

Cancún, Quintana Roo, 6 December 2010

OIL POLLUTION, FOOD AND WATER SHORTAGES WILL BE THIS CENTURY'S CHALLENGES, WARNS ENVIRONMENTALIST JEAN PHILIPPE COUSTEAU.

- During his conference as part of Green Solutions@COP16, he said events of this type raise the hope that things will change.
- It's time to "see the world differently, to understand and take care of it," he urged.

The entire world should be concerned with solving the most urgent problems we, as a society, face: global warming, pollution caused by the use of fossil fuels, and water shortage. It would be a pity if subsequent generations did not have the opportunity to know what we see today, said Jean Philippe Cousteau.

The environmentalist, a grandson of legendary French researcher Jacques Cousteau, gave a keynote address before Green Solutions@COP16 attendees, in which he warned about the risks facing humanity and which have not been addressed.

He acknowledged ProMéxico and the Ministry of Foreign Relations' efforts to put on an exhibition where you can calculate your "carbon footprint". "We know," Cousteau said, "that this won't change immediately, but being able to measure it is a good start to begin changing things."

The environmentalist warned about the seriousness of the oceans' increasing acidity due to the enormous amount of carbon they take in: "Half of the carbon we release into the atmosphere is concentrated in the seas, making them more acid, as a result of which mollusks, for instance, cannot produce shells that are as hard as they used to be".

But this is not the only problem caused by global warming, Cousteau added. "The water crisis is the greatest of the century. According to the United Nations, it is estimated that by mid-century 5 billion people will be living without drinking water. That is a real crisis." The conservationist noted that many people are concerned over the high cost of fuels, "and I say to them that we can live without a gallon of fuel, but we cannot live without water".

However, he acknowledged that "it is encouraging to already see some progress on this issue when Latin American business executives and leaders expressed their concern about the loss of biodiversity, particularly because it would have a negative impact on their businesses—only 18% of Europeans shared in that sentiment—which is good news for Latin America. Mexico and other countries in the region are becoming much more important than others, and that is a step forward".

Jean Philippe Cousteau shared a message given to him by his grandfather, Jacques-Yves: "We must explore the world in a different way. The challenge is to see it differently in order to understand and take care of it. We must take care of it."



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