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**Chapter 13 – Section 3**

**Personal Viewpoint - Global Warming and Climate Change**

**AIM:** What is your personal viewpoint about global warming and climate change?

**OBJECTIVES:**

• Identify your personal viewpoint

• Investigate how your personal viewpoint has formed

• Defend your personal viewpoint

There are many different perceptions of the global warming issues. Your response to climate change depends on your personal viewpoint. For example, you may focus on the positive benefits associated with the predicted changes in world climate.

Most scientists are now convinced that there is a causal link between carbon dioxide levels and global temperature change, although some still argue that relationships are more complex and that the effects of global warming remain unclear. Some claim that current changes are part of wider patterns of natural fluctuation; their case is based on the idea that data has been collected over a very short time compared to geological time scales, so the full picture is not yet known. The complexity of the problem means that global climate models will always have an element of uncertainty about them.

Opinions of ordinary citizens depend on what scientific evidence they find most convincing, which depends on their overall awareness, level of education and specialized knowledge of the issues. The growth of the environmental movement (exponential in terms of both profile and influence in recent years) has played a large role in raising awareness of the issue, and has informed many peoples’ opinions.

The hugely varied response to global warming is because personal viewpoints are so varied. Views are influenced by environmental paradigms (models or templates based on evidence or experience) which shape how you read scientific literature. These paradigms stem from your cultural context and ethical standpoint (e.g. whether or not you believe we have a moral obligation to future generations). Attitudes towards your relationship with the environment are also important, such as whether you think we should live in harmony with it or control it using technology. Your cultural or religious group may play a role in your views towards climate change and where you live may affect your views (e.g. near the sea, you are at risk from flooding). Socio-economic status plays a role (e.g. extreme poverty leads to short-term views and wealth leads to faith that money will solve the problem). Age may also be important (young people tend to be more concerned than the old).

Some citizens feel they have a responsibility to change the way in which they live to reduce their personal contribution to the problem, whereas others do not believe that actions at an individual level can make much difference. Some people do not prioritize environmental issues, including global warming, or think that the response should be from organizations rather than people.

In general, because science is an inductive process and can never be 100 per cent certain in its claims, judgment about the role of human activity in global warming must depend on personal attitudes, and priorities based on your own environmental paradigms.

SOURCE: Andrew Davis & Garrett Nagle – Environmental Systems and Societies

*Directions*. On the back, **discuss** your personal viewpoint about global warming and climate change. **Defend** your position using at least THREE pieces of evidence.