ECOLOGY

For hundreds of thousands years the human race has thriven in Earth's environment. But now, at the beginning of the 21st century we are at a crucial turning point.

Every year the world's industry pollutes the atmosphere with millions of tons of dust and other harmful substances. The seas and rivers are poisoned with industrial waste. People who live in big cities are badly affected by harmful discharge from plants and city transport and by the increasing noise level which is bad for human health.

Among the most urgent problems are depletion of the ozone layer, acid rains and global warming. Another serious environmental problem is the disappearance of forests. If man continues to cut down rainforests, more than one million species of plants and animals will become extinct by the year of 2030.

There are a lot of places on our planet that need immediate help. The nuclear accident of Chernobyl has seriously aggravated the ecological situation in Belarus. About 18 per cent of the country's soil is unfit for farming and some districts in the south-east of the country are dangerous to live in.

Pollution ruins nature, creates serious danger to the flora, fauna and man himself. So nature protection should become everybody's concern.

I believe that environmental disasters can be avoided if people broaden ecological education and every person understands that the beauty of nature is extremely fragile. In my opinion, people must obey the unwritten rules of nature. Governments must take serous actions against pollution. Many countries reduce air pollution making plants and factories fit affective filters on chimneys and car exhausts. They try to use natural resources more economically. Green zones around big cities are protected and extended.

159 countries-members of the UNO have set up environmental protection agencies. They hold conferences discussing ecological problems, set up environmental research centres and take practical measures to improve the situation.

The July 5 is proclaimed the World Environmental Day.

Different non-governmental organizations work actively to protect nature. The international organization is “Greenpeace'' is one of them.

As far as l know people in Europe and America are very ecologically-conscious and they do many things to protect the environment. They have so called “Clear Air Day'', aimed at encouraging people to walk, bike, ride public transport, thereby reducing the use of personal cars. In a cafe you can get a recycled paper napkin with words “I feel sun on my face. Let me touch it growing'' which line the picture of a green sampling, extending its leaves towards the sun. All recycled napkins call people to recycle.

Carpooling is an arrangement among car owners by which each of them takes a turn driving the others to and from a designed place. So less gas is burnt and fewer emissions are discharged into the atmosphere.

In many countries people work together on the program of sustainable development called “Local Agenda 2l'', which was set up in 1992. Our gymnasium takes place in different international environmental projects. We also have a volunteer group which promotes the ideas of sustainable development. Members of this group organize special contests for schoolchildren to attract their attention to environmental problems, offer litter-gathering, anti-litter and community involvement programs; they encourage pupils to divide garbage into regular garbage, recyclable garbage, yard waste, paper and cardboard so that it could be recycled.

There are many things we can do at home to help nature. We can waste less water by fixing leaky pipes, turning off the tap while brushing teeth, by taking showers instead of baths. We should remember that paper is not garbage and it can be recycled, so we shouldn't throw away newspapers. By recycling of one ton of newspapers we save 17 trees. Families should buy in bulk so that to eliminate the trash from extra-packaging. We should bike and use public transport.

I personally try to do what is within my reach. I try to save water, divide garbage, use energy-saving bulbs, plant trees, feed animals and birds. I do not throw away plastic bottles and glass. But when l look around, l realize that not all people understand the importance of nature protection. For example, people of our town like to have picnics in

the forest or on the lakeshores. They often leave behind a lot of rubbish – plastic bags and bottles, tins and paper. It makes me feel sad when I see people returning to town with huge bunches of forest or meadow flowers. To my mind in forests and on lawns there should be placed a notice “Please leave wild flowers for others to I enjoy”

I strongly believe that we must review our wasteful, careless attitude to nature, we must consume less, recycle more, conserve wildlife and nature, act according to the dictum “think locally, think globally, act locally''.

To my mind, we should remove factories and plants from cities, use modern technologies, redesign and modify purifying systems for cleaning and trapping harmful substances, protect and increase the greenery and broaden ecological education. “Reduce, reuse, recycle'' this is the motto for taking care of nature and adopting an ecologically friendly attitude towards the environment.

If we don't realize that we are responsible for what's happening around us, we will never feel secure about the future of the world we live in.