



**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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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 climate change action. 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.

**International Research Center on Sustainability
at the University of Reims, France**

Dr. Jon Marco Church is joining the newly established International Research Center on Sustainability at the University of Reims, France, where he will be Assistant Professor of Regional Development, Sustainability and Politics. He has been in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan for the last two years where he was working with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and he will continue to work for UNECE and on Central Asia as an external expert.

Jon Marco also organized another IEF-inspired workshop entitled "small things you can do every day for the environment," based on the "things you can do" leaflet (<http://iefworld.org/eltodo.htm>). It took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Earth Day (22 April) in collaboration with a local youth NGO called Nasli Navras and with the assistance of the Cultural Section of the US Embassy in Tajikistan.

**U.S. Louhelen August 17-20 Environmental Stewardship & Justice
with Peter Adriance and other facilitators**

This extended-weekend program welcomes the whole family to explore themes of environmental stewardship and justice – themes which the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly has encouraged us to integrate more fully into our core activities and community life. While drawing inspiration and guidance from the Writings, we will immerse ourselves in the natural surroundings of the school and engage in creative and fun learning activities - both age-specific and intergenerational. Experiences are planned to help us gain a deeper appreciation for the natural world, our place in it and impact on it. Families will develop their own vision for translating learning into acts of service and stewardship at home, in the community, and beyond.

CAUX FORUM ON HUMAN SECURITY



Views of the valley of the upper Rhone River in Valais, Lake Geneva and the towns of Montreux and Vevey



The mountainside at Caux, Mountain House, the 110 year old conference centre, now a registered monument



The main hall during the conference, with two spectacular fireplaces at either end

On 8-13 July, Arthur Dahl participated in the Caux Forum on Human Security (<http://www.cauxforum.net/>) organized by Initiatives of Change at their Mountain House conference centre, which is reached by a funicular railway and is located in the village of Caux in the Swiss Alps high above Montreux at the eastern end of Lake Geneva. In the forum there were over 300 participants from more than 35 countries, including major delegations from across Africa and particularly South Sudan, which commemorated its first year of independence.

The Caux conference centre was built over a hundred years ago as one of the world's most luxurious hotels, the Caux Palace, but since the end of World War II it has been run by Initiatives of Change as a meeting centre to bring together former warring factions and countries in an effort to build peace and reconciliation.

The first day was on sustainability, and looked at land restoration, featuring Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia and member of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Sustainability, and Elizabeth Thompson, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Coordinator of the UNCSD Rio+20 Conference. It also included sessions on community leadership and grass-roots action. Other themes during the week were inclusive economics, good governance, healing memory, and intercultural dialogue. One particularly touching evening was a re-living of the official apology of the Australian Government for its treatment of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia and in particular the "lost generations" of Aboriginal children who were taken by force from their parents to be raised in white foster families. Kevin Rudd, who as Prime Minister issued the apology, shared the stage with two leaders of the movement for Aboriginal rights.

TRIGLAV CIRCLE

The Triglav Circle (<http://www.triglavcircleonline.org/>) is a high-level informal gathering established by Jacques Baudot, Secretary-General of the 1995 UN Social Summit in Copenhagen, and his wife Barbara, to consider the ethical and spiritual dimensions of social development. It meets alternately each year in North America and Europe. Participants include former senior UN officials, theologians including two former General Secretaries of the World Council of Churches, and distinguished academics. The circle held its summer meeting in the Jura Mountains of Switzerland on the theme "Harmony with Nature - perspectives on a responsible and sustainable life in our natural environment", and Arthur Dahl was invited to report to the circle on Rio+20, including the International Environment Forum contribution. At the end of the meeting, the organizers expressed the desire to include more Baha'i perspectives in their deliberations and invited Arthur to become a member of the Triglav Circle.

Global Ethics Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, 28-29 June 2012

Report by Arthur Lyon Dahl

The International Environment Forum and the European Baha'i Business Forum were again partners in the Global Ethics Forum (<http://globoalethicsforum.org>) held at the International Conference Centre Geneva on 28-29 June 2012, on the topic "Seeds for Successful Transformation: The Value of Values in Responsible Business", with 80 speakers and panelists from all over the world. The report of the forum with recommendations will eventually be published. The following are a few highlights from the forum of interest to IEF and EBBF.

In his plenary keynote, Martin Dahinden, Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, commented on Rio+20 which concluded the previous week. He said there were two parallel worlds, the intergovernmental, which gave no clear political signal, and the many side events such as the corporate sustainability forum that served as an incubator for concrete projects and public-private partnerships. An approach constrained by national perspectives produced a fatal misjudgment of the risks posed by resource constraints, climate change, water shortages, ecosystem changes and planetary limits to growth, raising issues of global justice. He said we must change our patterns of thinking to reflect the global common good, requiring technical, social and institutional innovations. To narrow the gap between diverging interests and perceptions, we need a dialogue on norms and values, aiming for sustainability through fair burden sharing. This will require a change in our institutional and cultural heritage comparable to the industrial revolution, in a more pluralistic vision of governance, with new values and priorities in a spirit of justice linked across the local, national, regional and global levels. He said we should mainstream sustainability, and that decoupling our well-being from resource consumption is the challenge of our time.

