No sidelines in fight against climate change: Augusta Free Press





immediate, more threatening and more irreversible, while scientific consensus and data on the health effects of climate change — particularly on the poor — mount.

Critics warn that the agreement's specific emissions targets are too low, that the pace of implementation is too slow, and it fails failed to specify penalties for non-compliance. That's where we the people come in.

Included in the climate agreement are provisions that recognize the critical role civil society must play to make it work. It calls on citizens to "scale up their efforts and support actions to reduce emissions. It signals the need for all of us to be actively engaged in transforming our world from one dominated by fossil fuels to one driven by renewable energy. While these words don't amount to a call for revolution, it's clear both the United Nations and world leaders recognize that citizen participation in solving global warming has been missing. The success - or failure - of the agreement is on our shoulders.

This isn't a fight in which any of us can remain on the sidelines and hope for the best. Unless we take these matters into our own hands, the agreement alone won't save the world's ecosystems from collapsing, or our biodiversity, which supports all living things on earth, from disappearing.

Doing our part doesn't mean merely buying green products or inquiring how things are going. It means action. It means a direct challenge to the status quo. It means holding our elected officials accountable and voting out of office national, state and local leaders who won't take action on climate change. It means not passing the buck and hoping others do the hard work.

For many, getting involved means knowing how your retirement accounts and pensions are invested and demanding divestment from fossil fuel stocks. It means demanding that your children be educated for green jobs of the future. It means showing up at town hall or city council meetings and asking about your community's survivability in a climate crisis. It means saying "No" to every new coal or fracking project, and retooling those communities for safer green powered jobs.

And there are no doubt countless other ways to act. Undoubtable, the climate agreement makes it clear that governments don't have the power to solve climate change alone. We all must do something more than we currently are. Earth Day 2016 is not about crossing the finish line. When the agreement is signed, the hard work begins anew.

Kathleen Rogers is president of Earth Day Network.

















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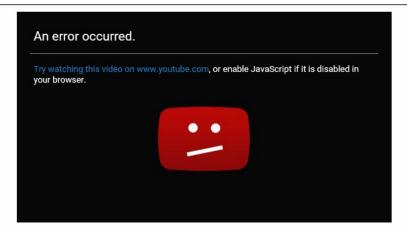






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