

UN Climate Change Conference COP 16
Cancun, Mexico - December 2010

Dr. Marilyn Wyatt's introduction to the film, When the Flood Came, by Gideon Mendel

Greetings from Islamabad to all Climate Conference delegates and all Safe Planet supporters!

After last summer's flood in Pakistan, the hearts and hands of people all over the world reached out to help more than 20 million individuals whose lives were seriously disrupted by this calamity.

The short film, "When The Floods Came," by South Africa photojournalist and filmmaker Gideon Mendel, was made in the aftermath of those floods.

It shows the suffering and the courage of people in dire need—of families and communities that in the face of tragedy immediately set to work to help each other, and rebuild their lives.

The floods that swept through Pakistan in 2010 were not a local event, but part of a larger extreme weather pattern that affected all of the Asian continent.

The release of hazardous chemicals disturbed by the floodwaters is also not a local event.

Persistent organic pollutants—or POPs—once released into the environment anywhere in our planet, become part of the total global burden of harmful chemicals that potentially affects all of our lives.

POPs, once released into our environment, become travelers without passports. They can enter the global food chain and affect the health of people living far away from the source of the release.

The United States government joins the international community in expressing our support to the people of Pakistan. Their tragedy, and their resilient determination to rebuild their lives, affect and inspire us all.

I wish to thank the United Nations Environment Program for this opportunity to share our concern and respect for the people of Pakistan—and for the earth we all share.

Together, we can strive to make our planet "safe for all living things".

Thank you.