



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the
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ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

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International Environment Forum A Baha'i inspired organization addressing
the environment and sustainable development

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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.

IEF 23rd Annual Conference in New Zealand

As announced earlier, the 23rd IEF Conference will be associated with the World Health Promotion Conference in Rotorua, New Zealand on 7-11 April 2019, co-hosted and organised by the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE), and the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand (HPF). The theme is Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development for All. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the framework for the sub-themes of the conference. More details are available on the conference website: <http://www.iuhpe2019.com/en-gb/iuhpe-home>. While the distance and high registration fee make it difficult for IEF members to attend the conference itself, we are contributing to a session on spirituality and health promotion. A late-breaking call for abstracts is open until 20 December. On either side of the conference, we are organizing two separate IEF related events for local IEF members (and any others who can get there) to attend. On 5 April, IEF member Marjo Lips-Wiersma will organize a full day public event at the Auckland University of Technology where she teaches on the theme "The role of spirituality in creating new social and environmental sustainability mindsets". In the evening she will arrange a room for IEF to hold a meeting, which could be public and/or the IEF General Assembly. On 14 April, Sione Tu'itahi will organize a Baha'i session in Auckland on Baha'i-inspired perspectives for public discourses on planetary well-being and sustainable development, where local IEF members might want to help. Mark these dates in your calendar if you might be able to attend and contribute to any of these events.

Presentation at Center for Strategic and International Studies

While IEF members Maja Groff and Arthur Dahl were in Washington, D.C., USA, at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in early December to work on their book on Global Governance for the 21st Century, they joined co-author Augusto Lopez-Claros for a presentation about their work at the Center for Strategic and International Studies with a group of distinguished Washington intellectuals, where they were able to respond to many questions about their proposals. Arthur also made an evening presentation to a large audience about the wider implications of climate change.

BIC joins Arab leaders to advance sustainable development goals

Bahá'í World News Service, The official news source of the worldwide Bahá'í community
12 December 2018



Shahnaz Jaberi, a Baha'i representative from Bahrain; Hala Al-Saeed, a government minister from Egypt; Hatem El-Hady, a Baha'i representative from Egypt; and Solomon Belay, a representative from the Baha'i International Community's Addis Ababa office, at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo

CAIRO — Amid growing concerns in the region about serious challenges—hunger, armed conflict, environmental degradation, human rights, and more—Arab leaders gathered in Egypt's capital city last month to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was the first time the Baha'i community had an official presence at a space convened by the Arab League, a regional organization of about 20 nations in North Africa and the Middle East.

The second annual Arab Sustainable Development Week, held from 19 to 22 November, focused on the Arab region's efforts to reach the 17 targets in the global Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030.

"The participants in this meeting took ownership of the question of sustainable development as their agenda, and there was a conscious effort to make sure all took part," said Solomon Belay, a Baha'i International Community (BIC) representative who attended the meeting.

Dr. Belay, from the BIC Addis Ababa Office, was joined by Shahnaz Jaberi from Bahrain and Hatem El-Hady from Egypt.

"It was significant that the Baha'i community participated in such a forum where leaders of Arab states and regional spokespersons were coalescing around the critical issue of sustainable development," explains Mr. El-Hady.

The BIC representatives noted the participants' heightened consciousness and insights about the SDGs as they related to the specific challenges in the region. The statement, Summoning Our Common Will: A Baha'i Contribution to the United Nations Global Development Agenda, was distributed at the event.

Recognizing that the summit was a great step forward in the region, Ms. Jaberi highlighted the need to broaden the conversation: "It seems that the focus needs to go beyond technological and economic advancement. We underscored the importance of moral values and spiritual insights in our conversations throughout the event."

The Baha'i representatives also noted that the conference strengthened relations among fellow regional actors. More than 120 diplomats, government officials, representatives of regional and international organizations, businesses, and academics attended the event. Speakers included Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit and Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, among a number of other leaders in the Arab region.

Talanoa Dialogue Call for Action on Climate Change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) launched the Talanoa Dialogue a year ago to share positive stories and to build commitment to more action on climate change. The International Environment Forum submitted a written contribution to the Talanoa Dialogue, and two IEF members took part in face-to-face dialogues with diplomats at the Talanoa Dialogues in Bonn, Germany, in May 2018. Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen again participated in the Ministerial Talanoa Dialogue at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, on 11 December 2018. See her blog at <http://sylviakarlssonvinkhuyzen.blogspot.com/>.

The Talanoa Dialogue closed on 12 December with the Talanoa Call for Action (see below and download as [pdf](#)) which reflects the IEF contribution to the dialogue. We encourage all IEF members to join the Talanoa Call for Action. See the press release below. See also the [IEF position on climate change](#).

