AS PERCENTAGE OF WORLD REGION



Change over time

The rise of agriculture during the last two centuries has been dramatic. In 1800, most of the farmed land was in Europe and parts of Asia. Today, it has expanded across those continents and transformed the face of North and South America, and much of Africa and Australia, where natural vegetation has been cleared to make way for crops and livestock.



KEY

Land used for agriculture

- 1800
- 2000

GRAIN USES

Each year, the world produces around 3.1 billion tons (2.8 billion tonnes) of grains. Rice and wheat are primarily consumed by people, but most corn is fed to livestock. Feeding crops to animals, which are then consumed by people, uses more land, water, and fossil fuels than people eating crops directly.



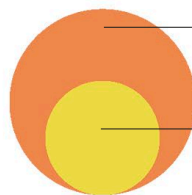
People 45 per cent – under half of all grain production is eaten directly by people.



Cattle feed per cent – grains such as corn are used to feed pigs, cattle, and chickens.



Other uses 20 per cent – some grains have nonfood uses, and are used for biofuels and industrial materials.



TOTAL LAND

32,131 million acres
(13,003 million hectares)

LAND USED FOR AGRICULTURE

12,081 million acres
(4,889 million hectares)

TOTAL AGRICULTURAL LAND



Fertilizer Boom

The dramatic increase in food production achieved during recent decades has rested in large part on a corresponding increase in the use of fertilizers. However, this success has brought major challenges.

The plants that sustain all people and animals need soil nutrients—including nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium—to grow. These are depleted by agriculture and need to be replaced. For millennia, farmers used nutrients recycled from wastes, such as manure. Industrial farming is sustained by the input of fertilizer from other sources, which has had a major environmental impact.

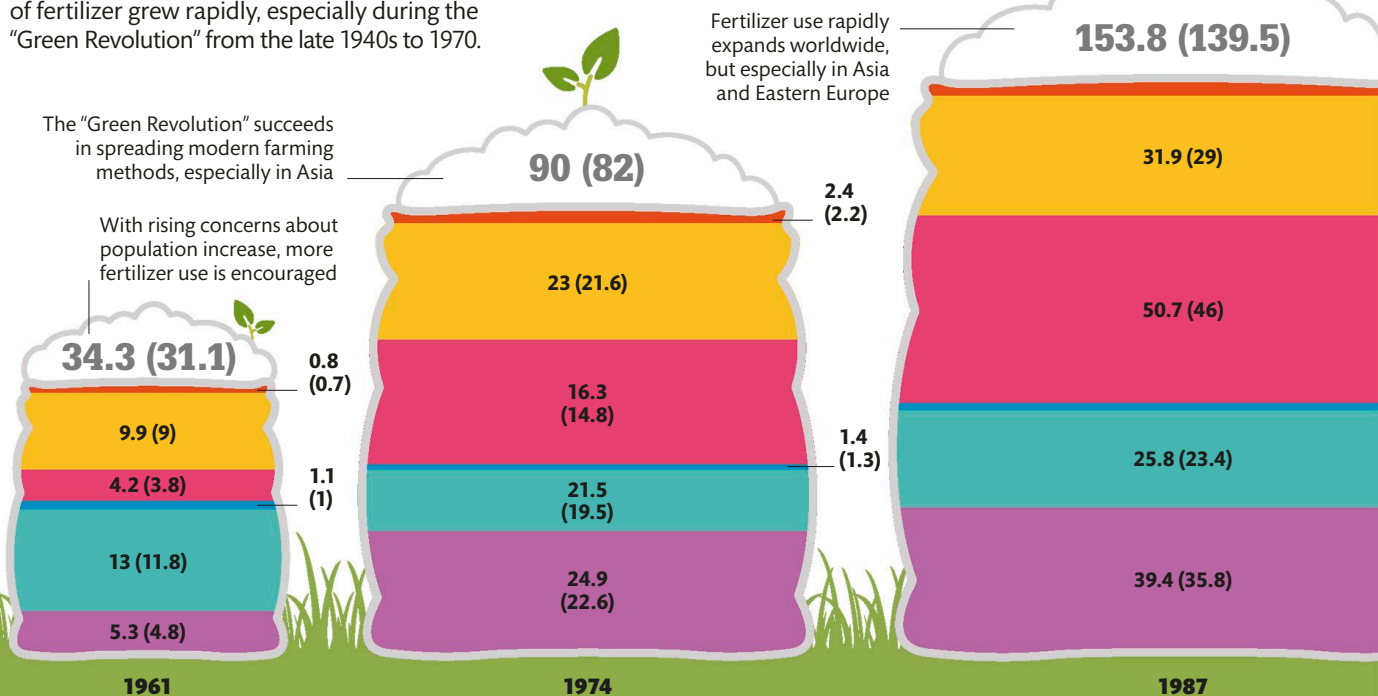
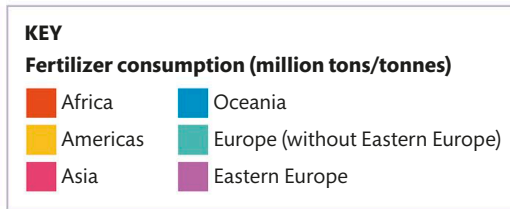
Improving yield

The invention of the Haber-Bosch process in the first half of the 20th century enabled nitrogen fertilizer to be made using natural gas and nitrogen from the atmosphere. Large-scale fertilizer application allowed farmers to produce more food from the same land, thereby keeping pace with increasing demand. Between 1950 and 1990, world food production almost tripled, while farmland increased only by 10 percent.



Rise of fertilizer use

In the aftermath of World War II, chemical factories began to produce nitrogen fertilizer. New sources of rock phosphate were identified, and the availability of phosphorus increased. With encouragement in some countries from government subsidies, the use of fertilizer grew rapidly, especially during the “Green Revolution” from the late 1940s to 1970.



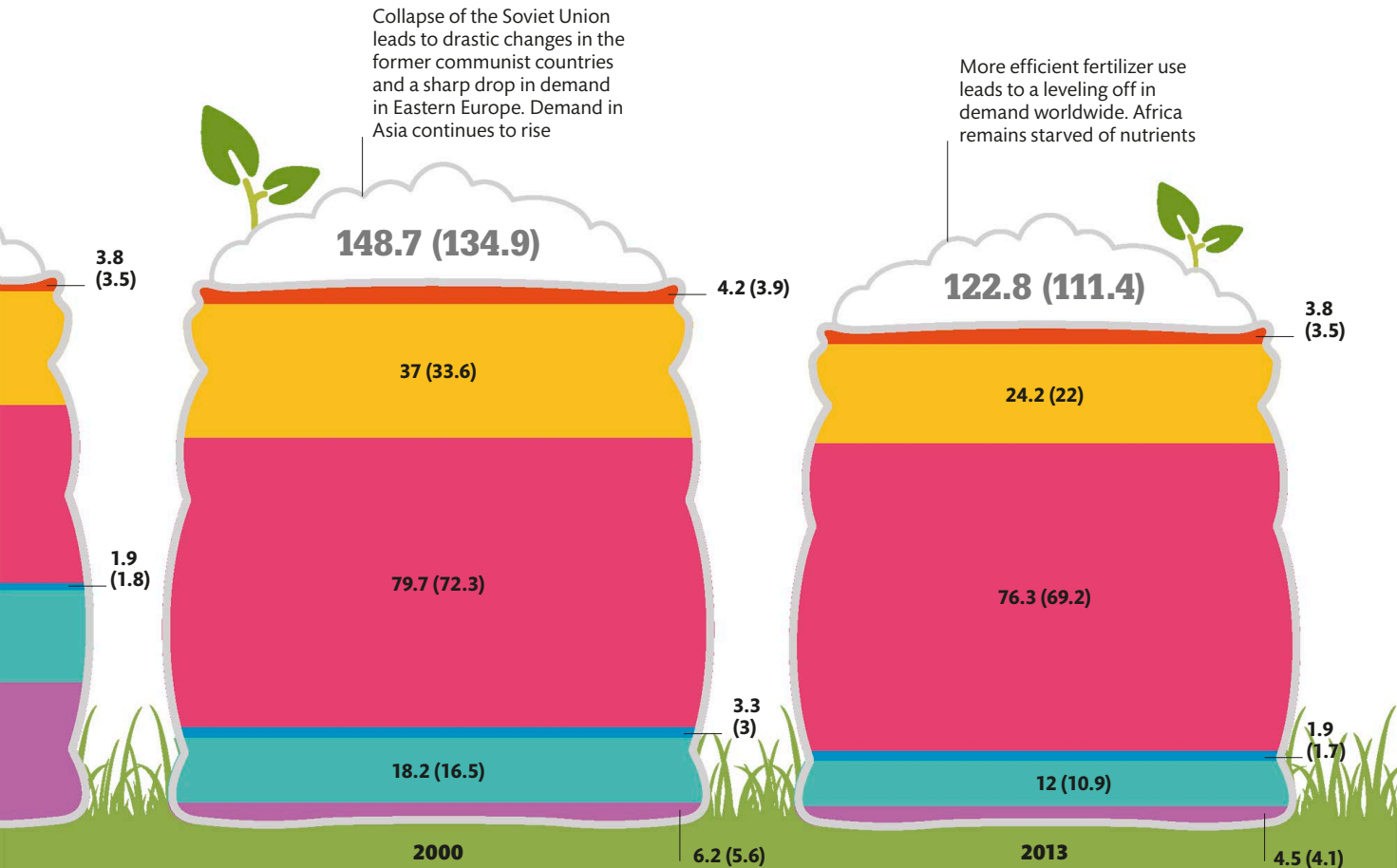


EFFECTS OF NITRATE FERTILIZERS

The main reason for the increased concentration of nitrous oxide in the atmosphere is the application of nitrogen fertilizers. These have a number of harmful effects on the environment and human health.

- › Nitrous oxide is the third most important greenhouse gas causing climate change.
- › Nitrogen fertilizers are partly responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer.
- › Nitrogen (and phosphate) can cause ecological changes, especially in aquatic and marine environments, harming fish and other wildlife (see pp162-163).
- › Fertilizer enrichment causes changes to ecosystems on land, thereby enabling more aggressive plants to displace more fragile ones.
- › Nitrates building up in the environment can get into drinking water and present threats to human health. These include risk of "blue baby syndrome," various cancers, and thyroid conditions.

100%
increase in fixed nitrogen on planet Earth over the last century due to human activities





Pest-Control Challenge

Weeds, fungi, microbes, and insects assault food crops, reducing yields and spoiling food. We have fought back with pesticides but in the process have caused damage to wildlife.

For millennia, farmers grew crops without chemical pesticides. In the decades after World War II, toxic compounds came into widespread and ever-increasing use, emerging as a key factor in the rapid expansion in food production. But

the damage caused to wildlife has been considerable. The effects are wide ranging and include the loss of food plants for insects and a decline in the food supply for insect-eating birds. The populations of beneficial animals

are affected, too, including pollinators. Some pesticides accumulate in food chains, causing populations of top predators to decline (see pp92–93). At the same time, pests have developed resistance to pesticides.

How much pesticide is used

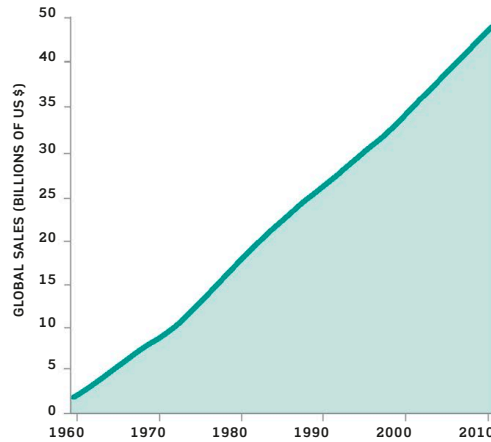
Pesticide use is rising almost everywhere, but countries vary widely in the quantity that they use. This is determined by the type of crops being grown, how valuable they are, and whether pest pressures are high. It also depends on the potency of the chemicals being applied, agricultural practices, and the stage of development the country has reached, with very poor countries unable to afford to use pesticides. Government policy and the extent to which pesticide companies have been successful in influencing policy also plays a part. In most cases, however, pesticide use could be reduced.

The amount of pesticides used internationally has risen 50-fold since 1950



GLOBAL RISE IN PESTICIDE SALES

Global pesticide sales have been rising rapidly since the 1940s. Since 2000, sales have continued to increase, particularly in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. However, they have stagnated in the Middle East and Africa. Pesticide companies boost their sales by charging lower prices for older products or in poorer markets.



Pesticide application

Pesticides play an important role in growing rice in South and Southeast Asia. Spraying by hand is a common practice.



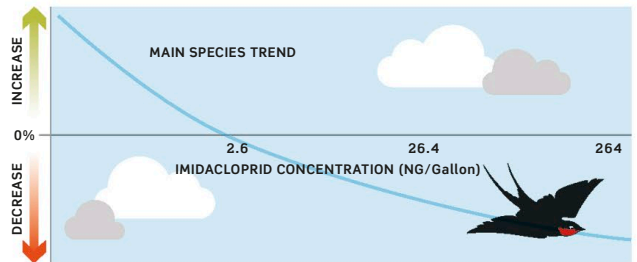
Colombian coffee is a valuable crop, and pest pressures are high



CHILE	JAPAN	COLOMBIA	BAHAMAS
9.5 lb/acre (10.7 kg/Ha)	11.7 lb/acre (13.1 kg/Ha)	13.7 lb/acre (15.3 kg/Ha)	53.0 lb/acre (59.4 kg/Ha)

Threat to wildlife

Neonicotinoid pesticides are potent toxins that affect the nervous system of insects. Their use has affected many bird populations because insects comprise an important part of their diet. A study found that in areas with imidacloprid (a neonicotinoid pesticide) concentrations higher than 5.13 ng/gallon (19.43 ng/liter), bird populations were in decline.



What can we do?

» **Governments, farmers, and chemical companies** can promote integrated pest management. This involves adopting strategies to enable food production with fewer chemicals, through growing a more diverse range of crops, and the use of crop rotations. Encouraging the recovery of bat and bird populations can improve natural pest management.



How Food is Wasted

The extent of food waste means that more than one quarter of the world's farmland is discarded. As population and economic growth lead to rising demand, reducing food waste is an ever more important priority.

Worldwide, we waste about 1.4 billion tons, or one third, of the food we produce every year. This in turn wastes water equivalent to the annual flow of Russia's massive Volga River. Food waste adds more than 3.3 billion tons of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, not least because rotting food can create methane emissions that add to climate change. It wastes

millions of tons of fertilizer and costs food producers US\$750 billion annually. It also represents a missed opportunity to make sure everyone has access to food.

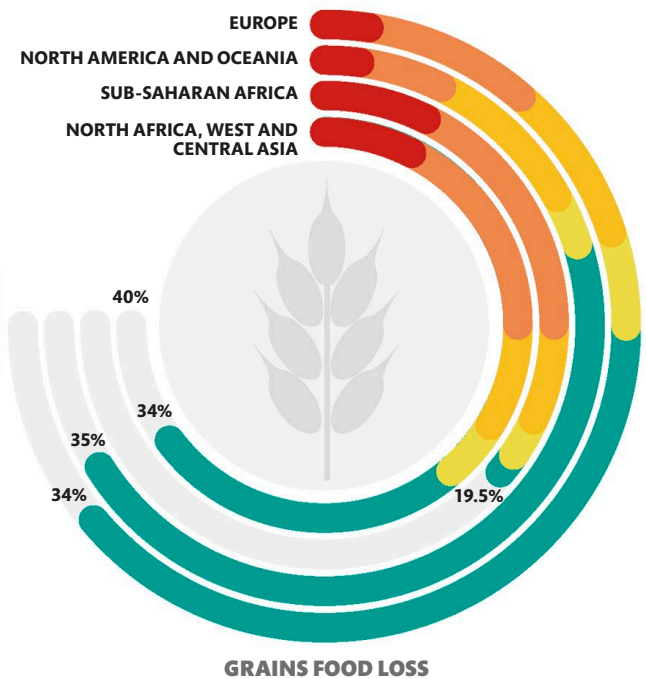
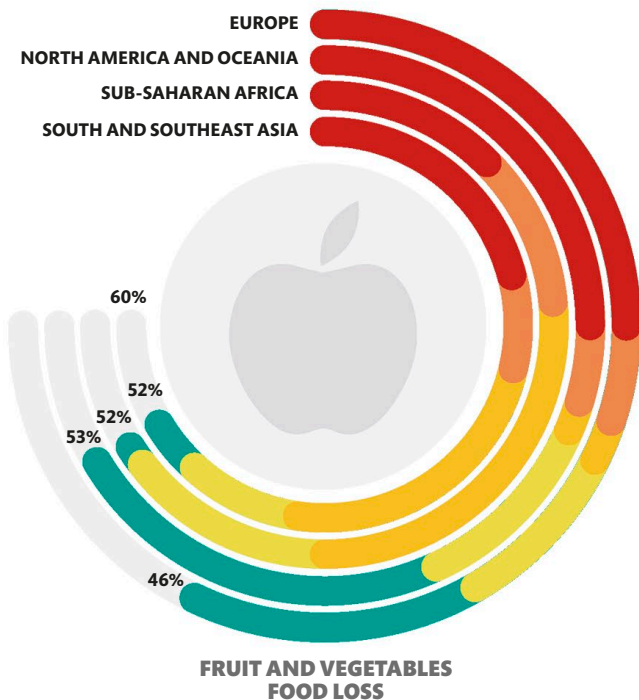
The later a food item is spoiled in the trip from field to plate, the bigger the environmental impact because more resources will have been used up in getting it there.

Where is it lost?

Food waste occurs at every stage of the supply chain, from initial production right down to household consumption. In developing countries, 40 percent of food losses occur at early stages of the process, and can be attributed to constraints in harvesting techniques and storage and cooling facilities. In developed countries, over 40 percent of waste occurs at the retail stage, due to quality standards that overemphasize appearance, or during the consumption stage when food is thrown away.

KEY
Cause and stage of food loss
(% of total production)

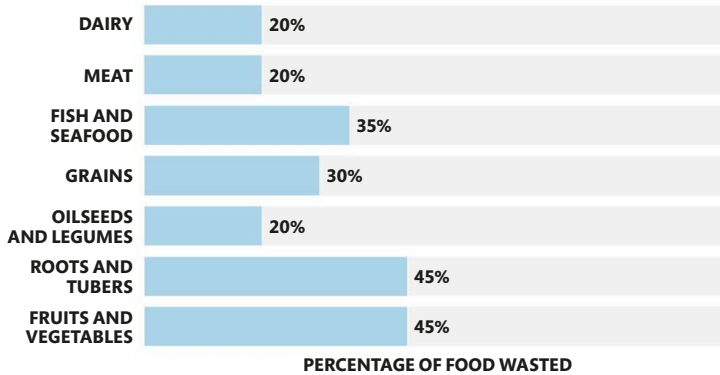
- Agriculture
- Post-harvest or slaughter
- Processing
- Distribution
- Consumption





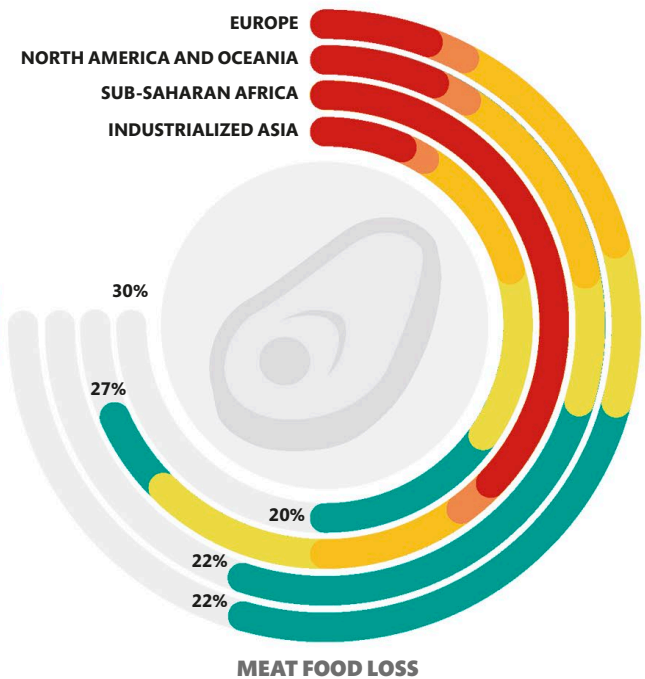
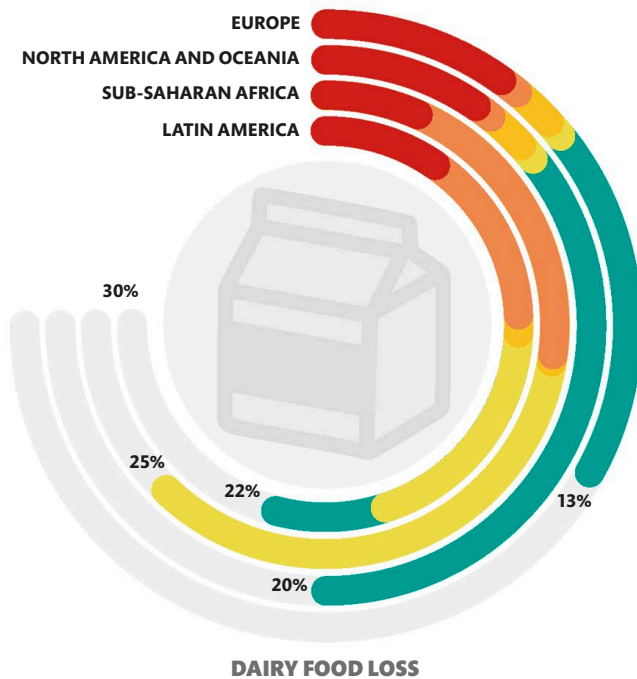
WHAT ARE WE WASTING?

All the major food groups are subject to substantial waste globally, but it is among the more fragile and perishable fruits, vegetables, roots, and tubers that the biggest proportion is lost. Meat waste is comparatively low, but the impact is bigger because calories from livestock farming come with a larger environmental footprint.



What can we do?

- **Reduce waste.** Avoid wasting food between farm and table.
- **Feed people in need.** Good food that would otherwise be wasted can sometimes be diverted to people in need.
- **Feed livestock.** Food unfit for human consumption can be fed to animals, such as pigs and chickens.
- **Compost and make renewable energy.** Badly spoiled food can be used to generate power via anaerobic digestion, while at the same time recovering nutrients that can be used as fertilizer.





Feeding the World

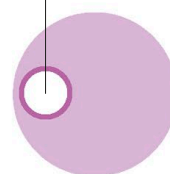
Across the world, hundreds of millions of people are hungry while hundreds of millions more are obese. This demonstrates how absolute levels of food production are not enough to ensure good nutrition.

In many rich and more developed countries, growing numbers of people are becoming overweight or obese, while in many developing countries a large proportion of people are undernourished. These outcomes are linked with various factors, including political and climatic conditions, and the proportion of their income people must spend on food. Despite an increase in food production during recent decades, poverty and hunger remain closely related. Inclusive economic growth is needed to improve the incomes and livelihoods of the poor, which would help reduce hunger and malnutrition.

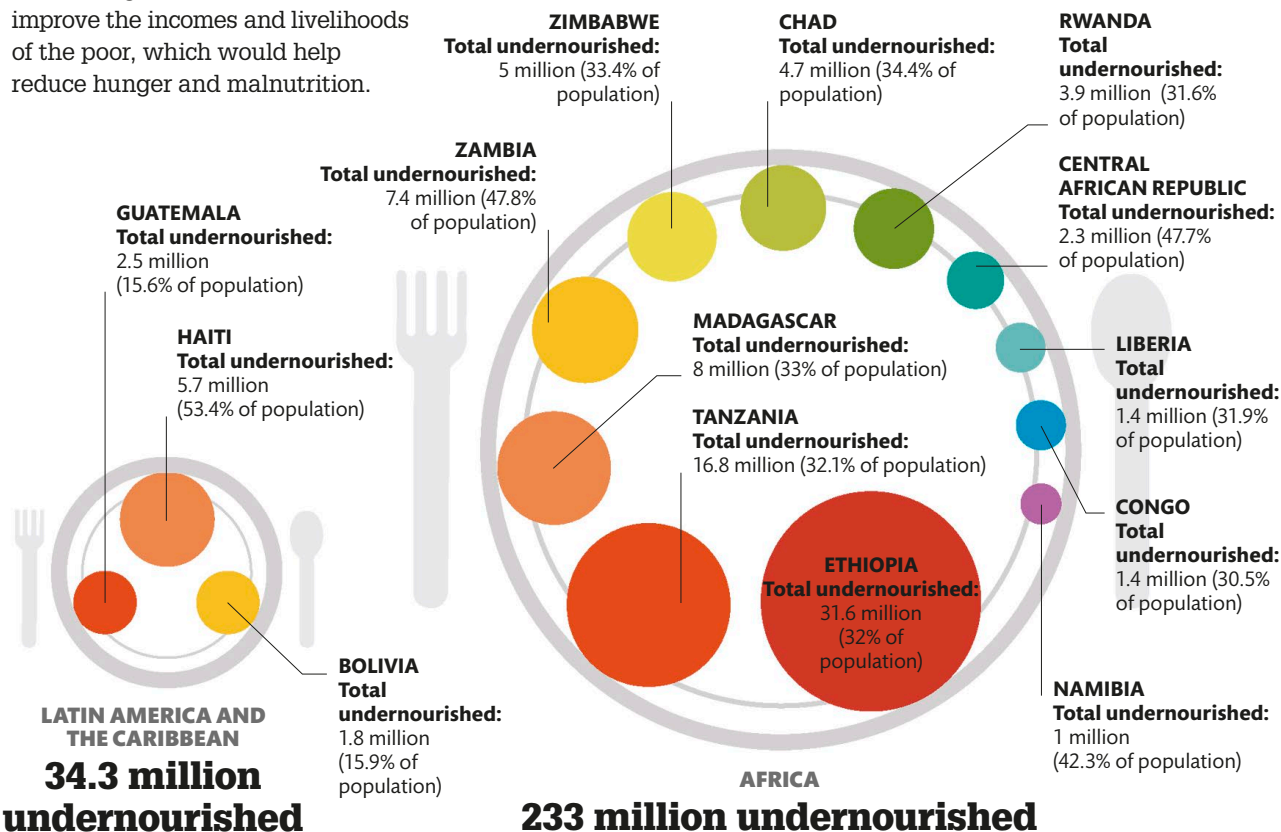
Where are the hungry?

More than 800 million people worldwide are chronically undernourished. These are the poorest of the poor, who have limited financial assets and often live in rural areas. In Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, progress in reducing hunger has been slow, and undernourishment is still prevalent in both regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly one quarter of the population has insufficient food. India is home to the highest number of undernourished people in the world, although they represent a smaller percentage of the country's population.

10.9%
of global
population are
undernourished
(815 million)



TOTAL GLOBAL POPULATION (2016)
7.4 billion



THE COST OF FOOD

The price of food, in both absolute terms and relative to income, is an important determinant of hunger and obesity. In the USA, the average citizen spends a relatively small proportion of a large income on food. In India, the average person spends a far larger proportion of a tiny average income on food.

US\$32,051
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
EXPENDITURE



USA

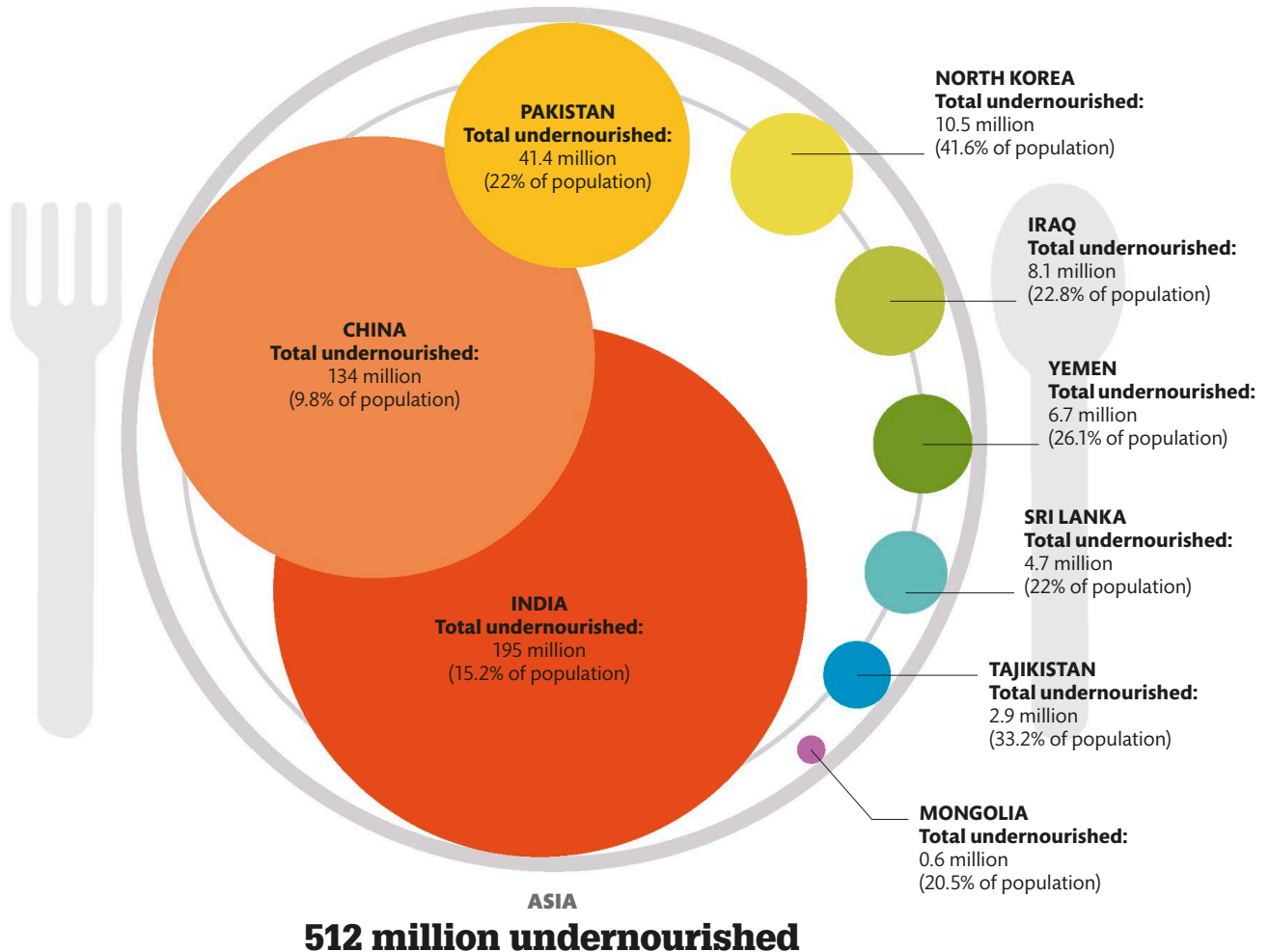
US\$620
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
EXPENDITURE



INDIA

“The war against hunger is truly mankind’s war of liberation.”

JOHN F KENNEDY, 35TH US PRESIDENT





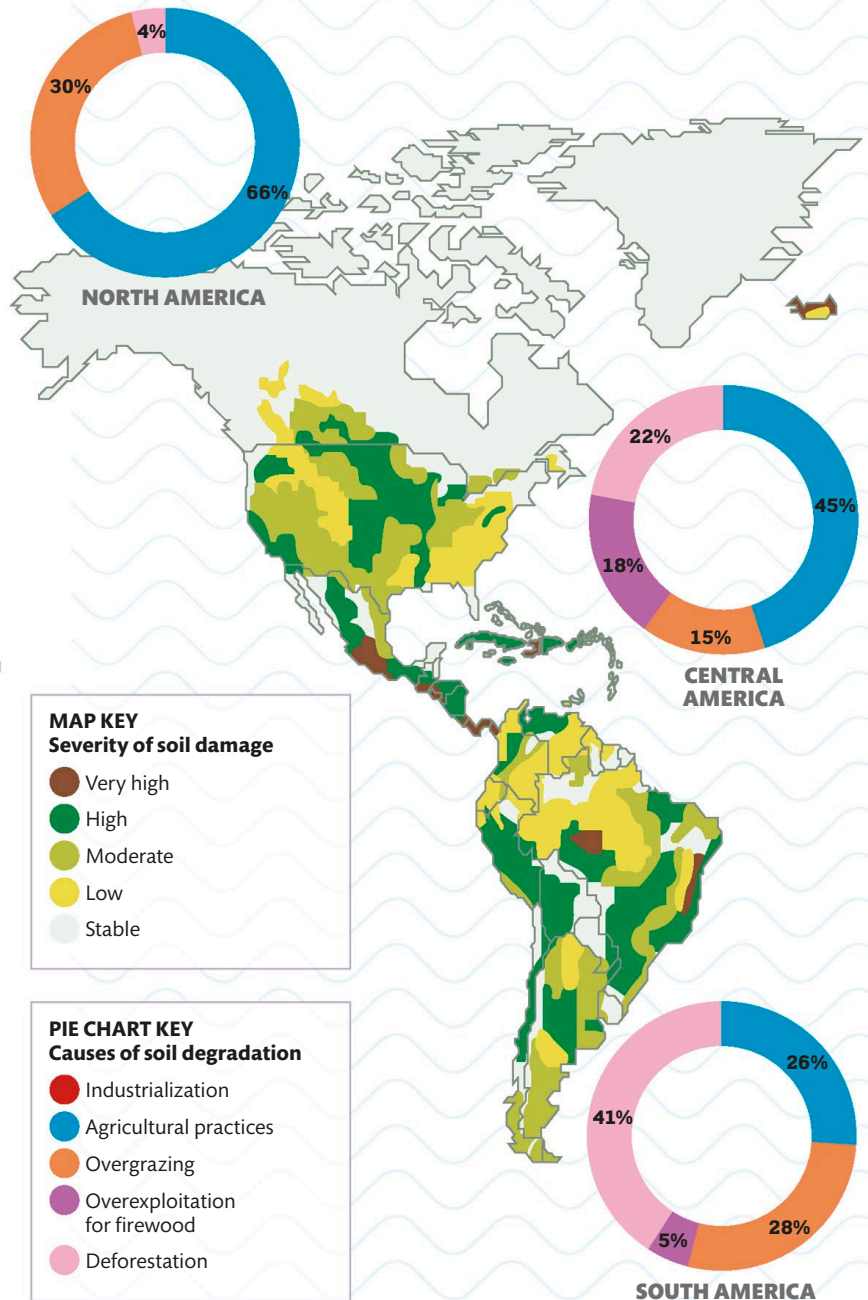
Threats to Food Security

Nearly all food production depends on soil and freshwater. In both cases, environmental changes are leading to threats to food security. The challenge is global but becoming acute in many developing countries.

Every year 12–17 million acres (5–7 million hectares) of farmland are degraded with 27.5 billion tons (25 billion tonnes) of topsoil eroded by wind and water. Since settled agriculture began, the US has lost about one-third of its topsoil. Farming practices cause damage that can reduce the level of organic matter (decomposing plants and soil organisms). Soils with more organic matter hold more water, rendering growing plants more resilient to drought. In developing countries, soil damage and drought are prevalent. It is expected that later this century large portions of the world will experience extreme and, in some cases, unprecedented dryness.

Soil degradation

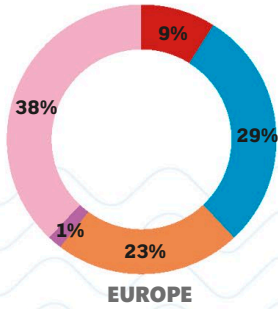
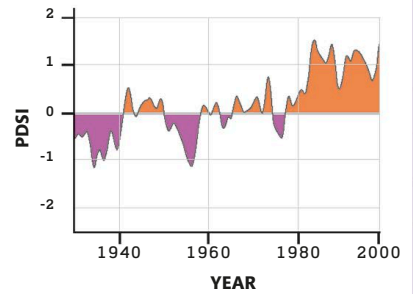
Soil damage is a widespread and worsening global problem. Human-induced soil degradation has already made many areas unsuitable for farming, especially in semiarid parts of the world. Plowing and excessive pressure from grazing animals can leave soils bare and vulnerable to removal by wind and rain. This is the cause of nearly all soil damage in North America. In South America, Europe, and Asia, deforestation is responsible for widespread soil damage. Relatively small areas of land have been damaged by industrial pollution.



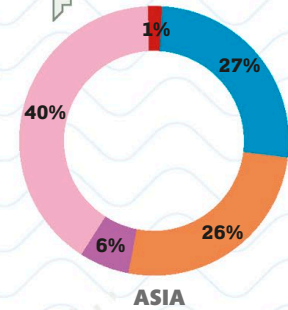


WORSENING DROUGHT

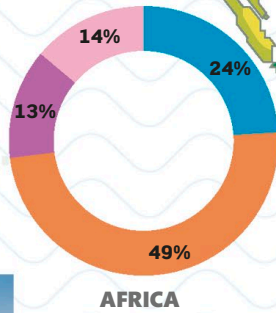
The Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) combines precipitation and temperature data to reveal changing levels of dryness over time. Since the 1970s, the propensity for drought has increased worldwide, in terms of both the severity and frequency of droughts.



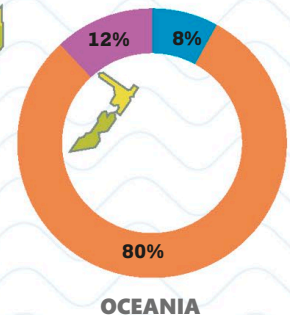
EUROPE



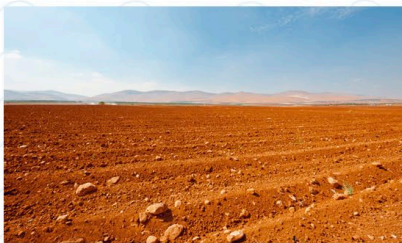
ASIA



AFRICA



OCEANIA



Soil degradation in Israel

Moderate to severe soil degradation globally affects an area of land larger than that of the US and Mexico combined.



Thirsty World

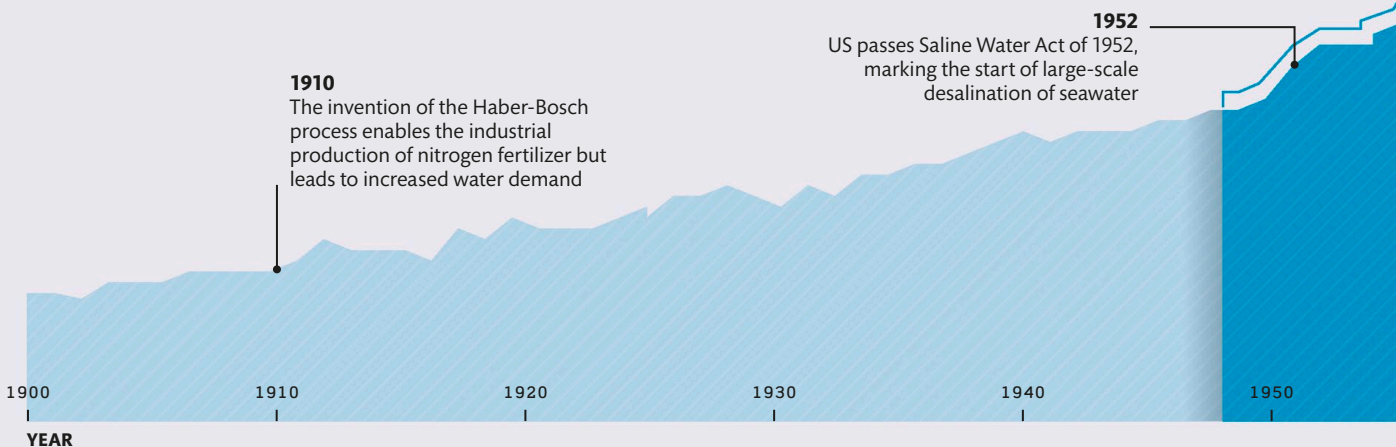
Our need for freshwater has risen dramatically over the last century. In addition to being required for drinking, washing, and agriculture, freshwater also helps power economic development. In the natural world, all land plants and animals rely on freshwater. Some ecosystems, such as tropical forests and wetlands, are dependent on regular replenishment of water. In recent years, several parts of the world have suffered from the effects of severe drought. The result has affected harvests and food prices and increased the number of hungry people by millions.

Pressure on water supplies

Water covers 70 percent of our planet, but less than three percent of this is freshwater, and most of that is unavailable for our use (see pp78-79). Since 1900, population and economic growth have led to around a fivefold increase in water consumption. In some parts of the world, access to sufficient water is a serious constraint to development. Matters are made worse by the inefficient use of water in farming, industry, and homes and through damage to ecosystems that help replenish secure water supplies. Pressure on water resources can be expected to become even more challenging as the effects of climate change disrupt the water cycle, including the effect of more severe droughts, and areas already prone to water stress.

“A nation that fails to plan intelligently for the development and protection of its precious waters will be condemned to wither...”

.....
LYNDON B. JOHNSON, 36TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

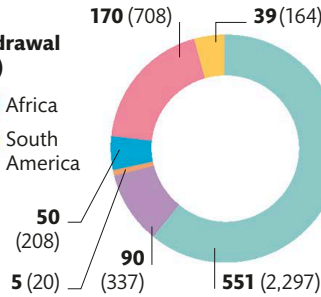


WHERE WATER IS USED

More than half of the world's freshwater withdrawals occur in Asia, where most major irrigated lands are found. On average, however, water use per person is higher in richer countries, with people in the US using about five times more than people in Bangladesh. In rich, dry countries, water stress is acute.

KEY Freshwater withdrawal (cubic miles/km³)

- Asia
- Europe
- North and Central America
- Oceania
- Africa
- South America



A series of record-breaking droughts and heat waves lead to reduced crop production across the world.

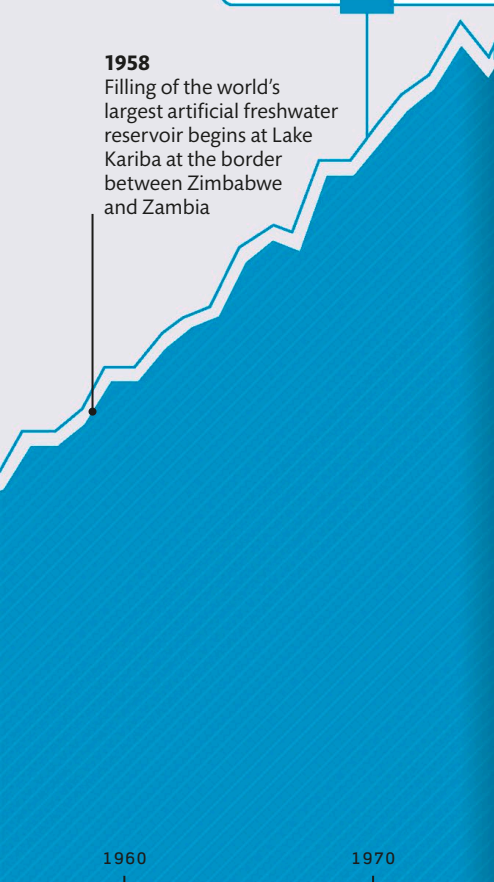
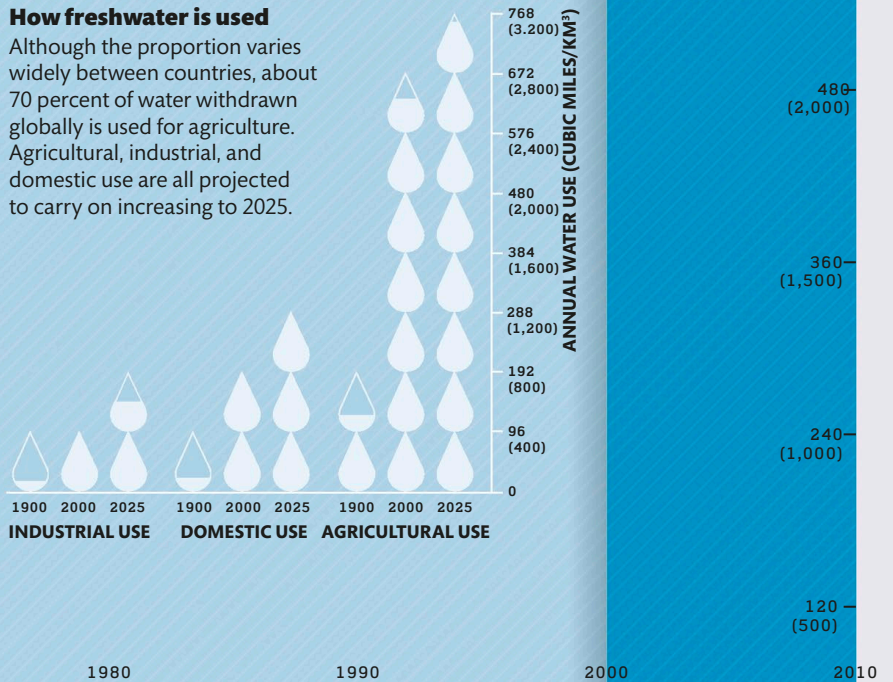
New technologies of the "Green Revolution" boost agricultural output but place more demand on water resources, including through an expansion of irrigation.

1958

Filling of the world's largest artificial freshwater reservoir begins at Lake Kariba at the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia

How freshwater is used

Although the proportion varies widely between countries, about 70 percent of water withdrawn globally is used for agriculture. Agricultural, industrial, and domestic use are all projected to carry on increasing to 2025.





Freshwater Scarcity

About 97.5 percent of the world's water is in the oceans and salty. The rest is freshwater, but most of this is locked up in ice, with only about 0.3 percent accessible for human use.

Freshwater is a surprisingly scarce resource. It is also unevenly spread, and in areas with low rainfall or high evaporation, scarcity can be a major problem. Water scarcity already affects 1.2 billion people, across every continent. Another 1.6 billion people are affected by the challenges of extracting and transporting water. These numbers are rising, not least because water

demand has been rising at more than twice the rate of population growth, causing the spread of longterm water scarcity to other parts of the world. Although too much of it is presently wasted, polluted, or used in unsustainable ways, there is still enough water on Earth to meet our needs. Making more rational use of water will be vital in the decades ahead.

SEE ALSO...

- › **The population explosion** pp16-17
- › **Escalating appetite** pp62-63

Earth's water resources

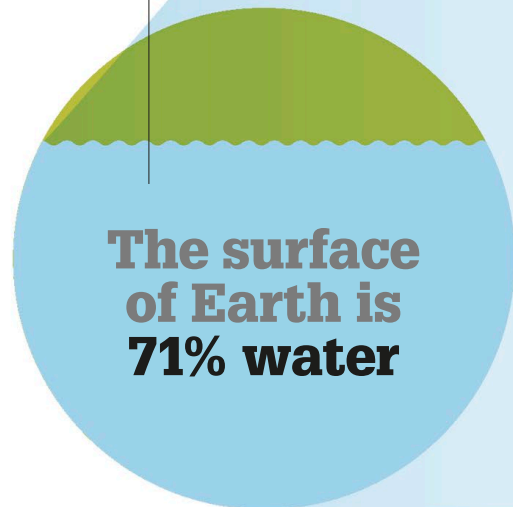
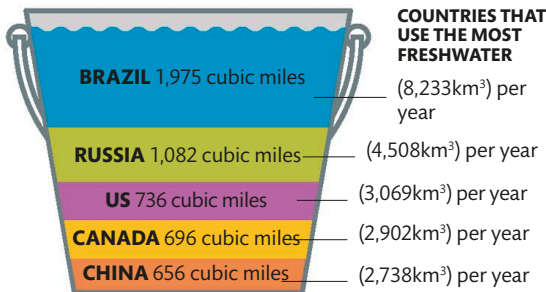
Almost all of Earth's 336 million cubic miles (1.4 billion km³) of water is saltwater. Of the small portion that is fresh, more than two thirds is locked up in ice caps, especially on Antarctica and Greenland. Nearly all of the remaining third is in the ground, and much of that is out of reach. This leaves only a tiny proportion as freshwater in the lakes and rivers from which we meet demand for drinking water as well as supplying farming and industry.

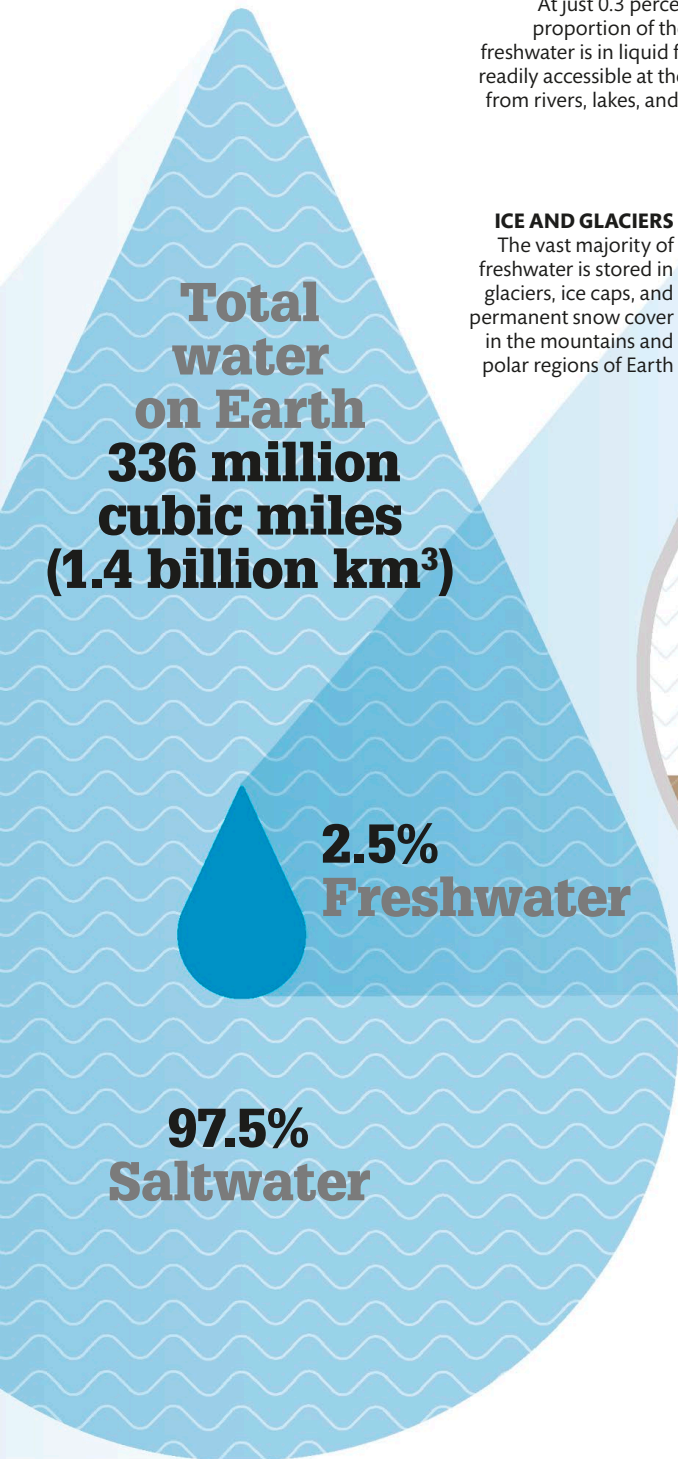
WATER

Life began in the oceans but spread to the land, where all animals and plants rely on freshwater

WATER-RICH NATIONS

Countries' economies rely on freshwater. Brazil's most populous region, São Paulo, suffered a severe drought in the years 2014-17. With two-thirds of the country's power grid dependent on water reservoirs providing hydroelectric power, rationing is inevitable. Meanwhile, the continuing expansion of China's huge industrial output demands more and more freshwater.



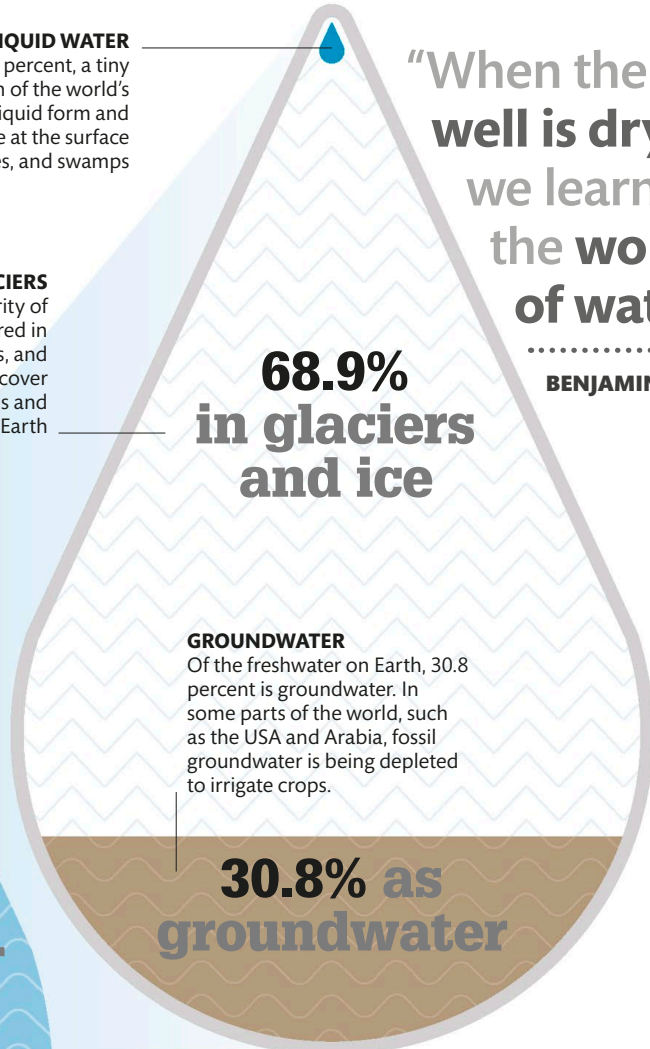


LIQUID WATER

At just 0.3 percent, a tiny proportion of the world's freshwater is in liquid form and readily accessible at the surface from rivers, lakes, and swamps

ICE AND GLACIERS

The vast majority of freshwater is stored in glaciers, ice caps, and permanent snow cover in the mountains and polar regions of Earth



GROUNDWATER

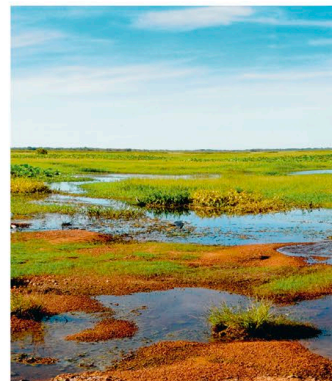
Of the freshwater on Earth, 30.8 percent is groundwater. In some parts of the world, such as the USA and Arabia, fossil groundwater is being depleted to irrigate crops.

“When the well is dry, we learn the worth of water.”

.....
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Freshwater sources

Ecosystems that store water include healthy soils, forests, and wetlands such as marshes and blanket bogs. Acidic peatlands in cool, wet climates also hold a lot of water. These environments are changing due to three main forces: global warming, which can change rainfall patterns and melt glaciers and ice caps; excessive water extraction to meet rising demand; and pollution, which contaminates an already limited water resource.



WETLANDS OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA



The Water Cycle

The freshwater that is vital for life on land, economic development, and farming is endlessly recycled. The process begins with water evaporating from seas, lakes, and forests to form clouds (see panel, opposite). When rain falls, the water is stored in forests, soil, and rocks to be released into rivers and lakes. Some is stored as snow, which melts in spring and summer, enabling rivers to flow during otherwise dry periods. Different human impacts, including deforestation, climate change, and soil damage, are interfering with how the water cycle works, with resulting water shortages in some parts of the world including North Africa and the Middle East.

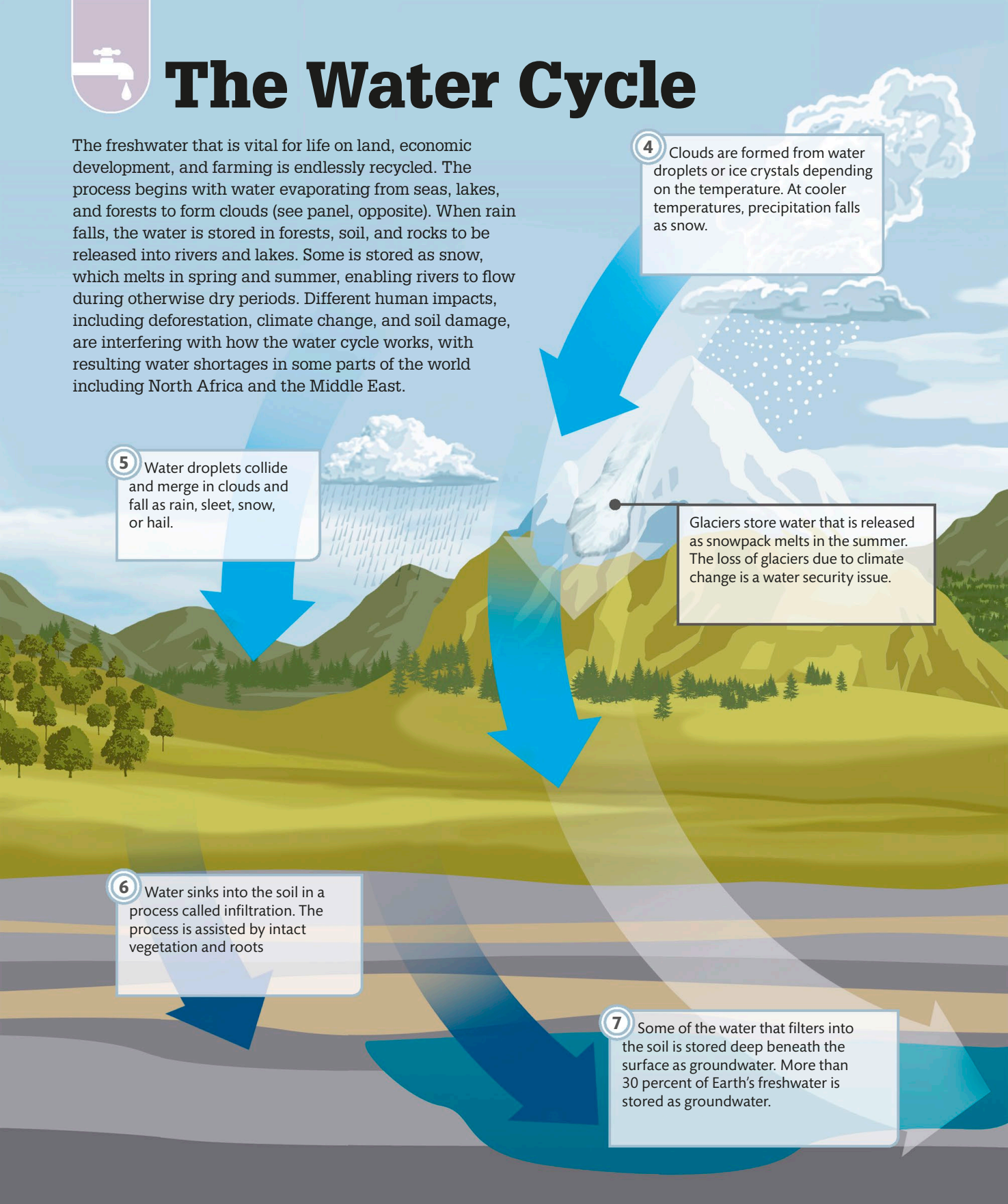
4 Clouds are formed from water droplets or ice crystals depending on the temperature. At cooler temperatures, precipitation falls as snow.

5 Water droplets collide and merge in clouds and fall as rain, sleet, snow, or hail.

Glaciers store water that is released as snowpack melts in the summer. The loss of glaciers due to climate change is a water security issue.

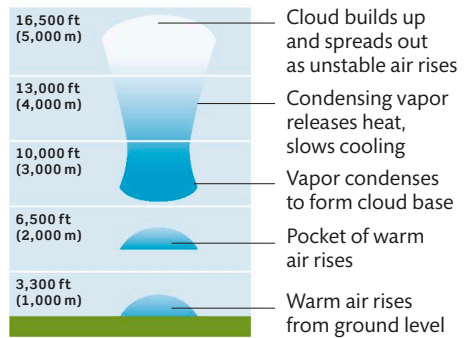
6 Water sinks into the soil in a process called infiltration. The process is assisted by intact vegetation and roots

7 Some of the water that filters into the soil is stored deep beneath the surface as groundwater. More than 30 percent of Earth's freshwater is stored as groundwater.



HOW CLOUDS ARE FORMED

Clouds form as warm air is forced upward. As water condenses in rising air, it releases heat. This warms the air mass and causes it to rise farther. The air cools and the relative humidity increases. Rising air is saturated, and water vapor collects around airborne particles to form a cloud.



3 As water vapor rises, it cools and condenses into water droplets.

2 Plants and trees take in water through their roots. Most of it passes out through the pores in their leaves as water vapor.

Cloud forests harvest water from clouds to create flows of liquid water. The large surface areas of leaves at cool, cloudy altitudes snatch water from clouds and are dripping wet, even when it is not raining.

1 Water is heated by the sun and turns into vapor. Microscopic plankton release a gas called dimethyl sulfide that hastens the condensation of vapor and "seeds" clouds.

8 Groundwater flows beneath the surface and eventually discharges into the sea, mostly via rivers.



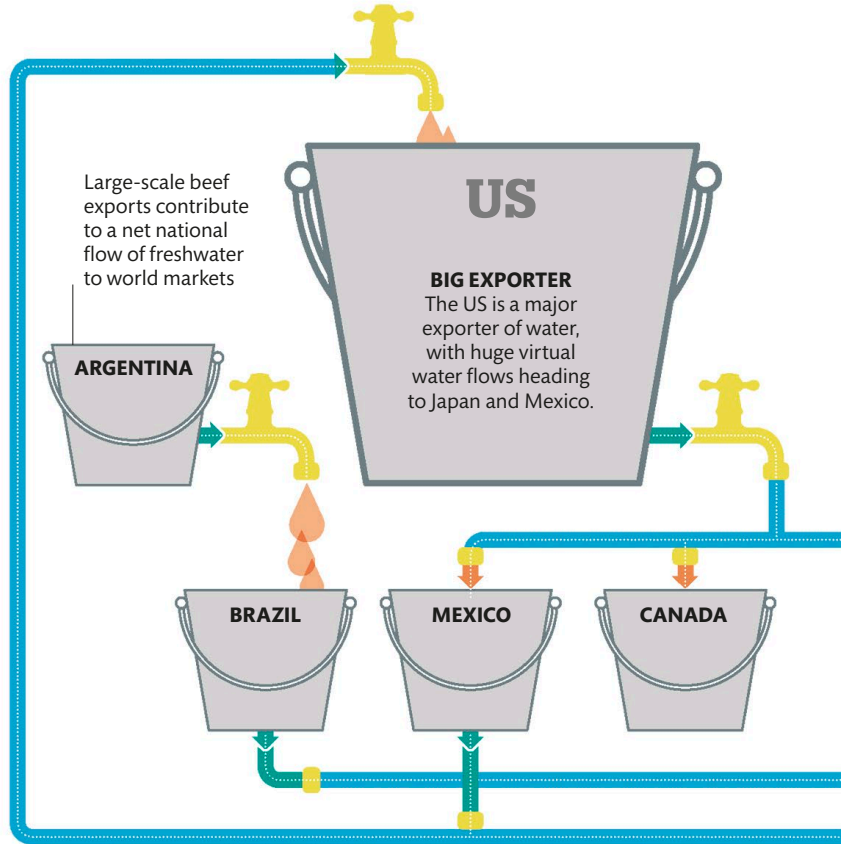
Water Footprint

It is not the everyday water that we use at home that forms most of our water consumption. The vast majority we use is “hidden” water needed to grow food, produce goods, and generate energy.

Water resources are more vital to world trade than oil and financial capital. Similar to a carbon footprint (see pp50–51), a “water footprint” shows the extent and location of water used by individuals, businesses, and countries. This allows us to calculate the amount of “virtual” water. This is the water used to make traded goods and helps reveal which countries rely on freshwater imports to meet their needs—for example, those with limited water resources of their own.

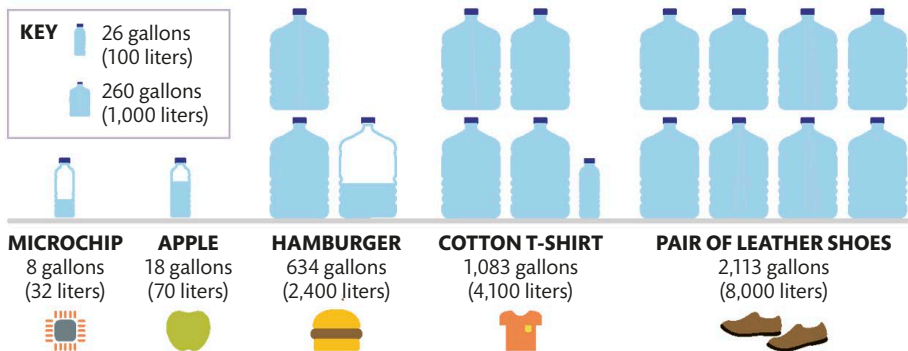
Trading virtual water

All countries import and export food, so they all trade virtual water. The volume of water needed to trade agricultural and industrial products in 1996–2005 averaged 82 trillion cubic feet (2.3 trillion cubic meters) per year, or about five times the volume of Lake Erie, North America. Among the biggest net exporters of virtual water are the US, China, Canada, Brazil, and Australia. Among the biggest net importers are Europe, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and the Middle East.



