

Protection of the Environment and Activity of the Oil Industry

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The oil industry at present affects most of human activities, and especially scientific and economic ones. Its negative effects, however, are diverse and various and one of the biggest problems caused by this industry is pollution.

Scientists and environmental activists have warned governments and oil companies about the pollution caused by exploitation and use of oil but their opinions didn't receive proper attention because of high profit and the market demand. Increasingly bad effects on the environment, however, that lead to natural disasters, have made human lives more and more unbearable. Carrying out measures to protect the environment against pollution caused by the oil industry has become a problem of great importance and urgency that requires an action of global level.

Excessive exploitation of oil all over the world could make the structure of earth's crust change, which is one of causes of such disasters as earthquake, volcano and tsunami.

With current technologies, a large volume of gas from oil wells is burnt everyday, which emits million cubic meters of smoke and hazardous gas into the atmosphere. When refining the oil, many refineries dump waste into land and water while many oil tankers pour million tons of oil into the sea when they have accidents.

Consumption of oil by industries and individuals also emits a lot of pollutants into the air. The more

the economy grows, the more pollutants it produces.

As a consequence, many regions, seas, rivers and the air are polluted heavily, the balance of the ecosystem is broken and the natural environment is damaged. In many regions, various species of animals and plants are extinct and the future of the earth is under serious threat.

Scientists have warned about the ozone hole in the southern hemisphere that could produce bad effects on the earth. Many UN conferences have been held to discuss measures to protect the environment and various agreements or pacts signed to carry out these measures. To get all governments engaged in a common action program is not an easy task because each nation has its own interests to protect.

Various measures could be carried out at the same time. Some require great funds, high technologies and long-term international cooperation, but many others don't cost much and are within reach of many oil companies or governments. The following are some of them:

- Educating the public in dangers of the environment pollution in order to enhance the sense of natural protection and encourage researches on measures to protect the environment.

- Applying technical and scientific advances in economical use of oil and fuel and use of substitute sources of energy.

- Putting extra gas into use instead of burning it.

- Reducing step by step the exploitation of oil.

- Applying modern techniques of weather forecast and positioning to help oil tankers avoid accidents.

- Carrying out urgent programs to retrieve the oil spilling over rivers and seas from oil tankers and take measures to clean sites of accidents.

- Making environmental protection laws to punish acts of polluting the environment while using oil products.

- raising funds from oil companies to protect the environment and handle waste from the oil industry.

These measures may fail to reflect urgent requirements about the size and effects of the environment protection, but they could make relevant authorities to think seriously of the problems and work out specific action programs with a view to paving the way to a sustainable development. ■

Photo by Huỳnh Thơ

