Examples of Analytical Exposition

REASONS WHY A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE A HUMAN RIGHT

World Health Organization estimates that 23 per cent of all deaths are linked to "environmental risks" like air pollution, water contamination and chemical exposure. Here are some of the ways that a compromised planet is now compromising the human right to health.

First, the destruction of wild spaces facilitates the emergence of zoonotic diseases. The alteration of land to create space for homes, farms and industries has put humans in increasing contact with wildlife and has created opportunities for pathogens to spill over from wild animals to people. An estimated 60 per cent of human infections are of animal origin. And there are plenty of other viruses poised to jump from animals to humans.

Second, air pollution reduces the quality of health and lowers life expectancy. Across the globe, nine in 10 people are breathing unclean air, harming their health and shortening their life span. Every year, about 7 million people die from diseases and infections related to air pollution, more than five times the number of people who perish in road traffic collisions.

Third, biodiversity loss compromises the nutritional value of food. In the last 50 years alone, human diets have become 37 per cent more similar, with just 12 crops and five animal species providing 75 per cent of the world's energy intake. Today, nearly one in three people suffer froms some form of malnutrition and much of the world's population is affected by diet-related diseases, such as heart diseases, diabetes and cancer.

Fourth, biodiversity loss also reduces the scope and efficacy of medicines. Natural products comprise a large portion of existing pharmaceuticals and have been particularly important in the area of cancer therapy. But estimates suggest that 15,000 medicinal plant species are at risk of extinction and that the Earth loses at least one potential major drug every two years.

Fifth, pollution is threatening billions worldwide. Many health issues spring from pollution and the idea that waste can be thrown "away" when, in fact, much of it remains in ecosystems, affecting both environmental and human health. Water contaminated by waste, untreated sewage, agricultural runoff and industrial discharge puts 1.8 billion people at risk of contracting cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio.

Sixth, climate change introduces additional risks to health and safety. The last decade was the hottest in human history and we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with wildfires, floods and hurricanes becoming regular events that threaten lives, livelihoods and food security. Climate change also affects the survival of microbes, facilitating the spread of viruses. According to an article published by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, "pandemics are likely to happen more frequently, spread more rapidly, have greater economic impact and kill more people."

Statistics like that are the reason why the United Nations Human Rights Council recently passed a resolution reaffirming states' obligations to protect human rights, including taking stronger actions on environmental challenges.

LIVEWORKSHEETS