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Unit 1

Climate Change

Learning Objectives:

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- develop a comprehensive understanding of climate change on a global scale;
- recognize and respect cultural diversity in addressing global environmental issues;
- understand the themes, objectives, and guidelines of the course project.

PART I Listening and Speaking

Section 1 Pre-Listening Activity

Directions: *Discuss the following questions with your classmates. List the key information, and prepare to share your opinion with the class.*

(1) How would you describe the level of awareness about climate change in your community or country?

(2) In what ways do you believe climate change is affecting our daily lives?

(3) Why do you think international cooperation is crucial in addressing global climate issues?

(4) How can governments encourage the adoption of renewable energy in their respective countries?

(5) How effective do you think current government policies are in addressing climate change?

(6) In your opinion, how can education play a role in raising awareness of climate change?

Section 2 Listening Comprehension

Passage 1

1. Directions: *Listen to Passage 1 and choose the best answer to each question.*

(1) When was the Paris Agreement adopted, and how many parties adopted it?

A. November 4, 2015, 196 Parties.

B. December 12, 2016, 150 Parties.

C. December 12, 2015, 196 Parties.

D. November 4, 2016, 150 Parties.

(2) What is the overarching goal of the Paris Agreement regarding the global average temperature increase?

A. Well below 1.5°C. B. Well below 2.5°C.

C. Well below 2°C. D. Exactly 2°C.

(3) Why have world leaders stressed the need to limit global warming to 1.5°C in recent years?

A. It is the maximum limit allowed by the Paris Agreement.

B. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommends it to avoid severe impacts.

C. It aligns with the economic and social transformation goals.

D. It is the easiest target to achieve.

(4) What is the deadline for greenhouse gas emissions to peak according to the Paris Agreement?

A. 2020. B. 2025. C. 2030. D. 2050.

(5) How does the Paris Agreement work to combat climate change?

A. It enforces immediate and drastic measures on all nations.

B. It establishes a yearly cycle of climate action based on decreasing ambition.

C. It works on a five-year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action by countries.

D. It relies on voluntary actions without any binding agreements.

Passage 2

1. Directions: *Listen to Passage 2 and choose the best answer to each question.*

(1) What is the primary purpose of the new regulations regarding straw burning in China?

A. To promote traditional farming methods.

B. To increase agricultural production.

C. To reduce air pollution and improve rural air quality.

D. To encourage open burning for easier disposal.

(2) When did China implement a strict ban on burning straw?

A. 2020. B. 2018. C. 2015. D. 2023.

(3) Why is the issue of burning straw more severe in China compared to Western countries?

A. Western countries have larger populations.

B. China has smaller agricultural production.

C. China has large population and massive agricultural production.

D. Western countries do not have strict regulations.

(4) What are the two environmentally friendly methods suggested for straw disposal?

A. Open burning and landfilling.

B. Recycling and incineration.

C. Composting and returning straw to fields.

D. Dumping in rivers and burying.

(5) How does composting contribute to improving soil quality?

A. It adds more pollutants to the soil.

B. It increases the emission of pollutants.

C. It transforms straw into organic fertilizer over time.

D. It has no impact on soil quality.

2. Directions: *Listen to Passage 2 again and decide whether the statements are true (T) or false (F).*

(6) _____ Western countries do not allow the burning of straw without proper controls.

(7) _____ China's ban on burning straw is primarily based on considerations of economic development.

(8) _____ Returning straw to the fields enhances soil structure and increases soil fertility.

(9) _____ The Chinese government implemented strict controls on burning straw due to a small agricultural production.

(10) _____ Both China and Western countries are actively exploring methods to reduce the environmental impact of burning straw.

PART II Reading and Speaking

Reading 1 What Has China Done to Address Global Climate Challenges?

More than 70,000 **delegates** from around the world were gathering in Dubai for the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP28), the United Nations climate change conference scheduled from Novermber 30 to December 12, 2023. This meeting, convened under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, would be a **milestone** where the international community took stock of progress made on implementing the Paris Agreement.

China had halved **carbon dioxide** emission per unit of GDP, becoming a global leader in utilizing green and low-carbon energies, and actively promoting international cooperation on climate governance. Erik Solheim, former under-secretary-general of the UN and former executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, told Xinhua Press that strong environment calls from the people, dedication from China's political leadership and **innovations** of Chinese businesses together made all these possible.

In 2022, China's carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP had dropped by more than 51% since 2005. The **proportion** of **non-fossil** energy consumption had reached 17.5%, and national forest coverage rate reached 24.02% in 2021. China has incorporated carbon emission reduction goals into overall economic and social development planning, **pledging** to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon **neutrality** by 2060. A national carbon market had been established, with **cumulative** transaction volume of carbon emission **allowances** reaching 238 million tons nationwide by the first half of 2023.

With total **installed capacity** of **renewable** energies reaching 1,213 gigawatts in 2022, China had become a global leader in utilizing green and low-carbon energy sources. The country had ranked first in the world for eight **consecutive** years in production and sales of new energy vehicles, with 16.2 million on the roads by June 2023. COP28 President-Designate Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber noted that China is the key in the decarbonization of today's energy, as a powerhouse producing the majority of the world's solar panels, wind turbines and lithium-ion batteries.

China is active in promoting international cooperation on addressing climate challenges and has been deeply engaged in South-South cooperation in this regard. By June 2023, China had signed 46 climate change memorandums of understanding with 39 developing countries, launched over 70 **mitigation** and **adaptation** projects,

and helped train more than 2,300 officials and technicians from over 120 developing countries.

China jointly established a **ministerial** conference mechanism for climate action with the EU and Canada in 2017. In August 2023, China and the United States released The Sunnylands Statement reaffirming their commitment to work together and with other countries to address the climate crisis.

China has been promoting climate change cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) **framework**, providing support for other developing countries. In the first half of 2023, 56% of China's overseas energy investment in BRI countries went into renewable energy projects.

New Words

delegate	/'delɪgət/	*n.*	代表；会议代表
milestone	/'maɪlstəʊn/	*n.*	里程碑；重要事件
innovation	/ˌɪnə'veɪʃən/	*n.*	创新；革新
proportion	/prə'pɔːʃən/	*n.*	比例；部分
non-fossil	/nɒn'fɒsɪl/	*adj.*	非化石的
pledge	/pledʒ/	*v.*	保证；誓言
neutrality	/njuː'trælɪti/	*n.*	中立；中立状态
cumulative	/'kjuːmjʊlətɪv/	*adj.*	累积的；渐增的
allowance	/ə'laʊəns/	*n.*	配额；津贴
renewable	/rɪ'njuːəbl/	*adj.*	可再生的；可更新的
consecutive	/kən'sekjʊtɪv/	*adj.*	连续的；连贯的
mitigation	/ˌmɪtɪ'geɪʃən/	*n.*	缓解；减轻
adaptation	/ˌædəp'teɪʃən/	*n.*	适应；改编
ministerial	/ˌmɪnɪ'stɪərɪəl/	*adj.*	部长的；内阁的
framework	/'freɪmˌwɜːk/	*n.*	框架；结构

Phrases and Expressions

carbon dioxide	二氧化碳
installed capacity	装机容量
Conference of the Parties (COP28)	各方会议