



## ENVIRONMENT ISSUES: Climate Change

In December 2009, over 180 nations met in Copenhagen, Denmark, for the United Nations Climate Change Conference. This event was an important step for countries to negotiate a new global agreement on what needs to be done about climate change. Although an agreement was not made at the conference, it did end with the Copenhagen Accord, agreed between five countries: the USA, China, India, Brazil and South Africa. The Accord lays out an agreement that global temperatures should not rise more than two degrees Celsius from 'pre-industrial levels.' It also includes a promise of more than \$100bn by 2020 to help developing nations cope with the effects of climate change, financed from richer countries through a variety of sources. Although only signed by these five countries, they include the world's top emerging economies (with the exception of the USA), and altogether produce the most carbon emissions.

### Activity 1

There have been many criticisms of the outcome of the conference in Copenhagen, as many environmentalists were hoping for a new global treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol. On the other hand, the Copenhagen Accord did see the USA and China (the world's two biggest carbon emitters) together agree for the first time that something needed to be done to reduce global carbon emissions.

- Discuss the pros and cons of the outcome. Do you think it was a success or not, and why? What more could have been done?
- Research the stance of the UK during the conference. Did they agree with the Accord? Why or why not?
- After reading about global warming and climate change (you might also want to refer to the fact sheet [Environment Issues – Climate Change](#)), write about ways you could change your behaviour to be more sustainable.

### Activity 2

Imagine it is the year 2050. Write an article for the environment section of a newspaper, detailing the 'current environmental state of the planet.' What does the Earth look like now? What has been accomplished to tackle climate change? What still needs to be done?