

“Climate change is happening and we must act now.”

While a historic drought affects the flow of one of the most important South American rivers, in Scotland, crucial issues for the future of the planet are being discussed. Civil society participation and lobbying at COP26 are more important than ever.

Romario Dohmann, coordinator of Argentina’s Hora de Obrar environmental programs walks from the shore to the bed of the second largest river in South America. “We are almost in the middle of the Parana riverbed, near the village of Montecarlo. In the background you can see Caraguatay Island, a provincial reserve,” he says. The scene is shocking but it is not new. Those who live in this area surrounded by rivers and streams know that the Parana has been receding for months.

“Due to the effects of climate change, this prolonged drought is aggravated even more,” says Romario. These extreme weather events cause losses and damages that affect flora and fauna species, as well as people. The impact is not only economic, but also affects the health and lives of communities.

“These are clear signs that climate change is happening, and the time to act is now,” says Romario. Through their program “Crece Selva Misionera”, the Hora de Obrar Foundation wants to plant 180,000 trees in the province of Misiones. This will help to reforest the edges of streams and the degraded areas caused by deforestation and the expansion of the agricultural frontier. The aim is to improve water quality and increase the water levels.

“These streams are vital for human consumption, for agriculture, for our lives,” says Romario. “By recovering the streams, we are carrying out a mitigation action in the fight against climate change.” Romario promotes actions at the local level and will participate in COP26 between November 1 and 12 to pressure governments to take urgent measures to protect rivers like the Parana around the world.

What will be the focus of the COP26 discussions?

Argentinean independent environmental journalist Tais Gadea Lara summed it up in four points:

1. **Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.** This is an issue pending regulation and seeks to regulate the global carbon market.
2. **Financing of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.** Historically, developed countries have contributed the most to climate change and are

expected to help developing countries in their efforts to develop mitigation and adaptation policies. They must mobilize 100 billion dollars per year from 2020 and from then on for five years to developing countries for this purpose.

3. **Irreparable loss and damage.** COP26 is expected to discuss how to implement the Santiago Network to address this problem, a crucial issue for the countries most vulnerable to climate change and most rejected by developed countries.
4. **Transparency.** It is time to discuss the content of the reports that all countries will have to submit periodically from 2024 onwards to see how countries are complying (or not) with the commitments they have assumed.

Do what is right and fair; that pleases the Lord more than bringing him sacrifices. (NIV, Proverbs 21:3)

I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. (GNT, Genesis 9:13)