



LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

Volume 16, Number 10 15 October 2014



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

Website www.iefworld.org
Article submission newsletter@iefworld.org
Secretariat Email ief@iefworld.org
President Email ief@iefworld.org
Postal address 12B Chemin de Maisonneuve, CH-1219 Chatelaine, Geneva, Switzerland

Article Deadline next issue 13 November 2014

General Secretary Emily Firth
Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.

From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters

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

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

Action on Climate Change

Mid-September has been an important time for action on climate change, with a report on the New Climate Economy, People's Climate Marches around the world, and a Climate Summit at the United Nations.

On 16 September, The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, made up of some of the world's leading economists and political leaders and chaired by the former President of Mexico and Sir Nicholas Stern, released its report "**Better Growth, Better Climate: The New Climate Economy Report**". The report shows that transforming the world to a low carbon economy will produce a higher GDP than business as usual regardless of climate change. The transition must be made in the next 15 years, and every day of delay is dangerous.

Investments should be transferred from old technologies to greater resource efficiency, transformation of infrastructure, and technological change and innovation. Three areas of focus are cities, land use productivity and restoration, and clean energy systems. One important problem is government subsidies for fossil fuels which distort the energy market. In 2012, fossil fuels received \$544 billion in subsidies, compared with only \$101 billion for renewables. The report shows that there is no economic argument against rapid action to prevent global warming. You can download the report or parts of it at <http://newclimateeconomy.report/misc/downloads/> and the four-page Executive Summary at http://static.newclimateeconomy.report/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NCE_ExecutiveSummary.pdf.

On Sunday 21 September, the largest **People's March on Climate Change** in history was organized in New York City, with about 400,000 people participating, including a number of IEF members such as Peter Adriance, representative for sustainable development for the Office of Public Information of the American Baha'i Community, and Christine Muller, who wrote the IEF course on climate change, and is lead faculty for the Wilmette Institute course on climate change. Faith-based groups, including about 200 Baha'is, made up a whole section of the march.



Similar, if smaller marches were organized in 2,600 other places around the world, involving at least another 300,000 people. Arthur Dahl marched with hundreds of others in Geneva, Switzerland. You can see more pictures at http://yabaha.net/dahl/Geneva.html#CLIMATE_MARCH

On 23 September, the UN Secretary-General convened a **Climate Summit** of 125 heads of state and government at UN Headquarters to build political momentum and make pledges of support for a global climate agreement to be finalized in Paris in December 2015.

One particularly moving event during the opening ceremony was Marshallese poet Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner speaking for civil society, with a poem to her infant daughter about the consequences of climate change on small islands. You can see the UN video broadcast at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4fdxXo4tnY>, and an illustrated version of her poem at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJuRjy9k7GA>. She received a standing ovation from the heads of state and government present.

Connecting the Dots...

Climate Summit Article Submitted by Peter Adriance to the Huffington Post

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-adriance/connecting-the-dots_3_b_5924108.html
10/03/2014

I've been at it again -- connecting the dots between faith and climate change. Some who have followed my posts may call it an obsession. This time, though, the events triggering my thoughts and feelings were unprecedented. And, as the clock ticks, the reasons for acting on climate change are becoming more urgent and obvious, and the religious community is increasingly stepping up to the challenge.

It happened over the weekend of September 20-21, 2014, and the days surrounding it, when the world seemed to come together around the issue of climate change. A string of remarkable events, in New York and in 150 countries worldwide, took place in advance of the UN Secretary General's one-day Climate Summit intended to inspire bold commitments in support of a far-reaching global climate agreement to be finalized next year.

The events organized by civil society leading up to the summit helped to put a human face on climate change and to dramatically demonstrate public demand for immediate action. Within these events, faith communities helped to connect the dots between core religious values and climate action.