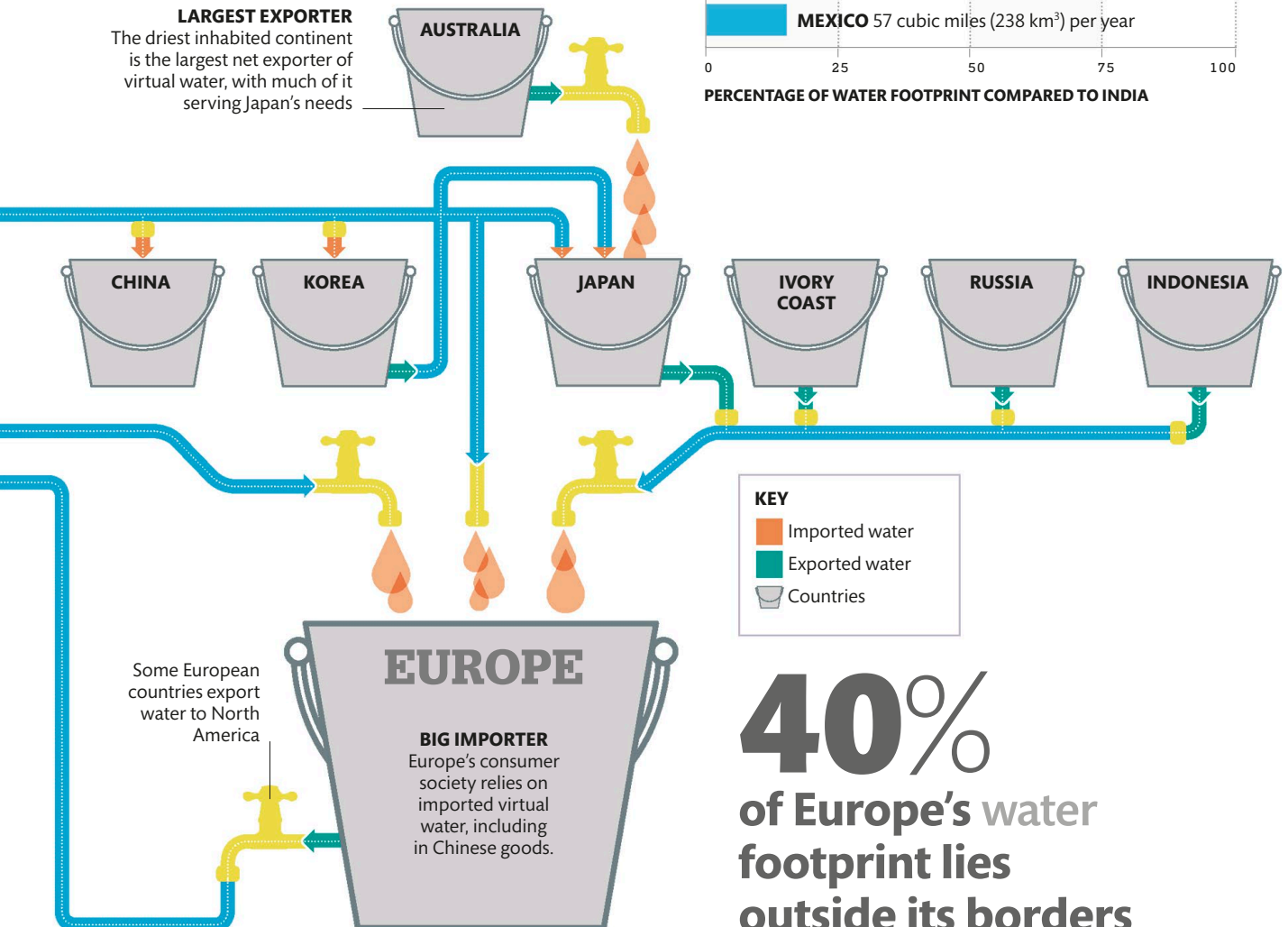
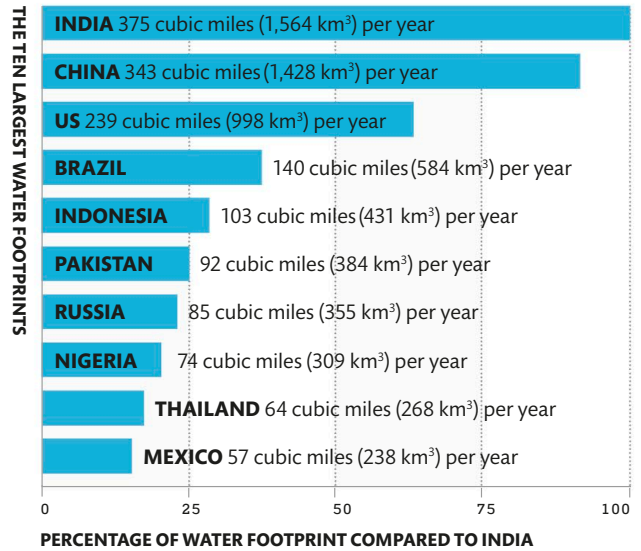
HOW MUCH WATER?

Each person in the UK uses an average of 38 gallons (145 liters) of water each day for cooking, cleaning, and washing. When including virtual water, however, this figure rises to a colossal 898 gallons (3,400 liters) per day. Cotton and leather goods have a significant water footprint. The longer these products can be made to last, the lower their overall impact will be.



Largest water footprints

The top water-consuming countries include those with both high and low per capita incomes, revealing that freshwater is vital at all stages of economic development. Countries with low rainfall face bigger challenges than wetter ones. Some countries, such as Brazil, rely on rainwater to meet their needs for food production, whereas India uses a lot more river water to irrigate crops for its huge agricultural sector. Roughly two-thirds of China's water footprint is used for agriculture, with one-quarter supplying its massive manufacturing sector.



40%
of Europe's water footprint lies outside its borders



Consuming Passions

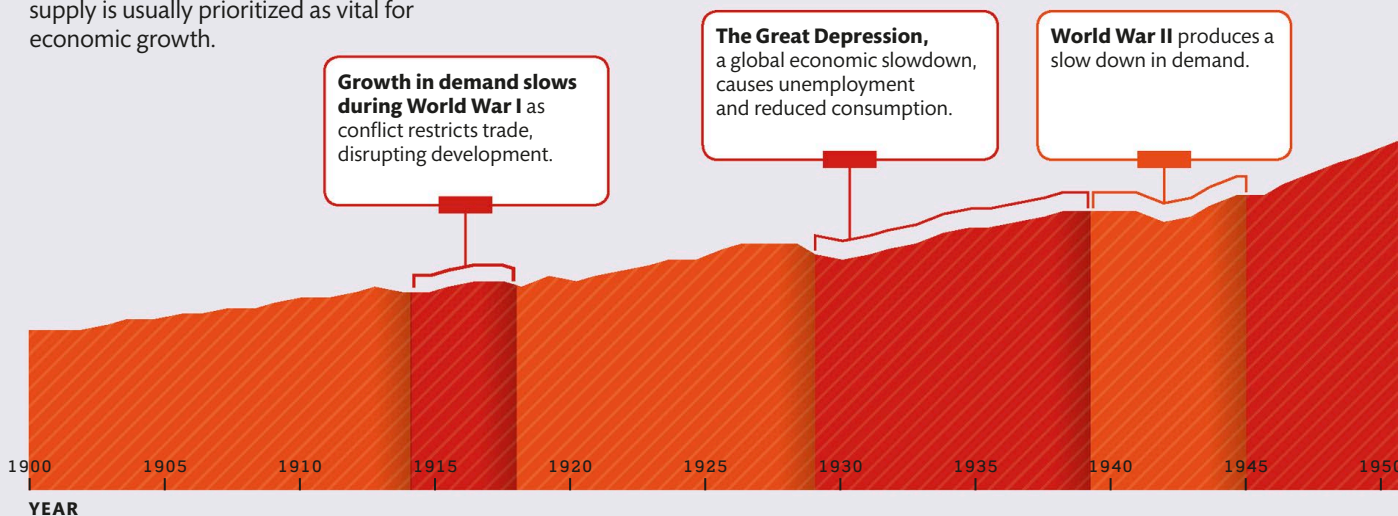
The last century saw a dramatic increase in demand for all kinds of natural resources. Today, the total combined consumption of construction materials, ores and minerals, fossil fuels, and biomass is about 10 times bigger than in 1900. While rising demand fuels economic growth, it places increasing pressure on natural systems, leading to a wide range of environmental problems. Unless we adopt different consumption and production patterns, projected population growth and economic development will lead to a further rise in demand—and this will intensify environmental pressures.

Rocketing resources

Every item we use and dispose of originates from natural resources. Some, such as wood used to make paper, are renewable; others, such as minerals, are not. Turning raw materials into products uses energy and water and creates wastes of different kinds, including carbon dioxide. The world's rocketing demand for resources is rarely seen in the context of the atmospheric and ecosystem damage it causes. Even if such impacts are understood, resource supply is usually prioritized as vital for economic growth.

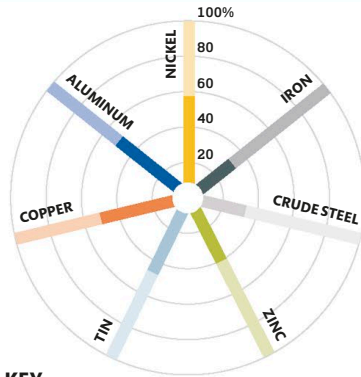
“There are **constant assaults** on the natural environment, the result of **unbridled consumerism**, and this will have **serious consequences** for the world economy.”

.....
POPE FRANCIS



THE BIG USERS

When it comes to the consumption of natural resources, we are not all equal. Higher-income countries, such as France, Germany, Japan, the US, and the UK, use more natural resources due to their high-consumption patterns than countries with a lower average income per person. As efforts to stimulate economic growth in poorer countries achieve some level of success, however, consumption patterns there will begin to follow those of wealthier nations.



KEY

Solid colors
France, Germany, Japan, US, and UK

Tinted colors
Population of rest of world

Consumption begins to grow, signaling the start of "The Great Acceleration."

1973
Global oil crisis begins, causing a temporary flattening of demand as higher energy prices feed into consumer markets

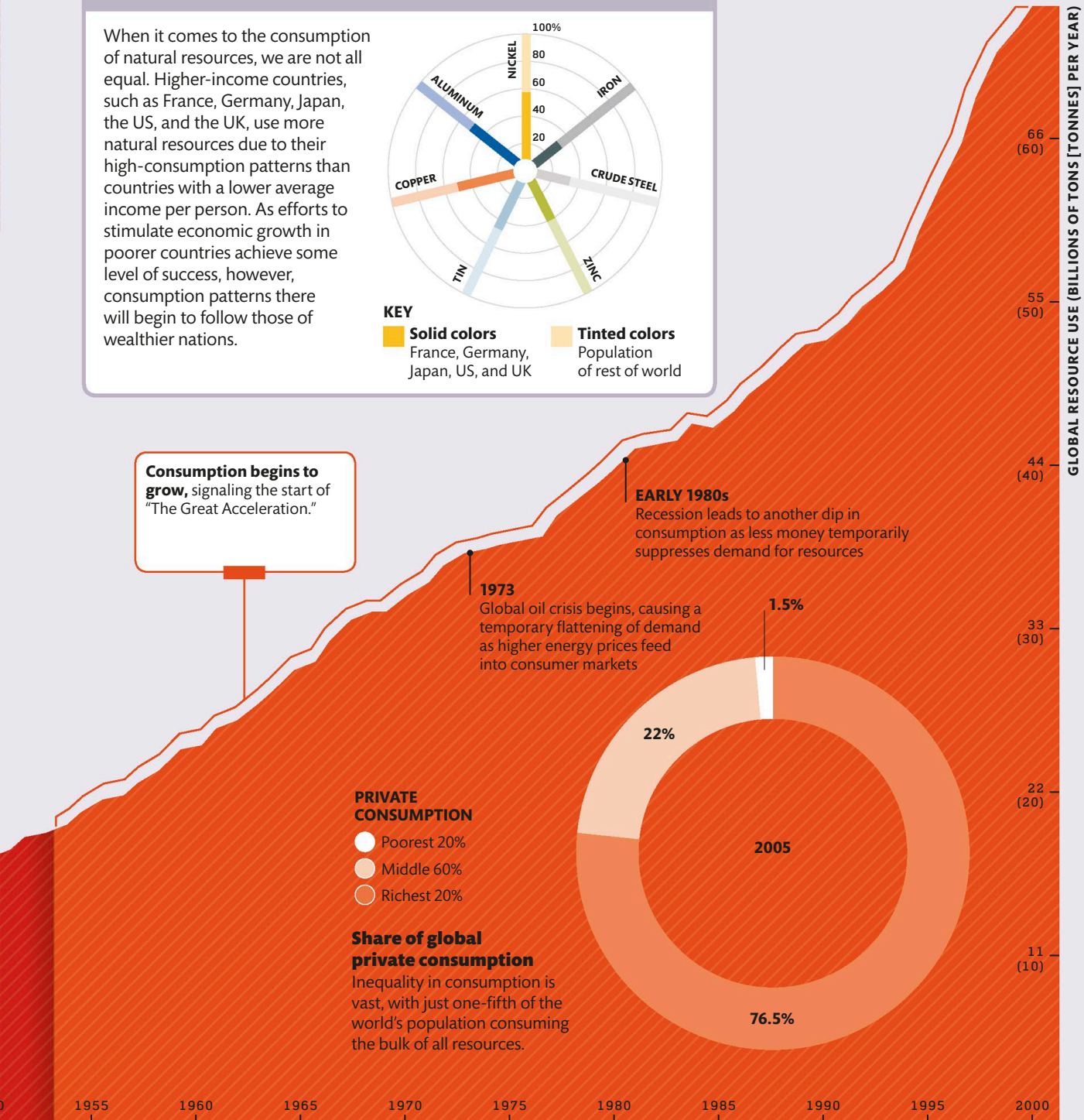
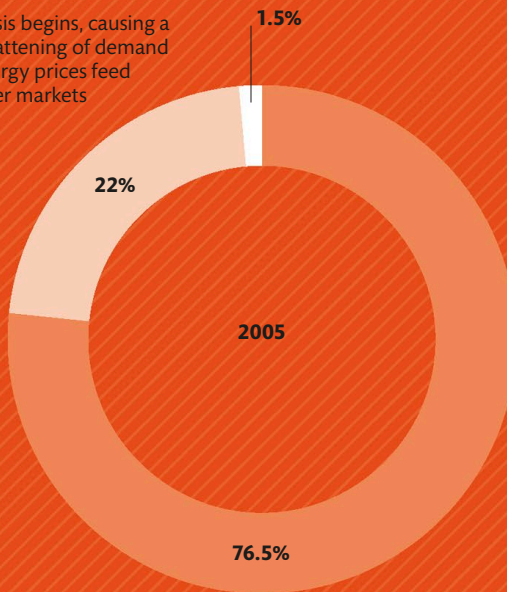
EARLY 1980s
Recession leads to another dip in consumption as less money temporarily suppresses demand for resources

PRIVATE CONSUMPTION

- Poorest 20%
- Middle 60%
- Richest 20%

Share of global private consumption

Inequality in consumption is vast, with just one-fifth of the world's population consuming the bulk of all resources.





The rise of Consumerism

Rising living standards have led to an explosion in demand for all kinds of consumer goods, ranging from disposable packaging to complex durable products such as cars. All require natural resources—and all eventually become waste.

The spread of middle-class lifestyles has produced a rocketing demand for resources. Bottled water and cars are just two examples that reflect wider trends. Whereas both were once absent from our lives, today they are pervasive, especially in richer countries and those with fast-growing economies.

Rising demand for these and other products puts pressure on

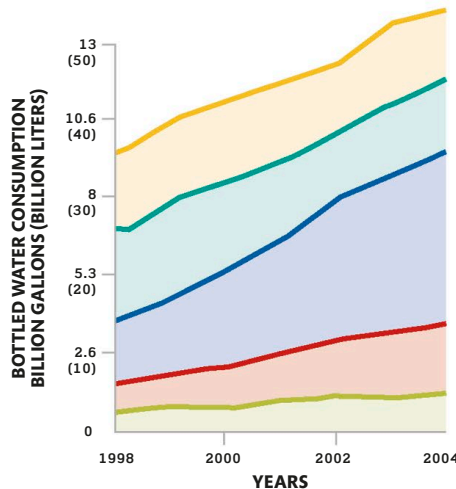
limited natural resources such as oil and minerals. Increasing amounts of water and energy are needed for their manufacture, while increased product consumption is adding to global waste. Cleaner, more efficient production methods and the more effective elimination of waste, which can in turn be used to make new products, can diminish the impact of more affluent lifestyles.

Bottling water: the true costs

Bottled water is usually sold in plastic or glass bottles. Extracting the water itself can sometimes deplete resources and lead to local environmental impacts, but it is in the energy used for transporting the product and the manufacture of its packaging that the biggest global effects are seen. Waste generated by plastic bottles is another serious problem.

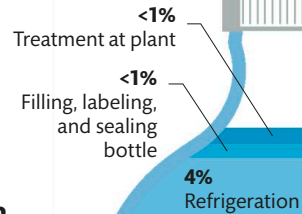
KEY

- Europe
- North America
- Asia
- South America
- Africa, Middle East, Oceania



Increasing consumption

Sales of bottled water have increased dramatically since the 1990s and by 2010 had reached a staggering 61 billion gallons (230 billion liters) worldwide.



Energy in a bottle

Treating water and filling a bottle with it takes only a tiny amount of energy. Making and shipping the plastic container demand 95 percent of the total required energy costs.

45%

TRANSPORTATION

50%

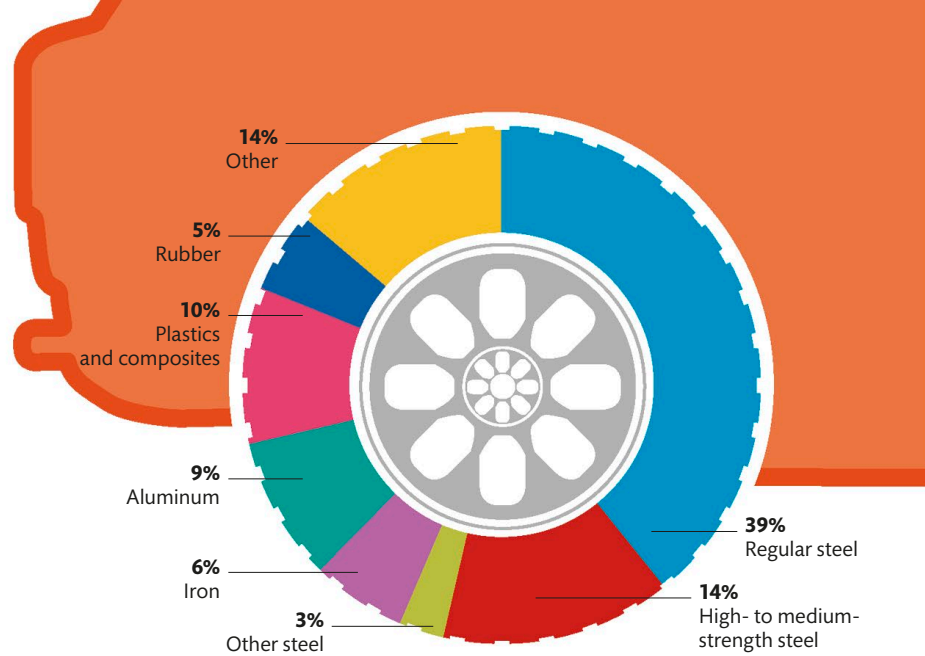
PRODUCTION OF PLASTIC BOTTLE

877

the number of plastic bottles thrown away every second

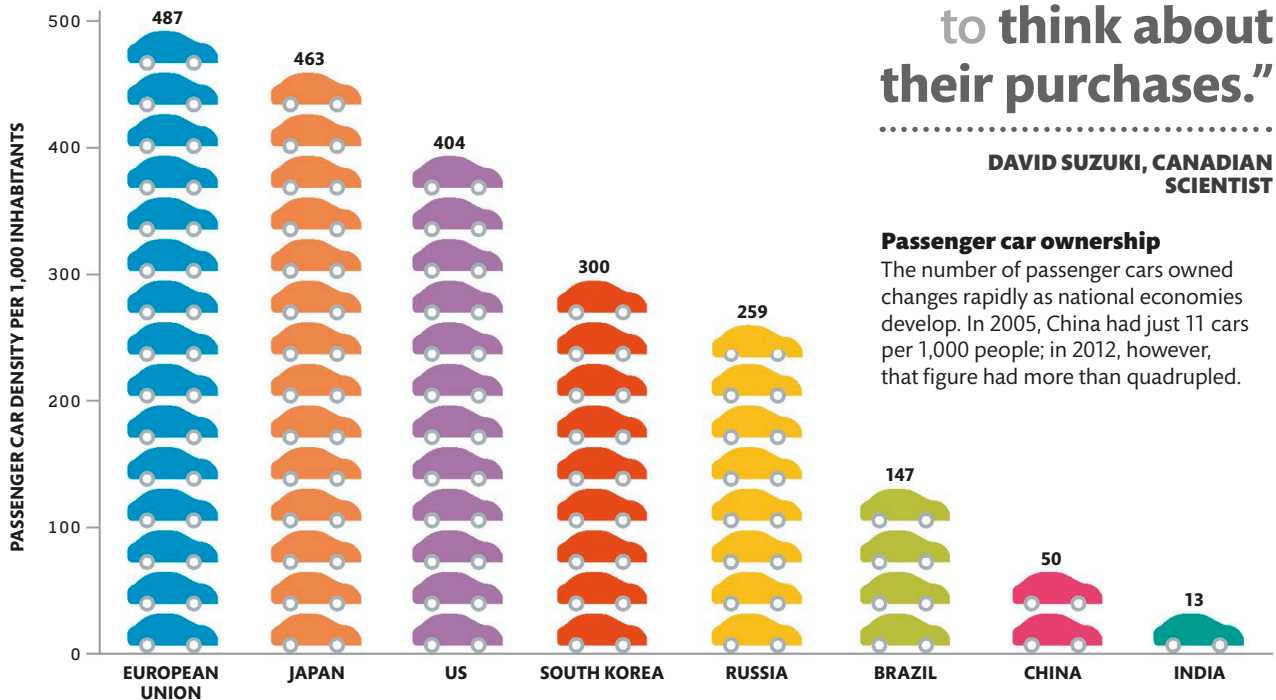
Materials in a car

The process of car manufacturing requires everything from metal ore extraction to applying paint and fitting complex electronics. Making cars also uses huge quantities of energy and water. Manufacturers seek ways to reduce the overall impact of vehicles, not only when driven but also in production and by recovering materials when cars are scrapped. To that end, some companies are building lighter-weight and more fuel-efficient cars made from recycled aluminum.



Vehicle ownership

Personal car ownership is strongly correlated with rising household income. Only in the US, the world's most mature car market, has the number of cars per 1,000 people recently stabilized; there were about 400 vehicles per every 1,000 people in the country in 2012.



“If we want a sustainable society, we need to get consumers to think about their purchases.”

DAVID SUZUKI, CANADIAN SCIENTIST

Passenger car ownership

The number of passenger cars owned changes rapidly as national economies develop. In 2005, China had just 11 cars per 1,000 people; in 2012, however, that figure had more than quadrupled.



Wasteful World

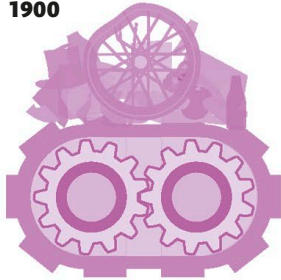
All the waste we generate originates from natural resources, which are often extracted in environmentally damaging ways. Waste disposal also causes problems, such as pollution and climate change.

World population increase and economic growth have led to an explosion in demand for resources. As the overall level of consumption has risen, there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of waste generated. That waste includes food, wood, metals, construction materials, and plastics, as well as complex high-technology products such as cars and computers. The production of all of these items results in greenhouse gas emissions, and even more are added during the

process of disposing of them: for example, rotting food waste in landfill sites releases methane, a very powerful climate-changing gas.

There are three basic approaches to waste management: burying it in the ground, burning it (sometimes with energy recovery technology), or recycling. From an environmental viewpoint, however, the best option is to avoid producing waste in the first place.

1900

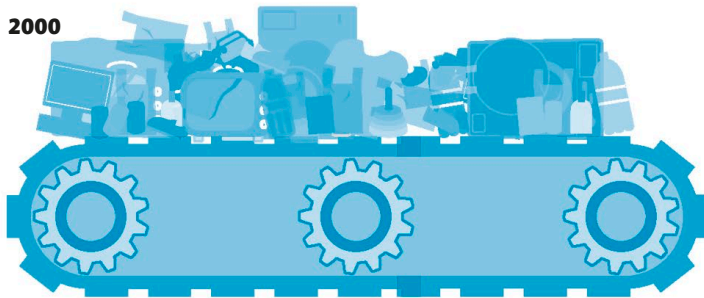


0.55
million
tons/day
(0.5 MILLION TONNES/DAY)

Mounting waste

In 1900, the world produced about half a million tons of solid waste per day. By 2000, that quantity was six times higher, and by 2100, based on projected population, social, and economic trends, it is expected to quadruple again to about 12 million tons. Adopting more ecologically sound consumption patterns and increasing recycling could, however, lead to a much lower daily peak of approximately 10.5 million tons by the middle of the 21st century.

2000



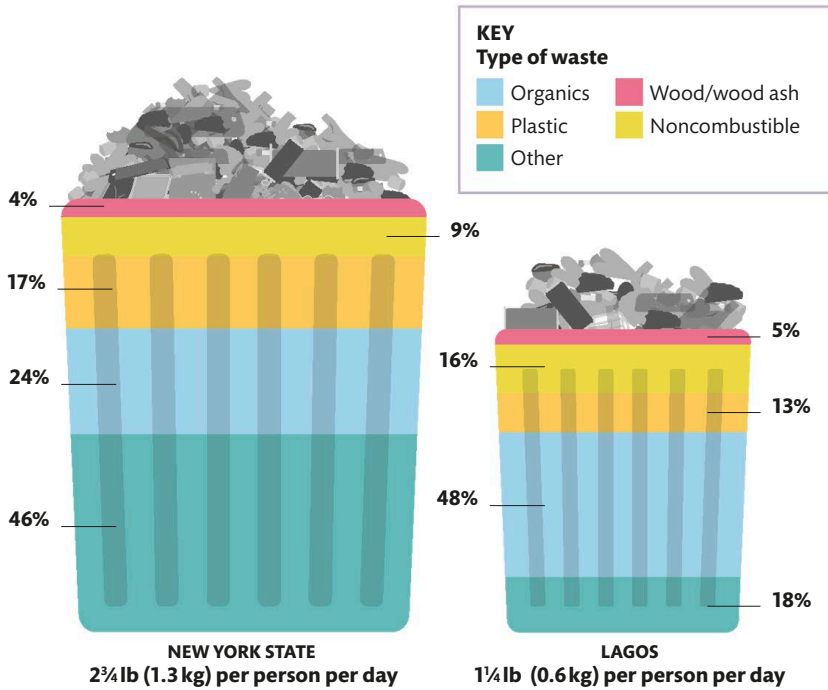
3.3 million
tons/day
(3 MILLION TONNES/DAY)

2100



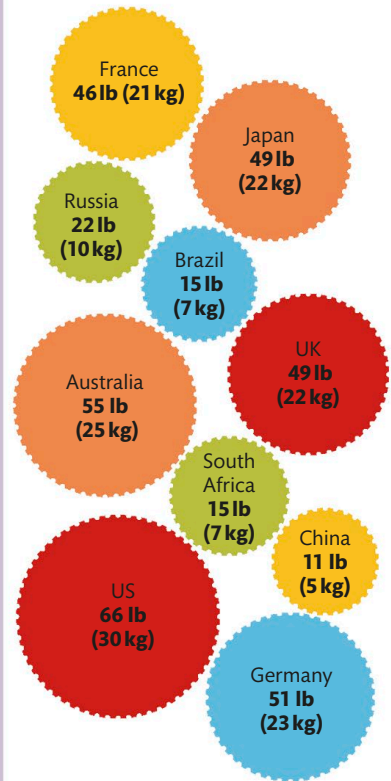
What's in the bin?

There are huge differences in waste produced in the affluent west and that generated by developing nations. For example, a far higher proportion of organic waste is put into trash cans in Lagos, Nigeria, compared with New York State. New Yorkers waste far more plastic, and overall, the American consumers are producing about three times as much waste per person per day as people who generally live on lower incomes in Lagos.



TECHNO TRASH

About 55 million tons (50 million tonnes) of electronic waste is generated each year. Computers, cell phones, and televisions are among the products that comprise this growing mountain.



TOP 10 ELECTRONIC WASTE PRODUCERS PER PERSON

700 The number of years it can take a **plastic bottle** to break down

13.3 million tons/day
(12 MILLION TONNES/DAY)





Where Does It All Go?

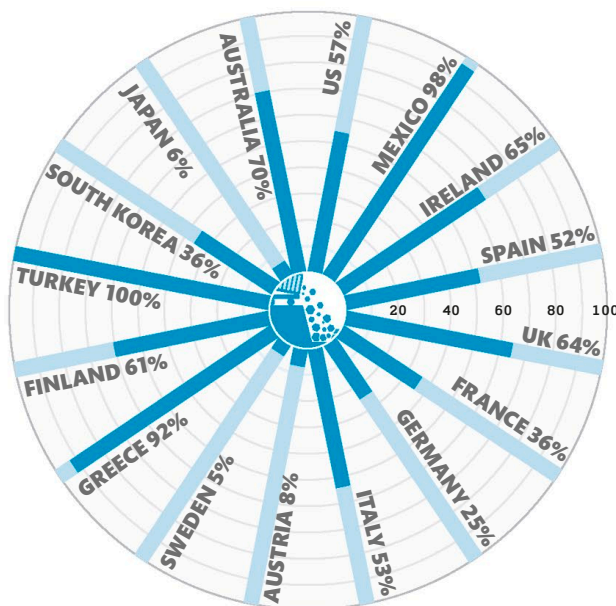
As our consumption levels rise and we generate increasing quantities of trash, the management of solid waste has become an unprecedented—and increasingly important—challenge.

Currently, four main options exist when it comes to the disposal of solid waste material: burying waste in landfill; burning it in different kinds of incinerators, some of which are also capable of generating heat and/or power; recycling; and, for organic matter, composting or anaerobic digestion to produce biogas for energy, while also recovering nutrients that would otherwise be lost.

The first two disposal methods are the least environmentally sustainable. The huge diversity of man-made materials, including many types of plastic, that cannot be easily separated and therefore recycled exacerbate the problem. Unfortunately, however, these two options are still viewed as the cheapest and easiest solutions for the growing waste mountains being generated by many societies today.

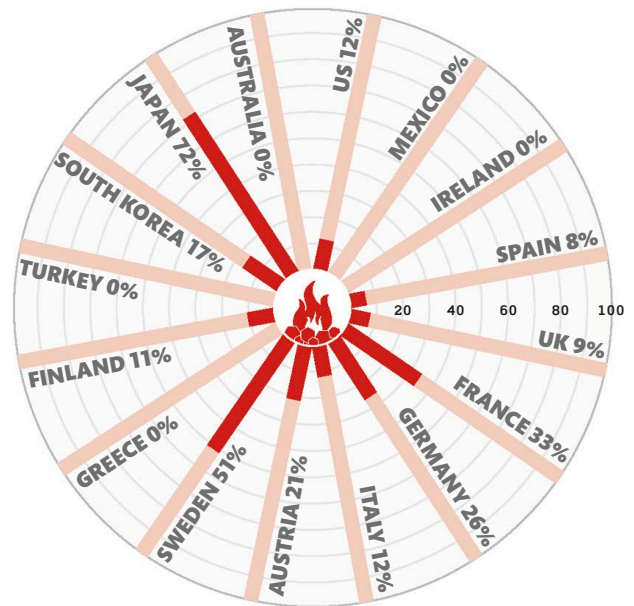
Where waste ends up

The figures presented here are based on data collected on member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Each wheel shows the percentage of a particular waste-disposal method used by each country in 2003–2005. Since then, some of the nations involved have made progress by reducing landfill use and increasing recycling rates.



Landfill

Burying waste in the ground can cause groundwater pollution when toxic substances are released. Rotting organic waste also emits methane, one of the primary greenhouse gases.



Incineration

Burning any kind of waste can cause air pollution. In addition, burning plastics and other man-made substances also produces residual toxic ash that is frequently buried in landfill.



What can we do?

- › **Governments** can set targets to shift more waste to composting and recycling.
- › **Governments can** provide incentives to waste operators for change, for example, by taxing landfill waste.
- › **Companies can** make packaging and electronic goods more recyclable.



What can I do?

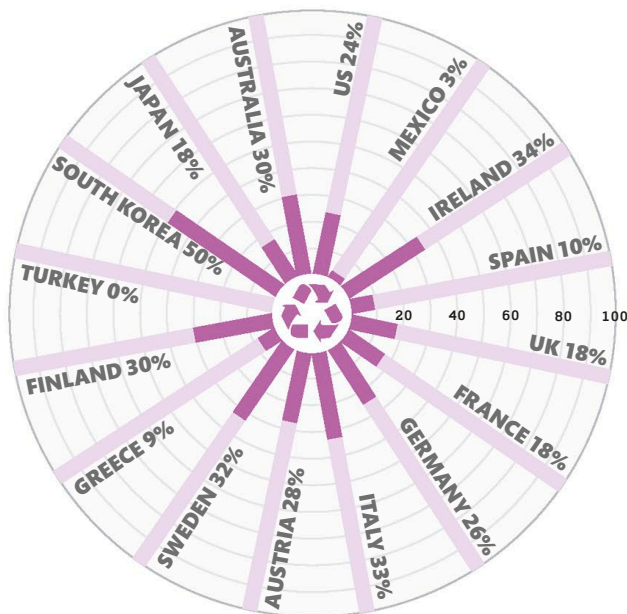
- › **Know your waste.** Learn what can be recycled and put it in the correct bin, whether in your home or at a collection facility.
- › **Buy with care.** Avoid unnecessary packaging and single-use or disposable items.
- › **Avoid plastic bags.** Buy durable shopping bags to use when you go shopping.



Poisoning the Earth

As waste breaks down in landfill, water filters through it, forming a toxic liquid called leachate that can seep into soil and groundwater.

90% The energy saving when making an aluminum can from **recycled waste** compared with **ore**



Recycling

Glass, metals, paper, cardboard, and some types of plastic can be recycled into new products. This process takes much less energy than manufacturing the same items from raw materials—and it also saves resources.



Composting

Organic matter such as food waste, agricultural waste, and plant material can be used to make biogas, generating heat and electricity while at the same time saving nutrients that can be returned to the soil as fertilizer.



Chemical Cocktail

The number of man-made chemical substances being released into the environment is increasing dramatically. We don't yet know the impact they may have, including any "cocktail effects" if two or more combine.

Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are mostly man-made compounds that do not readily degrade or break down in the environment. Because of this, they last a long time and accumulate in food chains, causing serious biological effects, especially among larger organisms. POPs include many chemicals that were developed as beneficial substances, such as the insecticide DDT and the PCBs once used in electrical equipment. Others, such as dioxins, are created via combustion, such as by burning waste in incinerators.

THE RISE IN NEW CHEMICALS

Since the 1940s, millions more synthetic compounds have been invented, registered, manufactured, and released into the environment. Many have not been properly assessed for their biological impacts, either on their own or in combination with other substances.

KEY
Cumulative number of new chemical substances (millions)

- 2015
- 2005
- 1990
- 1975



What is biomagnification?

As POPs move through food webs, they become more concentrated as one species feeds on another. For example, after the (now banned) insecticide DDT entered lakes and other water sources, it built up in the bodies of top predators such as fish-eating ospreys, causing them to lay thin-shelled eggs that broke when adult birds incubated them.

DDT ENTERS
water body;
contamination begins

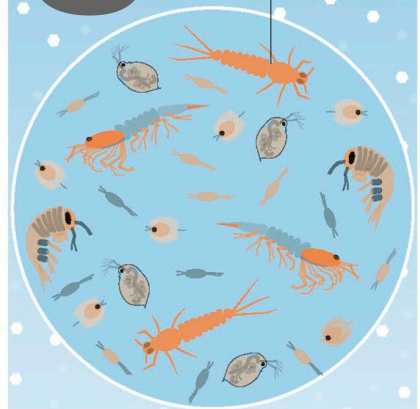
0.000003
parts per million (ppm)

DDT runs off fields in rainwater

Once applied, DDT enters bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, at about 0.000003 parts per million (ppm).

ZOOPLANKTON
feed on DDT-
contaminated food

0.04
ppm



Small creatures consume DDT

Zooplankton, tiny creatures that live in water, consume microscopic food items contaminated with DDT, and their bodies accumulate the chemical to around 0.04 ppm because the substance does not break down once eaten.



What can we do?

- › **Governments can work together** to control the effects of chemicals, such as via the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.
- › **Governments can** introduce more rigorous testing regimes to reveal the potential biological effects of new and existing chemicals.

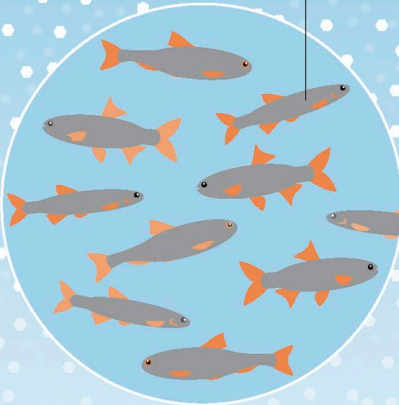


What can I do?

- › **Reduce your exposure** to potentially harmful substances. Start by looking up what is listed on the labels of consumer goods.
- › **Join campaigns** that support regulating chemicals entering the environment and advocate more effective screening of new substances.

SMALL FISH
feed on
zooplankton

0.5
ppm

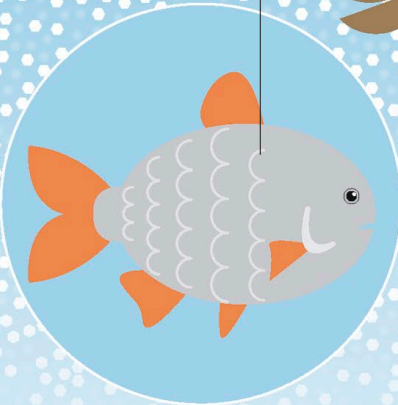


Small fish feed on the plankton

As small fish eat small creatures contaminated with DDT, they further concentrate the DDT to around 0.5 ppm. The DDT is lodged in the fish's bodies but does not break down; it continues to accumulate in larger amounts.

LARGE FISH
eat smaller fish

2
ppm

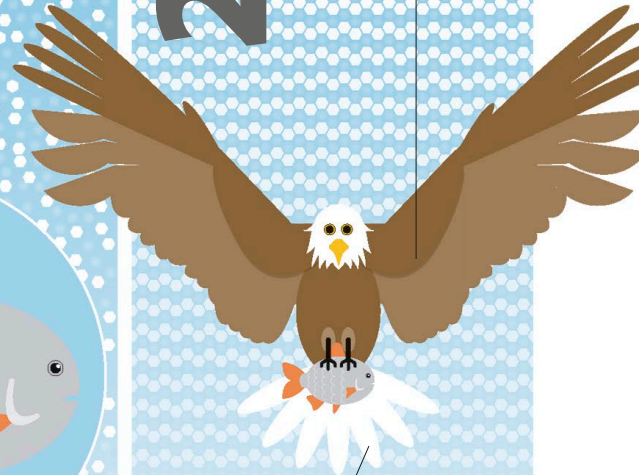


Predatory fish

Larger fish, such as trout, that eat smaller fish have higher concentrations of DDT in their bodies, at around 2 ppm. These fish become food for top predators, such as bears, fish-eating birds, and ultimately humans.

TOP PREDATOR
eats large fish

25
ppm



**DDT IS
MAGNIFIED**
to toxic levels of
around 25 ppm

DDT reaches top of the food chain

At around 25 ppm—about 10 million times more concentrated than when the chemical first entered the water—this amount threatens the survival of many species; for example, bald eagle populations were wiped out in much of North America when DDT was used.

“As human beings, we are more urbanized than ever before, and we are out of touch with the natural world. Yet we are 100% dependent on its resources.”

.....
SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, BRITISH BROADCASTER AND NATURALIST



The Global Age



Better Lives for Many



Our Changing Atmosphere



Changing the Land



Sea Changes



The Great Decline



2 CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGE

Some aspects of rapid change are positive, but others are causing negative consequences for people and the natural world, including the impacts of climate change, pollution, and land degradation.



The Global Age

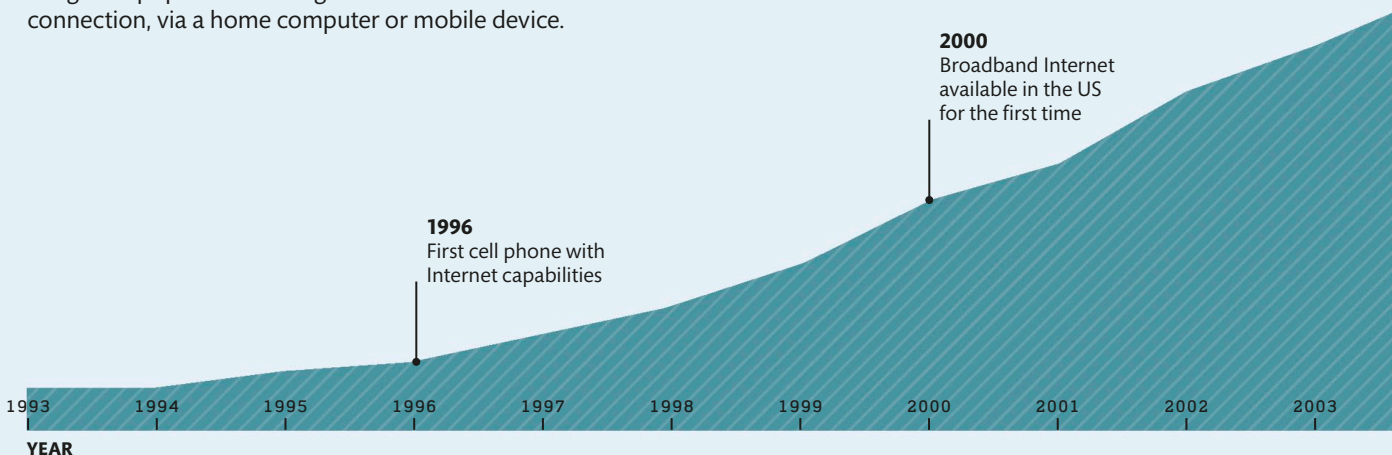
Our world is more interconnected than ever before. People can share information, ideas, and images between computer devices all over the world. Airplanes fly millions of travelers to cities huge distances apart every day. Once the domain of a small elite, access to cheap travel, high-speed Internet, and mobile communications is now growing fastest in developing countries. Interconnection speeds up economic growth, and it shapes all forms of businesses.

Rise of the Internet

In 1989, English inventor Tim Berners-Lee devised the World Wide Web, which kick-started an information revolution. Events can be watched anywhere in real time, while email offers cheap communications for anyone with an Internet connection. Home Internet connections became available in the 1990s, and each year many millions more people joined the global digital community. By 2005, there were 1 billion Internet users. This doubled in just five years and by 2015 tripled to about 3 billion. This graph charts the incredible rate of expansion, with more than 40 percent of the global population having access to an Internet connection, via a home computer or mobile device.

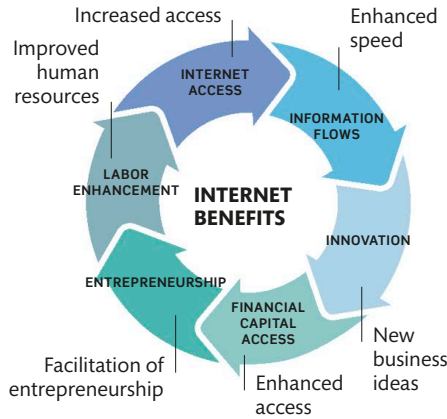
“We must make globalization an engine that lifts people out of hardship and misery, not a force that holds them down.”

KOFI ANNAN, FORMER UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL



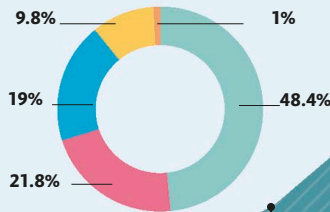
ENHANCING ECONOMIES

Internet access has had a positive impact on economies across the world. The ability to deliver company information quickly, widely, and cheaply means businesses can share corporate news, provide flexible working, lead in innovation, and effectively manage finance. The Internet has also diminished the power of established media, allowed social movements to spread their messages, and empowered research communities to share data.



Global Internet usage

With rapid growth in both population and economic prosperity, today almost half of Internet users are in Asia.



KEY (2013)

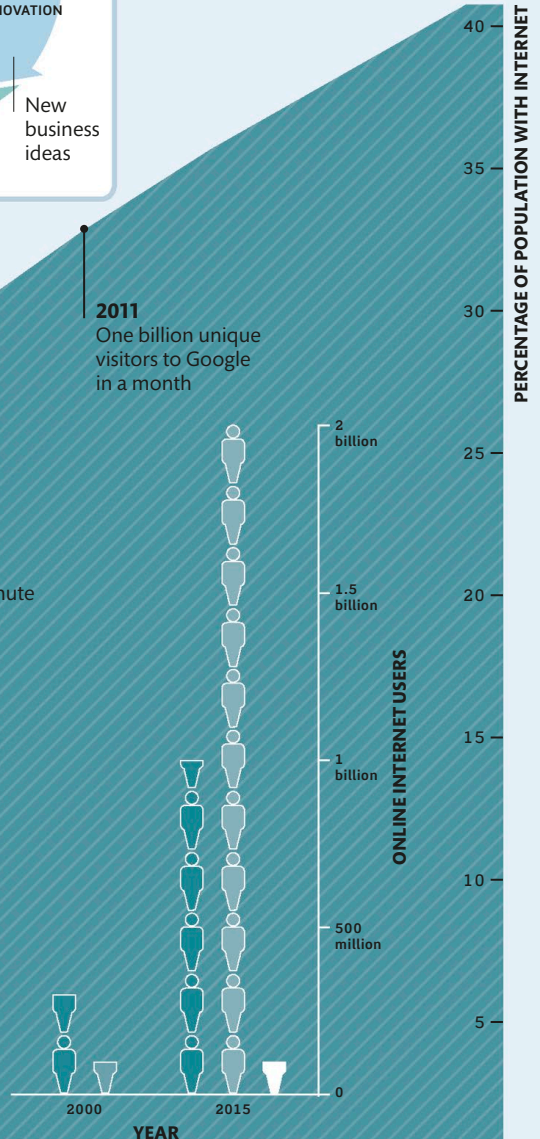
- Oceania
- Europe
- Asia
- Africa
- North and South America

KEY

- Developed countries
- Developing countries
- Least developed countries

Developing world

The last 15 years saw a dramatic rise in Internet access in the developing world. Today, one-third of Internet users live in developed countries, down from 75 percent in 2000.



2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014



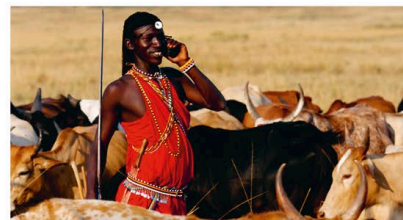
Mobile Technology

Today, cell phones are ubiquitous all over the world—from the biggest cities to remote villages—as more and more people connect to the virtual grid to make calls, send texts, and use the internet.

Cell phones have changed from being a bulky luxury to an everyday item. The first cell phone was developed in 1973, but it didn't become commercially available for another 10 years, when it was sold for US\$4,000— equivalent to US \$10,000 in 2018 prices. Many thought it a pricey gimmick.

At the turn of the century, cell phone use was concentrated in

Europe and North America, but usage has skyrocketed throughout the world as the technology has become cheaper. The instant communication and information of mobile technology is transforming the way people live their lives. Cell phones are no longer just a means of voice communication but also give users access to banking, healthcare, and global news.



Remote connectivity

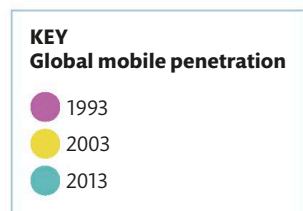
Nomadic peoples such as this Maasai warrior on the Kenyan plains now have ready access to mobile communication.

Upwardly mobile

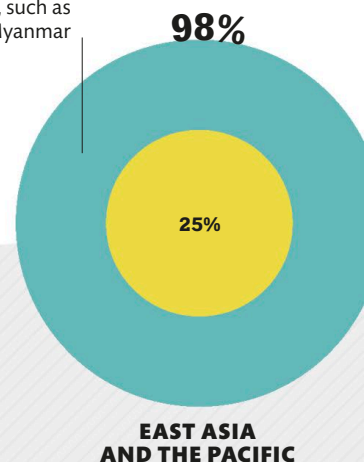
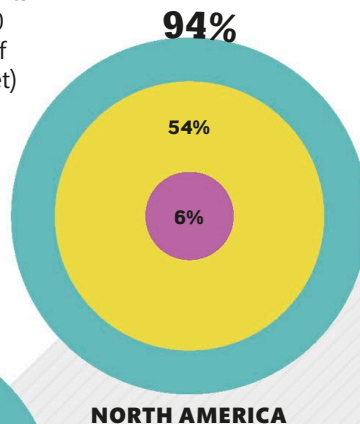
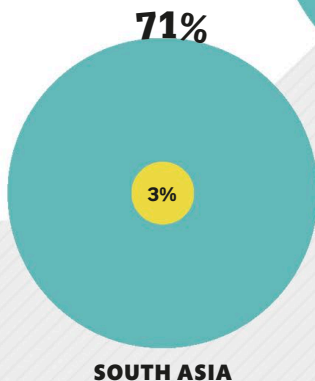
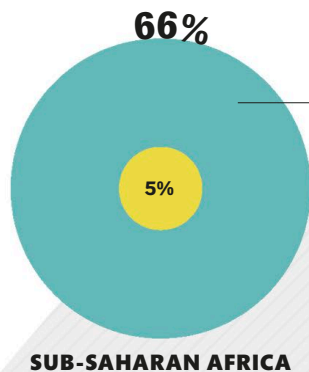
All regions have seen a massive expansion in cell phone use in the past 20 years. The biggest difference is seen in Latin America and the Middle East. In 2003, Latin America lagged behind its northern neighbors with only 23 percent use, but in just 10 years they reached 115 percent penetration (the number of mobile connections compared to the total available market) with more active cell phones than people living there.

UNEVEN COVERAGE

Uptake has soared to almost 100 percent but there are notable exceptions, such as North Korea and Myanmar



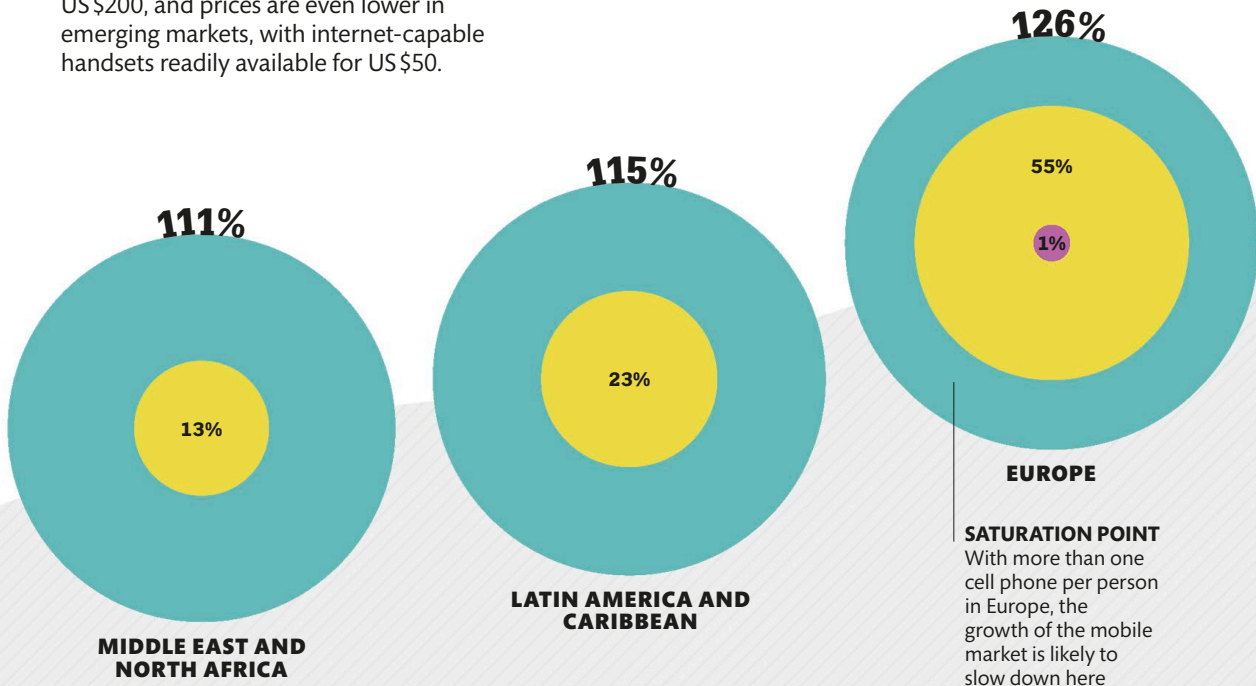
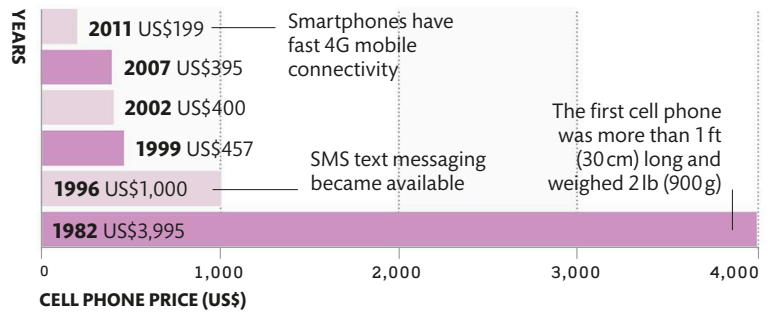
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY
After a slow initial start, many developing countries are deploying more advanced mobile technologies such as 4G networks



1.9 billion
The number of smartphone users worldwide

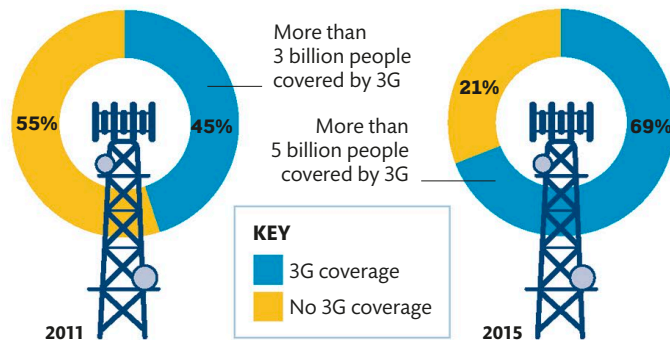
Affordable technology

The first available cell phones were out of reach for all but the very wealthy, but as demand has soared, prices have fallen. As prices fell, features increased, leading to the current success of the smartphone. Ongoing improvements in signal coverage, battery life, and handset size have helped drive their popularity since. In Europe, the average basic smartphone costs about US \$200, and prices are even lower in emerging markets, with internet-capable handsets readily available for US \$50.



EXPANDING MOBILE INTERNET ACCESS

Mobile internet is hugely popular across the globe, and in 2015 almost 70 percent of the world's population lived within 3G coverage—up from 45 percent in 2011. This is particularly significant in less-developed countries that lack the infrastructure needed for fixed connections. With smartphones available for as little as US \$50, cell phone internet subscriptions in the least developed countries increased 10-fold in the years 2012-17.





Taking to the Skies

The spectacular rise of air travel connects the world as never before. Modern aircraft permit cheap, long-distance transportation, enabling millions of people to travel and driving economic growth.

The first passenger aircraft took to the skies in the 1920s, with the first commercial jet airliners being introduced in the 1950s. Since then, passenger numbers have grown almost yearly as more routes have opened and become more affordable, and aircraft technology has continued to improve. Today, modern aircraft can carry several hundred people. In 2014, there were more than 30 million commercial flights, with the result that about half a million people were in the air at any one time. A network of major airports now connects the globe. The world's busiest airport is Hartsfield-Jackson airport in Atlanta, Georgia, which handled more than 104 million passengers in 2016.

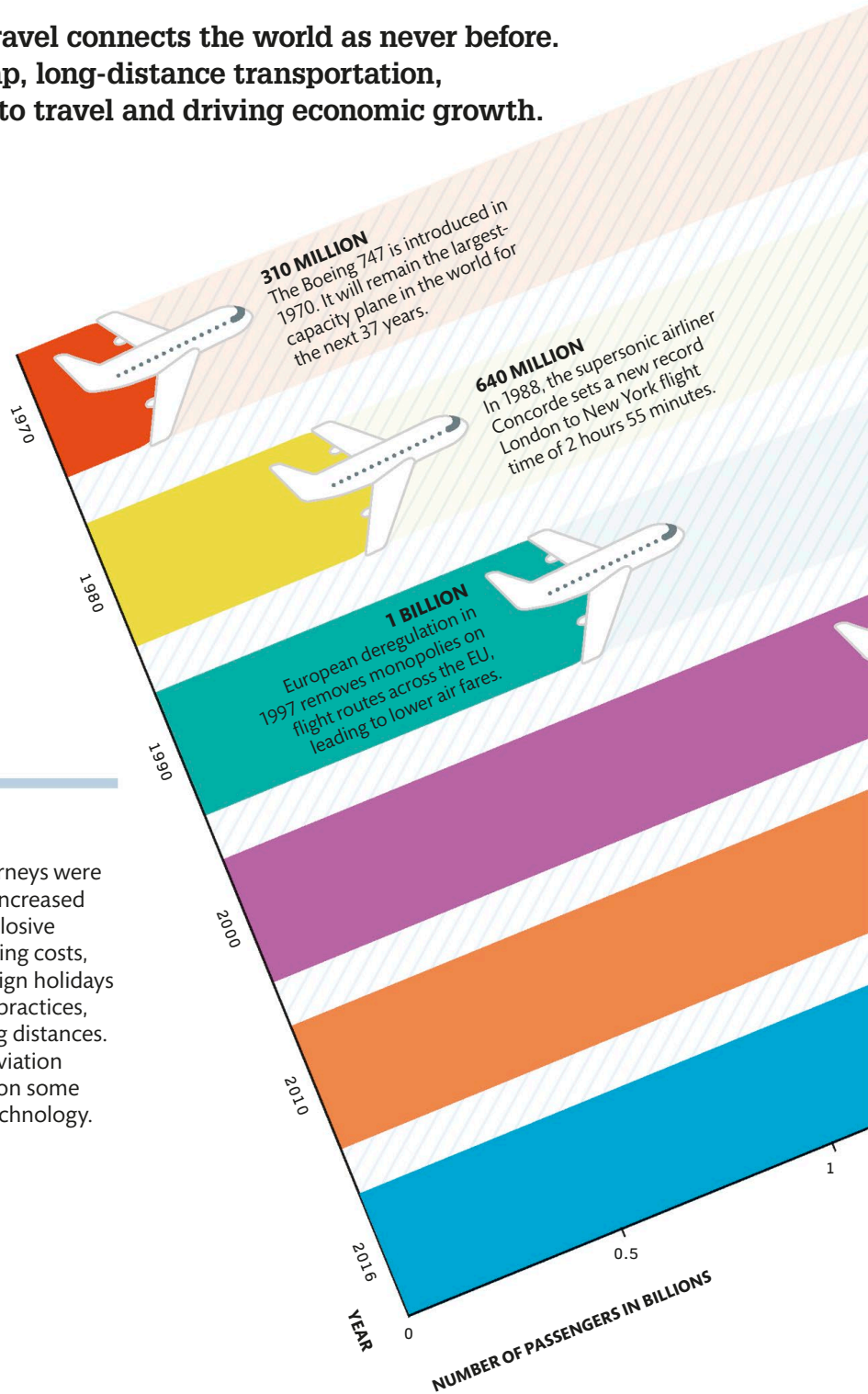
Growth of air travel

In 1970, some 300 million passenger journeys were made by plane. By 2016, this figure had increased more than tenfold to 3.7 billion. This explosive growth was largely a result of rapidly falling costs, which enabled more people to take foreign holidays and also permitted changes to business practices, with more face-to-face contact over long distances. The key drivers of reduced costs in the aviation sector were the removal of monopolies on some routes and more reliable and efficient technology.



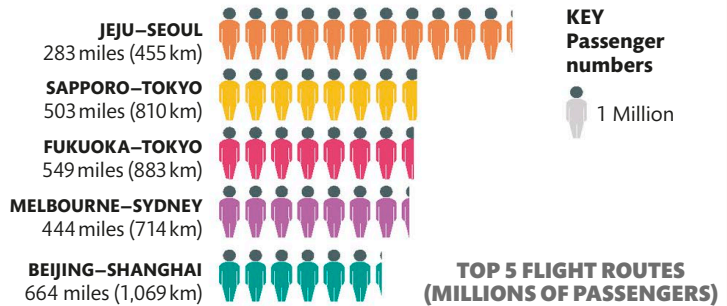
SEE ALSO...

› **Carbon footprint**, pp50–51



TOP FLIGHT ROUTES

The most popular flight routes in 2016 were all domestic, and four out of the top five were within the borders of South Korea, Japan, and China. This is because the rapid growth of a relatively affluent middle class in Asia has led to increased demand for flights, including short-haul pleasure trips. The most popular route was between the South Korean capital, Seoul, and Jeju, a holiday island in the south of the country.



1.7 BILLION
The Airbus A380 makes its first commercial flight in 2007. It supersedes the Boeing 747 as the largest passenger airliner, capable of carrying up to 850 passengers.

2.6 BILLION
Although about 10 million passengers are unable to fly due to a volcanic eruption in Iceland in April 2010, passenger numbers still increase from the previous year.

3.7 BILLION
Estimates of the number of air passengers suggest that about half a million people are flying at any one time.