[Video with Greta and Timoci, capturing the ‘Talanoa’ calls for action](#)

[Animation video summarizing the main messages and inputs of the Talanoa](#)

[A guide to joining the Talanoa Call for Action](#)

[2018 Talanoa Dialogue Platform](#)



<https://unfccc.int/news/join-the-talanoa-call-for-action>

UN Climate Change News, 12 December 2018 – Today, at the closing of the Talanoa Dialogue, the Presidencies of this and last years’ UN Climate Change Conferences (COP24 and COP23) issued the Talanoa Call for Action. This statement calls for the

urgent and rapid mobilization of all societal actors to step up their efforts with a view to meeting the global climate goals agreed in Paris in 2015. The calls to action were delivered by youth champions Timoci Naulusala from Fiji and Hanna Wojdowska from Poland.

The closing session concluded 21 ministerial roundtables – convened on the previous day at COP24, which runs to the end of the week here in Katowice, Poland. The roundtables brought together nearly 100 ministers and over 40 non-Party stakeholders to chart a way forward for global climate action.

“It is with great joy and commitment that the Polish Presidency co-leads with Fiji the Talanoa Dialogue,” said COP 24 President Michał Kurtyka. “The exchange of experiences and good practices, which is guided by the idea of Dialogue, is particularly important at this stage – the Dialogue’s discussion will focus on the question: how do we want to achieve the goal? A similar question constitutes the main issue of COP24, that is, the establishment of the Katowice Rules mapping out the viable paths that each country will follow in their efforts at intensifying actions for climate protection. The Talanoa Dialogue is therefore closely interwoven with the main task of COP24 – developing specific methods of combating climate change that are optimal for each Party.”

Afterwards, the Prime Minister of Fiji, H.E. Frank Bainimarama, President of COP23, said that the time for talking and listening – as important as that has been and will continue to be in the Talanoa process – must now also give way to action.

“The Talanoa Dialogue now must give way to the Talanoa Call for Action. Together, we must recognize the gravity of the challenge we face – the need to increase our collective nationally determined contributions fivefold – five times more ambition, five times more action – if we are to achieve the 1.5 degree target. Together, we must unreservedly accept the science and the advice that our present NDCs have us on target for warming of at least 3 degrees by century’s end. Together, we must commit to continue exchanging ideas and best practices to raise our NDCs and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Together, we can overcome the greatest threat humanity has ever faced – with the entire global community eventually emerging more prosperous and more resilient,” he said.

Overall, today’s “call for action” represents the outcome of a year-long process that has, for the first time in UN Climate Change’s history, brought together governments and thousands of actors from across the world in informal discussions on international climate policy that have seen virtually all segments of society have their say.

The call is issued against the backdrop of stark warnings in several recent UN reports – including the IPCC’s Special Report on 1.5 and UNEP’s Emissions Gap Report – which show that greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow and only rapid and far-reaching action on an unprecedented scale, together with adequate resources and technology, can prevent the worst climate impacts, and help transition economies to a just, clean future.

It therefore sends a critical political signal to governments as they embark on updating their national climate pledges and preparing long-term climate strategies, due by 2020.

In the spirit of the Talanoa Dialogue – which was inclusive of the inputs of all actors throughout 2018 – the statement captures a series of “calls” directed at governments, international agencies, non-Party stakeholders, civil society, spiritual leaders and youth, as a means of fostering greater political will and action. The Presidencies now invite all stakeholders – including the general public – to join the Talanoa Call for Action to amplify the message and spread support.

The Talanoa Dialogue – borrowing from the Fijian traditional way of holding conversations to tackle collective issues – was convened as part of the UN climate talks and gathered views on three guiding questions in relation to the climate crisis: Where we are? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

Its purpose was to take stock of global efforts since the Paris Agreement was adopted and inform the preparation of nationally determined contributions. The response has been overwhelming, showing unprecedented levels of climate action by governments, businesses, civil society, citizens, and many others. Under the third question, the process identified myriad solutions and ways forward to meet the Paris goals. It is noteworthy that in many cases the views gathered from non-Party stakeholders are those of coalitions of actors spanning many different countries and representing a sizeable share of the world population and world economy.

Virtually all contributions show alarm at the gap between current levels of ambition and action and what is required to achieve Paris Agreement goal, and call for enhanced determination from all to create an enabling environment and remove barriers to unleash untapped potential.

Source: <https://unfccc.int/news/join-the-talanoa-call-for-action>

Talanoa Call for Action

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Talanoa%20Call%20for%20Action.pdf>

Issued by the two presidencies of COP23 and COP24 on 12 December 2018

In the Pacific tradition of Talanoa, the world came together this past year to share experiences and help make wise decisions to inspire a global response to the threat of a changing climate. People shared stories of the widespread devastation already inflicted on our communities by climate change, and the increasing risks for human and food security. They also shared stories of ambitious action already being taken all over the world in response to these threats.

