

THE ENVIRONMENT-A GIFT TO BE MANAGED

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Some great ecological events such as Bhopal, Chernobyl, Seveso, Torrey Canyon, and the Saudi Arabian Coast, are rousing our consciousness: a significant number of dead and permanently handicapped people, soil and water pollution, long-term destruction of flora and fauna for a long time, are the irremediable results. Our systems of functioning and surveillance are not protecting us against error and human malevolence.

Doubtlessly less catastrophic, the problem of industrial wastes is nevertheless preoccupying societies generating an increasing volume of non-biodegradable wastes, the reduction, treatment and storage of which is very risky. The intensive emission of gas and dust, the uncontrolled release of industrial and domestic wastes and the abusive utilisation of pesticides are some of the factors polluting the air, the soil and water, contaminating and eventually destroying life.

Many relevant debates aim at increasing the awareness of scientists on the consequences of acid rain, the weakening of the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect. Every minute, 20 hectares of forest disappear. Deforestation is due to several causes and can lead to a real ecological and human drama.

It is well-known that natural resources are being wasted. The ecological diversity and balance of species constitutes a genetic heritage, whose interdependence and interaction should be safeguarded. We must refuse fatalism and pessimism and share the responsibility and task, either by diffusing information and raise collective consciousness, or by individual and group action aimed at bringing changes in the way of living and promoting political measures in all levels of political power.

Further to those activities, several questions arise concerning the relation between humanity and nature, the responsibility for future generations and the proper model(s) of development.

The universe is a gift to be accepted with gratitude and respect. We must allow for a collective management of this gift, with solidarity for the development of all. By situating ourselves as members of a common world, we must neglect arrogance and rediscover the meaning of cosmic and human fraternity, in order to create an authentic civilisation, for our common share and benefit.

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