



Green Pilgrimage Network

*A handbook for Hindu religious leaders,
cities, towns and pilgrims*



The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)

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Letter from His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I am very pleased to know that ARC, in conjunction with its members, is developing seven year plans to take forward their commitment to care more effectively for the earth's natural environment.

The fact that the majority of the world's faiths ascribe the creation of the world to an all-powerful deity, implies that the leaders and followers of each faith have a moral responsibility for the continued well-being of our planet, and particularly for its natural environment. In recent times it has become apparent that the sheer size of the human population, and its consequent increasing demand for natural resources, are seriously threatening the future health of our planet and the welfare of all life on earth.

I am well aware of the excellent work undertaken by the faith communities ever since the first encounter between conservationists and the leaders of the major faiths at Assisi in Italy, in 1986, but it is only too evident that, in spite of the commendable efforts of the members of ARC, the situation facing us today is even more critical.

I am happy to commend this very important initiative, and I am confident that it will make a significant difference to the quality of life on earth in the long term.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Letter from the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

In 2001, more than 70 million Hindu pilgrims attended the Maha Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, making it the largest human gathering in recorded history. On any ordinary day of the year, hundreds of thousands of people around the world are on pilgrimage. Indeed, at least 220 million people become pilgrims each year – whether for a few hours, days, weeks or months.

The Green Pilgrimage Network (GPN) is an international initiative of the UK-based charity, the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC). Through religious organisations, NGOs and municipalities and local government bodies, ARC is working with pilgrim sites around the world to draw up plans for creating environmentally sustainable towns, cities and wild areas.

ARC has been working on the environmental aspects of sacred sites and pilgrimage routes since it was founded in 1995. In November 2009, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ARC held a major event at Windsor Castle, UK, and in the presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations HE Ban Ki-moon, and HRH Prince Philip. Nine major world religions launched long-term commitments to environmental action. The UNDP described it as “potentially the world’s largest civil society movement on climate change”.

This gave birth to the idea of setting up a network of green pilgrimage cities, towns and pathways around the world, sharing experiences and ideas. The vision is of pilgrims, and the pilgrim sites that receive them, becoming models of care for the environment and leaving a positive footprint on this Earth. Given that pilgrimage is central to the experience of faith, this could have a dramatic impact on protecting our planet.

The international Green Pilgrimage Network (GPN) was created, and launched in Assisi, Italy, in November 2011, with 9 pilgrimage cities of different faiths from Christianity to Sikhism to Daoism, located across Europe, Africa and Asia.

A common denominator for each and every religion is a deep care for the planet, and the natural world that sustains us. With that common denominator, it makes sense that people reaching into their faith to embark on a spiritual journey do so with a sense of the spirituality of the land they are passing through.

International Green Pilgrimage Network (GPN) and India Chapter

The India chapter of the GPN was launched in Hyderabad in mid-October 2012 with representatives of the Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Buddhist cities of Amritsar, Guntur, Howrah, Visakhapatnen, Shirdi, Ujjain, Nanded, Rishikesh, Varanasi, Ladakh and Bodh Gaya.

On any given day in India thousands of devotees are on pilgrimage. Tirupati, the most visited sacred town in India, receives a minimum of 40,000 pilgrims daily. Over a million people attend the annual Ratha Yatra festival in Jagannatha Puri, 30 million visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar each year, the sacred city of Ajmer receives 1.5 million pilgrims annually and in 2001, at the Kumbh Mela held in Allahabad, over 70 million pilgrims took part.

The vast array of religious sites across India creates a sacred geography that is unsurpassed by any country in the world. From Badrinath in the North, Rameswaram in the South, Puri in the East and Dwarka in the West, India is marked by the sacred in all directions. In addition, cities such as Amritsar and Bodhi Gaya create a multi-faith tapestry of unique communal harmony.

With rising incomes, the number of pilgrims traveling to holy sites is rapidly increasing in India. A pilgrimage that may have traditionally taken weeks to complete can now be done in few days. Religious towns are now feeling the strain on their resources and infrastructure, particularly when it comes to energy, water use, sanitation and waste.

Pilgrimage is also putting pressure on India's wild places. Millions of pilgrims visit holy sites located inside or near tiger reserves, which is disrupting animal populations that are already severely threatened. This includes the tiger – with less than 2,000 remaining in India and just over 3,000 in the world – and other globally important animals such as elephants, rhinos and bears.

Pilgrims do not set out to damage the natural world. However, the sanctity of the pilgrimage journey is being lost as huge numbers of people move across the land and forests to get to their destination without realizing that these areas, and their wildlife, are also sacred.

This handbook is being launched at the first meeting of Hindu holy sites, hosted by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, the inaugural chair of the Hindu pilgrim sites initiative of the India GPN chapter. At the two-day meeting, city officials and religious leaders will discuss the challenges and opportunities their pilgrim towns face, share ideas for greening pilgrimage, and commit to drawing up long-term plans to be launched at a special celebration in a year's time.

They will share sustainable solutions for pilgrim cities for greening waste, sanitation, buildings, transport, food and accommodation and share strategies to make the hosting of large scale pilgrimage more sustainable and environmentally friendly. This new network will encourage the sharing of best practice between pilgrim sites in India, and with those around the world.

Following this first meeting, this handbook will be expanded to include more extensive resources and comprehensive examples from India of what is already being done to address green pilgrimage.