Climate action is on the rise, but not at the speed and scale we need. Actors in all countries, including Parties and non-Party stakeholders at the national, regional and community levels are already taking action. Pre-2020 action is vital for putting the world on a path towards achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. But it is not only governments that must act. Non-Party stakeholders can and should join in pre-2020 action and complement action by states.

According to the science, global emissions continue to rise. This leaves a significant gap in the effort needed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees highlights, among other things, the benefits of holding warming to below 1.5 degrees. It also concludes that to keep global warming within 1.5 degrees, global emissions need to be halved by 2030. And according to the Paris Agreement, in the second half of the century, we aim to achieve net-zero emissions, on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

The window for action is closing fast – we need to do more and we need to do it now. We may have already caused warming of 1 degree Celsius and we can no longer push significant and effective action further down the road. Existing possibilities to limit global warming must now be matched with the necessary will and engagement of all levels of government and society.

The key messages emerging from the Talanoa Dialogue and synthesis report can show the way forward. They can inform Parties' Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020, as well as their participation in the 2019 Secretary-General's Climate Summit, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other important processes.

We must fulfil the goals of the Paris Agreement.

- We saw overwhelming support for the Paris Agreement and its goals. We agreed to hold temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees.

We must achieve a just transformation towards a better world.

- We celebrate a vision – shared by many – of a better world. A world with universal access to sustainable and affordable energy sources, emissions-neutral infrastructure and buildings, zero-emission transport systems, energy efficient industries, and the elimination of waste by reducing, recycling or reusing all materials. A world of productive and efficient carbon reservoirs and sinks. A world of clean air, climate-resilient food production; healthy lands, forests and oceans; an end to ecosystem degradation; and, sustainable lifestyles worldwide.
- In this transformation, based on nationally defined development priorities, no one should be left behind. The benefits of this journey must be spread across society and, in getting there, a just transition must be available for all.

We must unlock the full potential of technology.

- Many solutions already exist and more can be developed. They can take us forward and we must act now to start the transformation. Climate action brings opportunities for economic growth and gains in productivity.

We must demonstrate bold leadership.

- Climate action must remain at the top of the political and strategic agendas of world leaders. They must now translate the global vision of the Paris Agreement into national and local action, provide the necessary resources, and motivate and mobilize all stakeholders to help support and deliver a net-zero emission and climate-resilient future.

We must act together.

- Multilateralism and cooperation will enable us to address problems together, find solutions, and build consensus for the common good. Only a global coalition of actors – including Parties, national and sub-national governments, private sector

companies, the investment community, civil society and all non-Party stakeholders – can take us there.

We call upon Heads of State and Government to maintain climate action at the top of the political agenda. Governments must continue to strengthen national policies and regulatory and institutional frameworks that deliver action and support until 2020 and beyond; provide grounds for bold, integrated and coherent policies; and, create a stable environment that stimulates investment in and action on adaptation, mitigation and building climate resilience. We recognize governments must anticipate and address any negative effects, particularly on workers.

We call upon Parties to work closely with non-Party stakeholders to enhance global ambition by 2020 and to develop long-term, low-emission development strategies. Together, Parties, working with non-Party stakeholders including sub-national governments, should pursue efforts to strengthen mitigation and adaptation commensurate with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. They must work together in the planning and pursuit of low emissions and climate-resilient development.

We call upon government and international agencies to step up financial, technical and technological cooperation. We must ensure the resources, technology and capacity for climate action are widely shared, and the barriers in the way of unlocking potential are removed. We also call upon governments and non-Party stakeholders to scale-up cooperation and resources for research and development, and transfer technologies for achieving low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

We call upon private sector leaders to be drivers of change. We call upon the business community – from large, medium and small-sized enterprises, investors and entrepreneurs – to establish technology and science-based targets and transition plans, provide leadership in their sectors and supply chains, cultivate innovation and creativity, and invest in pursuit of the goals of the Paris Agreement.

We call upon civil society leaders to marshal the public and political will needed to drive action. We call upon them to engage political leadership, influence and challenge norms, enhance awareness, and mobilize action at the regional, state and local levels.

We call on spiritual leaders to unlock spiritual pathways for addressing climate change. We call on them to help their followers reconnect with the wonders of nature and creation, nurture love for the planet and foster compassion and reconciliation.

We call on the youth of the world to mobilize at a larger scale to ensure that their future is

secure. We call on everyone to engage with the concerns that climate change poses for youth, and to take decisive action that leads to better opportunities, security and wellbeing for young people, today and in the future. We call upon decision-makers to adjust education systems to help young people understand, address and adapt to global warming.

