

UN Secretary General warns of increasing inequality



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Davos, January 19 (RHC)-- The Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, expressed Wednesday at the Davos Forum that the world is in a "lamentable state."

The UN leader commented on the interrelated effect of challenges such as climate change and the conflict in Ukraine, which are accumulating "like cars in a chain reaction crash," and lashed out at oil companies for "selling their big lie" about global warming.

During the second day of sessions at the World Economic Forum, Guterres commented that the increasing geopolitical divide and distrust of recent generations undermine efforts to address global problems.

He identified rising inequality, the cost-of-living crisis due to rising inflation and energy problems, the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and supply chain stoppages, among others, among these global conflicts.

From his perspective, climate change is an "existential challenge" and the global commitment to limit the increase in the planet's temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius "is on the verge of vanishing."

Guterres also lashed out at the oil companies for having spread a "big lie" by hiding their role in global warming. He drew a parallel between their strategy and that of the tobacco companies, which faced massive lawsuits over the effects of cigarettes.

"Some fossil energy producers were fully aware in the 1970s that their flagship product was going to burn the planet," he said. The UN leader recalled a study published last week in the journal Science, which showed how ExxonMobil dismissed its own scientists' conclusions about the role of fossil fuels in climate change.

"But, like the tobacco industry, they paid little heed to their own science," referring to lawsuits that showed tobacco companies had concealed the dangers of their products. Some oil giants sold the big lie. Like the tobacco industry, those responsible must be held accountable, he added. Later, the secretary-general urged the world to put an end to fossil fuel addiction.

"Today, fossil fuel producers and their supporters continue to strive to increase production, knowing that their economic model is incompatible with the survival of humanity," he said.

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