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-Essay-

Evidently the importance of sustainability has grown exponentially over the past few decades. The ever-increasing growth of population and the subsequent development of the world economy suggest that humanity simply can't sustain its current way of living, and must consider bringing drastic changes to its system. This essay examines two crucial subjects, which their importance is often overlooked due to their public nature. The first is the issue of protecting our maritime environment(SDG 14), and the second is about strengthening global partnership to achieve sustainable development(SDG 17).

Even though technological developments have allowed us to pioneer through airspace, the world is still highly dependent on maritime space and its resources. Most notably, maritime trade, with it being the most cost-efficient way of transporting goods around the world, is the backbone of the modern world economy. According to the International Maritime Organization, an organization affiliated with the United Nations, over 90% of world trade involves maritime transportation. This number is expected to rise before the next century as, although tragic, the Northeast Passage¹ is projected to expand due to global warming, in a, the cost of benefit of maritime transportation will far exceed that of aerial or ground transportation and, thus, increase overall volume of trade in the long-term. However, maritime trade is also one of the biggest contributors to climate change and ocean acidification. The UN estimates that current levels of marine acidity is a shocking 26% increase compared to pre-industrial levels. Obviously maritime trade couldn't be blamed as the sole factor behind such ecological catastrophes. Yet, with it contributing to nearly 3% of global carbon dioxide emissions, it is safe to conclude that maritime trade is one of the greatest contributors to ocean pollution. Nevertheless, it is impossible to bring a stop to maritime transportation for the sheer economic damages it will accompany. Instead, a more reasonable solution would be to renew old ships that cause greater environmental damage and develop new shipping technologies that create less waste. But this solution could only be implemented through a joint effort by all countries, as most aged and pollutive ships are primarily utilized by Low Economically Developed Countries(LEDGs) and small-sized industries.

Another serious issue to consider is the worsening of coastal eutrophication: a phenomenon of excessive nutrient² loading which dangers marine life. Eutrophication occurs rarely in nature after floods;

¹ A naval route that connects the Atlantic and Pacific. Although this route is much shorter than the route through the Suez Canal, under current circumstances, only icebreaker ships are capable of safely sailing through it, making it unviable for commercial use.

² Specifically Phosphorus, Nitrogen, and Silicon

modern day eutrophication is mostly occurred through human activities such as dumping waste. Eutrophication causes toxic algal booms and increased oxygen consumption. It either depletes or significantly decreases oxygen levels in lower water layers and suffocate maritime life, often leading to mass fish kills. Since certain species of fish are more prone to hypoxia than others, eutrophication could destruct and disarrange the ecosystem in the long term. Pollution caused by algae is also known to be harmful to even humans. At present, most actions aiming to resolve the situation such as ultrasonic irradiation and biomanipulation are purely reactive in nature. Instead of providing a fundamental solution to the problem it even produces a false feeling of security and further worsens it. Furthermore, even though eutrophication is a worldwide phenomenon that is mutually damaging, many governments still treat it was a local issue or tend to ignore it. Any further solutions must pivot to a preventive approach attempt to incorporate regional and global support.

The two issues discussed above demonstrate the need for a worldwide intervention in protecting the maritime environment. This relates to the 17th sustainable development goal(SDG): Partnership for the goals. The 17th SDG aims to unify the efforts from both government and private sectors into achieving the other 16 goals. The international nature of modern problems make it impossible to resolve them through efforts of any single country or union. That is why the 2015 Paris Agreement was deemed such an important milestone until the US pulled out just two years after the agreement was signed. Strengthening cooperation on a global scale is especially important in protecting maritime environment for several reasons. First, all oceans, regardless of technical boundaries set by international laws, are common resources. The interconnectivity of maritime environment suggests that the effects of pollution in a single area will d end up disrupting the whole ecosystem. For c, the Great Pacific garbage patch, more widely known as 'Trash island' by public, is the culmination of trash and stretches to the size of Texas. No single country is directly responsible for the creation of the patch, but the consequences are shared by every country around the globe.

In addition, many LEDCs have difficulties financing environmental projects and restructuring its industry into a more eco-friendly path. The World Bank projects that most LEDCs have a high chance of facing economic regression as a result of increased debt levels and decrease of world commodity trade levels. One can't easily justify claims on whether the importance of environmental protection outweighs that of economic growth. This meaning, although we could encourage LEDCs to pursue a eco-friendly path, we shouldn't and couldn't coerce them into actually doing so. Especially now that LEDCs are less likely to fund environmental projects themselves, the role of official development assistance will expand.

In overall the essay discussed the importance of achieving two of the 17 SDGs set by the UN. It further recognizes the connection between the two SDGs and endorses the creation of a preventive solution that encompasses cooperation amongst various stakeholders.