We call upon everyone to take forward a clear signal from the Talanoa Dialogue. We call upon everyone to act with urgency and recognize that we are in a race against time – we must act now to ensure sustainable development and the preservation of life on earth as we know it.

'Biggest case on the planet' pits kids vs. climate change



These young people are among the group suing for the right to a stable climate. Left to right they are Aji Piper, Levi Draheim, Journey Zephier, Jayden Foytlin, Miko Vergun, and Nathan Baring.

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/03/kids-sue-us-government-climate-change/>

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL CRONIN
BY LAURA PARKER
PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 9, 2018

On November 8, 2018, the trial in the case of Juliana v. United States was delayed again by the Ninth

Circuit Court of Appeals, which gave lawyers 15 days to respond. The district court judge said she will set a new trial date after the appellate court lifts the stay. **Below, read our article on this case that was originally published on March 17, 2017.**

LEVI DRAHEIM IS a nine-year-old science geek. He founded an environmental club as a fourth grader and gives talks about climate change to audiences of grown-ups. His home is on a slender barrier island on Florida's Atlantic coast, 21 miles south of Cape Canaveral and a five-minute walk from the beach. By mid-century, his sandy childhood playground could be submerged by rising seas. He will be just 42.

Nathan Baring is 17 and a high school junior in Fairbanks, Alaska—120 miles south of the Arctic Circle. He loves cold weather and skis. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet. Now winter snows that Baring once celebrated as early as August in Fairbanks can hold off until November.

By 2050, Arctic sea ice will have virtually disappeared, and temperatures in the interior, surrounding Fairbanks, will have risen by an additional 2 to 4 degrees Fahrenheit, altering the boreal forest ecosystem. Nathan will be 50.

"I can deal with a few days of rain in February when it's supposed to be 40 below," he says. "But I can't deal with the idea that what my parents experienced and what I have experienced will not exist for my children. I am a winter person. I won't sit idly by and watch winter vanish."

Baring and Draheim so lack confidence that they will inherit a healthy planet that they are suing the United States government for failing to adequately protect the Earth from the effects of climate change. They are among a group of 21 youths who claim the federal government's promotion of fossil fuel production and its indifference to the risks posed by greenhouse gas emissions have resulted in "a dangerous destabilizing climate system" that threatens the survival of future generations. That lapse violates, the court papers argue, their fundamental constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. The lawsuit also argues that the government violated the public trust doctrine, a legal concept grounded in ancient law that holds the government is responsible for protecting public resources, such as land and water—or in this case, the climate system—for public use.

The kids' lawsuit was joined by acclaimed NASA climate scientist James Hansen, who began studying climate change in the 1970s and whose granddaughter, Sophie, is among the 21 young plaintiffs.

"In my opinion, this lawsuit is made necessary by the at-best schizophrenic, if not suicidal nature of U.S. climate and energy policy," he told the court.

Last fall, U.S. District Court Judge Anne Aiken agreed with the youths' claim. Her sweeping 54-page opinion laid the foundation for what looks to be a groundbreaking trial later this year. In her ruling, Aiken established, in effect, a new right for these children and teens: a right to expect they could live in a stable climate.

"I have no doubt that the right to a climate system capable of sustaining human life is fundamental to a free and ordered society," Aiken wrote. "Just as marriage is the foundation of the family, a stable climate system is quite literally the foundation of society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress." She made clear that "this lawsuit is not about proving that climate change is happening or that human activity is driving it. For purposes of this motion, those facts are undisputed."

And Aikens added: "Federal courts too often have been cautious and overly deferential in the arena of environmental law and the world has suffered for it."

Mary Wood, a University of Oregon environmental law professor who pioneered the concept that the atmosphere should be treated as part of the public trust, calls the lawsuit "the biggest case on the planet."

"This claim challenges the government's entire fossil-fuel philosophy. The whole thing," Wood says. "The scientists, on the other hand, are saying if we continue on our path without drastic cuts in carbon dioxide emissions, we are going to leave a barren planet that will not support broad human survival. You could not get claims more grave than that."

Two administrations (and industry) respond

The lawsuit originally was filed against the Obama administration, which sought to have the case dismissed because the courts are "ill-suited" to oversee "a phenomenon that spans the globe," according to court papers.

"Climate change is a very serious problem," Sean Duffy, a Justice Department lawyer told the court last September. "We do not question the science. Climate change threatens our environment and our ecosystems. It alters our climate systems and it will only worsen over time. It is the result of man-made emissions. Now where (the parties) disagree is as to who determines how to address climate change in the first instance. Our position is that Congress and the Executive Branch should address climate change in the first instance and should do so by coordinating with other nations."

