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EU Tech Chamber White Paper  
Environment Council

# **HOW TO SOLVE THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

# INTRODUCTION

Thousands of years ago, the mark left by humans in the natural spaces they inhabited was insignificant. The natural resources available to them were sufficient to meet their vital needs. They adapted to nature's dynamics and used the resources nature provided to survive: fruits, tubers, plants, and fishing and hunting, among other sources of sustenance. These were nomads with no luxuries and their lack of fixed dwellings allowed the soil they left behind to regenerate naturally.

However, with the emergence of agriculture, the domestication of animals, improved hunting and fishing methods, and the appearance of language, humans no longer needed to migrate each season, because they could produce all the necessary food for themselves, their families and their domestic animals. Over time, agriculture created the optimal conditions for life: a family, food, and shelter. At this early stage, the adverse effects of humans and agriculture on nature remained inconsequential.

Little by little, humanity was experiencing social development that allowed them to more effectively organize, form communities, and work. Over time, these events facilitated generational sustainability until, in our time, humanity left a visible footprint in the natural environment.

All this development was affected by political, social, and cultural events that are part of the history of humanity and, in most cases (the industrial revolution, the world wars, the post-war era, neoliberal globalization, etc.), served to modify the balance between industrialization and the natural world in a negative way, which became the legacy for successive generations. These are the roots of all the environmental problems we face today, known collectively as the global environmental crisis.

But what motivates us to return to the causes of this problem? We need to study this phenomenon further and understand the causes, consequences, and how we can solve this problem.

The global environmental crisis needs urgent attention, and not only from governmental or non-governmental institutions or isolated effort from particular industries or sectors. It is a question of assuming an international position based on the conscience of every human being on the planet regardless of their social, racial, or economic status. The easiest and most consistent way to be a good citizen in an ecological culture is to actively work to solve the environmental problem in front of you.

The main Environmental Problems can be solved as long as all those who inhabit the earth are conscientious. Indeed, this situation has many culprits, but we all, in some way, contribute to the alteration of nature. Still, if we have a better understanding and awareness about the current problems and their causes, we can mitigate the impact. Consider that the global environmental crisis (paradoxically) results from man's irresponsible interaction with his natural environment. But why paradoxically? Because nature itself is the primary source of life and human development.



**With great technology comes great responsibility.**  
**Technology Obliges!**

The European Technology (EUTECH) Chamber is a registered NGO that enables European businesses to use their technologies for the benefit of Europe and mankind. The EUTECH Chamber has three major goals and believes that technology will help us reach them.



**Competitiveness**

Strengthen Europe's competitiveness and transformation capabilities in its global positioning



**Sustainability**

Leverage innovation, key technologies and business opportunities to achieve 17 UNSDGs



**Growth**

Build bridges to international markets and establish partnership for an inclusive growth





## About the Environment Council

This Council tackles Europe's most pressing environmental problems by agenda setting, monitoring, advising on and influencing the way the EU deals with these issues.

These include issues such as climate change, biodiversity, circular economy, air, water, soil, chemical pollution, as well as policies on industry, energy, agriculture, product design and waste prevention.



**Success**



**Sustainable  
Development**



**Scaling Up**



# METHODOLOGY

## EUTECH Chamber White Paper

An EUTECH White Paper is an informational document used to share knowledge, foster exchange and collaboration, and create value for our advocates and the larger EUTECH community from society to businesses, and from industry professionals to technological innovators.

Sharing technology-driven solutions and methods to help solve some of our most challenging questions about how we can improve our lives, while providing insights from engineers, experts, and researchers.

A White Paper is carefully curated in collaboration with EUTECH advocates, supporters and contributors who share EUTECH's vision and values and is published by EUTECH Sections for educational and knowledge sharing purposes.



