



**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 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.

**Upcoming IEF Conference to be Held in Toronto, Canada with
Association for Bahá'í Studies 7-10 August 2014**

The 18th Annual Conference of the International Environment Forum will be a partnership with the 2014 Association for Baha'i Studies - North America Conference on 7-10 August at the Fairmont Royal York hotel in downtown Toronto, Canada.

The ABS theme is "Scholarship and the Life of Society", so the theme of the IEF contribution will turn around environment and sustainability contributing to the life of society. We can focus on how reflection on environmental limits, climate change and sustainability from a spiritual and ethical perspective contributes to more sustainable lifestyles and communities, and how we can put our concerns into action at the international, national and local levels. Registration and paper submission will be through the ABS on their web site at www.bahai-studies.ca, and papers for the IEF sessions should also be sent for review to ief@iefworld.org by the 1 April 2014 deadline. For the lowest fee, register by 31 May 2014.

It has been five years since we last had our conference in North America, and the second time that IEF has partnered with ABS after our successful collaboration in Washington, D.C. in 2009. See the report at <http://iefworld.org/conf13.htm>. Further detail on the IEF contributions to the programme will be announced later, but should include workshops, paper sessions and probably a panel. Please plan to attend both to participate in the life of IEF and to network with the larger community of scholars.

Remarks at EPA Hearing on Proposed U.S. Carbon Standards for New Power Plants

Remarks by Peter Adriance, Representative for Sustainable Development, U.S. Bahá'í Office of Public Affairs February 6, 2014

Good morning. I'm Peter Adriance, Representative for Sustainable Development for the Bahá'ís of the United States. I'm pleased to be among the several representatives of faith communities here speaking in support of EPA's proposed carbon pollution standards for new power plants.

I appreciate EPA's efforts to clean up our environment through these standards, which will reduce dangerous emissions. They will protect the health and well-being of all citizens and the web of life upon which we all depend. Currently, power plants are responsible for about 40% of US national carbon emissions. The impacts of these emissions are increasingly being felt in communities here at home and around the globe. From extreme weather events to droughts, floods, wildfires, the spread of vector-borne diseases, increased levels of asthma and more, there is growing evidence that carbon emissions are causing chaos and loss of property and life, often in communities ill prepared to deal with the impacts.

Knowing the importance of reducing carbon emissions, then, why would we allow new power plants to be built without any restrictions on the carbon they emit? These standards can help to discourage the investment in infrastructure that will lock us into dangerous levels of emissions for decades to come. The new standards will serve as an incentive to develop clean energy sources, including renewables.

More than purely an environmental issue, the setting of carbon standards is an issue of fairness, equity and justice, as many speaking here today will testify. President Obama has stressed this same point himself. In his words: "We have a moral obligation to future generations to leave them a planet that is not polluted and damaged." We in the faith community would, of course, agree. But it is not only future generations that will bear the impacts of climate change. They are being felt now, most intensely by those populations around the world who are least able to cope with them. We must act with great conviction and haste to move toward solutions.

The central principle of the Bahá'í Faith is the oneness of humankind. This principle has deep implications for policy in many arenas. It should guide us to seek solutions that are equitable and just, treating all people as members of one human family. EPA's proposed carbon standards for new power plants represent one way that this principle can be put into action

I was fortunate last week to attend the 14th National Conference and Global Forum on Science, Policy and the Environment. The focus there was on "building climate solutions". The good news is that solutions are within our reach, and many are being implemented. Several presenters acknowledged the social costs and ethical dimensions of the climate challenge. Renowned climate scientist, Dr. Richard Alley, was emphatic about this. He referred to "the Golden Rule issue" – We must do unto others as we would have them do unto us -- but right now our emissions and their impact on others is taking us in the wrong direction. He said, if we take the right steps in limiting our emissions, we'll bring about a stronger economy, more jobs, enhanced national security, and a cleaner environment. We will also be more consistent with the Golden Rule. If we continue with business as usual, the opposite will result. EPA's proposed carbon standards for new power plants are an important addition to the mix of solutions we so desperately need.

