

31

It's Everyone's Responsibility

SOMETIMES I WORRY about what the future holds for the young people of this and future generations, if the world continues on its present destructive way.

When I see paper being used excessively, I think of the lost trees. When I turn on a tap, I feel compelled to use as little water as possible. When I switch on a light, air-conditioner or heater, I feel anxious to switch off again as soon as possible.

This fear of wasting resources results from the daily news we hear about global warming, the melting of the ice-cap, the high level of carbon dioxide and the over-use of fuels. I wonder what we can do when these resources are all exhausted. This problem is indeed everyone's responsibility.

One person cannot do much, but as we say in Scotland, "Many a mickle makes a muckle" (meaning: many small amounts add up to a large amount). Yes, even one person's efforts can help to make a difference. We all have a responsibility to our planet, no matter how small that responsibility is.

Governments too must do their part. I notice many large buses here are almost empty at off-peak hours. The Government could compel companies to use small buses in appropriate areas and in off-peak periods. I sometimes see vehicles, including Government vehicles, running their engines while loading and

unloading. Much damage is caused by barbecues, and lighting candles on various ceremonial or festive occasions. If people cannot extinguish such fires, the Government should take strong action to re-educate them. In fact, we should do everything possible in the fight to save the earth's resources. Moreover, the Government should act quickly on the "polluter pays" policy on water usage. While ensuring that laws are fair, legislators should act quickly, before the air pollution becomes even worse.

Climate change and natural disasters are now seen in all parts of the world: flooding, typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis and other phenomena causing death and destruction. Not only individuals and local governments need to respond urgently to the dangers ahead, but the various United Nations organizations should consider how to compel world polluters to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide, as well as oil consumption, which some believe will be used up completely within a few decades. The Kyoto Protocol agreed years ago that each country should reduce its carbon dioxide emission. Action should be taken against those who fail to carry out the agreement.

You may read more about this subject on the Internet, or in magazines and newspapers.