



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the
INTERNATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT FORUM**
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International Environment Forum A Baha'i inspired organization addressing
the environment and sustainable development

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Article Deadline next issue 13 May 2015

General Secretary Emily Firth
Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.

From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to newsletter@ief.org.

Please share the Leaves newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

Updates from the IEF Governing Board

**REQUEST FOR HELP: Global Ethics Forum 2015 Conference,
25-27 June, Geneva**

As a partner of the Global Ethics Forum, the IEF has been invited to participate in its 2015 conference in Geneva from 25-27 June. 'Responsible Leadership' is the topic of 2015 and the conference theme is 'The Value of Values'. Should any IEF members based in or near Geneva wish to represent IEF at the conference this year, please contact Arthur Dahl or Emily Firth at ief@iefworld.org.

REQUEST FOR HELP: COP21 – Paris, December 2015

In the lead up to the UNFCCC climate conference (Conference of the Parties 'COP21') to be held in Paris in the first two weeks of December this year, we are considering how IEF might be able to contribute to the conference as we did in Johannesburg (UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002), Copenhagen (COP 15, 2009) and Rio de Janeiro (UN Conference on Sustainable Development 'Rio+20', 2012).

The Board has initiated discussions with the Baha'i International Community (BIC) in New York, the US Office of Public Affairs and the French Baha'i Community. Our planning is still in early stages and we welcome your input and ideas! Should you be interested, willing and able to be part of this effort in Paris in December on either the intergovernmental or NGO side of the conference, please contact Arthur Dahl, IEF President or Emily Firth, General Secretary at ief@iefworld.org.

REQUEST FOR HELP: IEF Climate Change course material to be translated into French

In anticipation of COP21 in Paris, IEF would like to offer French materials about climate change and how the Bahá'í teachings provide a spiritual and ethical framework to mitigate it effectively. A group of French-speaking IEF members have generously volunteered their time to translate a shortened version of the IEF course "Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions of Climate Change - an Interfaith Study Course". We are aiming to have the translation completed by June in order to make the material available for educational projects and study circles starting this summer. We may still need more volunteers to help with translation or to review the materials. If you would like to be part of this initiative, or want further information, please contact Christine Muller at chmuller99@hotmail.com.

REQUEST FOR HELP: Education in the post-2015 process

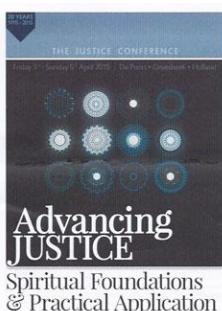
It has often seemed as if governments had other preoccupations than education about sustainable and responsible lifestyles, yet this may be changing. There is Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, and education dimensions to all the other goals and targets. Victoria Thoresen has been contributing to discussions on the UNESCO Global Action Plan (GAP) that follows up the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. At a recent meeting with governments in Tokyo, education was prioritized with, at the top of the list, the values-based indicators for schools that IEF has been pushing in the framework of PERL. Behaviour change is recognized as important, and values-based education is important for motivating changes in behaviour. PERL is now planning how to upscale and upgrade the project in anticipation of major new funding. The IEF board is considering what directions it would like to contribute to: school curriculum, training of teachers, reaching out beyond schools to the wider community, etc. This will depend partly on the interest of members to become involved in working on this.

Education will probably also be a major theme in the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December, so we encourage all IEF members to consider how education, and particularly education that combines science with ethics, values and spirituality, can contribute to action leading up to and after the Paris Conference, where implementation will be at the top of the agenda. If you want to be part of the consultation on education, please contact Arthur Dahl, IEF President or Emily Firth, General Secretary at ief@iefworld.org.

Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG indicators

The IEF Governing Board is supporting an initiative by CIVICUS to write the co-chairs of the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations and co-facilitators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) process, H.E. Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya and H.E. Ambassador David Donoghue of Ireland, requesting a formal mechanism for the participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders in the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG indicators. The indicators will bring the high aspirations of the SDGs down to the level of practical realization. There is still a wide range of proposals for indicators, from a very limited list from the UN Statistical Commission selected on the basis of practicality, to much more forward looking proposals, often with details still to be developed. Many civil society organizations, including IEF, have expertise in indicators that would be useful to the Inter-agency Expert Group beyond what is already available in the agencies of the UN system. Civil society is often able to experiment with new indicators and to develop them to the point where governments might take an interest in them. We hope that the proposal by CIVICUS will be taken up by the co-chairs.