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# 10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS HOW TO SOLVE THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS





## 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPEAN COMPANIES

- 1. Choose a sustainable food system:** A sustainable food system is a food model that aims to address health and environmental concerns associated with food production and consumption. In addition to improving people's health, it seeks to promote responsible production and consumption, reduce environmental impact, fight against climate change, respect culture and biodiversity and protect terrestrial ecosystems and underwater life.
- 2. Integrate environmentally friendly practices into your routine.** Reducing the negative impact of pollution is possible thanks to the many small actions that a person can take in everyday life. Biking, not littering, and efficient energy use are some of the strategies that can be implemented daily to reduce the negative impact of humans on planet Earth. In this context, people can reduce the negative impact of this situation through changes in their daily habits.
- 3. Implement effective strategies for waste management.** Excessive waste is a problem for our planet, which is why we encourage product reuse and recycling, betting on the implementation of clean technologies to innovate at the product production, supply chain, and the treated product waste. If you are interested in learning more about this topic, this green ecology recommendation delves into the concept of waste management, different types, and innovative techniques.
- 4. Execute concrete Initiatives to protect biodiversity.** The UN General Assembly recently adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a collective action plan built around the top 17 global challenges that address issues related to people, the planet, and global prosperity. The so-called sustainable development goals are connected. To advance in the achievement of one implies an advancement towards the others, and biodiversity is the common denominator of all of them because it is fundamental to the development and well-being of humanity.
- 5. Implement actions to mitigate water pollution.** Water pollution lies above all in the discharges which, unfortunately, is still being carried out by many companies in the world. Practices that are often carried out by private individuals also contribute to water pollution. This, multiplied by the more than 7,000 billion people who inhabit the planet, is too significant an impact on our water. We will tell you how to avoid contaminating water at home.



## 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPEAN COMPANIES

6. **Choose sustainable fashion brands and organic fabrics.** The textile industry has been changing to meet the needs of new consumers. Consumers no longer only demand quality material and products but also that products and companies contribute something positive to the planet, or at least avoid harming it. Many brands already use ecological fabrics to provide their customers with unique and sustainable products. People are often unaware of the waste and toxic substances generated by the textile industry throughout the manufacturing process. This endangers the environment, our planet, and our health.
7. **Understand environmental problems as whole.** The environment is a set of physical, chemical, and biological components and surroundings that convolve interactions and interrelations. However, it is also the space in which life develops and it also comprises living beings, objects, water, soil, air, and the relationships between them. Our planet constitutes a balanced environmental whole, in which all the elements are related. Therefore, environmental problems should be understood as problems that involve and affect each of us and impact the entire planet.
8. **Support the establishment and enforcement of regulations for adequate regional and national environmental management.** Environmental laws and norms arise due to the unsustainable environmental impact of humanity, with its natural resources and socio-cultural environment, on the planet's natural resources. Hence the importance of environmental legislation in the face of the impact of human activity on its natural habitat.
9. **Promote community participation in local environmental preservation.** When changes are required at the global level and action is required at all levels, it is necessary to use environmental education to train communities and encourage their participation at the local level, promoting and designing growth strategies that allow ecological local development.
10. **Encourage educational programs on environmental care and sustainability.** The Environmental Education Program is an educational resource that promotes awareness for sustainable development, while paying particular attention to natural heritage.. Indeed, through a dynamic and innovative pedagogy, this program encourage the understanding of how small actions can have a great impact.





## 1. Choose a sustainable food system

A sustainable food system, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, is characterized by being responsible, sustainable and ethical with the environment.

Sustainable food systems must be considered in the context of population growth, urbanization, growing wealth, changing consumption patterns, globalization, climate change, and the depletion of natural resources. Sustainable food also considers the environmental footprint of food (i.e., gas emissions, energy consumption, and the use of water and land resources) throughout the food chain process, in addition to prioritizing minimally processed, local and seasonal foods and promoting culinary and gastronomic activities.

According to the FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (at the Value Chain Development Consultant of the Sustainable Markets, Agribusiness and Rural Transformations Team), a sustainable food system is a food system that delivers food security and nutrition to all in such a way that the economic, social, and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. Therefore, it is profitable throughout (economic sustainability), it has broad-based benefits for society (social sustainability), and it has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability).

To realize the SDGs, the global food system needs to be reshaped to be more productive, more inclusive of poor and marginalized populations, environmentally sustainable and resilient, and deliver healthy and nutritious diets to all. These are complex and systemic challenges that require a combination of interconnected actions at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

### **What about Sustainable Agriculture?**

Sustainable agriculture can be defined as a system of ecological agricultural practices based on scientific innovations. It is possible to produce healthy food with methods that respect the soil, air and water while also respecting the rights and health of farmers.

Sustainable agriculture aims to meet human needs for healthy eating by following basic principles: improving quality in the environment, preserving natural resources, efficient use of agricultural resources and non-renewable energy sources and adaptation to the natural environment.