At the "Religions for the Earth" conference, (held September 19-20 at Union Theological Seminary) 200 invited leaders from diverse religions and ethical traditions focused on the role of values such as justice, equity and stewardship in addressing climate change. They noted that those who are most vulnerable to climate impacts - - indigenous people, people of color, the poor, women and children, to say nothing of manifold species across the planet and generations yet to come -- have had little or no role in generating the related greenhouse gasses and have benefitted least from the energy produced. To see the injustice in this situation and to take steps to correct it is to connect the dots.

Then on Sunday, September 21st, participants from "Religions for the Earth" joined a multi-faith contingent (7-8,000 strong) in the huge People's Climate March, for which 400,000 had converged on New York City -- four

times the anticipated turnout. Prior to the March, the bustling faith contingent had packed together for a worship service and rally, with signs and pennants from every faith tradition. Many who joined the vast river of marchers said that the event felt like a great unifying force, carrying all humanity forward with a common purpose. The sheer volume and diversity of participants was stunning. Many carried signs pointing to the climate crisis as a crisis of values. One that cut to the chase said, "The climate changes. Can we?" I believe we can, but only if we connect the dots.

That evening, I joined a large crowd at an uplifting multi-faith worship service in the massive Cathedral of St. John the Divine. During the service, prominent religious and spiritual leaders from around the world voiced their commitments. Referring to responsibility born of faith, Jewish ecologist, Rabbi Ellen Bernstein noted, "My tradition teaches that the land is a gift from God, and that that gift is conditional. If we do not care for the gift, we lose the gift. And my tradition teaches that we are all responsible for each other."

The next day, I observed two sessions of a 30-member Interfaith Summit on Climate Change that had also taken place over the weekend. That group released a statement committing themselves to a range of actions and urging world leaders to reach agreement on an ambitious, fair, legally binding treaty in 2015. They noted, "When those who have done the least to cause climate change are the ones hardest hit, it becomes an issue of injustice. Equitable solutions are urgently needed... As faith leaders, we commit ourselves to the promotion of disaster risk reduction, adaptation, low carbon development, climate change education, curbing our own consumption patterns and reducing our use of fossil fuels."

They continued, "Based on our spiritual beliefs and our hope for the future, we commit to stimulating consciences and encouraging our peers and communities to consider such measures with urgency." They too were connecting the dots.

The following day, I monitored the live stream broadcast of the UN Climate Summit. World leaders had obviously been moved by the events of the weekend and had heard the call for action. Several made commitments to substantially cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce deforestation. This was an encouraging sign, but only if governments make further commitments next year in the form of a strong climate treaty will they demonstrate that they are truly connecting the dots.

Finally, what really put a cap on the weekend's events for me was the frank and passionate appeal to world leaders made by the young Marshallese poet, Kathy Jetnail-Kijiner, who had been selected from among 500 applicants to speak for civil society. She offered both a stern warning and encouragement to world leaders. Pledging civil society's support, she concluded with a poem she had written for her seven month old daughter. It brought a standing ovation. Her powerful message connected the dots for all with ears to hear and eyes to see.

Emerging from these remarkable events I feel a sense of hope. The climate crisis is an opportunity to bring about a more just, healthy and prosperous world. That will happen only as more and more of us find ourselves connecting the dots

THE NEW CLIMATE ECONOMY

The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE CAN NOW BE ACHIEVED TOGETHER, FINDS GLOBAL COMMISSION

<http://newclimateeconomy.net/content/approach>

<http://newclimateeconomy.net/content/press-release-economic-growth-and-action-climate-change-can-now-be-achieved-together-finds> Contact: Lauren Zelin, lzelin@wri.org, T: +1-202-729-7736

Read the report at www.newclimateeconomy.report.

The New Climate Economy's starting point has been the perspective of economic decision-makers: government ministers, particularly ministers of finance, economy, energy and agriculture; business leaders and financial investors; state governors and city mayors.

For such decision-makers, climate change is rarely a primary concern. Their motivations are to promote short-term economic growth and job creation, increase market share and profitability, improve energy and food security, build competitive cities and reduce poverty. Yet their decisions powerfully influence the trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions.