1.5

2

2.5

3

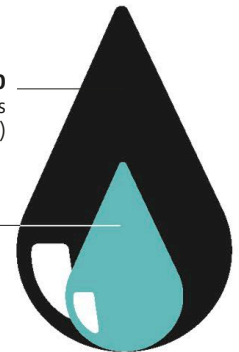
3.5

3.7

AMOUNT OF FUEL PER 100 PASSENGER MILES

1960
About 2.6 gallons
(9.8 liters)

2014
About 0.8 gallons
(3 liters)



Air transportation has reduced its fuel use and CO₂ emissions per passenger mile by well over 70% compared to the 1960s

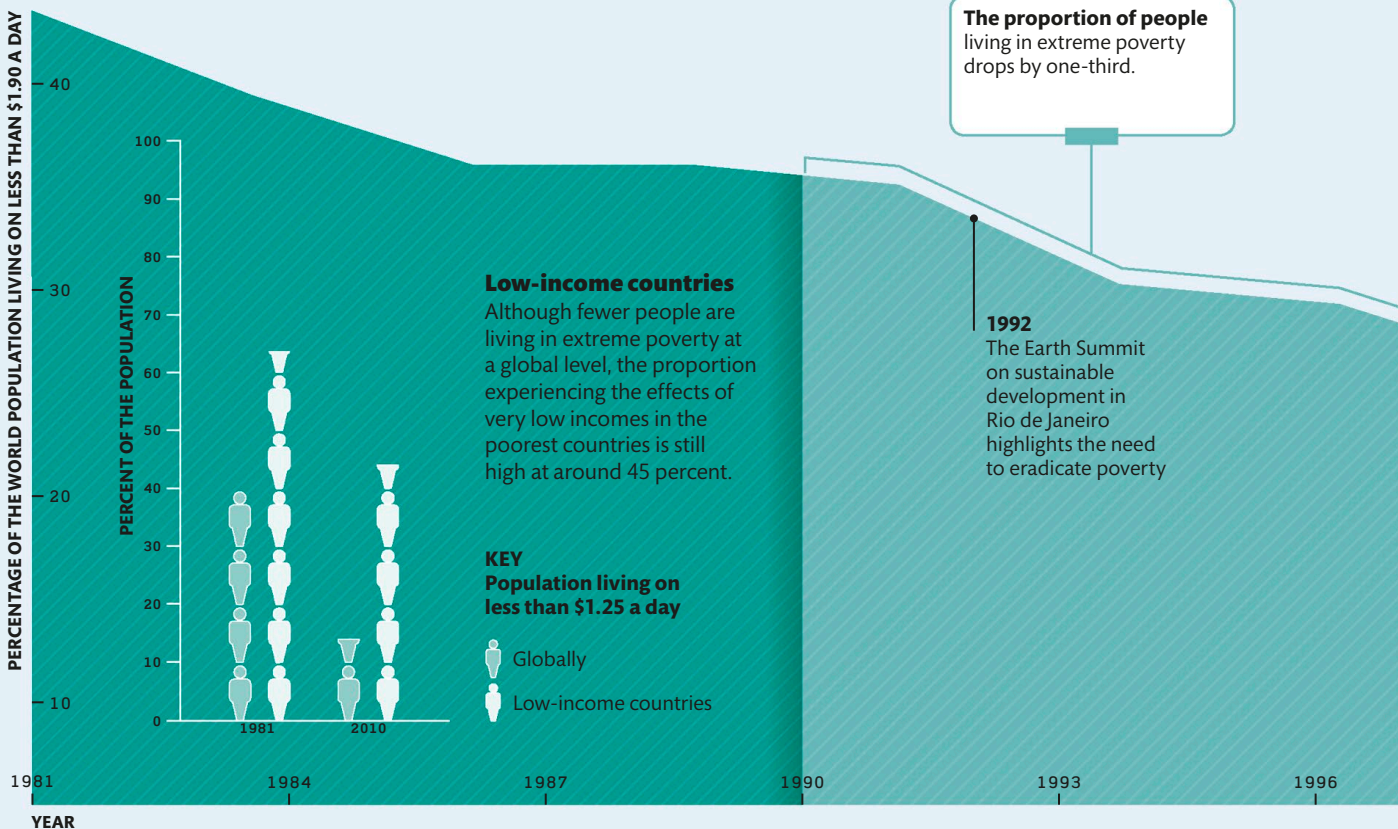
Increased fuel efficiency

Rising fuel costs and pressure over environmental concerns, especially about air pollution, noise, and climate-changing emissions, have stimulated manufacturers to develop more efficient aircraft. As a result, the fuel needed to fly one passenger 100 miles (161 km) has decreased by more than two-thirds since the 1960s, with a similar reduction in climate-changing emissions.



Better Lives for Many

There has been significant progress in reducing extreme poverty over recent decades, partly due to economic growth. Access to education, connection to electricity, and the provision of health care, clean water, and sanitation all reduce poverty. By helping people escape poverty and improving the economy, these factors create a beneficial cycle for the whole society. However, while there is global improvement, some parts of the world remain affected by war, conflict, and inequality, which means there is still plenty of work to be done in ensuring better lives for all.



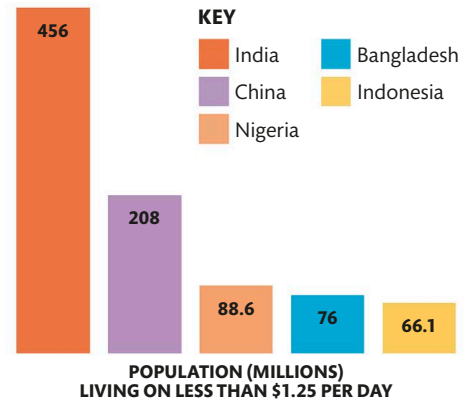
Declining poverty

During the last three decades, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined significantly. Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than \$1.25 a day—the level at which basic survival conditions can be met. This figure is called the poverty line, and it was raised to \$1.90 a day in 2015.

This reduction in extreme poverty happened despite large population growth during the same period. It occurred because of the steady expansion of countries' economies, leading to increases in average per-capita incomes in both developed and developing nations. The steepest decline began in 1997, when explosive economic growth took off in Asia—particularly in China. This rapid reduction in extreme poverty masked the effect of the two regions where poverty increased—in Eastern Europe and Central Asia after the fall of communism.

WHERE ARE THE WORLD'S POOREST PEOPLE?

A 2015 ranking that compared countries based on income and the cost of living found the 10 poorest nations in the world were all in Africa. The greatest absolute numbers of people in extreme poverty, however, are mainly located in Asia, because this is where the most populated countries are. Millions of people live in vast slums, and large rural populations survive from subsistence farming, all living on tiny incomes.



“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are **one and the same fight.**”

BAN KI-MOON, FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

2000

Millennium Development Goals are adopted by the United Nations with, among other things, the aim of reducing hunger and poverty

2005

G8 countries agree to write off the debts of the poorest countries

Sustained economic growth

helps nearly half a billion people escape living in extreme poverty on under \$1.25 a day.

1999

2002

2005

2008

2011

2013

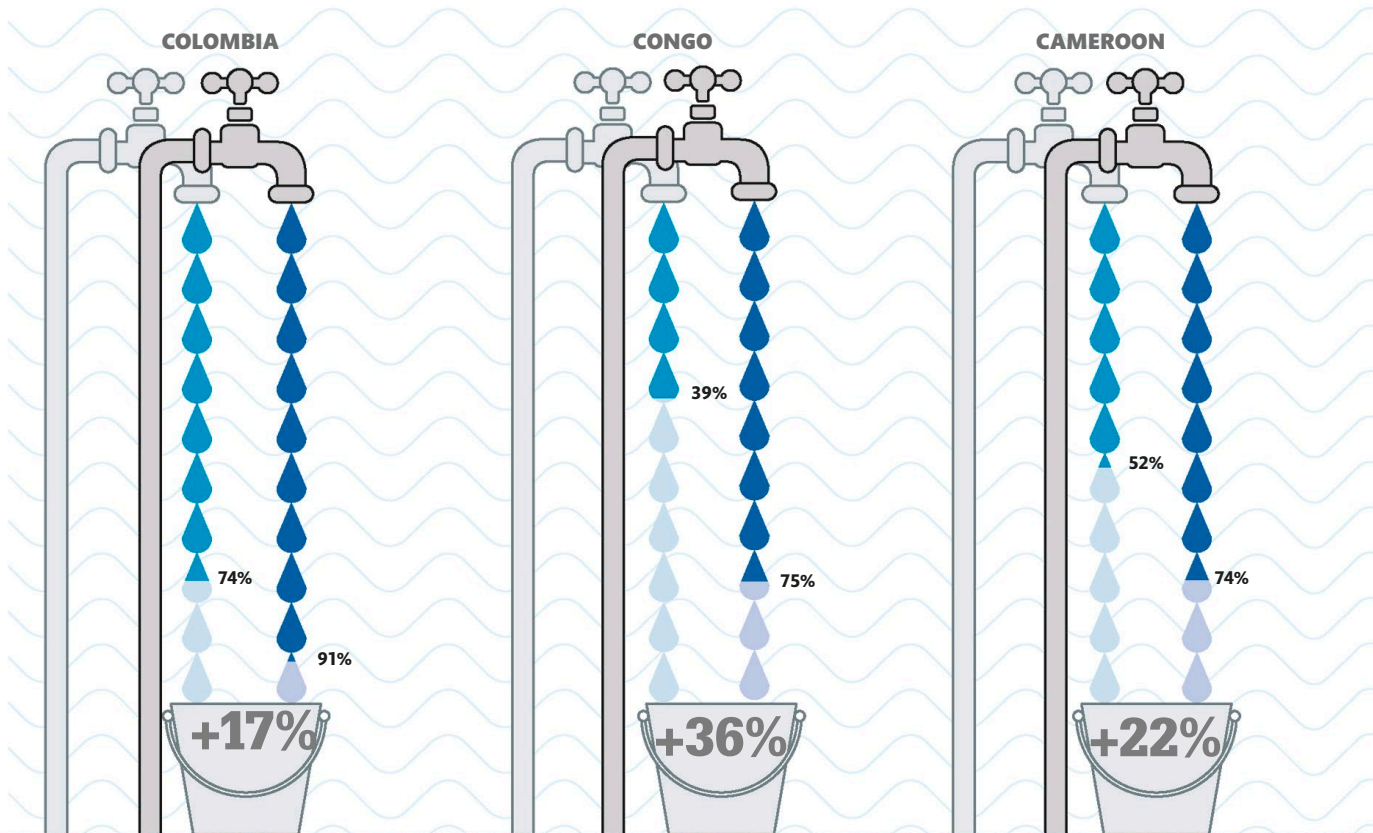
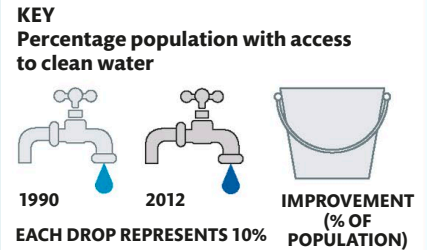


Clean Water and Sanitation

Clean water and sewage treatment facilities are key factors in influencing outcomes for public health, development, and poverty. Impressive progress has been made in extending these basic necessities to billions more people.

Improved access to clean water

According to World Health Organization data collected over 22 years, the countries below have made the greatest progress in the world and respective regions by supplying a greater proportion of their citizens with access to safe and clean drinking water. Disparities remain, however, between rural and urban areas, and more people living in the countryside are still unable to make use of reliable water supplies than those residing in towns and cities. Despite recent positive progress, millions still die each year from diseases spread in dirty water. Asia and Africa remain the areas where people are at greatest risk of water-borne diseases.



Cleaning up water is often the quickest and most cost-effective way to improve public health, saving both lives and money. Following a global improvement program, around 91 percent of the world population now has access to safe drinking water access—up by 2.6 billion people compared with 1990. A parallel effort in sanitation means that, today,

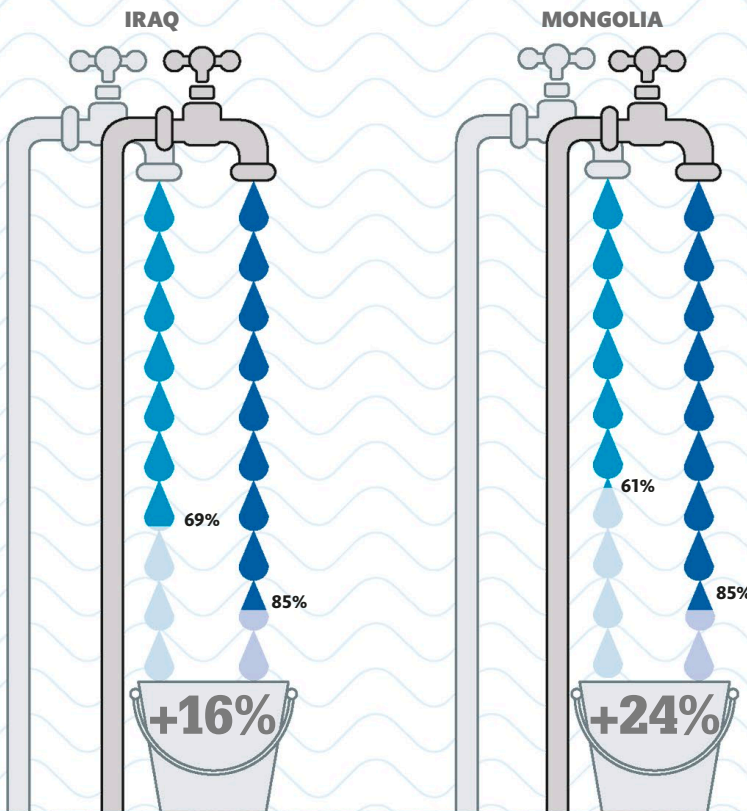
68 percent of the global population has improved sewage treatment and disposal services—up by 2.1 billion compared with 1990. In 2015, however, 2.4 billion people lacked access to basic sanitation facilities. Nearly 1 billion people are still forced to defecate outside, causing the spread of diseases such as cholera, diarrhea, and hepatitis A.

1 in 9
people in the world lack access to safe water



Safe to drink

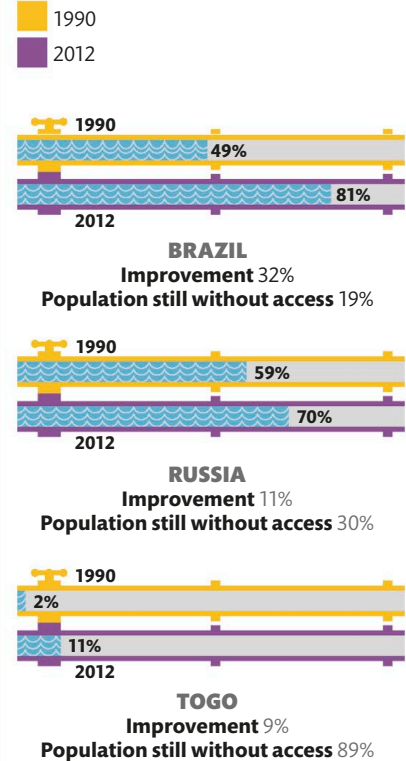
In India, 70 percent of people had clean water supplies in 2012, leaving 30 percent still using untreated sources.



ACCESS TO SANITATION

The stark differences in the improved sewage treatment of the selected countries below reveal their contrasting national circumstances, including the level of development, the rate of economic growth, and the prevalence of corruption.

KEY Percentage of population with access to sanitation





Reading and Writing

Improving literacy skills is essential when trying to reduce poverty. While positive progress has been made in increasing the proportion of people who can read and write, major challenges remain, especially in Africa.

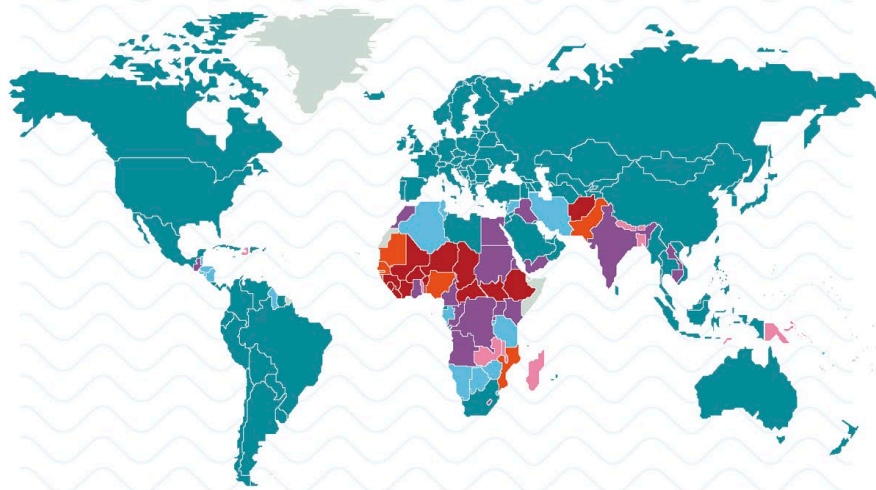
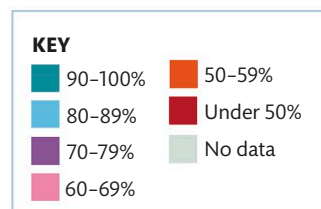
In 2011, there were still 774 million adults in the world who lacked basic literacy skills. Three-quarters of them were living in South Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa, and two-thirds were women.

The past 30 years have seen substantial efforts from governments, charities, and individuals to improve literacy in the poorest and most deprived parts of the world. The ability to read and write greatly improves people's prospects to enter employment, generate income, and contribute to development.

The challenge in achieving universal literacy begins with the acquisition of basic skills during childhood and access to primary education. This was one focal point for the Millennium Development Goals—a set of eight goals set out in a UN initiative in 2000—and today 91 percent of children receive primary schooling.

How the world reads

North America, Europe, and Central Asia have all achieved near-universal literacy. The situation in South America has improved during recent decades to reach an average literacy rate of 92 percent, although the Caribbean still lags behind with just 69 percent of adults able to read and write. The lowest literacy rates are in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.



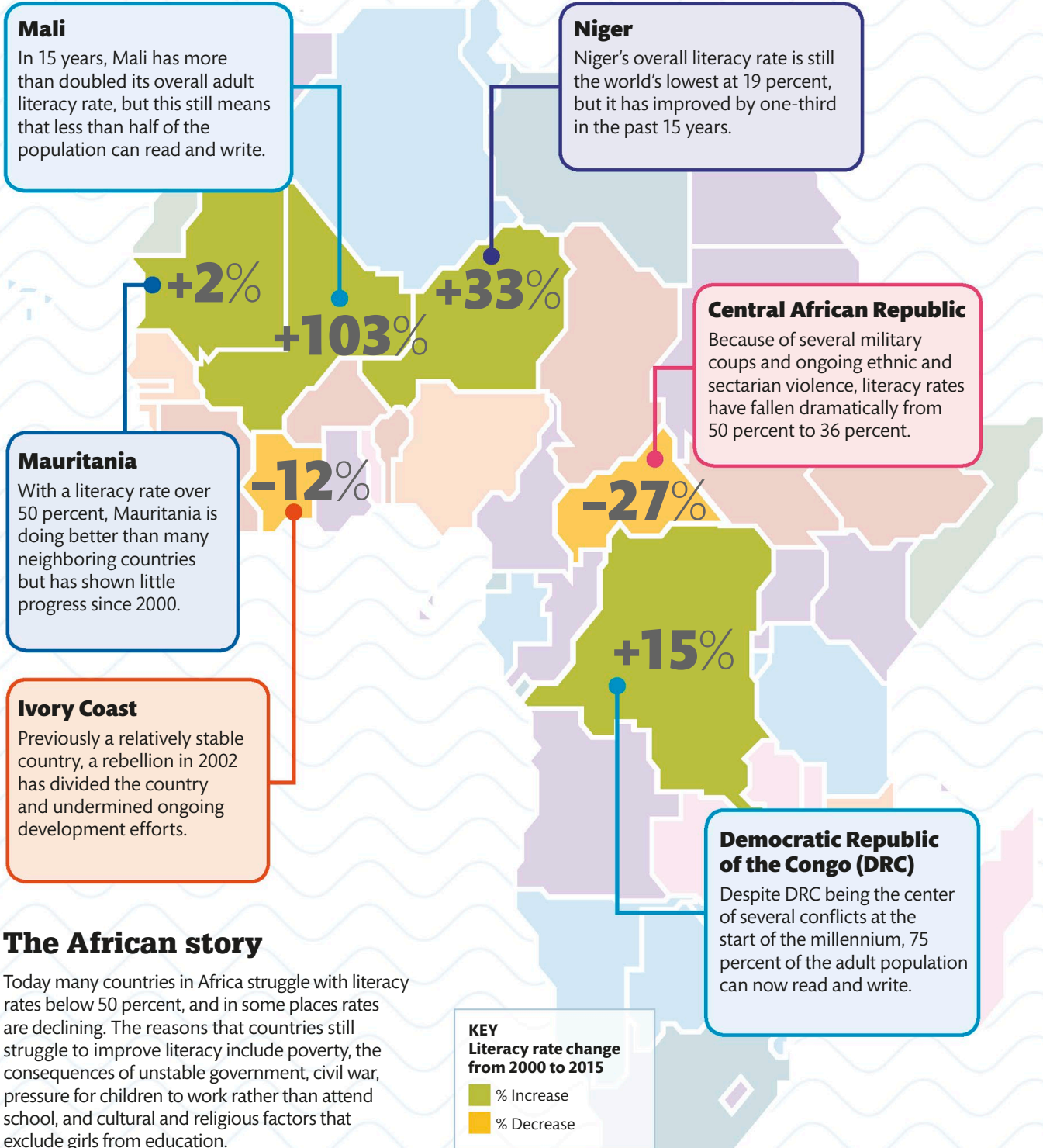
Women's literacy rates

In four of the worst-performing countries, the female literacy rate is less than half that of the male population. In Niger, only one in nine women have basic literacy skills, while literacy in the male population is three times higher. This disparity makes other challenges far harder to address: for example, it poses a fundamental barrier to both reducing poverty and slowing population growth (see p22).



Reading benefits

These women and girls are some of the lucky few who are taught to read and write in Somalia. Here, only 25 percent of women can read and write compared with almost 50 percent of men.





Healthier World

In the 21st century, the incidences of deadly communicable diseases have fallen dramatically, so people lead, on average, longer lives. The major causes of death are now cardiovascular diseases and cancers.

Between 2000 and 2015, the mortality rate in Africa dropped by more than one third, largely due to a reduction in deaths from communicable diseases (those spread from one person to another), including HIV/AIDS. During that same period, deaths caused by malaria in Africa were cut by nearly one half. This was due to simple measures being introduced, such as the increased availability of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and greater access to life-saving medications.

Since 1990, there has been a 44 percent reduction in maternal deaths around the world, although 830 women still die each day due to complications in pregnancy and childbirth. The success in preventing and treating communicable diseases and reducing premature mortality through better public health services has led the causes of sickness and death to shift more toward age- and lifestyle-linked problems, especially cardiovascular and cancer-related conditions.

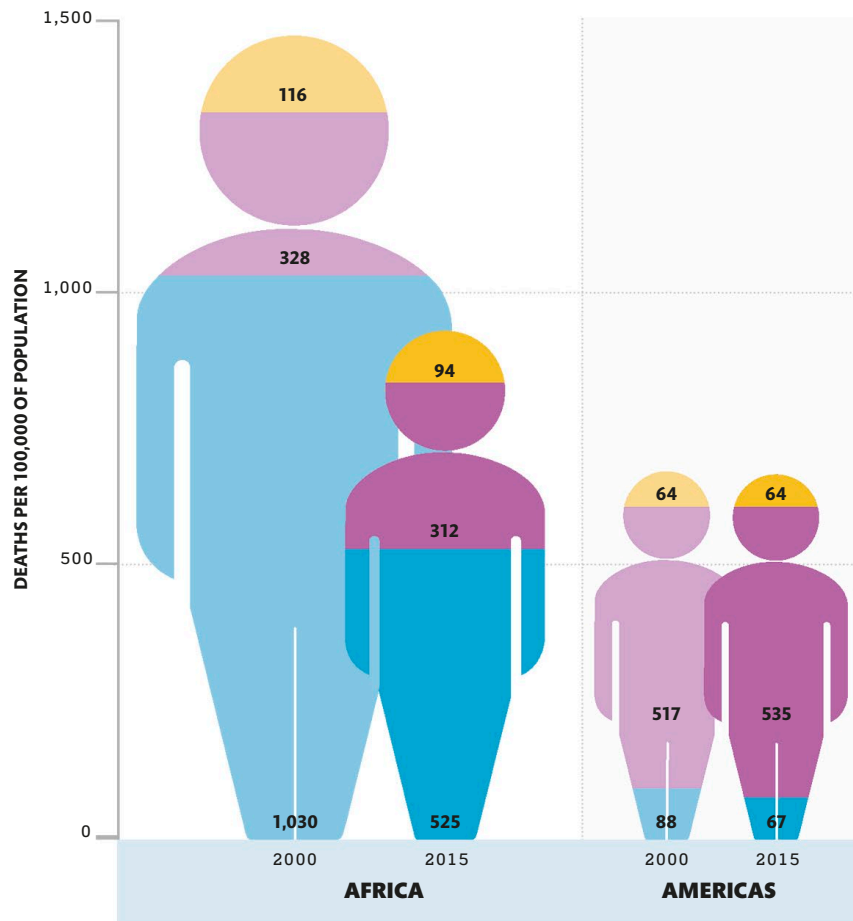
Major causes of death

The reduction in the death rate across almost all regions means that fewer people are dying each year and, on average, they are living longer. Injuries are responsible for a large number of deaths in Africa, with a proportion far greater than anywhere else in the world. Deaths by noncommunicable diseases have stayed relatively consistent across the world.



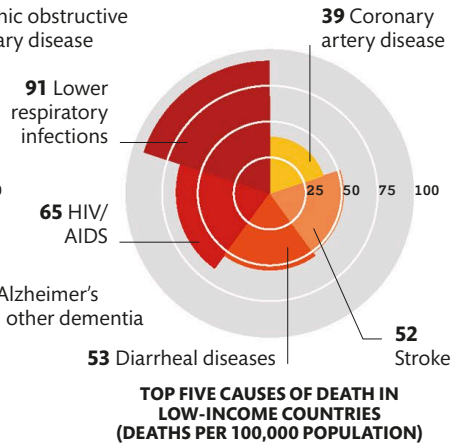
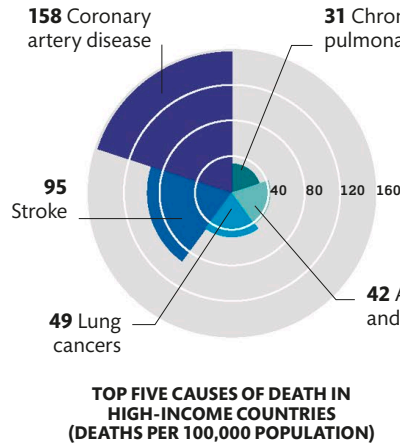
HIV clinic

A nurse comforts a boy diagnosed as HIV positive at a clinic in Kampala, Uganda. Medical investments have reduced mortality from communicable diseases.



DISEASE AND INCOME

Despite recent improvements in the prevention and treatment of many infectious diseases, the leading causes of death in the world's poorest countries are lower respiratory infections, including pneumonia, bronchitis, and tuberculosis. In the richest countries, one of the fastest-growing causes of death is Alzheimer's disease and dementia, reflecting the increased longevity in the developed world. This puts greater long-term pressure on health services already under strain.

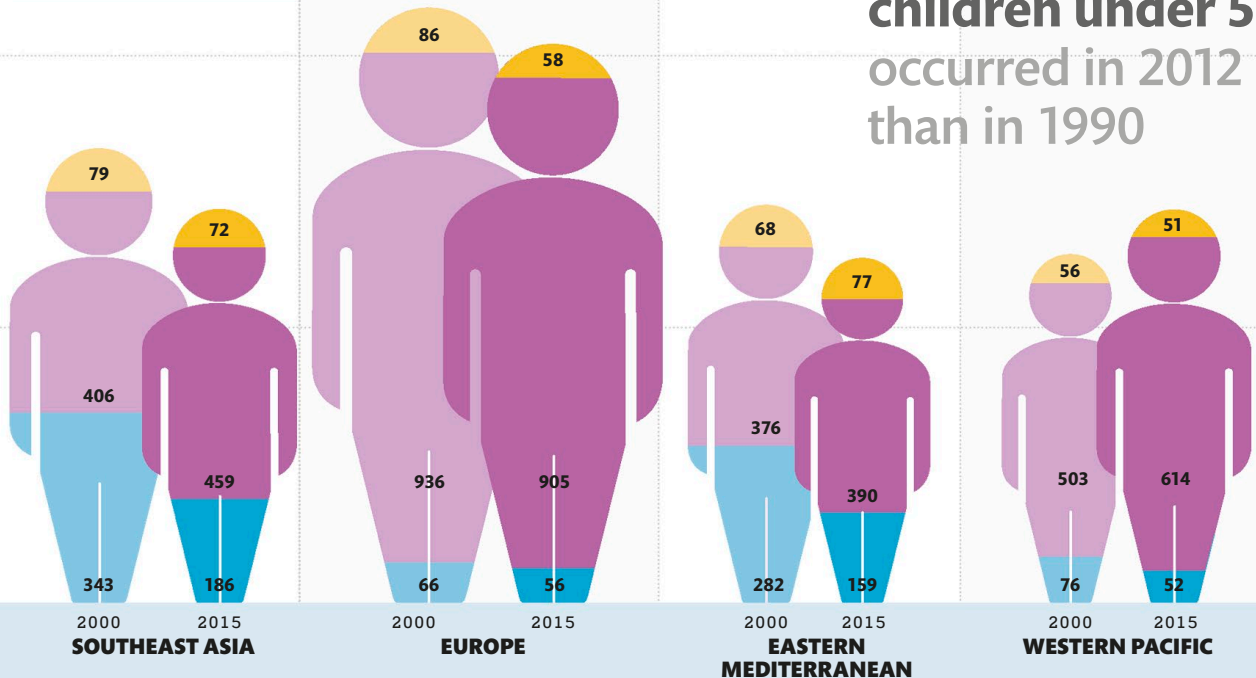


KEY Causes of death

- Injury
- Noncommunicable diseases
- Communicable diseases; maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases

47%

fewer deaths of children under 5 occurred in 2012 than in 1990





Unequal World

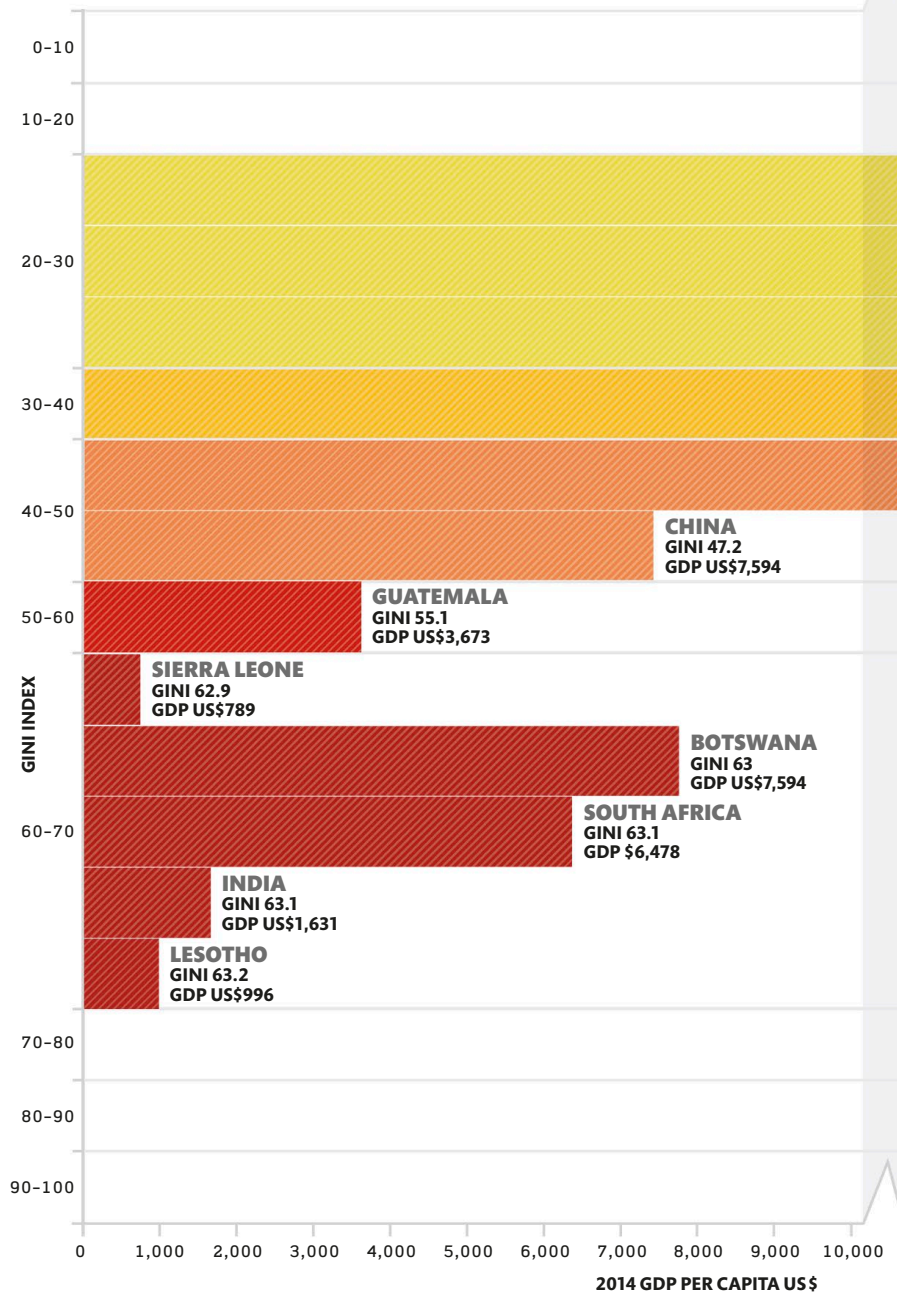
Many people in the world are enjoying better lives, but inequality has grown dramatically. Disparities in wealth and income are seen both internationally and within individual countries.

Wealth inequality between countries can be demonstrated by looking at a country's gross domestic product (GDP) per person—a measure that gives a rough idea of income and standard of living. Rich countries such as Sweden are vastly better off than less developed nations such as Lesotho or Botswana.

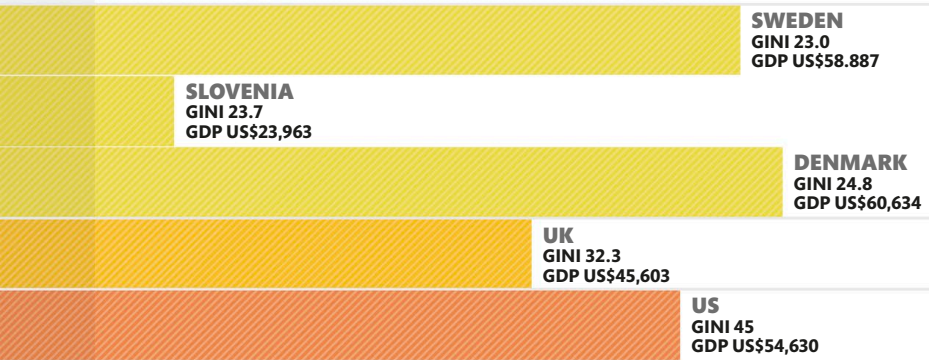
Inequality also exists at a domestic level, which is quantified using the Gini coefficient, a statistical tool that measures differences in income. Recent economic growth in developed countries has mainly benefited those at the top of society, widening the gap between rich and poor—a situation that is bad for everyone. Research shows that the more unequal a society, the more social problems it faces. Issues such as violent crime, mental illness, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy are reduced in societies that are more equal.

Global inequality

Using both Gini ranks and GDP per capita shows that the most equal societies are also the richest. The world's most equal country, Sweden, had the sixth largest GDP per capita, while Lesotho, the least equal, had just US\$996 GDP per head.

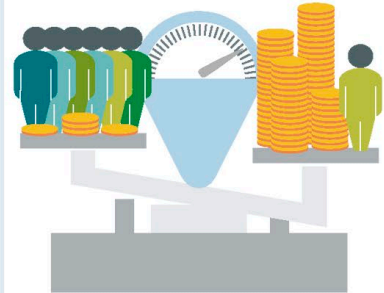


1% of the world's population has more money than the other 99% in 2016



WHAT'S THE GINI COEFFICIENT?

Developed in 1912 by Italian statistician and sociologist Corrado Gini (1884–1965), the Gini coefficient is a measure of national equality, calculated by measuring how evenly income is distributed across a country. A country with perfect income equality will have a Gini coefficient of 0, while 100 indicates complete income inequality.



What a high Gini score means

Perfect inequality means one person has all the wealth while all others have nothing. In unequal nations, a few are very rich and a large number have very little.



What a low Gini score means

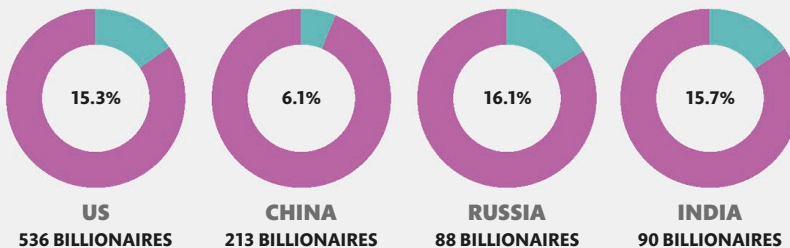
Perfect wealth equality would see all people having exactly the same amount of money, so countries with low Gini scores have more equal wealth distribution.

What wealth is worth

Billionaires control around 10 percent of the world's assets, yet many call poor nations home. A third of India's people live in poverty, but India ranks in the top five nations with the most billionaires.

KEY

- National Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Billionaires' net worth as % of national GDP



20,000 30,000 40,000 50,000 60,000



Corruption

In many countries, efforts to combat poverty and halt environmental degradation have been seriously hampered by the effects of corruption. Corrupt practices often hit the poorest hardest.

Corrupt practices divert financial resources away from poor people and undermine controls intended to protect environmental assets such as forests and rare wildlife. Such practices embrace a wide range of activities, including bribery, embezzlement of public funds,

obstruction of justice, and concealment and laundering of the proceeds of corruption.

All of this can have disastrous impacts on economic development because income inequalities increase, social policies are undermined, and economic

growth stalls. In many countries affected by corruption, the exploitation of natural resources that should lead to development benefits for all instead enriches small elites. These conditions can contribute to civil war, as was the case in Sierra Leone in 1991.

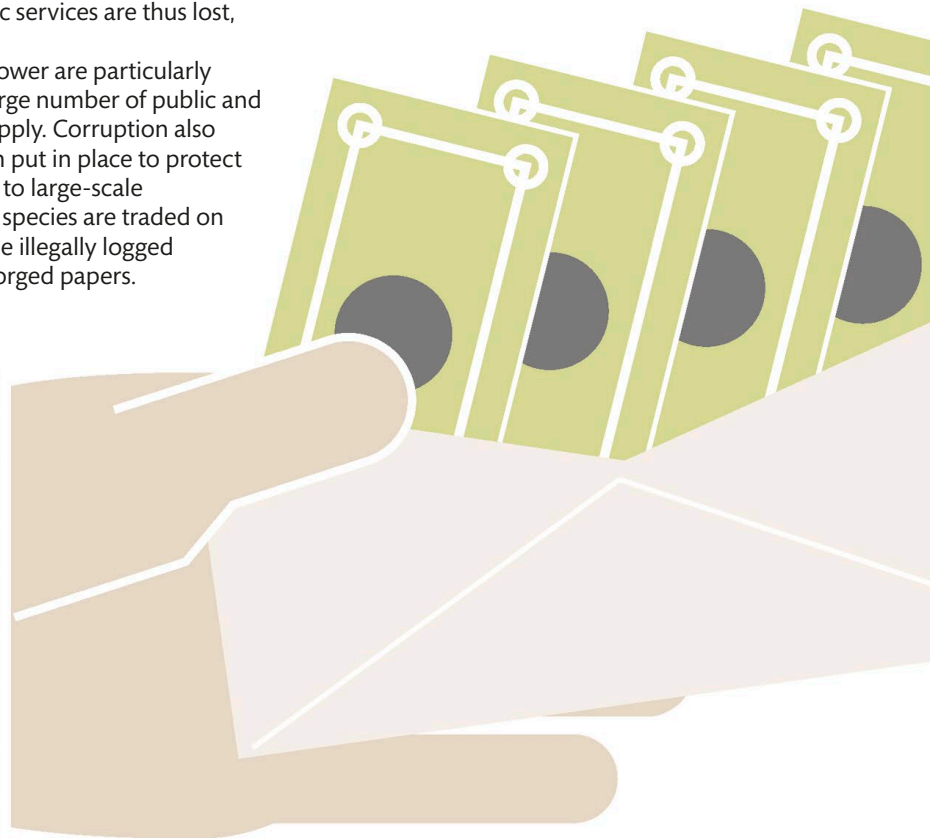
Where corruption corrodes progress

According to the World Bank, each year corrupt practices lead to the siphoning off of about \$1 trillion. Funds desperately needed for education, health care, and other public services are thus lost, trapping people in poverty.

All sectors are affected, but water and power are particularly vulnerable to corruption because of the large number of public and business organizations involved in their supply. Corruption also leads to the flouting of laws that have been put in place to protect natural resources and ecosystems, leading to large-scale environmental damage. Protected wildlife species are traded on the back of bribes to customs officials while illegally logged timber enters international markets with forged papers.

Givers

Bribery can help commercial interests gain access to natural resources, such as protected forests or fish stocks, and is vital in getting illegally harvested goods to market. Businesses offer bribes in order to win public contracts. Bribes are paid to customs officials to turn a blind eye to the export or import of contraband, such as in the trafficking of ivory between Tanzania and China.





Water supplies

Bribes are paid for licenses to dispose of waste in open water. Large agribusinesses pay officials for access to irrigation.

- › Corruption adds 30 to 45 percent to the connection costs of a clean water supply.



Essential services

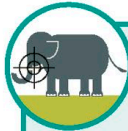
Drugs intended for poor people are diverted for sale via private pharmacies. In addition, stolen funds hamper efforts to combat major health challenges, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

- › The World Bank estimates that up to 80 percent of nonsalary health funds never reach some nations' local facilities.



What can we do?

- › **Governments can bar companies** involved in corruption from bidding for public contracts.
- › **Public bodies can instill** a zero-tolerance culture for corrupt practices.
- › **Governments can prioritize** implementing UN anti-corruption policies.



Illegal animal trade

An unprecedented rise in illegal wildlife trading threatens decades of conservation work, making this the fourth most lucrative transnational crime, after drugs, arms, and human trafficking, worth between \$10 and \$20 billion a year.

- › At least 20,000 elephants are illegally killed for their tusks in Africa each year.



Forestry and illegal logging

Illegal logging now accounts for up to 30 percent of the international timber trade. Cutting and shipping logs on the black market is a complex process and can occur only with the aid of corruption.

- › The World Bank estimates that each year up to \$23 billion worth of wood is illegally cut, losing \$10 billion in revenue.

Takers

In all parts of the world, officials and politicians at all levels have been shown to be susceptible to taking bribes. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the low salaries paid to public servants mean bribery is an open and accepted part of business. Such embedded corruption makes it extremely hard for many companies to conduct business legally.



The Rise of Terrorism

Violence created by terrorists seeks to advance political or religious goals through fear, often using dramatic shock tactics. Terrorist acts increasingly influence headlines, civil liberties, and social agendas.

The *Global Terrorism Index (GTI)*, produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, defines terrorism as “illegal force and violence by a nonstate actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” This definition excludes civil war, and thus most of the 300,000 deaths that have occurred in Syria alone because of violence since 2011.

The *GTI* shows a strong correlation between terrorism and political instability, intergroup tensions (including between religious factions), and the lack of legitimate states. While poverty, health, and illiteracy indicators are not directly linked with terrorist activity, terrorism is a block to sustainable development, diverting resources from poverty reduction and discouraging investment.

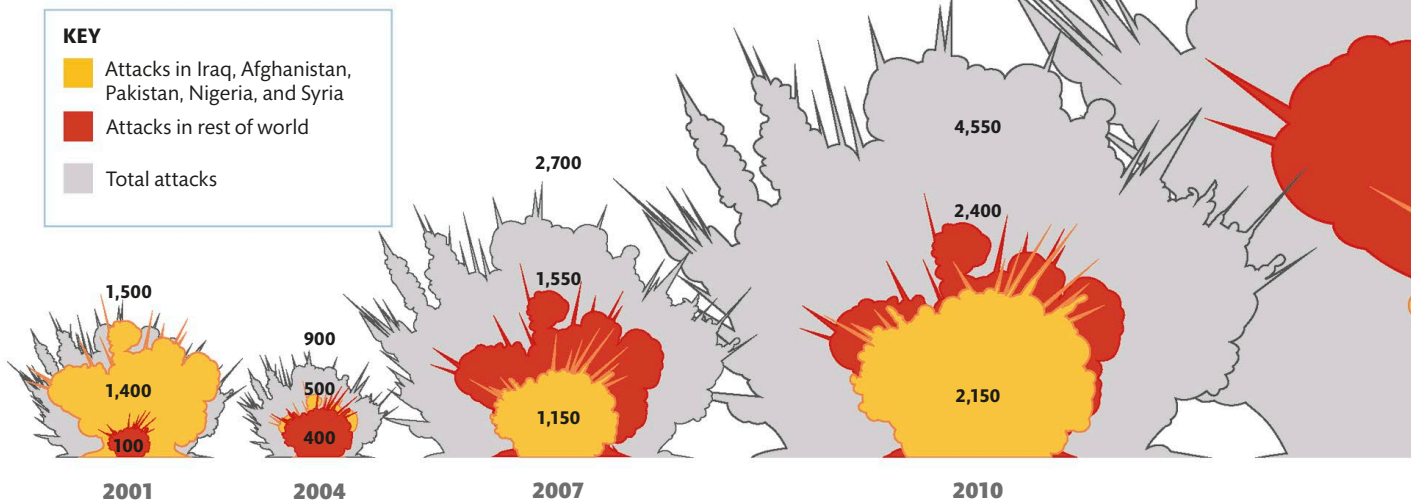
Unstable countries are often unable to elect accountable, democratic governments, and this prevents environmental and social progress.

SEE ALSO...

- **Corruption** pp112-113
- **Displaced People** pp116-117
- **Extreme World** pp130-131

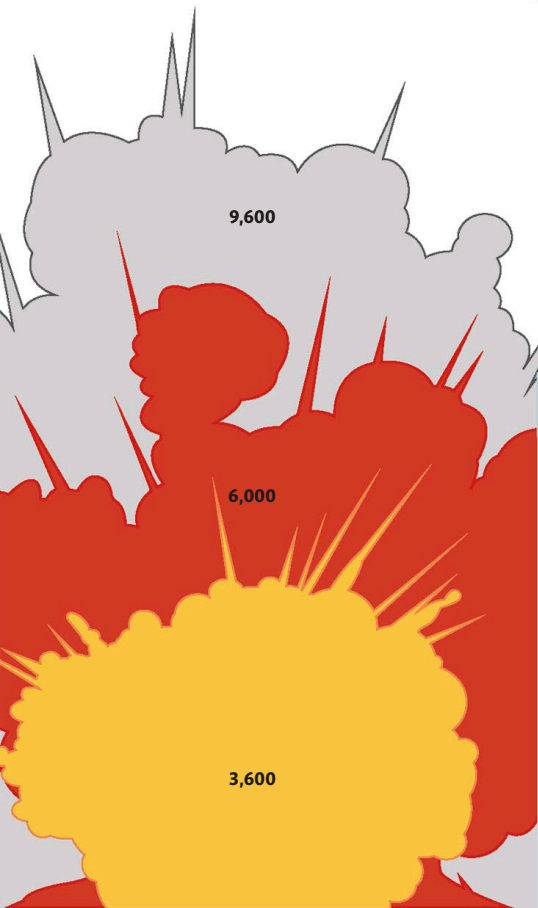
Terror by numbers

In 2013, almost 10,000 terrorist incidents resulted in approximately 18,000 deaths. Excluding the five most affected countries, the almost 4,000 attacks in the rest of the world killed 3,236 people. The main driver of terrorism in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia is religious ideology. Elsewhere, terrorism is more associated with political, nationalistic, and separatist movements.

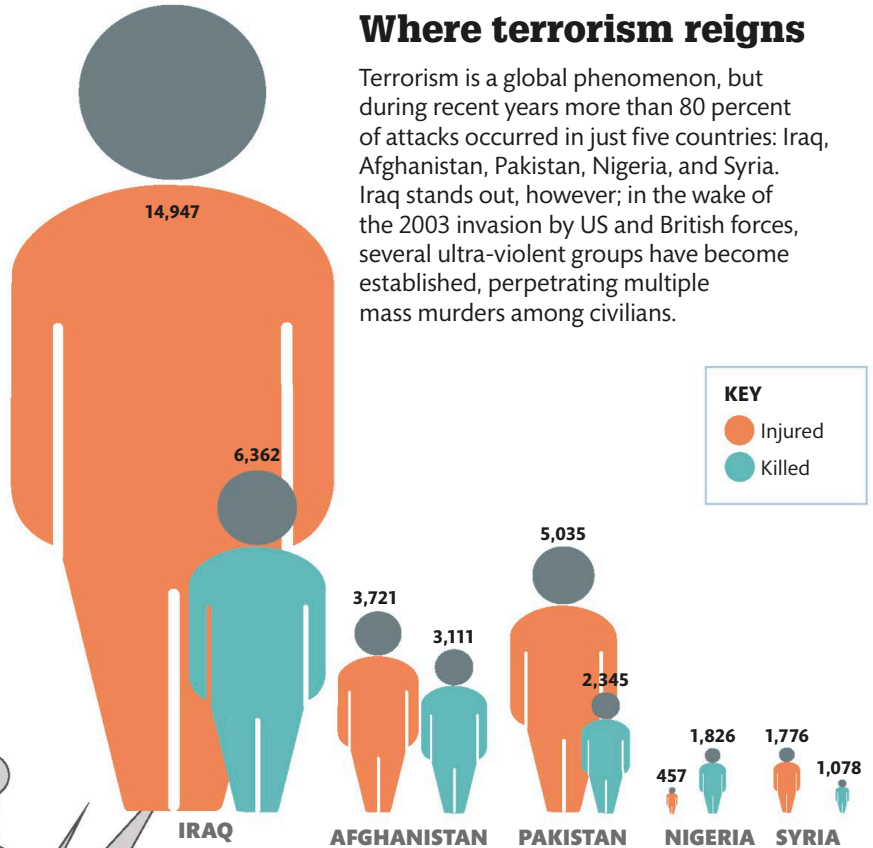


13%

The decrease in the number of deaths caused by terrorism from 2015 to 2016



2013



Where terrorism reigns

Terrorism is a global phenomenon, but during recent years more than 80 percent of attacks occurred in just five countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Syria. Iraq stands out, however; in the wake of the 2003 invasion by US and British forces, several ultra-violent groups have become established, perpetrating multiple mass murders among civilians.

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF TERRORISM

The horrific human toll exacted by terrorism is just part of the damage it causes to societies. There is the additional cost of increased security, diverting financial resources from positive social and environmental programs. Economic growth is affected by terrorist activities because businesses experience uncertainty and face increased costs, such as that for insurance, while at the same time investors move funds to more stable areas. Nations affected by terrorism also experience the emigration of educated and talented people, further impacting their development.



The high price of fear

Terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 caused global outrage, leading to an escalation of bombing by Western and Russian aircrafts in Syria and Iraq.



Displaced People

The number of refugees, asylum seekers, and people displaced inside their own countries has rocketed. Forced out by war, persecution, and environmental change, the total is roughly equal to the UK's population.

Following several years of substantial increases, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimated that, in 2016, the global total number of displaced people reached a staggering 65 million—an increase of over 50 percent in five years. This amounts to forced

movement on an unprecedented scale creating a “nation of the displaced.” Its population includes refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people still living within their national borders. The causes include armed conflict, human rights violations, political violence, and the effects of drought.

The main destinations for people escaping across borders are Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Uganda, and Ethiopia. These host countries hold more than 40 percent of people seeking safety outside their country of origin, and increased demands on their already inadequate services cause serious stresses.

A growing problem

By 2000, rapid globalization and the end of the Cold War had created new pressures that forced people to move, including those sparked by organized crime networks. In 2007, countries with the most internally displaced people included Eritrea, Colombia, Iraq, and the Democratic Republic of Congo—all fueled by internal conflict. More recent increases are largely explained by the conflict in Syria and ongoing terrorist activities in Iraq.



Somali refugee camp

People displaced from their homes have to find shelter in camps, often creating a huge strain on local resources.

KEY

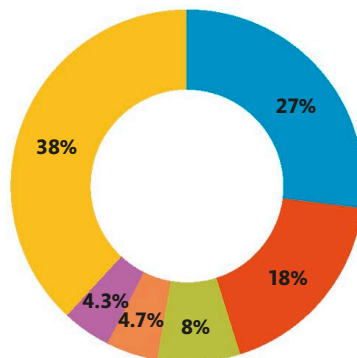
- Internally displaced
- Refugees and asylum seekers

KEY

- Syria
- Afghanistan
- Somalia
- Sudan
- South Sudan
- Rest of the world

Where they come from

Of the millions of refugees crossing international borders in 2014, over half came from just three countries: Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia.



21 million

17 million 2000

10.3

million people
were newly
displaced
in 2016 due
to **conflict or
persecution**



2016

40
million

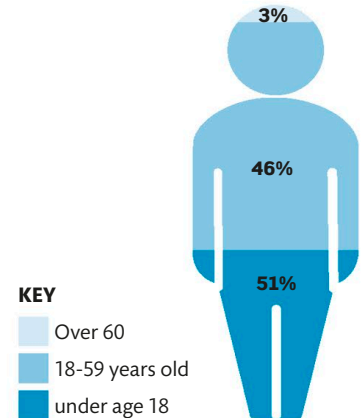
17
million

26
million

2007

HOW OLD IS A REFUGEE?

In 2014, just over half of all refugees were under 18 years old, up from 41 percent in 2009. In that year, 34,300 asylum applications were lodged by unaccompanied or separated children, mostly from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, and Somalia—the highest figure since such data was first collected in 2006.





Our Changing Atmosphere

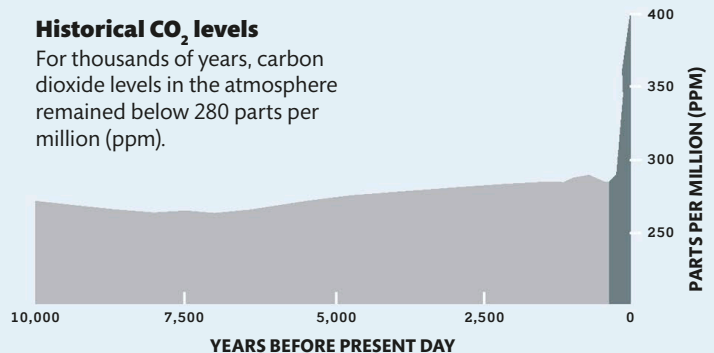
Without the atmosphere, there could be no life on Earth. The shallow layer of gases that envelops our planet allows us to breathe and creates the climatic conditions we experience. Over the course of Earth's long history, the climate has changed many times. Natural factors caused this, but the main reason for recent climate change is the buildup of heat-trapping greenhouse gases produced by human activities (see pp 120–121). Because of this, the atmosphere is trapping more of the sun's energy, causing average temperatures to rise, in turn altering the climate.

Carbon acceleration

The greenhouse gas most responsible for the recent warming of the atmosphere is carbon dioxide (CO₂). This trace gas occurs naturally and keeps Earth warm, maintaining favorable conditions for living things. The concentration of CO₂ fluctuates but has recently risen at an accelerating rate and is at the highest level it has been for at least 800,000 years. The main cause for this is the burning of fossil fuels, with some contribution from deforestation and emissions from soils.

Historical CO₂ levels

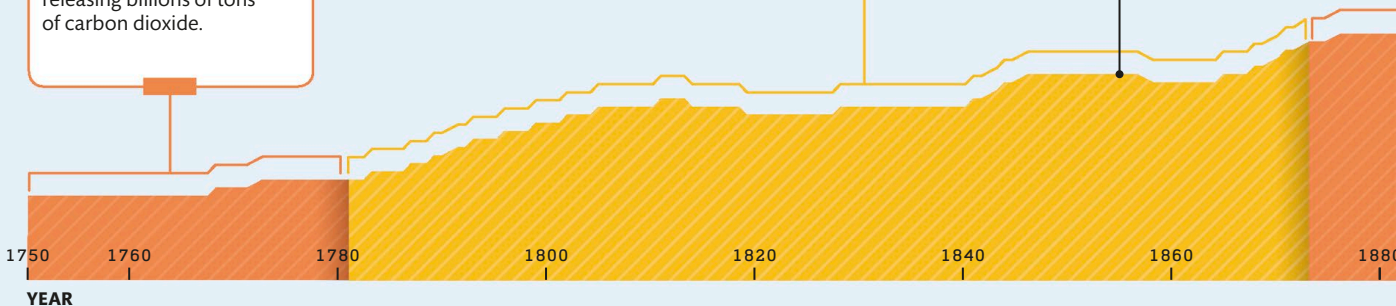
For thousands of years, carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere remained below 280 parts per million (ppm).



Tree growth is stimulated by higher carbon dioxide levels. This may cause carbon dioxide acceleration to flatten.

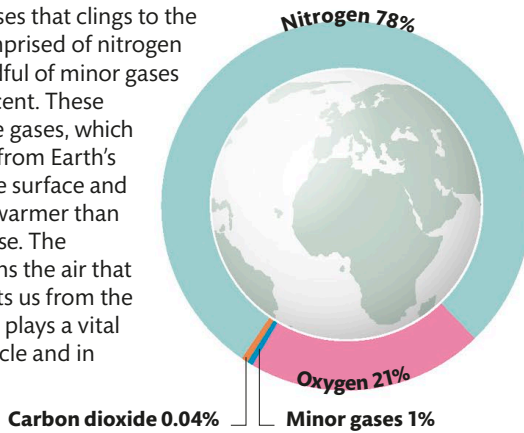
1859
World's first commercial oil field opens in Pennsylvania

The industrial revolution is powered by burning coal, releasing billions of tons of carbon dioxide.



WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE?

The thin shell of gases that clings to the Earth is mostly comprised of nitrogen and oxygen. A handful of minor gases make up just 1 percent. These include greenhouse gases, which trap outgoing heat from Earth's surface, keeping the surface and lower atmosphere warmer than it would be otherwise. The atmosphere contains the air that we breathe, protects us from the sun's radiation, and plays a vital role in the water cycle and in climate patterns.



Global economic growth takes off, fueled overwhelmingly by fossil fuels. This leads to the most rapid acceleration since the industrial revolution.

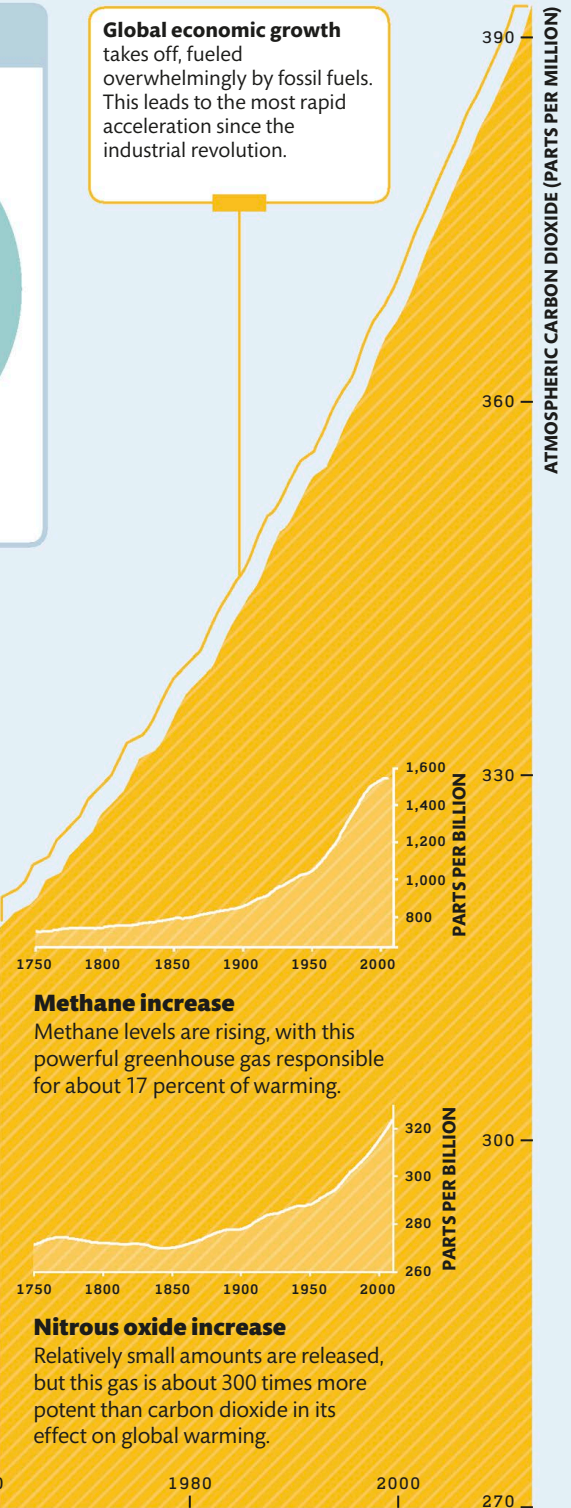
“Clean air and water, and a livable climate, are inalienable human rights.”

LEONARDO DI CAPRIO, AMERICAN ACTOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNER

Industrialization spreads and economies grow. Emissions from oil and gas add to those from coal.

1908
First Model T Ford produced

1913
Peak of British coal production





The Greenhouse Effect

Light energy from the sun is absorbed by Earth's surface, warming it up. The resulting heat is emitted from land and sea in the form of infrared radiation, most of which escapes back into space. However, heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere keep Earth much warmer than it would be otherwise. These gases create a "greenhouse effect," forming a layer that traps heat going out from Earth's surface and retains some of it within the lower atmosphere. Human activities interfered with Earth's delicate energy balance by rapidly increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases, causing the atmosphere to warm up.



Sources of greenhouse gases

Human activities produce greenhouse gases in many ways but particularly by industrial activity and energy production.

EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE

4 Human activity causes an increase in the level of greenhouse gases.

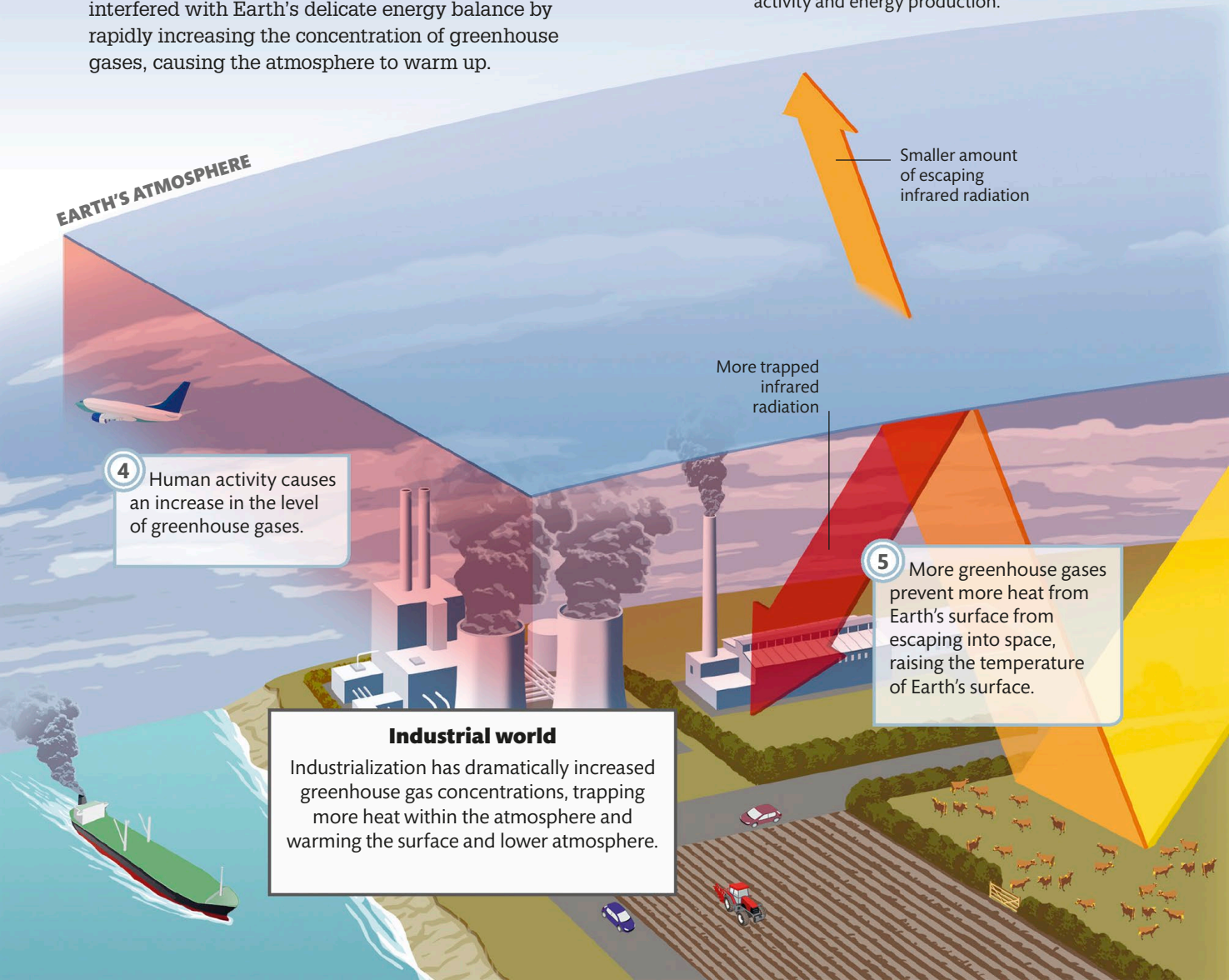
More trapped infrared radiation

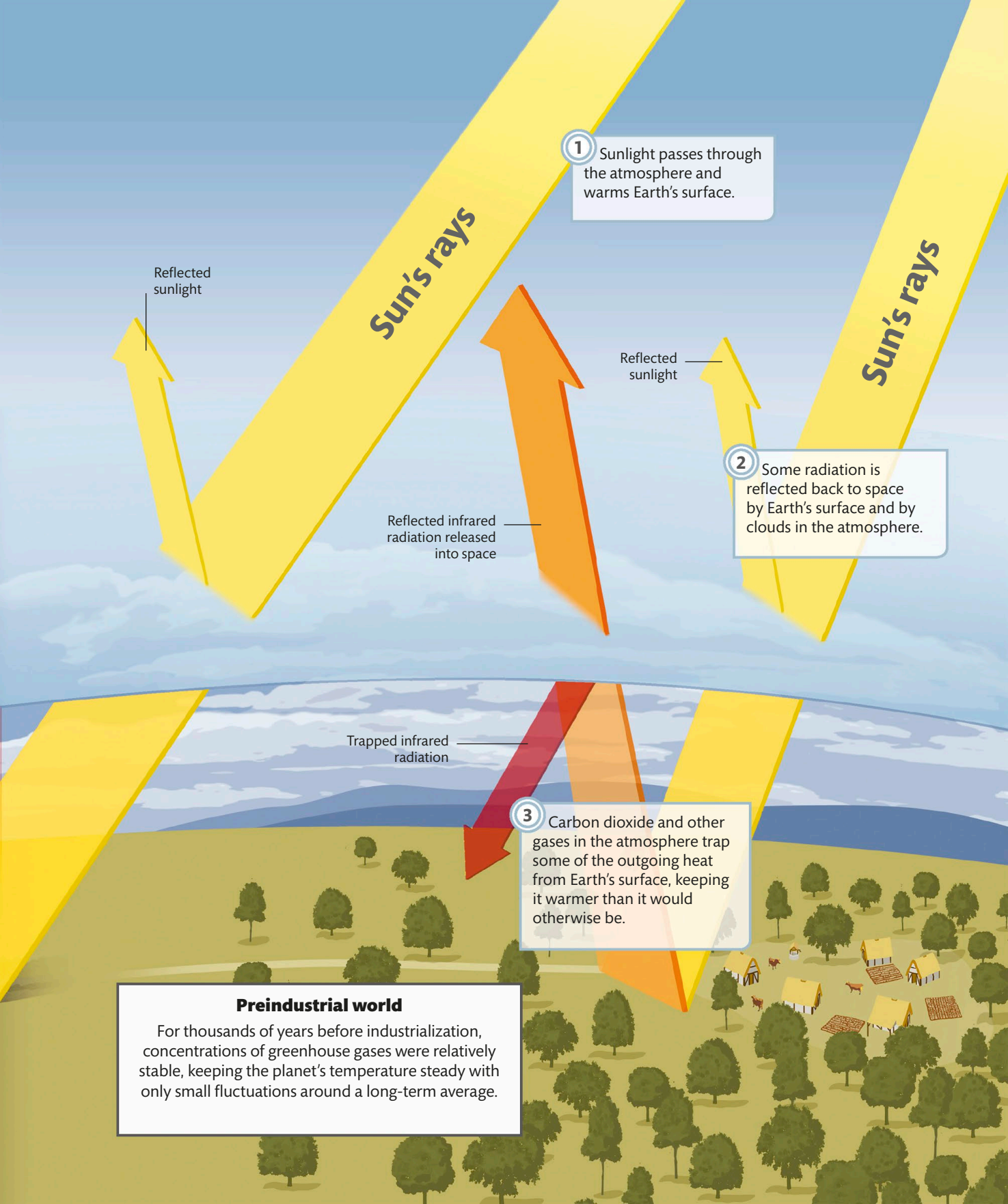
Smaller amount of escaping infrared radiation

5 More greenhouse gases prevent more heat from Earth's surface from escaping into space, raising the temperature of Earth's surface.