## 2. Integrate environmentally friendly practices into your routine

Today we are suffering the consequences misusing our natural resources. It is up to educated young people to take urgent action to mitigate the negative impacts of environmental problems and create new scenarios for innovation that guarantee our rights and quality of life.

There are many different ways you can become sustainable: preventing pollution, adopting clean energy, reducing waste, greening the planet by planting trees, conserving water using sustainable materials, making their products sustainable, and by adopting sustainable practices relate not only to the natural world but also to other important issues, such as poverty, consumption, community and health.

But what are the practical recommendations for an environmentally friendly life? Start with small actions!

- Use a bamboo toothbrush. Brushing your teeth does not require a plastic object that lasts for years only to degrade and pollute marine ecosystems, claiming the lives of marine animals. In addition, you avoid going to the supermarket to buy so many brushes a year.



- Use a glass cup or other environmentally friendly material for when you buy coffee. It is unnecessary to use a plastic cup to serve hot drinks, bring your mug or favourite cup with you.
- Join the Zero Waste movement. The movement focuses on eliminating unnecessary garbage from our daily lives, taking five principles or "errors" into account: Rejecting that you do not need, reducing what you need, reusing discarded or second-hand products, recycling things you can't throw away, and rot (breaking down food matter to get compost and using it on your plants). Perhaps in everyday life it is not so easy to decompose, but we can divide our waste to make it easier to collect.
- Follow the minimalist movement. It consists of having what is necessary to live, reducing material possessions, and focusing on sustainable, essential consumption. For example, some cultures such as Japan or South Korea lead a minimalist lifestyle in their homes, with functional elements of everyday use without extra features that are not required to live.
- Reduce your energy and water consumption per day. Turning off electronic devices such as the TV or computer when not in use decreases the emission of CO2. In addition, you can collect rainwater using home irrigation systems for your plants.
- Use transportation alternatives. Bike or walk to work, college or school. In addition, using public transport reduces the pollution generated by your car.
- Offsetting CO2 emissions: invest and support initiatives in CO2 reduction projects (ex planting trees)

In any part of your daily routine, you can apply these recommendations to help you become an environmentally friendly person and start creating opportunities in your life and actions to help save the world. Are you ready to change your lifestyle and make the planet a better place to live? Let's do it!

### 3. Implement effective strategies for waste management

What is waste management? We can define waste management as the process through which, using a variety of necessary activities, to address all the garbage generated by humans. There are three main phases of waste management:

**1. Recover and collection of the waste.** For this phase, the waste must be deposited in containers, and depending on the country and its management system, the color and number of containers used may vary. For example, some countries have containers for plastic, paper, organic waste, and glass.

**2. Transportation of the waste.** The waste is taken by truck to sorting or treatment plants at this stage.

**3. Waste treatment.** In the last phase of management, waste undergoes different treatments depending on its origin.

Waste management classification is mainly based on the origin of waste management. Therefore, depending on the source of the waste, its management can be classified into municipal solid waste management, hazardous waste management, sanitary waste management, and industrial waste management.

Waste from industrial processes are generally substances that contain environmentally damaging components. For this reason, regulations for this waste must be very strict on all the following points:

- **Prevention:** Refers to the appropriate procurement of materials and providing for the proper disposal of waste.
- **Elimination:** Waste must be disposed of correctly, whether it is hazardous or not.
- **Recycling:** Refers to the possibility of reusing or recycling materials.
- **Storage and transport:** It is essential to store and transport waste following current legislation and contractual provisions.

Therefore, in addition to the waste management systems already in place, an appropriate waste management oversee must audit in all the steps preceding the waste production. To do this, it is necessary to pay special attention when designing production processes, use ecologically-friendly raw materials and cleaner technologies. Implement a periodic control plan of the production chain to detect possible leaks, wear and tear of machinery, and the disposal of recyclable materials, among other things, is required.



## 4. Execute concrete initiatives to protect biodiversity

More than half of all goods and services worldwide depend directly or indirectly on natural resources, especially in developing countries. In addition to being a food source, natural resources are the primary source of income for the population.

Industries such as pharmaceuticals or the beauty sector depend directly on biodiversity. Nature is the source of many drugs used in modern medicine, including plants, animals, and natural microorganisms.

