Facing global issues

Hi there! This is Earth speaking. Will you spare a moment to listen to me? I have some very important things to discuss.

We must face up to some urgent environmental problems! All living things depend on my environment, but the way you humans are living at the moment, I will not be able to keep looking after you.

The issues I am worried about are:
- the huge number of people on Earth
- the supply of clean air and water
- wasting resources
- energy supplies for the future
- protecting all living things
- global warming and climate change.

My global challenge to you is to find a sustainable way of living. Read on to find out what people around the world are doing to try to help.

Fast fact
In 2005, the United Nations Environment Program Report, written by experts from 95 countries, concluded that 60 per cent of the Earth's resources are being degraded or used unsustainably.

What's the issue?
Energy for the future

Across the world today, oil, coal and gas are the main sources of energy for industry, transport and the home. Oil, coal and gas are fossil fuels. Developing energy sources as alternatives to these fuels is an urgent environmental issue.

The need for energy

Everything that happens needs an energy source. Human bodies use food for energy, plants use the energy of sunlight to grow. Since the 1850s, people have come to rely more and more on fossil fuels as their main energy sources, and most modern machines still use oil or coal.

Problems with fossil fuels

The are two main problems with relying on fossil fuels:
- fossil fuels are non-renewable energy sources, and they will run out
- using fossil fuels causes environmental problems, including pollution and global warming.

Overcoming these problems requires the development of a range of alternative fuel sources.

Fast fact
Until the mid-1800s, the main fuel source used by people was wood.

Most of the energy used by people today comes from fossil fuels.