Several groups representing the fossil-fuel industry, including the American Petroleum Institute, joined the lawsuit as intervenors, but disagreed "to the extent of climate change, to the emissions that cause it, and to other scientific principles," Quin Sorenson, a lawyer representing the industry, argued in court.

The case could prove even more consequential with the change of administration because of President Trump's efforts to roll back climate regulations put in place by his predecessor. Last week, the Trump administration shifted course on the case and asked that a federal appeals court review Judge Aiken's decision to proceed to trial.

"Whatever happens next, this is a case to watch," says Michael Burger, a Columbia University law professor and specialist in climate law. "It's out there, ahead of the curve. And given the change in administration and President Trump's views on climate change, this may be a potential hook to keep things moving along the climate change front. It may be the opening salvo in what will be an increasing number of lawsuits that take a rights-based approach to climate change in the United States."

Building on history

In challenging the government's role in climate change on constitutional grounds Julia Olson, the plaintiffs' lead lawyer, harkens to the realm of historic Supreme Court cases that established new constitutional protections in situations when Congress failed to act. Those cases include the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that banned segregation in public schools and the 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision that legalized same-sex marriage.

The climate change lawsuit makes essentially a straightforward request. It asks a federal judge to order the government to write a recovery plan to reduce carbon emissions to 350 parts per million by 2100 (down from 400 parts per million) and stabilize the climate system.

The courts are needed to step in, Olson argued, because the government has not—despite knowing for more than 50 years that the burning of fossil fuels causes global warming.

Olson first tuned in to the climate change threat when, eight months pregnant with her youngest child, she watched *An Inconvenient Truth*, former Vice President Al Gore's 2006 Oscar-winning climate change documentary at her local movie house.

"There is something about carrying life inside your body that is transformative and gives you a different kind of perspective on the world," she says.

She founded Our Children's Trust, a nonprofit with a mission to protect children from climate change, and now serves as executive director. The trust is assisting in the case. Olson has also filed climate change lawsuits in each of the 50 states, which are proceeding separately. She has won cases in Washington, Massachusetts, and New Mexico.

Similar lawsuits, brought by other lawyers, are playing out in other nations, including Belgium and New Zealand, and have been won in Pakistan, Austria and South Africa. Last year, a Dutch court ordered the government to reduce carbon emissions by a quarter within the next five years.

Olson's clients in the federal suit range in age from nine to 20. They are media savvy environmental activists who understand the power of connecting the future effects of climate change to the people who will have to live with them.

Kiran Oommen, 19, a student at Seattle University, says he joined the lawsuit because it gives voice to his generation.

"We have little or no representation in the government, yet the effects of climate change will affect us more than anyone else," he says. "This is a way we can speak for ourselves and stand up for our future."

Aji Piper, 16, is a high school student in Seattle who plants trees around the city and is an avid letter-writer to the state's polluting industries. He adds: "Once you start involving children, people start listening more. My role in the case is to sit there in court."

The climate kids, as the group is known, also are living the full menu of drought, deluge, heat, and extreme weather events that are rapidly becoming the unnerving norm. Not only has sea-level rise killed any long-term future Levi Draheim might have envisioned on Florida's Space Coast, but he has to cope with toxic algae blooms like the outbreak that befouled beaches last July and monster storms, such as Hurricane Matthew, which barreled up the Florida coast last October and eroded away much of the sand on his beach. Journey Zephier, 16, lives in Kauai, Hawaii, where ocean acidification is killing coral reefs and coastal fisheries. Miko Vergun, 16, who lives in the Portland, Oregon, suburb of Beaverton, fears she may never be able to visit her native Marshall Islands in the remote Pacific Ocean before they disappear beneath the swells. Tidal flooding, she says in court papers, is so frequent now that a fifth of the population has already moved away.

Last August, Jayden Foytlin, 13, awoke one morning to flood waters seeping into her bedroom in Rayne, Louisiana, as a rainstorm that lasted two weeks flooded more than 60,000 homes and killed 13 people. Foytlin's home was soon awash in sewage. The Foytlins do not live in the flood plain, yet the raging waters destroyed their home and all of their belongings.

"This flood has been called a thousand-year event," Foytlin told the court. "Yet within the last two years, I have read about eight '500-year' events. In less than two years, there have been nine flood events that are not even supposed to happen in my lifetime. My family and I feel very vulnerable."

Winning the war?

Despite winning a trial, prevailing ultimately remains an uphill climb. Columbia's Burger says Judge Aiken's unprecedented order that the case go to trial "is a great opinion for environmental law."