How does biodiversity influence the earth? Ecosystems capture and store greenhouse gases, making them an excellent ally in mitigating climate change. Healthy ecosystems account for up to 37% of the reduction of greenhouse gases needed to curb global warming. They are a barrier against natural disasters such as floods, storms, droughts, among others.

Ecosystems can also protect against the spread of disease; where native biodiversity is high, zoonotic diseases, such as COVID-19, are lower.

### What to do?

Human beings are wiping out the planet's biodiversity. Our consumption habits and our lifestyle, in general, have caused 8% of all known animal species to go extinct, and 22% are at risk of extinction. The acidification of water by pollution has caused the loss of marine biodiversity on a massive scale. Indeed, hundreds of species of fish have already disappeared.

It is time to take care of nature and preserve ecosystems. We still have time to reverse the loss of biological diversity. We must understand that doing so is the only way to restore and maintain a healthy planet and the lives it supports.

For that, there must be a drastic change in the policies, incentives, and development actions of all governments, companies, and citizens.



## 5. Implement smart actions to mitigate water pollution

More and more people are aware of why we must change the water pollution trend to protect our rivers and seas, along with all the living things in them. Consider the following tips to avoid contaminating water and contribute to mitigating the impact of pollution:

- **Save water at home.** Although it may not seem so to the naked eye, reducing water consumption is one of the keys to minimizing contamination. Why? Because by reducing the amount of water used, you also reduce the amount of water flowing into waste water treatment systems. That's why it is important to always follow these well-known tips to save water at home: Shower instead of taking a bath, do not leave the faucet open while you brush your teeth, run the washing machine and dishwasher only when they are completely full, etc.
- **Use organic products.** Whenever possible, try not to use cleaning products that contain chemical components. Instead, use eco-friendly products, such as biodegradable soap and natural cleaning supplies. The more natural the products you use, the better, as they will surely end up in our water.
- **Discard toxic products carefully.** Try not to use toxic products (including many paints, solvents and cleaning products), but if you must, dispose of them appropriately, never pour them down the drain.
- **Do not throw garbage into the environment.** Even if you are outside the home, never throw garbage into the sea, rivers, lakes, etc.
- **Do not apply pesticides and use natural fertilizers.** If you have a garden at home, do not forget that pesticides and chemical fertilizers lead to water pollution because they seep into groundwater. Always use products that are as natural as possible and use them responsibly.

These are some tips to avoid contaminating water in the home, but common sense tells us what we can and cannot do to avoid destroying our primary source of life!





## 6. Choose sustainable fashion brands and organic fabrics

The solution for this generation to minimize waste that is harmful to the environment is to use ecological fabrics to create clothing that is also ecological. Environmental or sustainable fashion is based on the manufacture of organic clothing. Therefore, it is made by materials that are raised or grown without the use of harmful chemicals, and takes care of nature.

Working for the creation of ecological garments using ecological fabrics can be a challenge, especially if you do not know which are the best fabrics to use for that garment. In the market, there are many options for organic materials. Ethical textile production is here to stay, as it favours responsible and environmentally friendly consumption. In recent years, different materials of this type have gained a lot of fame thanks to the benefits they bring to the planet. For example:

- Organic cotton is an ecological fibre characterized by its strength, elasticity, and breathability. It is grown on land free of pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic chemical fertilizers. Genetically modified plants are not used, and earth cycles are respected through crop rotation. During the production process, no bleaches or toxic dyes are used, which benefits our skin and health in general.
- Bamboo fabric is obtained from the natural and biodegradable plant of the same name. This is a highly sustainable resource, and its growth cycle is high speed. It is characterized by being a soft, absorbent and breathable ecological fabric that has antibacterial properties, and is ideal for sensitive skin. In addition, thanks to its porous qualities, it is very hygienic since it transpires well and allows for easy and continuous washing.
- Flax is an ecological and natural fabric made of the fibres of the flax plant. One of the most notorious aspects of the textile is its durability compared to other equally popular natural fibres and its versatility in making different clothing pieces. It is resistant to pests, and both the tree and its fibre are fungicides. Also, growing flax requires little care, just a little water and light. It also has a high ink absorption capacity, making it ideal for various manufactured textile products.
- Tencel is natural, biodegradable cellulose that is produced from wood pulp. Cellulose fibre is an abundant organic material in the soil. It is a renewable energy source, and its production process is environmentally responsible. It is characterized by absorbing moisture well in the environment where it is located. It is a comfortable ecological fabric, soft to the touch, and recommended for delicate skin. It has excellent durability, is very easy to maintain, and does not wrinkle excessively.

