

# IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH-LED AND MULTI-SECTORAL CLIMATE ACTION NOW

Second  
Latin America  
Dialogue



July 22, 2020 | 8:30 AM CST

A platform for indigenous communities, media, academia, legislative, government, NGOs, and more importantly, youth to promote cross-sectoral and action-oriented engagement against the threats of climate change and environmental degradation in Latin America.

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**Keynote Speaker: H.E. Dra. Rosalía Arteaga, Former Constitutional President of Ecuador**



*“I must point out that the wealth of the workshop organized with the participation of various sectors of society is an example of inclusion and of what we must do day by day. Academia and the scientific community must socialize in order to produce the necessary knowledge and transform it; NGOs play a very important role, and together with the media can generate adequate coverage of the populations; Indigenous communities contribute to regional knowledge and issues; and the social and legislative sectors combine to consolidate the foundations of community development.”*

H.E. highlighted that Amazon is a key player for the ecological balance and like the Ocean, helps to maintain the climate in the region. She recalled her work at the Secretary of the Amazonian Basin, where she pointed out the importance of Amazon and the great communities living there on a local and global scale, as it is the lungs of the planet.

*“I come from a generation where ecology did not exist. It was not until 1992 with the Brundtland report, ‘Our Common Future’, that we talked about Ecology.”*

Dra. Arteaga emphasized the importance of the POP Movement in involving young people in the cause of climate action. According to her, youth have the responsibility to create a better environment for all, because they are the ones who will stay.

***Youth Voice: Ms. Camila Colistro, POP Movement***



*“Young people need space that allows our active participation. We need to be seen as part of the solution.”*

There is a need to integrate different sectors and collectivize in a unique manner to achieve a joint fight towards environmental conservancy. Many young people are willing to make a change and are looking for opportunities to get involved, but at times, are not considered or valued for being young, a minor and in some cases, being a woman.

*“Young leaders are the future, but also the present. We are given uncertain pieces of the future, and sometimes it is difficult to find a voice in the present of our society.”*

**Community Voice: Mr. Balmore A. Zanco, Nahua Pipil Community, CCNIS, Representative, El Salvador**



*"We need to strengthen alliances with other indigenous communities to protect biodiversity and marine-coastal resources; mitigate the rise in temperature and work with renewable energy."*

Indigenous people perceive animals, plants and forests as living creatures. These living creatures need assertive conservation initiatives against deforestation, resource depletion and extractive activities. Known as the "Guardians of the Nature", the indigenous communities need to be included in government decisions and policies as they not only protect the natural territory, but also suffer the impacts of climate change like forced migration, for instance.

*"All of us in our common home will be victims of Climate Change, we have to be resilient and take action in change."*

### **Questions and group discussion - Moderator: Deputy Silvia Garza**

#### **1. Are there any public politics that are driving the circular economy in Ecuador?**

Dra. Rosalía Arteaga: There isn't public politics in Ecuador regarding the circular economy, nonetheless, the civil society and NGOs are pushing initiatives concerning the circular and blue economy. It is sad to think that the human race is the only species in the world that leaves behind a track with all its trash and inorganic matter. We hope that this will be a matter of public politics in Ecuador soon.

#### **2. Taking advantage of your experience, what do you recommend scientists to do to push a more integrated solution that addresses both society and nature?**

*(Question directed to Dr. Rosalía Arteaga)*

Dra. Rosalía Arteaga: Scientists must get closer to the academic world. Sometimes, scientists have immense knowledge but may not express their message in the most understandable way. We need more efforts toward the integration of education and scientific practices. It is imperative to implement a STEM type of education where children focus on Science,

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. It is also extremely important to change the ways of the current politics and practices.

**3. Natalia is a young Ecuadorian woman concerned about public and government support for women's empowerment, social and climate issues. She asks, what do we do if we don't get support from the government? What can the government do differently to support local and indigenous practices?**

Dra. Rosalía Arteaga: Natalia, those are a lot of questions and they are all valid. I know the region you are talking about, I have been there. Sadly, you are right, I know we haven't been able to succeed in all of our objectives in your region. Your region has been exploited by the petroleum and mining sectors which has greatly impacted life there. You are also right about the youth, sometimes they don't have the floor but nonetheless, youth have to be proactive and take commitment. They have the right to demand more but they also have the responsibility to take action.

