

Is it possible to protect
the environment
when many countries
require increasing a...

[Environment](#), [Climate Change](#)



Is it possible to protect the environment when many countries require increasing amounts of energy to boost economic progress? According to Alan M. Eddison, " Modern technology owes ecology an apology. " This is definitely true as economies and technologies have developed recklessly at the expense of the environment. The world has seen huge increases in consumption of the Earth's scarce resources ever since the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s and countries, especially the developed countries, imprudently emit carbon and other pollutants into the environment, causing climate change. However, since the 1990s, the world has begun to realise the importance of safeguarding man's only habitat and have shown greater willingness to protect the environment despite the need to progress economically at the same time. Therefore, it is still possible to protect the environment, even when many countries such as the large developing countries like China and India, are requiring greater supply of energy to boost their progress. As society progresses, the people's affluence increases as well, especially through education, and as such, there is increased awareness among the world population about climate issues. Theories learnt from Geography lessons on climate and temperatures especially, have alerted many people to care for the environment as people are able to observe unexpected changes in the environment, such as extremely harsh weather conditions and increasing frequency of natural disasters. The increasing knowledge about climate issues has led to many searching for ways to help protect the environment despite the need for society to progress. People are now tapping on cleaner energies such as the solar and wind energies to generate power for industries and homes, which can help

reduce the need to use natural resources such as crude oil and coal, which are causes for increasing carbon emissions. Some housing estates in China's capital, Beijing, have begun installing solar panels on top of roofs of the covered walkways that can generate enough electricity for almost all households for more than three hours during the night. China is seeing rapid economic growth and its increasing affluence, although has led to a greater demand for energy, has also encouraged more cautiousness in dealing with climate change as the Chinese begin to tap on cleaner sources of energy and decreasing their reliance on coal-powered energy, which can definitely help to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment from further harm. Furthermore, the increased awareness for environmental protection has led to more individuals and communities playing their part as well. More individuals and families are beginning to use more efficient lightings at home and reducing the consumption of energy by limiting their use each day. Previously, people could leave their lights and electrical appliances on even when not in use, but now, there is an increasing trend of people, who care for the environment and the welfare of the international community, reducing their consumption by switching off unnecessary appliances. Many have even become advocates for the environment and help by encouraging their community to do so as well. Therefore, in the age of rapid economic progress, it is still possible to protect the environment if individuals are willing to exercise social responsibility by reducing their energy needs. As the world understands the urgency to protect the environment, governments are also required to play their part, and there is evidence of greater international cooperation between countries. Most significantly in many parts

of the world, where governments take office based on the people's mandate, there is mounting pressure on governments to not only focus on the economic agenda for progress, but at the same time, protect the environment. During the US Presidential campaign, both Barack Obama and John McCain reaffirmed their commitment to introduce pro-environment policies. Also at the 2010 Copenhagen Climate Summit in Denmark, many countries like Singapore, even developing China and India, have indicated their willingness to help protect the environment by setting goals for carbon reductions of up to 40%, which are to be met by year 2020. Furthermore, governments now also lead the way in protecting the environment by doing all it can to reduce energy consumption as most energy used are provided using coal and fuels. In Singapore, the government encourages enterprises to construct 'green buildings' or environmentally-friendly buildings that consumes energy efficiently and provide attractive incentives such as grants and also give awards through the Green Label Project. Government buildings in Japan also reduce energy consumption by reducing the duration of the use of air-conditioners and introduce smart and energy-efficient lightings that automatically dim when it scans a certain level of sunlight in a facility. Therefore, with a stronger political will, countries can combat climate change in the midst of rapid economic progress. Rapid progress of the human society has led to further research and development as people have the means to carry out such activities that are expensive in the short-run, but in the long-run leads to greater efficiency and cost savings. As such, technology would become cheaper and easier to acquire, especially green technology as its popularity rises due to greater awareness of the people. Countries can

conduct research and develop cheaper and cleaner energy sources, to cope with the increase in demand for energy for the economy to progress smoothly. As the technology and equipment becomes cheaper, countries can capitalize on environmentally-friendly technologies and reduce its reliance on the natural resources such as coal and fossil fuels, which are high carbon emitters that destroy the environment. With the invention of large wind-power turbines, countries such as China, Korea and New Zealand have begun to harness the natural wind to generate electricity. Heavy industries that emit high levels of carbon have begun to install catalytic converters in chimneys and new cars that are produced are also fitted with catalytic converters, in order to reduce the amount of poisonous carbon emitted into the air. Also, hybrid cars are becoming more common and cheaper these days that its popularity is rapidly increasing. Greater technological advancement will lead to such equipment becoming cheaper and more efficient and thus, can help power the progress countries need economically, yet at the same time, protecting the environment. However, many are skeptical about the ability to protect the environment when many countries require increasing amounts of energy to progress their economy. This is especially true with the corporate world. Protecting the environment would mean the need to implement changes and introduce new policies and equipment such as catalytic converters for chimneys in the heavy industries especially power stations and membrane systems at chemical industries before the by-products are discharged into open waters, which is likely to increase operating costs, lowering profits. Hence, being socially responsible and protecting the environment goes against corporate ideals of maximizing

profits. Corporations would be unwilling to direct their focus on protecting the environment while carrying out business operations as people in the management level of these large corporations have to answer to the shareholders if business profitability falls below expectations. As such, most are unwilling to take up the burden of having to answer to their shareholders as a result of operating losses and continue to allow the business' activities to harm the environment or worse, increasing harm by emitting more harmful gases to the air and discharging pollutants to waters. China's largest and fastest-growing power company, Shenhua Energy, although in the know that coal is one of the largest source for emitting carbon, refuses to focus on environmental protection but continues to increase its energy output by burning coal and building new coal plants, just in order to cope with China's economic progress and surging demand for energy. Therefore, this proves that it is impossible to protect the environment if countries want to progress economically. In addition, the developing world is mainly made up of poor countries where a large majority of its people lives below the poverty line. As such, it is difficult for these countries to harness cleaner sources of energy as they do not have the finances and expertise to capitalize. These countries would be likely be following the footsteps of the developed countries when they were also developing countries, focusing on developing their economies and improving the people's affluence in terms of income and education, before turning their focus onto cleaner sources of energy as the current sources, coal and oil, are cheaper than building hydroelectric dams and wind turbines, which are costly and is highly dependant on nature's course. Even if the developing countries would want to use environmentally-friendly

energy sources, they may not have the expertise in the building of those architectures. Therefore, it is difficult for this part of the world, which requires high amounts of energy to develop and progress, to focus on being environmentally-friendly due to the lack of proper facilities such as machinery to build hydroelectric dams or wind turbines, finances and expertise. Hence, this proves that environmental protection is impossible. To conclude, protecting the environment is based on the will of individuals, corporations and governments, as they make up the society, and every effort put in to protect the environment counts. However, it is also important to note that if the developed nations are not willing to take the lead in protecting the environment and provide necessary assistance to the developing countries in terms of finances and expertise, it would be impossible to protect the environment in the age of rapid progress, especially experienced by the developing countries.