Industrial world

Industrialization has dramatically increased greenhouse gas concentrations, trapping more heat within the atmosphere and warming the surface and lower atmosphere.





1 Sunlight passes through the atmosphere and warms Earth's surface.

2 Some radiation is reflected back to space by Earth's surface and by clouds in the atmosphere.

3 Carbon dioxide and other gases in the atmosphere trap some of the outgoing heat from Earth's surface, keeping it warmer than it would otherwise be.

Preindustrial world
For thousands of years before industrialization, concentrations of greenhouse gases were relatively stable, keeping the planet's temperature steady with only small fluctuations around a long-term average.



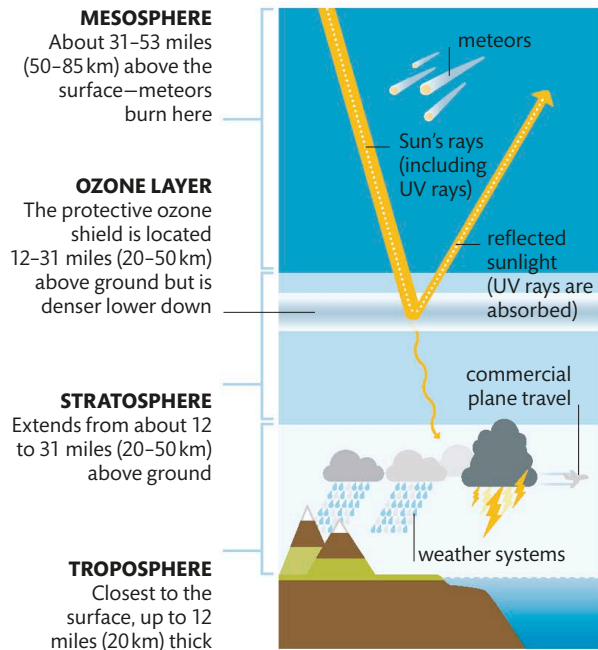
Hole in the Sky

High in Earth's upper atmosphere, miles above the planet's surface, is a diffuse layer of ozone gas. Its presence protects life on Earth and is vital for the functioning of the planet itself.

Ozone formation relies on the oxygen in our atmosphere. As ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun hits oxygen molecules in the stratosphere, ozone is formed, and this in turn absorbs UV radiation that would otherwise damage the DNA (genetic material) of plants and animals. Oxygen was scarce until about 2.3 billion years ago, when an event called the Great Oxygenation occurred, the result of an increase in photosynthesis by microscopic organisms called cyanobacteria.

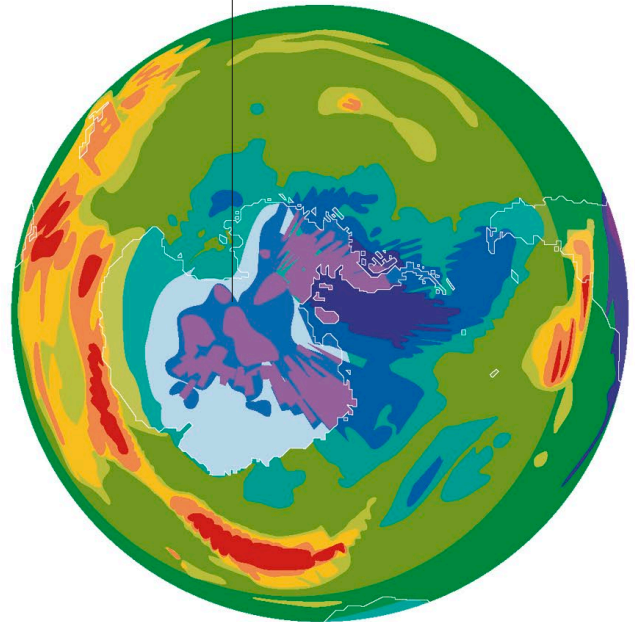
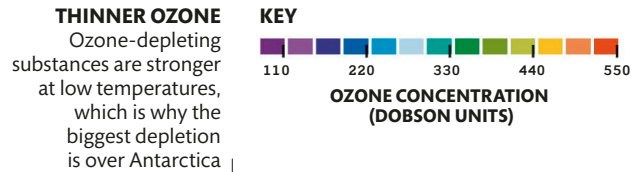
The ozone layer

Stratospheric ozone is most dense about 12–19 miles (20–30 km) above Earth's surface, where the atmosphere is about a thousand times thinner than at ground level. Compounds released by human activities have depleted the ozone layer, raising concerns about greater levels of UV radiation reaching the surface. In addition to damaging key groups of organisms such as marine plankton, increased UV exposure increases the risk of skin cancer in humans.



Antarctic ozone

Ozone concentration is measured in Dobson units (DUs). Prior to 1979, ozone had never been recorded below 220 DUs, but from then on it became apparent that during spring over Antarctica, Earth's natural sunscreen was getting thinner. This area of depleted ozone became known as the ozone hole. In 1994, concentrations fell to just 73 DU.



1979

Ground-based measurements of ozone began in 1956, at Halley Bay, Antarctica. Satellite monitoring started in the early 1970s, and the first worldwide measurements began in 1978 with the Nimbus-7 satellite. The findings of this monitoring helped galvanize global political action.

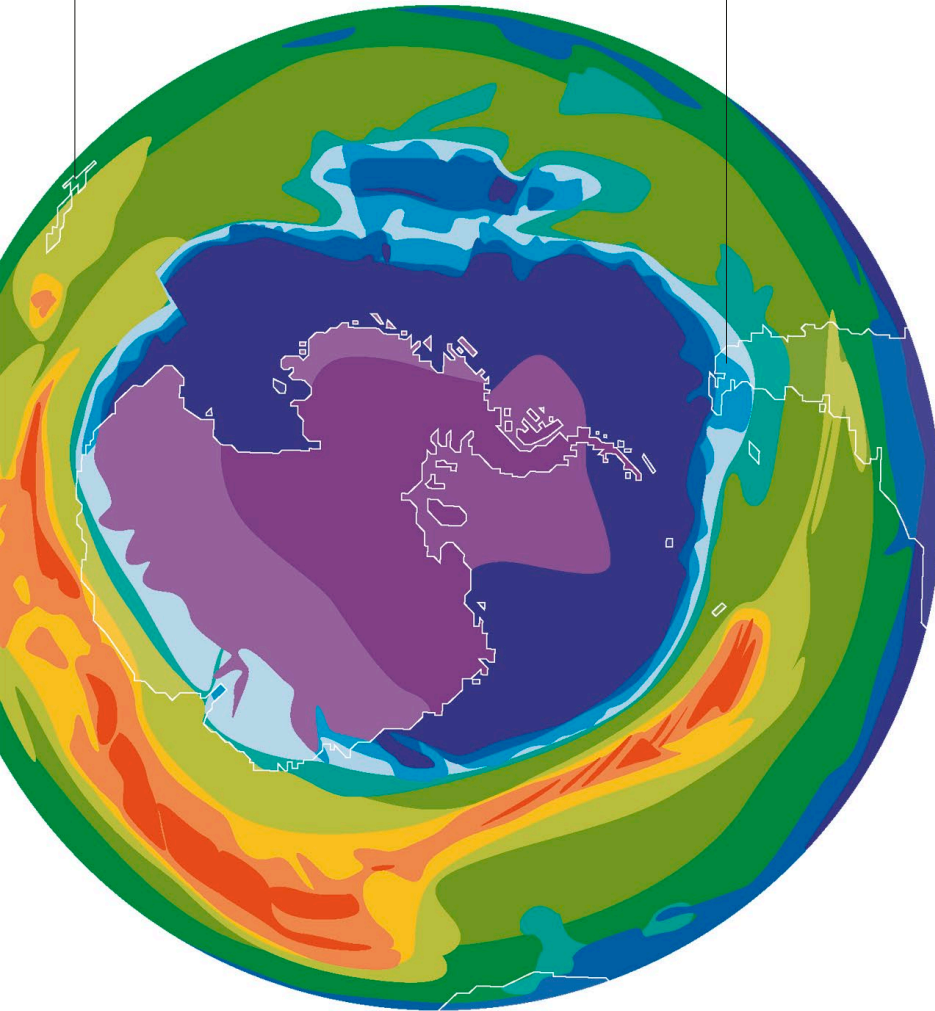
40% depletion in ozone above the Arctic in 2011

NEW ZEALAND

From time to time, the ozone hole breaks apart, and fingerlike areas of depleted ozone extend over inhabited areas, including New Zealand

SOUTH AMERICA

During September 2015, the ozone hole spread over Punta Arenas, Chile, exposing inhabitants to very intense UV radiation



2013

In 2013, the ozone hole was still massive and deep, despite the phasing out of most ozone-depleting substances. Models suggest that Antarctic ozone will largely recover by the mid-21st century, although this might be delayed by climate change.

OZONE ENEMIES

When it became clear that certain chemicals were depleting the ozone layer, an international agreement—the Montreal Protocol—was negotiated in 1987. This successfully reduced the manufacture and release of ozone-depleting substances. Even so, ozone concentrations need time to recover. Meanwhile, monitoring ensures that warnings can be issued to areas at risk. Despite industry concerns about costs, alternatives to ozone-depleting substances were developed and are now widely used.



CFCs

Chlorinated fluorocarbons (CFCs) were used in aerosols, sterilization equipment, and refrigerators and freezers. Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) were used as substitutes.



Halons

These powerful greenhouse gases were used in fire extinguishers and technology systems employed by the aviation and defense industries. Production of halons ceased in 1994 under the US Clean Air Act.



Methyl bromide

Methyl bromide was used to control a huge range of agricultural pests. Many chemical and nonchemical alternatives now exist.



A Warmer World

Rising temperatures, higher sea levels, and polar ice melt are just some of the many changes resulting from mankind's impacts on the atmosphere. These and other effects caused by increased concentrations of greenhouse gases are leading to a range of economic, social, and environmental consequences.

The world is getting hotter. From 1850 to the present day, surface temperatures have risen 1.5°F (0.8°C) on average across the globe. The primary cause is undoubtedly the higher levels of heat-trapping gases, such as carbon dioxide, CO₂ (see pp120–121). This rise in temperature is already leading to melting ice sheets and glaciers, which contributes to sea level rise. These changes are set to continue, but they may not be linear in relation to temperature increase. The planet's total amount of ice melt may accelerate as critical "tipping points" are reached—as is possible for the Greenland ice sheet and some Antarctic ice sheets.

10 million people each year are affected by coastal flooding

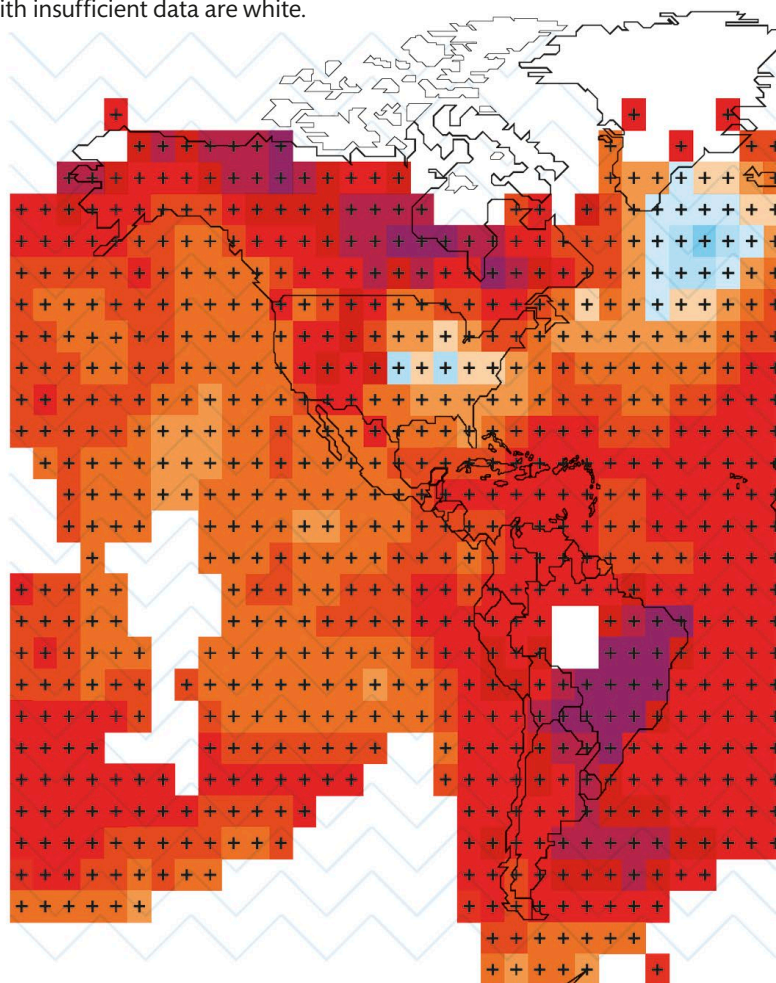
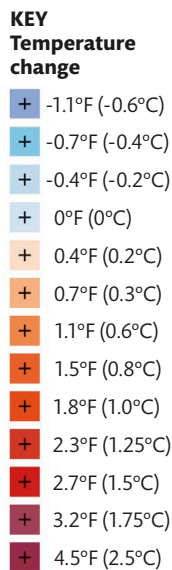


SEE ALSO...

- › Seasons Out of Sync pp126–127
- › Extreme World pp130–131
- › Feedback Loops pp134–135

Temperature rise

Throughout the Northern Hemisphere, 1983 to 2012 was probably the warmest 30-year period in the last 1,400 years. This map shows estimated global surface temperature changes from 1901 to 2012. Temperature decreases appear as shades of blue, while increases appear as shades of orange and purple. Areas with insufficient data are white.

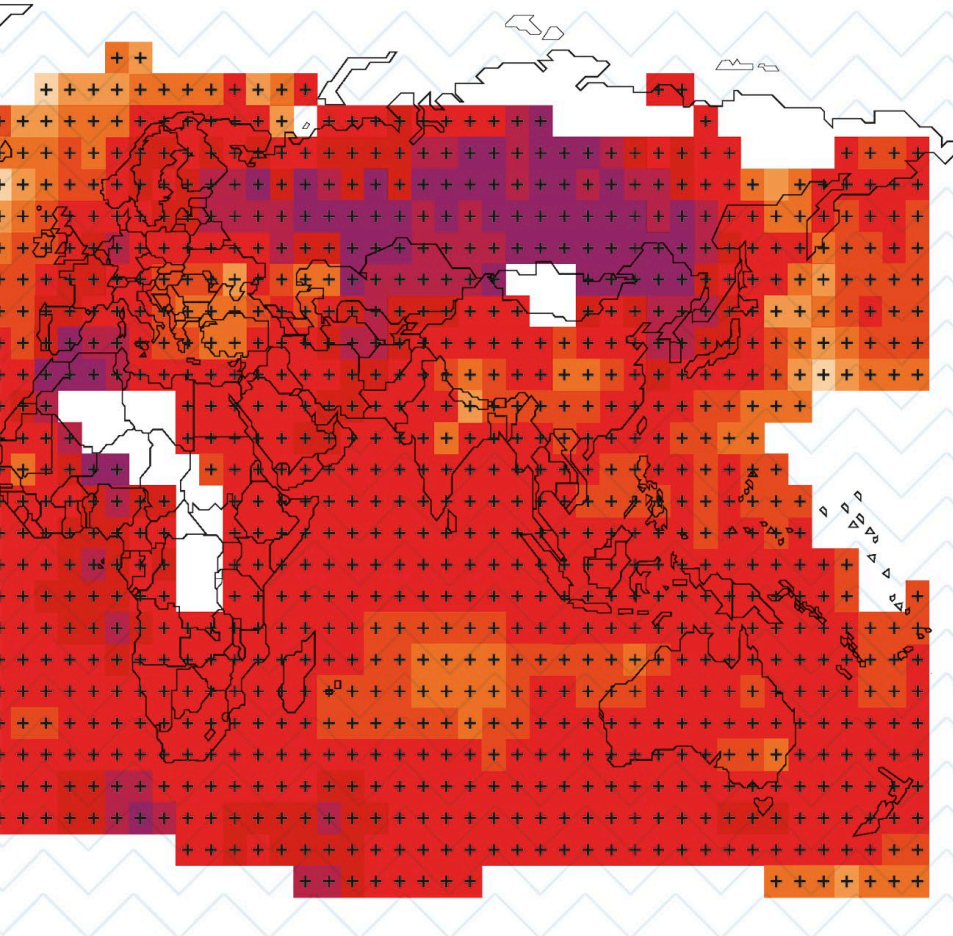
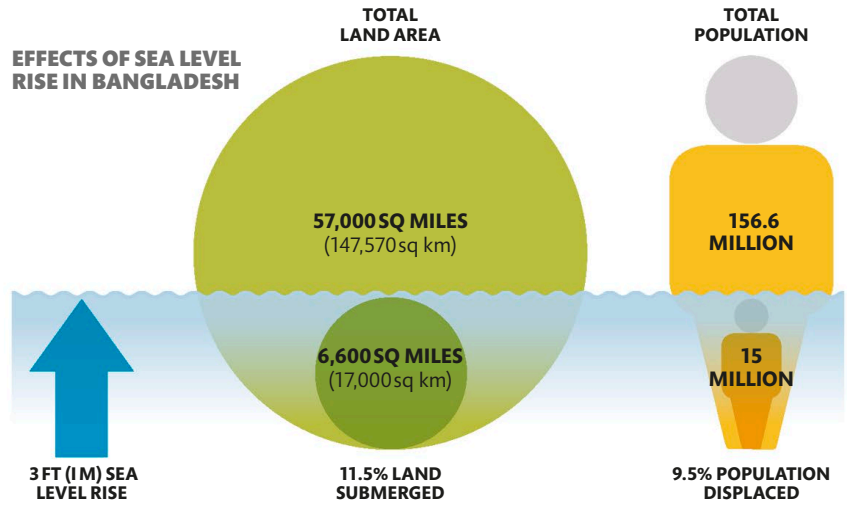


Flooding

Rising water levels already affect life in Bangladesh. The problem is likely to get worse.

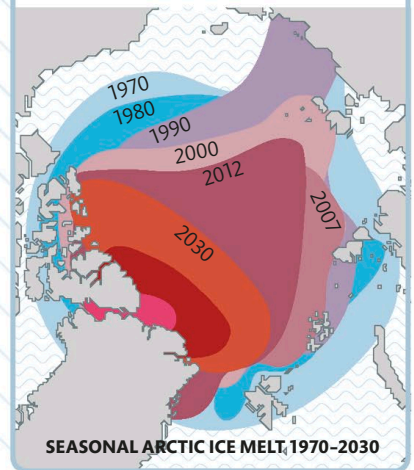
Rising waters

Sea levels are rising because of land-based ice melt and because ocean water expands as it gets warmer. The rate of sea level rise since the mid-19th century has been larger than the average rate during the previous two millennia. From 1880 to 2013, global mean sea level rose by about 9 in (23 cm). It will rise further as the ocean continues to warm and the melting of glaciers and polar ice sheets increases. The consequences of sea level rise are particularly severe in low-lying countries such as Bangladesh.



ICE MELT

The world has seen a massive loss of ice over the last two decades, from both ice sheets and glaciers. The average rate of ice loss from the Greenland ice sheet increased substantially from 2002 to 2011, and recent major ice loss has also been reported from Antarctica. The diagram below shows the seasonal shrinking of Arctic ice cover since 1970. By 2030, Arctic sea ice cover will be a fraction of 1970 levels. By 2100, there is likely to be little or no summer sea ice remaining here.





Seasons Out of Sync

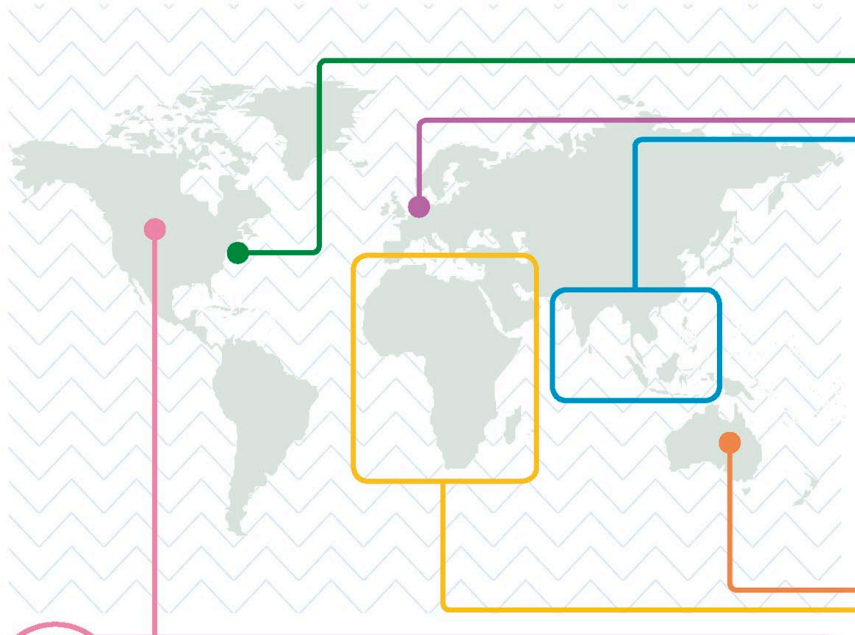
Across the world, climate change is leading to shifts in seasonal patterns. Sometimes subtle and taking place over decades, the implications can nonetheless be profound, for people and nature.

Many parts of the world have marked seasons that are important for farming, water supply, and energy demand, and for sustaining the complex relationships between different wildlife species. Although many seasonal changes have been fairly predictable, longer-term shifts in climate are causing some patterns and relationships to fall out of balance—for example, because of the earlier arrival of spring warmth and earlier flowering of plants.

Records reaching back decades, and in some cases centuries, allow scientists to document long-term trends. These records include data on the first and last leaves on ginkgo trees in Japan, the dates of first butterfly appearances in the UK, bird migration in Australia, and of course temperature records that reveal increasingly short winters and the earlier arrival of spring. More important than these individual changes, however, is the impact that they may have on the many different and complex relationships between elements of the natural world.

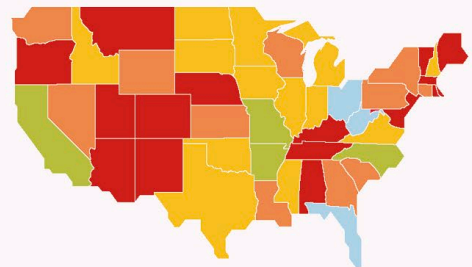
Global impact

The natural world and the human civilizations that depend on it are heavily influenced by seasonal cycles. These cycles have been relatively stable and predictable for thousands of years. That is now subject to ongoing change, however, as the timing and intensity of temperature change and rainfall respond to global warming, affecting people and wildlife in a variety of ways.



Earlier spring

Spring is arriving earlier across most of the US. This map estimates the first day that leaves emerge in each state, comparing the average for 1991–2010 with the 1961–1980 average. Such changes could have potential effects on plant and animal life cycles, which are tied to the seasons.



CHANGE IN SPRING ARRIVAL BY US STATE

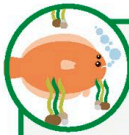
KEY

0-1 2 3 4 5+ Days earlier



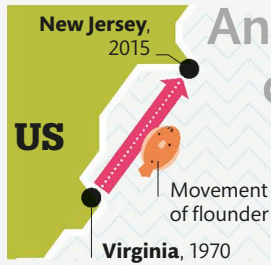
SEE ALSO...

- › **Farmed Planet** pp64–65
- › **Extreme World** pp130–31
- › **How Climate Patterns Work** pp128–129



Warming waters

From 1982 to 2006, the North Atlantic Ocean warmed by about 0.4°F (0.23°C) per decade. Surveys running from the 1960s reveal that the commercially important summer flounder population has moved north, causing problems for fishing fleets.



Annual flounder catch is worth more than \$30 million



Hungry birds

A Dutch study has shown how the breeding cycle of Great Tits has fallen out of sync with the peak abundance of caterpillars that the adult birds feed their chicks. Insects have adapted to earlier springs by breeding earlier, but the birds have not. This could lead to lower chick survival rates.

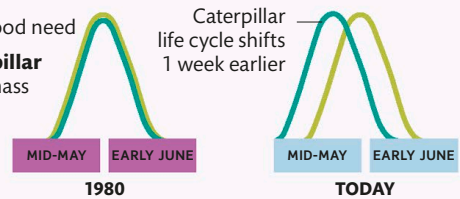
KEY

Bird

Peak food need

Caterpillar

Peak mass



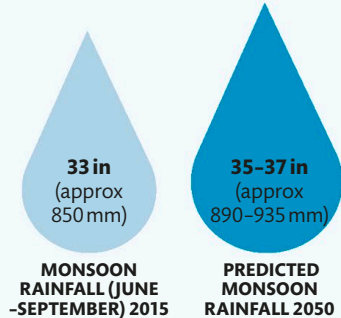
First leaves and blooms came **one day earlier per decade** in the Northern Hemisphere from 1955 to 2002



Indian monsoon

The Indian monsoon is a stable, reasonably predictable annual weather pattern, but it is believed that rainfall each year will become more variable as the climate warms. Both flooding and drought (between the rains) are predicted to increase. Even a 10 percent change can have huge impacts on farming, food prices, and the economy.

5-10% increase in monsoon rain



Farming

More than 70 percent of African farmers rely on rain (rather than irrigation) to produce food. Changes in the timing and intensity of seasonal rains are leading to reduced yields and lower incomes.



Rainfall

Australia is the driest inhabited continent, and changes in average rainfall have a major impact on farming. Scientists believe the Australian climate has already changed with recent droughts revealing the cost of less rain. More intense heavy downpours have also affected some areas.



Warming up

Seven of Australia's 10 warmest years on record occurred in the 13 years since 2002, with a record mean temperature for 2005-2014. High temperatures worsen the effects of low rainfall.



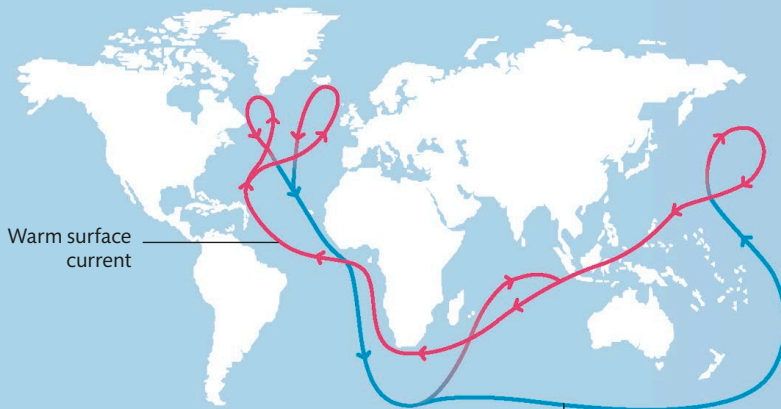
Bushfires

The drying climate of southeastern Australia has increased the risk of bushfires. From 1973 to 2007, there was an overall increase in high-fire-danger weather.



How Climate Patterns Work

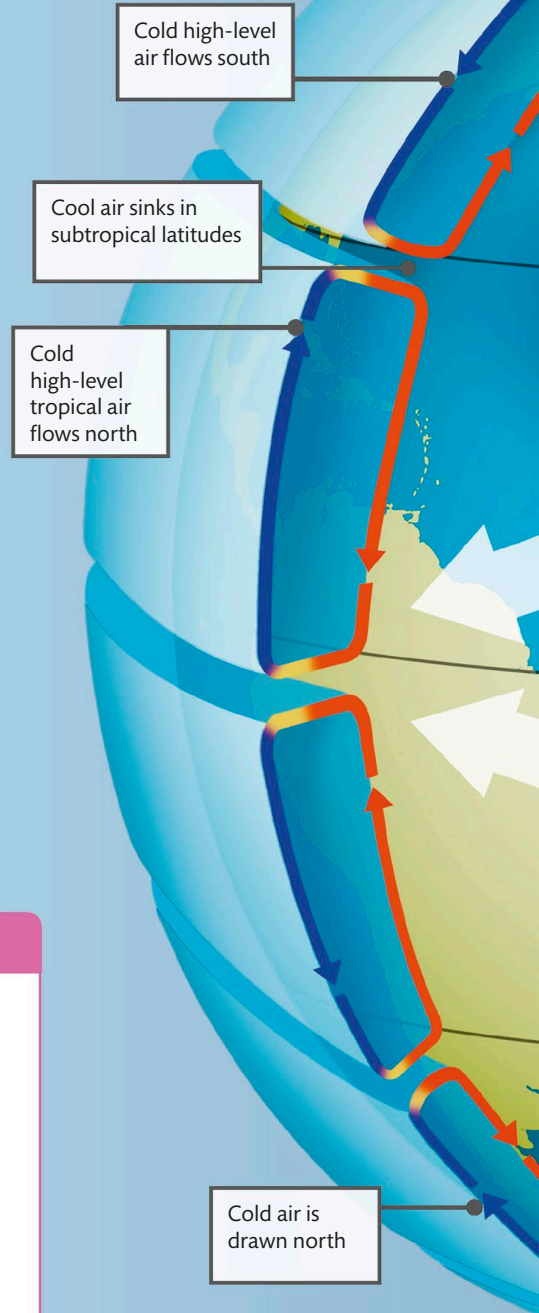
Climate is determined by the interaction of a finely balanced set of factors. Solar energy warms the oceans and the atmosphere, while differences in atmospheric pressure and temperature drive air and sea currents. Climate is influenced by latitude as well as factors such as distance from the ocean and height above sea level. Climatic conditions are measured in averages over decades. Weather is shorter term, changing from day to day. Solar heating causes the air in Earth's atmosphere to cycle around the globe in three sets of giant loops, called atmospheric cells—Hadley, Ferrel, and Polar cells. These produce north-south airflows, which are modified by Earth's spin, producing winds that blow diagonally.



Ocean currents

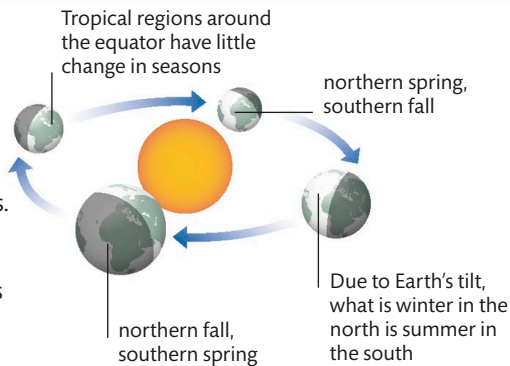
Oceans absorb energy from the sun and move it around in surface currents. Ocean currents carry warm tropical water into cooler regions, affecting the climate there.

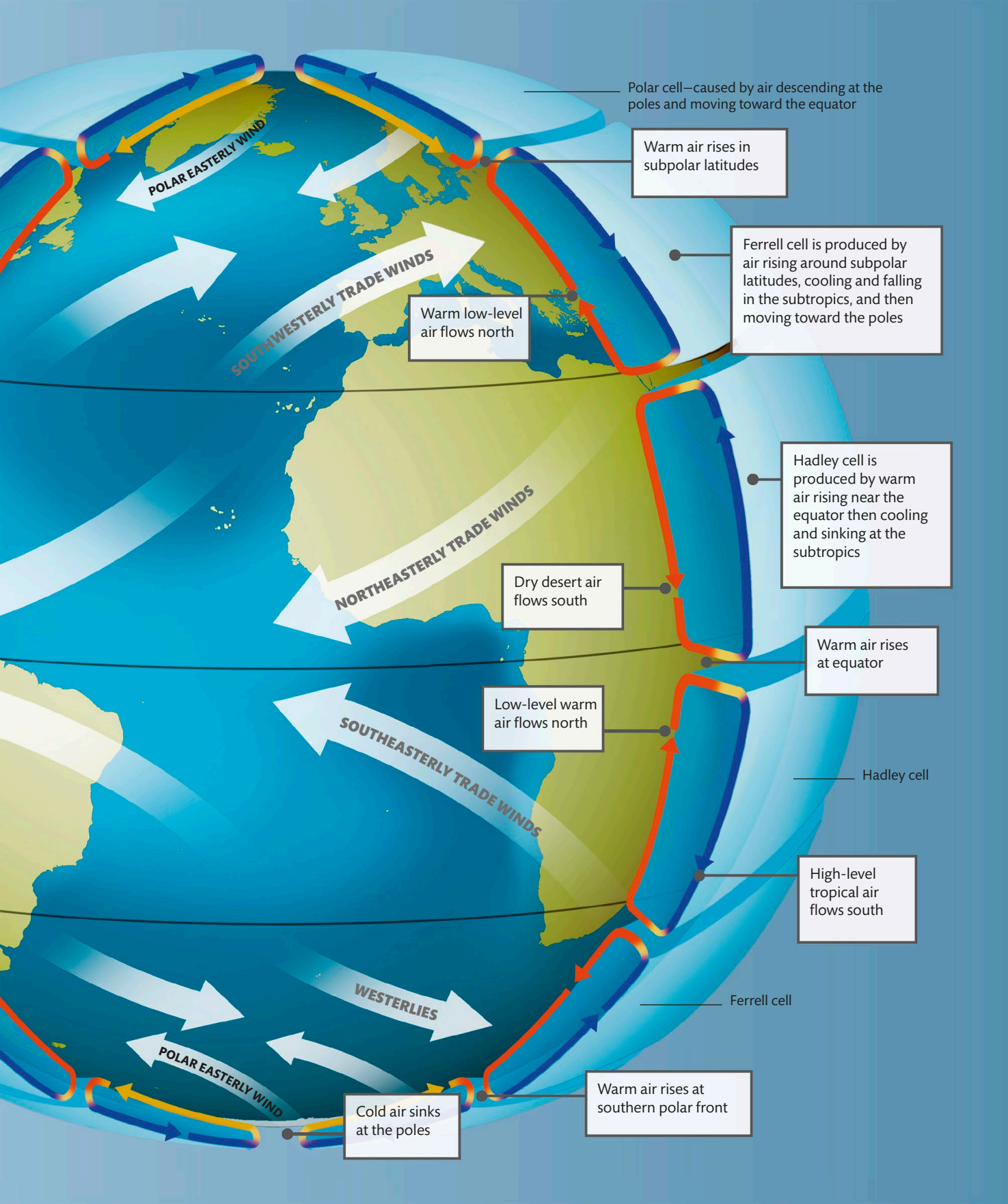
Cold, deepwater current



SEASONS

Earth rotates around the Sun on a tilted axis in an orbit that takes one year. Because different areas of the Earth face toward or away from the sun, the length of day and the temperature changes. This leads to long days and short nights in summer and the reverse in winter. Seasons are most pronounced near each pole.





Polar cell—caused by air descending at the poles and moving toward the equator

Warm air rises in subpolar latitudes

Ferrell cell is produced by air rising around subpolar latitudes, cooling and falling in the subtropics, and then moving toward the poles

Warm low-level air flows north

Hadley cell is produced by warm air rising near the equator then cooling and sinking at the subtropics

Dry desert air flows south

Warm air rises at equator

Low-level warm air flows north

High-level tropical air flows south

Hadley cell

Ferrell cell

Cold air sinks at the poles

Warm air rises at southern polar front



Extreme World

Weather records are being broken around the world. As the climate warms, extreme weather is becoming more frequent and leading to a series of devastating knock-on consequences.

The buildup of more heat in the atmosphere is leading to changed patterns of evaporation and atmospheric circulation. This causes unusual and extreme weather. Weather is highly variable in the short term, but climate trends are based on averages that span decades. The trend toward more extreme weather events is in line with the predicted impacts of progressive warming. A continued increase in warming will lead to more extreme conditions, in turn generating a wide range of economic, social, and environmental consequences. These are being intensified by other environmental changes, including deforestation.

Weather warning

The impact of more extreme weather events will undermine food production, place increased pressure on emergency services, elevate demand for humanitarian assistance, create security tensions, and exacerbate conflict. A vital aspect of future economic planning will be to prepare for extreme events so that their impact is reduced and a quick recovery can occur. This might be through storing more rainwater, conserving and restoring forests, adopting new standards for infrastructure, improving soil quality, and developing more diverse agriculture.



Hurricanes

The intensity, frequency, and duration of North Atlantic hurricanes, such as Hurricane Dean (pictured hitting the coast of Mexico in 2007), have all increased since the early 1980s.

Droughts

Australia, California, parts of East Africa, and southern Brazil have all recently suffered the effects of severe drought. This has resulted in limited availability of water for industry, farming, households, wildlife, and energy generation.

Floods

Devastating floods have recently affected parts of West Africa, Thailand, western Europe, and South America. This has led to loss of life, damage to property, and major interruptions to business activity. Damage to soil caused by farming has made flood events more severe.

Storms

As oceans heat up, storms powered by warm air rising from them are on average becoming more violent. The most severe tropical cyclones ever recorded have occurred during the last decade. As the world warms, severe storms are expected to become more frequent.





Food shortage

Floods, droughts, and storms can reduce food production. This causes shortages, rising prices, and hunger among the poorest people. Recently, drought and heat waves have hit yields in the US and Australia.




Lack of drinking water

Severe droughts have recently led to restrictions on public water consumption, including in parts of Australia, Brazil, and the US. Flooding and storm damage can lead to contaminated drinking water supplies.




Homelessness

Huge floods, such as those in Pakistan, destroy thousands of homes. Over recent years, cyclones have devastated islands and coastal areas, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless.



Damaged infrastructure

Roads, ports, railroads, and power-distribution systems are all affected by severe weather. This damage has increased the level of weather-related insurance claims.



Mass migration

Many of the migrants arriving in Europe over recent years have come from parts of Africa that are suffering from the effects of desertification, in turn made worse by reduced or more erratic rainfall. In the future, others will be forced to move by rising sea levels. Many also flee from conflict, which may in turn be connected to the impacts of severe weather events.



Conflict

The impacts of severe weather can be linked to conflict. The Syrian Civil War began at a time of severe drought. This aggravated political tensions when about 1.5 million rural people were forced to move to urban areas. The exceptionally dry period was consistent with climate change projections for the eastern Mediterranean that suggest progressively less rainfall there.



Human casualties

Some storm events cause massive loss of life directly, such as that brought about by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. About 18,000 people lost their lives as a result of this exceptional storm, which also wrecked infrastructure across large swathes of Central America. The impacts of extreme events—such as hunger, exposure, and conflict—also lead to human casualties.



The Two-Degree Limit

In 2009, governments agreed the need to keep the global temperature rise to below 3.6°F (2°C) compared with preindustrial times. In 2015, it was agreed to aim for the more challenging limit of 2.7°F (1.5°C)

The two-degree limit was adopted to meet the central aim of the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to avoid “dangerous” human interference with the climate system. Although there is no single scientific verdict as to what constitutes “dangerous,” 3.6°F (2°C) is a widely accepted limit to guide policy. The reasons include the expected impacts on

water security (see pp78–79), food production (see pp74–75), ocean acidification (see pp160–161), and the extent to which going above this level might trigger fundamental shifts in the climate. By adopting a two-degree limit as the overall aim, it is possible to construct a “carbon budget” to help achieve it. If we are to contain warming to the safer limit of 2.7°F (1.5°C), then the carbon budget will be far smaller.

SEE ALSO...

- ▶ **A Warmer World** pp124–125
- ▶ **How Much Can We Burn?** pp136–137
- ▶ **The Carbon Crossroads** pp140–141
- ▶ **Targets for the Future** pp142–143

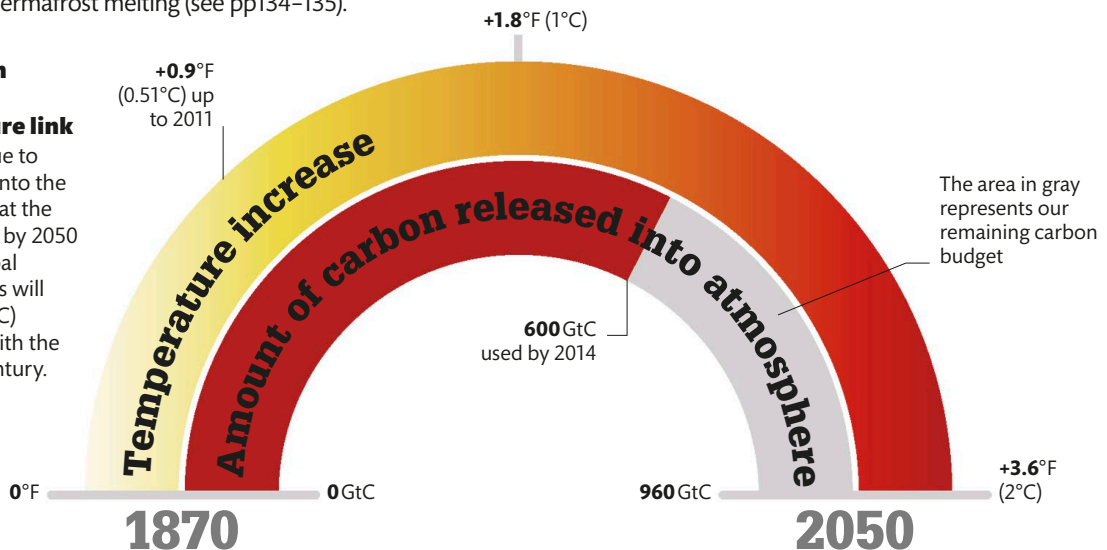
Our carbon budget

The carbon budget sets a limit on human emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂). If we are to have a two-thirds chance of limiting warming to below 3.6°F (2°C), then a total of 960 gigatons of carbon (GtC) can be released (starting from 1870). If other greenhouse gases (such as methane and nitrous oxide) are added, the budget shrinks to 870 GtC. The diagrams show an optimistic scenario based only on carbon and without the possible contribution of feedbacks, such as caused by permafrost melting (see pp134–135).

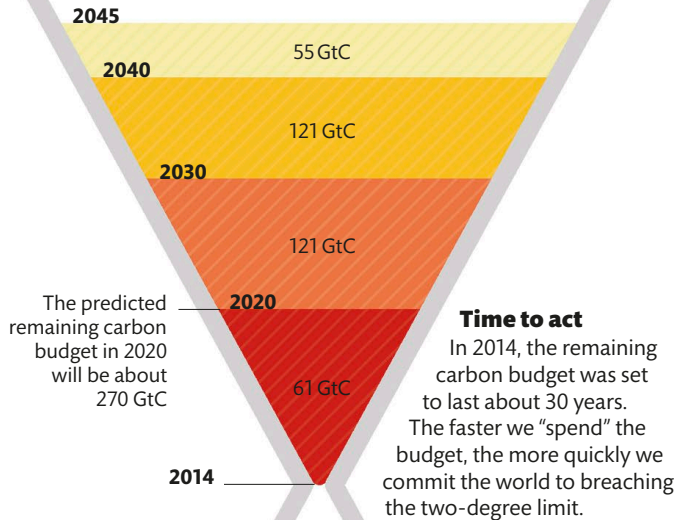
The UK was the first country to set a **legally binding carbon budget**, committing to an **80 percent reduction from 1990 levels by 2050**

The carbon dioxide/temperature link

If we continue to release CO₂ into the atmosphere at the present rate, by 2050 average global temperatures will rise 3.6°F (2°C) compared with the mid-19th century.



In 2014, we had
358 GtC
left in our
carbon budget



Time to act

In 2014, the remaining carbon budget was set to last about 30 years. The faster we “spend” the budget, the more quickly we commit the world to breaching the two-degree limit.

Carbon budget in 1870 was **960 GtC**

By 2014, we had used up **600 GtC**

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH

A range of different strategies is needed to follow an emissions pathway consistent with a maximum 3.6°F (2°C) temperature increase. Many of these strategies relate to energy choices but also to deforestation, land use, and economic policies. Some encouraging progress is already being made, but more action is urgently required.



Electricity efficiency Emissions can be reduced through efficient uses of power: for example, by fitting modern electrical motors in factories or LED light bulbs in homes.



Renewable electricity Switching from fossil fuels to renewable alternatives will be a major focus in getting onto an emissions pathway for two degrees.



Carbon capture Capturing waste CO₂ and storing it (see pp136–137) can reduce emissions from power stations, although limited progress is being made with this technology.



Vehicle efficiency More efficient conventional engines, hybrid-electric technology, and electric vehicles will reduce emissions and make air cleaner to breathe.



Low-carbon fuels Blending biofuels with gasoline and diesel to power vehicles, and using sustainably sourced biomass in industry, would reduce dependence on fossil fuels.



Smart growth Building communities with housing and sustainable transportation close to offices, schools, and stores would protect the environment and support local economies.



Carbon taxes Requiring polluting industries to pay a price for their carbon emissions would send a clear economic signal and encourage investment toward cleaner energy sources.



Forest and soil carbon Halting deforestation and restoring forests could make a significant contribution to meeting the two-degree target, as well as helping conserve wildlife and water.



Switching subsidies Removing fossil fuel subsidies could lead to around a 13 percent cut in emissions. These valuable subsidies could then support renewable alternatives.



Feedback Loops

While reducing fossil fuel emissions and limiting land-use change is under some human control, so-called feedbacks play an increasingly important part in climate change as our world gets warmer.

Climate feedbacks are effects of climate change that either speed up (positive feedback) or slow down (negative feedback) warming. For example, certain cloud types that might become more abundant at higher temperatures could create

a cooling effect and slow down the speed of climate change. The warmer the world becomes, the greater the risk that major positive feedbacks will hasten climate change regardless of any actions taken to cut emissions.

The Amazon drought of 2010 caused the release of about 2.2 billion tons of carbon



CO₂ released

Feedback loops and their impact

There are some potentially serious positive feedbacks that could add to global warming. This is one reason why, in 2009, governments adopted the goal of limiting warming to less than 3.6°F (2°C) above average global temperature. If temperatures rise more than this threshold, feedbacks could accelerate climate change. These feedbacks include the loss of ice cover, dieback of rain forests, release of methane from seabeds, and melting permafrost.



Arctic melt

Most of the sun's energy that hits icy surfaces is reflected back into space. As ice melts in the Arctic and elsewhere, the darker surfaces of ocean and tundra are exposed. These absorb much more of the sun's energy, speeding up global warming, and, in turn, melting more ice.



Seabed methane release

Huge quantities of methane are stored in seabeds. This methane is stable at lower temperatures, but global warming could cause the gas to be released into the atmosphere. This powerful greenhouse gas would speed up warming and cause further methane release from the seabed and permafrost.



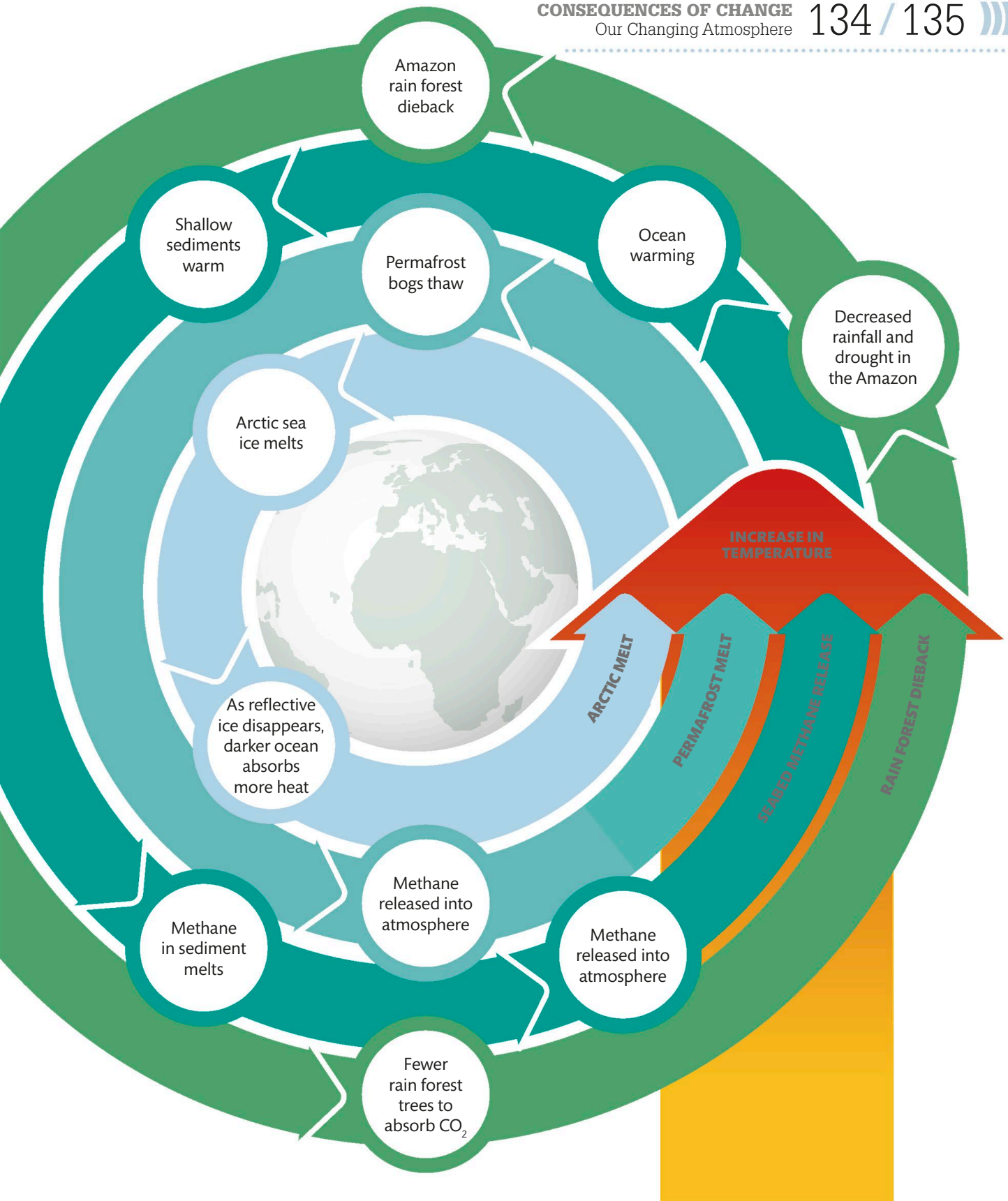
Permafrost melt

At high latitudes, close to polar regions, there are vast areas of peat soils frozen as permafrost. They contain trapped carbon dioxide and methane. As the climate warms and causes the permafrost to melt, these greenhouse gases are released. As more of these gases are released, there is further melting and emissions.



Rain forest dieback

Decreased rainfall and heat stress could cause large areas of rain forest to dry out and turn into savanna, or grasslands. These ecosystems hold less carbon than dense forests, thereby increasing levels in the atmosphere. Changes to forests will also affect wildlife.





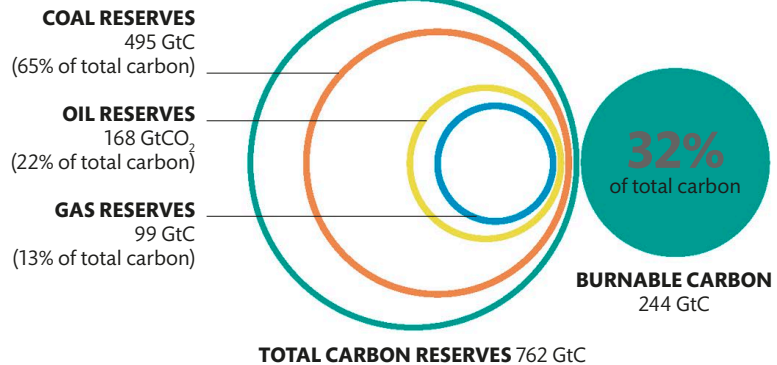
How Much Can We Burn?

It is now possible to calculate the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted before temperature thresholds are exceeded. With this in mind, we must decide how best to use the fossil fuel reserves we have.

Carbon budgets describe the amount of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide (CO₂), that countries agree can be released into the atmosphere. These budgets are being compared with known fossil fuel reserves to determine the amount of coal, oil, and gas that can be burned before the world commits to a dangerous temperature increase. A hazardous level of warming was agreed in 2009 to be 3.6°F (2°C) above the global average temperature in preindustrial times (see pp132–133). It is estimated that to have an 80 percent chance of keeping the overall temperature increase to below 3.6°F (2°C), less than one-third of reserves can be burned.

Staying on budget

There is a much larger amount of fossil fuels in the ground than we can safely burn. Potential emissions of CO₂ from total known reserves are calculated to be 762 GtC (gigatonnes of carbon). This figure excludes any new deposits that are yet to be discovered. Effective action on climate change would thus lead to coal, oil, and gas companies' assets being left in the ground or "stranded."



CARBON CAPTURE TECHNOLOGY

Experimental carbon capture technology may allow fossil fuels to be used without exceeding the 3.6°F (2°C) carbon budget. This process traps carbon emissions at the source and compresses the gas to liquid form. It is then piped into geological structures for storage.



Unmineable coal seams

Carbon dioxide can be injected into deep, inaccessible, or otherwise uneconomic coal deposits for storage. During this process, methane, a greenhouse gas, is released. The methane can then be recovered and used as an energy source.



Depleted oil deposits

Oil and gas fields that are nearing the end of their productive lives can be used for carbon storage. Injecting carbon dioxide can increase pressure in depleted oil fields to retrieve more oil in a process known as enhanced oil recovery.



Deep saline geology

Deep geological formations made up of sandstones and limestones that hold salty water are sometimes impermeable because they are capped by another type of formation. This means that they are able to hold injected carbon dioxide.



Fuel reserves

The amount of each fossil fuel that we can safely burn while staying within the 3.6°F (2°C) limit varies. Burning gas produces less CO₂ than burning coal. For example, if we stopped all coal burning, then we could use most of the oil reserves. If we use some coal, however, then the breakdown might look like this.

12% of coal is burnable

**Coal reserve
1,495 GtC**

48% of gas is burnable

**Gas reserve
99 GtC**

23.4%
of global carbon dioxide emissions in 2014 were emitted by China

65% of oil is burnable

**Oil reserve
168 GtC**



The Carbon Crossroads

The world is at a crossroads. To limit global warming to below 3.6°F (2°C) above the preindustrial average temperature, action is required now.

Future concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will be determined by a range of factors, including energy sources,

population changes, and individual consumption. Without urgent action, it will be nearly impossible to limit global warming later this century to below 3.6°F (2°C).

SEE ALSO...

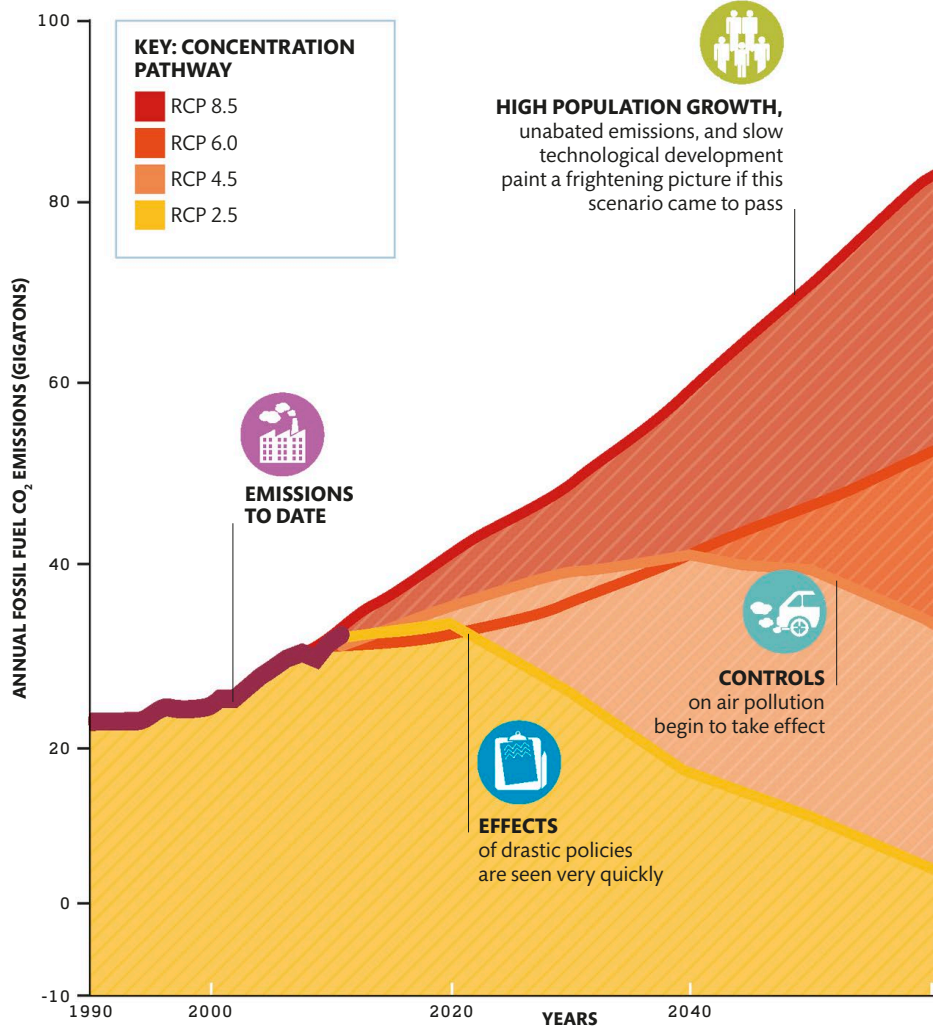
- **A Warmer World** pp124-125
- **The Two-Degree Limit** pp132-133
- **How Much Can We Burn?** pp136-137
- **Targets for the Future** pp142-143
- **What's the Global Plan?** pp186-187

Past, present, and future

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report, which was finalized in 2014, is a comprehensive assessment of climate change. Among its key findings were that human activities, especially the release of CO₂, are causing a sustained, unequivocal rise in global temperatures. Even if all emissions are stopped immediately, temperatures will continue to rise as a result of greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere. Mitigating this rise will need significant and lasting reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from this point onward.

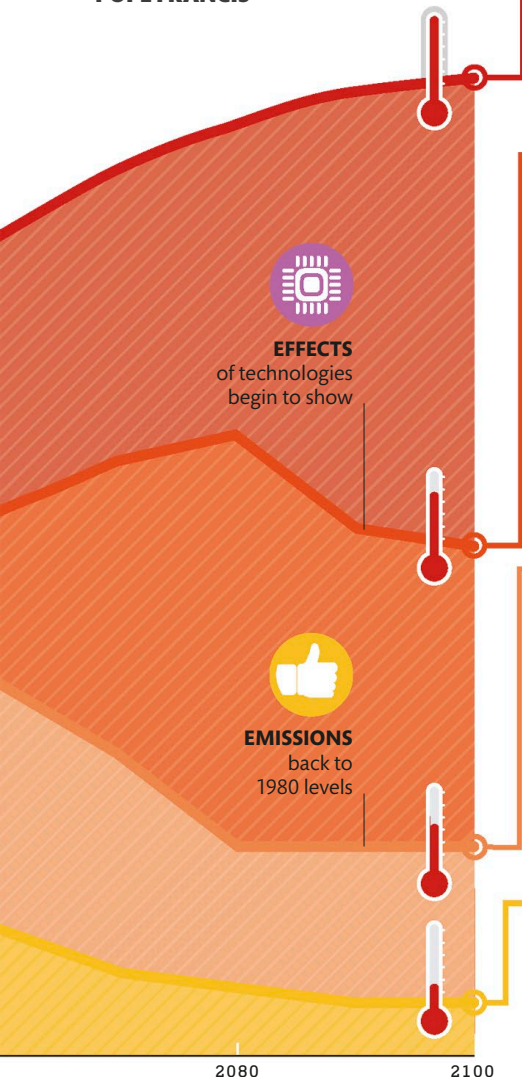
WHAT IS AN RCP?

As part of their findings, the IPCC explored four contrasting scenarios of future climate change. These scenarios, known as Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs), project greenhouse gas concentrations and their impact on global temperatures over the 21st century. Each pathway is consistent with different scenarios based on various socioeconomic trends and policy choices.



“We received this world...as a loan from future generations, to whom we will have to return it!”

POPE FRANCIS



Highest concentration pathway

RCP 8.5 is consistent with high population growth, lower incomes in developing countries, slow technology development, and rising emissions from burning fossil fuels. Emissions eventually level out, but the average global temperature increases by around 9°F (5°C).



Ecosystem failure Many ecosystems, such as large areas of tropical rainforest, will collapse, releasing more CO₂.

High concentration pathway

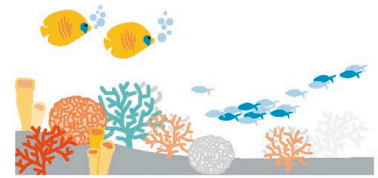
RCP 6 is consistent with technological advances that begin to have a large-scale impact during the 2080s. This causes concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases to stabilize at around the year 2100. Under this scenario, the average global temperature increase is about 5.4°F (3°C).



Food shortages Changing rainfall and temperature reduce food production, especially in the tropics.

Medium concentration pathway

RCP 4.5 is consistent with moderate action on climate change and air pollution. Forest conservation and regrowth brings significant positive effects from the 2040s to 2060s. During the 2080s, emissions are about the same as during the 1980s. The increase in temperature is 3.6–5.4°F (2–3°C).



Reef loss About two-thirds of the world's coral reefs suffer major long-term degradation.

Low concentration pathway

RCP 2.5 is consistent with an early peak and then a decline in emissions, arising from a radical and almost immediate policy change to encourage renewable energy, energy efficiency, and forest conservation on a large scale. In this scenario, the overall average temperature stays below the critical 3.6°F (2°C) mark.