But, he warns: "As it moves up on appeal and ultimately to the Supreme Court, the chances get less and less that that opinion survives in its current form."

To date, courts have never recognized a constitutional right to even a natural environment free of pollutants, let alone to a stable climate.

After Judge Aiken ruled, proponents urged Obama to settle the case before Trump took office. Obama declined. The government also declined to ask for an appellate review of her order; government lawyers instead proceeded toward trial. Seven days before Trump was sworn in as president, government lawyers added a routine brief to the court file that may complicate the Trump administration's effort to argue the science and halt the trial.

In the brief, government lawyers conceded nearly every point on which the plaintiffs' case against the government was constructed. These admissions include the government's role in promoting the development of fossil fuels and its belief that greenhouse gases are at "unprecedentedly high levels compared to the past 800,000 years ... and pose risks to human health and welfare."

The government went so far as to point out where the plaintiffs had understated the evidence against the government in court papers. They then corrected the figures, raising them upwards.

"They recognized the importance of this case and tried to make sure when the Obama administration left, that the government's position was clear and the court shouldn't spend time in trial worrying about facts that should not be contested," says Phil Gregory, the plaintiffs' co-counsel.

The Trump team changes tack

Now, the Trump administration appears to have reversed course. Last week, government lawyers asked Judge Aiken to grant their request that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals review her order. Halting the trial, the lawyers wrote, could avoid litigation that "is unprecedented in its scope, in its potential to be protracted, expensive and disruptive to the continuing operation of the United States Government."

The appellate review is unlikely to be granted, because the decision is up to Judge Aiken, the judge who ordered the trial to proceed. In common practice, appeals courts decline to consider appeals until a trial concludes.

In a separate motion, government lawyers are also fighting a request by the youth's lawyers that the Justice Department preserve all documents relevant to the lawsuit, including information on climate change, energy, and emissions.

Even if a review is granted, it may be difficult for the Trump administration to reverse the government's statements and acknowledgements about climate change that are already part of the record. Still, the new administration's position on the subject is becoming increasingly clear. Two days after the government's motions were filed, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt swept aside established science on the connection between carbon dioxide emissions and global warming and declared that "carbon dioxide is not a primary contributor to the global warming that we see."

NSA of the Baha'is of the US— Affidavit in U.S. Climate Change Case

Juliana v. United States

Filing Date: 2015

Case Categories: Constitutional Claims > Fifth Amendment
Public Trust Claims

Principal Laws: Public Trust Doctrine, Ninth Amendment,
Fifth Amendment—Due Process, Fifth Amendment—Equal Protection

Description: Action by young plaintiffs asserting that the federal government violated their constitutional rights by causing dangerous carbon dioxide concentrations.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States submitted an affidavit in January 2018 in support of the decision of federal district court Judge Anne Aiken in the Juliana case, in which a group of children have sued the United States Government for not taking sufficient action to address climate change that threatens their future. In *Juliana v. United States*, 21 youth and others challenge decisions of the President of the United States and

several federal departments and agencies because those decisions "have substantially caused the planet to warm and the oceans to rise." The affidavit provides a practical example of how a set of Bahá'í principles can help an institution to assist in bringing about social justice. The full affidavit can be downloaded at https://iefworld.org/fl/USNSA_Affidavit_Juliana_case180110.pdf. The substantive content of the affidavit follows:

3. The Bahá'í community has been addressing environmental issues and, more specifically, climate change for several years. It has worked for more than two decades to contribute to discourses on issues related to the environment.
4. As evidenced in the findings in Volume I of the U.S. National Climate Assessment released on November 3, 2017, the impacts of carbon pollution continue to increase as average global temperatures, extreme weather events, and global sea levels continue to rise. The impacts span across all regions and sectors of the U.S. economy, and the projected impacts from doing little about our emissions are severe, especially for our current youth and children as the next century approaches. To protect our children, the situation calls for the recognition of a fundamental right to a stable climate system that should be protected rather than violated by government action.
5. Baha'is are guided by a firm belief in the principles of the oneness of humankind, which has

profound implications for policy. Baha'is believe that a recognition of this principle leads naturally to an acknowledgement of the organic interrelatedness and interdependence of all of the people of the planet regardless of nationality, race, sex, class, religion, or age. No one is unimportant. Ultimately, the best interests of the entire human family can best be served by assuring the welfare of each component part. Justice therefore requires that the interests of the marginalized or the powerless, whether the poor or the young, must be protected. Within the context of climate change, this means that significant reductions in our carbon emissions must occur so as to reduce the projected weather and pollution burdens we have unfairly shifted onto the poor, the young, and future generations. They and all of us are entitled, "as fundamental to a free and ordered society," as Judge Aiken held at the District Court level, "to a climate system capable of sustaining human life."