## 7. Understand environmental problems as a whole

Today we know that the environmental crisis is not limited to gender, class, ethnicity, or culture. It is a problem that involves and affects all of us, impacting the entire planet. Therefore, pointing out environmental issues and challenging the logic of capitalist relations of production and consumption is critical. We must recognize the limits of most of the solutions offered to us, such as technology solutions or those based on personal consumption. Thus, the current environmental crisis should be understood as complex interactions between economic, political, and social challenges, but most of all as an area that disrupts all of life.

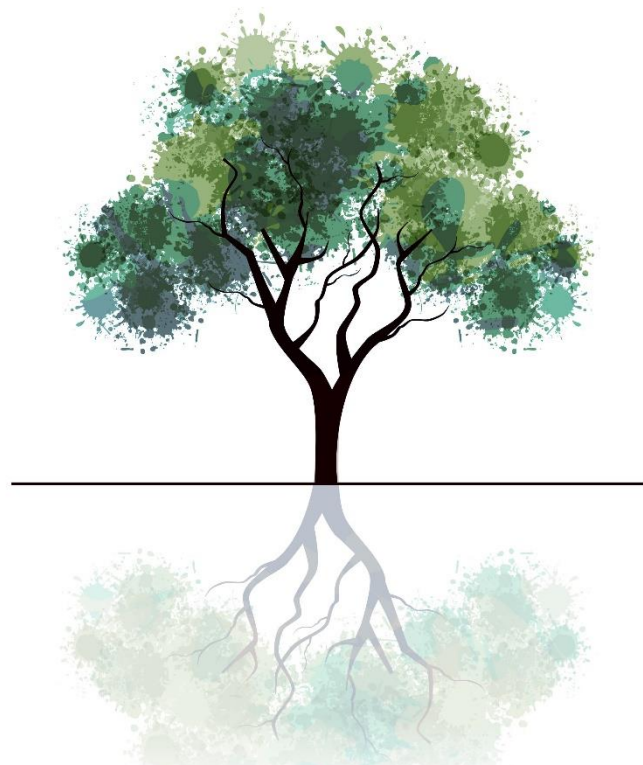
Moreover, reaching change involves:

- Reformulating how we value and invest in nature by integrating that value into policies and decision making at all levels.
- Adjusting subsidies and other elements of economic and financial systems.
- Fostering innovation in sustainable technologies and business models.
- Massive private investment in electric mobility and alternative fuels shows that entire industries recognize the potential benefits of rapid change.



Ending environmental degradation in all its forms is essential to promote several Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty alleviation, food and water security, and good health for all. For example, the sustainable intensification of agriculture and fisheries, dietary changes, and reduced food waste can help end hunger and poverty and improve nutrition and health while conserving more terrestrial and marine wilderness. This shows the need for society to be involved in decision-making and identifies key actions that can and should be taken in all sectors to achieve a sustainable world. The following aspects must be considered as a whole:

- Governments can include natural capital in economic performance measures, put a price on carbon, and redirect trillions of dollars currently spent subsidizing fossil fuels or unsustainable agriculture and transportation toward low-carbon solutions.
- International organizations can promote the One Health approach and ambitious international targets for biodiversity, such as broader protected area networks.
- Financial organizations can stop extending loans to fossil fuel projects and develop innovative financing mechanisms for biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture.
- Companies can adopt circular economy principles to minimize resource use and waste and commit to maintaining transparent supply chains free of deforestation.
- Non-governmental organizations can create networks of various actors to ensure their full participation in decisions on the sustainable use of resources.
- Scientific organizations can propose cutting-edge technologies and policies to reduce carbon emissions, increase resource efficiency and raise the resilience of cities, industries, communities, and ecosystems.
- People can rethink their relationship with nature, learn about sustainability, change their habits to reduce food and water consumption, avoid energy waste and adopt healthier diets.







## 8. Support the establishment and enforcement of regulations for adequate regional and national environment management

Before human alterations to the environment, which has caused environmental problems; imbalances in nature affect the quality of natural elements, the health of all living beings on the planet.