A first plenary panel including the CEO of a large Indian IT company, a former supreme court justice from South Africa, a director from the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the director of a Russian think tank and the Deputy-Director General of IUCN, was on "Managing the Sustainability Crisis: Next Steps after Rio+20". Some of the distinguished speakers emphasized the ethical issues in Rio and beyond. Environmental governance is an ethical question. We know how to raise everyone out of poverty and to stay

within planetary limits, but we do not do it. Our political system is not effective and did not deliver in Rio, but there are many things we can start doing anyway. We cannot sit back and wait for governments.

The discussion addressed questions such as: How can ethics and values be part of the process? Do we need innovation in ethics? What is the role of spirituality? They can help us to come up with new mindsets for the age of less. The highest type of capital is moral and spiritual capital, which is the real driving force. Our economy has a heritage of the wrong spiritual ideals (Adam Smith, John Nash), when we know we need solidarity and cooperation for a successful result. To counter the disproportion between wealth and poverty, we need to replace greed by other patterns of living, aiming to be spiritual billionaires.

The panel noted that GDP is not a relevant measure. We need to include natural and social capital. A green society must pay for the losses of nature. Nature-based solutions are the real solution to the green economy. Growth will no longer be a relevant concept. There is no world legislation and no enforceable code of ethics. The era of the nation state is yesterday's arrangement. In today's borderless world, we need an economy of collaboration.

The second plenary panel including the deputy editor of the leading Swiss economic magazine, a forensic accountant from USA, an Italian imam, a Chinese financial expert and a sustainability economist, discussed "Managing the Debt Crisis: Transformation Towards an Ethical Economy".

It started with the observation that speculative finance was a greater risk to governments and societies today than sustainability. One banking expert who has testified in many court cases in the USA, giving him access to thousands of internal documents from the big banks, said they show clear evidence of the widespread fraudulent use of financial instruments. There has been collusion between the banks, the US Treasury, the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, using untransparent derivatives as "weapons of financial mass destruction" in commodity swaps (Enron), cross-currency swaps (hiding Greek and Italian debt off their balance sheets and then betting against them) and sub-primes to make huge profits while getting bail-outs of their losses for being too big to fail. Three quarters of all derivatives are for speculation, totaling over \$700 trillion (when US GDP is \$15 trillion). There is an urgent need to make the financial system environmentally friendly and socially responsible.

The Islamic scholar said that money was a means, not a goal, and cited sharia doctrine on finance as an alternative. The Chinese expert described the rapid evolution in the Chinese financial system over the last 20 years, and the role of the banks in investment-led growth. The problems of the short-term horizon in finance, the manipulation of interest rates by central banks, the lack of global standards and accountability, sharing of insider information, the excessive remuneration in the financial sector, market manipulation to increase the value of stock options, and the billions spent on litigation and lobbying, were also cited as ethical challenges.

The result has been global chaos and financial disruption. Yet new financial thinking has not yet emerged. The fact that the US dollar was the de facto global reserve currency allowed the US to borrow without limit, and this flood of money created opportunities for the bankers. The massive American spending spree was irresponsible, with consumption all out of proportion with revenues and an over-valued dollar resting only on its reputation protecting it from rational thinking. There was follow-up discussion of the need for a new global reference currency to replace the dollar, with evidence that the collapse of the dollar was only a matter of time, as China and other countries implement their exit strategies.

There were workshops on multicultural ethics, ethical dilemmas in business, corporate social responsibility, business ethics in conflicting legal and ethical systems, a new global reference currency, sustainable, transparent and ethical finance, social media, sustainable global responsibility in business schools, and business ethics networks in emerging countries. Apart from the finance discussion, other parts of the Forum were much more positive on the role of ethics in business.

EBBF Annual Conference

CSR 2.0 redefining the enterprise, co-creating prosperity

4-7 October – Hotel Vila Galé Ericeira, Lisbon

ebbf's 10 seconds statement:

Want to personally contribute to improve the world?

Meet EBBF - a unique, spiritually inspired, global network enabling individuals to contribute to a just, prosperous and sustainable civilisation through their work.

Enriching encounters

The EBBF organises 250 local, national and international events every year, reaching over 10,000 people.

From high level events and presentations to MBA and University workshops and courses, these enriching encounters bring diverse individuals together to explore a wide range of values-related topics.

These are opportunities to gain fresh insights, to hear original points of view and to interact with like-minded, action-orientated peers.

A unique atmosphere

The atmosphere at an EBBF event is always unique. Each one is informal, convivial and relaxed - yet inspired by great thought-leaders, visionaries and passionate, values-driven individuals from diverse professional sectors.