6. We cannot continue to emit current levels of carbon into the atmosphere, knowing the harmful impact it will have, particularly on our children and youth, as well as all life on the planet.

7. Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i Faith, states in his Writings that the natural world is a reflection of the attributes of God, its Creator. Beauty, majesty, power, love, generosity, bounty, and many other attributes of God are reflected in His Creation. Moreover, the contemplation of nature creates an awareness of the "signs" and "tokens" of God and constitutes proof of His existence. "[W]hatever I behold I readily discover that it maketh Thee known unto me, and it remindeth me of Thy signs, and of Thy tokens and of Thy testimonies. By Thy Glory! Every time I lift up mine eyes unto Thy heaven, I call to mind Thy highness and Thy loftiness, and Thine incomparable glory and greatness; and every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I am made to recognize the evidences of Thy power and the tokens of Thy bounty. And when I behold the sea, I find that it speaketh to me of Thy majesty, and of the potency of Thy might, and of Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur. And at whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence." He further adds: "Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator." "Nature is God's Will and its expression in and through the contingent world. It is a dispensation of Providence ordained by the Ordainer, the All-Wise." Our moderate, sustainable use of nature's resources, as stewards of such a priceless bestowal, is a necessary corollary of this belief.

8. Over a hundred years ago, Baha'u'llah warned against the immoderate exploitation of these resources. "The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation."

9. In addition to the moral imperative to act, technological innovation has produced a dramatic drop in the price of green energy that has rendered the choice between the economy and jobs, on the one hand, and a climate system supportive of human life and prosperity, on the other, an increasingly false dichotomy.

10. For the last several years, the American Bahá'í community has taken action to reduce its carbon emissions, both nationally and locally. We removed an old heating and air conditioning system and replaced it with a high efficiency system in our continental House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, where we also recently completed a LEED-certified Visitors Center. Baha'is in over 100 localities in 43 states have been among the over 1700 diverse faith congregations that have taken part in the educational and awareness-raising activities of Interfaith Power and Light's annual Preach-in on Global Warming. These efforts and others like them help to raise awareness of the climate issue and emphasize the important part each of us can play in seeking solutions. But such actions alone will not be enough. We need informed, well-designed national policies, reflective of a fundamental right to a livable climate system that will propel us, especially our children, toward a safe future.

Rethinking business management for climate change

Submitted by Iko Congo

IEF member Iko Congo has recently submitted his MSc thesis on 'Rethinking management: a case of bahá'í practitioners' which attempts to propose that if we are to address climate change effectively, a new way of thinking is required in order to transform how our organisations are governed and our economic system structured. His thesis was awarded as best among all those in his MSc promotion. Iko is now in Angola. His abstract follows:

Climate change, as many contemporary challenges, is an environmental, social, cultural and political complex phenomenon and not a simple issue to be solved through technocratic approaches rooted in the prevalent mode of thinking. It demands a fundamental rethinking and transformation from our 'current ways' and 'business as usual' associated with a materialistic interpretation of reality that emerged in the 20th century that informs the current socio-economic system, neoliberal capitalism. A desecularisation movement, predicted to unfold in the 21st century, arises from the recognition of the limitation of the prevalent secular way thinking, and has the potential to replace the root thoughts and beliefs that characterise the current state of affairs, as

there is an intimate connection between religion and the economy. Members of the Bahá'í Faith who are engaged in a process of spiritualising business management give us insight to this wider movement. They articulate their framing of the issue, and how the conception of religion they hold can create new patterns of thought that are relevant to make proactive sustainable action more effective. Among them are the concepts of 'processes of integration and disintegration' and 'coherence' that give insight into the context of their actions; 'education' and 'continuum' which help us understand the nature of the process of transformation; and 'inclusion', 'consultation' and 'friendship' which illustrate how to foster universal participation, a key element of their approach.

The full MSc thesis can be accessed

at https://www.academia.edu/37601012/Rethinking_management_the_case_of_Bah%C3%A1%C3%AD_management_practitioners

Our “literal” Mountain of Garbage, Ocean Pollution and Sea Level Rise

Based on a report by IEF member Carol Curtis on Majuro, Marshall Islands

“As we all know the planet’s oceans are full of plastic. Now microscopic pieces of broken-down plastic are entering the food chain through the fish and other animals who live in the oceans, and which we then consume. But has, or is anyone considering the numerous sources of future garbage that will enter the oceans with sea level rise?

“I’ve been wondering about this issue for the past several years since I live in the atoll nation of the Marshall Islands, where we have no land higher than about three feet (1 meter) above sea level. The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) consists of over 1200 islands formed into 29 atolls and 5 single islands with a total land area of only 70 sq. miles spread out over 750,000 sq. miles of ocean.

