

Appendix 1: Mario Girard's speech, Vice-President of the AIVP, at the One Ocean Summit, in Brest, February, 10th 2022

It is a privilege to speak to you today as Vice-President of the AIVP.

We are at a time of choice.

Once again.

There have been so many missed opportunities over the years.

In 1912 and even earlier, scientists began to publicly express concern about the environmental impact of burning fossil fuels.

1912 was also the year the Titanic sank.

The supposedly unsinkable Titanic sank on its maiden voyage.

And we, human societies, unconscious or incapable, are struggling to make the decisions necessary to avoid another kind of sinking.

For 110 years we have been burning more and more coal and oil.

With this energy voracity, we have been able to achieve a level of development, prosperity and comfort that our ancestors could never have imagined.

But at what cost?

Today, about 80% of the energy consumed in the world is still of fossil origin.

Of course, the development of renewable energies is rapidly accelerating. But are we doing well enough or fast enough to avoid the iceberg?

Imagine if we put a value on every ton of rock that is not crushed, every hectare of forest that is not cut down, every liter of fuel that is not burned.

Imagine if we put a value on restoration rather than exploitation of the environment.

Calculating the enrichment of societies for the benefit of our natural heritage rather than at its expense.

We need to change the conceptual framework to act forcefully.

We need to change our conception of environmental externalities.

We need to be able to say that decarbonizing the world economy and our ports will generate trillions of dollars in environmental value restoration.

Let's try to see things differently.

I was reading recently that at the time of the mammoths and the last ice age, the average temperature was only 4 degrees cooler than today.

Four degrees and it was winter all the time.

Now we are already 1 degree warmer than at the beginning of the industrial era.

And we already have a series of natural disasters on all continents, disasters that very often affect port cities to the greatest extent.

Let's put it all together.

Four degrees less is the ice age. One degree more means serial disasters.

That means that every bit of a degree has enormous consequences.

To cap global warming at 1.5 degrees by 2050 would require, according to some scientists, repeating covid years for 20 years.

It is hard to believe that governments could impose such restrictions.

It is hard to believe that so many sacrifices could be demanded while preserving social peace.

We must step up the fight against climate change... while adapting.

Because if the past is any indication of the future, we will not achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

We are not on that trajectory.

We must be prepared to manage the consequences of climate change in the hope that it will one day be possible to reduce them.

Reducing our emissions, saving natural resources, slowing down climate change, all of these are indispensable.

And the AIVP will continue tirelessly to mobilize Cities and Ports to this end. But for what final objective? We must keep in mind that we want and must preserve living things.

The preservation of habitats is to biodiversity what the energy transition is to climate change.

These two issues are much more intrinsically linked than we thought.

If we continue at this rate to cut down forests, drain marshes, destroy marine and terrestrial ecosystems, pollute in every way possible, and have incoherent policies, the IPCC predicts that 1 million threatened species will disappear in the coming years.

Why is this serious?

There are very few people here, and I am the first, who would be able to tell the difference between a human, a monkey, a pelican or a cod under a microscope.

All living things are alike. We are made of the same stardust.

If the Earth becomes unlivable for one species, it may be a matter of time before it becomes unlivable for another.

Species that disappear are like canaries in the mine.

So many alarm signals.

That's one part of the reality.

The other part is that the species of biodiversity are directly necessary to us.

We make life-saving medicines from the venom of snakes, scorpions and spiders.

We make antibiotics from frog skin.

(There is a molecule in salmon to treat bone loss in humans.)

I'm not even talking about the ecosystem services provided by mangroves to prevent the retreat of the coastline or the underwater vegetation to capture carbon in the oceans.

Today, 23.7% of animal species are threatened with extinction and one third of fish resources are overfished.

The world is waking up.

Somewhat.

Canada, for example, has introduced a plan to protect 25% of its ocean coastline by 2025 and 30% by 2030, and to create healthier habitats for species at risk.

This is good.

The last UN conference in Kunming last October called on states to take urgent action on biodiversity protection.

This call must be answered.

A few years ago, I was lucky enough to spend five days on a scientific ship in the Arctic, in the Northwest Passage.

I came back overwhelmed.

By so much beauty and so much fragility.

This passage has been forged by climate change in an ice pack that is thousands of years old.

Climate change has made it possible to navigate safely in Arctic waters and to open new routes.

Already between 71 and 82 ships pass through the region each year, most of them from northern European ports - a boon for shipowners. On the face of it, there is a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

But again, at what cost? Can we be serious and responsible?

The ecosystem risks being devastated.

For example, this boat traffic poses the threat of introducing non-native species that will further destabilize the ecosystem that has already been greatly damaged by being used as a dumping ground for rockets to launch satellites.



Our organization, the AIVP, believes that the time has come to step on the accelerator when it comes to protecting biodiversity.

We believe that the time has come to move away from the logic of compensation or mitigation. It is not true that planting trees that will take 50 years to grow offsets emissions today.

In the same way, it is not true that we can compensate for the destruction of a thousand-year-old habitat by creating a protected area elsewhere.

It is a dodging logic that does not work.

In the 10th and final objective of its Agenda 2030, the AIVP recommends avoiding all destruction of sensitive natural habitats in the development of port areas in order to move towards the conservation of ecosystems. And not only should we no longer destroy or compensate, but we should even enhance and improve.

I know very well, as CEO of a large port, that the impacts of such a decision are major

We also believe that we must honor our commitment to transparency and publish regular surveys of biodiversity on port-city territories.

And to make a link with the remarks on the electrification of ports which will follow, let us not forget the societal externalities which imply the need to respect the health of the local populations, another subject at the heart of the mission of the AIVP.

Let us face reality and act accordingly with seriousness, courage and hope.

Thank you.