**Panel Discussion:** Strengthening the bond and dialogue between communities

**Q 1 - How can we empower Latin American youth, including those of indigenous communities to lead climate action in the region (and beyond)? What are a few practical strategies?**

**Dra. Rosalía Arteaga** (Global leader)

- The public sector is a main player towards achieving this. Youth ought to be provided with opportunities, education and participation in civil society, and they need to make the decision to get involved.
- Urban communities should work together with young mestizos through participative programs. Financial aid is important.
- *"Where are the young people, we do not consider them. How can they consolidate their ideas and carry them out? What are their challenges? Youth must take the lead, consider their rights but also responsibilities. I demand but also care."*

**Manuel Díaz** (NGO)

- It is important to spread knowledge about the environment and use social media to reach out to the youth.

- *"Apply an environmental audit to each young person, systematize knowledge about climate change and empower them to be leaders."*
- *"Young people have to be the solution through participation, innovation, creativity and criticism."*

**Gabriel Rivadeneira** (NGO)

- Environmental education campaigns with environmental ethics, led by youth and for youth will be important.
- Define environmental ethics and promote it in developing environmental projects.
- Engage with the POP Movement that will allow collectivization, strengthening the environmental message.

**Johan Ramos** (indigenous community)

*"We need sages and adults for answers; be aware of nature to protect it; communication, dialogue and guidance from adults are important to search for real solutions; Indigenous youth can amplify voices about local reality."*

**Q 2 - How can the media inspire authorities to implement policies and laws to tackle climate change and support environmental protection, while keeping physically safe given the trajectory of violence and assassination of journalists who openly report on these issues in the region?**

**María del Carmen Vergara** (Academia)

- Work articulately between media and academia, bringing information to all sectors. Maintain the dialogue of knowledge between the scientific community and the media.
- Establish communication strategies for citizens and a national policy of social appropriation of knowledge to enable public access to important information.
- Academia can help communities understand how to lead a sustainable way of life, in an easy and communicable way.

**Cosme Vásquez** (Media)

- Media plays an important role in global communication about climate change; it can work with governments in policy proposals.
- Media emphasizes important problems. It was only 30 years ago that information about

environmental issues began coming to light, and only in the last decade, there has been coverage on climate change and its impact on communities.

### **Verónica González** (Academia)

- Media can inspire journalists to report on environmental issues, publish projects with a sense of truthful and timely responsibility, and denounce scams and damage to ecosystems.
- Communication sector should make metrics like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) widely available and provide information on green practices.
- *“In Venezuela, journalists are gagged and are at constant risk if they report on topics such as the mining arch and ethnic groups. Government must take responsibility to protect journalists when doing their job.”*

### **Carmen Salzano** (Media)

- Dr. R.K. Pachauri and Dr. Soto are the two great mentors of this movement. *“We are all living beings and communicators, what we do today will mark the future.”*
- What is unknown is not loved and therefore, it is every individual’s responsibility to spread awareness and act.
- Social media must work towards divulging knowledge about climate change and should serve as a platform to publish environmental initiatives.

**Q 3 - What strategies would be effective in promoting comprehensive environmental education in schools, and what educational models do you think would be most effective?**

### **Gabriela Madrid** (Youth)

- Both teachers and authorities ought to lead by example.
- Recycling, sustainability and agricultural knowledge and practices are key strategies to promote in schools.
- Promote environmental sensitization by reconnecting with nature.

### **Mario Gómez Monroy** (Government)

- Develop activities mainly focused on reducing the carbon footprint and CO2 emissions; climate action strategies; systems and lifestyles; and care for the environment, using the Kinesthetic method.
- Promoting leadership in environmental conservation in schools is key.