Report from The Justice Conference in the Netherlands, 3-5 April



International Environment Forum members Iko Congo, Arthur Dahl, Wendi Momen and Nuri Niyazi

IEF members Arthur Dahl of Switzerland, Wendi Momen of England, Iko Congo of Portugal and Nuri Niyazi of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome participated in The Justice Conference held on 3-5 April 2015 at the de Poort Conference Centre, Groesbeek, the Netherlands, with about 100 participants from around the world. This was the 20th year that such conferences have been held. The conference theme was **"Advancing Justice: Spiritual Foundations and Practical Applications"**, and the programme combined keynotes with several parallel workshops, all of a very high calibre.



Kiser Barnes giving the opening keynote; Kiser Barnes and Maja Groff, conference organizer

The opening talk was by Kiser Barnes, a distinguished lawyer and law professor from the USA and a former member of the Universal House of Justice, the international council of the Baha'i Faith. His topic was **"Two Foundations of Justice: Moral Development and Service to Humanity"**, which provided a solid review of the spiritual foundations for justice provided in the Baha'i writings.



Ali Noroozi's Presentation followed by Workshop by Ali Noroozi and Hooshmand Badee on distributive justice

Ali Noroozi, Inspector-General of Taxation for the Australian Government, gave a fascinating talk on **"The Role of Taxation in Delivering Economic Justice"**, making us almost want to love paying our taxes (assuming that our government is just and efficient). This was followed by a workshop on distributive justice together with Hooshmand Badee of England.



Keynote by Sovaida Ma'ani Ewing

Sovaida Ma'ani Ewing of Washington, D.C. provided a broad overview of the governance dimension of justice in her presentation on "**Building a World Federation**", drawn from her new book "*Building a World Federation: The Key to Resolving Our Global Crises*", published by the Center for Peace and Global Governance. Workshops allowed for a deeper discussion of practical applications of justice, such as actual cases facing a local government, and the issues of income inequality and poverty.



Arthur Dahl keynote and leading a workshop

IEF President Arthur Dahl concluded the second day with a keynote on "**Justice and Global Policy Change for Environmental Stewardship**", which highlighted the opportunities presented by the expected adoption at the United Nations of the Sustainable Development Goals as a new set of aspirations for greater economic, social and environmental justice in the world over the next 15 years. Arthur also led a workshop on the relevance of justice to global environmental issues like climate change and food security.

The final day started with a plenary session on **The Future of Peaceful Inter-Religious Coexistence**, starting with a presentation over skype by Elham Manea of the University of Zurich on "**Islamic Law in the West? Secularism as a Necessary Basis for Peaceful Inter-Religious Coexistence**". Professor Manea had been unable to come in person because, as both a Swiss and Yemeni national, she was advising the Swiss government on the crisis in Yemen. Her main point was that proposals to allow the application of Islamic law, especially about marriage and the family, in western countries, had been shown to increase isolation and extremism rather than facilitate integration.



Wendi Momen

This was followed by IEF board member Dr. Wendi Momen giving her paper on "**Baha'i Perspectives on Inter-Religious Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence**".



Payam Akhavan

The closing plenary was a deeply touching talk by Prof. Payam Akhavan on "**The Law of Oneness: Empathy and Justice in a World of Extremes**". He drew on his experience with the United Nations as a legal advisor investigating war crimes and genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda, among other places, and his efforts before the highest tribunals to bring the perpetrators to justice. This truly linked spiritual foundations and practical applications.

Overall, the conference showed how issues of environment and sustainability interlink with other dimensions of justice, and the importance of holistic approaches in searching for solutions to the complex problems the world is facing. A report with photos can be seen at <http://yabaha.net/dahl/travel/t2015/JusticeConf/JusticeConf.html>.

The Netherlands

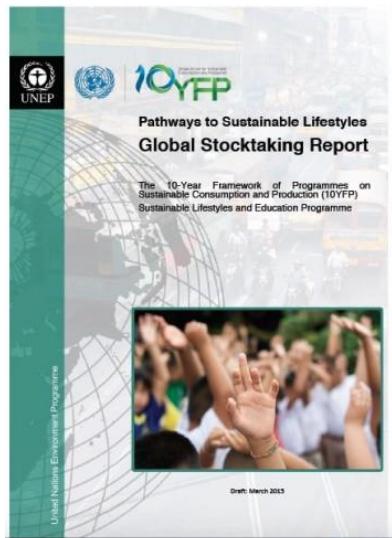
IIEF members Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, Onno Vinkhuyzen and Erasmus Vinkhuyzen hosted meetings at their home in Heelsum, the Netherlands, including talks on "Ecology and Spirituality", and with stories from the Pacific about our relationship with nature, by Arthur Dahl before his attendance at the Justice Conference.

