

7.3 Climate change

Global Warming

- This is the gradual increase in the average temperature of the earth's atmosphere due to the greenhouse effect.
- It can be seen in the increased extreme weather events such as floods seen in the UK recently.

Effects of Global Warming

- Global warming is causing the polar ice-caps to melt, and sea levels to rise as a result. Rainfall patterns change noticeably. Glaciers melt at record rates and extreme weather becomes more common across the globe.
- Greenhouse gases. These are gasses which are unable to escape the earth's atmosphere. Increasing levels of greenhouse gasses create an increase in the earth's atmosphere and have possible harmful consequences for the environment and human health. Burning of fossil fuels and deforestation are thought to be causing the levels of gasses to rise.

Kyoto Protocol

- This is an international agreement linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions globally.
- Originally adopted in Kyoto, Japan on 11th December 1997 and came into effect on 16th February 2005. In Spring 2010, there were 84 signatories and 190 parties to the Kyoto protocol.

5 key principles

1. The commitment to reduce greenhouse gases was legally binding
2. Countries had to prepare policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gases
3. A fund for climate change would be set up to help minimise the impact on developing countries
4. Reports and reviews of the Protocol would be carried out
5. A committee would be established to ensure that the Protocol is being complied with.