Huffington Post Article on Testimony at U.S. EPA

13. February 2014

Faith communities, including IEF governing board member and Representative for Sustainable Development of the U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs **Peter Adriance**, testified recently before the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the moral implications of carbon pollution causing climate change. Peter's write-up on the testimony, "**Faith Communities Stress Moral Dimension of Carbon Pollution at EPA**", has been published in the Huffington Post and can be read at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-adriance/faith-communities-stress-_b_4769649.html

Faith Communities Stress Moral Dimension of Carbon Pollution at EPA

Posted: 02/12/2014 12:27 pm EST

What drove me and more than fifteen representatives of other faith communities to deliver compelling testimonies at a hearing of the Environmental Protection Agency last week? The need for robust carbon standards for new power plants in the United States. Our interest was not so much in the technical aspects of the EPA's proposed rules, although they are important. We were there to shine a light on the moral and ethical dimensions of our carbon emissions and the need to dramatically change how we produce energy in order to avoid the many catastrophic impacts of carbon pollution.

Early in the day, I was particularly moved by the testimony of Tricia Bruckbauer, representing Creation Justice Ministries, the "creation care" voice of 37 Christian denominations. She quoted from President Obama's State of the Union speech in which he said, "when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world, with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say yes, we did."

As a recent college graduate, Bruckbauer is a member of that rising generation; in her words, "... a child who inherited a changing climate." So while she is driven by her faith and called to care for the earth, she is also, "compelled to speak out because this is my future... It is a sad and frightening reality when it has become normal to vilify the EPA, and radical to ask for clean air and water."

Expressing empathy for those who may lose profits or jobs with the required shift away from

fossil fuels, she stated, "Jobs and profits are tangible benefits that I can understand and value. Climate change and health impacts for future generations seem abstract, but I cannot believe that earning profits will mean anything if my brothers and sisters do not have a safe and healthy planet to live on." This was a point mostly overlooked by those few testifying against applying the proposed standards for emissions from U.S. power plants.

Reverend M. Dele, a pastor in the United Church of Christ and a steering committee member of Virginia Interfaith Power and Light echoed Tricia's comments with these words: "Our economy can never be so desperate that we sell off our children's right to fresh air."

She highlighted some dramatic statistics on the impact of carbon emissions on the African American community: 75 percent of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal fired power plant; an African-American family making \$50,000/year is more likely to live near a toxic facility than a European-American family making \$15,000/year; and African Americans suffer from increased rates of respiratory illnesses, despite having lower rates of smoking than many other groups.

In addition, African American children are "5 times more likely to die of asthma and 3 times more likely to be admitted to the hospital for an asthma attack," she continued. "This is directly related to unbridled carbon pollution in the air."

Barbara Weinstein of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, which advocates

on behalf of 900 Reform Jewish congregations across North America (1.3 million Jews) and more than 2,000 Reform rabbis, cited Hebrew scripture. God says to Adam, "See to it that you do not spoil or destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you." Jews are called to be stewards of the Earth, she said, "not just for our own benefit and the well-being of those with whom we share this planet today, but because of responsibility to the generations that will succeed us." She noted that with only 5 percent of the world's population, the U.S. produces about 19 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (40 percent of which come from power plants). "We have a responsibility to the people of our own country and to our global community to address this climate crisis," she concluded, echoing the support of the vast majority of those testifying for setting strong pollution standards.

John Elwood is a Sunday school teacher. His farm in Andover, New Jersey provides food for 700 families. Speaking from an Evangelical and Reformed Christian perspective, he noted, "It's clearly wrong for a buyer and a seller to enjoy all the benefits of a transaction, and then leave a substantial part of the cost for someone else to pick up - the external costs." Citing a report from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, *The Hidden Cost of Energy*, he said, "Its findings were shocking. Coal burned in a single year by U.S. power plants costs everyone else on the planet another \$200 to \$300 billion in unpriced external costs."

