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Climate change: Cultural shift needed similar to anti-smoking, abolition of slavery

ANN ARBOR, Oct. 28, 2010: Despite scientific evidence of climate change, it will take a significant *cultural shift* in societal attitudes in order to address the problem—much like what has happened with recent cigarette smoking bans and the abolition of slavery in the 19th century, says a University of Michigan researcher.

"The present reality is that we tend to overlook the social dimensions of environmental issues and focus strictly on their technological and economic aspects," said *Andy Hoffman*, the Holcim (U.S.) Professor of Sustainable Enterprise at the Ross School of Business and School of Natural Resources and Environment. "To properly address climate change, we must change the way we structure our organizations and the way we think as individuals."

"It requires a shift in our values to reflect what scientists have been telling us for years. The certainty of climate change must shift from that of being a 'scientific fact' to that of being a 'social fact.'"

In a new article published in the current issue of the journal *Organizational Dynamics*, Hoffman compares the current cultural attitudes toward climate change to historical societal views on smoking and slavery.

For years, scientists pointed to data that would suggest that smoking causes lung cancer, but the general public consciousness ignored that fact, he says.

"And yet, the general public now accepts belief that smoking and second-hand smoke cause lung cancer," said Hoffman, who is also associate director of the Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise. "They have become 'social facts' and with that shift, action becomes possible."

Hoffman says that climate change today still resides in the "pre-social" fact phase, awaiting public acceptance. He points to the abolition of slavery as an example of the magnitude of the cultural and moral shift it will take in order for climate change to become a social fact.

During the 18th century, slavery was a primary source of energy and wealth around the world, especially in the British Empire. Abolitionism was seen as a challenge to the way of life in Great Britain and would lead

to the collapse of its economy. Slavery was seen as the natural order of things, and it took about 100 years to abolish it.

"Just as few people saw a moral problem with slavery in the 18th century, few people in the 21st century see a moral problem with the burning of fossil fuels," Hoffman said. "Will people in 100 years look at us with the same incomprehension we feel toward 18th-century defenders of slavery? If we are to address the problem adequately, the answer to that question must be yes—our common atmosphere will no longer be seen as a free dumping ground for greenhouse gases and other pollutants."

But Hoffman says this value shift will require humankind to come to terms with a new cultural reality: first, that we have grown to such numbers and our technologies have grown to such a capacity that we can, and do, alter the Earth's ecological systems on a planetary scale; and second, that we share a collective responsibility and require global cooperation to solve it.

According to Hoffman, research
(Continued on Page LP2)

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Climate change: Cultural shift needed similar to anti-smoking, abolition of slavery

(Continued from Page LP1)

and experience support the conclusion that there is a range of individual- and organizational-level biases that operate to maintain current behaviors that do not support sustainability.

Organizations must augment the development of new protocols for carbon accounting or economic incentives to reduce emissions in order to overcome these obstacles and to change the culture and values of the organization, he says.

"These alterations must integrate sustainability concerns into the existing routines by which business strategies are constructed, recasting them in ways that are mutually beneficial to the objectives of individuals, organizations and the sustainability of the ecosystem on which they depend," he said. "The solutions to climate change within the organization must emerge from an alteration of the organizational system, reaching deep into the levels of the core beliefs and values that members hold toward the relationship among the organization, the market and the natural environment. It involves the unlearning of what has been ingrained."

Hoffman says that organizations must develop a climate strategy by conducting an emissions profile assessment, gauging risks and opportunities, evaluating options, and setting goals and targets. Once a strategy is established, organizations must create financial mechanisms to support climate programs and get employee buy-in by educating and rewarding its work force. Finally, organizations must be aware of regulatory policy options that would most benefit their own business strategies and ideally "gain a seat at the table" when future

regulations are designed.

"For business, the rules of the game are changing, and companies are finding that the implications of these changes have deep cultural significance for their organizational purpose and objectives," Hoffman said. "No solution to climate change will ever be found if we do not spend time changing the culture and values by which we make and implement our decisions."

• Cambio climático: se necesita un cambio cultural similar al que hubo con tabaquismo o esclavitud

El 28 de octubre del 2010, ANN ARBOR: A pesar de las pruebas científicas del cambio climático se necesitará un significativo cambio cultural en las actitudes sociales para encarar el problema, algo parecido a lo que ocurrió con las recientes prohibiciones de fumar y la abolición de la esclavitud en el siglo XIX, según un investigador de la Universidad de Michigan.