So the core question the project has sought to answer is: how can decision-makers achieve their economic and social goals while simultaneously reducing the risk of dangerous climate change?

Engagement with these decision-makers has been central to our approach. We have talked to key public and private sector institutions in different countries to understand how they make choices about policy and investment. How do they see the

risks and opportunities presented by climate change? What might change their decisions made under conditions of uncertainty? What might lead them to reappraise their assessment of short and longer-term economic trade-offs?

The project's approach has combined such engagement with new research. We have sought to bring together and synthesise work done by a large number of research institutes, international organisations and others from around the world. The New Climate Economy work programme work has been organised into six workstreams: Cities, Land Use, Energy, Economics of Change, Finance and Innovation.

We are pleased to share our findings in our report, *Better Growth, Better Climate*, launched on 16th September 2014. In the second phase of the project, we will be sharing our report and findings directly with decision-makers through a consultation period, and communicating them to the wider public through a variety of global and national media channels, and public meetings in a number of countries.

NEW YORK/BEIJING/ADDIS ABABA/OSLO/JOHANNESBURG (September 16, 2014) — A major new report released by a commission of global leaders finds that governments and businesses can now improve economic growth and reduce their carbon emissions together. Rapid technological innovation and new investment in infrastructure are making it possible today to tackle climate change at the same time as improving economic performance.

"The New Climate Economy report refutes the idea that we must choose between fighting climate change or growing the world's economy. That is a false dilemma," said former **President of Mexico Felipe Calderón**, Chair of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate. "Today's report details compelling evidence on how technological change is driving new opportunities to improve growth, create jobs, boost company profits and spur economic development. The report sends a clear message to government and private sector leaders: we can improve the economy and tackle climate change at the same time."

The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate comprises 24 leaders from government, business, finance and economics in 19 countries. A year-long study has been conducted by leading research institutes from Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, South Korea, the United Kingdom and United States, advised by a panel of world-leading economists chaired by Lord Nicholas Stern.

Better Growth, Better Climate: The New Climate Economy Report was presented to governments and business and finance leaders at a global launch event at the UN headquarters in New York City, attended by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The report arrives just one week before the UN Climate Summit.

The report finds that over the next 15 years, about US \$90 trillion will be invested in infrastructure in the world's cities, agriculture and energy systems. The world has an unprecedented opportunity to drive investment in low-carbon growth, bringing multiple benefits including jobs, health, business productivity and quality of life.

"The decisions we make now will determine the future of our economy and our climate," said **Lord Nicholas Stern**, Co-Chair of the Global Commission. "If we choose low-carbon investment we can generate strong, high-quality growth – not just in the future, but now. But if we continue down the high-carbon route, climate change will bring severe risks to long-term prosperity."

The report finds that there are now major opportunities to achieve strong growth with lower emissions in three key sectors of the global economy – cities, land use and energy. To achieve this growth, governments and businesses need to improve resource efficiency, invest in good-quality infrastructure, and stimulate technological and business innovation.

- **Cities:** Building better connected, more compact cities based on mass public transport can save over US \$3 trillion in investment costs over the next 15 years. These measures will improve economic performance and quality of life with lower emissions.
- **Land use:** Restoring just 12% of the world's degraded lands can feed another 200 million people and raise farmers' incomes by \$40 billion a year – and also cut emissions from deforestation.
- **Energy:** As the price of solar and wind power falls dramatically, over half of new electricity generation over the next 15 years is likely to be from renewable energy, reducing dependence on highly polluting coal.
- **Resource efficiency:** Phasing out the \$600 billion currently spent on subsidies for fossil fuels (compared to \$100 billion on renewable energy) will help to improve energy efficiency and make funds available for poverty reduction.
- **Infrastructure investment:** New financial instruments can cut capital costs for clean energy by up to 20%.
- **Innovation:** Tripling research and development in low-carbon technologies to at least 0.1% of GDP can drive a new wave of innovation for growth.

