

## >> COP21: Road to disaster or the future?

Panama >> 12 >> 2015

Throughout the next 10 days, global leaders will meet in Paris at the 21st International Convention on Climate Change in which the 195 State Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will seek to reach an agreement to keep global warming below 2°C. A global meeting that is tainted by the recent events, but which has summoned all political representatives to meet another critical challenge: How to save the planet from global warming and climate change.

The aforementioned word, which has become increasingly important over the last years and has managed to bring together celebrities and politicians alike, has appeared in movies, books and scientific documentaries. However, it is still not considered by ordinary citizens as a real threat to their lives or the environment or –even worse– they do not feel responsible for it.

Rejection or skepticism about climate change and global warming are the main hurdle that authorities, environmentalists and the media need to overcome in order to end with any potential global denial that prevents human beings from quickly taking actions to preserve their home.

For years, we have witnessed a highly scientific approach and the overuse of a professional language that did not contribute to the engagement of the population, since they were not able to understand terms such as CMCC, CFCs, GWP, REDD+ or IE-EE.

Additionally, the front pages and TV scripts focused on remote locations and included large figures, not achieving any impact on citizens, despite the fact that the harsh truth illustrated by hotter summers and more violent storms made it increasingly hard to ignore climate change.

It should be noted that, in order to face the consequences of this phenomenon we need to break the mold and change our habits. Who likes to talk about making sacrifices? And even less when these sacrifices do not entail immediate advantages for one. As explained by psychologists, it is necessary to understand that we need to break with our current lives, in which we have access to infinite water, air conditioning and electricity. This will no longer be a possibility in the future and we will need to move towards a new life in which we will have to make a more conscious use of water and waste management.

This traditional communication, focused on drama, fear or the end of the world will not be able to achieve a large social commitment to fight climate change. Thus, the challenge of the Paris Convention shall be to convey hope: the future no longer lies in the hands of scientists and idealists; it is the responsibility of everybody, regardless of their age, religion, race or social class.

Based on three key communication points we can start promoting a more humane and close communication on climate change and the consequences that the agreements or mistakes of the COP21 will entail.

**1 Storytelling:** Draft the story we want to tell and not merely convey facts, figures and words. How could the goal of the Paris Convention to keep global warming below 2°C be told through a story with real players? Humans and the environment shall be the protagonists over the 12 days of meetings and not political and technical speeches.

**2 Audience:** The number of stakeholders will be as broad as the number of external meetings to be held during the Summit. Communication cannot be identical for everyone. It is necessary to adapt it for each audience we want to reach, including politicians, scientists, environmentalists, journalists, entrepreneurs, NGOs, citizens, young people and even children, as highly-developed countries teach environmental issues since the early stages of school.

**3 Clear messages:** Out of all ambitious goals of the summit, which shall prevail in the end? Which objectives shall our messages promote over these 12 days of environmental chaos? The best approach is to convey the solutions and identify the main players in this story.

Experts have stated that there are reasons to believe that the Paris Convention will mark a milestone in the fight against climate change. Were these to be true, the next major challenge for this group which includes over 150 countries will be to structure the storytelling to trigger certain feelings which, in the end, are the reasons behind our actions or lack thereof.





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