Voicing support for protection of those who stand to lose jobs or profits when fossil fuels are phased out, he noted, "Christians of all traditions take their plight seriously, and our society must find ways to help affected communities recover. But... consider the plight of totally innocent communities -- both in our country and around the world -- which have never had an ounce of benefit from the burning of coal."

Elwood traveled last year with a church delegation to Kenya to hear firsthand from those being affected by climate change. He

said, "We met with hundreds of small farmers and community leaders. Everywhere, the story was the same. Two reliable growing seasons in years past have shrunk to a single season. And even that single season is now unreliable. Crop yields have plummeted. Water is more scarce than ever."

In my own remarks to the EPA, I pointed to the central principle of the Baha'i Faith -- the oneness of humankind -- and its deep policy implications in many arenas. When applied to energy policy, for instance, this principle would guide us to find solutions that are equitable and just, treating all people as members of one human family. In light of the impact of our carbon pollution on African American communities, Kenyan farmers and many others in vulnerable situations, it would require that we substantially reduce our carbon emissions. EPA's proposed carbon standards for new power plants are one small way that this principle can be put into action. But we need much more. We must act with deep moral conviction and a sense of urgency, to move toward solutions.

With that in mind, on Valentine's Day weekend, February 14-16, people of all faiths, including Baha'is, will take part in the national Preach-in on Climate Change organized by Interfaith Power and Light. In churches, mosques, synagogues and Baha'i Centers around the country, we will discuss climate change from a faith perspective, commit to action to reduce our own emissions, and send messages to members of Congress asking them to do their part in moving us toward a low-carbon energy future.

I am grateful to my colleagues who so eloquently raised a moral voice last week and to all those who stood up in support of setting strong carbon standards. It's time to move forward as one on energy policy so that we will be able to say "Yes, we did," when our children's children ask.

Follow Peter Adriance on Twitter:
www.twitter.com/faithsustain

Measuring What Matters

3 Toolkits of Values-Based Activities and Indicators for Education for Responsible Living and Sustainability

Measuring What Matters is an international project which aims to inspire students to understand 'achievement' and 'success' in new ways - not just in terms of exam grades, but in terms of acquiring the skills and values needed to survive and thrive in the 21st century.

The Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) is a group of educators and researchers who have spent more than a decade learning about the values at the heart of sustainable schools and societies. These values include, among others, trust, compassion, creativity, empowerment, and care and respect for the community of life. IEF is a partner in PERL and has been leading the PERL workgroup to prepare toolkits on values-based indicators.

This research has been used to create a draft set of Measuring What Matters activities and assessment toolkits for secondary school (high school) teachers and students. There are three toolkits that are complementary in their uses:

Toolkit 1. An introduction to measuring values: While values underlie much of human behaviour, they have long been considered intangible and unmeasurable. New methods and indicators pioneered by a European Union-funded research project show how values are expressed and can be measured. This toolkit explains the background and approach for

those who want to create their own indicators adapted to their needs.

Toolkit 2. Values-based Student activities:

To what extent have students already acquired the values, as well as the skills, knowledge, attitudes and personal qualities, which will prepare them for tomorrow? Can they understand more clearly what their own values are, and learn to live by them? In which areas do they need more help? This toolkit includes both a menu of indicators and an example of an activity ready to use. It can be used directly by student groups.

Toolkit 3: Assessing Your School for

Values-based Learning: Are we 'walking our talk' as educators? Is our school a living example of a vibrant, sustainable community? Do we provide a supportive learning environment for staff and students, and empower them as agents of positive change? This toolkit provides tools to assess whether the educational environment we create for our students facilitates acquiring responsible values.

While this is still a work in progress, drafts of the three toolkits are now available for review and testing. **Download pdf files from the links above.** Any comments or descriptions of experience in the classroom would be greatly appreciated, and should be sent to ief@iefworld.org.

