



Message from Dr. Mario Molina on Earth Day, Climate Change and COVID-19

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Society is going through a tough time with the coronavirus crisis. What scientists recommend is to stay at home, and if you must step out, do so using a face mask, keeping a safe distance amongst each other.

We know this Pandemic will have very strong impacts in the world economy. As it turns out, the scientific community agrees that we are facing another global emergency, namely climate change. In contrast to the coronavirus crisis, we don't have to act in a matter of days or weeks, but we can no longer wait another decade, because the impacts to society could be terrible if we don't take the necessary measures soon enough. Today in particular, on Earth Day, we must recognize this global emergency.

What does Science tell us? Quite clearly the message is that there is an enormous risk that the global climate will change practically irreversibly in a couple of decades to another much warmer climate, which would have extremely negative consequences for the majority of the world population, including fatal consequences for a large part of society. There could be torrential rains in some areas, and permanent droughts in others, which would cause vast migrations, with disastrous outcomes.

Fortunately, experts in these issues -scientists, economists, lawyers, sociologists, etc.- all agree that we can prevent these catastrophes if we take the necessary measures during the next few years at the latest: we have to drastically reduce green house gas emissions from fossil fuel use, because these are the gases responsible for changing the climate. Furthermore, we have to protect forests, because they help to maintain the current climate, which is favorable for civilization. And all this can be done practically without sacrifices, that is, through measures which improve the economy and well-being of society. We already have the necessary technologies, such as sustainable energy production at very reasonable costs, and we have the expectation that society will continue to develop favorable and efficient technologies.

How do we achieve all this? By strengthening the actions set by the "Paris Agreement", for which we need the collaboration of most heads of state, and of a vast portion of global society, including large businesses. Fortunately, we already have the support of younger generations worldwide; they are the ones who would have to pick up the pieces and face the probable damaging consequences of climate change caused by the lack of action of current generations.

What is important is that there is a highly feasible and successful way in which we might confront the climate emergency that we face today. We have to collaborate globally; fortunately, we have an example, namely the Montreal Protocol, that demonstrates how this may be achieved: it is an international agreement that successfully confronted the global threat of depletion of the ozone layer which protects our planet.

So, let's celebrate today, Earth Day, by working together in order to effectively face the climate change problem.

-Dr. Mario Molina

