

Severn Cullis-Suzuki's Speech

[00:06-00:16]

Hello, I'm Severn Suzuki speaking for "ECO" -- the Environmental Children's Organization. We are a group of 12 and 13 year-olds trying to make a difference.

[0:21-1:16]

We've raised all the money to come here ourselves -- to come 5,000 miles to tell you adults you must change your ways. Coming up here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election, or a few points on the stock market.

I am here to speak for all generations to come. I am here to speak on behalf of the starving children around the world whose cries go unheard. I am here to speak for the countless animals dying across this planet, because they have nowhere left to go. I am afraid to go out in the sun now, because of the holes in our ozone. I am afraid to breathe the air, because I don't know what chemicals are in it.

[01:35-01:50]

In my life, I have dreamt of seeing the great herds of wild animals, jungles, and rainforests full of birds and butterflies, but now I wonder if they will even exist for my children to see.

[02:13-03:22]

You don't know how to fix the holes in our ozone layer. You don't know how to bring the salmon back up in a dead stream. You don't know how to bring back an animal now extinct. And you can't bring back the forests that once grew where there is now a desert. If you don't know how to fix it, please stop breaking it.

Here, you may be delegates of your governments, businesspeople, organizers, reporters, or politicians. But, really, you are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles -- and all of you are someone's child.

I'm only a child, yet I know we are all part of a family -- five billion strong; in fact 30 million species strong -- and borders and governments will never change that. I'm only a child, yet I know we are all in this together and should act as one single world towards one single goal.

[04:02-04:35]

Two days ago, here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent time with some children living on the streets. This is what one child told us: "I wish I was rich and if I were, I would give all the street children food, clothes, medicines, shelter, and love and affection."

If a child on the streets who has nothing is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy?

[05:14-05:56]

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us to not to fight with others, to work things out, to respect others, to clean up our mess, not to hurt other creatures, to share, not be greedy. Then, why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do? Do not forget why you are attending these conferences -- who you're doing this for. We are your own children. You are deciding what kind of a world we are growing up in.

[06:14-06:34]

My dad always says, "You are what you do, not what you say." Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grown-ups say you love us. But I challenge you, please, make your actions reflect your words.

Thank you.