

Volkswagen scandal 'marks new climate mindset': 2014 summit head

November 27 2015, by Luis Jaime Cisneros



Greenpeace activists make a CO₂ sign at the entrance to the Volkswagen in Wolfsburg, central Germany, on November 9, 2015

Outrage over Volkswagen's emissions cheating scandal has revealed that the public will no longer settle when it comes to environmental protections, the president of last year's UN climate conference told AFP.

"A [scandal](#) like this one clearly shows that today global consumers are

more demanding, that they do not accept an industry trying to make us believe it is more environmentally responsible than it really is," Manuel Pulgar said in an interview.

As Peru's environment minister, Pulgar presided over the United Nations annual [climate change conference](#) when it was held in Lima last year.

He spoke to AFP just days before the 2015 summit begins in Paris and only months after Volkswagen admitted to cheating.

The German automaker stunned the world in September when it said that it had fitted 11 million diesel vehicles with software "defeat devices" designed to cheat on pollution tests.

The software turns on emissions controls when the vehicle is undergoing a government emissions test then turns them off during normal operations, allowing illegal amounts of nitrogen oxide to spew into the air.

Volkswagen subsequently revealed that it had also understated [carbon dioxide emissions](#) on 800,000 vehicles, including petrol (gasoline) cars.

The scandal threw one of the world's biggest carmakers into crisis, sparking resignations and mass vehicle recalls.

Pulgar said public consciousness over the company's pollution would inform the United Nations' major summit starting in Paris on Sunday, where leaders are aiming for an accord to limit global warming.



Manuel Pulgar presided over the United Nations annual climate change conference when it was held in Lima last year

The marathon talks, which end December 11, will see 195 nations attempt to negotiate a world pact.

Global climate deal

Pulgar said he believes the scandal will not harm the image of Germany, a major player in the drive for European commitment on reducing harmful emissions.

"I do not think that the scandal will affect the credibility of the German state since Germany's commitment has been made clear in reducing emissions, in financing climate initiatives and (by) the active

participation of Chancellor Angela Merkel in the negotiations," he said.



Manuel Pulgar says Germany has been a major player in the drive for European commitment on reducing harmful emissions

Pulgar added that he was optimistic about the conference and believes negotiators "will come up with a global binding agreement which will confront the roots and consequences of climate change."

Rich and developing countries have struggled to agree on a deal, but Pulgar said he is convinced the summit "will launch a process for the future."

The negotiations will continue at next year's conference in Morocco "where they will have to implement the Paris accords," Pulgar said.

In Copenhagen in December 2009, high hopes for a legal pact to curb climate-harming greenhouse gases came crashing down as countries failed to reach an agreement.

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