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Course

Date

Globalization Study Guide 6

1. Environmental problems have become one of the greatest concerns of human well-being over the second half of past century. The global community understands the devastating consequences of contamination to human health, social and economic development. Although, people have been worrying about pollution of land, air, and water since the beginning of the 20th century, the modern concern about the environmental problems has become more urgent nowadays. With the advance of new technology a lot of changes have occurred in the environmental protection. The second half of past century is determined by the rapid use of technologies that are implicated in different industries. For example, one of the main environmental problems, such as deforestation, has become a common thing in many regions with tropical forests that are devastating because of the human interference. At the beginning of the 20th century, the environmental problems were mainly a concern of local organizations but nowadays more and more international organizations take part in resolving these problems.

The transnational environmental organizations described by Lechner and Wapner involve the World Bank that supports different programs. They indicate that civil-society organizations contribute money in environmental projects worldwide and oppose powerful forces that damage the environment by their devastating activities. These organizations play an important role in environmental protection from individuals, corporations, and governments that care only about their profits ignoring environmental pollution.

Nowadays, sociologists insist on reviewing environmental problems from the social perspective. The 1972 Clean Water Act passed by Congress regulated the discharge of pollutants from the industries into the water in the USA. Till then, many American lakes and rivers (for instance, the Hudson River) were enormously polluted because this problem stood apart from the societal concern. Many social activists began to alarm to the governments and communities not only inside the United States but also all over the world.

2. The global concern about the environmental protection led to the Stockholm Conference of 1972. A meeting in Stockholm established the United National Environment Program (UNEP) that issued many important initiatives and programs. In the following years, the environmental movement has spread all over the world encouraging international governmental and nongovernmental organizations to take an active part in this movement. In other words, it shaped the global environmental regime that consists of a number of institutions that provided programs and financial support for the environmental efforts. Environmental regime itself is a set of organizations, assumptions and understanding that define the relations of people to the natural environment. The new ecological awareness was the basis for the global environmental regime that involved not only individuals but also gave rise to the establishment of environmental legislation, ministries, and international treaties. It empowered states to establish the climate change regime that began to study the ozone hole.

In 1992, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that organized states to the further researching and finding decisions about the ozone hole and climate change took place in Rio de Janeiro. The protection activities that were held since 1972 to 1992 were the time of the establishment of the environmental regime that focused on the global environmental problems regulating particular issues. Lechner pointed out that the three major concerns were climate change, the protection of forests from deforestation, and depletion of the ozone layer. The scientists have proved that the greenhouse gases produced

by the carbon-based fuels have no alternatives. However, this is a major reason for climate change that is not completely understood.

3. Nowadays, the institutions and organizations that make up the contemporary global environmental regime are the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Criminal Court, and others. They provide a “world society” that began to care about the environment and made this problem one of the greatest concerns of their members. Institutions that shaped a regime applied environmental policies that established specific norms and procedures in protecting the nature. The interaction between nongovernmental and governmental organizations is rather effective because their mutual efforts lead to certain policies around the world. Wapner believes that nongovernmental institutions also play an important role in the regime. NGOs like “Greenpeace and Political Globalism” are known for lobbying policymakers who attempted to change the state policies. The organizations help create new forms of government that can be more productive and efficient in providing new environmental policies that can unite governmental and nongovernmental organizations in their efforts to find better solutions. The organizations that care about the nature create a global governance of the environment because the environmental degradation cannot be a problem of one separate country. International environmental efforts ensure the world community that more progress could be done in the environmental protection by introducing certain norms related to the human activity.

4. International environmental regimes cannot be successful in their attempts to solve many environmental problems because of the resistance of developing countries that are unable to provide new technologies. For example, many poor countries continue deforestation in their search of arable lands and the development of agriculture. The steady growth of consumption of goods that have become attributes of the modern life is not favorable for fulfilling durable solutions to the environmental problems. A lack of profitable

alternatives is a serious obstacle on the way to solve the environmental problems such as climate change and deforestation. Those who are interested in deforestation and receive a profit from it oppose the environmental efforts of international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. As for climate change, many officials do not agree that human activity results in these changes. The governments are unable to issue the policies that could stop the human activity that leads to climate change.