The report finds that competitive markets and consistent government policy signals are essential for businesses and investors to create low-carbon jobs and growth. By establishing a strong carbon price and a level playing field through an international climate agreement, governments can unlock new investment and innovation.

"Major companies, smart investors and a new generation of entrepreneurs are already demonstrating how markets can drive low-carbon growth," said Jeremy Oppenheim, Global Programme Director of the New Climate Economy project. "But inconsistent policy in many countries is now creating uncertainty, hurting investment and job creation. Businesses and investors need clearer market signals."

Better Growth, Better Climate sets out a detailed 10-point Global Action Plan of practical recommendations that can achieve greater prosperity and a safer climate at the same time. These measures will all lead to net benefits to the economy, even before their climate benefits are considered.

The Commission calculates that if fully implemented its recommendations could potentially achieve up to 90% of the emissions reductions needed by 2030 to avoid dangerous climate change. This would require decisive and early action by economic decision-makers.

Over the next six months the Commission will discuss the report with economic decision-makers across the world. It aims to stimulate stronger action by governments and businesses to drive growth and emissions reductions together.

New York Declaration on Forests Follow-up Report from Michael Richards, IEF Member

For a full copy of the Forests Declaration see: http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/07/FORESTS-Action-Statement_revised.pdf

Last month I wrote about the causes and solutions of deforestation. This month I can report that it seems like some of the solutions could be on their way! One of the most promising outcomes of the big UN Climate Summit in September has been the New York Declaration of Forests. This sets out high level goals to reduce deforestation and promote forest restoration – it commits to halving deforestation by 2020 and eliminating it by 2030, and restoring 350 million hectares of forest, an area larger than India.

Of course we hear a lot of commitments - there are two interesting things about this one. Firstly it is signed by a huge range of actors, both powerful and vulnerable, including some of the biggest food companies in the world and 16 indigenous groups or nations, including the biggest umbrella groupings of Amazonia and Indonesia. Secondly it is backed up to some extent by financial commitments – although only a fraction of what is needed, US \$1 billion was pledged by the signatories. Much of this will support 'Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation' (REDD+) discussed in last month's article.

The Declaration currently has 150 'Partners' composed of 38 governments, 8 subnational governments, 35 companies (including such as McDonald's, Nestle, Kellogg's, Cargill, Unilever, Walmart, Marks & Spencer and Golden Agri-Resources, the biggest global supplier of palm oil), 16 indigenous groups and 45 NGOs or civil society organizations. The corporate interest is due to their increasing concerns about how climate change is impacting their supply chains, e.g., due to water quality problems and extreme climate events like flooding and droughts. The Declaration will remain 'open' in the hope of attracting many more signatories right up to the crucial UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015. There is one notable absentee among the signatory governments. Brazil did not sign due to diplomatic and legal reasons, e.g., some deforestation is legal, but given that it leads the world in reducing deforestation (having reduced it by 80% in the last 10 years) this is not such a problem. There was also a Declaration on Agriculture – this is also important for forests since 80% of deforestation is caused by agriculture in one form or another.

While the Declaration has been widely welcomed, a few NGOs like Greenpeace did not sign it partly since they felt that its targets were unambitious. To this observer, it might rather be argued that the targets are over-optimistic as regards the political economy, corruption and greed challenges. To be successful, we will need to alter the underlying economic drivers of deforestation, not to mention corruption, and this won't be easy within prevailing value systems.

New York Declaration on Forests Elicits Praise, Concerns

By Center for International Forestry Research

The New York Declaration on Forests, signed last week at the UN Climate Summit, was notable not just for its ambition—halving deforestation by 2020 and ending it by 2030—but also for its broad-based support from governments, corporations and indigenous groups.

History will show whether the pact can actually deliver, said experts who lauded the aims of the declaration but expressed concerns about some of its limitations.

"This broad support is really something good that has come from Climate Week," said Peter Holmgren, Director General of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). "It is not every year that we have heads of states gathered and you hear them speak about forests, agriculture and commitments."