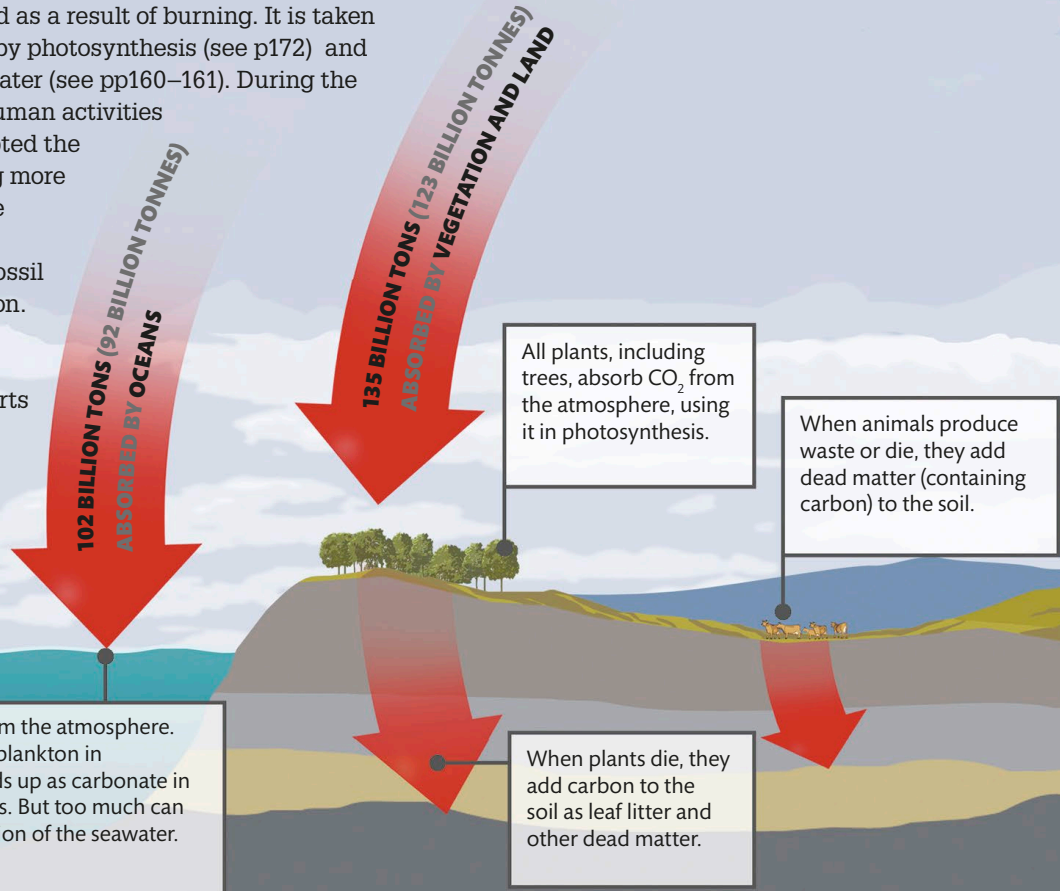


Declining milk production Lower-quality pasture and higher heat stress on cows affects major dairy exporters such as Australia.



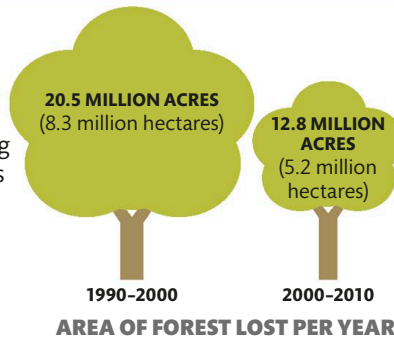
The Carbon Cycle

Carbon is essential for life and is present in all living things. It flows in cycles through Earth's systems, passing between rocks, plants and animal life, the atmosphere, and the oceans, including as carbon dioxide (CO₂). This finds its way into the air via respiration and as a result of burning. It is taken out of the air mostly by photosynthesis (see p172) and absorption into seawater (see pp160–161). During the last two centuries, human activities have seriously disrupted the carbon cycle, causing more CO₂ to build up in the atmosphere, mostly because of burning fossil fuels and deforestation. The graphic shows carbon circulating between different parts of the Earth system.



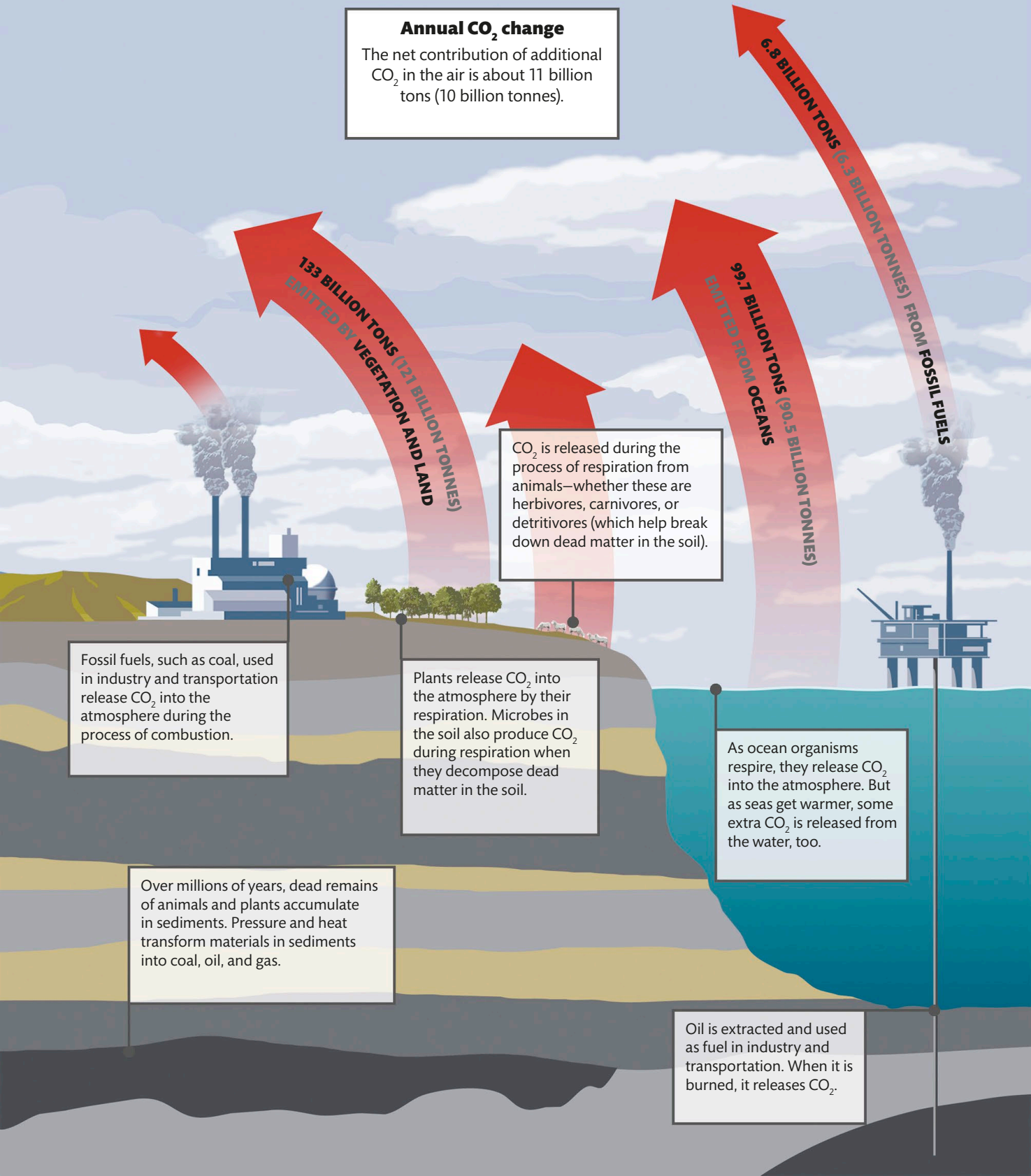
THE COST OF DEFORESTATION

Deforestation accounts for about one-fifth of greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activities—exceeding emissions from global transportation. Halting deforestation and restoring forests that have been cleared could provide about one-third of the action needed to combat climate change.



Annual CO₂ change

The net contribution of additional CO₂ in the air is about 11 billion tons (10 billion tonnes).





Targets for the Future

In the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, countries confirmed their commitment to limit global warming to less than 3.6°F (2°C) and also agreed to aim for the more challenging limit of 2.7°F (1.5°C).

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. Negotiations under this legally binding treaty led to a new agreement being forged in Paris in 2015. Under this new agreement, countries adopted to voluntary national action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Although this marked a major step forward, the total cuts are insufficient to meet a 3.6°F (2°C) warming limit. However, a five-yearly review process will require countries to reexamine their ongoing efforts and to consider whether deeper cuts are necessary.



SEE ALSO...

- **The Two-Degree Limit** pp132-133
- **Carbon Crossroads** pp138-139
- **What's Working?** pp190-191

Timeline of change

Since 1992, there have been many significant summits at which countries have debated how best to deal with the challenge of climate change. However, success has been elusive.

1979

First World Climate Conference in Geneva, Switzerland

1988

Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) founded

1992

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed at Earth Summit

1997

Kyoto Protocol, extending the UNFCCC, is signed

2007

China announces its first National Climate Change program in response to overtaking the US as the world's largest polluter

Main polluters

The top 10 biggest emitters of carbon dioxide in 2011 accounted for about two-thirds of global emissions. All these countries (and 175 others) committed

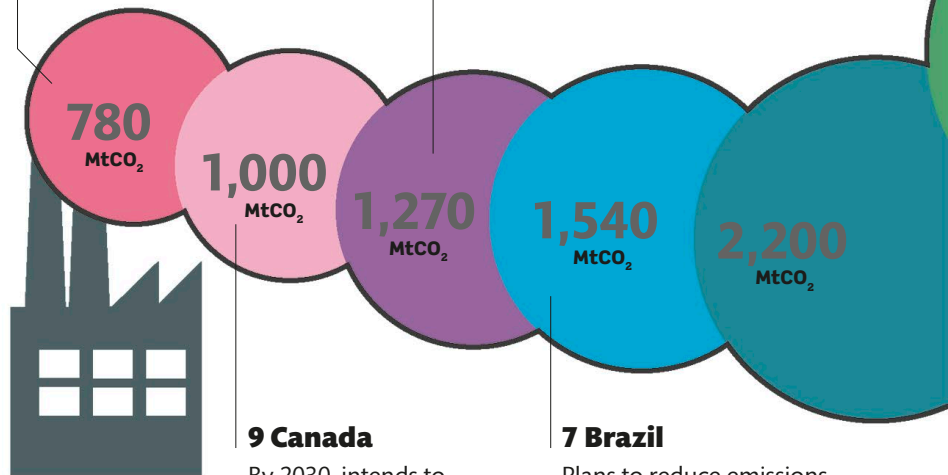
to reducing emissions as part of the 2015 Paris climate agreement. In the diagram, the figures are millions of tons of CO₂ (MtCO₂) emitted in 2011. Proposed cuts are for 2020–2030.

10 Mexico

Plans to cut emissions by 22 percent by 2030 and will go further if conditions are met, such as a global agreement addressing international carbon price

8 Japan

Despite economic difficulties and nuclear power problems, Japan still aims to cut emissions by 26 percent compared with 2013



9 Canada

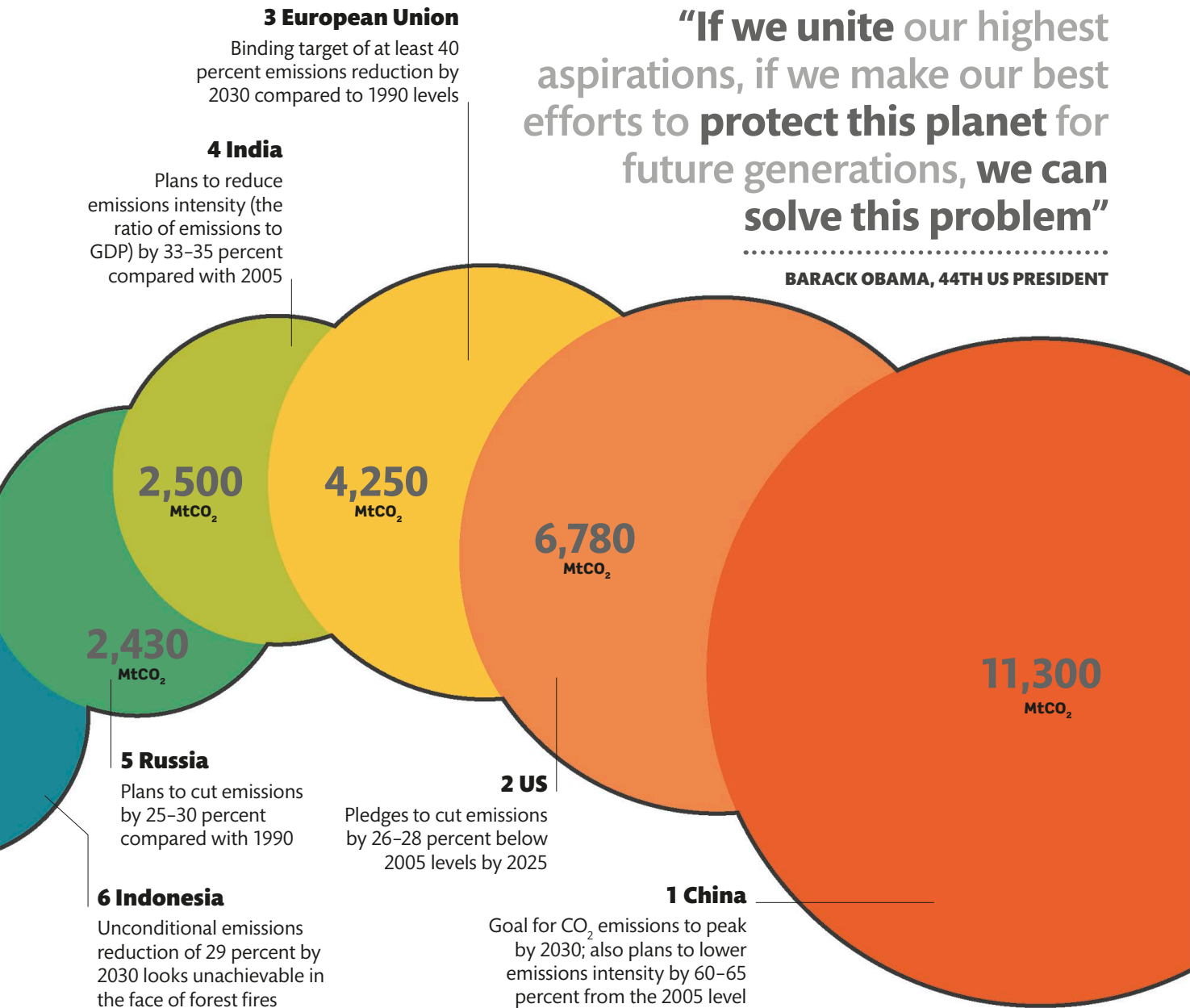
By 2030, intends to reduce emissions by 30 percent compared with 2005

7 Brazil

Plans to reduce emissions by 37 percent by 2025 to be met through renewable energy expansion and saving forests

“If we unite our highest aspirations, if we make our best efforts to protect this planet for future generations, we can solve this problem”

BARACK OBAMA, 44TH US PRESIDENT



2009 Copenhagen Summit results in a weak, nonbinding agreement

2011 Durban climate change talks agree to open negotiations for a new legally binding climate change treaty to be agreed in Paris in 2015

2014 IPCC Fifth Assessment Report concludes that “human influence on the climate system is clear” and that “human emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history”

2015 Paris climate talks agree a global legally binding commitment to limit the temperature rise to 3.6°F (2°C) and, if possible, 2.7°F (1.5°C)



Toxic Air

Air pollution is a major cause of premature death. The rise of huge cities, combined with increased demand for energy and cars, is making things worse.

A wide range of pollutants get into the air and cause damage to human health. Vehicle exhausts, emissions caused by power stations, and forest fires are the principal sources. Common health-threatening pollutants include microscopic particles, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, and ozone, which is toxic when it is in the air we breathe. Cars and trucks are especially problematic. Nitrogen oxides and particles released from diesel engines, and photochemical smog arising from sunlight acting on gasoline exhausts, kill millions.

DAMAGING PARTICLES

Polluting particles are divided into two groups: PM2.5 and PM10, based on their diameter. The WHO sets the maximum safe limit over 24 hours as 25 of the PM2.5 particles per 35 cubic feet of air.

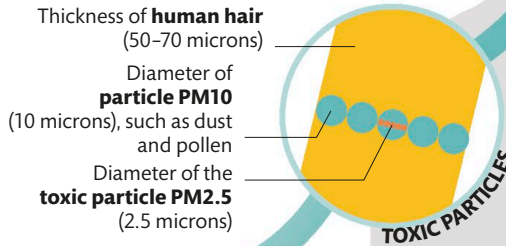


Sources of pollution

The main sources of air pollution include power stations, factories, and vehicles. These pollutants are all recognized, but not enough has been done to reduce emissions, and millions of people die as a result.

Deaths by disease

Air pollution increases the instances of major diseases. Particles released by combustion, for example, can be less than 2.5 microns in diameter. This means they are small enough to reach the deepest parts of the lungs and cross into the bloodstream. The World Health Organization (WHO) released figures breaking down the 3.7 million pollution-related deaths in 2012 by types of disease.



Thickness of **human hair**
(50–70 microns)

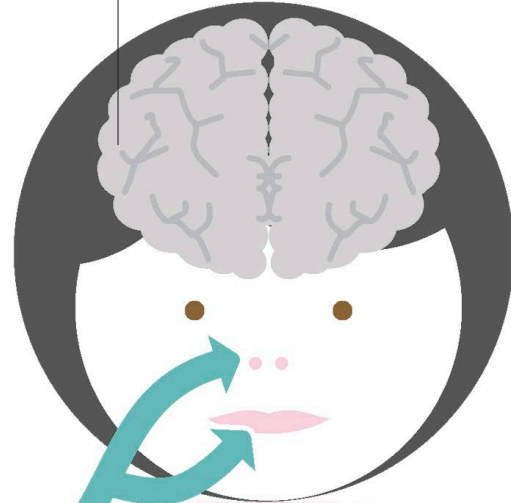
Diameter of **particle PM10**
(10 microns), such as dust and pollen

Diameter of the **toxic particle PM2.5**
(2.5 microns)

TOXIC PARTICLES

STROKES 40%

Pollutants can cause damage to blood vessels in the brain, causing oxygen starvation in brain tissues and death



COPD 11%

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) narrows the airways and can be fatal

LUNG CANCER 6%

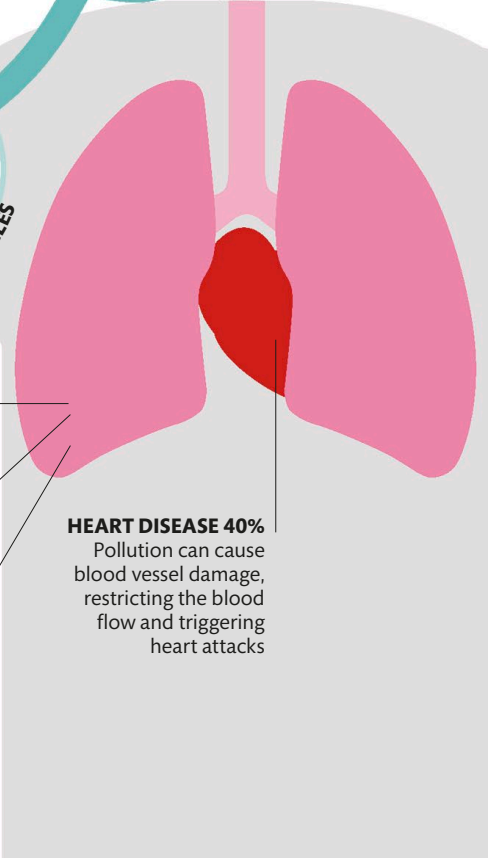
The risk rises with increasing exposure to air pollution, including particulate matter

ACUTE LOWER RESPIRATORY DISEASES 3%

The biggest cause of deaths among young children worldwide

HEART DISEASE 40%

Pollution can cause blood vessel damage, restricting the blood flow and triggering heart attacks



Most toxic parts of the world

About 88 percent of deaths caused by air pollution occur in low- and middle-income countries, which between them are home to 82 percent of the world's population. As of 2012, the Western Pacific and Southeast Asian regions were the worst offenders, with 1.67 million and 936,000 deaths, respectively. Some experts believe that the increasing number of fossil fuel-powered megacities

—cities with more than 10 million inhabitants (see pp40–41)—will double the number of air-pollution deaths by 2050 compared with 2012. Air quality has actually improved in some parts of the world—the blue regions on the map below signify reductions in air-pollution deaths since the 1850s.

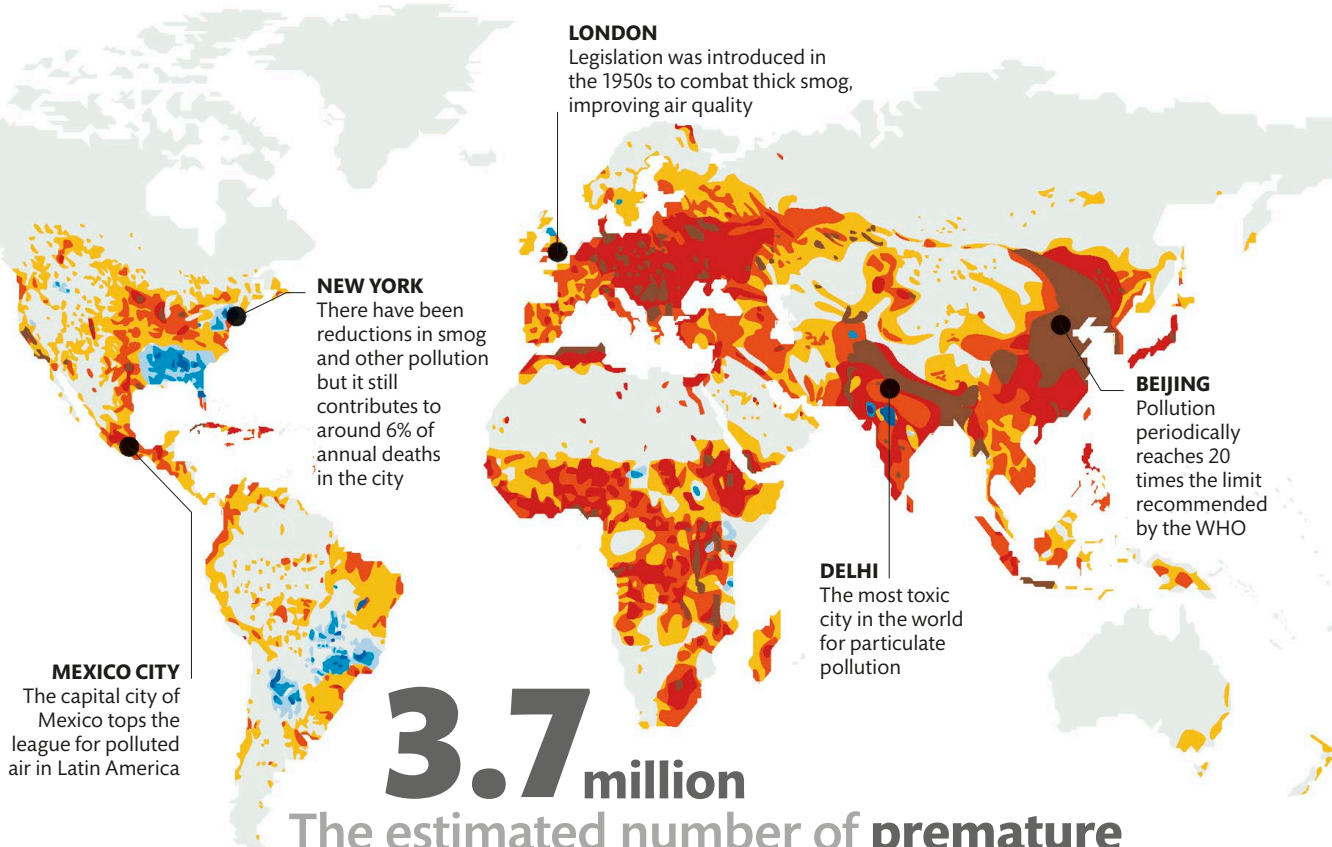
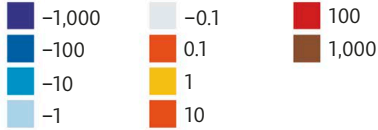


What can we do?

- **Go electric** Choosing an electric vehicle over a gasoline- or diesel-powered car will do your bit to improve air quality and improve public health.
- **Plant trees** Increasing the number of trees in polluted urban areas can help clean up the air. Leaves catch particles and other pollutants that are washed to the ground when it rains.

KEY

Premature mortality due to air pollution
(deaths per year per 400 square miles)



3.7 million

The estimated number of premature deaths caused by air pollution in 2012. The majority were in developing countries.



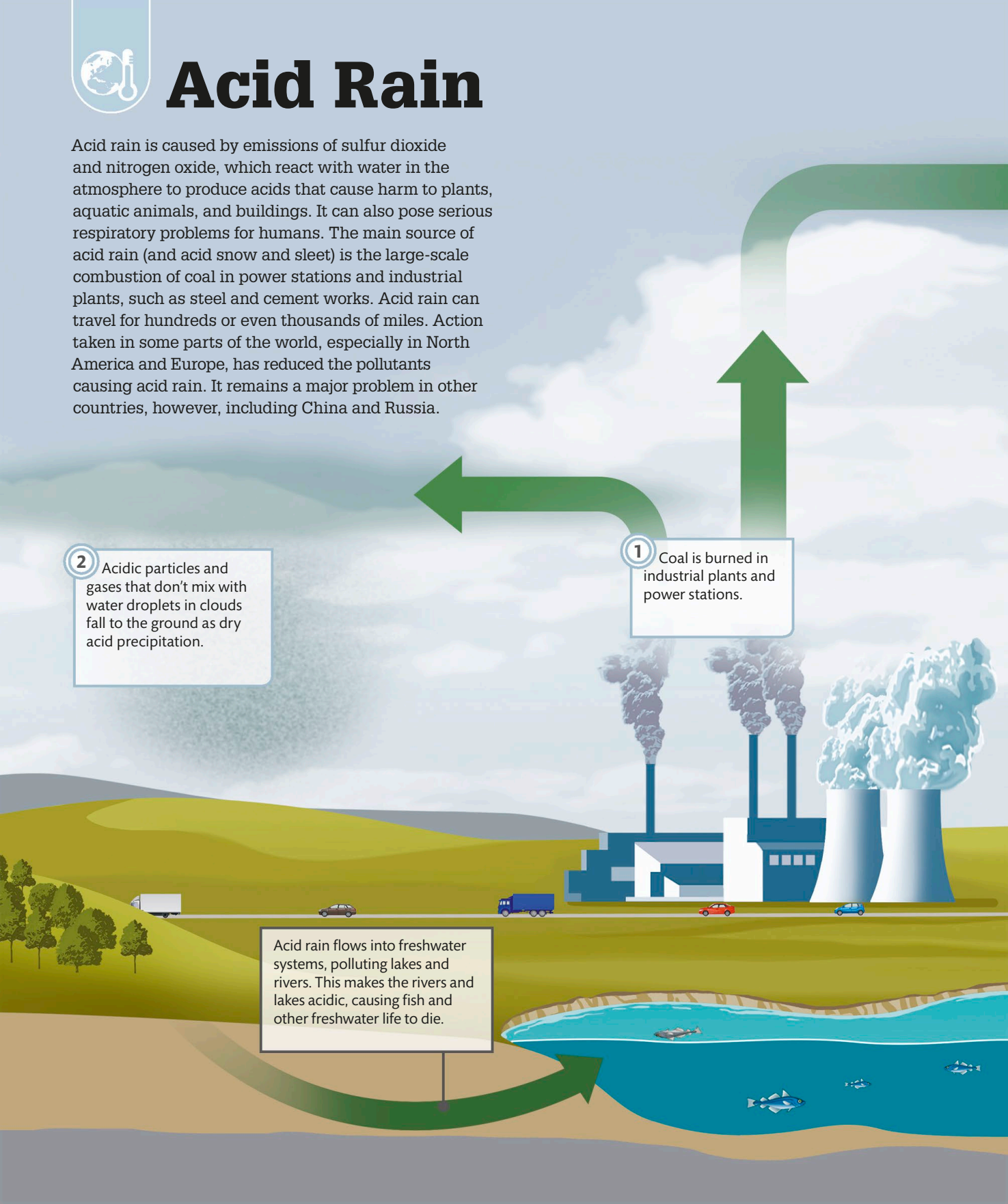
Acid Rain

Acid rain is caused by emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, which react with water in the atmosphere to produce acids that cause harm to plants, aquatic animals, and buildings. It can also pose serious respiratory problems for humans. The main source of acid rain (and acid snow and sleet) is the large-scale combustion of coal in power stations and industrial plants, such as steel and cement works. Acid rain can travel for hundreds or even thousands of miles. Action taken in some parts of the world, especially in North America and Europe, has reduced the pollutants causing acid rain. It remains a major problem in other countries, however, including China and Russia.

2 Acidic particles and gases that don't mix with water droplets in clouds fall to the ground as dry acid precipitation.

1 Coal is burned in industrial plants and power stations.

Acid rain flows into freshwater systems, polluting lakes and rivers. This makes the rivers and lakes acidic, causing fish and other freshwater life to die.



2 The wind carries pollutants—including sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide—far from their original sources.

3 Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides combine with water in clouds to form weak nitric and sulfuric acid.

4 Acid snow and sleet falls over upland areas. When it melts, it flows into rivers and lakes.

4 Acid rain falls.

Acid rain corrodes both natural and man-made structures, eating away at paint and buildings.

Trees and plants are damaged, becoming malnourished and prone to disease.

Acid rain seeps into the ground and dissolves nutrients that are vital to plant health. As the soil becomes more acidic, aluminum is released, which can pollute freshwater.



Changing the Land

During the 20th century, the expansion of croplands and of pastures to feed animals, and the development of forestry to sustain a rising demand for lumber and paper, has put increasing pressure on the planet. At the same time, we have destroyed various ecosystems by chopping down forests and by using land for our own needs at the expense of wildlife. One of the results of this is the desertification of once productive land. Land has become a scarce resource in some countries, and many regions have started to invest in lands far away to produce food and biofuels.

Consuming Earth's natural resources

Scientists have developed an indicator to measure the overall use of Earth's resources called Human Appropriation of Net Primary Production (HANPP). This shows how humans now consume a hugely disproportionate percentage of primary production. (Primary production means the sum of plant biomass produced by photosynthesis.) We use the productive capacity of land by harvesting plant biomass for food or burning it for fuel. This change in land use is the main cause of ecosystem damage and the decline in wildlife diversity and abundance. The main graph shows how our consumption of primary production (HANPP) has increased dramatically over the last century, leaving less to sustain all other species.

Agricultural productivity goes up during the postwar years, and less new land is needed to increase food production.

“Forests [...] act as **giant global utilities**, providing **essential public services** to the **whole of humanity.**”

.....
THE PRINCE OF WALES



BIOMASS CHANGE

One of the most dramatic indicators of the scale of human consumption of the planet's productivity is the relative proportion of wild terrestrial vertebrate biomass compared to biomass that is comprised of people and their domesticated animals, such as cattle, sheep, and pigs. Ten thousand years ago, there were very few people, and animal biomass was mostly made up of wild creatures, rather than domesticated animals. Today, 96 percent of terrestrial vertebrate biomass is comprised of people and farm animals.

KEY Land and air vertebrate biomass

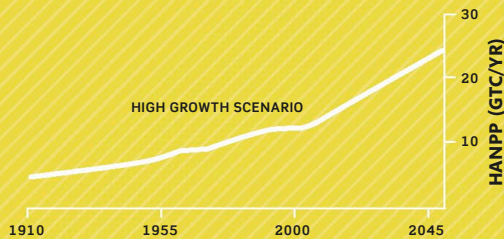
- Wild Animals
- Humans and their animals



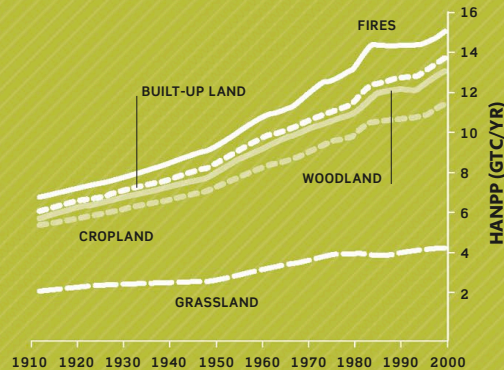
Because of an average increase in crop yields, the rate of growth in HANPP levels off, even though population and consumption levels are still increasing.

Rapid population growth is accompanied by a steep increase in human appropriation of land and plant biomass.

1960s
Despite more productive farming, a population explosion results in more and more land being harnessed to meet human demand



1990s
Rapid economic growth in emerging economies leads to more demand for meat and dairy products, and more land to produce them



Future trend

Projections based on high growth in bioenergy (such as crops for fuel) suggest that HANPP will increase further up to 2050, creating additional pressures on natural habitats and vital ecosystem services.

Causes for growth

Most growth in HANPP during the last century is explained by natural habitats being converted to cropland and grazing land. Forest fires also account for a substantial proportion, as does the consumption of forest products.

HUMAN APPROPRIATION OF NET PRIMARY PRODUCTION (GTC/YR)

14
12
10
8
6

1960 1970 1980 1990 2000



Forest Clearance

Most of the world's natural land vegetation has been removed or heavily modified as a result of human activity. The overall global situation is reflected in the drastic reduction in natural forest cover.

Forests are vital to the health of the planet. They are important in capturing greenhouse gases and for many human needs (see panel, opposite). But, since the beginning of settled agriculture, vast swathes

of forest have been lost. Since 1700, the rate of loss has been faster than at any other time in our history. Beginning in Europe and Asia, the process spread to North America and to the tropics. In much of

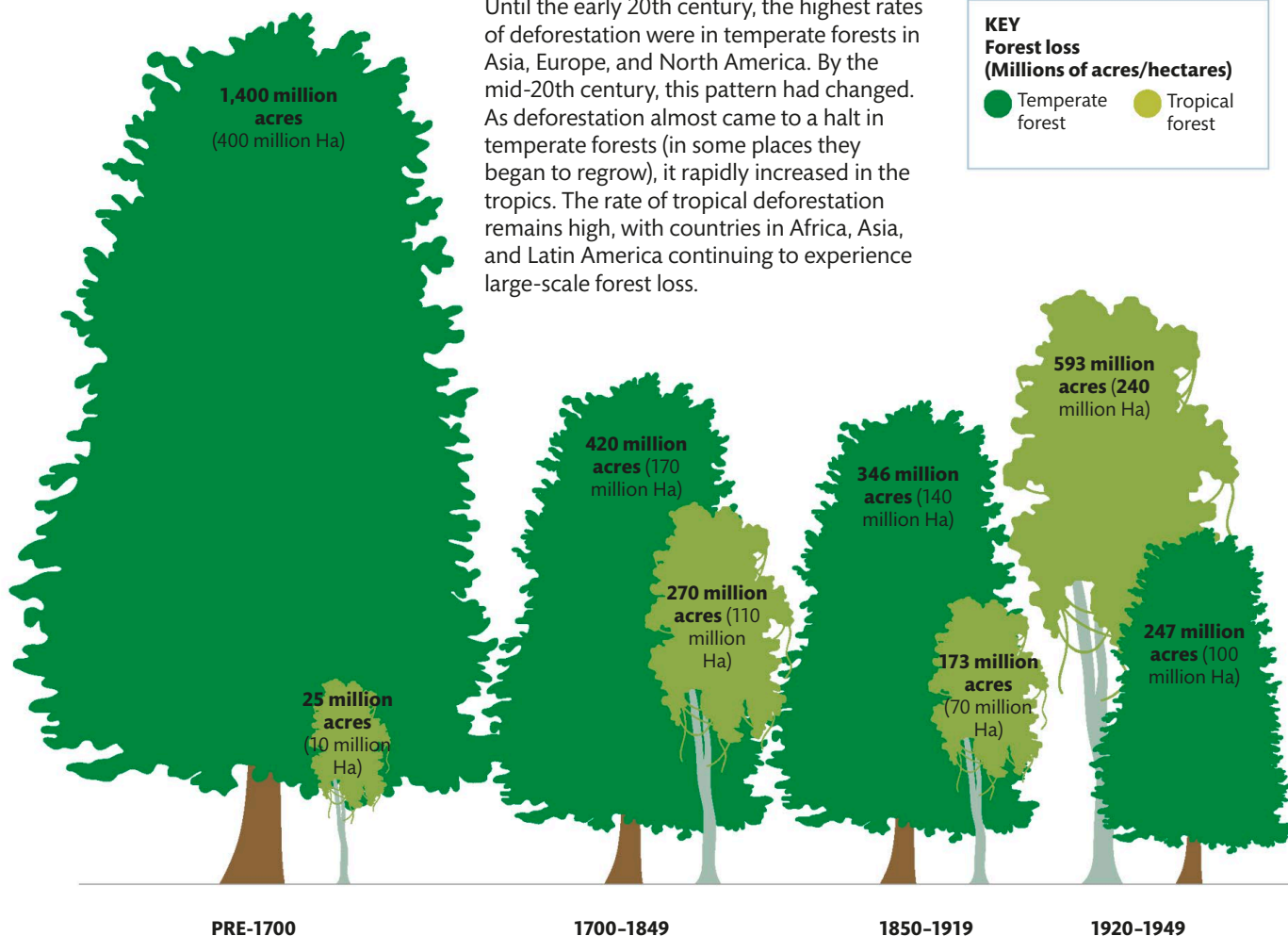
Europe, West Africa, Southeast Asia, and southeastern Brazil, the clearance of natural forests is nearly complete. Agriculture is the main cause of forest loss, often preceded by logging.

Forest loss over time

Until the early 20th century, the highest rates of deforestation were in temperate forests in Asia, Europe, and North America. By the mid-20th century, this pattern had changed. As deforestation almost came to a halt in temperate forests (in some places they began to regrow), it rapidly increased in the tropics. The rate of tropical deforestation remains high, with countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America continuing to experience large-scale forest loss.

KEY
Forest loss
(Millions of acres/hectares)

● Temperate forest
● Tropical forest



Winners and losers

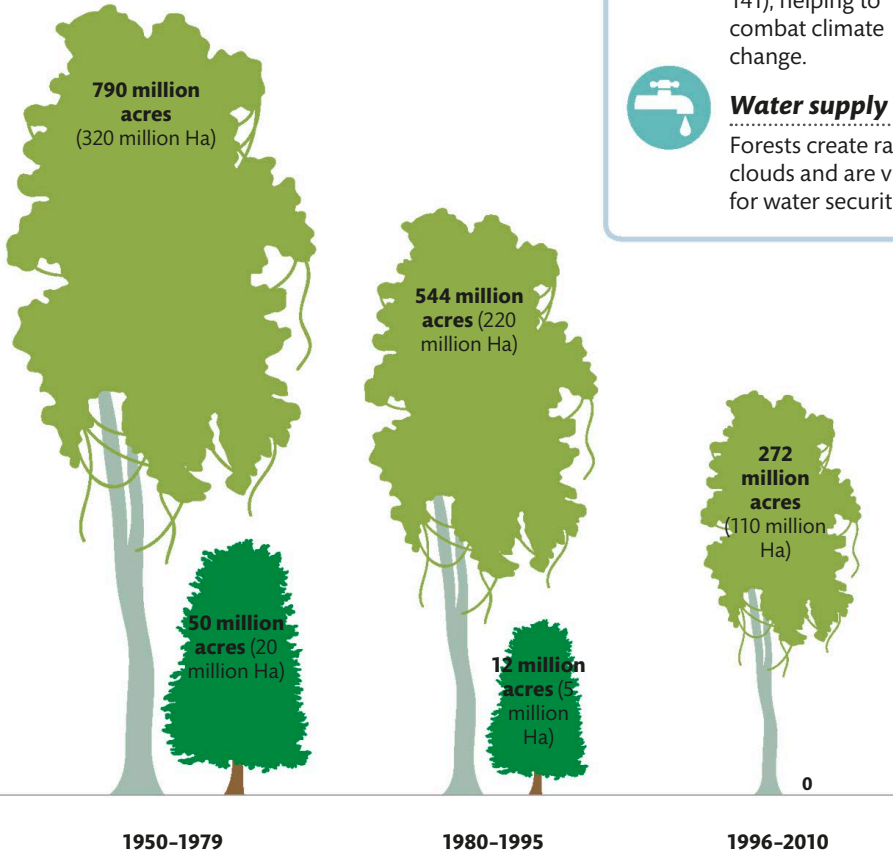
In some countries, deforestation is occurring rapidly, but in others, tree cover is expanding on plantations. These are some of the countries to have recently seen the biggest changes in forest cover.

BIGGEST GAINS

China
Vietnam
Philippines
India
Uruguay

BIGGEST LOSSES

Malaysia
Paraguay
Indonesia
Guatemala
Cambodia



WHY PEOPLE NEED FORESTS

Forests are plundered for wood and cleared to make way for farming. While societies gain value from these activities, other and even more important forest values are being lost.



Paper

Forests supply the world with paper.



Soil protection

Woodlands help limit soil erosion and the spread of deserts.



Flood reduction

Wooded landscapes hold water and help reduce flood risk.



Fuel

Millions of people depend on forests for wood fuel.



Carbon storage

Forests play vital roles in the carbon cycle (see pp140-141), helping to combat climate change.



Medicines and food

Many human diseases are treated with drugs first found in forest plants and animals. Forests also provide food.



Water supply

Forests create rain clouds and are vital for water security.



Biodiversity

About 70 percent of wildlife diversity on land is found in forests, especially in the tropics.



What can I do?

- **Buy wood and paper** products certified by the Forests Stewardship Council.
- **Find out which companies** have adopted "zero deforestation" or "zero net deforestation" policies.
- **Visit and support natural forests** near home or while traveling.



Desertification

Across many of the world's semiarid regions, the land is turning to desert. This is mostly caused by the degradation of delicate ecosystems, especially savanna woodlands, leading to soil loss and desertification.

Desertification is the persistent degradation of semiarid dryland ecosystems, such as grasslands and woodlands. It is caused by variations in climate and human activities. More than one third of the world's land area is vulnerable to desertification, with 10 to 20 percent of all drylands already lost to advancing deserts. The most widespread effects of

desertification are seen around the subtropical deserts of North Africa, the Middle East, Australia, southwest China, and western South America. Other areas at risk are the countries surrounding the Mediterranean and Asia's subtropical steppes.

Desertification can cause once-productive land to become useless. It is a global issue that has serious

implications for biodiversity, poverty eradication, socioeconomic stability, and sustainable development.

SEE ALSO...

- **Threats to Food Security** pp74-75
- **Extreme World** pp130-131



CASE STUDY

Lake Chad

➤ In 1963, Lake Chad in Africa was a vast body of water covering 10,000sq miles (26,000km²). In 2001, it was a fifth that size and has since shrunk to 500sq miles (1,300km²). Millions of people once relied on the lake for fishing and farming.

➤ Deforestation, overgrazing, and diverting water for irrigation caused desertification to take hold, impoverishing the people living there.



KEY

1972 1987 2007

Impacts of desertification

Various human activities, such as deforestation and farming practices, can cause deserts to spread and, in the process, bring a series of problems. The consequences are being felt in some of the world's most fragile countries, but also more widely. The effects of climate change are aggravating the situation, with droughts exacerbating the more direct human impacts on the land.

Growing of cash crops

Growing crops for export rather than local markets leads to more intensive farming, causing soil damage.

Incorrect irrigation

Attempts to boost food production with irrigation can cause salt to rise to the top of the soil, making it harder for plants to grow.

Cutting down trees

Felling trees for fuel reduces tree cover, leaving soils vulnerable to erosion.

Overgrazing

Too many animals grazing one area for too long remove the vegetation that protects the soil, leading to erosion.

Causes



Dry rivers

Damaged soils hold less water and river flow declines. Fewer plants leads to less moisture evaporation to the air and that means less rainfall.



Soil damage

- › **Sun-baked, cracked soil** Exposed to the punishing heat of the sun, soils become baked and impermeable to the scarce rainfall.
- › **Soil erosion** With tree cover removed, the soil becomes dry and vulnerable to erosion by wind and water.



Loss of plants and animals

As the desert advances, the native wildlife of the dry woodland retreats.



Extreme weather

- › **Flash floods** Instead of penetrating into the ground, rainwater runs off the hardened soil crust to cause flash flooding.
- › **Gullying** The land is further damaged as flood water concentrates into streams, stripping away the soil to form deep gullies.
- › **More sandstorms** Loosened soil turns to dust. Windy conditions whip it into the air to form blinding sandstorms.



Impact on people

- › **Crops and cattle die** As farm animals and crops die, people are made even poorer.
- › **Migrants move to cities** As farming is rendered impossible by the march of deserts, people are forced to move to cities.
- › **Unrest** Increased demand for services in urban areas causes social tensions.
- › **Death** Reduced food production leads to more widespread malnutrition and people die.

Desertification

Physical impacts

Impacts on humans



What can we do?

- › **Governments can act** by funding programs to achieve the aims of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (agreed in 1992) to improve the living conditions for people in drylands and maintain and restore the land and soil productivity.



Land Rush

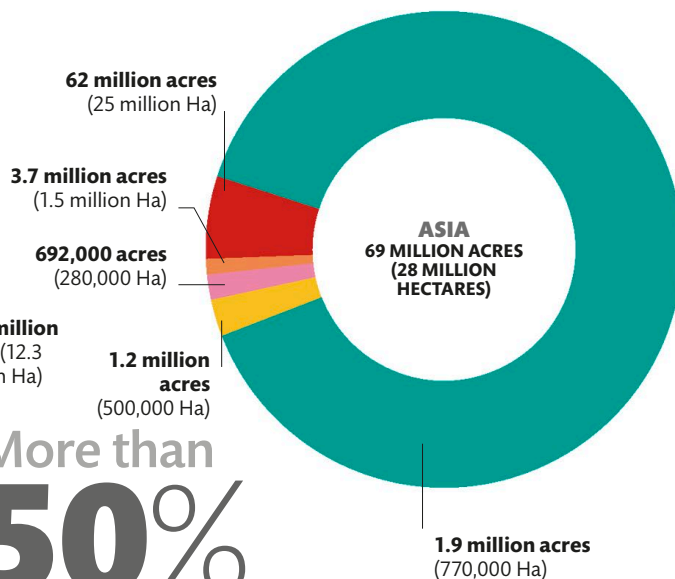
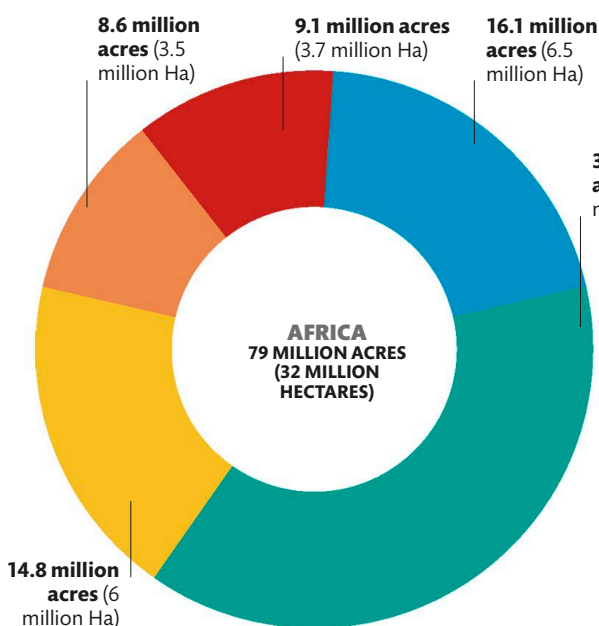
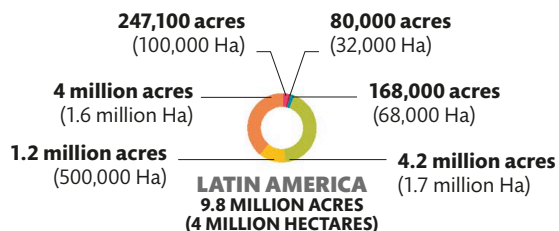
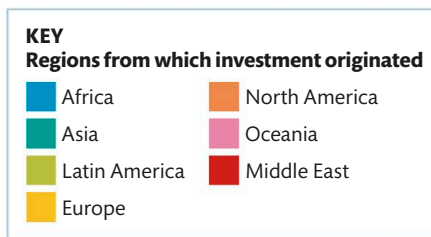
Some countries have growing populations but limited potential to grow their own food. Concern about food security has led some governments and investors to seek control of land in other countries.

Lack of suitable land to grow plants for food and biofuels, along with water scarcity, are major issues in a growing number of countries. In the past, trade was used as a means to feed countries with limited land, but now direct control of production is seen as more desirable. In some cases, governments have allocated land to foreign interests without consulting local

people, leading to disputes and sometimes violence. As well as creating additional pressure on forests and other natural habitats, the large-scale allocation of land to external agricultural interests also undermines food security in host countries. Two-thirds of large-scale land acquisitions have been in countries with a serious hunger problem.

Land acquisition

The land rush has been a worldwide phenomenon with finance originating from interests in Europe, Middle Eastern nations, Korea, and China to take control of land in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. It is Africa, however, to which the vast majority of money has been attracted.



More than **50%** of land controlled by foreign investors is located in sub-Saharan Africa



What can we do?

- **Governments and investors** must prioritize the interests of local populations before making decisions to change land ownership or control.
- **Investors** must ensure that their activities contribute to the sustainable development and food security in host countries.
- **Involve people** living in affected areas in discussions that could lead to a change in ownership of the land they depend on.

SOUTH AFRICA
2.5 million acres
(1 million Ha)

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

CHINA
6.9 million acres
(2.8 million Ha)

CHINA
4.9 million acres
(2 million Ha)

ZAMBIA

MOZAMBIQUE

SWEDEN
250,000 acres
(101,200 Ha)

QATAR
Investment in agriculture

US
1 million acres
(405,000 Ha)

SUDAN

JORDAN
60,000 acres
(24,300 Ha)

SOUTH SUDAN

KENYA

QATAR
99,000 acres
(40,000 Ha)

SAUDI ARABIA
1.25 million acres
(0.5 million Ha)

UNITED KINGDOM
110,000 acres
(44,500 Ha)

CHINA
740 acres
(300 Ha)

CHINA
\$800 million

SAUDI ARABIA
2.3 million acres
(0.9 million Ha)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
940,000 acres
(380,000 Ha)

SOUTH KOREA
1.7 million acres
(0.7 million Ha)

INDIA
\$4 billion

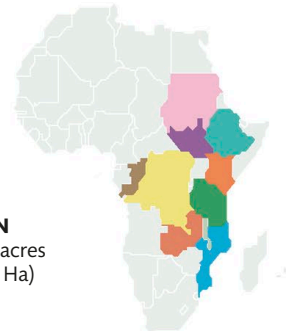
GERMANY
32,000 acres
(13,000 Ha)

KEY

- Foodstuffs
- Biofuels

Investments in Africa

Since the period of high food prices that began in 2008 and 2009, foreign interests have particularly focused on a number of African countries, with Sudan, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Tanzania among the most significant destinations for land acquisitions. The land is mostly used for growing foodstuffs or biofuels. Crops grown for export include corn, palm oil, rice, soybeans, and sugar cane. Constant changes to land ownership mean the figures here should be treated as indicative.



LOCATOR

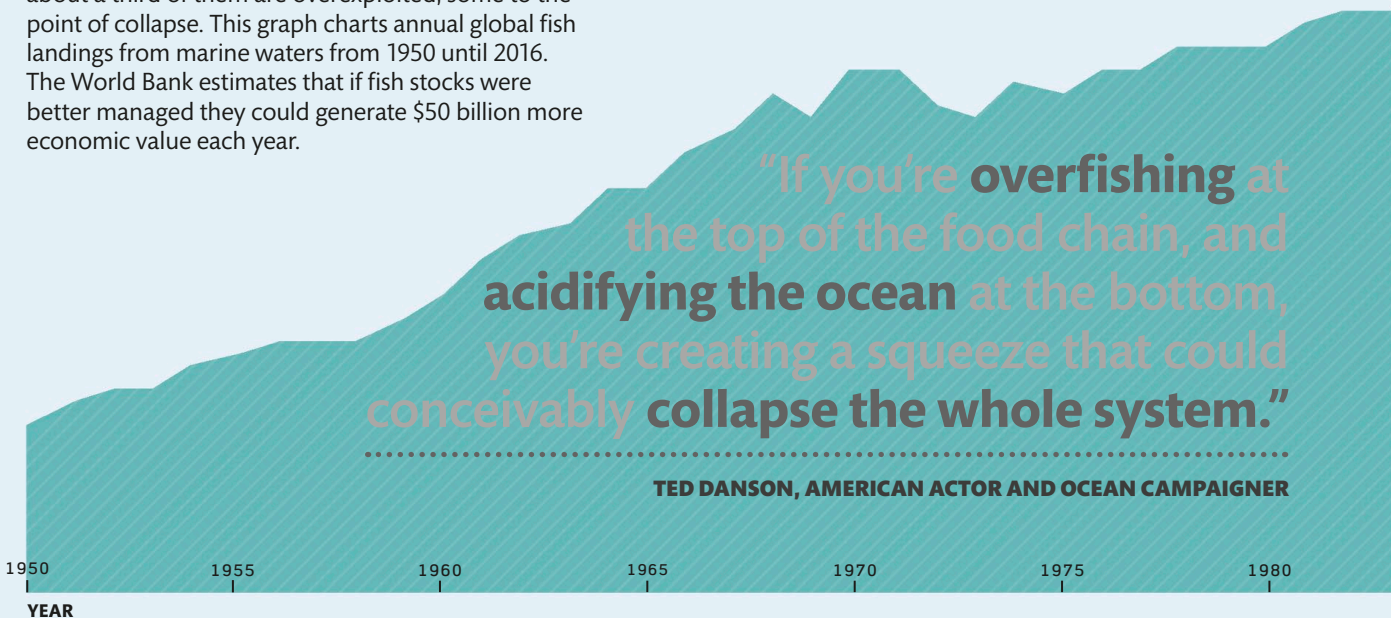


Sea Changes

Fish caught from the seas are a vital source of economic development. Global catches of fish contribute an estimated US\$278 billion per year to the global economy, and US\$160 billion more comes from boat-building and other related industries. Global wild fish stocks provide employment for hundreds of millions of people, the vast majority of whom live in developing countries. The fishing industry contributes to global food security—about one billion people are reliant on wild-caught fish for their main source of protein. Sustaining these benefits depends on sustaining fish stocks.

Plundering the oceans

During the 1950s, marine fish catches grew rapidly. This was due to bigger vessels fishing in greater numbers, as well as the use of new technologies, including sonar equipment. Government subsidies gave incentives for overfishing, so today more than half of stocks are at their maximum sustainable yield—the largest catch that can be taken—and about a third of them are overexploited, some to the point of collapse. This graph charts annual global fish landings from marine waters from 1950 until 2016. The World Bank estimates that if fish stocks were better managed they could generate \$50 billion more economic value each year.



FISH UNDER THREAT

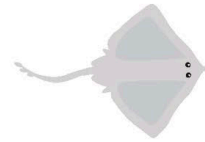
Many organizations, including the UK's Marine Conservation Society and the US's Environmental Defense Fund, offer advice on which fish to eat. They discourage consumption of threatened species, such as bluefin tuna and sturgeon, and encourage people to choose herrings, mackerel, and other species from healthy stocks. The Marine Stewardship Council certifies sustainable fish to help consumers make good choices.



HALIBUT, ATLANTIC—WILD



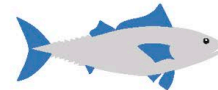
SPURDOG OR ROCK SALMON



SKATE, COMMON AND WHITE

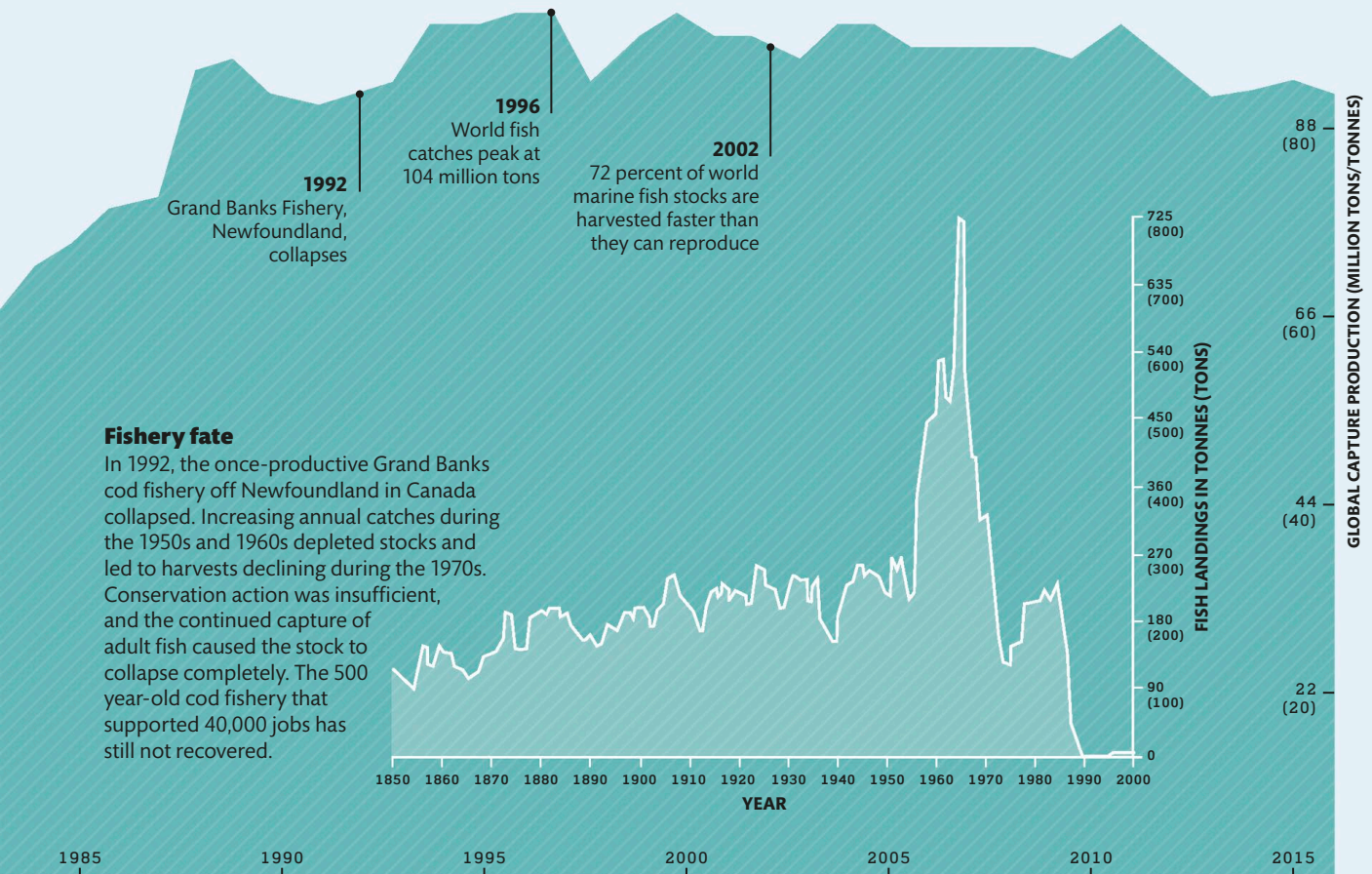


STURGEON (CAVIAR)—WILD



TUNA, BLUEFIN

FISH TO AVOID EATING





Farming Fish

As pressure on wild fish stocks has increased, there has been a rapid expansion in farmed-fish production. While this has made a significant contribution toward meeting nutrition and food security goals, it has also created new challenges.

During the past 50 years, the expansion of fish farming, also known as aquaculture, has been dramatic. Whereas in 1970 only 5 percent of food fish were sourced from farms, today farmed fish make up about half of all fish eaten in the world. That proportion is expected to rise to nearly two-thirds by 2030.

Fish farming today is a global industry, supplying massive quantities of both marine and freshwater fish, including cod, salmon, bass, and catfish. Aquaculture operations also supply increasing amounts of crustaceans, such as shrimp and lobsters, and mollusks, like mussels.

Growth in farmed fish production between 1980 and 2010 outpaced growth in the wild fish catch—so much so that the average consumer in 2010 ate almost seven times more farmed fish than in 1980. Fish are relatively efficient at converting feed to protein for human consumption, but a number of environmental issues have accompanied the rise of farmed fish.

60%
China's share
of the world's
farmed fish
production

Aquaculture's impacts

Fish farming has led to a significant increase in the availability of healthy protein. A number of environmental impacts have emerged as production has risen, however, including the spread of parasites to wild fish—even though farmed fish are kept inside nets or cages.

Fish and fish oil



Species such as salmon are fed on smaller fish, including young wild-caught species.



Habitat loss

Creation of fish farms can cause habitat damage. Many areas of ecologically important mangrove forests have been cleared to make way for shrimp farms.



Parasites

Parasites such as lice can quickly spread through confined numbers of captive fish populations then pass into the surrounding environment to infect wild fish species.



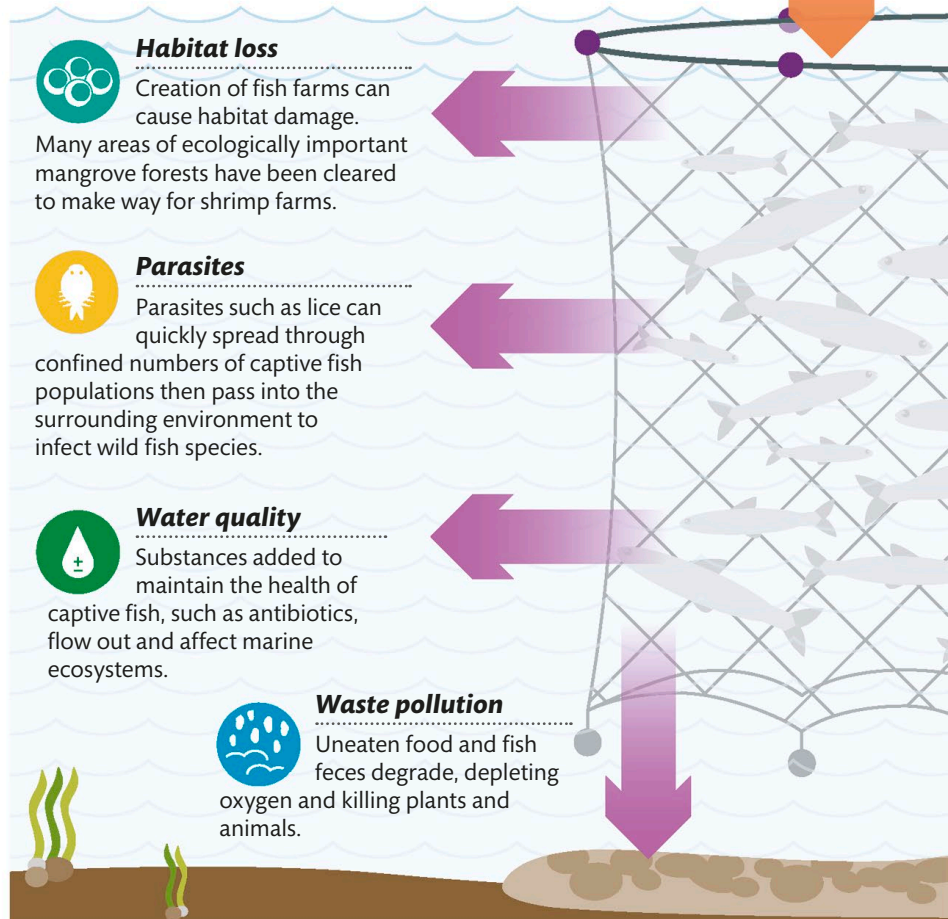
Water quality

Substances added to maintain the health of captive fish, such as antibiotics, flow out and affect marine ecosystems.



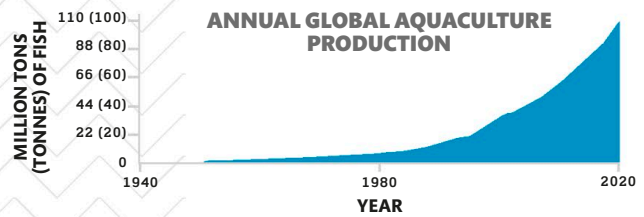
Waste pollution

Uneaten food and fish feces degrade, depleting oxygen and killing plants and animals.



THE RISE OF FARMED FISH

During the last 30 years, the number of wild-caught fish has increased from 76 million to 102.5 million tons (69 million to 93 million tonnes). Farmed fish production rose from 5.5 to 69 million tons (5 to 63 million tonnes). Fish farms will help to meet the increasing demand for food fish, especially in China, which is expected to account for 38 percent of global consumption by 2030.



Aerial predators

Fish-eating birds, such as ospreys, are attracted to pens and become targeted as pests.



