

The rise of China

The rapid rise of China cuts across many topic areas in Geography. China is now highly globalised with strong trade links to other parts of the world. The rise in economic and military power now makes China an emerging superpower to compete with the USA and EU. The Rise of China has created more demand for resources and therefore increased carbon emissions which are contributing to global warming. This increase in demand for resources has also caused increased conflict in the South China Sea. There are also ongoing problems of human rights issues in China.

Task – Use the following resources, websites and videos.

Explain the problems created by the rise of China as an emerging superpower



Video on the South China Sea conflict

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luTPMHC7zHY>

Human rights issues in China

The human rights situation continued to be marked by a systematic crackdown on dissent. The justice system remained plagued by unfair trials and torture and other ill-treatment in detention. China still classified information on its extensive use of the death penalty as a state secret.

Repression conducted under the guise of “anti-separatism” or “counter-terrorism” remained particularly severe in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) and Tibetan-populated areas (Tibet). Authorities subjected Uighurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang to intrusive surveillance, arbitrary detention and forced indoctrination.

LGBTI people faced widespread discrimination and stigma in society. Due to inadequate medical services, they took serious risks by seeking unregulated and improper gender-affirming treatments. LGBTI people also faced abuses in the form of “conversion therapy”.

The government continued to intimidate, harass, and prosecute human rights defenders and independent NGOs, including raids on their homes and offices. Human rights defenders’ family members were subjected to police surveillance, harassment, detention and restrictions on their freedom of movement.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/china/report-china/>

1 million Chinese muslim minorities (Uighurs) held in camps.

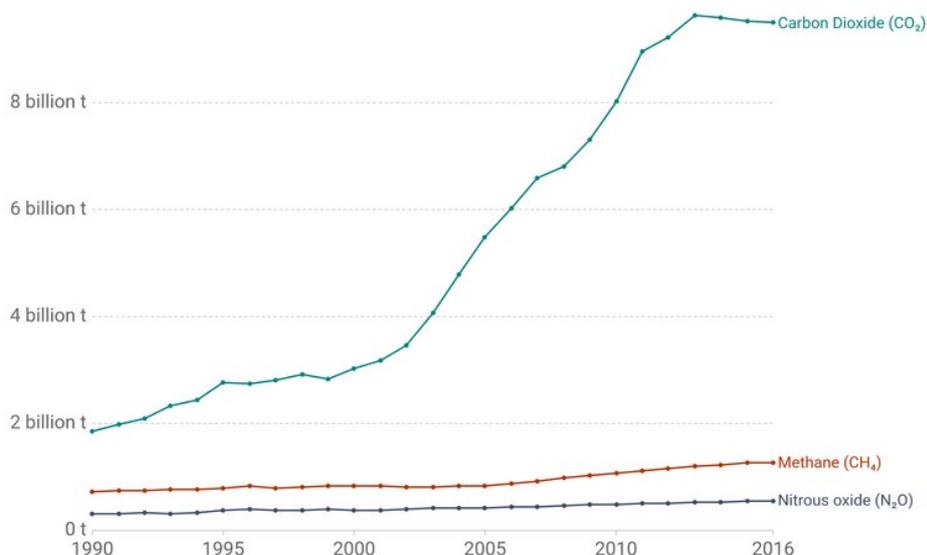
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMkHcZ5lwjU>

Carbon emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions by gas, China

Global greenhouse gas emissions by gas source, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO₂e). Gases are converted to their CO₂e values based on their global warming potential factors.

Our World
in Data



Source: CAIT Climate Data Explorer via Climate Watch

OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions/ • CC BY

Resource demands

China is demanding resources such as copper, coltan, wood and oil to fuel its economic growth and provide it with resources it requires to manufacture goods such as electronic devices. However, this is having an impact on the people and environment of the countries it is being sourced from. Examples are the impact of copper mining in Zambia and Coltan mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Impacts of copper mining on people and nature

Although few in number, the multinational mining companies that are earning billion-dollar profits in Zambia have had a massive impact on its environment and people. On the bright side, the copper mining industry records the country's largest export earnings and has generated more than 90,000 jobs for Zambians today.

For almost 100 years, Zambia has been highly dependent on copper and the mining industry, and the country is living proof that progress leaves its mark on both the environment and people's health. Land degradation. Increased deforestation. Water and air pollution from particles of sulphuric acid, which severely affect those residing near mines. These are some of the main concerns of The Environmental Council of Zambia.

'People can't live here'

In August 2015, 1,800 local residents from Shimulala and nearby villages in Zambia sued the mining giant Vedanta Resources and their subsidiary KCM, claiming that copper extraction from the Konkola mine – the largest copper mine in Africa – is polluting the local waterways and causing catastrophic damage to their health and livelihoods.

According to a leaked confidential internal report commissioned from Canadian pollution control experts, Vedanta Resources' giant mine in Zambia's Copperbelt region has been spilling sulphuric acid and other toxic chemicals into the rivers, streams and underground aquifers used for drinking water near the mining town of Chingola.

Coltan Mining a Continued Threat in Rainforest



Coltan is a highly valuable mineral derived from the unrefined ore, colombo tantalite, and is used as a hardening agent in the production of many modern technological devices, including cell phones and fax machines. Uganda, Rwanda and DRC account for three of the top six nations involved in the \$1 billion trade which supply the mineral to the United States. As demand for the product increases in Western markets, coltan mining has become an increasingly lucrative activity and thousands have joined the fierce competition over resource control in mineral-rich DRC. Miners from all over Central Africa have poured into the tropical forests to set up camps, causing irreparable damage to the environment and indigenous communities who depend on it for their livelihoods. Deforestation has occurred at an exponential rate, precious water sources have been contaminated, and wildlife has all but disappeared in the region as miners rely on “bushmeat” as their primary source of sustenance. Not only does this destruction of the forest ecosystem pose serious obstacles to the abilities of indigenous communities residing in the forest to sustain their subsistence activities, but they are further threatened by the ever-present dangers of warfare and disease brought into their homelands by outsiders.