"La realidad social actual es que tendemos a descuidar las dimensiones sociales de los problemas ambientales y nos enfocamos estrictamente en sus aspectos tecnológicos y económicos", dijo *Andy Hoffman*, profesor de la Cátedra Holcim (EEUU) de Empresa Sostenible en la Escuela Ross de Empresas y de la Escuela de Recursos Naturales y el Ambiente. "Para enfrentar adecuadamente el cambio climático debemos cambiar la forma en que estructuramos nuestras organizaciones y la manera en que pensamos como individuos".

"Se requiere una transformación en

nuestros valores que refleje lo que los científicos han estado diciéndonos por años. La certidumbre del cambio climático debe pasar de ser un 'hecho científico' a ser un 'hecho social'".

En un nuevo artículo publicado en la edición actual de la revista *Organizational Dynamics*, Hoffman compara las actuales actitudes culturales hacia el cambio climático con las opiniones sociales históricas acerca del tabaquismo y la esclavitud.

Durante años los científicos señalaron a las evidencias que indicaban que fumar causa cáncer de pulmón pero la conciencia pública general ignoró el hecho, dijo.

"Y sin embargo el público en general ahora acepta la creencia de que fumar y el humo del cigarrillo que otros fuman causan el cáncer de pulmón", dijo Hoffman, quien también es director asociado del Instituto Erb para la Empresa Global Sostenible. "Estos se han convertido en 'hechos sociales' y, con ese vuelco la acción se hace posible".

Hoffman sostiene que el cambio climático reside, hoy, en la fase de "pre facto" social, a la espera de la aceptación pública. El profesor señala la abolición de la esclavitud como un ejemplo de la magnitud del vuelco cultural y moral que ocurrirá a fin de que el cambio climático se convierta en un hecho social.

Durante el siglo XVIII la esclavitud fue una fuente primaria de energía y riqueza en todo el mundo, especialmente en el Imperio Británico. El abolicionismo se consideraba como una amenaza para el estilo de vida en Gran Bretaña que llevaría al colapso de su economía. La esclavitud se veía como el orden natural de las cosas y llevó unos cien años para abolirla.

"Sólo unas pocas personas percibían un problema moral en la esclavitud en el siglo XVIII, y pocas personas en el siglo XXI ven un problema moral en la quema de combustibles fósiles", dijo Hoffman. "¿Dentro de cien años la gente nos verá a nosotros con la misma dificultad para comprender con la cual nosotros vemos hoy a los defensores de la esclavitud en el siglo XVIII? Si no encaramos adecuadamente el problema del cambio climático la respuesta a esa pregunta será "sí": nuestra atmósfera común ya no se considerará como un botadero gratuito de gases que causan el efecto invernadero y otros contaminantes".

Pero Hoffman dice que este cambio en los valores requerirá que la humanidad acepte una nueva realidad cultural: primero, que nos hemos vuelto tan numerosos y nuestras tecnologías han crecido a tal capacidad que podemos alterar, y alteramos, los sistemas ecológicos de la Tierra en escala planetaria; y segundo que compartimos una

responsabilidad colectiva y se requiere la cooperación global para resolver el problema.

Según Hoffman la investigación y la experiencia sustentan la conclusión de que hay una gama de actitudes y opiniones, al nivel individual y de organizaciones, que opera para que se mantengan los comportamientos actuales que no contribuyen a la sustentabilidad.

Las organizaciones deben aumentar el desarrollo de nuevos protocolos para la contabilidad del carbono o incentivos económicos que reduzcan las emisiones a fin de que se superen esos obstáculos y cambien los valores y la cultura de la organización, añadió.

"Estas alteraciones deben integrar las preocupaciones por la sustentabilidad en las rutinas por las cuales se construyen las estrategias de negocios, remodelándolas de forma que sean mutuamente beneficiosas para los objetivos de los individuos y las organizaciones, y la sustentabilidad del ecosistema del cual dependen", continuó. "Las soluciones al cambio climático dentro de la organización deben emerger de una alteración del sistema de las organizaciones, deben llegar profundo a los niveles de las creencias y valores centrales que los miembros tienen hacia la relación entre la organización, el mercado y el ambiente natural. Esto involucra un des-aprendizaje de lo que está arraigado en nosotros".

Hoffman dijo que las organizaciones deben desarrollar una estrategia climática mediante una evaluación de su perfil de emisiones, la medición de riesgos y oportunidades, la evaluación de las opciones y la elaboración de metas y objetivos. Una vez que se establezca la estrategia las organizaciones deben crear los mecanismos financieros que sustenten los programas climáticos y deben ocuparse de que sus empleados se sumen al esfuerzo educando y recompensando a la fuerza laboral. Finalmente, las organizaciones deben ser conscientes de las opciones de política regulatoria que beneficien más sus propias estrategias de negocios e, idealmente, se ganen un sitio de participación cuando se diseñen regulaciones futuras.