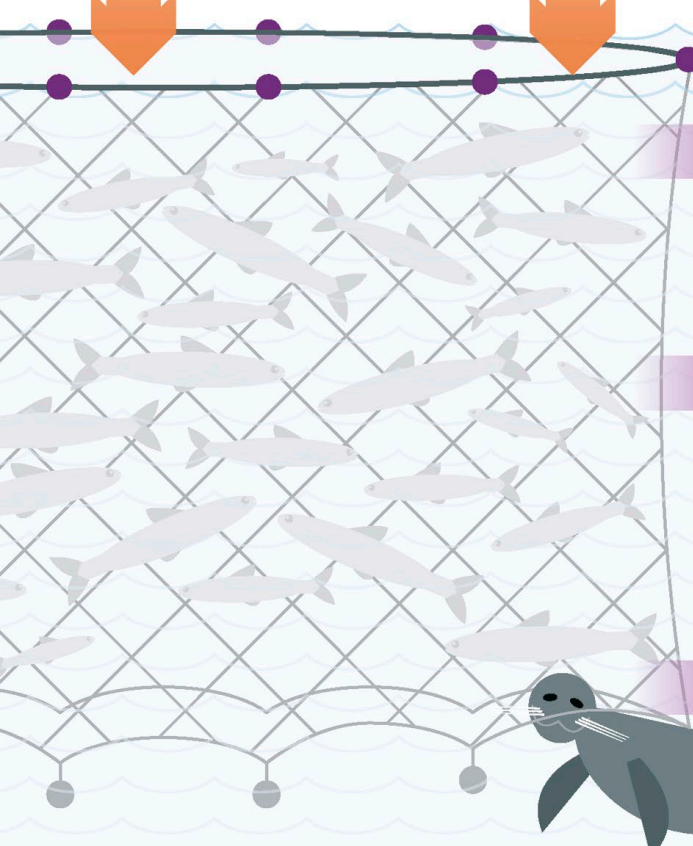
Drugs

Antibiotics are used to prevent and treat diseases. Growth hormones and pigments may be added.



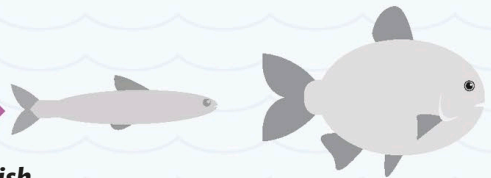
Herbicides

Herbicides are often added to combat algal overgrowth in or near farming pens.



Diseases

Massed numbers of fish in confined spaces create an ideal environment for incubating disease, which can pass to wild fish.



Escaped fish

Escaped nonnative or genetically modified fish can cause ecological impacts, competing with wild fish for food, preying on wild fish, passing on diseases, and interbreeding with native populations.

Underwater predators

Fish-eating seals, sharks, and dolphins can become tangled in nets and can be killed during attempts to catch the fish inside.





Acid Seas

Up to half of the carbon dioxide released because of human activities has been absorbed by the oceans. This has caused marine environments to rapidly become more acidic, leading to conditions not experienced on Earth for more than 20 million years. This has had profound impacts on many ecologically vital species, including oysters, clams, urchins, corals, and plankton. The decline of these and other organisms will cause disruption to entire food webs, bringing devastating consequences for industries dependent on fish and shellfish. Progressive acidification will also limit the oceans' ability to store carbon, as animals that use carbonate to make their shells decline.

Preindustrial world (1850)

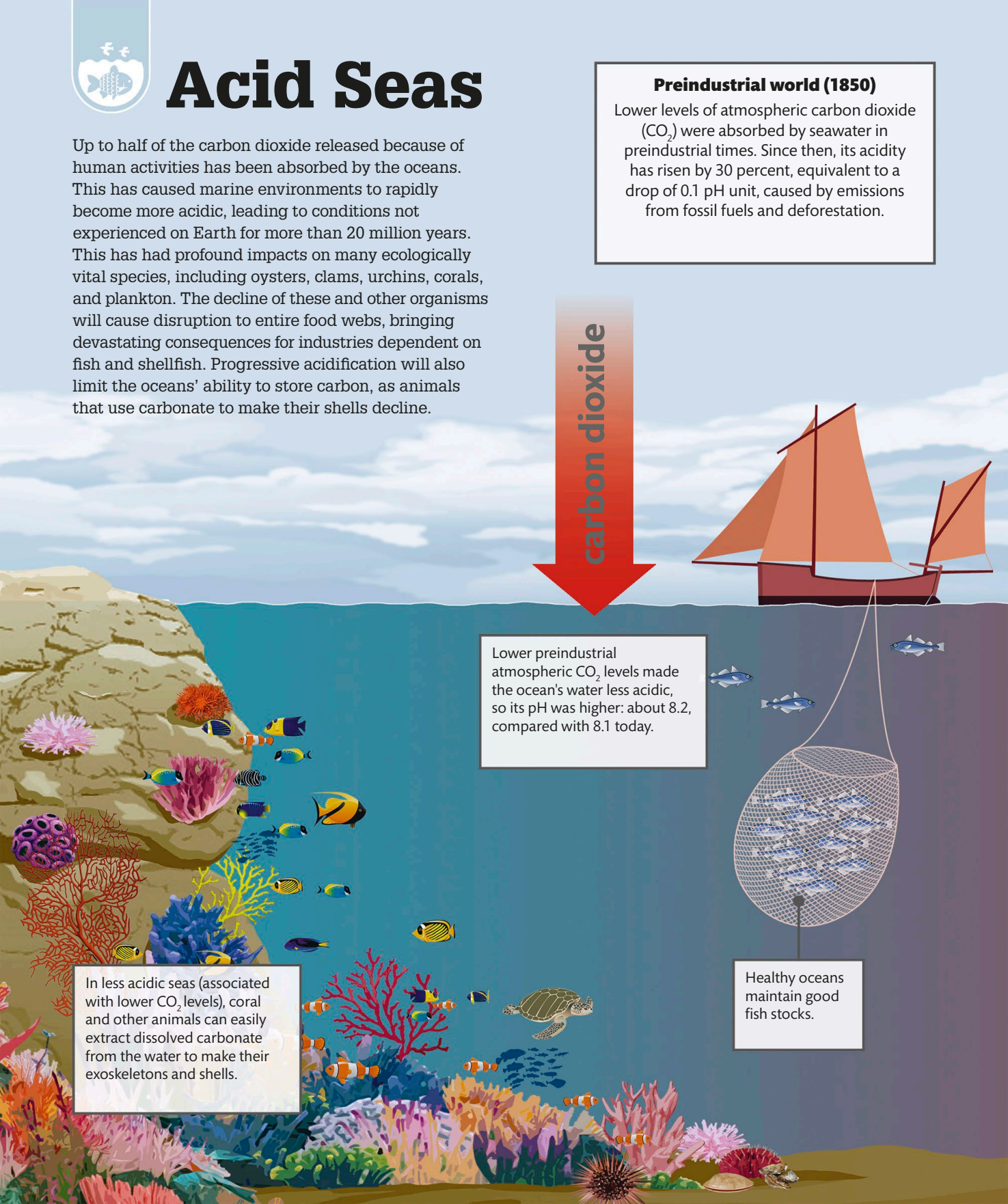
Lower levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) were absorbed by seawater in preindustrial times. Since then, its acidity has risen by 30 percent, equivalent to a drop of 0.1 pH unit, caused by emissions from fossil fuels and deforestation.

carbon dioxide

Lower preindustrial atmospheric CO_2 levels made the ocean's water less acidic, so its pH was higher: about 8.2, compared with 8.1 today.

In less acidic seas (associated with lower CO_2 levels), coral and other animals can easily extract dissolved carbonate from the water to make their exoskeletons and shells.

Healthy oceans maintain good fish stocks.



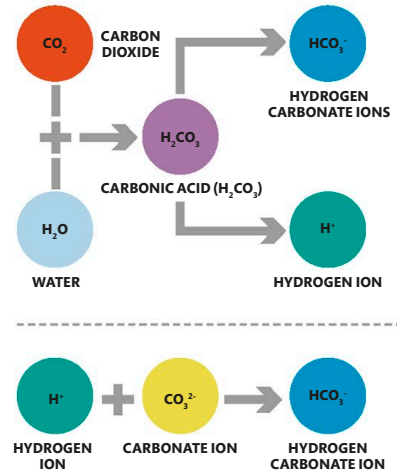
Future trend (2100)

If CO₂ emissions remain unchecked, by 2100 the acidity of seawater is projected to rise even further: by 150 percent more than it is today—equivalent to another drop of 0.4 pH unit.

increased levels
of carbon dioxide

THE CHEMISTRY OF ACIDIFICATION

When carbon dioxide (CO₂) dissolves in water (H₂O), the two molecules react together to form carbonic acid (H₂CO₃). Carbonic acid then splits to release hydrogen ions (H⁺) and hydrogen carbonate ions (top right). The more hydrogen ions in water, the more acidic it is and the lower its pH. Hydrogen ions react with carbonate in the seawater (bottom right), so less carbonate is available for making shells. They also react with carbonate in existing shells, making them corrode.



Higher future atmospheric CO₂ levels will make the ocean's water more acidic, so its pH will drop to about 7.7.

Jellyfish are tolerant of warmer and more acid seas. They compete with other sea creatures for food and eat fish eggs. Jellyfish species have spread and numbers have increased dramatically in many areas of oceans.

Pteropods are small free-swimming sea snails. Lab experiments have shown that their shells take little more than six weeks to corrode in seawater with the same acidity as that projected for 2100.

Coral skeletons become fragile, changing shape and crumbling, and are unable to reproduce. Entire reefs may disintegrate in more acidic seas.





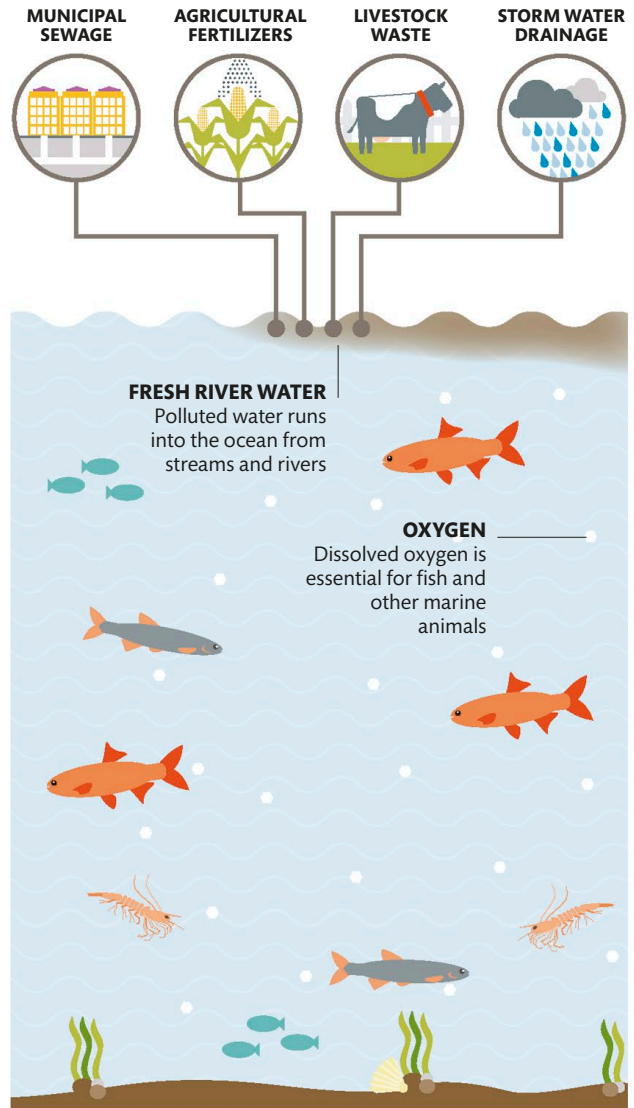
Dead Seas

High levels of pollutants in the ocean can have a devastating impact on marine life. Substances such as nitrogen and phosphorus act as fertilizers, triggering a process called eutrophication, which removes oxygen from seawater and creates so-called dead zones.

If nitrogen- and phosphorus-rich agricultural fertilizers, animal waste, detergents, or sewage leak into waterways, contaminated freshwater ends up in the sea, where it can create a dead zone. Dead zones are particularly prevalent in coastal waters, where major rivers discharge and have such low oxygen levels they no longer sustain life. They cause many damaging effects, from loss of wildlife biodiversity to collapse of fisheries. The situation is reversible if the cause is halted and the area is supplied with oxygenated water.

How dead zones form

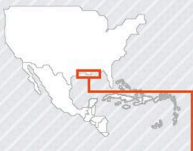
Eutrophication can occur in any water body, including lakes, rivers, or seas. It usually happens when an excess of nutrients runs into the water from surrounding land controlled by human activity, such as farmland, golf courses, and lawns, all of which are heavily fertilized.



CASE STUDY

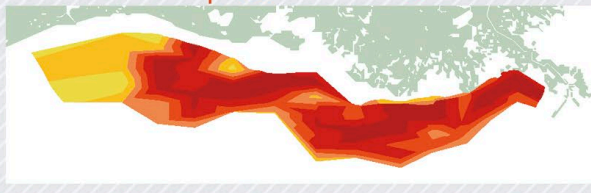
The Gulf of Mexico dead zone

- ▶ Almost half of the continental US drains into the Mississippi River. As it flows into the Gulf of Mexico, the river creates a vast dead zone each spring, due to seasonal runoff of agricultural fertilizer. In 2015, this oxygen-starved area extended almost 6,500 sq miles (17,000 sq km). Marine life cannot survive in waters with oxygen levels below 2 mg/liter (0.5 mg/gallon).



KEY
Bottom-water dissolved oxygen (mg/liter)

Yellow circle: >5 mg (normal)	Red circle: 2-3mg
Orange circle: 4-5 mg	Dark red circle: 1-2mg
Light orange circle: 3-4mg	Dark red circle: <1mg



Contaminated water flows in

Water rich in nutrients (from sewage and fertilizers, for example) flows into the sea and forms a layer above denser saltwater.

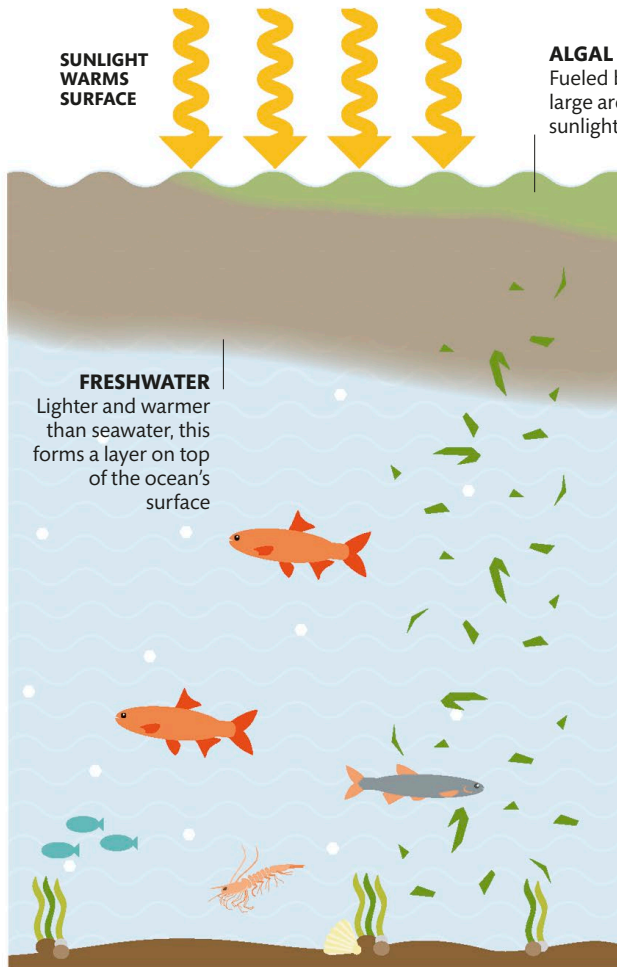
405

The total number of dead zones in coastal waters worldwide



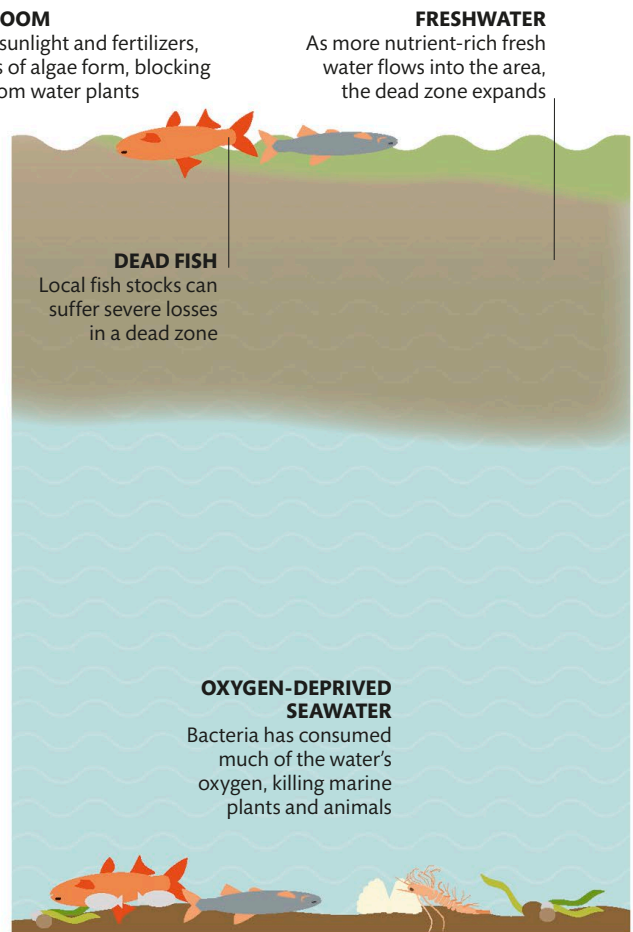
What can we do?

- › **Prevent untreated wastewater** from being channeled into rivers and seas.
- › **Limit the use** of industrial fertilizers in problem areas, such as along coastlines and major rivers.
- › **Restore wetlands** and natural coastal defenses, which help filter nutrients out of the water before it reaches the sea.



Algae thrive in freshwater layer

Warm sun provides perfect conditions for algae to form. At the end of their life cycles, dead algae sink to the sea floor where they decompose. In this process, oxygen is removed from the water.



Death of the ecosystem

Low oxygen levels cause marine animals to leave, mutate, or die. Increased decomposition of dead matter exacerbates the lack of oxygen in the water, and the dead zone is formed.



Plastic Pollution

Packaging, consumer products, and fishing nets are among the plastic items discarded in the oceans. These kill sea creatures, while plastic particles concentrate pollutants and enter food chains via filter-feeding plankton.

Most plastic now in the oceans was originally dumped on land and entered the marine environment via rivers. About 88 million tons (80 million tonnes) of plastic litter is already in the seas and about 8 million more plastic items are added each day. The quantity of this plastic debris is rising fast as more people

embrace consumer lifestyles. Some wildlife species mistake floating plastic for food, and each year millions of animals and birds die as a result. The United Nations Environment Program estimates that the impact of plastic pollution on marine life costs the global economy \$13 billion every year.

Deadly gyres

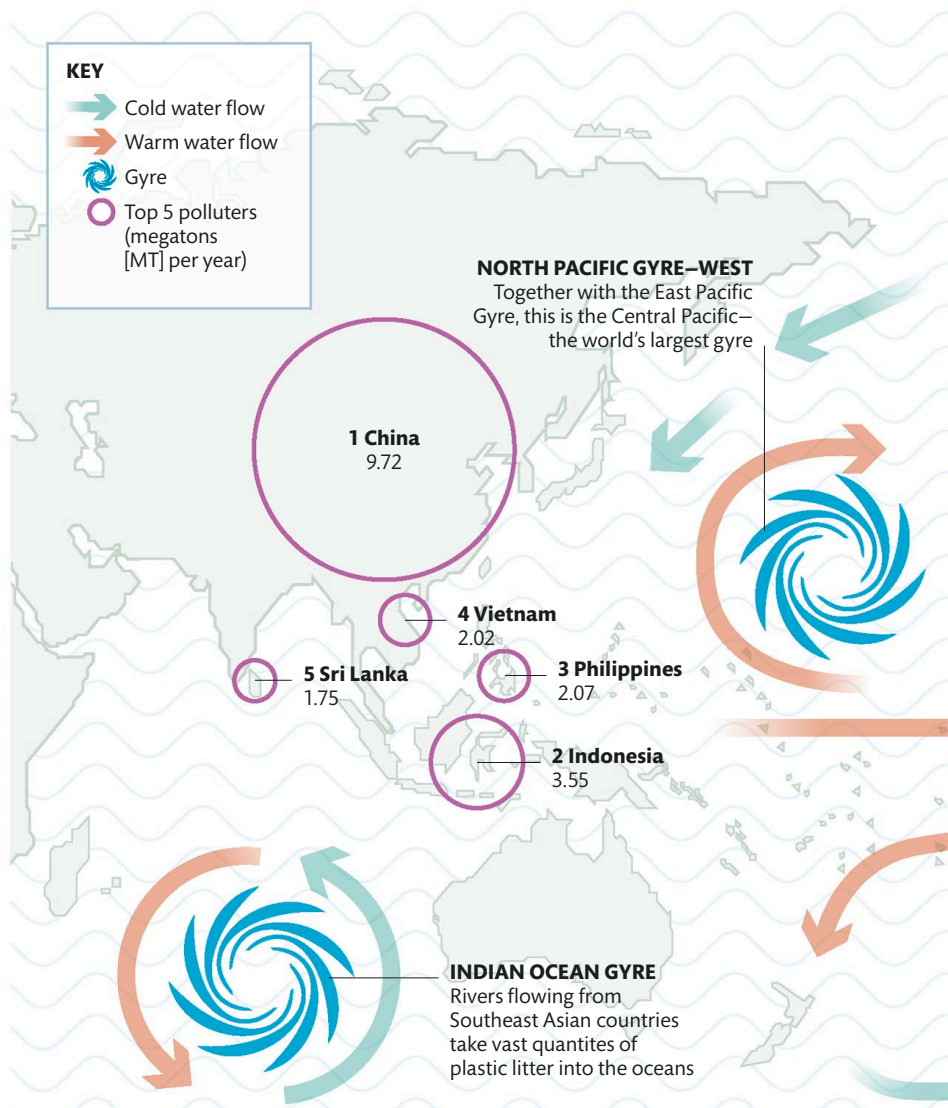
Gyres are large areas of open ocean where slow-moving currents converge. Light plastics are carried on these currents into the gyres, where they are concentrated and held in vast areas of drifting plastic waste. There are five main gyres, including the North Pacific Ocean. A vast quantity of plastic debris drifts in the center of this gyre. Another is in the Bay of Bengal, where plastics are fed into the sea via Asia's largest rivers, including the Ganges.

What can we do?

- **Restrict the sale** of single-use plastics, such as supermarket bags.
- **Encourage deposit schemes** for plastic bottles.
- **Invest in** solid waste and recycling facilities.
- **Developing countries** should invest in modern recycling.

What can I do?

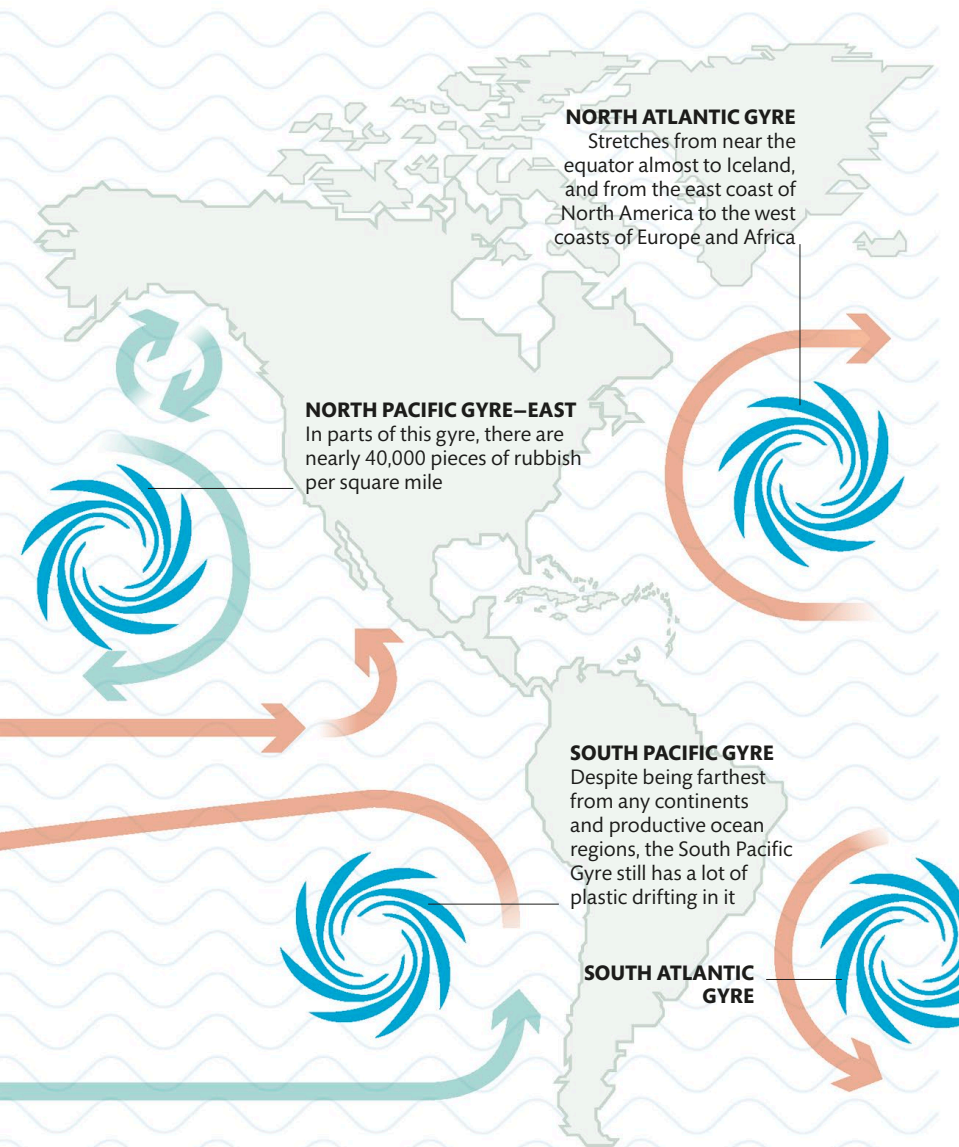
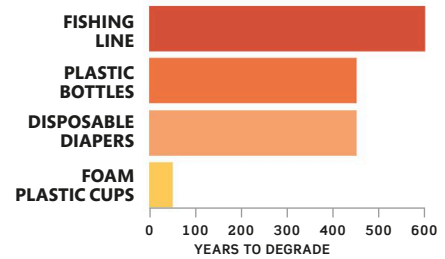
- **Stop buying plastic**—choose reusable alternatives.



90%
of all litter floating
on the ocean's
surface is plastic

PLASTIC BREAKDOWN

It can take many years, or even centuries, for plastic debris to break down. Microscopic plastic particles, broken down from larger pieces of litter, attract toxic chemicals that enter the food chain and cause harm.



EFFECT ON WILDLIFE

Plastic debris has a huge impact on wildlife—either directly or indirectly, as these examples show.



Birds

High mortality among young birds occurs in many albatross colonies because the chicks are fed plastic items, including discarded lighters, found drifting in the sea.



Turtles

Some plastic litter, such as fishing nets, lines, and plastic bags, can entangle animals such as turtles, dolphins, and birds, causing them to drown.



Plankton

Microparticles of plastic are taken up both by plankton and by plankton-feeding animals, causing problems for their digestion.



Whales and dolphins

Plastic ingestion has been noted in 56 percent of whale, dolphin, and porpoise species. Whales have also mistaken plastic bags for squid. One whale was found with 37 lb (17 kg) of plastic in its body.



The Great Decline

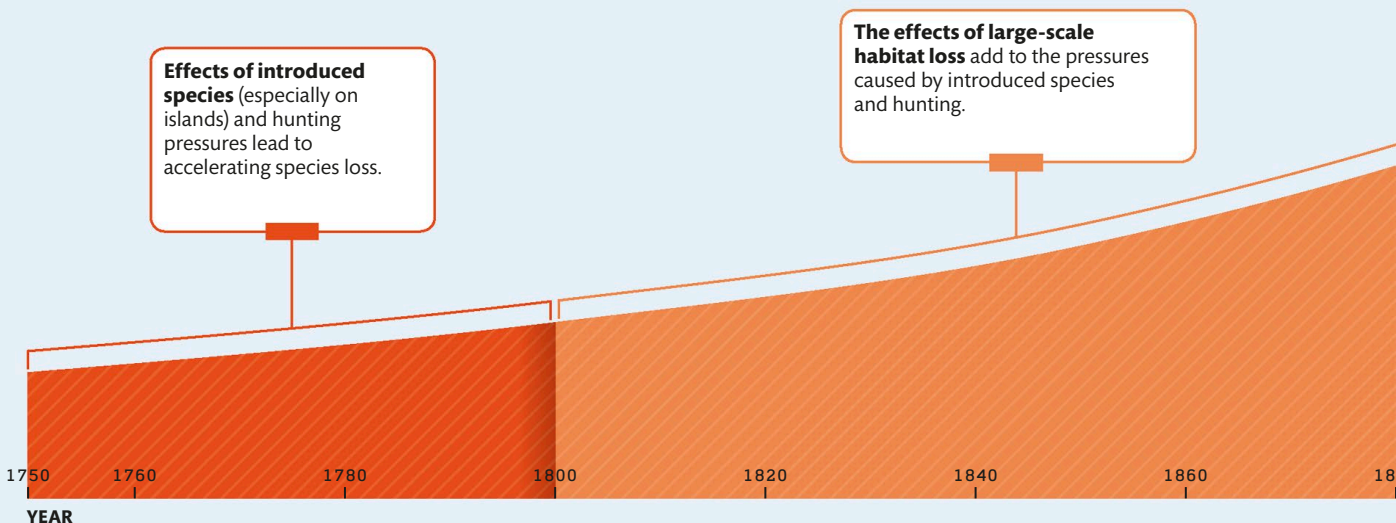
The disappearance of wildlife species is perhaps the most pressing and serious of all environmental problems, threatening the loss of valuable natural “services” (see pp172–173) and, as a result, undermining human well-being. A number of stresses are causing the disappearance of natural diversity on a scale not seen for 65 million years, since the extinction of the dinosaurs. The already accelerating rate of species loss is set to become faster still, as existing pressures arising from human population growth, expansion of farming, and economic development become more intense.

Disappearing wildlife

Animal extinctions caused by humans began tens of thousands of years ago, when large mammals, including woolly mammoths and cave lions, were hunted to oblivion by bands of hunter-gatherers. Since then, other pressures have been added to the effects of hunting. During the age of European exploration and colonization, many aggressive invasive species of animals and plants were moved around the world, causing extinctions among native species (see pp170–171). Today, planet-wide degradation of the terrestrial biosphere (see pp148–149) is the main driver of species loss.

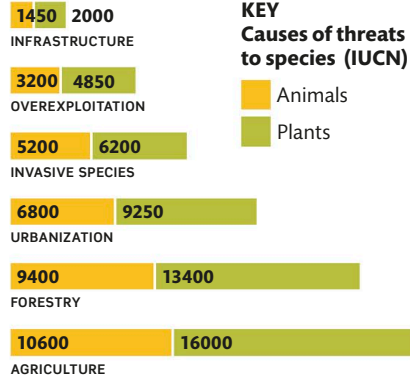
“We are undoubtedly exterminating species at a speed which has never been known before.”

SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, BRITISH BROADCASTER AND NATURALIST



CURRENT TOP THREATS TO SPECIES

Species considered at risk of extinction are assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The principal pressure on animal and plant species considered at risk of extinction is the expansion and intensification of agriculture. This includes the clearance of more land to grow food, causing ongoing deforestation. Forestry operations are a major threat due to both the logging of natural forests and their replacement with plantations.



KEY Causes of threats to species (IUCN)

- Animals
- Plants

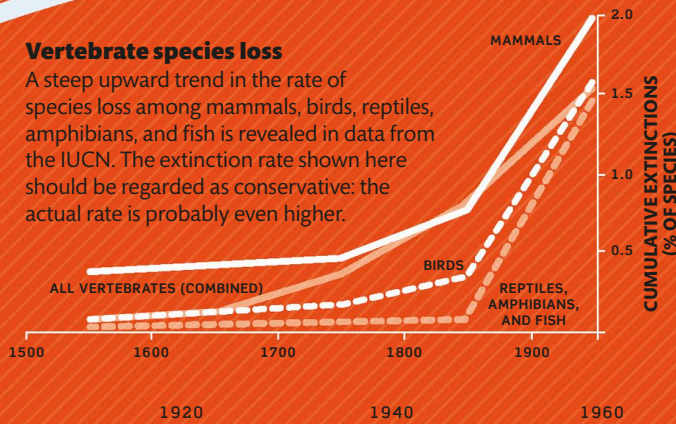
A global mass extinction is under way, comparable to five other major events evident in the fossil record and now also driven by the impacts of climate change.

Invertebrate species loss

Many species of insects are in sharp decline due to pressures arising from habitat loss and chemical pollution as well as the effects of climate change.

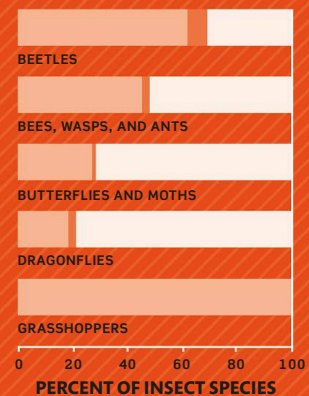
Vertebrate species loss

A steep upward trend in the rate of species loss among mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish is revealed in data from the IUCN. The extinction rate shown here should be regarded as conservative: the actual rate is probably even higher.



KEY

- Decreasing
- Increasing
- Stable



CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DECREASE

30
25
20
15
10

80

1900

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000



Biodiversity Hotspots

The diversity of wildlife species on Earth is not evenly spread. Some places have a far richer diversity of animals and plants. But many such areas are under threat. These areas are known as biodiversity hotspots.

Biodiversity hotspots are places where nature is most diverse and unique but also where it is most under pressure. Natural diversity sustains human welfare in a multitude of different ways. All of our food and many of our medicines are derived from wild species. There is also huge potential benefit from the process of biomimicry—this is the idea of copying other life forms to find solutions to, for example, engineering and design

challenges. By permitting these unique areas to be damaged through deforestation, for example, and allowing species to become extinct, we risk losing these benefits that nature provides. Conserving the remaining natural habitats in these biodiversity hotspots is therefore vital not only for conserving wildlife but also for protecting humanity's future prospects.

Caribbean Islands

The islands of the Caribbean form a major hotspot with a range of habitats from 10,000 ft (3,000 m) peaks to low-lying deserts. They are home to 6,550 native plant species and more than 200 threatened endemic vertebrates.

Where nature is most diverse

Conservation International has identified 35 hotspots. Together they cover only 2.3 percent of the Earth's land surface, yet more than 50 percent of the world's plant species and 42 percent of all terrestrial vertebrates are found in these areas. All of these hotspots are threatened by human activities. As a whole, more than 70 percent of the natural vegetation has already been lost. Deforestation is a major pressure, caused by the expansion of farming, logging, and mining.



Atlantic Forest

The Atlantic Forest stretches along Brazil's coast. Long isolated from other major rain forest blocks in South America, the Atlantic Forest has an extremely diverse and unique mix of vegetation and forest types, including around 8,000 native plant species. Centuries of logging, cattle ranching, mining, and clearance for sugar cane plantations has devastated this unique habitat.



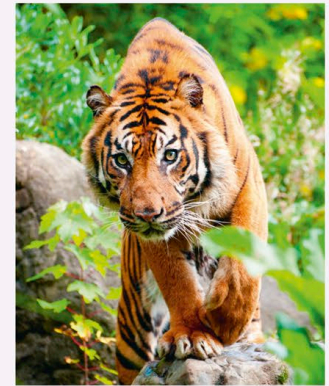
More than **70%** of natural vegetation has been lost across 35 hotspots

Caucasus

This region includes a range of important habitats, such as grassland, desert, swamp forests, arid woodlands, broadleaf forests, montane coniferous forests, and shrublands. Together, they are home to around 1,600 native plant species.

Sundaland

This western half of the Indo-Malayan archipelago has two of the world's largest islands—Borneo and Sumatra. Isolated by sea level rise, the rain forests on these and other islands support many unique species, such as the critically endangered Sumatran tiger. Deforestation threatens the 15,000 native plant species, and subsequent habitat loss threatens 162 endemic vertebrates here.



SUMATRAN TIGER



Cape Floristic Region

On the southwestern tip of the African continent lies an exceptionally diverse region of shrublands, including the flower-rich fynbos. This unique habitat contains 6,210 native plant species.

Southwest Australia

In this region of Australia lies a mixture of eucalyptus woodlands, thickets, scrub-heath, and heath. This supports some 2,948 plant and 12 threatened vertebrate species that occur nowhere else.



What can we do?

► **Retaining natural habitats** in the hotspots will require the legal protection of at least the best-quality areas, with all rules adopted to protect habitats and wildlife fully enforced. It will also be necessary to find ways for farmers to make a living without encroaching into natural areas.



What can I do?

► **Make regular visits** to areas that are protected for nature, both near to home and when you are traveling. The more that protected areas are used, whether they are diversity hotspots or not, the bigger the incentive for governments and individuals to work to keep them intact.



Invasive Species

The spread of species to places where they are not native can cause serious disruption to local ecosystems. The arrival of these invasive alien species can lead to the decline or extinction of native wildlife.

At the global level, the impact of so-called invasive alien species may be as damaging to ecosystems and wildlife diversity as the effects of habitat loss and degradation. Thousands of species have already been driven to extinction by animals and plants moved around by people. Sometimes species are deliberately

introduced, such as rabbits to Australia, where the damage they caused to native vegetation led to the decline of many of that continent's birds and mammals.

Other species were taken to new places inadvertently. Many flightless birds once confined to single islands have been driven to

extinction because of predation by rats arriving on ships.

SEE ALSO...

- **Biodiversity Hotspots** pp168-169
- **Nature's Spaces** pp190-191

Invasive species on land

Predation, spread of disease, and competition for food are among factors that lead nonnative species to displace native animals and plants. Evolving in isolation from the often more aggressive newcomers, the native wildlife often cannot cope with the new pressures. There are many examples of the serious damage that can be caused by introduced species spread by growing global trade.



Asian longhorned beetle

Native to China and Korea, these insects have devastated trees in parts of Europe and in the US—where in 1996–2006 the cost of eradication attempts was over \$800 million.

European rabbit

Rabbits have changed natural habitats across the world. They breed rapidly—24 rabbits introduced to Australia in 1894 produced 10 billion by the 1920s. They compete with native species for food.

Burmese python

Originally escaped pets imported from South and Southeast Asia, these huge snakes now threaten rare wildlife across Florida. They predate and outcompete native species.

Kudzu vine

These climbing vines are native to Southeast Asia but are smothering ecosystems from the US to New Zealand. The vine grows rapidly over plants and trees, creating vast monocultures.



What can we do?

› **Countries must do more to prevent the importation of invasive species.** This can be achieved through effective trade controls, including on certain kinds of garden plants and marine species carried in ships' ballast tanks.



What can I do?

- › **Never deliberately release pets or garden plants.** Many of the most damaging alien invaders arrived via this route. Once they are out, it is often impossible to stop them from spreading.
- › **Take care when disposing of garden waste.**

Every day
an estimated
7,000
species are carried
around the world
in ship ballast water

Aquatic invasive species

Ocean ships move marine wildlife around the world, in their ballast tanks that hold seawater, as well as attached to the outside of their hulls. Many rich and varied freshwater ecosystems have also been seriously damaged by invasive species. This is one reason why freshwater fish are one of the most threatened animal groups.

Caulpera seaweed

Popular marine aquarium plants, caulpera seaweeds are causing major problems across the Mediterranean, where they smother native seaweed, and invertebrates, causing the decline of many species.

Forms dense meadows on seabed, blocking out other marine life

Nile perch

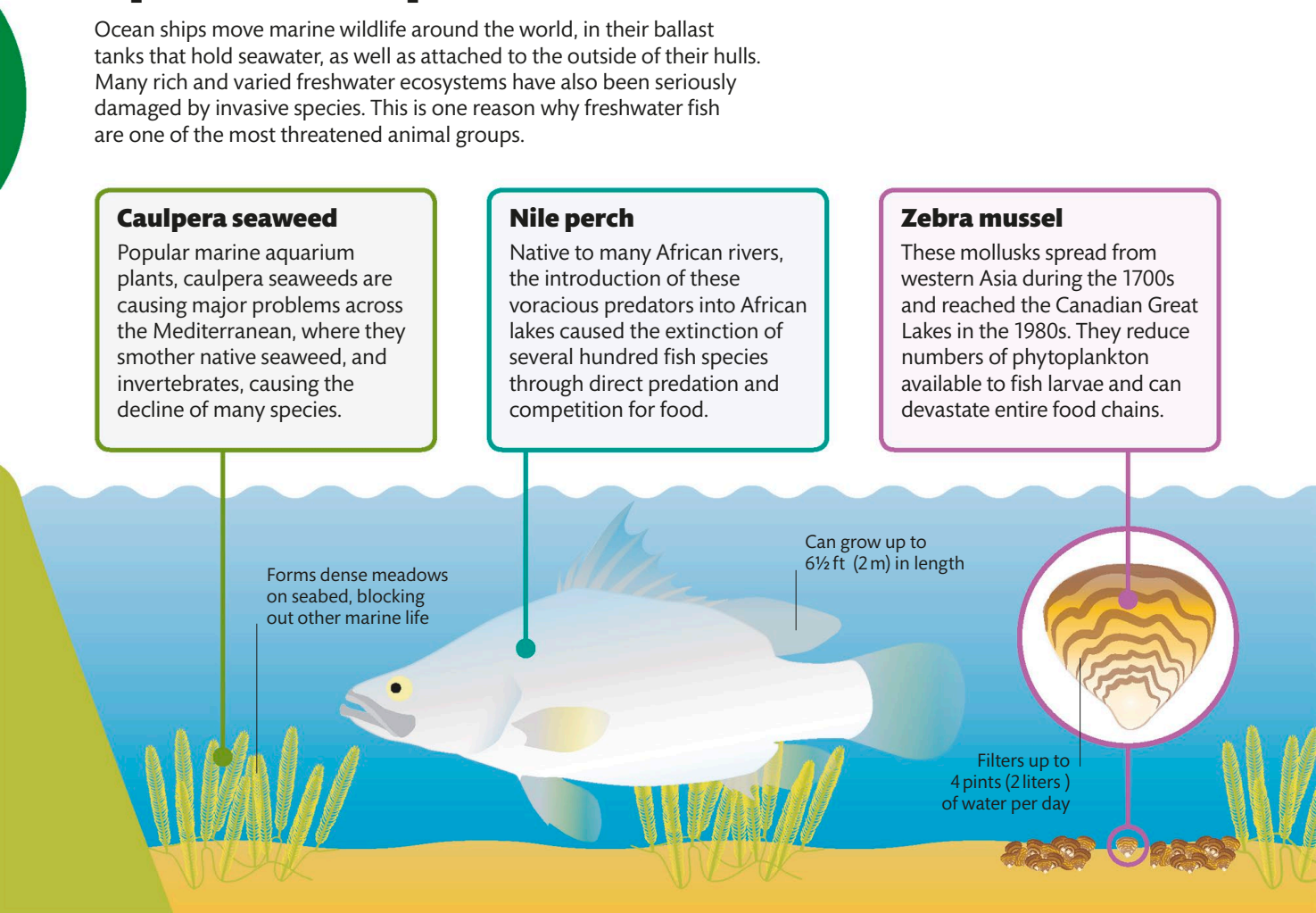
Native to many African rivers, the introduction of these voracious predators into African lakes caused the extinction of several hundred fish species through direct predation and competition for food.

Zebra mussel

These mollusks spread from western Asia during the 1700s and reached the Canadian Great Lakes in the 1980s. They reduce numbers of phytoplankton available to fish larvae and can devastate entire food chains.

Can grow up to 6½ ft (2 m) in length

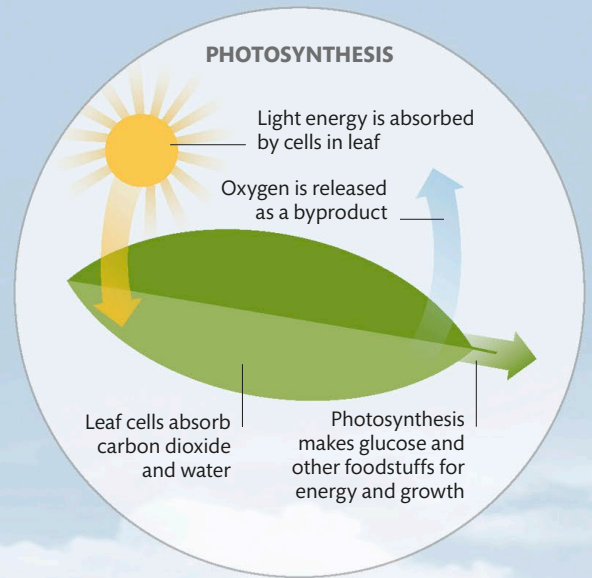
Filters up to 4 pints (2 liters) of water per day





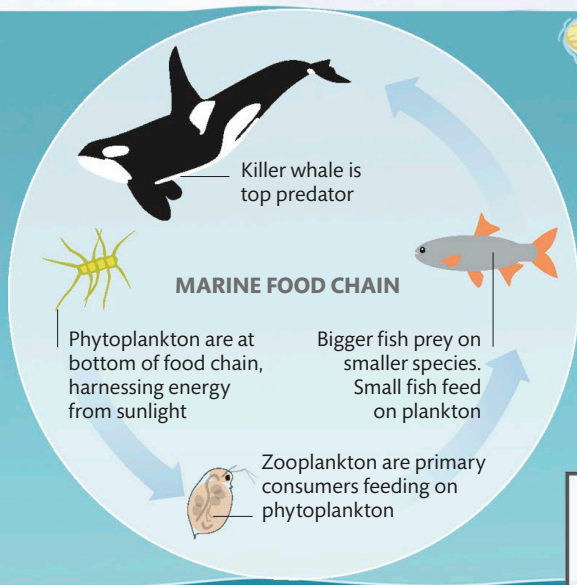
Nature's Services

Natural systems and wild species are not only beautiful but provide a wide range of essential and economically valuable benefits. These are sometimes referred to as ecosystem services. They range from flood protection given by forests to the storage of carbon in wetlands, and from the pollination of crops by wild insects to the replenishment of freshwater by wetlands. Often, however, economic growth is achieved at the expense of the health of natural systems. For example, all of our food plants and animals, and many of our medicines, are derived from wild species. By permitting extinctions, we are closing down future opportunities for innovation in food and health care. A healthy marine food web depends on plankton—without them, fish stocks would be hugely depleted.



Tourism

Natural habitats, such as beaches, mountains, and forests, are the basis of multibillion-dollar tourism industries. Access to natural areas improves mental and physical health.



Coastal protection

Ecosystems such as mangroves and salt marshes protect coastal areas from inundation by the sea.

Capture fisheries

"Solar-powered" plankton in the oceans is the basis of a food web that sustains some 99 million tons (90 million tonnes) of fish capture each year. This is the major source of protein for about 1 billion people.

Disease prevention

Some animals help protect public health by removing health hazards. Scavenging birds and animals can help remove rotting animal and plant debris that could otherwise be a health threat.

Carbon capture and storage

Forests, soils, and oceans absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Plants use carbon dioxide in photosynthesis and release oxygen.

Water purification and recycling

Forests and wetlands—such as mountain peatland and lowland bogs—store, purify, and replenish water supplies.

Flood reduction

Wetlands, healthy soils, and forests slow down the runoff of water, keeping it in the environment and out of people's homes.

Pollination

Around two-thirds of crop plants rely on pollination by animals, mostly wild insects such as bees.

NUTRIENT CYCLE

Plant decay releases carbon and nitrogen into soil

Nutrients absorbed through roots

Decomposers such as worms and fungi release carbon dioxide. Bacteria convert nitrogen into plant food



Insect Pollination

Almost 9 in 10 species of land plants—including most crop varieties—rely on pollination by animals, especially insects, to complete their life cycles. But wild insect populations are declining, posing a risk to food security.

Bees, wasps, hoverflies, butterflies, and beetles are among the insects that pollinate flowers, enabling plants to produce seeds and fruit. Most of the fruits and vegetables we eat rely on insects. In some parts of the world, the loss of wild pollinators has already disrupted food production, forcing farmers

to resort to extreme measures, including pollinating plants by hand using paint brushes. Such cases reveal not only the crucial role of pollinators in the food chain but also their huge economic value. Their annual contribution has been estimated to be worth about \$190 billion globally, including

\$14.6 billion in the US and \$600 million in the UK.



SEE ALSO...

➤ **Nature's Services** pp172-173

TYPES OF POLLINATORS

Insect pollination first evolved about 140 million years ago, and it plays a vital role in ecosystem function. There are several types of pollinators. Some are highly specialized, visiting just one species of plant; others are very general, feeding on a wide range of flowering plants.



Bees

A variety of bees undertake pollination, including bumblebees, solitary bees, mason bees, carpenter bees, and honeybees.



Wasps

Many of the 75,000 wasp species pollinate one particular species of plant. Some live in colonies; others are solitary.



Hoverflies

Adults feed on nectar and pollen while the larvae are aphid predators, making them both pollinators and pest controllers.



Butterflies and moths

These insects use their long proboscis to feed on nectar deep inside flowers and, in doing so, transfer pollen between blossoms.

Threats to pollinators

In many areas of the world, wild pollinators have undergone drastic decline, mainly as a result of agriculture. Habitat loss due to farming deprives insects of food plants and breeding areas, and many pesticides are toxic to pollinators. In common with other wildlife, many pollinators are also being affected by climate change, as well as other threats, such as housing and infrastructure developments and pollution. Shown here are the principal threats to bees in Europe.



AGRICULTURE

The progressive intensification of farming has led to more and more species disappearing from farmed land. Pesticides have devastated some populations of insect pollinators, while herbicides have killed wildflowers, depriving pollinators of food

Nitrogen deposition arising primarily from fertilizers causes plant diversity to decline in grasslands, wetlands, and other habitats, depriving pollinators of their food sources

POLLUTION

LIVESTOCK

More intensive livestock rearing has involved the replacement of traditional hay meadows with silage production. In some countries, such as the UK and Sweden, more than 95% of flower-rich grasslands have been lost, depriving pollinators of vital habitats



What can we do?

- › **Governments could ban the most damaging pesticides**, including the neonicotinoids that are harmful to bumblebees and birds (see p69).
- › **Subsidies to farmers** could be paid only on condition that farmers protect or restore pollinator habitats.



What can I do?

- › **Grow pollinator-friendly flowering plants** in your garden and leave wilder patches where insects can hibernate and breed.
- › **Buy organic fruit and vegetables**; these are produced without any pesticides that can poison pollinators.

The estimated economic value of bees and other pollinators per year is **\$190 billion**

Urban expansion and infrastructure development reduce wild and semi-wild areas while fragmenting and further isolating those that remain

Heavy rainfalls, droughts, heatwaves, and alterations in the timing of seasons can adversely affect populations of insect pollinators

Sea defenses that affect coastal habitats can impact species that are specially adapted to those habitats

CLIMATE CHANGE

FIRE AND FIRE SUPPRESSION

OTHER ECOSYSTEM CHANGES

RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

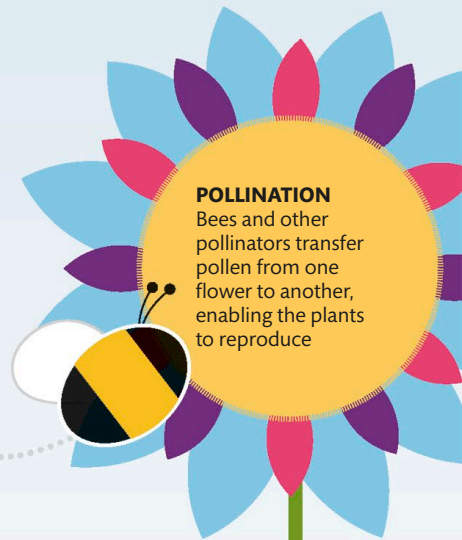
Fire has its greatest impact on species in drier areas. Land management intended to reduce the fire risk can also reduce plant diversity

RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCES

Tourism in wild or semi-wild areas, such as ski tourism in the Alps, can disturb natural habitats, threatening bees and other pollinators

MINING AND QUARRYING

Mineral extraction leads to loss of vegetation, but rehabilitated mines and quarries can provide excellent habitats for insects



POLLINATION
Bees and other pollinators transfer pollen from one flower to another, enabling the plants to reproduce

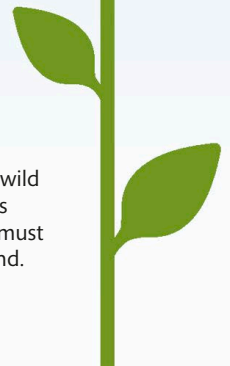
The importance of bees

Healthy diets include a diverse range of fruit and vegetables. Maintaining a secure supply of such produce into the future will depend on healthy insect populations. Domesticated honeybee hives can play some role, but many crops rely primarily on other species, such as wild bumblebees; in the UK, for example, at least 70 percent of crop pollination is carried out by wild insects.



Pollinating by hand

In parts of southwestern China, the destruction of wild pollinators with pesticides means that fruit growers must pollinate blossoms by hand.



Value of Nature

It is often assumed that environmental damage is an inevitable price of progress. However, the loss of free services provided by nature is creating major costs and risks.

Nature provides a wide range of essential services that sustain development. It is possible to estimate the financial value of these, such as the work done by bees in pollinating crops, the importance of coral reefs in protecting coasts from storms, and the role of wetlands and forests in replenishing freshwater. The economic value of natural services is vast and estimated to be worth more than global GDP.

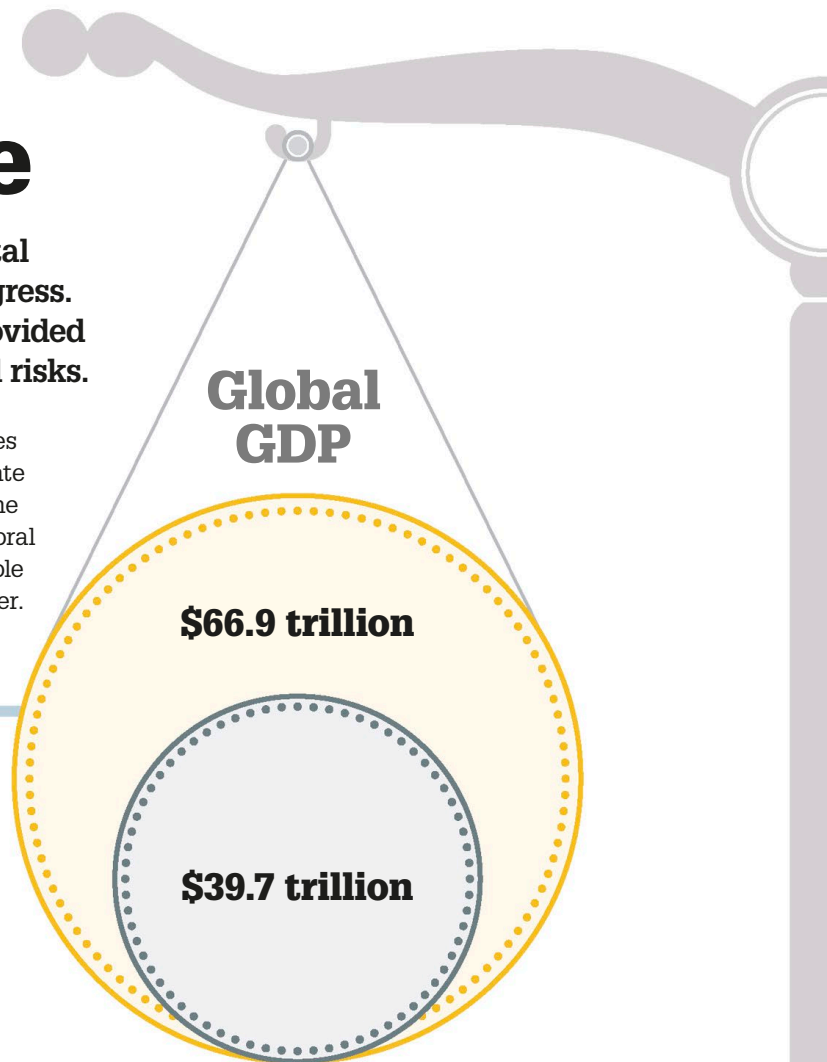
Nature's bounty

Work by US environmental economist Robert Costanza and colleagues has revealed the value of nature and how the financial value of ecosystem services changed between 1997 and 2011. A range of valuation methods were used, but this research demonstrates how nature's annual contribution is bigger than world GDP. These findings reveal that the continuing development of human societies depends directly on the health of nature. The more we damage ecosystems, the bigger the costs to human societies in replacing what nature once did for free.



What can we do?

- › **Governments and companies** can gather information on their impact on and their dependence upon natural assets. This information can shape economic decisions to improve, rather than decrease, the health of vital ecosystems.



“Without land, the rivers, the oceans, the forests... and thousands of natural resources we would have no economy whatsoever.”

.....
SATISH KUMAR, INDIAN ECOLOGICAL CAMPAIGNER

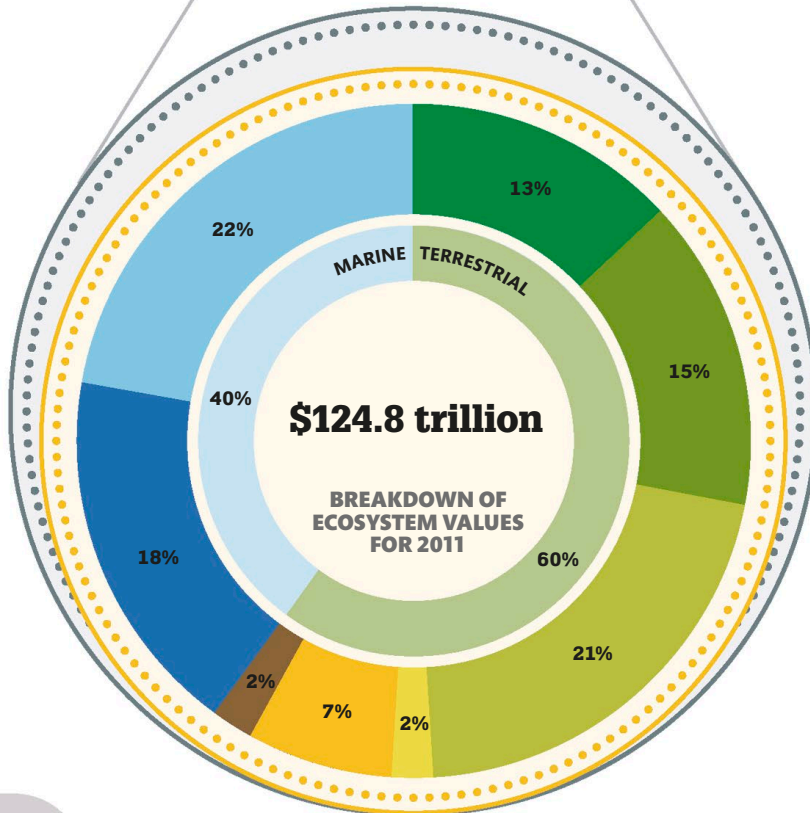
Value of GDP

While countries seek growth in GDP, the declining health of nature is absent from economic calculations. As ecosystems are destroyed and degraded, the value we get from them is declining.

KEY (2007 US\$)

- 1997
- 2011

Global value of nature



Natural systems

All around us ecosystems and wild species help sustain human welfare. Carbon dioxide is removed from the air by forests, which helps slow climate change. Wild fish stocks are replenished by solar-powered food webs that begin with plankton and provide nutrition and jobs. New drugs and crop varieties are being developed with genetic material found in wild species. The contribution of nature is shown in estimates by Costanza and his team.

KEY



FOREST

The economic value of forests is more than \$16 trillion per year. Forests replenish oxygen, supply water, and are home to most land species.



GRASSLANDS

Different kinds of grasslands are estimated to deliver more than \$18 trillion in value, through sustaining most of the world's livestock.



WETLANDS

These help reduce flood risk, capture carbon, and purify water. Wet ecosystems deliver more than \$26 trillion in value.



LAKES AND RIVERS

Our water supplies depend on lakes and rivers being replenished: an annual economic contribution in excess of \$2 trillion per year



CROPLAND

The croplands that grow our food depend on soils supplying nutrients to plants. They provide services worth more than \$9 trillion per year.



URBAN

Seminatural environments in towns and cities provide valuable services. The global value of these per year is more than \$2 trillion.



OPEN OCEAN

This global asset provides services worth nearly \$22 trillion per year, including ocean plants that produce much of Earth's oxygen.



COASTAL

Ecosystems lying where sea meets the land provide \$28 trillion worth of services, such as tourism and protection from storms.

“The core values that underpin sustainable development—interdependence, empathy, equity, personal responsibility, and intergenerational justice—are the only foundation upon which any viable vision of a better world can possibly be constructed.”

SIR JONATHON PORRITT, BRITISH ENVIRONMENTALIST AND WRITER



The Great Acceleration



What's the Global Plan?



Shaping the Future



3 BENDING THE CURVES

A wide range of initiatives is in place to address interrelated global challenges, but if we are to achieve a secure and sustainable future, far more will be needed.



The Great Acceleration

The pressures exerted by humankind on planet Earth have led to fundamental changes to the atmosphere, ecosystems, and biodiversity while depleting many resources. Further population and economic growth are driving the demand that is behind continuing changes, many of which are interconnected. The scale of human activity is so big as to become the most influential factor shaping life on Earth. Scientists believe that we have entered a new geologic era—the Anthropocene—a period in which people have become a defining global force.

A new era: the Anthropocene

The point at which the Anthropocene began is subject to debate. Some suggest it began during the Pleistocene, up to 50,000 years ago, when humans caused the extinction of many large mammals. Others suggest that it coincides with the rise of agriculture. There is a strong argument for the industrial revolution as the point from which to start the new epoch, since it ushered in an unprecedented global impact on the planet. Equally, some argue it began when the first atomic bomb was detonated, leaving a global radioactive human fingerprint. There is increasing agreement, however, that the 1950s is the best place to mark the start of the Anthropocene. This was the start of a unique period, called the Great Acceleration, when many human activities reached takeoff points and sharply accelerated toward the end of the century.

50,000 YEARS AGO
Groups of hunter-gatherers target large mammals for food and other resources, including skins and bones.

Although climate changes that accompanied the end of the last Ice Age played a part, it has been estimated that about two-thirds of the many large mammal extinctions that took place in this period were caused by humans.

8,000 YEARS AGO
The near simultaneous rise of agriculture and cities marked a sudden change in human impacts.

Hunter-gatherer societies lived close to nature in the ecosystems they depended upon. Farmers feeding urban populations made fundamental changes to their environment, including forest clearance, which caused carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels to rise, while the builders of cities relied on systematic large-scale resource extraction.

5,000–500 YEARS AGO
Soil changes created by human activity spread widely across the world with the rise of agriculture.

Some changes were deliberate and aimed at improving soil quality. Other impacts were inadvertent and led to soils being damaged to the point where they stopped producing crops.

1610
A drop in atmospheric CO₂ concentration coincides with forest regrowth.

The mass mortality of indigenous peoples in tropical rain forest regions, caused by slavery and diseases brought by newly arrived Europeans, meant fields reverted to forests, which removed CO₂ from the air.

Rising trends

When researchers plotted various trends reflecting rising human demands and impacts, they expected the curves to begin going up sharply from the start of the industrial age, during the 1700s or 1800s. They found, however, that all these and many other trends really took off during the middle of the 20th century. The Great Acceleration that began in the 1950s and continues today is perhaps the correct point from which to mark the start of the Anthropocene.