The Wilmette Institute offers a 7-week Online Course on Climate Change March 10 - April 28, 2014

For those interested in a more thorough study of climate change or who are interested in specific aspects of it, the course offers numerous optional resources.

The Wilmette Institute is an online Baha'i Learning Center: Its courses are open to members of all religions. Participants are usually from different countries. On the faculty are Christine Muller, Gary Colliver, Arthur Lyon Dahl, Carole Flood, and Karryn Olson-Ramanujan.

The objectives of the course are

- to help participants become literate in the basic science of climate change and to acquire an understanding of how it impacts people today and in the future,
- to explore ethical questions related to climate change and to address them within the context of the spiritual teachings of the world's religions, especially of the Baha'i Faith,
- to enable participants to make enlightened decisions for their lives that are consistent with their own spiritual and ethical values,
- to empower participants to engage in social discourse by presenting the spiritual dimensions of the climate crisis offered by the Baha'i teachings to the increasing number of people who are very concerned about this problem.

For more information or to register, visit: <http://www.cvent.com/events/climate-change/event-summary-2dda00ae91df4b54b70814f43ec88ec7.aspx>

“War And Peace And War” – Book Review by Arthur Dahl

Peter Turchin is an evolutionary biologist who has turned his expertise in modeling the rise and fall of animal populations to explore similar processes in empires. In his book "War and Peace and War: The Rise and Fall of Empires" (2006, Pi Press and Plume Book, Penguin Group, New York), he explores world history to understand what makes empires grow and then collapse, looking at Russia, Rome, Islam and Medieval Europe, among others. His central thesis is that societies on a frontier between two very different cultures are subject to stresses that force them to build social cohesion faced by an enemy. The strength that comes from cohesion, effective organization and a willingness to sacrifice for the common good allows such societies to expand into empires. The success of an empire, however, contains the seeds of its own downfall. The wealth of a growing population and improving technology produces a successful elite, until excess population allows increased exploitation of labour and an overshoot of food production capacity, in which the poor suffer and the elite continue to live well. A generation later the excessive concentration of wealth leads to conflict among a too numerous elite over a shrinking resource base, and the civilization loses cohesion and collapses, perhaps through several cycles. Turchin's view is a largely negative one, that it takes wars to build empires, and civil wars to destroy them.

What Turchin hints at with respect to Islam, but does not explore, is whether forces other than

the constant threat of an enemy on a geographical frontier can bring about social cohesion. It seems reasonable that the rise of a new religion can create another kind of cultural frontier, with those sharing the new values building social cohesion as they work to transform society. Turchin's theory by extension could suggest that a highly cohesive social and spiritual movement can overcome the negative forces around it and expand rapidly into a global civilization. In addition, if its social cohesion comes not from constant external threats but from an inner spiritual force for unity in diversity, that civilization should be able to achieve sustainability in its use of resources, prevent the excessive concentration of wealth in an elite, and thus rise above the cycle of decline and fall that has characterized past civilizations, or at least slow the cycle to the millennial span of religious revelations.

Subsequent to publishing his book, Peter Turchin has published a notable paper in 2010 in the leading scientific journal *Nature*. He draws the parallel with the educated young elite of today who no longer have access to the success and comfort of their parent's generation and may become the revolutionaries, producing factionalism, anarchy and ultimately collapse. He predicts a risk of political instability and impending crisis in Western Europe and the USA peaking in 2020. The only way to avoid this would be to reduce social inequality. The reference to this paper is Peter Turchin, 2010. Political instability may be a contributor in the coming decade. *Nature*, vol. 463, p. 608 (4 February 2010). doi:10.1038/463608a.

Commitments to Improve Energy Access for Rural Areas Announced at Global Conference

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&nr=808&type=12&menu=1532>

A number of commitments to help bring modern and reliable energy services to impoverished rural communities were announced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), UN DESA and several other Stakeholders at the “Global Conference on Rural Energy Access: A Nexus Approach to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication”, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 4 to 6 December 2013.