**Enrique Alberto Vázquez** (Science/Technology)

- Understanding that both environment and human rights are important is key for promoting technology to improve both areas; Communicate this progress in schools.
- A new educational model based on the rights of nature is required. Science and technology should consume less energy and resources. The awakening of conscience is essential.

**Q 4 - What strategies can be undertaken to achieve collectivization and collaboration within and between indigenous communities and other stakeholders in Latin America?****Silvia Garza** (Legislative)

- There is a need for legislation to ensure investment in education and technology, and to diminish social inequality, especially in education. Education must be bilingual and reach all parts of the country.
- Inequality is generated by unequal access to technology. New laws and budget allocations are required to ensure equal access in all regions of the country, through legislation that will provide certainty.
- Youth must participate actively in government voting processes.

**Roberto Ayala** (Social)

- The inequality gap should be lessened through formal and non-formal education, and the authorities must respect indigenous life and educate indigenous communities in their native languages.
- NGOs must provide formal education on sustainable topics through regional programs, molding education to the realities of the indigenous communities.
- Communities need to be empowered to use technologies to conserve and record ancestral knowledge, and also to record various areas of the country with environmental problems. Education and technology can be the tools employed to ensure their rights.

**Diego Toj** (Indigenous community)

- *“Chaman, the man, the old man, the wise man. Each of the young people is a Chaman.”*
- It is important to take back ancestral knowledge and generate a positive attitude towards environmental conservation.

- *“Young people, take up ancient knowledge, carry it in your genes, and keep growing and generating”*

**Q 5 - What needs to be done to overcome the inequalities, including technology, which can enable indigenous communities in Latin America to have a voice and meaningful participation in taking climate action?**

**David Porcel** (Social)

- It is very important to know the reality of indigenous people and how they function with respect to their Cosmovisión.
- Support for technical, legal and media training is required. There is a need for spaces for dialogue and training of leaders to prevent them from adopting images of external leaders distorting the ideals of the communities.
- Create a web of collaboration between indigenous communities and create indigenous future leaders.

**Diego Toj** (Indigenous community)

- It is important to reduce inequalities as indigenous communities need to develop in an integral and sustainable way, administered by their own communities.
- The role of science, technology and innovation is to capture the best exponents and examples of the native intellect, and indigenous people who develop resilient projects in various modern fields, taking into account ancient technology.
- *“There are no indigenous libraries, nor have any native schools been built in the last 35 years, and the teachers who are in those schools do not speak Mám. Therefore, it becomes almost impossible to have a voice and participation as a community.”*

**María Teresa Pérez Gómez** (Indigenous community)

- *“Take us into consideration for planning and decision making. Do not allow plans or projects to be imposed on us that are not in accordance with our needs and objectives. In other words, have a greater opportunity in decision-making and greater participation in educational, technological and agricultural planning, in all sectors. This would allow a better development in our community from our perspective, experience, ways of life and from our needs. In this way, we would not be left behind in many aspects.”*



## Notable Quotes

*"Changes in the world that are urgent on all levels and in the environment, how will we achieve this? Young people must speak up."*

- **Dra. Rosalía Arteaga, Former President, Ecuador**

*"Close your eyes and see the world we want and transform it into a person. The world for indigenous people is like a living being and this is how we look and feel."*

- **Balmore A. Zanco, Indigenous, El Salvador**

*"There are no indigenous libraries, nor have any native schools been built in the last 35 years, and the teachers who are in those schools do not speak Mám. Therefore, it becomes almost impossible to have a voice and participation as a community."*

- **Diego Toj, Indigenous Community**

*"Young people have to be leading actors."*

- **Cosme Vázquez, Media, Chiapas, Mexico**

*"Environmental education at an early age is equal to sustainable adults"*

- **Gabriela Madrid, Youth, Venezuela**

*"Let's continue protecting our planet, which is everyone's home."*

- **Mario Gómez, Government, Tamaulipas, Mexico**

*"Institutions and good intentions are accompanied by resources to reduce inequalities."*

- **Silvia Garza, Legislative, Mexico**