"Las reglas de juego están cambiando para las empresas y las compañías sedan cuenta de que las implicaciones de estos cambios tienen profundo significado cultural para sus propósitos y objetivos como organizaciones", señaló Hoffman. "Jamás se encontrará una solución al cambio climático si no dedicamos tiempo al cambio de la cultura y los valores por los cuales hacemos y ejecutamos nuestras decisiones".

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Triple threat Detroit singer, songwriter and musician Jessica Hernández is making sound waves on national music scene

By Alan Abrams, La Prensa Senior Correspondent

Move over *Kid Rock* and *Eminem*, there's another Detroit Icon on the way.

The buzz in the pop music business is that Detroiter *Jessica Hernández* may be "The Next Big Thing."

Critics have compared her voice to *Amy Winehouse*, *Joan Osborne*, and *Fiona Apple*, but Hernández is clearly an original. Simply put, she dazzles reviewers and audiences alike.

The diminutive 23-year-old Detroit-born songwriter, singer, and musician is the driving force in front of the blues, indie, and soul swamp music band *The Deltas*, one of the hottest groups on the highly competitive national music festival circuit.

"Players come in and out" of the group, explains Hernández, who just launched her first EP, "*Weird Looking Women in Too Many Clothes*," last week

with a party at *DetroitSoup*, located in a loft above Detroit's *Mexicantown Bakery* at 4330 West Vernor Highway. Her parents, *Lena* and *Omar Hernández*, own the bakery and the popular *Armando's Restaurant*.

Detroit-Soup sponsors monthly dinners funding micro-grants for cultural projects in Detroit, many of them in the Latino community.

If that song title grabs you, then wait until you hear the title song in her forthcoming LP, "*Cutting the Talon Off a Dead Owl*"

Omar Hernández, who is Cuban, left Cuba at the age of three with his family. Although they already had other family

members in Miami, Jessica's grandmother's sister was living in Detroit, so the family moved to the Motor City. Her mother is of Texan-Mexican heritage.

Hernández has a brother Michael who serves in the US Army Reserve and commutes to college.

Surprisingly, music was not Hernández's original career choice. She attended Columbia College in Chicago where she studied fashion and has also majored in marketing. She began singing with bands while she was a student in Chicago.

"I was writing songs in a combination of genres," says Hernández of her work. I wrote all of the songs on the EP in the past year or two."

Now that the EP is on the market, Hernández is shopping the LP record, and is already getting serious attention from labels.

"I wanted to test the waters," she explains. "I want to get the music out there and I'd like to release it in the spring. We won't be touring until the spring so that allows me to do more writing and pre-production for our next record."

"I do a lot of writing. I have my own music room where I can play my banjo, guitar, piano, and drums. So I'm writing lyrics and playing recording ideas. And I have put my marketing skills to work. I handle

all the phone calls, set up interviews, and keep up the postings on line. It is almost as if I have a day job, except that it's not work, it is everything I enjoy,"



Jessica Hernández—Photo by Matty Franklin



Jessica Hernández and the Deltas.

—Photo by Nicholas Williams.

says Hernández.

She says it is very important to her that her family is supportive. "My dad lets me work at the bakery warehouse whenever I need money," she says with a laugh, "but I keep an open schedule. My dad is always helping me a lot, and so has the Latino community in Detroit."

Although her band is collective, Hernández says she makes all the decisions. "That's why it is revolving," she explains, "Since I was writing material and was the one pursuing everything."

Hernández and the Deltas stood out at their very first festival, CMJ in New York City. However, by the time they played the prestigious *SXSW (South by Southwest) Festival* in Austin, Texas, "We'd only been a band for a few months. It was nerve racking. We were forced to get really tight in the band. But we got our stuff together for it and were very good. As a young band, it really opened our eyes."

"When we played the *Bonmaroo Festival* in Tennessee, we'd still only been playing together for under a year, maybe six to nine months. To have those spectacular experiences so early forced us to be professional. The audience and

critical response was really great," says Hernández.

The group returns to SXSW in March. *So where does Hernández see herself a year from now?*

"Hopefully, we'll have the full-length record released on a very ideal label. If not, I'll release it. Getting out there and playing more music for everyone every night, that's my goal," she says.

Does she plan to record a bilingual song or album, or even one in Spanish?

"I didn't want to force myself to be ready in Spanish, because English is my first language. But on the full-length record I do sing in Spanish," says Hernández.

"However, I'm not a fan of doing the same record in both English and Spanish. Not only are the languages different, but so are the emotions."

To order her EP, e-mail Hernanjessica@gmail.com The EP sells for \$10 and \$2.50 postage.

Her music is also available for downloading on line at iTunes and Bandcamp, and you can follow her on Myspace and Facebook.

On the Internet: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJzEUUnsuO4



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