Global Environment Monitoring System Encyclopedia Article

Global Environment Monitoring System

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Global Environment Monitoring System

A data-gathering project administered by the **United Nations Environment Programme**. The Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS) is one aspect of the modern understanding that environmental problems ranging from the **greenhouse effect** and **ozone layer depletion** to the preservation of **biodiversity** are international in scope. The system was inaugurated in 1975, and it monitors weather and **climate** changes around the world, as well as variations in soils, the health of plant and animal **species**, and the environmental impact of human activities.

GEMS was not intended to replace any existing systems; it was designed to coordinate the collection of data on the environment, encouraging other systems to supply information it believed was being omitted. In addition to coordinating the gathering of this information, the system also publishes it in an uniform and accessible fashion, where it can be used and evaluated by environmentalists and policy makers.

GEMS operates 25 information networks in over 142 countries. These networks monitor **air pollution**, including the release of **greenhouse gases** and changes in the **ozone** layer, and **air quality** in various urban center; they also gather information on **water quality** and food contamination in cooperation with the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.