“In Majuro atoll, the government center for the RMI, we have a dump that is literally a small hill, which has the highest elevation in the country. In the late 1980's and all of the 90's to the present day this dump has been filled as a landfill, thus the reason for literally our “mountain” of garbage. Now with sea level rise when the islands go under water, then all that garbage goes with it into the ocean, and this will happen in thousands if not millions of places around the world. Even if this garbage is in a landfill the ocean water would eventually break it up and move it around, although the oceans may be totally dead by then. Then of course we most likely will have cities, and whole islands like Manhattan under water with all the buildings and thousands of other items full of dangerous chemicals underwater. The amount of garbage, waste, etc. would/will be monumental, and even if we mediate climate change to some extent, the sea level will still rise for the foreseeable future, and the oceans will become the garbage dump for everyone and everything. Has there ever been any discussion or solutions proposed about this eventual phenomenon?”

Since Majuro and all the Marshall Islands are atolls close to sea level, they are already subject to some flooding, and sea level rise is accelerating, so the risk is very real. Plastics and many other materials do not decompose in landfills, so they will eventually wash into the sea and add to the high levels of plastic waste already there. There can also be other toxic materials in landfills that would be released. This is a typical example of the shortsightedness of our thinking and our failure to consider the interactions between different global problems like climate change and ocean pollution.

Time Bomb Climate Change - What Role for Ecotaxes? Environmental taxes and their application in developing countries

Submitted by IEF member David Menham
22 November 2018

In 2015, under the Paris Agreement, countries agreed to keep global temperatures well below 2 degrees and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature further to 1.5 degrees. They committed themselves to reduce their carbon emissions and to report regularly about their “nationally determined contributions”. But the 2018 report

of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change is alarming: Limiting temperature to 1.5 degrees will require more “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes”. Actions will have to be taken in the coming years.

But how should the necessary climate mitigation and adaptation measures be funded? Developing countries are especially challenged because they already need large resources for building up basic social services, infrastructure and for their (sustainable) economic development. According to recent UN calculations, developing countries could face climate adaptation costs of 300 billion USD per year by 2030 and 500 billion USD by 2050. Public-sector loans and grants as well as private sector investments will not cover these costs, countries will have no choice but to mobilize domestic sources of revenue. Moreover, credit-financed environmental investments may cause spiraling debts.

Even the poorest countries have begun to endow their domestic environmental funds with money from their state budgets, thus creating a pressing demand for additional tax revenues. Environmental taxes have so far not been very popular. OECD and emerging countries tax emissions at rates that are far too low to bring about the radical change required to mitigate climate change, and at the same time fossil fuels continue to be subsidized. But the threat of climate change makes the need to price carbon ever more urgent.

Is there potential for implementing eco taxes in developing countries? Could they discourage environmentally harmful behaviour? Do they have the potential to raise significant amounts of revenue? Or would such taxes increase inequalities? What role might environmental taxes play in establishing a fair and progressive tax system that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable?

"A Climate of Fairness: Environmental Taxation and Tax Justice in Developing Countries", a study launched by the VIDC, refers to these questions. Jacqueline Cottrell and Tatiana Falcão give a comprehensive overview about environmental taxes and their ecological, economic and social impact in a development context. As domestic factors are important for the success or failure of implementation, the study also contains short country studies (China, Mexico, Morocco and Vietnam, as well as a special chapter about the challenges of Low Income Countries).

The Executive Summary of the report is at http://www.vidc.org/fileadmin/Bibliothek/DP/A_Climate_of_Fairness-Executive_Summary.pdf ; and the full report at http://www.vidc.org/fileadmin/Bibliothek/DP/A_Climate_of_Fairness.pdf

Source: <http://www.vidc.org/en/topics/international-economy/economic-policies/time-bomb-climate-change-what-role-for-ecotaxes/>

Inequality. A Challenge for African-European Cooperation

Submitted by IEF member David Menham

This was a two day conference on 26-27 November hosted by the Haus der Europäischen Union in the centre of Vienna. It looked at relations between the European Union and Africa under the perspective of inequalities both between and within these two regions and explored answers to questions: What are the current trends in and drivers for income and wealth inequalities within the African-European context? Is transnational solidarity an effective mean to reduce inequalities and promote social justice? With regards to the ongoing negotiations about the Post-Cotonou Agreement, what could be an adequate institutional response to tackle existing and growing inequalities? The main objective of the conference was to highlight the issue of inequality within the African-European relations.

The full details are available at: <http://www.vidc.org/en/topics/africa/african-european-relations/inequality-a-challenge-to-african-european-cooperation/>