From company directors to UN representatives, from social innovators to MA students and from entrepreneurs and consultants to NGO innovators, this is a chance to connect with leaders and decision-makers at every organisational level across a wide range of sectors.

We invite you to EBBF's 22nd annual learning event, where we connect to the origins of EBBF back in 1990 when EBBF was a pioneer introducing concepts such as CSR and sustainability now, 22 years on, we revisit the concept of CSR with its version 2.0, a new version of "CSR" rethinking the enterprise, rethinking its purpose, structure and meaning, exploring how it can become a structure of hope and of co-creation of global prosperity.

2.0 also evoking the interconnectedness, the global perspectives, the opportunities for exchange and horizontal learning, the sense of unity and world civilization that the web 2.0 is now allowing us to achieve and forcing companies to adapt to.

We will enjoy meaningful conversations and hear inspirational new points of view from over 20 presentations and speakers adapting to, as part of a cycle of consultation, action and reflection that aims to transform our economic system and our workplaces, allowing us to increase our transformative influence ultimately connecting our and our organizations' purpose to EBBF's vision.

The 2012 Rabbani Trust Baha'i Conference in Orlando, Florida

The 2012 Orlando Conference will be held **December 20-23, 2012**, again at the **Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida, USA**. Make your plans now to join us!

The Bahá'í Conference on Social and Economic Development is now known as **"The Rabbani Trust Bahá'í Conference in Orlando"**.

The Conference is advancing beyond the narrower definition of "SED" to a broader concept of social action and the context within which it takes place (i.e., the Plans of the Universal House of Justice). In this expanded view, social action opportunities emerge naturally from a robust foundation of multi-faceted activities associated with growth and community building.

The theme of the 2012 Conference is, **"Coherence: Learning to Weave a Tapestry of Action"**.

The recent messages of the Universal House of Justice have honed our understanding that social action forms part of one coherent whole, together with the growth process and that of participating in the prevalent discourses of society. Rather than focusing only on a subset of that whole, it seems appropriate to broaden the scope of the Conference to explore additional elements of this coherent whole.

“A rich tapestry of community life begins to emerge in every cluster.... That the world civilization now on humanity's horizon must achieve a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual requirements of life is central to the Bahá'í teachings. Clearly this ideal has profound implications for the nature of any social action pursued by Bahá'ís, whatever its scope and range of influence.... Involvement in the life of society will flourish as the capacity of the community to promote its own growth and to maintain its vitality is gradually raised. It will achieve coherence with efforts to expand and consolidate the community to the extent that it draws on elements of the conceptual framework which governs the current series of global Plans.” (Ridván 2010 Statement of the Universal House of Justice)

The Conference will continue to be a place where spirits are uplifted; concepts and understandings are introduced and explored; questions can be asked; humble learning together is promoted; relationships can be forged or renewed; and anyone, from any place within community life, can bring his or her knowledge gleaned from experience and merge it with that of others. Together, we can strengthen the mindset of asking: What is needed by the community? What can I do about it in a coherent and systematic way? And, how does this contribute to creating a distinctive Bahá'í culture, as referenced by the Universal House of Justice?

Preliminary Details of the 2012 Pre-Conference & Conference

We are pleased to announce that the following individuals will be delivering plenary talks at the Conference:

- Mr. Hooper Dunbar (Former member of the Universal House of Justice);
- Ms. Anita Williams, representing the Continental Board of Counselors for the Americas;
- Ms. Jacqueline Left Hand Bull, representing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States;
- And a special panel discussion chaired by Mr. George Costant (incumbent of the Social Action desk for the US NSA).

In addition, Mr. Hooper Dunbar will be offering a pre-Conference class on the subject, The Adventure of Bahá'í Study: "During a series of enriching seminars, Mr. Dunbar will discuss the bounties of insight and perception that abound when one embarks upon a concerted and enthusiastic study of the Bahá'í Writings. Using passages from the foundational text Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah as inspiration, as well as the wisdom derived from a lifetime of learning, Mr. Dunbar will accompany guests on a priceless and rewarding immersion in the peerless Ocean of Baha'u'llah's Words."

The dates of the pre-Conference class are:

- Wednesday, Dec. 19 (morning and afternoon; evening optional); and,
- Thursday, Dec. 20 (morning and afternoon)

Music Director Jack Lenz will once again be joined by wonderful artists whose hope is to uplift your spirits and share insights on the role of the arts in building community.

For more information <http://rabbanitrust.org/pages/445-sed-conference>

2012 Living Planet Report

The 2012 edition of the LPR highlights the tremendous pressure that humanity is putting on our planet. We are using 50 per cent more resources than the Earth can provide. By 2030, even two planets will not be enough. Our natural capital is declining and our Ecological Footprint is increasing. Urgent action is needed to ensure that we can live in harmony with nature. You can download the report at http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/living_planet_report/2012_lpr/. Please note that the PDF report is 16.21 MB and is 164 pages.