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Deborah Phelan: Cancun kids tell COP16 to 'Stop talking. Start planting.'

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With just a few days remaining for COP16's negotiators to reach a binding agreement on climate change, thirteen-year-old "21st Century Superhero" Felix Finkbeiner was all business yesterday as he and his schoolmates marched through Cancun Messe. They didn't want to be late for a private meeting with negotiators: a outdoor plenary session which involved planting 194 trees for each of the 194 countries participating in the climate talks.



Photo by Plant for the Planet

The students also delivered a short and stern message to negotiators: 'Stop talking. Start planting.'

"We, the children, are very disappointed and consider the adults' reluctance to enter into binding agreements as a crime against our future," said Felix, who initiated the student project. "By just talking we won't stop the glaciers from melting, although they know exactly about the consequences of the climate crisis and to what extent it threatens our future."

Representatives from Ecuador, the EU, Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique joined Felix and friends outside Cancunmesse, just four miles away from The Moon Palace talks.

This was by no means Felix's debut as a climate activist. Just last month, he was in attendance at the United Nations International Day of Tolerance in London, where Global Tolerance and UNESCO granted him "21st Century Superhero" status. He accepted the 'tolerant' award for Plant-for-the-Planet's 60 seconds of hope video.

Just Monday, Felix joined 350 families at a tree planting in the Puerto Morelos's Botanical Garden and gave a short primer on why what happens at COP16 is important to them.

The 'Plant-for-the-Planet Forest' mission is to remind everyone that now is the time to take action to stop global warming. Along with binding CO2, the trees were selected as symbol for climate justice.

A worldwide network with children activists in 91 countries, 'Plant-for-the-Planet Forest' intends to plant one million trees in every country of the world to compensate for global CO2 emissions while contributing to a reduction and an equal distribution of GHG emissions.

The children are united under the conviction that 'only a global contract based on climate justice can be the solution to the problem.'

"The planting activity here at the Cancun Climate Change Conference is the most significant we have organized so far," said Felix. "Especially after the failure of Copenhagen, it is more important than ever that right decisions are made to finally take action."

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