"And private corporations are making moves in the direction that many of us think is a good direction: to bring in climate change into their value chains and to see it as a business opportunity." More than 30 countries as well as 30 corporations signed the declaration, including Golden Agri-

Resources, Cargill, Asia Pulp and Paper, McDonald's, Nestle and Kellogg's.

"The objective to try and eliminate deforestation, to engage with the private sector is new and useful, and I think that's one of the things that we've seen here throughout the climate week in New York," said Louis Verchot, Director of Forests and Environment Research at CIFOR. "The private sector engagement is at a much higher level than it has been in the past."

BRAZIL BALKS

Regarding the country signatories to the Declaration, there was one notable absence.

Brazil's refusal to sign the declaration stood in contrast to its progress in curbing deforestation. In the past 10 years, Brazil has reduced its deforestation by nearly 80 percent, though 2013 saw a small rise in deforested land.

"Brazil did not sign for diplomatic and, let's say, legal restrictions, because it said 'zero deforestation,' and Brazilian law today allows for a certain small amount of deforestation," explained Carlos Nobre, the National Secretary for Research and Development Policy in Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation. "However, Brazil is intent on getting to zero deforestation soon."

CUTTING CARBON, ABSORBING CARBON

If successful, the declaration would have far-reaching effects not just on forests but on the climate: Carbon emissions caused by deforestation could be cut by 4.5 billion to 8.8 billion tons per year—roughly the yearly emissions of the United States. Forests also play a safety-net role in the current climate system, absorbing up to 45 percent of carbon emissions.

In addition to being effective carbon sinks, forests play key roles in landscapes to support agricultural productivity through ecosystem services such as pollination, water quality maintenance, groundwater recharge, and maintenance of soil quality. It is estimated that about 1.6 billion people living in and around forests are heavily dependent on these forests for their livelihoods.

SOME CONCERNS REMAIN

Despite the praise for the declaration, there are some concerns as to its approach.

"The UN declaration goes a long way in recognizing forests as a major target for conservation and for climate change mitigation in the coming 10 years and 20 years," said Eduardo Brondizio, Professor of Anthropology and Adjunct Professor of Environmental Sciences and Geography at Indiana University. "On the other hand, it seems to just put forests on the conservation side more than on the management side."

Some experts also expressed concern that the declaration isolates forests, separating them from their interconnected roles with other land uses.

"The declaration is a little bit short in that it focuses on forests as an entity and not on forests as an entity within the landscape," Verchot said. "Agriculture, forestry and land use would have been a really nice declaration."

"Agriculture causes 80 percent of deforestation in the tropics and is the leading cause of biodiversity loss," he continued. But it is also crucial to human subsistence—in Africa alone, he said, agriculture provides subsistence and livelihoods for 80 percent of the continent's population.

Forests, meanwhile, "provide all kinds of ecosystem services including those that support agriculture, food security and balanced nutrition," Verchot said. "Thus dealing with forests and agriculture separately does not make sense. Both land-use systems are essential for human wellbeing, and there are tradeoffs between the two land uses that need to be recognized and managed."

CIFOR's Holmgren agreed.

"There are surprisingly few cross references between the forest declaration and the agriculture declaration, and the institutional arrangements for these two sectors remain apart," he said. "This really limits our options. We have a much better chance of finding solutions if we look across the sectors."



Dear GCP Friends,

This has been an amazing week for politics, climate and forests at the UN Climate Summit in New York.

I was delighted that the main story in news of the Summit was the *New York Declaration on Deforestation*. The fact that Brazil did not endorse it, gave the press a reason to report on the Declaration, which might otherwise have been drowned out. Indonesia and Congo DRC, did endorse it and efforts by UNDP, backed by ourselves and many other organisations resulted in 155 countries, businesses and NGOs signing up to the Declaration including the US. It was a centre piece of many climate outcomes here in New York.