Thus, the importance of environmental legislation lies in regulating and punishing human acts that alter, transform and/or modify the quality of the environment to meet human needs.

In this sense, environmental laws are essential and fundamental to preventing, mitigating, correcting, guiding and penalizing illegal and unsustainable activities with the environment surrounding citizens.

Therefore, environmental laws must exist for the following reasons and benefits:

- To care for, protect and conserve the socio-environmental environment.
- To punish and penalize those who destroy the environment.
- To ensure a balance between man and nature.
- To regulate the activities and projects of human beings that impact the environment.
- To guarantee the sustainable and rational use of natural resources.
- To ensure environmental management.
- To combat and reduce environmental problems.
- To conserve life on planet Earth.
- To achieve the correct environmental balance and quality of life for humans.
- To ensure sustainable development.

What is essential is not the number of laws that exist to protect the environment but the knowledge and valuation of, respect for, and compliance with the laws by humanity for the benefit of all.

Finally, environmental legislation (national and international laws) are significant for setting standards for conserving air, water, soil, flora and fauna.

## 9. Promote community participation in local environmental preservation

It is crucial to know that the environmental problems present in communities can only be faced and mitigated from ecological management. Still, this management is impossible without knowledge of the local ecological system, its synergies, limitations and potentialities. This knowledge must be present in managers at the public policy level. It is also necessary to train the community to promote citizen participation, environmental theoretical frameworks, strategies and methodologies for addressing the environment. Indeed, people can be active participants in designing their future scenarios, guiding them towards proper growth, which allows these communities to develop sustainably.

Therefore, it is necessary to work on a solid conceptual framework regarding what the environment is, to facilitate an understanding of essential and urgent changes.

In such a way, to identify in what ways, with what strategies, methodologies, and activities are necessary to improve the preservation and care of the environment. Thus, it is essential to organize and participate in environmental education and awareness programs to solve ecological problems in the community.

Participate in the cleaning and maintenance of common areas: streets, avenues, corridors of buildings and sports fields. Keep parks and squares clean and in good condition and maintain public transport units and other public services. It is relevant to extend the installation of trash containers to avoid the dispersion of waste or its settlement the environment. Above all, social participation is necessary where the main goal is to promote good habits among neighbors. This requires both awareness campaigns and a penalty regime.

If behaviors do not change and there is no citizen social participation, making a difference will be impossible.





## 10. Encourage educational programs on environmental care and sustainability

These programs should promote awareness of global socio-environmental problems, encourage participants to adopt responsible and environmentally friendly habits and attitudes, and promote proactive behaviors towards the defense and conservation of the nature, ecosystems and resources.

The lack of environmental information, especially in climate change, is critical. For its purpose to implement an environmental education program oriented in climate change and environmental crisis, could become an effective solution to generate citizenship awareness.

The main scope of the program starts in the classroom and expands to the community by engaging the next generations in action-based learning. Indeed, through a dynamic and innovative pedagogy, this program encourage the understanding of how small actions can have a big impact on our sustainable future.

### **The components of environmental education are:**

- An awareness of and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges.
- Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges.
- Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality.
- Developing the skills to identify and contribute to solving environmental problems
- Participation in activities that contribute to solving environmental issues and climate change.

# CONCLUSION

# CONCLUSION



The global environmental crisis is caused by humanity's contradictory and illogical relationship with nature. It results from heavy machinery use, the deforestation, formal and informal mining, the misuse of soils, and inactivity in the face of the disappearance of abiotic and biotic elements. It is also evidenced by the overpopulation of people, the number of animals and plants in danger of extinction, the use of non-renewable fossil fuels, the poor or deficient use of renewable resources, along with the effects of wars and the unsustainable growth of industries. However, all these problems have a common denominator: social awareness.

The environmental crisis is a global problem that has quietly and steadily been causing environmental disruption to almost the entire planet. Thus, can we save the planet? The answer is yes, but let us reflect on this: If, in support of the environmental laws that currently exist, human beings manage to identify and provide practical solutions based on peoples' individual and collective conscience regarding the importance of protecting the natural environment, we would be sculpting our happiness and those who will succeed us in the future. We would be saving every endangered or threatened species, and we would live with the pride of preserving and caring for the planet, which facilitate our existence.

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