

Global warming

Did you know about the greenhouse effect, and did you know that there is an increased greenhouse effect, global warming? In this article you will learn more about these phenomena and you learn about the consequences of global warming.

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What is the greenhouse effect?

The greenhouse effect is a natural process that takes care of keeping the earth warm enough. You can compare the greenhouse effect with a greenhouse, which is used in the horticulture. The outside of a greenhouse is structured in a certain way, so that the warmth of the sun-beams stays in the greenhouse to warm up the plants. The same process takes place in the atmosphere around the earth. In the atmosphere there are materials which make sure that the warmth of the sun stays in the atmosphere. These materials are called greenhouse-gases. Some examples of these greenhouse-gases are carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrous oxide (N_2O) and ozone (O_3).

The greenhouse effect works as follows: a sunbeam 'falls' into the atmosphere and 'bumps' against the earth's surface. The biggest part of the warmth of the sun-beams is absorbed by the earth's surface. A smaller part of the beams is reflected. The reflected sun-beams go through the atmosphere back to space again. But, on its way back it 'bumps' into the greenhouse gases and the gases absorb also a part of the warmth of the sun-beams. So, a part of the warmth of the sun-beams stays in the atmosphere and so the earth is covered by a 'warm blanket'. Thanks to this 'warm blanket' people, animals and plants can live on the earth.

What is global warming and where is it caused by?

You know already that the greenhouse effect is a natural one and is caused by greenhouse-gases, which are able to keep a part of the sun-warmth into the atmosphere. But there is a problem in the amount of greenhouse-gases. The more gases, the more warmth can be kept in the atmosphere. In the past decades there came more gases in the atmosphere, through the (extra) emission of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and through the enormous cutdown of the (rain)forest. Trees have the possibility of making oxygen (O_2) out of carbon dioxide (CO_2), this process is called photosynthesis. But, the more trees are cut down, the less carbon dioxide they can make into oxygen. Since 1750 the amount of carbon dioxide is increased with 30%.

The cause of global warming is the increase of greenhouse gases. This increase is for the greater part caused by industrialization. More factories, more emission of (toxic) gases, more cars, more emission of gases.

What are the consequences of global warming

A lot of scientists predict that through global warming the atmosphere around the earth becomes warmer and warmer and this has its influence on the earth herself, because the increase of temperature in the atmosphere causes increase of temperature on the earth's surface. One of the consequences of this temperature increase is the melting of big parts of the polar ice on the north and south pole. Through the melting of polar ice, there becomes more water in the seas and oceans and the sea level will rise. Through the rising of the sea level

big parts of land will be flooded and there becomes less land to live on and to grow food on. So, there will not be enough space left, so others areas will be overpopulated, with all the problems which go with it. Through the warming up of the atmosphere the average temperature will rise and there will come more and bigger deserts. Scientists don't agree on how far these consequences will come true, but it is a fact that the atmosphere becomes warmer and that mankind has something to do with it.

How to solve the consequences of global warming?

The solution of global warming is not that simple, to reduce global warming the carbondioxide emmision (CO₂) has to become less. That means that there should come very strict rules for for instance factories and for the developement and building of cars which emmision is a lot less than nowadays. On the other hand mankind should be very carefull with the (rain)forests on this planet. The United Nations made a pact, which is also known as 'the pact of Kyoto'. In this pact you can find a lot of solutions to oppose the climate changing. The complete pact can be found at the site of [Federal services of the environment](#) in Belgium.