

親愛的扶輪社友，

在奧勒崗州波特蘭 1990 年國際扶輪年會，當時的社長當選人保羅·柯斯達告訴與會的扶輪社員們，「該是扶輪發聲、取得主導，並喚醒所有扶輪社員參與保護我們的自然資源的神聖運動的時候了。」他宣佈成立一個「保護行星地球」的扶輪計畫，要求扶輪社員們把環境問題列入他們的服務課題：種樹、致力於使我們的空氣及水保持乾淨，以及為未來世代保護這個行星。

柯斯達社長要求當時扶輪的 110 萬社員每人種一棵樹。照慣例，我們扶輪社員們在扶輪年度結束時總計種了將近 3,500 萬棵樹。許多的這些樹可能今天仍然欣欣向榮，它們從環境中吸收碳、釋放氧氣、冷卻空氣、改進土壤品質、提供棲地及食物給鳥類、動物及昆蟲，並帶來其他許多好處。不幸，雖然那些樹持續發揮保護環境的作用，整體來講，扶輪並未進一步對環境實現其承諾。

這就是為什麼，在今年一開始，我要效法保羅·柯斯達，要求每個扶輪社員至少種一棵樹。我的目標是要超越那 120 萬棵（或更多！）樹所帶來的好處。我希望藉由種樹，扶輪社員們將恢復對於這個必須重新納入扶輪工作項目的問題的興趣：我們這個行星的狀況。

環境問題深深盤根錯節在我們的每一個焦點領域，不能以這不是扶輪關心的事而不予理會。污染在地球各地影響健康：百分之八十以上的都會區人口呼吸不安全的空氣，在中低收入國家這個數字會攀升到百分之九十八。如果目前的趨勢繼續下去，預估到 2050 年海洋中的塑膠會比魚多。而且氣溫上升的記錄斑斑可考：從 1880 年到 2015 年，全球年度平均氣溫大約增加華氏 2 度（攝氏 1.1 度）。這個改變是人類造成的，這點毋須經過科學辯論，如果此趨勢不加以控制，勢必造成嚴重的經濟及人為的破壞。採取行動的需求更甚以往，我們需要達到其他的效果之能力也大於從前。

誠如聯合國前秘書長潘基文所說，「不可能有 B 計畫，因為沒有 B 行星。」我們的地球屬於我們全體、我們的子女，及他們的子女。保護地球是我們所有人的責任，改善現況是我們全體扶輪社員的責任。



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DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,

At the 1990 Rotary International Convention in Portland, Oregon, then President-elect Paulo Costa told the gathered Rotarians, “The hour has come for Rotary to raise its voice, to claim its leadership, and to rouse all Rotarians to an honorable crusade to protect our natural resources.” He declared a Rotary initiative to “Preserve Planet Earth,” asking Rotarians to make environmental issues part of their service agenda: to plant trees, to work to keep our air and water clean, and to protect the planet for future generations.

President Costa asked that one tree be planted for each of the 1.1 million members that Rotary had at the time. We Rotarians, as is our wont, did better, planting nearly 35 million trees by the end of the Rotary year. Many of those trees are likely still flourishing today, absorbing carbon from the environment, releasing oxygen, cooling the air, improving soil quality, providing habitat and food for birds, animals, and insects, and yielding a host of other benefits. Unfortunately, while those trees have kept on doing good for the environment, Rotary as a whole has not carried its environmental commitment forward.

That is why, at the start of this year, I followed Paulo Costa’s example and asked Rotary to plant at least one tree for every Rotary member. My goal was to achieve a good beyond the considerable benefits that those 1.2 million (or more!) trees would themselves bring. It is my hope that by planting trees, Rotarians will renew their interest in, and attention to, an issue that we must put back on the Rotary agenda: the state of our planet.

Environmental issues are deeply entwined in every one of our areas of focus and cannot be dismissed as not Rotary’s concern. Pollution is affecting health across the globe: More than 80 percent of people in urban areas breathe unsafe air, a number that rises to 98 percent in low- and middle-income countries. If current trends continue, by 2050 the oceans are expected to contain more plastics by weight than fish. And rising temperatures are well-documented: Global annual average temperatures increased by about 2 degrees F (1.1 degrees C) from 1880 through 2015. That this change was caused by humans is not a subject of scientific debate, nor is the likelihood of vast economic and human disruption if the trend continues unchecked. The need for action is greater than ever – and so is our ability to have a real impact.

As past UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put it, “There can be no Plan B, because there is no Planet B.” Our planet belongs to all of us, and to our children, and to their children. It is for all of us to protect, and for all of us in Rotary to make a difference.



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