The other major event was the shock announcement by Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the original founders of Standard Oil, to disinvest from fossil fuels sending shockwaves around the global financial community. This lent credence to a US\$ 50 billion disinvestment campaign announced by a range of investors. This helps our Natural Capital Declaration work focussed on the financial sector. Disinvestment from deforestation may be next.

More here: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/22/rockefeller-heirs-divest-fossil-fuels-climate-change>

Al Gore set the pace with a barnstorming speech that had the audience at the UNDP Equator Prizes calling for him to be the next President of the US! 25 community activists from around the world were recognised at this event, including friends from the Waorani of Ecuador and the Masai of Il Ngwesi, in Kenya. 350,000 climate activists took to the streets in New York. Even the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, took part.

UK, Germany, France and Norway announced a joint effort on forests agreeing to fund up to 20 new, large-scale, REDD+ projects by 2020 through a range of mechanisms. Britain pledged £45 million to the World Bank's BioCarbon fund bringing its total support for forests to £500 million over the last three years. Norway committed \$450 million to Liberia and Peru to help define land tenure for communities. Germany committed US\$1 billion to the Green Climate Fund.

GCP led or engaged with three key events on 'deforestation-free' supply chains and finance for forests. Our main event "*Towards a deforestation-free future: the demand-side challenge*" with Indonesia, included Ministers from Indonesia, Norway, the head of UNDP (the former Prime Minister of New Zealand), and Manuel Pulgar the President of the forthcoming UN Climate Meeting to be held in December in Lima, Peru. This high level event convened leaders across Government, the private sector, multilateral banks, and civil society organisations on the question of increasing global incentives for sustainably grown 'forest risk' commodities, such as palm oil, beef and soya.

More big news for forests here included the striking commitments made by huge companies such as Unilever, Golden Agri-Resources, Nestle, Cargill, and Wilmar, who are the world's biggest growers, traders and buyers of palm oil, to have deforestation-free supply chains by 2020. Many of them were at our event with Indonesia, which gathered leaders to discuss creating demand for sustainable supply chains that do not destroy forests. Real momentum is now behind a sea change in attitude, across Government, business and civil society that was unthinkable just a few years ago. Of course the devil will be in the detailed delivery of these commitments but it is about everyone getting on a journey, from which there is no going back.

I owe a huge thank you to all our supporters who help to keep GCP at the frontline for forests. I feel very proud of the role GCP is playing in our own modest but incisive way, to help make all this change happen.

On Wednesday, at the outgoing President of Indonesia's event on REDD+, where he spoke of his record on rainforests, I gave a speech in support of Indonesia's efforts to curb deforestation. I was in good company with the Environment Minister of Norway, Tine Sundtoft; Helen Clarke, Head of UNDP; Achim Steiner, DG of The UN Environment Programme and others. This was followed by another GCP event on how to stimulate a global deal to finance REDD+ in Paris in December 2015, including Ian Grey from the UN's billion \$ Global Environment Facility and Peter Heng from Golden Agri-Resources, the world largest grower of Palm oil, and others.

It was moving to be in the General Assembly hall of the United Nations to see Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon speaking passionately at the closing ceremony about all the commitments made to curb climate change across sectors from energy, to forests, to agriculture and many more at this UN Climate Summit. To have Ed Norton at the Equator Prizes and Leonardo DiCaprio at the opening ceremony, as well as President Obama himself, all added to the occasion.

The colourful United Nations flags fluttered valiantly around the iconic UN building, as the week gave way to the UN General Assembly and darker stories, on air strikes and ISIS. All around police sirens filled the air. Whilst it is difficult not to think that the world is currently in crisis mode, the progress made here on forests, may yet herald a coming revolution in the world's economy.

We may look back to this Summit, as the time when protecting natural capital, as part of doing business, became the new normal.

Andrew W. Mitchell, Founder & Executive Director, GCP, Co-Director, Natural Capital Declaration

Nuttall: 'Religious groups are taking action on climate change'

© Deutsche Welle You can find the complete article here: <http://www.dw.de/nuttall-religious-groups-are-taking-action-on-climate-change/a-17918398>
10.10.2014

Nick Nuttall, spokesperson for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, tells Deutsche Welle (DW) how religious groups are increasingly fighting climate change and how that might have a bigger impact than you'd think.

DW: Mr. Nuttall, in the lead up to the climate negotiations in Paris in 2015, the United Framework Convention on Climate Change has called upon religious groups around the world to combat climate change. Why are religious leaders asked to address climate change?

Nick Nuttall: Right now there is quite an interesting groundswell of interest among all sorts of sections of society to try and address climate change. The faith groups have been emerging in the last few months because I think they have internalized the science that has been coming out and have determined that it's actually a very moral and

ethical central issue that they feel needs addressing.

Christiane Figueres, the head of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, has urged faith groups to "find their voice" and "set their moral compass" on climate change. What does this mean exactly?

Christiane Figueres was actually in London a few months ago addressing a group of faith leaders and business leaders from the city of London at St. Paul's Cathedral. And I think she was basically expressing to them: now is the time. There needs to be a lot more energy towards a really meaningful agreement in 2015.

And this setting of the moral compass was her way of expressing to them that this is your moment, this is your time to actually stand up and basically say to your leaders: "We would like a meaningful agreement on climate change to protect not only the people but the whole concept of stewardship of this one planet that we have."

Why should religious groups care about climate change? Why have they been specifically targeted by the UN?

With every new report that is brought out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, the science gets ever more sobering and the risk assessment gets ever more clear. The churches are very aware that they have within their own midst members of the communities who are vulnerable and marginalized and that climate change presents an ever increasing risk to those very vulnerable people.

There may be people within the developed countries, but certainly in the developing world, where many are at a very high risk from extreme weather, the spreads of diseases, shortages of water, and all the other impacts that are likely to come with a more intense climatic change.

So I believe that many of the churches have accepted that this is unacceptable and they must do something about it because climate change threatens to undermine several decades of development gains in the developing world. It's part of looking after their flock in the near term but also the extended family of humanity across the globe.

How successful has the campaign been to divest investment in the fossil fuel industry?

Divesting from fossil fuel sends a very clear signal to the investment community as well as to leaders across the world that these kinds of fuels that we are burning right now, that contain high amounts of carbon, isn't the way to go. And the Quakers in the UK were one of the church groups that have actually done this on ethical grounds.

There are other faith groups looking at it right now, for example the World Council of Churches. They have called on member churches to actually divest from fossil fuels. They represent about half a billion of Christians and there is a huge interfaith meeting happening in New York, which is bringing together not just the Christians but also Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews who are coming from around the world and also from within the United States to basically sign statements and a declaration of what they want world leaders to do in respect of climate change.

Apart from urging faith groups and followers not to invest in fossil fuel companies, is the UN encouraging religious institutions to address climate change in other ways?

There are already many initiatives by churches and religious and faith groups across the world who actually incorporate climate friendly, energy efficient and clean energy technologies in their buildings. And only the other day, a mosque in Dubai announced eco-friendly measures that it was incorporating into its buildings and structures. There is actually an interfaith movement in the United States which is installing renewable energy solar panels in churches, mosques and other places of religious worship.

With religious groups around the globe taking action on climate change, how big of an effect could this have?

I think it could make a huge impact. Climate change is often talked about through the economic lens. It's often discussed through the lens of science and other quite cerebral ways. But through the lens of religion one speaks to the spirit and sometimes it's the spirit and the heart that you need to move - as much as the head - to actually get progress in this world.

How can religious leaders convince the climate change skeptics out there?

I think there is maybe a chance that religious leaders work with the scientists to bring home the risk assessments because in the end it is a risk assessment. And the risk assessment points to some very sobering future for us all if we don't act.

Nick Nuttal is an environment and technology journalist from England who is currently living in Bonn, Germany, where he works as the spokesperson for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Before joining the United Nations Environment Program in 2001, he won several awards for his reports about technology and environment.

Author Interview: Charlotta Lomas; Editor Anne-Sophie Brändlin

Upcoming IEF 19th Annual Conference



the 10th PERL
International Conference
UNESCO, Paris
10-11 March 2015
Preparing, Engaging,
Responding and Learning
about Responsible Lifestyles



The **19th Annual Conference of the International Environment Forum** will be held in association with the international conference of the Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, on 10-11 March 2015. Members wishing to present a paper at the conference should submit an abstract to the PERL secretariat as soon as possible. Registration is through the PERL website: <http://www.perlprojects.org>.

The theme of the PERL International Conference is "**A Decade of Responsible Living: Preparing, Engaging, Responding and Learning**". The IEF will be organizing a panel on ethical transformation and education for service at the individual, community and institutional levels, and contributing to a workshop on values-based indicators in education and the toolkits that IEF has contributed to developing.

ebbf - Ethical Business Building the Future

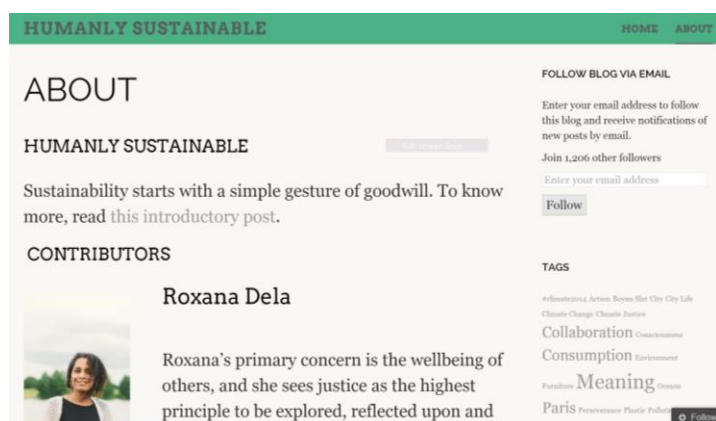


Jenna Nicholas speaking at the ebbf conference on "The spiritual transformation of impact investing"

Our long-time partner Baha'i-inspired organization, formerly the European Baha'i Business Forum, has a new name: ebbf - Ethical Business Building the Future that better captures its global scope and focus on action more than talking. The new name was announced at its annual conference in Barcelona, Spain, on 2-5 October, with about 140 attending. The conference, on the theme "How to create a just workplace?",

included inspiring keynotes and discussions from leaders in the field, learnshops in parallel sessions on practical applications of the principle of justice, and evening events including a report from China and a musical comedy prepared during the conference and performed by participants. One of the keynote speakers was IEF member Jenna Nicholas, who now leads a social enterprise on impact investing. IEF board members Wendi Momen and Arthur Dahl were re-elected to the ebbf Governing Board, ensuring close coordination between our two organizations. Other IEF members attending included: Dale Allen, Iko Congo, Les Gornall, Richard Hainsworth, Jason Maude, Daniel Turan, and Andreas Vatsellas. For more information, see <http://ebbf.org>, and pictures http://yabaha.net/dahl/travel/t2014/Barcelona/ebbf_barcelona.html.

CALL TO ACTION -- Introducing "Humanly Sustainable"



From: Roxana Dela Fiamor
<delaroxana@gmail.com>
Dear Rio+20 BIC friends,

I am very happy to introduce to you "Humanly Sustainable", a blog created to contribute to the discourse on sustainability (environmental, corporate, social, and above all "human sustainability"): humanlysustainable.com (French version: humaindurable.com)

We're looking for contributors—occasional or regular ones— to make this blog a collective learning space,

feel free to contact me for further details. You can also participate by sharing this blog with your friends, reading it, commenting the posts, spreading the word and offering any suggestions to improve it. I would love to have your feedbacks and comments!

Finally, it would be great if you could share it with anyone interested in this topic. The larger audience it reaches, the richer it will become. Looking forward to continue learning with you!