

“Out of sight...”

...out of mind”. We are aware of many “uncomfortable” situations but we do not react because, bombarded with information, we do not have time to digest the news we receive and, thus, we do not react as we logically should. And given their magnitude or exceptional relevance, it is vital that the public conscience be made aware of, and that its behavior be influenced by certain significant events. For years, since the 1960s the scientific community has warned us of the destructive effects on the quality of the environment (land, sea, air) of “modern” life as it is now lived by the human race that increases by 180,000 people daily, despite the moderating trends of education, which has become more extensive over the last few years.

Ignored like Cassandra. Ignored when remembering research and the promotion of renewable energies, because it was counter to the interests of countries that are rich in oil reserves. Ignored when recommending agricultural research and forestry protection, because this might affect the exploitation and distribution channels that generate so much revenue. Ignored when urgently urging industries to reduce toxic emissions to a minimum... And that the necessary precautions be taken when transporting dangerous goods... .

Reports and more reports ignored because they “interfered” with the plans of those who set the pace for economic and industrial development. The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro addressed, with well-documented scientific criteria, the most significant ecological problems and situations that would transpire, some potentially irreversible, if tendencies did not

change. The impact of “Agenda 21” was much less than was expected, despite the significance and rigor of the world conference.

And later in 2000 came the Earth Charter, one of the most appropriate documents for facilitating on all levels the “planetary knowledge” that today is so indispensable, and which constitutes an invaluable instrument for making it known.

And then in Johannesburg there was Rio +10... of tremendous significance, but far from having the impact that each day becomes so much more urgent.

Declarations, reports ... Everyone finally needed to see: (and that is the great wisdom of Al Gore’s book and documentary “An Inconvenient Truth”) leaders, parliamentarians, the communications media, students... “Out of sight, out of mind”. It is necessary to read the book; the brief and precise text is accompanied by spectacular images. It is necessary to see and listen to the documentary to at last mobilize the political will and mold our everyday behavior.

When those around him are now paying due attention, isn’t it now time to do the same thing with all humanity, the “eyes of the universe”? Isn’t it time to “see” all of those who, being equal in dignity die each day from hunger, poverty and neglect while in this totally perverse system three million dollars are spent daily on weapons? I believe that Al Gore has shown us the way. Now it’s the turn of the people who possess the distinctive power to think and imagine, those of whom President Kennedy spoke when he said in June, 1963 that there is no challenge beyond the reach of the creative capacity of humanity. We must take action so that as

the author writes at the end of his introduction, our children do not ask us
“What were you thinking? Didn’t you care about our future?”

Federico Mayor Zaragoza
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