

Beat: Politics

Felipe VI: “No frontier protects against climate change“^[1]

UN Climate Summit begins

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USPA NEWS - Madrid is, from this Monday, the world capital of the climate. It hosts the UN Climate Summit that Chile should organize, but the South American country gave up organizing it due to street protests and the political and social insecurity it lives in and Spain took the witness. Although the summits are usually prepared for a year, Spain has been able to organize it in just one month. The Spanish Government has asserted its experience in organizing major events - the 1982 World Cup, the II Ibero-American Summit in 1992, the Olympic Games that same year in Barcelona and the Universal Exhibition of Seville, among others - and the Feria de Madrid, a semi-public corporation with experience in organizing the Fitur International Tourism Fair, among others, has lent its facilities. One hundred and thirty heads of State and Government, in addition to other great personalities - as in the case of the American representative, Nancy Pelosi, president of the House of Representatives and head of the United States delegation - meet in Madrid until next December 13 to try to agree on a global strategy against climate change.

"No border can protect us from the effects of climate change," said the King of Spain during the reception that, on Monday afternoon, he offered to the 130 leaders present at the summit. Felipe VI asked them to act with "leadership" and "determination" through a "constructive dialogue and participation" to address "one of the greatest challenges facing humanity: the fight against climate change." The King of Spain recalled the duty of the leaders to "give the world an effective, ambitious and multilateral response to the greatest environmental, social and economic danger facing the human race and the planet itself."

"We have rigorous data," said the monarch, "based on evidence." He responded thus to the deniers of global warming. The Climate Summit aims to obtain the firm commitment of all countries so that the global temperature of the planet does not rise more than 1.5 degrees at the end of this century. "Global warming is generating tensions over access to basic resources such as water, food, land and energy, as well as large-scale migration," said Felipe VI.

"It is time to act". The King of Spain endorsed the motto of the summit and assured that "yes, there is still time, but there is no time to doubt; yes, there is hope, but also a lot of work to do, and surely it will take several generations to achieve it."^[2] But it is everyone's job, not just the leaders: "Everyone within the scope of their responsibilities has the ability to guide and facilitate the shift towards an ecological development model that is compatible with the limits of our planet," he warned.

Capitulation or hope

Representatives from 196 countries meet in Madrid to try to move towards carbon neutrality in 2050, a commitment that 70 countries have already signed. The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, said during the opening of the summit that "we have two paths ahead: capitulation or hope for climate change [^[3]]. Do we want to follow the path of capitulation and be remembered as the generation that buried his head in the sand?"^[4] he wondered. "The other option is hope. We have science, tools and sustainable solutions,"^[5] he added. "But we are moving slowly, we need more ambitious goals."

For his part, the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro SÁnchez, warned that "only a handful of fans already deny the evidence. Time has proven that, in the face of alternative facts that some invoke to deny the evidence of the weather, there is no alternative but to act with facts. The battle against the climatic emergency requires [...] courage and determination, leadership and solidarity. And it requires, above all, facts: move from words to action."^[6] According to SÁnchez, "Europe drove the industrial revolution and now it must boost decarbonization."

This Tuesday is scheduled for the arrival in Lisbon of Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who has become a champion of the fight against climate change. To Madrid will arrive on Wednesday, amid great expectation that the Swedish teenager has created an image as a scourge of politicians on the grounds that her childhood has been stolen. The international media are looking forward to hearing her assessment of this summit.

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