Draft Report: Pathways to Sustainable Lifestyles – Global Stocktaking Report

<http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/news/136-draft-report-pathways-to-sustainable-lifestyles-global-stocktaking-report-.html>

Posted on 06/03/2015

10YFP Sustainable Lifestyles & Education Programme, Sustainable lifestyles and consumption, Consumer information, Standards and eco-labels, Values and cultural change, Awareness-raising and education for SCP, Formal education, Informal education and awareness-raising, Life-long learning - All, Africa, Asia / Pacific, Europe, Latin America / Caribbean, North America, West Asia



The purpose of this draft stocktaking report is to contribute to the overall development of the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) by delivering a better understanding of the complex relations between lifestyles and sustainability, briefly explaining the relevant role of research, policy development, education and civic action as fundamental tools to enable, strengthen and safeguard sustainable lifestyles, and identifying regional, sub regional, national and local initiatives and actions that indicate a shift towards more sustainable lifestyles or the safeguarding of sustainable traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

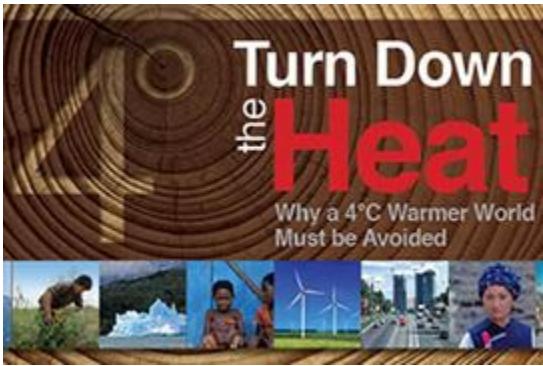
This report:

- presents the concept of sustainable lifestyles as understood today;
- identifies common lifestyles issues and differences between regions; and
- presents examples of the trends and innovations that are in place to address them, placing a special focus on education.

This report considers how transformative learning and change towards sustainable lifestyles can be accelerated and enhanced through the initiatives of the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme.

This report was prepared by contributors from:

- The Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) namely Victoria Thoresen, Robert Didham, Carme Martinez-Roca, Luis Flores Mimica, Cathy Rutivi and Sevgi Kalkan;
- with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including Fabienne Pierre (Programme Officer), Garrette Clark (Programme Officer), Khairoon Abbas (Consultant) and Helene Cruypenninck (former Consultant).



A New MOOC Is Coming on April 20, 2015

New Massive Open Online Course on Climate Change – PLUS a Regional Module on Climate Impacts and Action

The World Bank Group is launching a new MOOC on climate change **on April 20** and it's HUGE. In fact, it's Massive. This Massive Open Online Course, hosted on Coursera, is **FREE** and contains the most recent scientific evidence on climate change.

Explore forward-looking scenarios about your world: Can renewables help Africa overcome its energy poverty? How can countries in the Middle East adapt to water scarcity? What can we learn from climate action in Latin American cities? Is climate-smart agriculture an answer in South and South East Asia? Contribute and share your own solutions to the climate challenge.

Get valuable insights from leading thinkers on climate change, such as Yolanda Kakabadse, President of the WWF and Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, Director of the Potsdam Institute. Join the Google Hangout during the course and talk to climate scientists. Try out the **daily Carbon Footprint Tracker**. Connect with like-minded learners during the facilitated discussions and meet up with them in your community. Gain a different perspective and build your final project around a specific geographic region.

REGISTER NOW for five weeks of great learning for free. Get the latest information on climate change and find out what you can do about it. Spread the word: **#WBHeat**

Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must be Avoided

It is now clear that without action on climate change, the world may become 4°C warmer by the end of this century. Such an increase would threaten to roll back decades of development progress; thus, we are at a 'make it or break it' point in time. This course presents the most recent scientific evidence, as well as some of the opportunities for urgent action.

Instructors



Pablo Benitez The World Bank



Alan S. Miller The World Bank

About the Course

Under current pledges and commitments, the world is likely to reach 4°C degree warming by the end of the century and 2°C warming as early as 2040. This MOOC brings together renowned scientists and policymakers to provide a synthesis of the most recent evidence and presents an analysis of likely impacts and risks, with a focus on developing countries. It chronicles already observed changes in the climate system and their impacts, through the increase in carbon dioxide emissions, corresponding temperature increases and melting of glaciers and sea ice, and changes in precipitation patterns. This course also offers projections for the 21st century for droughts, heat waves and sea-level rise in different parts of the world, with implications for food and water security, as well as possible impacts on agriculture, water availability, ecosystems and human health.

