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The Climate Polycrisis: A Call to Action for a Sustainable Future

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The year is 2050 and a profound transformation has taken place across the globe. The climate crisis has pushed us to the brink, leaving once-prosperous landscapes barren and oceans swallowing up coastlines. Life has become a constant struggle for existence.

Meet Khushi, a young girl navigating this harsh reality. With resources scarce, Khushi and her family travel to the wastelands in hopes of finding a place to call home. Tired and depressed, Khushi wonders if such a place even exists. One evening, at the top of a hill, Khushi's family glimpses the ocean. But it is not the lively, vibrant sea Khushi remembers. It is an empty expanse, devoid of life- a stark reminder of what once was. Her father comforts her, promising they will find a safe haven. But deep down, Khushi knows the world has changed irreversibly. As the sun goes down, Khushi sees the last bits of light disappear. A scary idea grabs her heart – she might not see the sun's warm hug again the once-familiar glow of dawn, a symbol of life's resilience, seems to have dimmed, overshadowed by the imminent threat of climate change. Not only Khushi, but it will also be the fate of everyone on earth. We are currently confronted with a Climate Polycrisis, a complex and multifaceted issue demanding urgent attention. The term "Climate Polycrisis," refers to the interlinked and compounding crises stemming from climate change across multiple sectors and domains, encompassing both physical impacts like rising temperatures and extreme weather events, as well as the socio-economic and political challenges that arise.

Climate Polycrisis is a big word that describes a big problem. It means that climate change is not just one problem, but a whole bunch of problems that are all connected and make each other worse. For example, climate change is making the planet hotter, which is leading to more extreme weather events like hurricanes, floods, and droughts. These extreme weather events are causing damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, and they are also displacing people and disrupting communities. Climate change is also making it harder to grow food, which is leading to food shortages and hunger. It is also making it harder to access clean

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water, which is leading to water scarcity and disease. All of these problems are connected, and they are all making each other worse. This is what we mean by a Climate Polycrisis.

The 2021 WHO Health and Climate Change Survey Report highlights that climate change poses a significant threat to human health, particularly affecting the most vulnerable populations, with an estimated 250,000 additional deaths annually between 2030 and 2050 due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress.The causes of Climate Polycrisis include greenhouse gas emissions from human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, stubble burning and industrial processes, leading to global warming. Unsustainable consumption and production patterns, coupled with a lack of political will and collective action, further contribute to the crisis. According to an RBI report, Extreme heat and humidity may adversely affect labour hours and up to 4.5% of India's GDP could be at risk by 2030

The effects of Climate Polycrisis manifest in various ways, including extreme weather events, disruptions to agriculture, water scarcity, sea-level rise, health impacts, economic disruptions, increased energy demands, and the potential for political instability and national security concerns. To effectively address this interconnected crisis, a holistic strategy is essential, considering the diverse perspectives and goals of various stakeholders while prioritizing resilience, equity, and justice principles. Some of the comprehensive measures are:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions: Transition to renewable energy sources, improve energy efficiency and reduce deforestation.
- Adapt to climate change impacts: Develop climate-resilient infrastructure, implement early warning systems, and support vulnerable communities.
- Promote sustainable development: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns, support sustainable agriculture and forestry practices and invest in research and development for sustainable technologies.
- Strengthen international cooperation: Negotiate and implement international agreements, share knowledge and technology transfer, and provide financial support to developing countries.
- National Carbon Accounting (NCA): Implement a robust NCA system that meticulously monitors and quantifies carbon emissions across all sectors, from individuals to businesses and households. This comprehensive approach will provide a clear picture of the nation's carbon footprint, enabling effective mitigation strategies.

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- Carbon GDP: Alongside traditional economic growth indicators, introduce "carbon GDP" as a parallel measure of progress. This metric will incentivize nations to prioritize carbon reduction alongside economic growth, fostering a more balanced approach to development.
- Public Discourse and Engagement: Cultivate a vibrant public discourse around carbon emissions and sustainability. Engage citizens in discussions about environmental protection and the role of the economy in promoting ecological well-being. This open dialogue will empower individuals to make informed decisions and contribute to a more sustainable future

India has taken a proactive approach to combating climate change by implementing a range of mitigation initiatives, including the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), National Adaptation Fund on Climate Change (NAFCC), and State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC).

In conclusion, addressing the intricate challenges of Climate Polycrisis demands a holistic and interconnected approach that galvanizes various stakeholders, from individuals and businesses to governments and global entities. The establishment of a National Carbon Accounting System serves as a pivotal step in this journey, empowering informed decision-making and enabling the tracking of progress towards a more sustainable future.