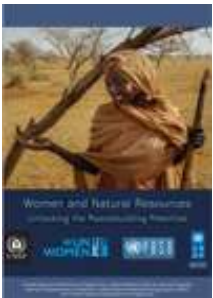
The commitments were made as a contribution to the 2014 – 2024 UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All. The main theme of the Conference, which was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All), UN-nergy and the Economic Commission for Africa, was the essential role that access to energy services has for enabling sustainable development and poverty eradication. Over 250 participants from 40 countries attended the Conference.

Participants agreed that lack of clean, affordable, reliable energy is at the heart of a range of interconnected problems faced by the energy poor in rural areas. Discussions therefore focused on a nexus approach to sustainable energy, which acknowledges the strong link between energy and other development factors such as education, health, gender, environment, economic growth, food security, and water, and seeks to address these in a holistic way.

An exhibition, at which 25 organisations displayed renewable energy technologies that enable affordable, clean energy, was an integral part of the Global Conference. The exhibition demonstrated that advanced “clean” cook stoves and stand-alone electric generation systems, which are practical, reliable and durable, are both widely available and affordable. A summary of the Conference discussions, recommendations and further information can be found on the Conference webpage on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&nr=489&type=13&menu=1634>

Download PDF books at <http://www.unep.org/>



Women and Natural Resources - Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential (November 2013)



The global climate 2001–2010 a decade of climate extremes Summary Report (2013)



REN21's Renewables Global Status Report (GSR)

Climate-Smart Agriculture Sourcebook

<http://www.fao.org/climatechange/climatesmart/en/>



There has been a rapid uptake of the term Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) by the international community, national entities and local institutions, in the past years. However, implementing this approach is challenging, partly due to a lack of tools and experience. Climate-smart interventions are highly location-specific and knowledge-intensive. Considerable efforts are required to develop the knowledge and capacities to make CSA a reality.

The purpose of the sourcebook is to further elaborate the concept of CSA and demonstrate its potential, as well as its limitations. This sourcebook is a reference tool for planners, practitioners and policy makers working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries at national and subnational levels, dealing with the effects of climate change.

Copy this link to download the 570-page PDF publication (8 Mb) at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3325e/i3325e.pdf>

Executive summary

This sourcebook is divided into **three main sections**, which addresses the main following topics:

Section A The Case for Climate-Smart Agriculture consists of two modules establishing a conceptual framework and is targeted to a broad audience. Module 1 explains the rationale for CSA and module 2 focuses on the adoption of a landscape approach.

Section B Improved Technologies and Approaches for Sustainable Farm Management is divided in nine Modules. It is targeted primarily to the needs of planners and practitioners and analyzes what issues need to be addressed in the different sectors, in terms of water (Module 3), soils (Module 4), energy (Module 5) and genetic resources (Module 6) for up-scaling of practices of crop production (Module 7), livestock (Module 8), forestry (Module 9) and fisheries and aquaculture (Module 10) along sustainable and inclusive food value chains (Module 11).

Section C Enabling frameworks encompasses seven Modules, targeted to policy makers, providing guidance on what institutional (Module 12), policy (Module 13) and finance (Module 14) options are available. It further provides information on links with disaster risk reduction (Module 15) and utilization of safety nets (Module 16) and also illustrates the key role of capacity development (Module 17) and assessments and monitoring (Module 18).

The sourcebook is also available through a web platform that facilitates stakeholders' access to additional information, case studies, manuals, practices and systems. The platform is dynamic and updated on a regular basis. www.climatesmartagriculture.org/72611/en

About Climate-Smart Agriculture

FAO has decades of experience in promoting agricultural practices and policies that also safeguard the natural resource base for future generations. Agriculture policies are the cornerstones for achieving food security and improving livelihoods. Effective agriculture and climate change policies can also boost green growth, protect the environment and contribute to the eradication of poverty. FAO works closely with many of the world's most vulnerable populations to help them increase their agricultural productivity, while ensuring that the natural resources they depend on are not exploited or depleted.