This MOOC presents an analysis of the likely impacts of a 4°C warming trajectory and stresses the need for decision makers and communities to take a serious look at their adaptation choices, while also signaling the urgency for mitigation action. Participants will also be introduced to the risks of triggering non-linearity, and tipping elements, such as the disintegration of the West Antarctic ice sheet and large-scale Amazon dieback. The course includes a discussion of the main policy choices needed to prevent warming above 2°C and ends with an assessment of climate risks to development across six geographic regions.

Course Syllabus

Overview

This overview presents the main topics this course will cover, and provides a summary of the key impacts and challenges of a 4°C warmer world.

Week 1: Observed Climate Changes and Impacts: Hundreds of Thousands of Years to Now

This module outlines the historical observed changes in the climate system leading up to the present day and the impacts that can now be attributed to human-induced climate change. It examines the rise of greenhouse gas emissions since pre-industrial times, while explaining the link between CO₂ concentrations and the rising global mean temperature, ocean heat storage and sea-level rise, as well as uncertainties in the scientific evidence. It also describes the trends of increasing loss of ice in Greenland and Antarctica, increasing loss of Arctic sea ice, melting mountain glaciers, increased heat waves and extreme temperatures, and drought and aridity trends.

Week 2: Possible 21st Century Climates

This module provides an overview of the projected changes in climate leading up to the end of the 21st century. It describes the likelihood of a 4°C warmer world by 2100 AD and enables a deeper understanding of various climate models with different projections and key areas of uncertainty. It also reviews possible responses from natural systems, explaining how the projected climatic changes from 2°C to 4°C warming could result in sea-level rise, heat waves and extreme temperatures, and ocean acidification.

Week 3: Life in a 4°C Warmer World

This module presents an overview of current and projected climate impacts across key human support systems, such as agriculture and food production, water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, and human health. Each of these human support systems will be negatively impacted by climate change under a 4°C warming scenario, resulting in adverse consequences for development, such as: diminishing crop yields, which threaten food production and human health; loss of biodiversity; the spread of vector-borne diseases; and water scarcity. The module also highlights the risks of nonlinear and cascading impacts and the risk of crossing critical thresholds for nonlinear tipping elements of the Earth system, which could dramatically increase vulnerability to climate change and impose multiple stresses on development.

Week 4: What Can We Do About it? The Choice is in Your Hands (Discussion)

After having outlined the scientific evidence in previous modules, the fourth module goes beyond the *Turn Down the Heat* report and provides a discussion on what mitigation and adaptation action is needed to help avoid a 4°C world, while also decreasing vulnerability to climate change impacts and building climate resilience. To do this, the module will draw on key experts involved in the implementation of different policy instruments. As no single policy solution exists, this module shares perspectives on what can be done at the global, national, and subnational levels, as well as at the individual level, to help transition towards a low-emissions, climate-resilient development path. By discussing the rationale for acting now, acting together and acting differently, the module presents examples and the expected benefits of mitigation and adaptation policies, considering both contributions to global emission reductions and local development opportunities.

Week 5: Regional Impacts on Development Prospects

Based on the scientific findings of the second report in the *Turn Down the Heat* series, this module will explore the climate trends and impacts on key development sectors across six geographic regions:

- Latin America and Caribbean
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Middle East and North Africa
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- East Asia and Pacific
- South Asia

The module will examine the likely impact of present day (0.8°C), 2°C and 4°C warming above pre-industrial temperatures in the regions, through a focus on agricultural production, water resources, ecosystem services, and coastal vulnerability for affected populations. In some regions, these risks have the potential to reverse hard-won development gains and potentially trap millions in poverty, illustrating the need for urgent action now.

Connect

Communicate and share resources via Twitter using hashtag #WBHeat. Sign up for a free account at <http://twitter.com>.

Suggested Readings

- › World Bank, 2012, *Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C World Must Be Avoided*
- › World Bank, 2012, *Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C World Must Be Avoided*, Executive Summary in English, Spanish, French, German, Arabic or Portuguese
- › World Bank, 2013, *Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience*
- › World Bank, 2014, *Turn Down the Heat: Confronting the New Climate Normal*
- › IPCC Fifth Assessment Report 2014, Summary for Policymakers
- › Working Group I Contribution to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policymakers
- › Working Group III Contribution to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change, Summary for Policymakers
- › Working Group II Contribution to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability