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100 months to act on climate, warns Charles

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The Prince of Wales is to issue a warning that the world has only "100 months to act" before the damage caused by global warming becomes irreversible.

As part of a tour of South America, his speech to business leaders in Rio de Janeiro on Thursday will echo predictions made by climate change experts who believe there are about eight years left to cut CO2 emissions. He will warn that failure to act urgently could have catastrophic effects for the planet.

The speech will stress the importance of big business joining the fight against global warming. He will say that although the world is in recession, protecting the environment should remain a priority.

It is believed the speech will echo one that he gave in São Paulo at the start of the last recession in 1991, when he warned that it was important to continue to care for the welfare of the planet and that it should not become "a luxury".

The prince's tour will help to put the environment at the top of the political agenda before leaders of the G20 nations meet in London next month.

The prince, accompanied by the Duchess of Cornwall, will arrive in Chile tomorrow at the start of a 10-day tour before travelling to Brazil and Ecuador. The tour will end in the Galápagos Islands to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin.

Prince Charles has been a long-term campaigner on environmental issues and set up his Rainforests Project in 2007.

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