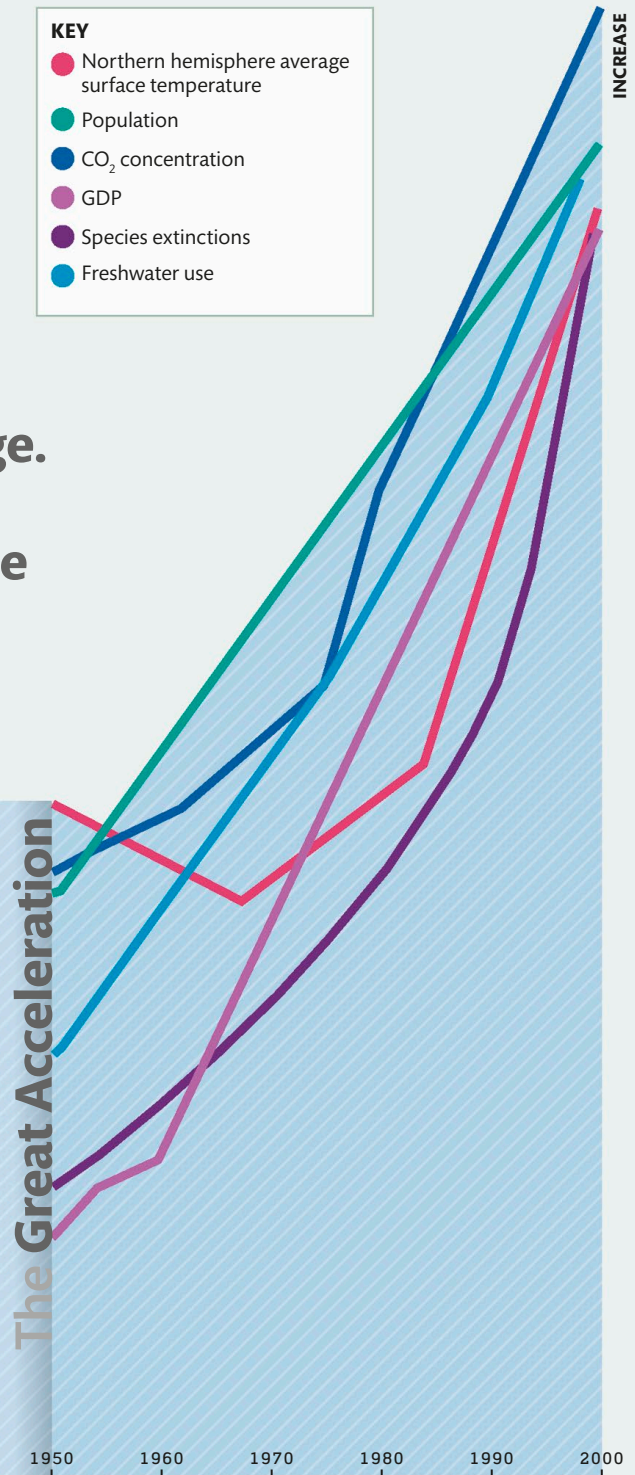
“It is difficult to overestimate the scale and speed of change. In a single lifetime, humanity has become a planetary-scale geological force.”

.....
WILL STEFFEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOSPHERE-BIOSPHERE PROGRAMME

LATE 1700s
The industrial revolution begins in England but soon spreads across Europe and to North America.

The large-scale combustion of fossil fuels begins, and there is a sharp increase in demand for other natural resources. Industrialized farming follows in its wake. It took more than 200 years for industrialized development to spread across the globe.

1950
The Great Acceleration: the beginning of rapid growth in many areas.
Following the first nuclear bomb detonation, the Great Acceleration marks the rise of truly global impacts caused by people on planet Earth. In addition to leaving a radioactive marker in sediments across the world, climate change, ocean acidification, widespread soil damage, and a mass extinction of species accompany the sharp increase in human influence.





Planetary Boundaries

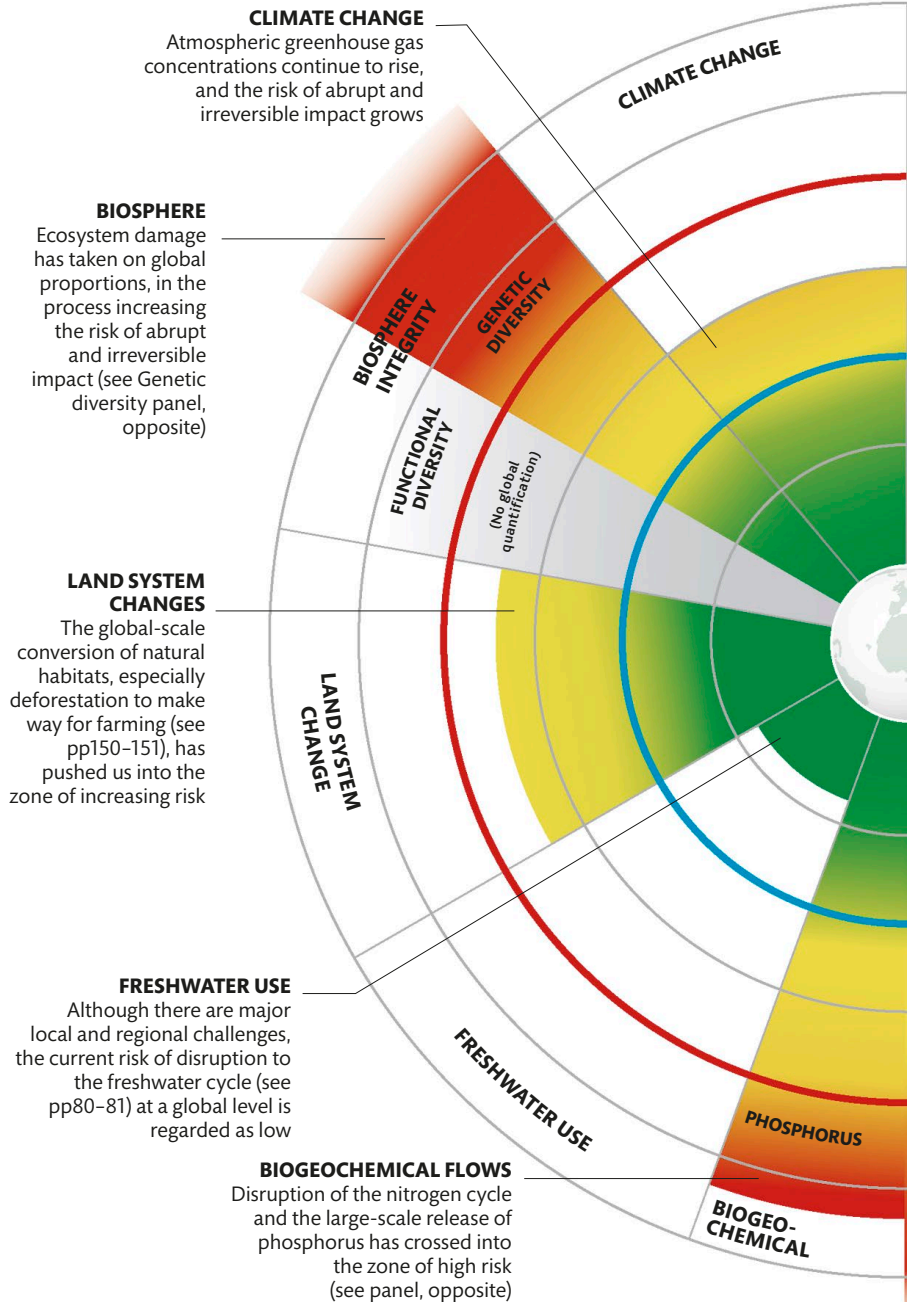
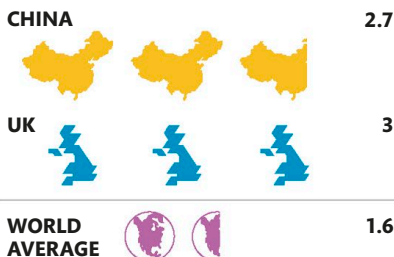
The degradation of the Earth's systems poses increasing risk to human societies. Scientists have identified a number of planetary "boundaries" that if breached could lead to potentially disastrous consequences.

Crossing boundaries

An international team led by scientists at the Stockholm Resilience Centre has set out nine "planetary boundaries" that are believed to be key to the health of our planet. The boundaries relate to global trends, including climate change, ozone depletion, ocean acidification, freshwater use, and biological diversity. The colors depicted here represent the level of risk for each area. Green indicates that to date the risk falls below the boundary—in other words, not presently a globally systemic threat. Yellow is the zone of uncertainty where risk is increasing. Red has gone beyond uncertainty and shows a high risk. Gray is an aspect that has not yet been quantified.

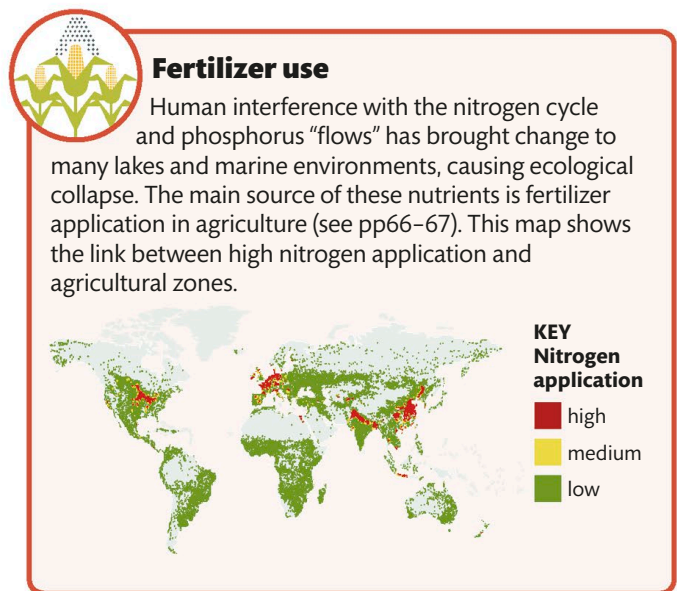
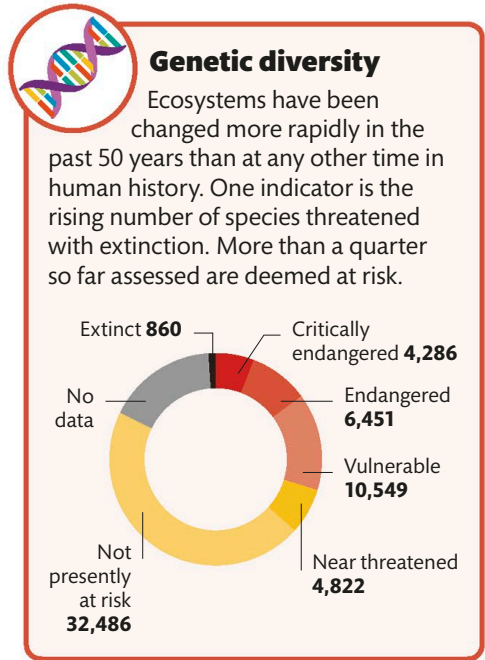
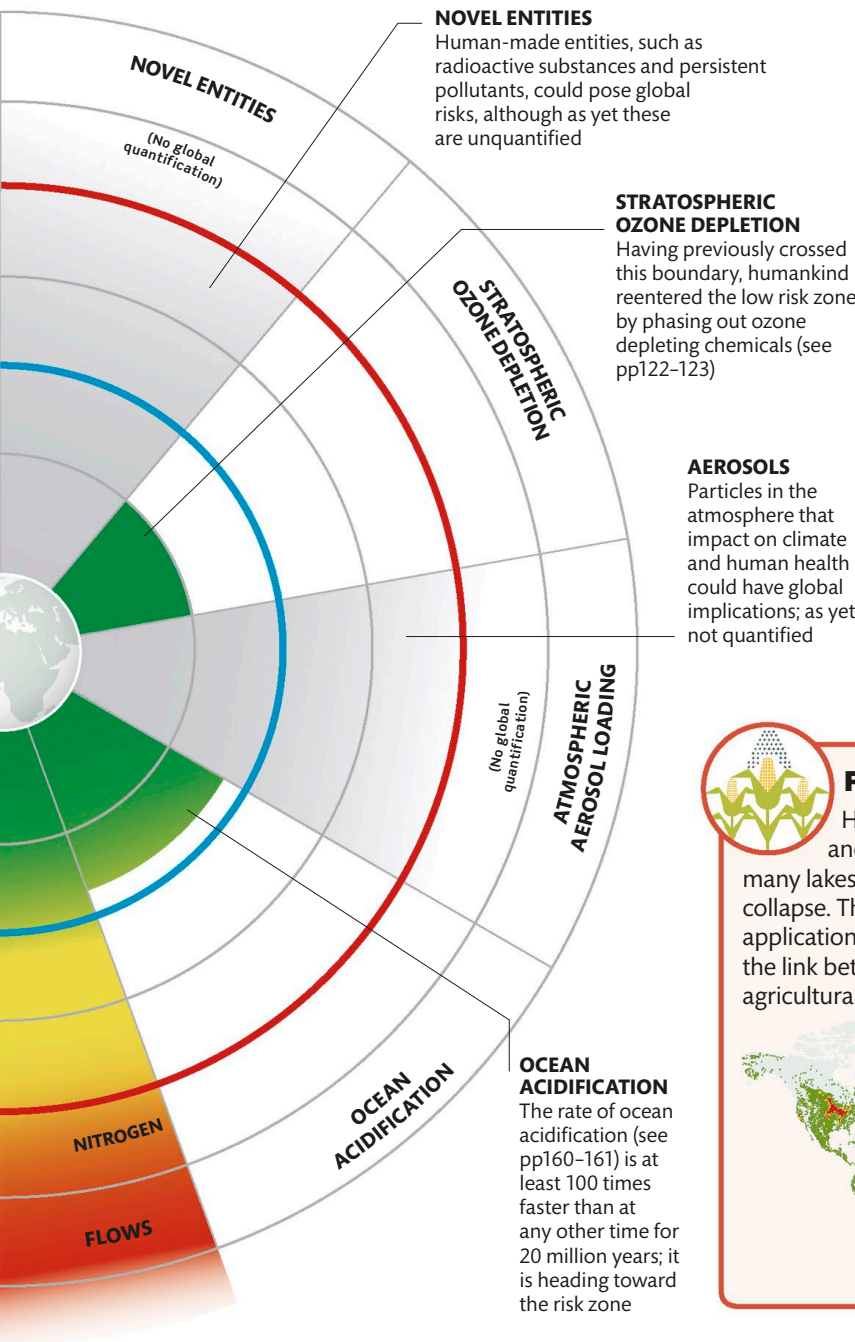
EARTH BUDGET

Human demand is now far larger than what the Earth can indefinitely sustain. Many large economies use more resources than can be provided within their own borders. For example, Japan needs five times its own area to sustain current consumption. China and the UK are also among countries demanding more than can be provided from their own territory.



It is important to identify those planetary pressures that have become most acute and pose potentially catastrophic risks to humankind. This can help us prepare for significant change and prioritize

resources toward meeting the most pressing challenges. The nine key areas shown here relate to global changes. In many places, local changes are already into the zone of high risk.





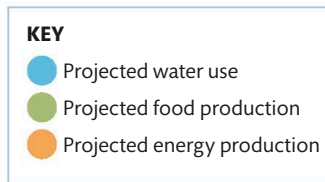
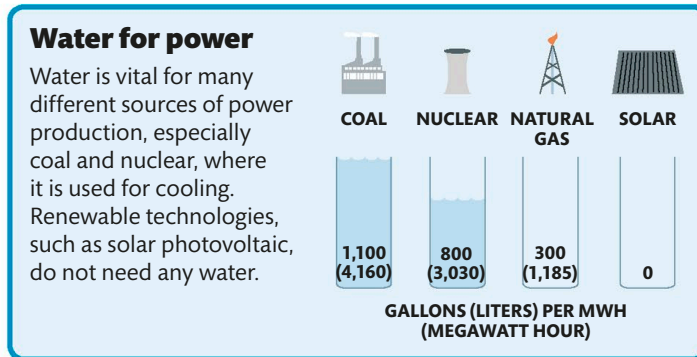
Interconnected Pressures

Rising demand for food, energy, and water presents great challenges, but less obvious are the connections between them. Energy and water produce food, water produces energy, and energy cleans and supplies water.

During 2008, food prices rose significantly, increasing the number of hungry people in the world by an estimated 100 million. This sparked social unrest and led many countries to restrict exports of staple foods. Two of the main reasons for this situation were the unprecedented high price of oil and gas and the droughts affecting major food-producing areas. The future security of human societies depends on finding solutions that recognize the clear links between food, water, and energy. The avoidance of waste and the efficient use of energy, food, and water are essential.

Linked demands

It is estimated that by 2030 the world will need 30 percent more water, 40 percent more energy, and 50 percent more food. Meeting these rising demands will be individually challenging, but the pressures emerging between them have been described as potentially creating a "perfect storm." This graphic shows some of the implications of the growing demand for food, energy, and water and how the increased consumption of one has implications for the others.





Land pressure

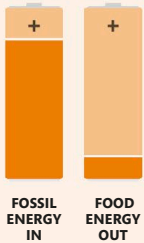
As the consumption of liquid biofuels and biomass for generating heat and power increases, there is growing demand for land to provide energy that could otherwise produce food.

THE RISK OF DROUGHT AND WATER SHORTAGES WILL MAKE COUNTRIES SEEK ACCESS TO WATER IN OTHER COUNTRIES

ALL FOOD PRODUCTION ON LAND NEEDS FRESHWATER. DEPLETION OF THIS RESOURCE RISKS RISING FOOD PRICES

Food energy

Large-scale food production needs vast quantities of fossil energy for all stages, including processing, transportation, and preparation. The energy produced as food is only a fraction of this.



MANY ENERGY SOURCES RELY ON WATER SUPPLIES. WATER SCARCITY CAN AFFECT ON POWER PRODUCTION

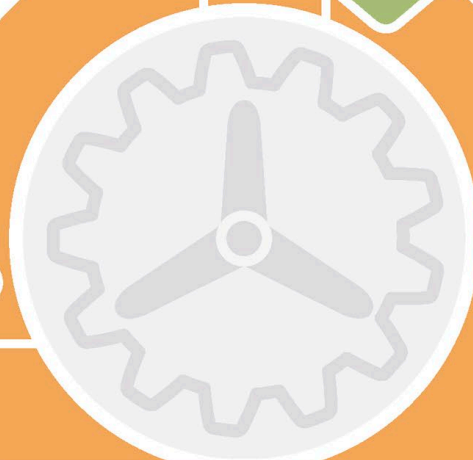
RISING DEMAND FOR WATER INCREASES THE ENERGY REQUIRED TO TREAT WASTEWATER AND TO PUMP CLEAN WATER

MORE ENERGY NEEDED TO PROVIDE MORE FOOD

MORE LAND NEEDED TO PRODUCE BIOFUEL AND BIOMASS FOR ENERGY

50% more food in 2030

40% more energy in 2030





What's the Global Plan?

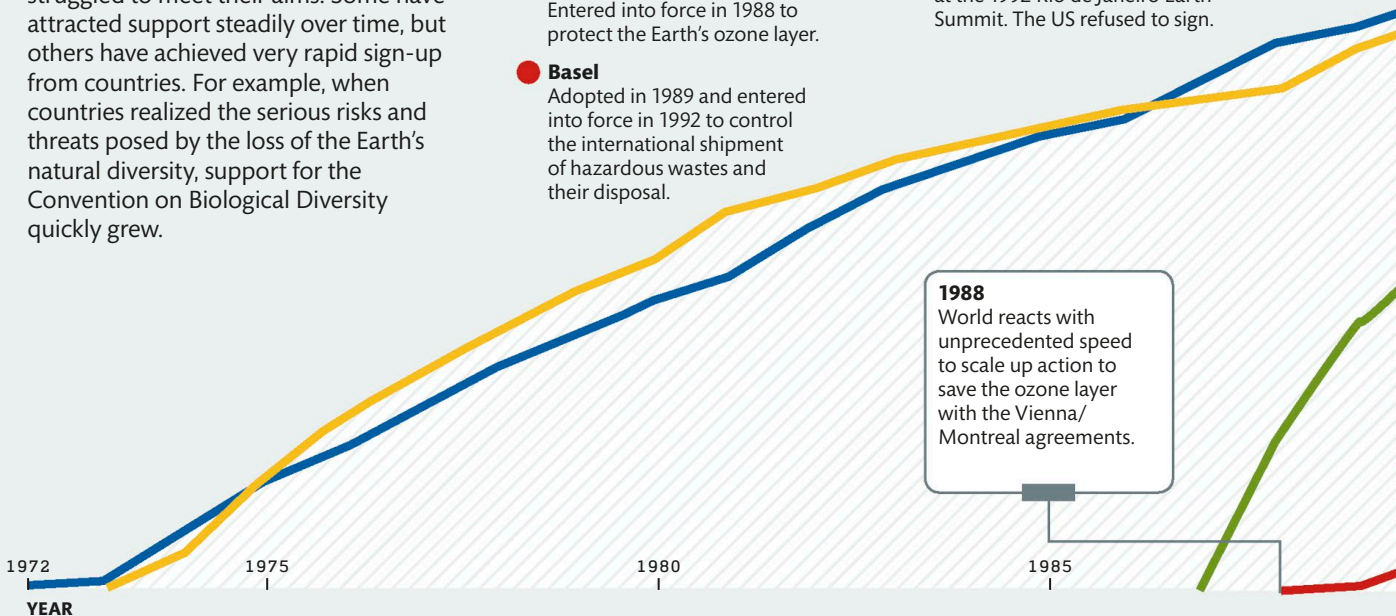
Recognizing the limited ability of individual countries to solve many environmental problems, intensive efforts have been devoted to negotiating and implementing various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). These are formal legal accords between countries to manage collective challenges that no one country can meet on its own. Countries signing multilateral agreements undertake to implement commonly agreed rules and meet targets linked with different environmental challenges.

Rise in MEAs

During the last century, the number of international environmental treaties, protocols, and other agreements has grown, especially during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. While some agreements have been highly successful in galvanizing coordinated responses, many have struggled to meet their aims. Some have attracted support steadily over time, but others have achieved very rapid sign-up from countries. For example, when countries realized the serious risks and threats posed by the loss of the Earth's natural diversity, support for the Convention on Biological Diversity quickly grew.

KEY

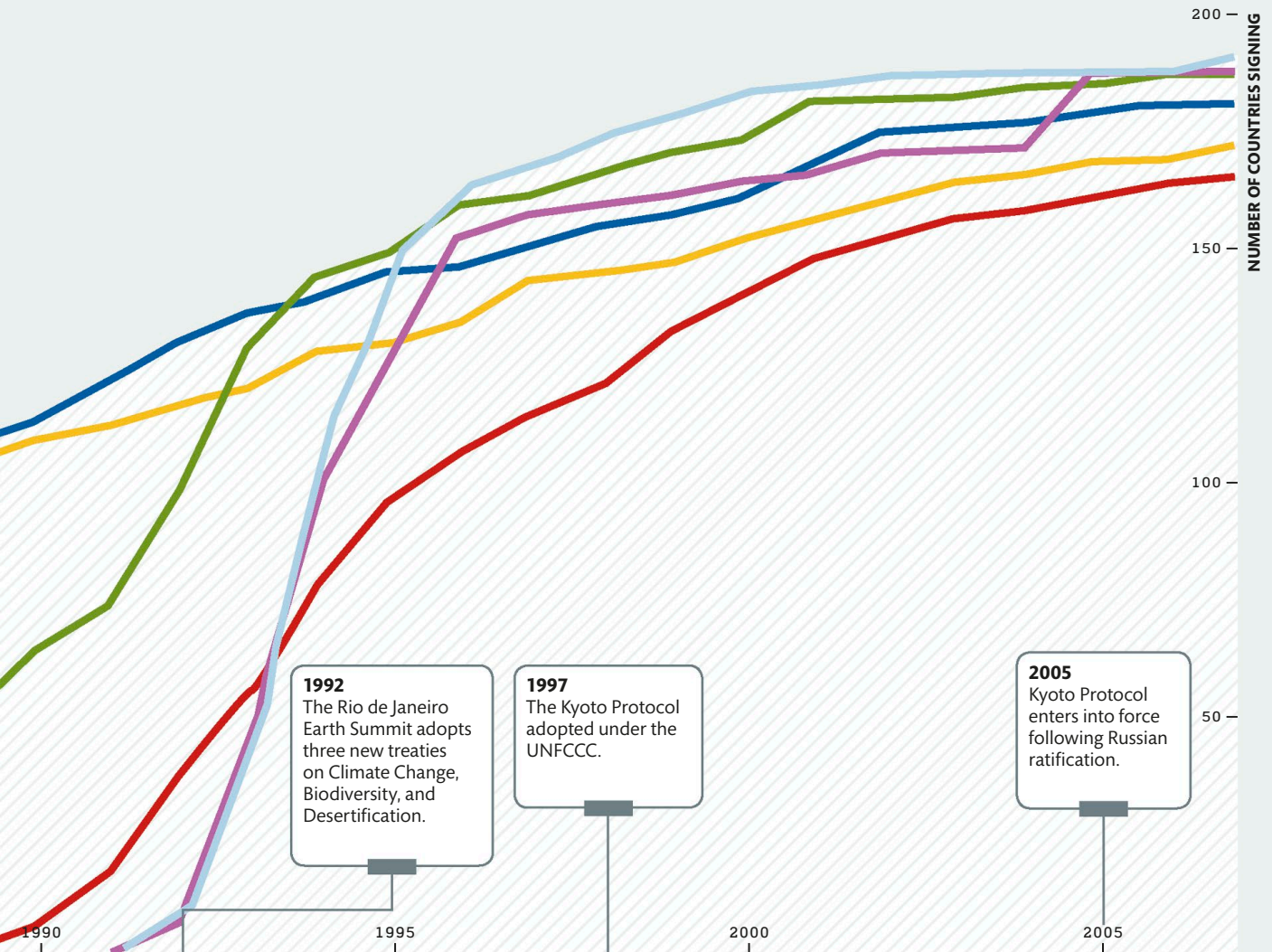
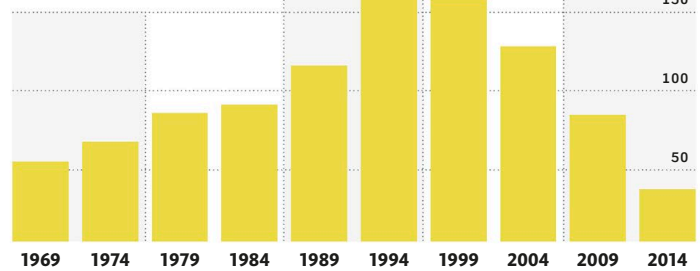
- World Heritage Convention**
Adopted at UNESCO's General Conference in 1972 to stem threats to natural and cultural heritage sites.
- CITES**
Agreement adopted in 1973 and entered into force in 1975. Aims to protect species that are traded.
- Vienna/Montreal**
Entered into force in 1988 to protect the Earth's ozone layer.
- Basel**
Adopted in 1989 and entered into force in 1992 to control the international shipment of hazardous wastes and their disposal.
- UNFCCC**
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol. Convention agreed in 1992 and Protocol in 1997. Paris Agreement 2015.
- CBD**
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Agreed at the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. The US refused to sign.



MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

During the last century, hundreds of new international environmental agreements have been reached. Most are technical amendments to existing plans; others are major new treaties. Over time, as more and more MEAs have been adopted, the rate of new ones being agreed has gone down. It is not for want of new agreements that the world struggles to make progress but more the effective implementation of what is already there.

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ADOPTING AGREEMENTS





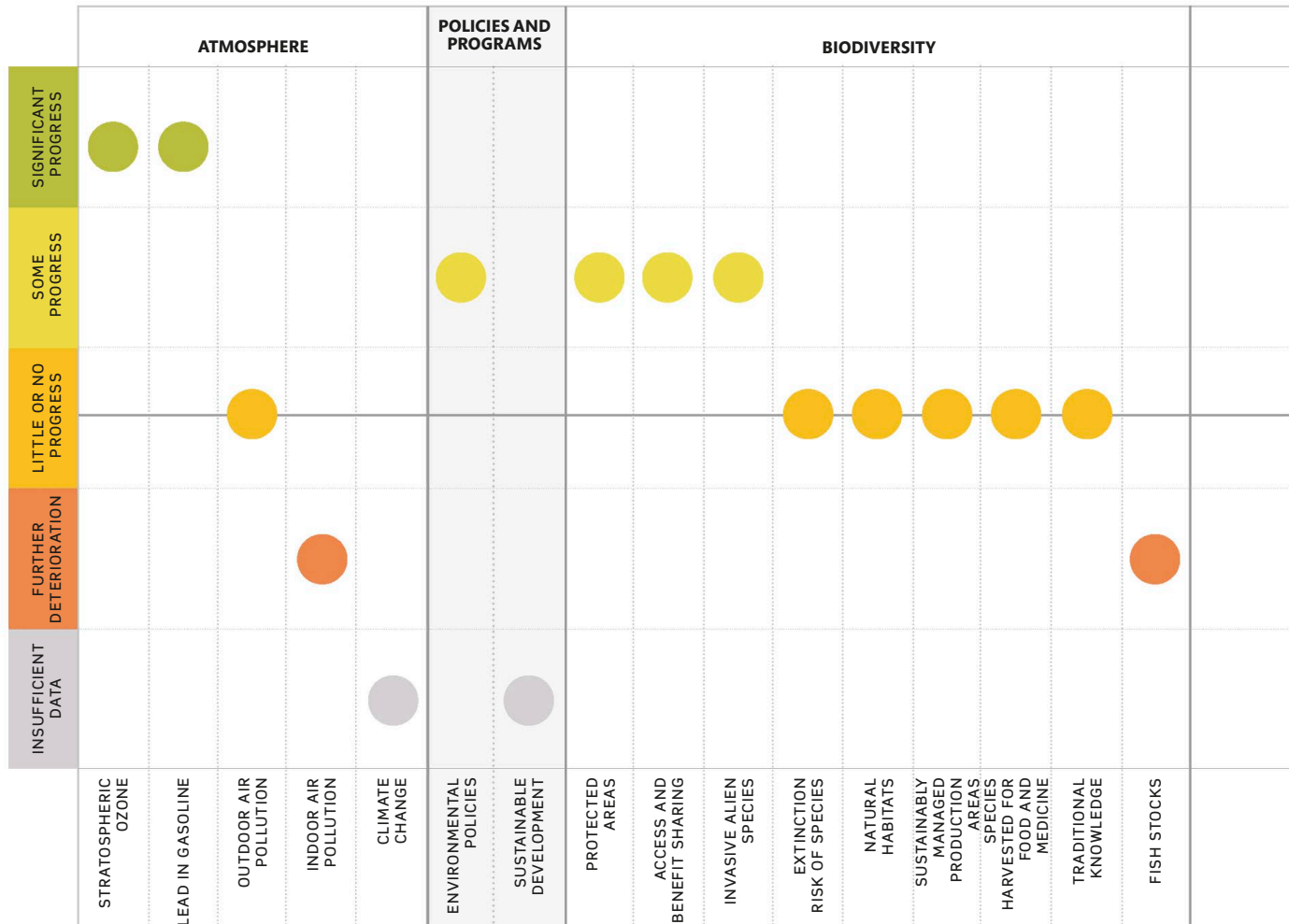
What Is Working?

Hundreds of different environmental and social treaties and agreements have been adopted internationally. However, more progress has been made in relation to social goals than environmental ones.

Plans to bring about the well-being of people have resulted in environmental measures taking a back seat. Improving health and nutrition have so far, for example, been more successful than action on climate change and conservation. The disparity in the performance of different treaties is linked to a wide range of factors, including the demands of the core aims, mixed political backing, available funding for implementation, and possible conflict with wider economic goals.

Limits of progress

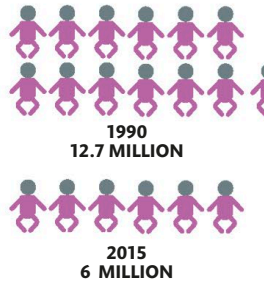
In 2012, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) published an assessment on the effectiveness of environmental treaties. This chart reveals the successes and failures. Only three environmental aims made significant progress—to phase out ozone-depleting substances (see p123), remove lead from vehicle fuel, and improve access to clean drinking water.



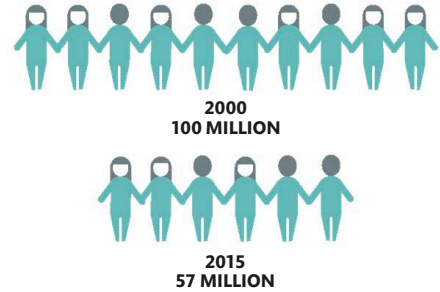
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Progress toward meeting international social targets has been more successful. The Millennium Development Goals agreed by the United Nations in 2000 set out to reduce extreme poverty, give more children an education, promote gender equality, and reduce child mortality. Across the developing world, political cooperation and international assistance have pursued these targets with impressive results.

GLOBAL DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE



GLOBAL OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE



	CHEMICALS AND WASTE	LAND	WATER
HEAVY METALS	●		
PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS	●		
RADIOACTIVE WASTE	●		
SOUND CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT	●		
SOUND WASTE MANAGEMENT	●		
DEFORESTATION		●	
ACCESS TO FOOD		●	
DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT		●	
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES		●	
WETLANDS			●
DRINKING WATER			●
SANITATION			●
WATER USE EFFICIENCY			●
EXTREME EVENTS			●
MARINE POLLUTION			●
GROUNDWATER POLLUTION			●
CORALS			●
FRESHWATER POLLUTION			●



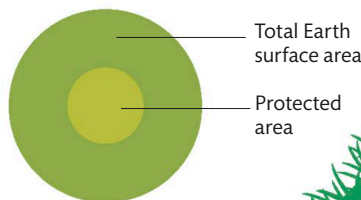
Nature's Spaces

The last 50 years have seen a huge increase in the number of national parks, nature reserves, and other protected areas. While this is a positive trend, there are still many challenges to overcome.

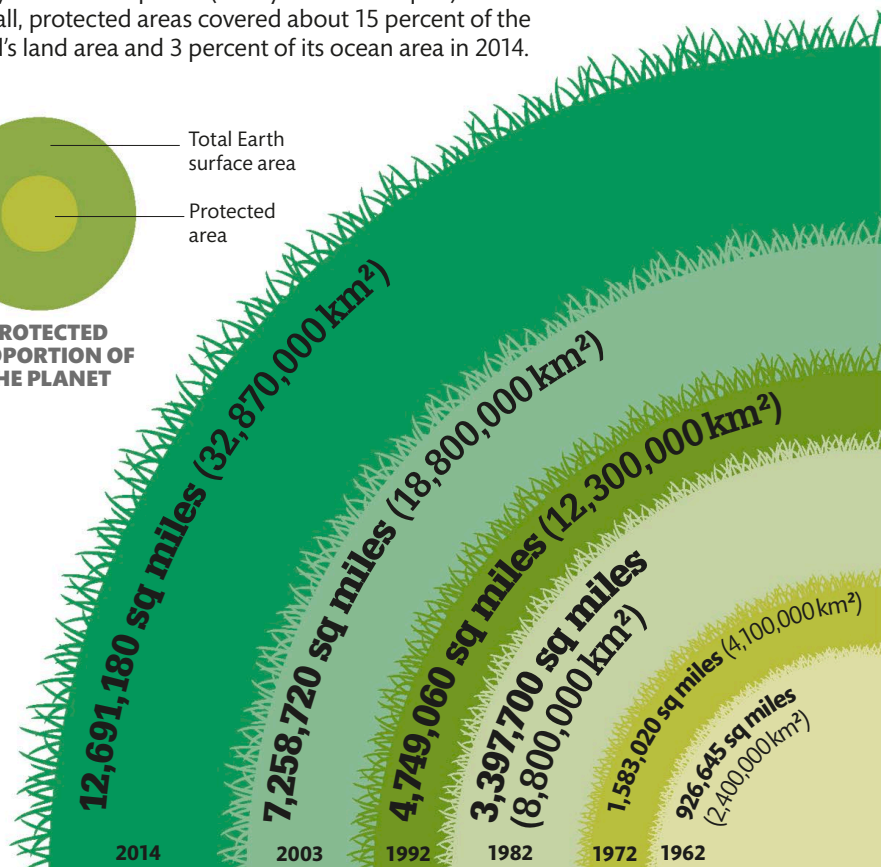
Investment in large, high-quality, and connected areas of natural habitat on land and in coastal and marine areas is vital to minimize the extinction of wild species. In 2010, world governments pledged to increase protected areas as part of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. However, this will not be enough on its own. Other steps—for example, sustainable farming, enforcement of antipoaching laws, pollution prevention, and effective action on climate change—are critical for nurturing nature's spaces. Protected areas must also be managed effectively. One recent survey found that only 24 percent were under "sound management." Experts also conclude that the current protection is insufficient to safeguard the full range of species and ecosystems. Little of the open ocean is protected, and habitats including tropical coral reefs, seagrass beds, and peat lands need particular attention.

Growth of protected areas

Since 1962, the number of protected sites has increased more than 20-fold globally and the total protected area has increased about 14-fold, to more than 209,000 sites covering an area of nearly 13 million sq miles (nearly 33 million sq km) in 2014. Overall, protected areas covered about 15 percent of the world's land area and 3 percent of its ocean area in 2014.



PROTECTED PROPORTION OF THE PLANET



SEE ALSO...

- › Nature's Services pp172-173
- › The Value of Nature pp176-177

Protection timeline

The legal protection of land for conservation purposes started in the mid-19th century. Countries have also enacted progressively stronger laws for the protection of individual species.

1864 Yosemite Grant Act passed by US President Abraham Lincoln establishing first major modern protected area

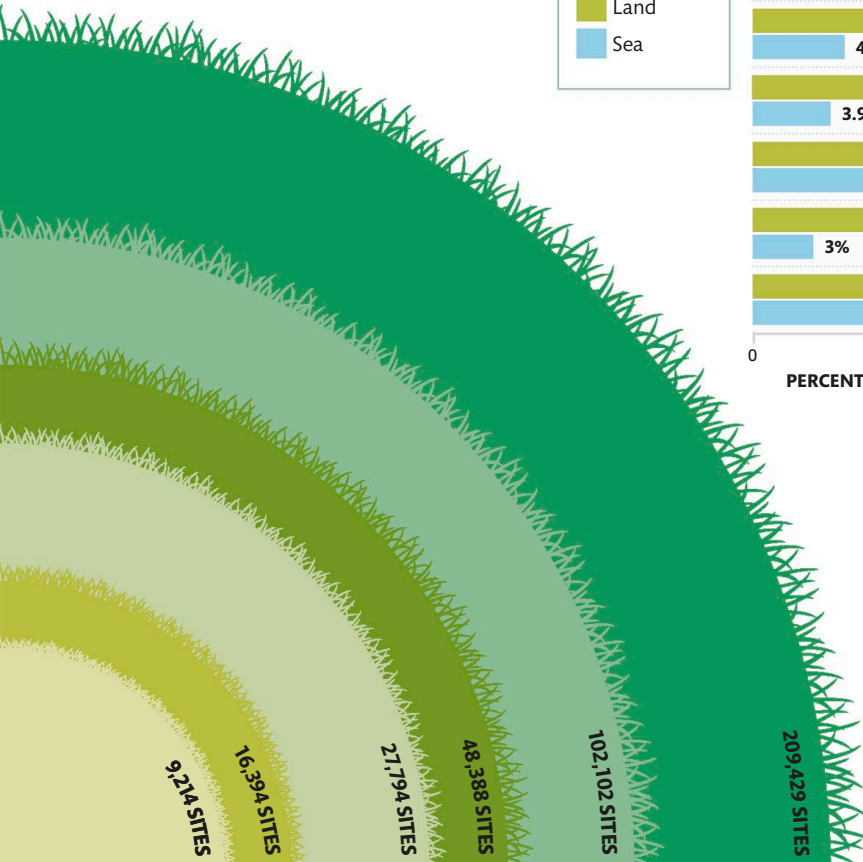
1872 Yellowstone National Park, California, the world's first national park, established

1948 The IUCN, then called the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN), founded

1958 The IUCN establishes provisional National Parks Commission

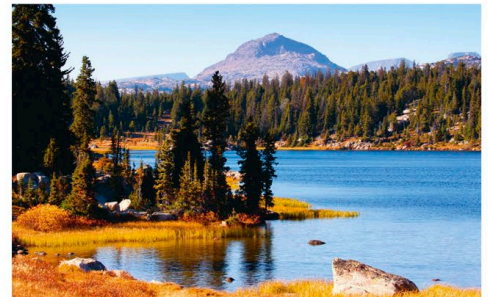
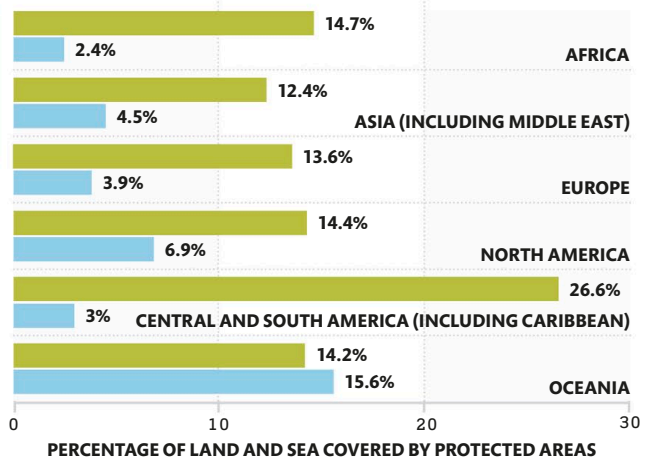
15%

of Earth's land surface is in some form of nature reserve or national park



The regional picture

All regions of the world have designated protected areas, but many are not properly implemented. Scientists have determined that it would cost about 0.12 percent of global GDP to rectify this, as well as to enforce other conservation measures. Meanwhile, the global cost of environmental damage is estimated at about 11 percent of global GDP.



First in the world

The iconic Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872. Today it protects one of the last remaining nearly intact temperate zone ecosystems on Earth.

1962 First World Parks Congress, a global forum on protected areas, held in Seattle, Washington

1972 United Nations Environment Program and World Heritage Convention established

1982 Third World Parks Congress focuses on protected areas and sustainable development

1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) treaty agreed at Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit

2010 CBD adopts Aichi Biodiversity Targets to halt loss of biodiversity

2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted (see pp198-199), including targets for the protection of nature



New Global Goals

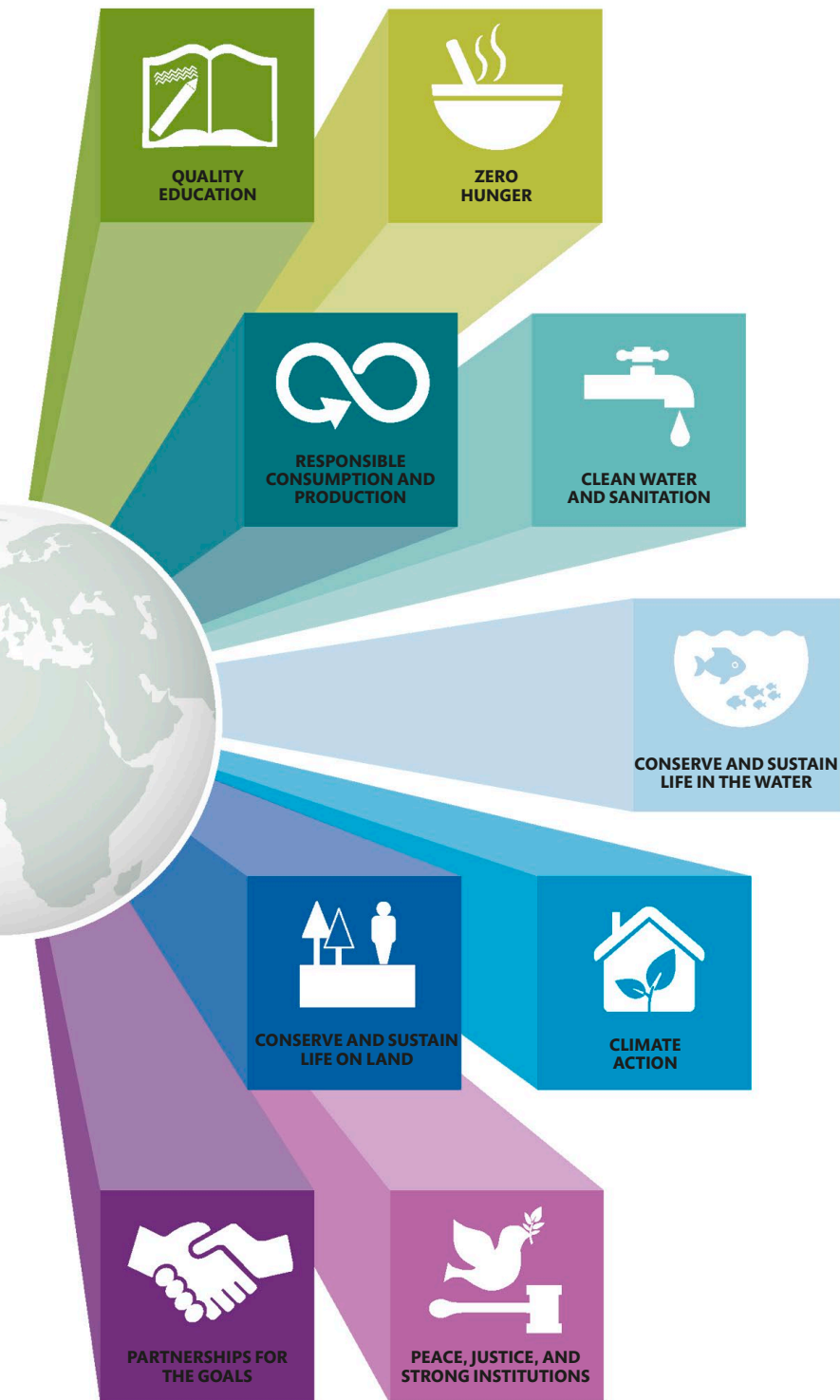
The Millennium Development Goals (see p189) expired in 2015. New action was needed to set out a framework for meeting environment and development challenges until 2030 and to lay the foundations for a more secure future.

The world first committed to the goal of sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, but societies everywhere struggled to embed its central idea of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Instead, economic growth and progress toward social goals were promoted at the expense of environmental assets and climatic stability. Then, in 2000, a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted (see p189). These aimed to reduce poverty and hunger but did not address the causes of poverty, and they made no mention of human rights or economic development. In 2012, countries—with the support of campaign groups and major international companies—agreed to embark on a process to establish a new set of goals.

This culminated in a new framework agreed at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. A key challenge for the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be to achieve social and environmental outcomes at the same time, rather than advancing one at the expense of the other.

193 nations have signed on to the **Sustainable Development Goals**





What are the goals?

The 17 SDGs focus on discrete challenges but are all linked. They are concerned with human well-being, envisaging a world free of poverty and hunger, where everyone has access to education, health care, and social protection, and to affordable and sustainable energy. They also address human rights and human dignity. The goals are designed to build a more just, equitable, tolerant, and socially inclusive world. Above all, they are concerned with sustainability and the building of a world in which every country enjoys inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all, while also protecting the environment and conserving biodiversity.



What can we do?

- ▶ **Urge governments** across the world to adopt ambitious plans for full implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals.



What can I do?

- ▶ **When buying products and services** from international companies, choose those whose policies support the achievement of the goals.



Shaping the Future

Since the start of the first industrial revolution, successive waves of invention have driven economic development and led to improved living conditions for billions of people. Many factors have shaped innovation. These include access to natural resources, the strength of the societies that develop new technologies, the role of government in encouraging innovation, levels of education, and how existing technologies provide springboards for new invention. A new wave of innovation is breaking and could be vital in enabling development that respects the planet.

Waves of innovation

Since the middle of the 18th century, there have been a number of new industrial revolutions. Each of these has reshaped every aspect of the economy and society, and they have all followed a similar pattern, with the initial invention creating a period of boom and rising wealth. In the process, this gave rise to secondary economies based on core inputs, such as coal for steam engines and computer chips for the computers that drive the digital economy. Each time the technology reaches maturity, it is subject to a period of adjustment before, ultimately, being replaced. History reveals successive waves of progress driven by new technologies that last for about 50 years each. We could be at the start of a new one—the sustainability revolution.

Second wave: Steam power

Water is superseded by coal-fired steam engines. They drive manufacturing and long-distance transportation by rail and ships. Global trade rapidly expands.

First wave of innovation: Water power

Water-powered machinery—driven by mills on streams—transform textile manufacture and leads to the industrialization of work previously done by individual workers.



BIOMIMICRY

Biomimicry is the process of mimicking nature. For example, termites cool their mounds by using vents to circulate air. Architects created the Eastgate Centre in Zimbabwe with an air conditioning system that is modeled on these termite mounds. It uses minimal electricity, which has resulted in drastically reduced carbon emissions.

90% The energy savings from using biomimicry for ventilation in the Eastgate Centre, Zimbabwe

Sixth wave: Sustainability

A new industrial revolution is built on sustainability. This uses renewable energy, the restoration of ecosystems (to provide essential services), zero-waste circular economy products, sustainable farming, biomimicry, and innovations in nanotechnology.

Third wave: Electrification

Electrical power transforms the world, along with the rise of the internal combustion engine, which revolutionizes transportation with fossil oil.

Fourth wave: Space age

Aviation technologies are refined to provide long-distance mass transportation and take us into space. Electronics and petrochemicals transform the lives of consumers.

Fifth wave: Digital world

Computers go mainstream, changing our lives, as well as business and government. Biotechnology and other industries develop as the digital revolution picks up speed.

INNOVATION

1920 1940 1960 1980 2000 2020



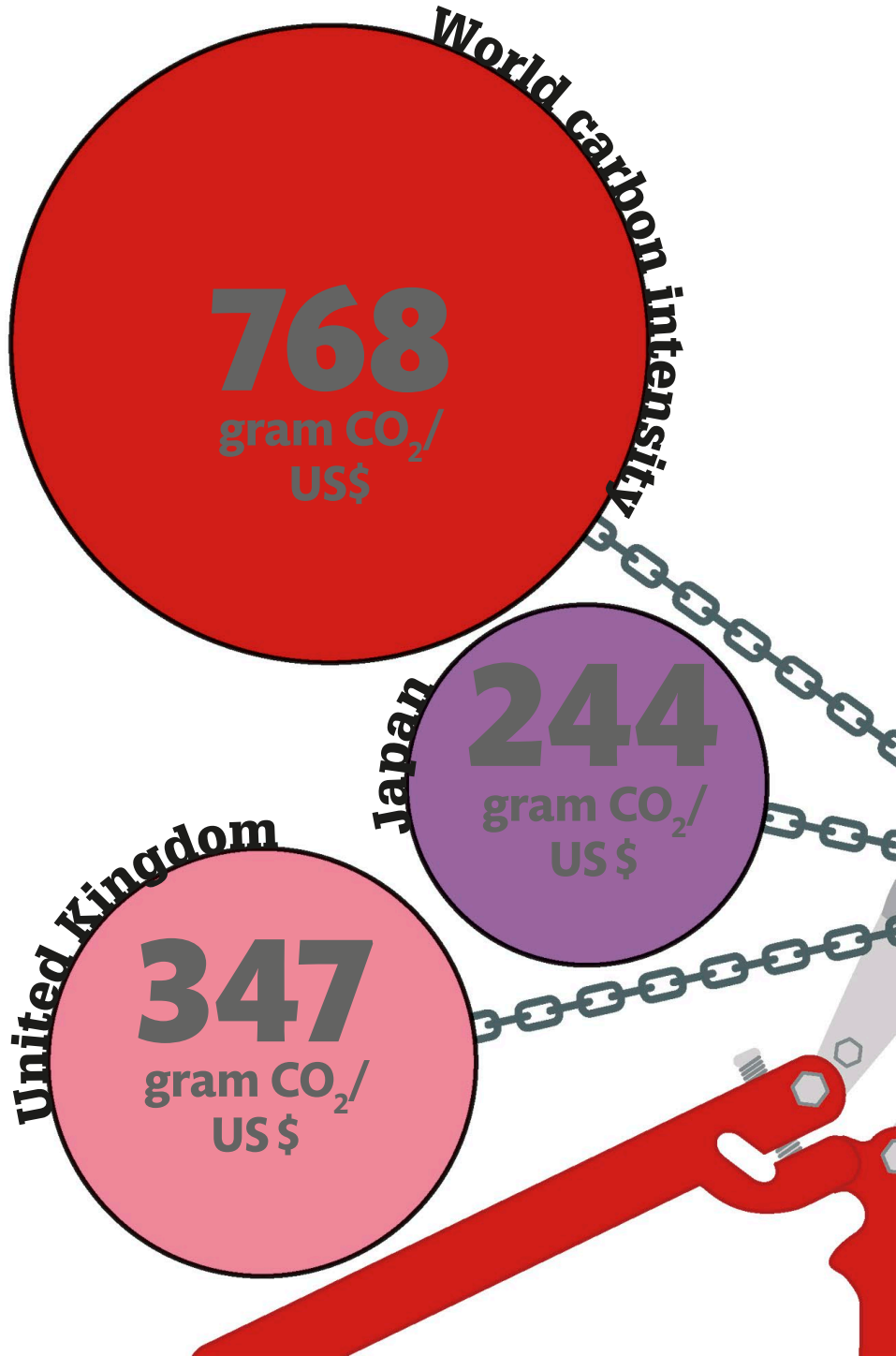
Low-Carbon Growth

The sustainability revolution will need to meet the demands of more people while achieving a drastic reduction in environmental impact. Carbon emissions provide an illustrative case in point.

Present patterns of economic development are carbon intensive. In other words, for every unit of economic output, we are producing high levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂). The strategy going forward needs to be toward a less carbon-intensive society—a world where we can continue to grow in wealth but are less dependent on factors (like fossil fuel energy production) that increase CO₂ emissions. This “delinking” of economic growth from carbon emissions is vital if we are to have any reasonable chance of ensuring the average global temperature increase does not exceed two degrees.

Carbon intensity

This graphic shows the carbon intensity of each dollar of GDP in 2007 in the UK and Japan, as well as the world's average levels. The relatively efficient use of energy, gas generation, and some nuclear power leads the UK to emit at about half the global GDP average. Lacking fossil energy resources, Japan's economy is quite efficient. The country uses a great deal of nuclear power and generally has a low level of emissions per unit of GDP compared with the world average. However, both countries are far off the much lower global carbon target that is needed by 2050—from 6 to 36 grams CO₂ per dollar (see Scenarios 1–4, opposite).



Future scenarios

We need to reduce carbon intensity significantly to prevent global temperatures rising more than two degrees above preindustrial levels. Economist Tim Jackson came up with four possible scenarios to reveal the scale of the challenge ahead. Each scenario uses variations on population number and average income. These predict how much carbon emissions must be reduced compared with 2007. With economic growth, incomes will rise. If the world achieves the income levels forecast in scenario 4, the carbon intensity of each dollar of GDP must drop to six grams. Even with continued inequality, but some growth (scenario 1), emissions per unit of GDP must be less than one-twentieth of the 2007 average.

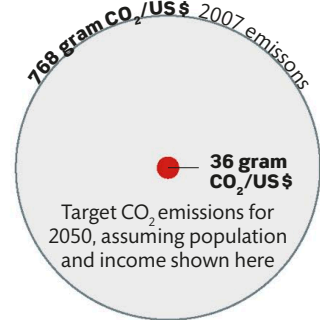
6.2%

The amount that the **global economy** needs to cut carbon intensity each year



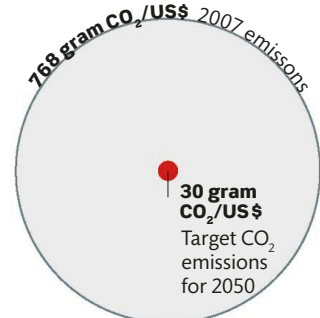
2050 Scenario 1

Assumes that population grows to 9 billion. Per capita income growth continues at the 2007 level, but inequalities remain.



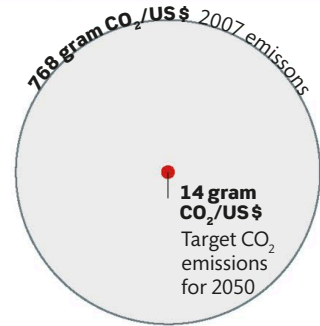
2050 Scenario 2

Assumes population grows to 11 billion. As in scenario 1, per capita income growth continues at the 2007 level, but inequalities remain.



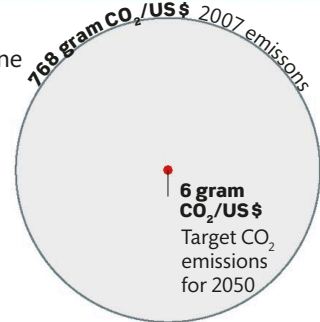
2050 Scenario 3

Population grows to 9 billion (as in scenario 1). Everyone enjoys per capita income at the equivalent of the EU average in 2007.



2050 Scenario 4

Population grows to 9 billion. Everyone enjoys high living standards because of economic growth above those of the EU today.





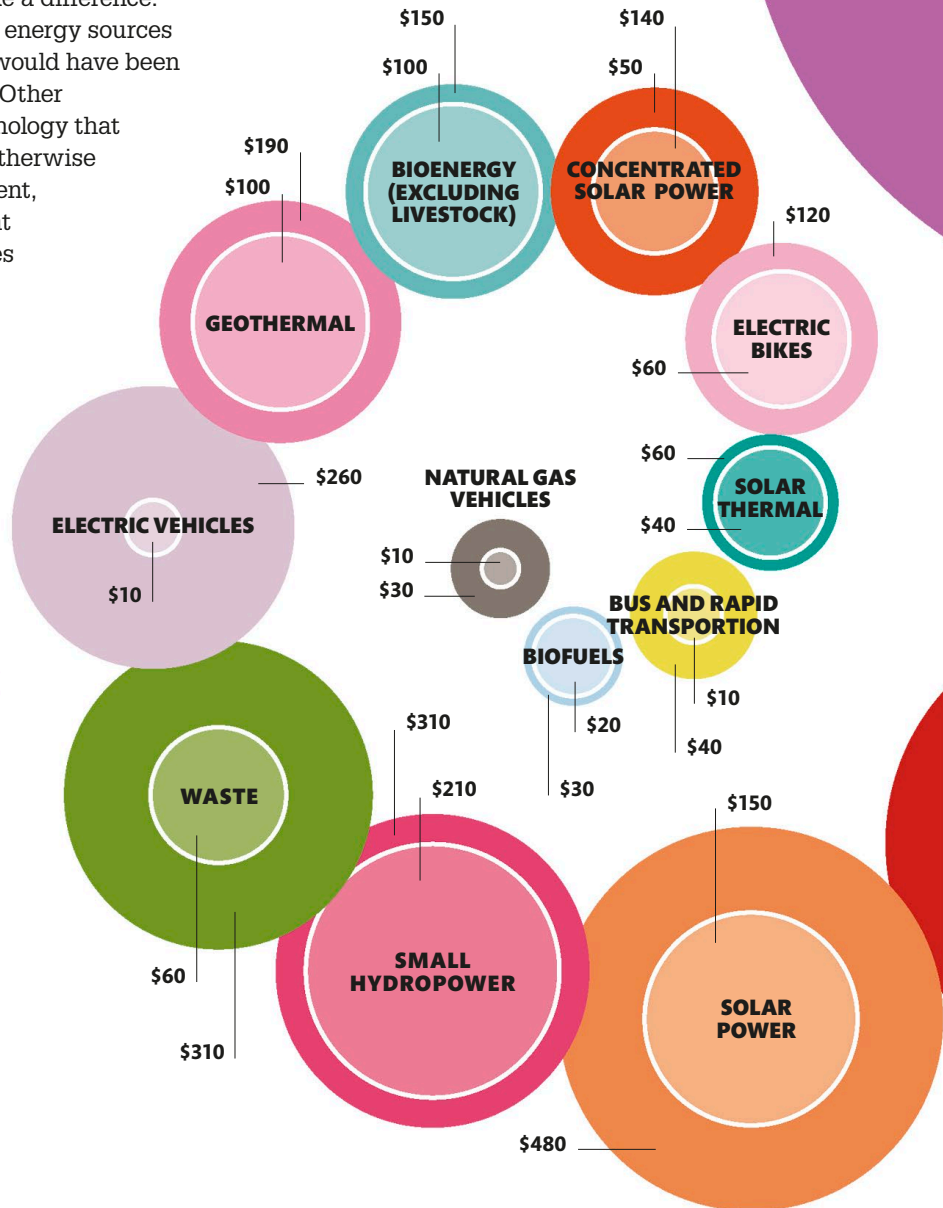
The Rise of Clean Technology

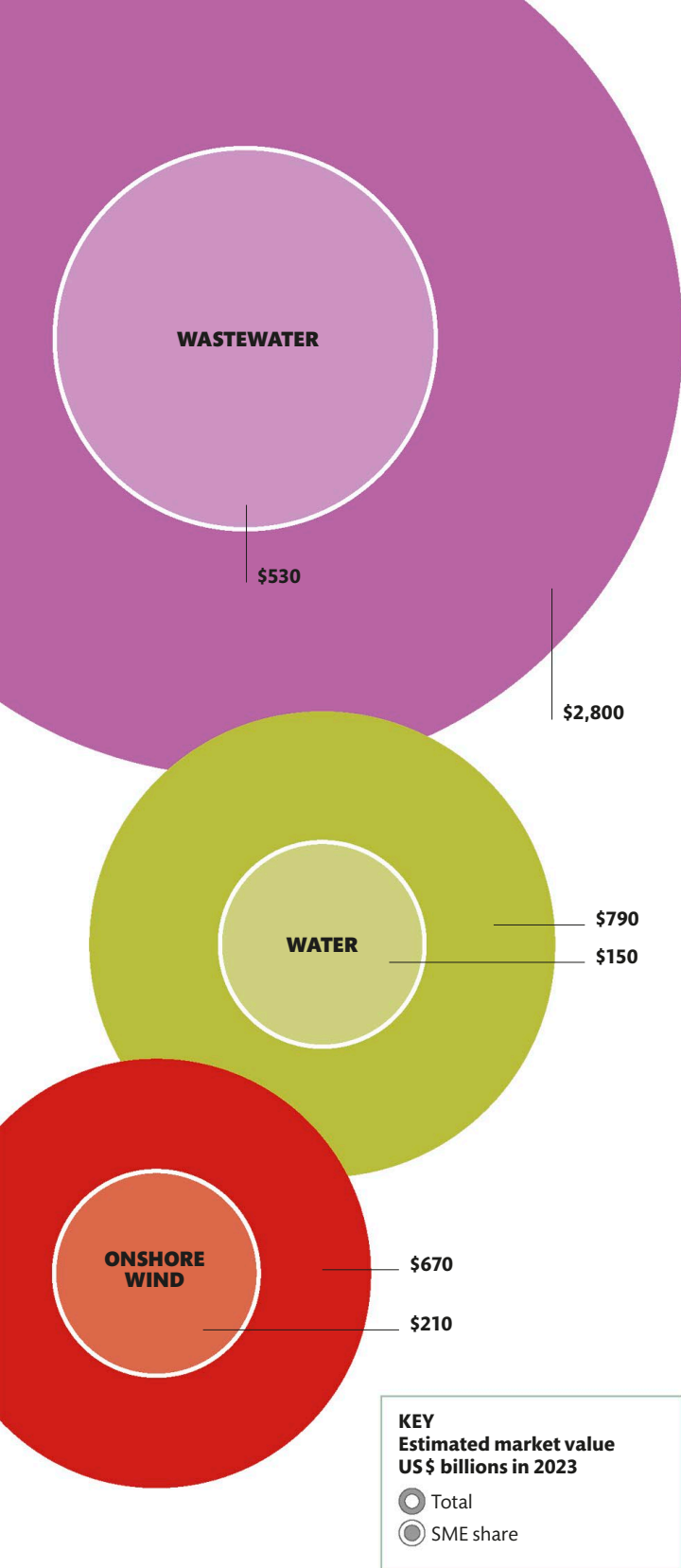
Increasing our use of clean technology through harnessing renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency, recycling, green transportation, and the more rational use of water is vital to reduce our ecological footprint.

Clean technology is beginning to make a difference. Most notably, switching to renewable energy sources decreases the amount of carbon that would have been released through burning fossil fuels. Other promising developments include technology that extracts resources from what would otherwise be waste, more efficient water treatment, nutrient recovery facilities that prevent pollution, and information technologies that enable buildings to run more efficiently. Clean technology companies are attracting increased investment as they become more efficient and competitive, which is helping them grow. From 2007–2010, the clean technology sector expanded by, on average, 11.8 percent per year, and in 2011–2012, it comprised a market worth around \$5.5 trillion.

Developing a clean future

Clean technology is driving growth in developing countries, including among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A World Bank study estimated that from 2014 to 2024, \$6.4 trillion will be invested in clean technology in developing countries, with \$1.6 trillion of that accessible to SMEs. South America and sub-Saharan Africa are predicted to be major growth areas in developing-world clean technology.



