**TOPIC: ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS (HAZARDS)**

**Definition of Environmental Problems**

Environmental problems or hazards are disasters which affects lives and properties as a result of the action of man and other natural phenomenon. Environmental hazards have causes and effects. They can be controlled

Forms of environmental hazards are:

1. **Deforestation:** This is the destruction of natural forest by the indiscriminate felling of lumberable trees

**Causes**

* Cutting of trees for timber
* Cutting down of trees for crop cultivation
* Excessive bush burning and grazing

**Effects**

* Deterioration of the environment
* Soil Erosion
* Destruction of soil nutrient
* Disrupts the act of keeping wild life
* Decrease transpiration and increases erosion

**Control**

* Afforestation is the act of planting trees to replace those that have been cut down
* Decrees is the legislation against tree felling
* Alternate sources of fuel apart from wood
* Public enlightenment
* Licensing

1. **Soil Erosion:** It is removal of the top layer of the soil by the agents of denudation. These agents are water, wind and ice

**Causes**

* Bush- burning
* Over grazing
* Excessive rainfall
* Deforestation
* Excavation of soil for various purposes example mining and construction

**Effects**

* Reduction of farmlands
* Reduction of soil fertility
* Destruction of roads
* Loss of lives and properties
* Land and water pollution through deposition of sediments

**Controls**

* Afforestation
* Contour ploughing or making ridge across slopes
* Bush fallowing
* Controlled grazing
* Planting of cover crops like legumes, melons, cowpea e.t.c
* Public enlightenment
* Through terracing
* Urban master plan to check developments

1. **Drought:** It refer to dryness due to lack of rainfall in an area over a period of time

**Causes**

* Lack of rainfall
* Low humidity and cloud cover
* High temperature over a period of time without compensating rainfall
* climatic fluctuation

**Effects**

* It affects plant growth
* Loss of crops and livestock
* Migration of man and animals
* Drying up of rivers and streams

**Control**

* Irrigation
* Avoidance of over grazing
* Planting of cover crops

1. **Desert Encroachment:** It is the spread of desert to areas that were not desert.

**Causes**

* Excessive bush burning
* Over grazing
* Deforestation
* Climate fluctuation

**Effects**

* Exposure of soil to wind erosion
* Hot and dusty and dry environment
* Shortage of water
* Migration

**Control**

* Afforestation
* Irrigation
* Conservation of trees, surface and underground water
* Creation of shelter belts
* Rotational grazing

1. **Flooding: It** is the occurrence of excessive flood of water in areas not usually waterlogged. Flooding is also defined as the accumulation of an abnormal large volume of water in an area which has refused to percolate of flow away. It usually occurs when there is heavy rainfall in an area

**Causes**

* Excessive rainfall
* Dumping of refuse
* Establishments of settlements along the river
* Inadequate urban planning
* Presence of steep slopes in the area
* Poor drainage systems

**Effects**

* Flooding causes loss of lives an properties
* Interruption of socio economic activities
* Washes away roads and railways
* It lead to diversion of public funds
* Spread water borne disease
* Leads to destruction of farm lands

**Control**

* Construction of wider gutters
* Environmental sanitation
* Regular clearance of drainage channels
* Avoid dumping in water channels
* Construction of dams to acts as flood reservoirs

**ASSESSMENT**

1. What are environmental problems?
2. List the types of environmental hazards
3. What are the causes of erosion?
4. What are the effects of desert encroachment?