

# Climate change

After the recent one-day United Nations climate summit in New York, the latest report shows what companies are doing to reduce their carbon emissions. Is it enough?

1 Match the words in the box on the left to those in the box on the right to create some collocations.

climate	carbon	Kyoto	emissions	energies	change
greenhouse	global	renewable	footprint	warming	protocol
					gas(es)

2 Scan the article and underline any collocations you created in exercise one.

**Climate change** The timing of the latest survey of the world's top 500 companies by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CPD) could not be better. It coincides with the recent meeting of world leaders in New York to discuss climate change. The CDP survey asks companies to reveal their emission levels, and outline plans to reduce these emissions. The highest scoring companies include Bayer (health care), BASF (materials) and HSBC (financials). However, one consultant commented that most businesses still do not translate their environmental plans into real action. In other words, they do not do enough to combat climate change.

Cutting energy bills must become a higher priority. IT alone accounts for 2% of global carbon emissions. So, more efficient IT systems can reduce a company's carbon footprint. Among some innovative projects in the UK is vehicle tracking software which can help planning routes; one UK company cut the carbon emissions of its delivery fleet by 20% in this way. Electronic invoicing software can save thousands of unnecessary sheets of paper. Schools and hospital are installing infra-red sensors which switch lights on and off in response to body heat. When there's no-one there, the lights

turn off! The aviation industry accounts for 3–5% of carbon emissions. In these recession-hit times, business travel is one logical expense to cut down on. 'Office communicator' is a web-based platform which allows business people to communicate with each other at a distance, share video clips and PowerPoint presentations. This could be the moment when such video-conferencing tools finally take off.

The CDP report comes before next December's UN climate change summit in Copenhagen. Even though climate scientists say that the world must stop the growth in greenhouse gas emissions, it is not clear whether the convention will be successful in achieving an effective follow up to the Kyoto protocol. China argues that its priority must be economic growth in order to relieve poverty among its vast population. So, how much investment is needed in renewable energies? How can consumer habits be changed? Are industrialised countries willing to reduce their own emissions of greenhouse gases? Many people have very real concerns about whether any action we take now to slow global warming, and minimise the disastrous effects of climate change, will simply be 'too little, too late'.

3 Read the whole article. Summarise the key points in each paragraph.

4 Decide if these words / phrases are red (three / two / one star) or black in the *Macmillan English Dictionary*.

energy	carbon	emission	carbon emission
climate	climate change	global warming	innovative
greenhouse gas	software	scientist	industrialised

\*\*\* - very frequent words  
 \*\* - frequent words  
 \* - quite frequent words  
 Black - less frequent words

5 Discuss the questions in small groups. Be ready to report your ideas to the class.

- (a) What are the main things that contribute to your company's carbon footprint?
- (b) Is your company doing anything to combat climate change? Are there any ways in which your company could improve its performance in this area?
- (c) What do you think will happen at the Copenhagen summit? Will there be a positive outcome? Why / why not?