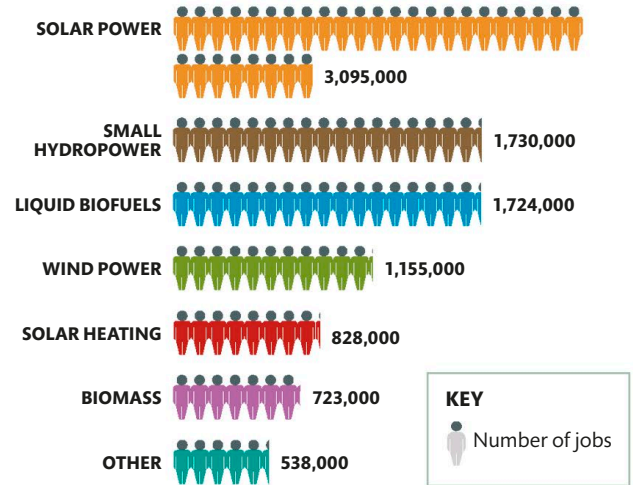


KEY
Estimated market value
US\$ billions in 2023

- Total
- SME share

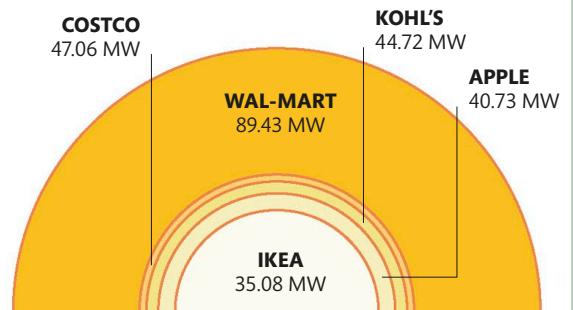
Clean, green jobs

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, there were 9.8 million jobs in renewable energy in 2016, up from 5.7 million in 2012. The largest concentrations are in China, Brazil, the USA, India, and Germany. Solar power, hydroelectric power and biofuels are the biggest employers.



COMPANIES GOING GREEN

The nonprofit organization The Climate Group identified Ikea, Apple, Kohl's, Costco, and Wal-Mart as among those US companies deploying a significant amount of renewable energy in 2013. The total amount of solar energy these companies deployed in the US in 2013 is measured below in megawatts (MW).





A Sustainable Economy

If the world is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (see pp198–199) to raise living standards while avoiding the worst impacts of climate change, resource depletion, and ecosystem degradation, then economic change is needed.

Rewiring the economy

In 2015, the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) in the UK proposed a plan to “rewire” the economy. The plan sets out 10 tasks for governments, business, and financial institutions to place our economic system more in line with social and environmental priorities. The tasks (right) relate to changes in government policy and the world of business while harnessing the massive power of finance. The changes are deliberately geared to promoting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which cannot be reached through traditional environmental and development programs on their own. A more fundamental shift is needed. That shift goes to the heart of our economy.

“If there is waste or pollution, someone along the line pays for it.”

.....
LEE SCOTT, FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WAL-MART

Government

- › **Set the right targets and measures**
For example, official goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions and protect ecosystems must be backed by policies to meet them.
- › **Introduce new tax systems**
Show the true cost of different choices—such as taxing waste and pollution to promote cleaner production and energy sources.
- › **Positive influence**
Drive positive change by harnessing the power of public spending, subsidies, planning rules, education, and research.

Finance

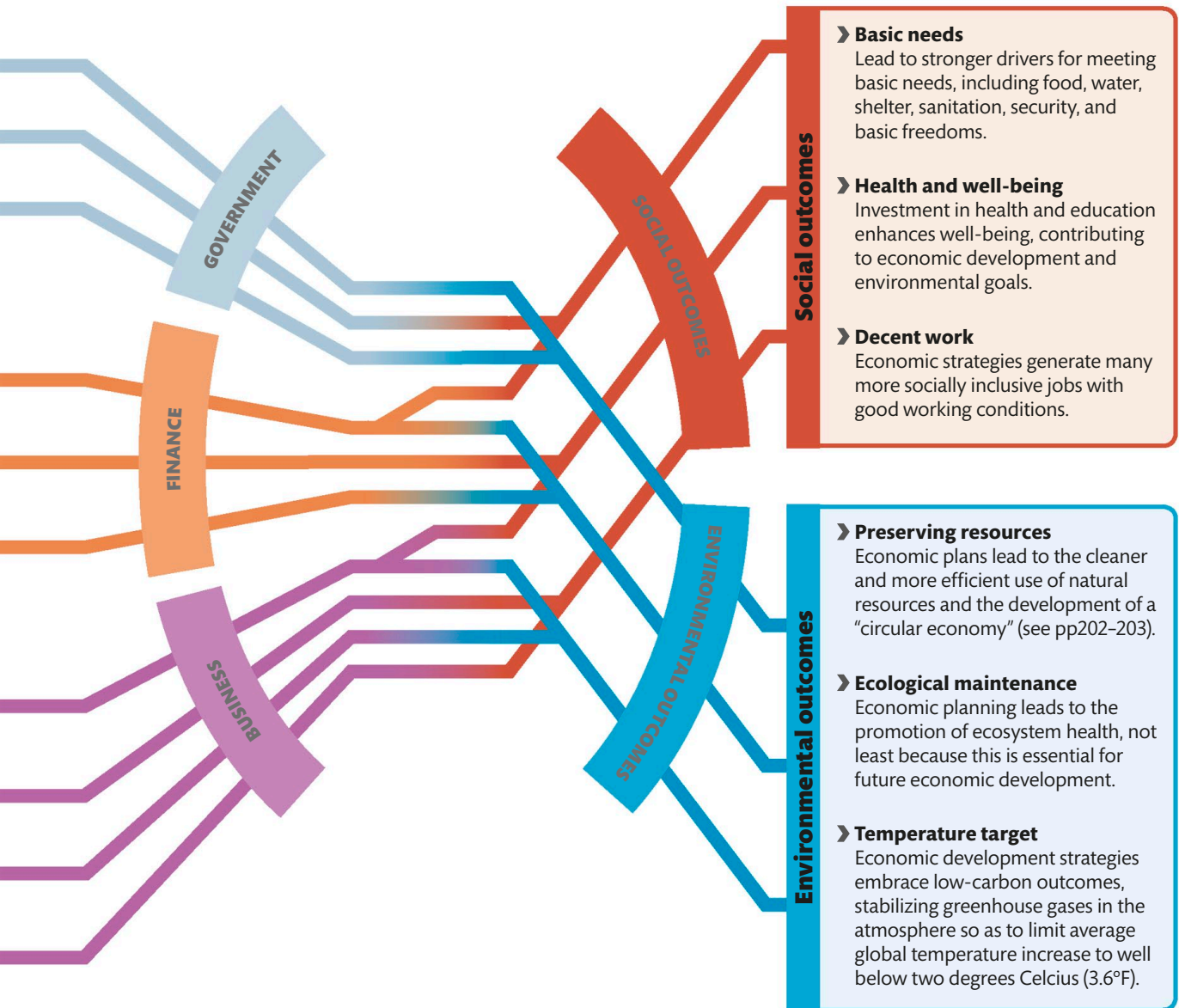
- › **Ensure that capital acts for the long term**
Extend the timeframes over which financial risks and returns are modeled, thereby reducing short-term decisions while protecting investors.
- › **Value the true costs of business activity**
Identify strategies that encourage companies to meet social and environmental goals while they pursue financial profitability.
- › **Innovate financial structures**
Make finance work for social benefit, including fighting climate change and protecting the planet’s ecosystems.

Business

- › **Set bold ambitions**
Transform company activities to embrace goals for low-carbon energy, zero deforestation, and zero waste.
- › **Broaden measurement and disclosure**
Ensure that companies report on the full range of impacts they create, including social and environmental performance.
- › **Grow capability and incentive**
Harness companies’ talent and money by, for example, linking executive bonuses with reduced carbon emissions.
- › **Harness the power of communications**
Change advertising to avoid messages that undermine social and environmental progress.

Despite the many social and environmental pressures facing our world today, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals could lay the foundations for a very positive future. This requires a change in mindset, however, and moving beyond the view that environmental protection brings unaffordable financial costs. In reality, social progress

cannot be achieved if the natural environment continues to degrade. That is why environmental damage must be minimized through the way the economy operates. There is evidence from around the world that this is beginning to happen, as policies, investment patterns, and business practices begin to change.



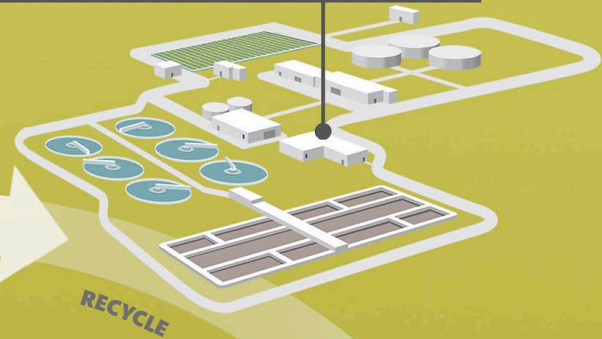


Circular Economy

Centuries of development and economic growth have been founded on a largely linear economy. This system takes resources—such as fossil fuels, metals, and nutrients—uses them, and then disposes of waste to air, water, and land. While this has sustained population growth and achieved more comfortable living standards, it has had many negative consequences, including climate change, resource depletion, pollution, and ecosystem damage. A circular economy, by contrast, reduces these impacts by treating waste as new resources. There are two illustrative examples of how a circular economy works—one biological and one material. The same basic ideas can be applied across the economy using a variety of biological nutrients and materials.

Sewage treatment plant

New technology is already fitted to some sewage works. Phosphorus is captured from waste and turned into a high-quality fertilizer.



RECYCLE

Biological cycle

Phosphorus is an essential biological nutrient. In our linear economy, we mine phosphorus from finite rock sources. It is then dispersed in the environment, causing ecosystem damage. In a circular economy, phosphorus is recycled to sustain new plant growth. This saves resources and protects the environment.



CONSUME

Consumption

Food that is eaten passes through the human digestive system. Waste is transmitted to sewage treatment works via toilets.

Starting point

Biological materials, such as phosphates, originally come from nature. If these are reused, it limits the need to extract more.



GROW/USE



Food supply and sale

Food is supplied to stores, supermarkets, and markets. Part of the cost of the produce is determined by the price of fertilizer, such as phosphorus.

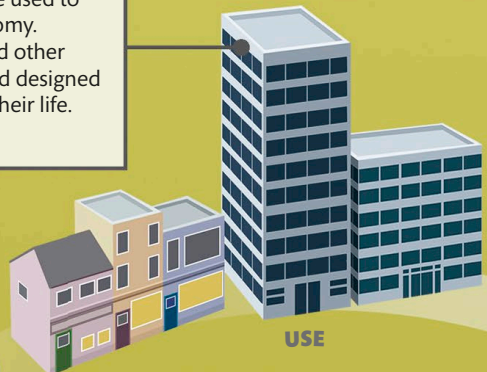
Growing crops

Phosphorus is applied to fields as fertilizer to promote plant growth and increase the crop yields needed to feed a growing population.



Main street and offices

Energy-efficient products are used to run a high-technology economy. Computers, cars, phones, and other products are made to last and designed for easy repair, lengthening their life.



Repair facilities

Manufacturers work with networks of businesses that repair, upgrade, and refurbish products. This creates a new level of service sector jobs.



Material cycle

Much of the material we use, including a wide range of plastics and metals, is used once and then disposed of. In a circular economy, this waste could be captured to supply new resources.

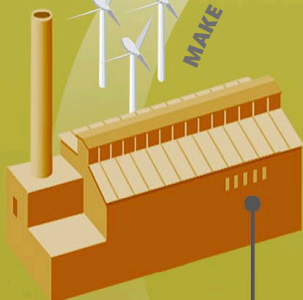
Recycling center

Specialized recycling facilities powered by renewable energy are fed with end-of-life consumer goods. Products predesigned for disassembly and recycling are easily reclaimed. There is no waste—only resources for new goods.



Starting point

Products are made in increasingly high-tech assembly plants. They are powered by renewable energy and supplied with components made from recycled materials.



Wind farm powers the factory



A New Mindset

Taking resources from nature and releasing wastes into the biosphere is causing mounting environmental pressures that threaten progress. New patterns of development are needed.

Our growing demands upon nature have caused profound changes to the systems that sustain life on Earth. These changes are now having huge economic and humanitarian impacts. A shift in approach is needed so that rising human demand is no longer met at the expense of the environment but instead embraces the restoration and protection of ecological systems. This in turn leads to the need for an approach that achieves sustainable economic development and improved social conditions while respecting ecological limits.

The safe zone

UK economist and sustainable development expert Kate Raworth proposes the idea of "doughnut economics," whereby social and ecological factors are equally respected. At the moment, one (social progress, such as better health, jobs, and education) is built on the sacrifice of the other (ecological systems). This graphic demonstrates the doughnut concept. The outer ring is the environmental "ceiling," made up of nine planetary boundaries (see pp180-181). Beyond these limits are unacceptable levels of environmental damage. The inner ring consists of 10 social factors, below which are unacceptable levels of human deprivation. Between the two rings is a doughnut-shaped space, which is both environmentally safe and socially just: the space where all of humanity can thrive.

ENVIRONMENTAL "CEILING"



FRESHWATER USE

Damage to ecosystems and wasteful water use threaten to increase water stress and undermine food security.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Global warming will increase risks of food shortages, water stress, conflict, and spread of disease.



LAND USE CHANGE

As more land is taken over for farming and urbanization, a series of essential ecosystems are being degraded.



BIODIVERSITY LOSS

All our food and many medicines are ultimately derived from wild species. Biodiversity is vital for a sustainable future.



OZONE DEPLETION

This is a serious threat to human welfare as rising levels of ultraviolet radiation increase the risk of skin cancer.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FOOD



WATER



HEALTH



SOCIAL FOUNDATION DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL EQUALITY



ENERGY



JOBS





NITROGEN AND PHOSPHORUS

Rising levels of these nutrients in the environment are damaging fish stocks (p162-163) and threatening human health.

KEY TO THE RINGS

- Environmental ceiling
- Sustainable economic development
- Social foundation development

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

Marine plankton species that replenish atmospheric oxygen could be threatened by ocean acidification (p160-161), caused by increased carbon dioxide.



CHEMICAL POLLUTION

Toxic materials affect natural diversity, including beneficial wildlife, such as pollinators that underpin a secure food supply (p74-75).



ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

Dust, smoke, and haze have increased in the air because of human activities, and these pose a serious threat to people's health.



INCOME

EDUCATION

HAVING A VOICE

RESILIENCE

PLANETARY STRESS

Oxfam estimates that one-tenth of the population is most responsible for factors that result in planetary stress, such as greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. It is their consumption, and the production methods of the companies producing the goods and services these wealthiest people buy, that drives most of the environmental damage threatening human security.

EMISSIONS

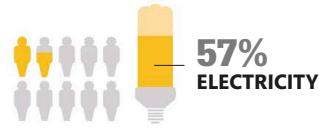
Half of the world's carbon dioxide emissions are generated by 11 percent of the world's population.

WORLD POPULATION



ENERGY

High-income countries are home to 16 percent of the world's population but use 57 percent of all electricity.



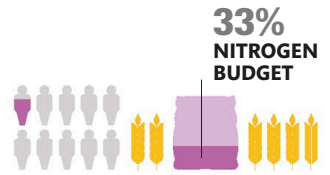
PURCHASING POWER

The same 16 percent of the global population also account for 64 percent of all spending on consumer goods.



NITROGEN (FOOD)

The EU has 7 percent of the world's population but uses 33 percent of the planet's sustainable nitrogen budget to grow and import animal feed.



What can we do?

- **Governments** across the world must adopt the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals at the heart of their economic strategies.
- **Companies** must align their plans with long-term sustainability, protecting social and ecological values.

What can I do?

- **Elect politicians** who are supporters of "doughnut economics."
- **Buy from firms** building "doughnut economics" into their business strategies.
- **Support campaigns** promoting human welfare within planetary limits.



Restoring the Future

If we are to lay the foundations for a secure future, then the centuries of environmental degradation must be halted and reversed. This is both an economically rational and an achievable priority.

Our approach to development and economic growth so far has assumed that the sacrifice of environmental ecosystems and the pollution of air and water are inevitable prices of progress. While this growth has brought comfort, convenience, and security to billions of people around the world, we are in a period of diminishing returns. The damage caused by climate change, air and water pollution, depletion of resources, and ecosystem deterioration threatens to exceed all the benefits of growth. But it is still possible to restore environmental health through sustainable development.

Restoration in progress

Continuing environmental degradation is not inevitable, and it can be reversed if we decide to build on positive examples from around the world that already demonstrate what is possible. From Brazil to Denmark, and from Uruguay to Bhutan, there are hundreds of inspirational examples of what can be done across a range of sectors, including farming, transportation, conservation, infrastructure, and energy supply. Governments, international agencies, businesses, and individual citizens all need to play their part in the sustainability transformation necessary in the 21st century.

Present



Natural environment

The protection of nature is a sound economic investment, but failing to see this is causing ecosystem degradation and mass extinction of animals and plants.



Agriculture

Climate change, water scarcity, damaged soils, and the decline of beneficial animals, such as bees, are all major threats to future food security.



Infrastructure

Current approaches toward the expansion and development of built-up spaces "lock in" wasteful, high-carbon, and resource-intensive patterns of living.



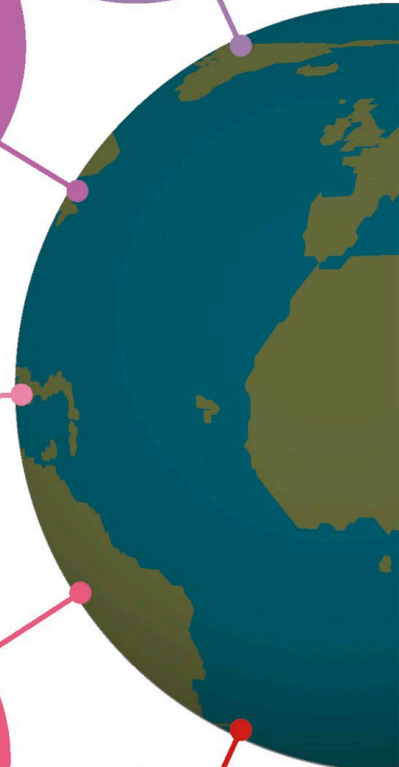
Transportation

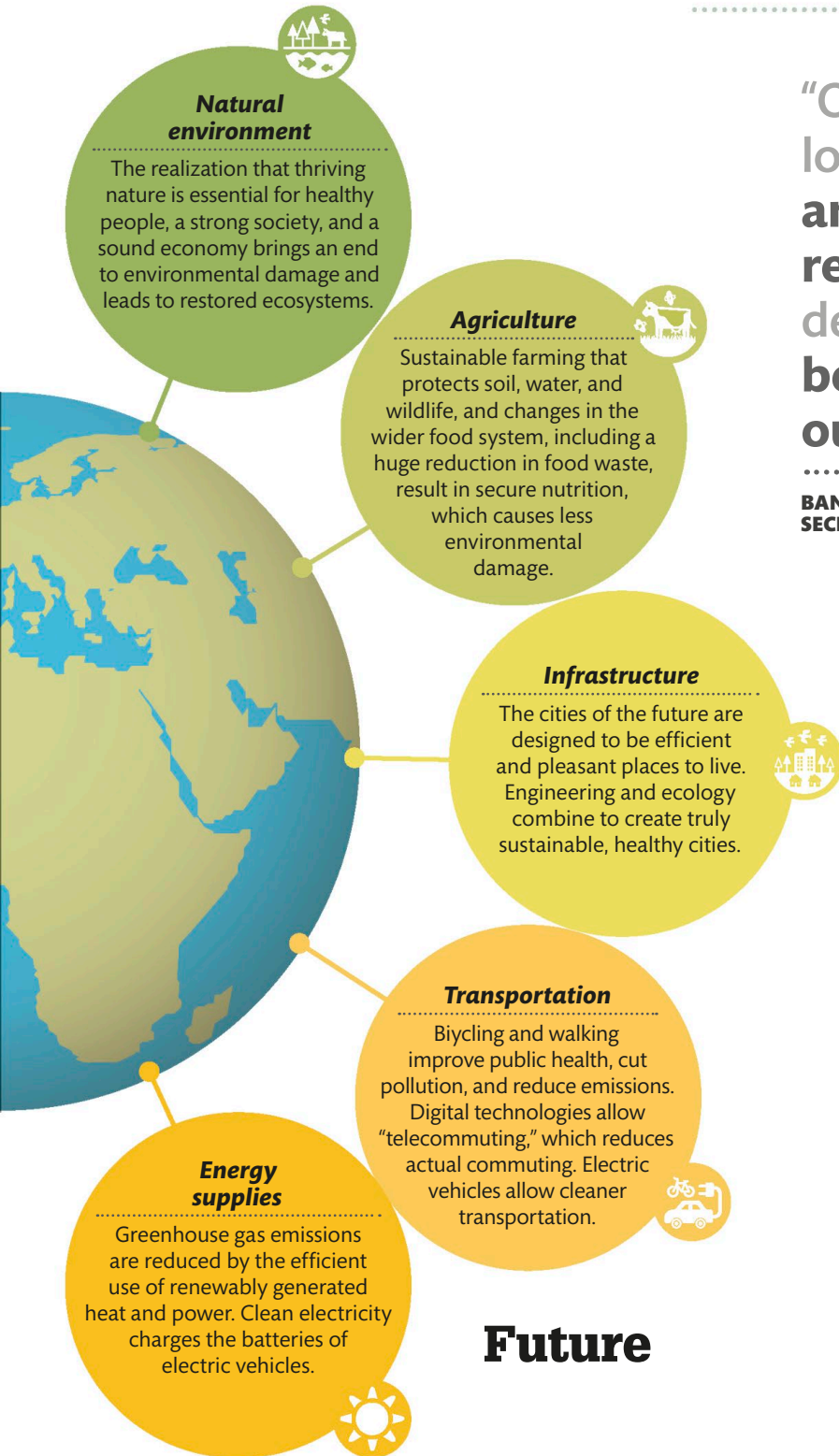
Air pollution, congestion, and climate change are among the expensive consequences of our transportation system. Commuting wastes time and causes stress, while clogging up city streets.



Energy supplies

High-carbon emissions and dangerous air pollution cause widespread damage. Wasteful energy consumption increases the negative impact on the environment.





Future

"Ours is a world of looming **challenges** and ... **limited resources**. Sustainable development offers the **best chance to change our course.**"

.....
BAN KI-MOON, FORMER UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

What can we do?

- ▶ **Investors can adopt strategies** that direct finance toward positive solutions, such as renewable energy and sustainable farming.
- ▶ **Governments can introduce incentives** to adopt clean technology, including subsidies to encourage the protection and restoration of ecosystems.

What can I do?

- ▶ **Choose products and services** from companies offering solutions for sustainability challenges. This rewards market leaders and puts pressure on those companies that lag behind.
- ▶ **Urge your bank** and pension fund to lend and invest only in enterprises that back a secure and sustainable future.

Glossary

UNITS

MTOE—million tons of oil equivalent

The amount of energy released by burning one million tons of oil; used as a measure of energy production or consumption.

MWh—megawatt hour

A measure of electrical energy use. 1 megawatt is 1 million watts; 1 MWh is the power of 1 million watts used or produced constantly for 1 hour.

TWh—terawatt hour

A measure of electrical energy use. 1 terawatt is 1 trillion watts; 1 TWh is the power of 1 trillion watts used or produced continuously for 1 hour. See also MWh.

BTU—British thermal unit

The amount of heat required to raise the temperature of 1 lb of water by 1°F at sea level. Used to measure the heat output of heating and cooling systems and machines.

DU—Dobson unit A unit used for measuring the concentration of trace gases, notably ozone, in the atmosphere.

gigatons (billions of tons) of CO₂

A unit of measurement used for carbon dioxide or carbon emissions. A similar unit, GtCO₂-eq (gigatons of CO₂ equivalent), may be used to measure other greenhouse gases in the “common currency” of the warming caused by carbon dioxide. To convert carbon dioxide to carbon, divide by 3.67. For example, 1Gt of CO₂ is equivalent to 272 million tons of carbon.

Ej—Exajoule

A unit of energy equivalent to 1 billion gigajoules. (A gigajoule is 1 billion joules.)

ng (nanogram) One billionth of a gram.

GENERAL

acid rain Rain, sleet, or snow contaminated with air pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Acid rain pollutes soil and water and damages buildings.

acidification A process by which oceans, lakes, or rivers gradually become more acid. Acidification of oceans is largely due to increased uptake of CO₂ from the air. In lakes and rivers, it may be due to acid rain entering the water.

algal bloom Rapid growth of algae in a lake or ocean, often due to an excess of nutrients such as nitrogen or phosphorus. Algae can block out sunlight and use up oxygen. Some algal blooms produce toxins harmful to animals or humans.

atmosphere The layer of gases surrounding the Earth (or any other planet). Earth’s atmosphere consists mainly of nitrogen (78%) and oxygen (21%).

biodegradable A term used for materials that can be broken down naturally by microorganisms into constituent molecules or elements.

biodiversity Variety in living things. Species biodiversity is the variety of species in an environment. Genetic biodiversity is the variation in genes within one species.

Ecological diversity is the range of ecosystems and habitats.

bioenergy Renewable energy extracted from biological materials such as wood, straw, manure, and sewage.

biofuels Generally used to describe liquid fuels derived from plants and other organic material, such as food waste, providing alternatives to gasoline, diesel, and kerosene. Biogas is an alternative to fossil gas, also made from organic material, such as animal waste or food waste.

biogeochemical flow The circulation of a chemical substance, such as carbon or nitrogen, through the atmosphere, soil, biosphere (plants and animals), and water.

biomagnification The process by which a chemical (such as a pesticide) becomes more concentrated as it passes through a food web, for example as filter-feeding organisms are eaten by bigger creatures and finally top carnivores.

biomass The mass of living organisms (plants, animals, and microorganisms) in a given ecosystem or community.

biome An area of land surface, freshwater, or ocean characterized by particular types of vegetation, as well as by physical features such as climate or water depth.

biomimicry Imitation of natural structures and processes to help meet challenges in the human world.

bioproductivity The rate of production of biomass from a specific ecosystem over a given time period.

biosphere The zone of the Earth containing all living organisms; comprises the Earth's surface, oceans, and the lowest layer of the atmosphere.

carbon A common chemical element (symbol: C) that binds with other elements such as hydrogen (H) and oxygen (O) to form compounds such as carbon dioxide. Carbon is found in all living organisms.

carbon capture and storage (CCS) A process in which carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels is captured before it reaches the atmosphere, then deposited deep inside rocks.

carbon dioxide A gas with molecules formed from one carbon atom and two oxygen atoms (formula: CO₂); produced by respiration from living organisms, fermentation of dead matter, and combustion (fires, or burning of biofuels or fossil fuels).

carbon intensity A measure of greenhouse gas emissions calculated as the mass of carbon emitted per unit of energy consumed. One example is grams of carbon dioxide-equivalent gases per megajoule of energy (gCO₂e/MJ). Carbon intensity can also be calculated in relation to emissions per unit of GDP. In this case, the concept can also embrace emissions from deforestation as well as energy.

carbon pricing A tax or market price levied on emissions of carbon dioxide to incentivize changed behavior, such as more efficient energy use or the expansion of renewable energy.

carbon sink An ecological system that absorbs and stores carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Oceans and forests are the Earth's two main carbon sinks.

carrying capacity The maximum population size of a species that an ecosystem or habitat can support indefinitely.

chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) Chemical compounds formed from chlorine, fluorine, and carbon. CFCs were widely used in refrigeration, as propellants for aerosols, and as solvents, but it was found that they damaged the ozone layer so their use is now restricted.

climate The average atmospheric conditions in an area over a long period of time. It is influenced by the latitude and elevation of an area, plus factors such as average temperatures and rainfall.

CO₂ emissions Release of carbon dioxide by natural means (as in forest fires and volcanic eruptions) or artificial means (such as burning of fossil fuels).

consumption (economic) The purchase and use of goods and services by individuals or households.

convection The transfer of heat through movement of a fluid (such as air or water). For example, in convection cells in the atmosphere (see pp128–29), warmer air expands and rises, while cooler air sinks, creating air currents.

dead zone An area of a lake or ocean where the water is so low in oxygen that many animals cannot survive there. Dead zones can result from *algal blooms* caused by water pollution.

deforestation Destruction and/or removal of trees from an area of forest, to leave open land. Major causes include logging or clearance of forest for ranches or plantations of crops. Deforestation can lead to soil erosion and loss of *biodiversity*.

desalination Removal of salt and other minerals from water to make the water suitable for drinking or irrigation.

desertification The spread of desert conditions to areas that were previously covered with vegetation; caused by factors that include reduced rainfall and overgrazing by domesticated animals

developed country A country with a relatively stable industrial or postindustrial economy, established political security, advanced level of technology, and generally high standard of living compared to other nations.

developing country A country with a weak infrastructure and insufficient public services, and in which the majority of people have relatively low income, lower life expectancy, and limited access to comprehensive modern health care and education.

dieback In trees and shrubs, the progressive death of twigs, then branches, then the whole plant. Possible causes include infection, pest infestation, drought, and pollution.

dioxin A group of persistent chemicals that may be emitted via industries such as paper bleaching and processes such as waste incineration. These chemicals are toxic and can pose risks to animal and human health through bioaccumulation in food chains.

DUs—Dobson units See *Units*

E7 countries A group of seven powerful countries with emerging market economies: China, India, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Turkey, and Indonesia. The E7 now accounts for around 30 percent of world *GDP*.

ecology The science that deals with interrelationships between organisms and each other and their nonliving environment, including air, water, and geology.

ecosystem A self-sustaining community of living things interacting with each other and with the air, water, and soil of their environment.

El Niño A large-scale climate disturbance occurring about every 3–7 years in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, in which warming of ocean surface currents gives rise to changes in prevailing weather patterns around the world, but especially along the coasts of North and South America and north of Australia. See also *La Niña*.

emerging market A national economy that is growing, developing, and industrializing rapidly from a relatively low income and economic base compared to the already developed nations. Many of these countries are becoming increasingly powerful in industry, trade, and technology.

emissions Discharges of gases, liquid vapors, and tiny particles into the atmosphere; usually refers to discharges from human sources such as vehicles, power stations, and deforestation.

energy storage The collection and storage of electrical or mechanical energy for use at a later time, either on a small scale (as in a rechargeable battery) or a large scale (as with a reservoir for a hydroelectric plant).

erosion A process in which soil or rock is broken down and carried away by wind, flowing water, or ice. Erosion processes may be mechanical (in which rock or soil is physically worn away) or chemical (in which the rock or soil is dissolved in water).

eutrophication Ecological change resulting from the rising concentration of nutrients, such as nitrates and phosphates, in an ecosystem such as a body of water. Eutrophication can give rise to *algal blooms* and *dead zones*.

evaporation The process in which molecules from the surface of a liquid change to a vapor, usually due to increased temperature, as when water evaporates from a sea or lake on a warm day.

extinction The disappearance of a species, subspecies, or group of organisms marked by the the death of the last individual.

flood plain A flat area of land beside a river that naturally floods whenever the water level rises above the level of the river banks.

food chain or food web A hierarchy (chain) or network (web) of organisms in which those at one level eat others; for example, a bird of prey species may eat insect-eating birds, which in turn eat insects, which in turn eat plants.

food miles/food kilometers The distance that food has traveled from the place where it was produced to reach the consumers. Longer distances involve higher fuel use, so cutting food miles/km can help reduce emissions from transportation.

food security The state that exists when people have access to, and can afford, enough nutritious food to maintain a healthy life.

fossil fuel A fuel produced from the remains of plants and animals that died tens or hundreds of millions of years ago, such as coal, oil, or *natural gas*. These fuels contain *carbon* captured from the *atmosphere*, so when they are burned they release *carbon dioxide* into the atmosphere.

fracking (hydraulic fracturing) Injection of a high-pressure mix of water, sand, and chemicals into oil- or gas-bearing rock to create cracks (fracturing) and release the oil or gas. Fracking can lead to contamination of groundwater and may even trigger small earthquakes.

G7 countries A group of seven major industrialized countries—the US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan—whose leaders and finance ministers meet annually to discuss global economic policy and international security.

GDP per capita A measure of economic performance; it is calculated by dividing a country's *GDP* by the number of people in the population.

GDP—Gross Domestic Product The monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced in a country over a specific time (usually a year). See also *Real GDP*.

geothermal energy Energy derived from heat generated naturally within the Earth, for example obtained from hot springs in areas of volcanic activity.

global warming The increase in the average temperature of the *atmosphere* and/or oceans, that in turn affects the extent of ice on earth, sea levels, and *weather*, including rainfall. Human activities have recently played a fundamental role in raising global temperatures.

green revolution A set of advances in crop cultivation, starting in the 1940s, that vastly increased food supplies, especially in developing countries.

greenhouse effect The process by which the Earth's atmosphere traps more energy from the Sun, thus warming the atmosphere and oceans.

greenhouse gas A gas that traps heat in the *atmosphere*. The main gas is *carbon dioxide*; other major gases are *methane* and *nitrous oxide*. Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities such as burning fuels contribute to *global warming*.

groundwater Water held within the spaces in soil and rock, notably in water-saturated rocks called aquifers.

gyre A large system of ocean currents rotating in a spiral.

Haber-Bosch process A synthetic process in which nitrogen from the air is combined with hydrogen to form ammonia. Mainly used to manufacture fertilizer.

habitat An *ecosystem* such as woodland or grassland that supports characteristic communities of animals and plants.

HANPP—Human appropriation of net *primary production* A measure of human use of the Earth's photosynthetic productivity. Net primary production is the net amount of solar energy converted to plant matter. HANPP is seen in, for example, the use of net primary production as food, wood, paper, and plant fibers.

hydro energy Energy obtained from falling or flowing water; for example, in hydroelectric power, where water is used to turn a turbine and generate electricity.

hydropower Electrical energy obtained from falling or flowing water; for example as produced by turbines in a hydroelectric dam.

ice sheet A mass of glacial land ice covering more than 20,000 sq miles (50,000 sq km). Earth's two main ice sheets lie over Greenland and Antarctica.

infrared A form of electromagnetic energy whose waves are just longer than those of visible light. Some of the Sun's energy, and some of the heat from Earth's surface, is in the form of infrared radiation.

inundation The overflow of water to cover normally dry land, as when a river floods or a storm surge occurs on a coast.

invasive alien species A species that is not native to a particular ecosystem and causes harm when introduced to that system.

invertebrate An animal with no backbone. Such animals include insects, mollusks, crustaceans, and worms.

IUCN red list The register of animals, plants, and fungal species across the world that are deemed to be at some risk of extinction.

La Niña A large-scale change in temperature occurring about every 3–7 years in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, during which the ocean surface is cooler than normal, causing disruption to weather, especially in the Americas, Australia, and Southeast Asia. Counterpart of *El Niño*.

Latin America The countries of Central and South America, primarily those where the populations mainly speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French.

least developed country (LDC) A country with very low per capita incomes; LDCs are the poorest of the *developing countries*.

literacy The ability to read and write. Literacy, especially for women and children, is a key indicator of economic and social development in a country.

malnourishment Having a diet that does not contain the right balance of nutrients: for example, too little vitamin C or too little protein. See also *Undernourishment*.

megacity A city and its surrounding area that has more than 10 million people, such as Tokyo, New York, or São Paulo.

methane A colorless, highly flammable, gaseous hydrocarbon. Methane is the main component of natural gas and a very powerful *greenhouse gas*. Globally, more than 60 percent of human-induced emissions arise from industry, agriculture, and landfills.

millennium development goals A set of eight development goals (including one relating to the environment) set out by the United Nations (UN) in 2000, to be achieved by 2015. Now superseded by the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

monoculture The agricultural practice of producing a single crop, plant, or livestock species, variety, or breed in a field or farming system at a time.

monsoon A seasonal change in weather, often associated with the Indian subcontinent, in which changes of wind direction and air pressure cause strong sea breezes bringing torrential summer rains.

MTOE—Million tons of oil equivalent (See *Units*).

multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) A legally binding agreement between three or more states relating to environmental issues. There are currently more than 250 MEAs in force.

MWh—Megawatt hour (See *Units*).

natural gas A fossil fuel comprised mainly of *methane*. Extracted from rocks, it is often associated with oil deposits. It is extracted by drilling or *fracking*.

nitrous oxide A pollutant and greenhouse gas. The atmosphere naturally holds a tiny amount of nitrous oxide, but levels have markedly increased due to human activity.

nuclear power Splitting of atoms of certain elements (nuclear fission) to release energy, which is used to generate electricity. Nuclear power produces low *carbon dioxide* emissions, but the waste is highly toxic for many years.

nutrient cycle The circulation of biological and chemical matter, such as carbon or nitrogen, between the physical environment and living organisms and back again in a particular *ecosystem*.

OECD countries Countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a body set up by the most developed countries in 1968 to promote economic development and social progress. There are 34 OECD countries.

organic farming A method of agriculture in which farmers avoid the use of manufactured pesticides and fertilizers, instead relying on more natural processes to maintain soil fertility, including animal manure and nitrogen-fixing plants.

ozone A colorless gas that can be harmful to plants and animals in the air we breathe, but in the upper atmosphere it protects the Earth from the Sun's ultraviolet radiation. Ozone concentration is measured using *Dobson units*.

ozone layer A layer of the atmosphere, 12–31 miles (20–50 km) from the Earth's surface, that contains relatively high concentrations of ozone. Thinning of the ozone layer can expose organisms (including humans) to dangerous levels of ultraviolet radiation.

permafrost Soil or rock that has remained continuously frozen for more than 2 years. In some areas, such as Alaska and Siberia, permafrost has existed for thousands of years.

persistent organic pollutants (POPs) Chemical compounds that resist being broken down and remain in the environment for a long time. Some POPs, such as DDT, are harmful to wildlife and human health.

petrochemicals Chemical compounds derived from petroleum or *natural gas*. They are used in thousands of products, such as solvents, detergents, plastics, and synthetic fibers.

photochemical smog A form of air pollution that occurs when sunlight reacts with nitrogen oxide and *volatile organic compounds*, making the air foggy or hazy. The smog can contain *ozone* and be harmful to breathe.

photosynthesis The process by which plants and some microorganisms use the energy from sunlight to convert *carbon dioxide* and water into glucose, releasing oxygen as a waste product.

photovoltaic system A technology in which photovoltaic cells or panels convert sunlight into electricity. PV systems produce clean and renewable power.

phytoplankton Tiny forms of *plankton* that live in the sunlit upper layers of oceans and lakes and use *photosynthesis* to take in *carbon dioxide* and release oxygen, thus playing a vital part in the carbon cycle.

plankton Small organisms, ranging from single-celled algae and bacteria to jellyfish, that spend part or all of their lives drifting in seas or lakes. Plankton plays vital roles in aquatic food chains. See *phytoplankton* and *zooplankton*.

polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) A group of manmade chemicals that were widely used in the past in products such as electrical equipment, adhesives, and paints. PCBs are *persistent organic pollutants (POPs)* that can damage health, and are now banned in many countries.

preindustrial world The world as it was before 1750, when the Industrial Revolution began. Humans lived mainly by agriculture or small-scale industries. Pressures on the environment were much lower than they are today.

primary production The rate of conversion of solar energy into new plant *biomass* by means of *photosynthesis*.

pteropods A group of free-swimming marine snails. Pteropods have been recognized as victims of ocean *acidification*, which causes thinning of their shells.

rain forest A dense forest in a tropical or temperate area with high annual rainfall. Many rain forests are notable for their *biodiversity* and are major oxygen producers and *carbon sinks*.

real GDP A measure of the value of all goods and services produced in a given year, adjusted for inflation.

recycling The conversion of domestic, agricultural, or industrial waste products into new usable materials. Recycling helps save energy and reduce pollution.

renewable energy A term for an energy source (for power, heat, or transportation) that can be constantly replenished instead of being progressively depleted. Examples include solar, wind, and hydropower.

savanna woodland A form of tropical vegetation consisting mainly of open grassland together with scattered trees and bushes.

seabed The floor of a sea or ocean.

sulfur dioxide An air pollutant primarily emitted by burning *fossil fuels* such as coal. Sulfur dioxide can mix with water vapor to form *acid rain*; it is also a health hazard to animals and humans.

sustainability The term to describe the circumstances in which a human activity can continue indefinitely into the future, for example in relation to farming, energy generation, waste management, forestry, or materials consumption.

TWh—Terawatt hour (See *Units*).

turnover The total amount that an organization earns, before taxes and other

costs, from selling goods or services during a specific time period.

ultraviolet light A form of electromagnetic energy whose waves are just shorter than those of visible light. Some of the Sun's energy is in the form of ultraviolet (UV-A and UV-B) radiation, most of which is blocked by the Earth's *atmosphere* before it reaches the surface.

undernourishment A consequence of consuming too few essential nutrients or using or excreting them more rapidly than they can be replaced. See also *Malnourishment*.

urbanization The process by which large numbers of people come together to live and work in relatively small areas, forming towns and cities.

urban density A measure of the intensity of human land use in an urbanized area, such as the number of people or the total floor area of buildings per sq mile/km².

UV radiation See Ultraviolet light.

vertebrate An animal with a backbone and an internal skeleton. Vertebrates include fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

volatile organic compounds (VOCs) Carbon-based chemical compounds that evaporate readily. Found in manmade substances such as fuels, pesticides, and solvents, VOCs are air pollutants that can cause *photochemical smog*.

water table In soil or rock below the ground surface, the level below which the rock is saturated with *groundwater*.

weather The day-to-day atmospheric conditions in a particular place; aspects include air temperature and pressure, hours of sunshine, cloud cover, humidity, and rainfall or snowfall.

weathering The breakdown of rock in situ (in a specific place) at the ground surface, by wind, water, temperature changes, or chemical reactions. See also *Erosion*.

zooplankton Animals that live part or all of their life as *plankton*. They include amoebae, the larvae and juveniles of fish, and the larvae of mollusks, crustaceans, and jellyfish. Zooplankton feed on *phytoplankton* and in turn are a vital food source for larger animals.

Index

Page numbers in **bold** indicate main references

A

acid rain **146-7**
acidification, oceans **160-61**, 183, 205
aerosols, in atmosphere 183
Afghanistan 22, 115, 116, 117
Africa
cell phones 98
deforestation 150
energy use 49
hunger 72
land acquisition 154-5
land use 64-5
literacy 107
megacities 40
mortality rates 108
population growth 17, 18, 19
renewable energy 53
seasonal changes 127
soil erosion 75
terrorism 114
urbanization 39
aging population **20-21**
agriculture
changes in land use **148-9**
circular economy 202
and desertification 152-3
fertilizers **66-7**
food security **74-5**
food waste **70-71**
grain production **62-3**, 65
the Great Acceleration 178
land use **64-5**
pesticides **68-9**, 92-3
planetary boundaries 182, 183
pollination 173, **174-5**
restoring the future 206-7
seasonal changes 127
and urbanization 38
and wildlife extinction 167
aid, international 34
air see atmosphere

air travel **100-101**
algae 163
animals
livestock farming 64, 174
see also wildlife
Antarctica
ice sheets 78, 124, 125
ozone layer 122, 123
Anthropocene era **178-9**
aquaculture **158-9**
Arctic 125, 134
Argentina 82
Asia
air travel 101
cell phones 98
deforestation 150
desertification 152
energy use 49
hunger 73
land acquisition 154
land use 64-5
population 17, 18
renewable energy 53
soil erosion 75
terrorism 114
urbanization 39
water use 77
Atlantic Forest 168
Atlantic Ocean 165
atmosphere **118-19**
acid rain **146-7**
aerosols in 183
air pollution **144-5**
carbon cycle **140-41**
carbon dioxide levels **118-19**
the Great Acceleration 178
greenhouse effect **120-21**
how climate patterns work 128-9
nitrous oxide in 67
ozone layer 67, **122-3**, 183, 204
pollution 44, 45, 48, **144-5**, 205
successful policies 188
weather extremes 130
see also climate change
Australia
biodiversity hotspots 169
desertification 152

population 23
seasonal changes 127
waste 89
water footprint 83

B

bacteria 122
Bangladesh 103, 124, 125
banks, financial crisis 37
Basel agreement 186
bees 174, 175
beetles 170
Beijing 41, 145
billionaires 111
biodiversity **168-9**, 186, 188, 204
biofuels 46, 52, 61
biomagnification, chemicals **92-3**
biomass 45, 61, 149
biomimicry 168, 195
birds 127, 159
birth rates 18, **22-3**
Bolivia 23, 72
Borneo 169
Botswana 23, 110
Brazil
biodiversity hotspots 168
car ownership 87
carbon emissions 142
economy 33
megacities 41
population 18
renewable energy 56, 199
sanitation 105
waste 89
water footprint 82, 83
water scarcity 78
wealth 29
bribery 112-13
Britain see United Kingdom
Burundi 19
bushfires 127
butterflies 174

C

Cairo 41
Cameroon 104
Canada 32, 35, 78, 82, 142

Cape Floristic region 169
carbon dioxide
acidification of oceans **160-61**
carbon budgets **132-3**, **136-7**
carbon capture 60, 133, 136, 173
carbon crossroads **138-9**
carbon cycle **140-41**
carbon footprints **50-51**
carbon-pricing 53
carbon taxes 133
future targets **142-3**
and greenhouse effect 121, 124
levels in atmosphere **118-19**
low carbon growth **196-7**
in permafrost 134
planetary stress 205
carbon monoxide 144
Caribbean 99, 168
cars **87**, 133, 144-5
Caucasus 169
cell phones **98-9**
Central African Republic 72, 107
Central America 48, 74
CFCs (chlorinated fluorocarbons) 123
Chad 22, 72
Chad, Lake 152
chemicals
biomagnification **92-3**
pollution 205
successful policies 189
children
death rates 109, 189
education 189
family size **22-3**
population age profile 21
China
air travel 101
car ownership 87
carbon emissions 137, 143
coal burning **45**
desertification 152
economy 33, 37
hunger 73
inequality 110
land acquisition 155
megacities 41

- China (continued)
- one-child policy 22, 23
 - population 17, 19, 23
 - poverty 103
 - renewable energy 53, 56, 199
 - trade 35
 - waste 89
 - water 78, 83
 - wealth 29, 111
- circular economy **202-3**
- CITES 186
- cities
- density **42**
 - ecological footprints **42-3**
 - economic value of environment 177
 - megacities **40-41**
 - richest 32
 - urbanization **38-9**
- climate change
- carbon budgets **132-3, 136-7**
 - carbon crossroads **138-9**
 - doughnut economics 204
 - effects of **118-19**
 - feedback loops **134-5**
 - future targets **142-3**
 - greenhouse effect **120-21**
 - the Great Acceleration 178-9
 - how climate patterns work **128-9**
 - low carbon growth **196-7**
 - planetary boundaries 182
 - seasonal changes **126-7**
 - temperatures **124-5, 132-3, 136-7**
 - threats to pollinators 175
 - weather extremes **130-31**
- clouds 80, 81, 134
- coal 60
- acid rain 146
 - air pollution 144
 - and carbon dioxide levels 118
 - electricity generation 44, **45, 46**
 - reducing use 136-7
- coasts 124, 177
- Colombia 104
- communications **96-9**
- composting 91
- computers 96, 195, 203
- concentrated solar power (CSP) 54
- conflict 131
- Congo 72, 104
- Congo, Democratic Republic of 23, 107, 155
- consumerism **86-7**
- waste disposal **90-91**
- contraception 22
- coral reefs 139, 161
- corruption **112-13**
- currents, ocean 128
- cyanobacteria 122
- cyclones 130-31
- D**
- dairy products **63, 64, 71, 139**
- DDT 92-3
- death
- air pollution 144-5
 - child mortality 189
 - and extreme weather events 131
 - healthier world **108-9**
 - life expectancy 20
 - terrorism **114-15**
- debt **36-7**
- deforestation 133, 140, **150-51, 168-9**
- degraded land 43
- Delhi 41, 145
- Denmark 111
- desertification **152-3**
- deserts, solar power 55
- developed countries
- population 18
 - trade 35
 - wealth inequality **110-11**
- developing countries
- clean technology 198
 - debt 37
 - emerging economies 32
 - energy use 48-9
 - population growth 18
 - trade 34
 - urbanization 38
 - wealth inequality **110-11**
- development goals 189, **192-3**
- diesel 52, 144
- diseases
- air pollution and 144-5
 - death rates 20
 - epidemics 17
 - immunizations 16, 17
 - natural systems 173
 - and sanitation 105
- displaced people **116-17**
- doughnut economics 204-5
- drought 75, 77, 78, 127, 130-31
- drugs 113, 159
- E**
- E7 (Emerging 7) 32
- ecological footprints, cities **42-3**
- economics
- and carbon dioxide levels 119
 - circular economy **202-3**
 - clean technology **198-9**
 - consumerism **86-7**
 - corruption **112-13**
 - debt **36-7**
 - and demand for energy **46-7, 48-9**
 - doughnut economics 204-5
 - economic expansion **24-5**
 - financial crisis (2008) 37
 - fishing industry 156
 - G7 countries **32-3**
 - innovation 194-5
 - Internet and 97
 - low carbon growth **196-7**
 - multinational corporations **30-31**
 - natural resources 85
 - poverty **102-3**
 - sustainable economy **200-201**
 - trade **34-5**
 - value of nature **176-7**
 - wealth inequality **110-11**
 - and weather extremes 130
 - see also gross domestic product (GDP)
- ecosystems
- and climate change 139
 - damage to 148
- ecosystem services **172-3**
- invasive species **170-71**
 - planetary boundaries 182
 - value of **176-7**
- education 22, **106-7, 189**
- Egypt 155
- El Salvador 23
- electricity 44, 46
- carbon footprints **50-51**
 - disparities in world energy use 48-9
 - electric vehicles 145
 - innovation 195
 - reducing emissions 133
 - renewable energy **52-3, 133**
 - solar power **54-5**
 - tidal power **58-9**
 - wave energy **58-9**
 - wind power **56-7**
- electronic goods 45, 89
- emigration see migration
- emissions see carbon dioxide
- employment 20
- energy
- carbon budgets **132-3, 136-7**
 - carbon crossroads **138-9**
 - carbon footprints **50-51**
 - carbon-pricing 53
 - circular economy 203
 - clean technology **198-9**
 - consumption in cities 43
 - disparities in world energy use **48-9**
 - and economic growth **46-7**
 - energy conundrum **60-61**
 - fuel efficiency 61
 - greenhouse effect **120-21**
 - innovation 194-5
 - interconnected pressures 184-5
 - planetary stress 205
 - restoring the future 206-7
 - sources of **44-5**
 - see also renewable energy
- Eritrea 117
- erosion, soil **74-5**
- Ethiopia 72, 155
- Europe
- car ownership 87
 - carbon emissions 143

Europe (continued)
 cell phones 99
 deforestation 150
 energy use 48
 land use 64–5
 population 18
 renewable energy 53
 soil erosion 75
 urbanization 39
 water footprint 83
 eutrophication 162
 extinction, wildlife **166–7**, 183

F

family size **22–3**
 farming see agriculture
 feedback loops **134–5**
 fertilizers 70, 162, 183, 202
 finance see economics
 fires, bushfires 127
 fish
 acidification of oceans 160
 fish farming **158–9**
 food waste 71
 food webs 172
 invasive species 171
 pesticides and 93
 sea changes **156–7**
 water pollution 162–3
 floods 124, 127, 130–31, 153
 food
 circular economy 202
 and climate change 139
 consumption in cities 43
 cost of 73
 fish farming **158–9**
 food security **74–5**
 food waste **70–71**
 grain production **62–3**, 65
 hunger **72–3**
 meat and dairy products **63**,
 64
 rising prices 184
 shortages 131
 see also agriculture
 forests
 acid rain 147
 and air pollution 145
 biodiversity hotspots 168–9

deforestation 133, 140,
150–51, 168–9
 economic value 177
 forest fires 127
 illegal logging 113
 rain forests 134
 water cycle 81
 fossil fuels 44–5
 carbon budgets **136–7**
 carbon capture 133, 136
 carbon cycle 141
 carbon-pricing 53
 growth in demand for 46–7
 subsidies 133
 France 32, 56, 89
 fuels see energy

G

G7 countries **32–3**
 The Gambia 19
 gas 44, 46, 52, 60, 136–7
 gasoline 52, 144
 genetic diversity 183
 Germany
 economy 32
 land acquisition 155
 population 23
 renewable energy 56, 199
 trade 35
 waste 89
 Gini coefficient 110, **111**
 glaciers 79, 80, 124, 125
 global warming see climate
 change
 globalization **96–7**
 government debt **36–7**
 grain production **62–3**, 65, 70, 71
 grasslands 177
 Great Acceleration **178–9**
 Greece 36
 Green Revolution 62, 66, 77
 greenhouse gases 45, 118,
 119
 food waste 70
 greenhouse effect **120–21**
 nitrous oxide 67
 and ozone layer 123
 permafrost melt 134
 seabed methane release 134

Greenland 78
 gross domestic product (GDP)
26–7, 30–31
 and carbon emissions 196
 economic expansion 24, 25
 value of nature 176–7
 wealth inequality 28–9,
110–11
 Guatemala 72
 gyres, in oceans 164–5

H

habitats see ecosystems, forests,
 oceans etc
 Haiti 72
 halons 123
 health threats
 air pollution **144–5**
 healthier world **108–9**
 nitrates 67
 homelessness 131
 houses, solar energy 55
 Houston, Texas 42
 hoverflies 174
 hunger **72–3**, 131
 Hurricane Mitch 131
 hydroelectricity 44, 46, 47, 60

I

ice sheets
 freshwater in 78, 79
 melting 124, 125, 134
 immigration see migration
 immunizations 16, 17
 incineration, waste disposal 90
 incomes, Gini coefficient 110,
111
 India
 car ownership 87
 carbon emissions 143
 debt 37
 economy 33
 hunger 73
 inequality 110
 land acquisition 155
 megacities 40, 41
 monsoon 127
 population 19, 23

poverty 103
 renewable energy 56, 199
 water 83, 105
 wealth 29, 111
 Indian Ocean 164
 Indonesia 33, 83, 103, 143
 Industrial Revolution 38, 44,
 118, 178, 179
 industry
 acid rain **146–7**
 car manufacturing 87
 circular economy 203
 clean technology **198–9**
 and greenhouse effect 120
 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
26–7, 176–7, 196
 innovation **194–5**
 low carbon growth **196–7**
 inequality **110–11**
 infrared radiation 120
 infrastructure
 and extreme weather events
 131
 restoring the future 206–7
 innovation **194–5**
 insects
 extinction 167
 pesticides **68–9**
 pollination 173, **174–5**
 Internet **96–7**, 99
 invasive species **170–71**
 Iraq 73, 105, 115
 Israel 75
 Italy 32
 Ivory Coast 83, 107

J

Japan
 car ownership 87
 carbon emissions 142
 debt 36
 economy 32
 megacities 41
 trade 35
 waste 89
 water footprint 83
 wealth 28
 jellyfish 161
 Jordan 155

K

Kenya 155
 Kinshasa 40
 Korea, North 73
 Korea, South 83, 87, 101, 155
 kudzu vines 170
 Kuwait 19
 Kyoto Protocol 187

L

lakes
 acidification 146, 162
 drinking water 78
 economic value 177
 water cycle 80
 land use
 agriculture **64-5**
 changes in **148-9**
 deforestation **150-51**
 degraded land 43
 desertification **152-3**
 doughnut economics 204
 interconnected pressures 184-5
 land acquisition **154-5**
 national parks and nature reserves **190-91**
 planetary boundaries 182
 successful policies 189
 landfill, waste disposal 90
 Latin America
 cell phones 99
 deforestation 150
 land acquisition 154
 see also South America
 Lesotho 110
 Liberia 72
 life expectancy **20**
 light
 solar power 54
 ultraviolet light **122-3**
 literacy 22, **106-7**
 livestock see animals
 lobbying, multinationals 30
 London **42-3**, 145

M

Madagascar 72
 Mali 107
 masosphere 122
 materials
 circular economy 203
 consumption in cities 43
 see also natural resources
 Mauritania 107
 MEAs (multilateral environmental agreements) **186-7**
 meat **63**, 64, 71
 megacities **40-41**
 methane 70, 119, 134
 methyl bromide 123
 Mexico 33, 35, 82, 142
 Mexico, Gulf of 162
 Mexico City 40
 middle class, growth of 29
 Middle East 49, 80, 99, 114, 152
 migration 18
 and desertification 131, 153
 displaced people **116-17**
 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 189, 192
 Mississippi River 162
 money see economics
 Mongolia 73, 105
 monsoon 127
 Montreal Protocol 123, 186
 mortality rates see death
 moths 174
 Mozambique 155
 multinational corporations **30-31**
 Mumbai 41
 mussels, zebra 171

N

Namibia 72
 national parks **190-91**
 natural gas see gas
 natural resources **84-5**
 changes in land use **148-9**
 consumerism **86-7**
 corruption 112
 waste **88-9**

natural systems
 benefits of **172-3**
 restoring the future 206-7
 value of **176-7**
 nature reserves **190-91**
 New York 40, 42
 New Zealand 123
 Niger 19, 23, 107
 Nigeria 83, 89, 103, 115
 nitrogen 66-7, 162, 183, 205
 nitrogen oxide 67, 119, 144, 146-7
 North Africa 80, 99, 152
 North America
 cell phones 98
 deforestation 150
 energy use 48
 land use 64-5
 population 18
 renewable energy 52, 56
 soil erosion 74
 urbanization 39
 nuclear power 44, 45, 46, 60
 nutrient cycle 173

O

obesity 72
 Oceania 18, 49, 53, 75
 oceans
 acidification **160-61**, 183, 205
 carbon cycle 140, 141
 coastal flooding 124
 currents 128
 dead zones **162-3**
 economic value 177
 fishing **156-7**
 food chains 172
 how climate patterns work 128-9
 invasive species 171
 methane release 134
 nitrous oxide pollution 67
 plastic pollution **164-5**
 sea level rises 124, 125
 tidal power **58-9**
 warming 127
 wave energy **58-9**
 oil 46, 60
 costs 52

electricity generation 44
 reducing use 136-7
 Oman 19
 Osaka 40
 oxygen, in atmosphere 122
 ozone, air pollution 144
 ozone layer 67, **122-3**, 183, 204

P

Pacific Ocean 164-5
 Pakistan 22, 41, 73, 83, 115
 Papua New Guinea 23
 paraffin 48
 Paris 42
 perch, Nile 171
 permafrost, melting 134
 pesticides **68-9**, 92-3, 123
 phosphorus 66, 162, 183, 202, 205
 photochemical smog 144
 photosynthesis 122, 172
 photovoltaic panels 54
 planetary boundaries **182-3**, 204-5
 planetary stress 205
 plankton 122, 172
 plants
 acid rain 147
 biodiversity 168, 204
 bioenergy 46
 carbon cycle 140-41
 photosynthesis 172
 pollination 173, **174-5**
 water cycle 81
 see also agriculture; forests; trees
 plastics, pollution **164-5**
 pollination 173, **174-5**
 pollution
 acid rain **146-7**
 air pollution 44, 45, 48, **144-5**, 205
 chemicals **92-3**, 205
 fertilizers 67
 fish farming 158
 oceans **162-3**
 plastics **164-5**
 POPs (persistent organic pollutants) 92-3

population
 age profile **21**
 disparities in world energy use 48–9
 economic expansion 24–5
 the Great Acceleration 178–9
 life expectancy **20**
 low carbon growth 197
 managing growth **22–3**
 megacities **40–41**
 population explosion **16–17**
 population shift **18–19**
 urbanization **38–9, 42**
 wealth **28–9**

potassium 66

poverty **102–3**
 and access to energy 48
 and hunger **72–3**
 wealth inequality **28–9, 110–11**

pythons, Burmese 170

Q

Qatar 19, 29, 155

R

rabbits 170

radiation, infrared 120–21

rainfall
 acid rain **146–7**
 drought 75, 77, 78, 127, 130–31
 floods 124, 127, 130–31, 153
 monsoon 127
 seasonal changes 127
 water cycle 80–81

rain forests 134

RCPs (Representative Concentration Pathways) 138–9

reading **106–7**

recycling 91, 203

refugees **116–17**

renewable energy 46, 47, **52–3**
 and employment 199
 reducing emissions 133
 solar power **54–5**
 tidal power **58–9**
 wave energy **58–9**
 wind power **56–7**

restoring the future **206–7**

richer people see wealth

Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit 187, 192

rivers
 acid rain 146
 and desertification 153
 drinking water 78
 economic value 177
 water cycle 80

Russia
 car ownership 87
 carbon emissions 143
 economy 33, 37
 megacities 41
 sanitation 105
 waste 89
 water 78, 83
 wealth 111

Rwanda 37, 72

S

Samoa 23

San Francisco 42

sanitation **104–5**

São Paulo 40

Saudi Arabia 155

seas see oceans

seasons **126–7, 128**

seaweed 171

sewage **104–5, 162, 202**

Shanghai 41

Shell 30

shipping industry 35, 171

Sierra Leone 22, 110, 112

Singapore 42

Sinopec 30

Slovenia 111

smog, photochemical 144

social problems 110

soil
 acid rain 147
 carbon cycle 140
 deforestation 133
 desertification 153
 erosion **74–5**
 permafrost melt 134
 water cycle 80

solar power 44, 49, 52, **54–5, 61**

Somalia 116, 117

South Africa 89, 110, 155

South America
 desertification 152
 energy use 48
 land use 64–5
 ozone hole 123
 population 18
 soil erosion 74
 see also Latin America

South Sudan 116, 155

space travel 195

Spain 41

spring, seasonal changes 126

Sri Lanka 73

steam power 194

sterilization, controlling
 population growth 22

storms 130–31

stratosphere 122

Sudan 23, 29, 116, 117, 155

sulfur dioxide, acid rain 146–7

Sumatra 169

Sundaland 169

sunlight
 greenhouse effect **120–21**
 how climate patterns work 128
 photosynthesis 172
 solar power 44, 49, 52, **54–5, 61**

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) **192–3, 200–201**

Swansea tidal lagoon 59

Sweden 111, 155

Syria 114, 115, 116

T

Tajikistan 73

Tanzania 72, 155

taxes, carbon 133

technology **198–9, 203**

telephones **98–9**

temperatures
 carbon crossroads **138–9**
 climate change 118, **124–5**
 feedback loops 134
 greenhouse effect **120–21**
 seasonal changes **126–7**

two-degree limit **132–3, 136–7**
 weather extremes 130

termites 195

terrorism **114–15**

Thailand 83

tidal power **58–9, 61**

“tipping points” 124, 134

Togo 105

Tokyo 40

trade **34–5**
 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) **26–7, 176–7, 196**
 virtual water 82–3

travel 43, **100–101, 206–7**

trees see forests

tropical cyclones 130–31

troposphere 122

Tunisia 23

turbines, renewable energy 57, 58, 59

Turkey 33

U

Uganda 19, 23

United Kingdom
 carbon footprints **50–51**
 economy 32, 36
 inequality 111
 land acquisition 155
 population 19, 23
 tidal energy 58–9
 waste 89
 water footprint 82
 wealth 28

ultraviolet (UV) light **122–3**

unequal world **110–11**

United Arab Emirates (UAE) 19, 155

United Nations 186, 188–9

United States of America
 air pollution 145
 car ownership 87
 carbon emissions 143
 cost of food 73
 debt 36–7
 inequality 111
 land acquisition 155
 megacities 41
 population 18, 23

United States of America
 (continued)
 renewable energy 56, 199
 soil erosion 74
 trade 35
 waste 89
 water 78, 82
 wealth 28, 111
 urbanization **38-9, 40-41**

V

vehicles
 air pollution 144-5
 cars **87**
 fuel efficiency 133
 Vienna agreement 186
 Vietnam 29

W

Wal-Mart 31
 warfare
 climate change and 131

displaced people **116-17**
 terrorism **114-15**
 wasps 174
 waste **88-9**
 circular economy 203
 plastic pollution **164-5**
 successful policies 189
 waste disposal **90-91**
 water
 consumption in cities 42
 and corruption 112, 113
 doughnut economics 204
 drinking water **78-9, 86,**
104-5, 131
 drought 75, 77, 78, 127, 130-31
 floods 124, 127, 130-31, 153
 food waste 70
 interconnected pressures
 184-5
 planetary boundaries 182
 renewable energy 44, 46, 47,
58-9, 60-61, 194
 sanitation **104-5**
 solar heating 55

successful policies 189
 use of **76-7**
 water cycle **80-81, 173**
 water footprints **82-3**
 see also lakes; oceans; rainfall;
 rivers
 wave energy **58-9, 61**
 wealth **28-9**
 disease and income 109
 inequality **110-11**
 planetary stress 205
 poverty **102-3**
 richest cities 32
 weather
 acid rain **146-7**
 and desertification 153
 extremes **130-31**
 how climate patterns work
128-9
 seasonal changes **126-7**
 see also climate change
 wetlands 172, 173, 177
 wildlife
 benefits of **172-3**

biodiversity **168-9, 188, 204**
 carbon cycle 140-41
 changes in land use **148-9**
 and corruption 112, 113
 and desertification 153
 extinction **166-7, 183**
 invasive species **170-71**
 pesticides and 69
 plastic pollution 164-5
 wind power 44, 45, 52, **56-7, 61**
 women, literacy 106
 wood, as fuel 45, 48, 52, 61
 World Bank 30
 World Heritage Convention 186
 writing **106-7**

Y

Yemen 73

Z

Zambia 72, 155
 Zimbabwe 36, 72, 195

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