It is expected that the Green Pilgrimage Network – Indian Chapter will:

- Create a network of sustainable and earth-friendly pilgrim sites across

India

- Join an existing network of international member cities
- Create a theological basis for green pilgrimage for each religion
- Encourage religions to work with government agencies, NGOs and private companies to make their holy places more environmentally friendly
- Create plans for promoting sustainability and care for the earth
- Share stories, wisdom and tradition
- Ask pilgrims to walk lightly and travel responsibly in the spirit of their religion
- Inspire pilgrim sites to celebrate their pilgrims and green their religious festivals
- Share these plans at an inaugural meeting in one year's time

We humbly ask for your good wishes, blessings and support in this endeavor and we are delighted to welcome you into the international Green Pilgrimage Network.

Martin Palmer
Secretary-General of ARC

Alison Hilliard
Deputy Secretary General of ARC and Co-ordinator of the Green Pilgrimage



Network

Letter from the Bhumi Project

The Bhumi Project encourages Hindus worldwide in the care and protection of Mother Earth. We are based at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, working in partnership with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

Launched in 2009 at Windsor Castle in England, the Project has worked to create the first ever international Hindu network of individuals, temples and communities concerned about the environment. We partner with all members of the international Hindu family and are free from theological and political bias.

In America we work with umbrella Hindu organisations. In 2011, with the Hindu American Seva Charities, we launched our programme of greening Hindu temples at the White House, Washington, D.C.

With our partner in Africa, the Hindu Council of Africa, we have established a dedicated team of volunteers in Nairobi, Kenya, who are developing environmental programmes for the whole continent.

With the Hindu American Foundation and National Hindu Students' Forum (UK) we are reaching out to Hindu university and college students to encourage them to be more mindful of the environmental impact of their lives.

Central to our work is our 9 Year Plan. Developed by leading Hindus in the United Kingdom, the Plan contains over 20 environmental projects for implementation in different parts of the world based on Hindu needs, interests and concerns.

We are very excited about developing the Green Pilgrimage Network in India. Hindu pilgrim towns are found across the country and are visited by millions each year. If we are able to make these towns environmentally friendly, the ripple effect across India could be substantial.

Underpinning our work are the teachings of Hindu scriptures and saints. Through them we find the Hindu view of the planet, the natural world, and our role within it. These teachings are highlighted in the 'Hindu Theology of the Environment', found on page 13.

Until recently the Bhumi Project has been working largely outside of India. We are therefore very excited to come home to the country that gave birth to Hinduism and so many other great religions. We hope that together we can address the environmental challenges of the world in a spirit of co-operation, devotion and service.

Gopal Patel
Project Manager, The Bhumi Project

THE
BHUMI
PROJECT



A RECOGNISED INDEPENDENT CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Blessings from Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati,

Pujya Swami is the inaugural Chair of the Hindu initiative of the India Chapter of the Green Pilgrimage Network



Dear Divine Souls,

This handbook is a tool to help us recover the true spirit of our tradition of pilgrimage.

A pilgrimage, a yatra is a divine experience. It is an internal journey as well as an outer journey; a true pilgrimage takes us not only to a Source of the Divine in the external world, but should also take us to the Divine Source within ourselves. In this way, every minute and every moment of a pilgrimage is puja (worship), not only that which we perform in the temple upon arrival. However, tragically, rather than treating our pilgrimage areas as temples, we are actually causing harm to our towns, cities, villages and natural places as we venture forth on our holy pilgrimages and engage in religious celebrations. We forget that other people and other creatures live in the places we are visiting on our pilgrimage, and that we must respect their homes. We are able to see the Divine in the temple to which we have come; but we are not able to see the Divine in the people, places, animals and ecosystems through which we pass on the way to get there.

The pilgrim is usually not aware of how their actions are harming Mother Earth and all beings. It is our divine responsibility as leaders to spread this awareness, and to exhort people to ensure that every aspect of their religious pilgrimage and celebrations should be sacred and filled with devotion and care.

Not only are our cities and towns being destroyed through filth and wanton disregard as millions of pilgrims descend on them, our natural, wild areas are also being severely impacted through our un-conscientious religious observance. So many of our holy sites are found in nature, at the top of mountains or the mouths of rivers. It is tragically ironic that we pray one moment to the image of Mother Ganga in the temple and then dump our plastic bags and chemicals in Her flowing waters outside the temple doors. Each step on the path of pilgrimage is holy, not just the destination.

Our natural parks and protected tiger reserves are also being destroyed through religious pilgrimage. With millions of people visiting these areas for their holy sites and temples, animal populations and their natural habitat are highly disrupted and endangered.

We must bring more awareness to our actions to make sure that the real spirit of our pilgrimage is not lost. The true spirit of pilgrimage is to honour God in all Its forms.

Our ancient sages personified the Earth as Mother Earth and worshipped her as Goddess (*Devi*): *“Mata bhumiḥ putro aham prithivyaha”*, meaning, *the Earth is my mother, I am the Earth’s son (Atharva Veda)*. We worship trees as *Vriksha Devata* (tree gods), forests as *Vana Devatas*, mountains as *Giri Devatas*, rivers as Goddesses, cow and cattle for their agrarian utility. *Kautilya’s Arthasastra* prescribes various punishments for destroying trees and plants. *The Vedas* state, *“Vriksho Rakshati Rakshitaha”*, meaning, *“Protect trees, trees will protect you.”* We believe water is a purifier, thus we offer a daily prayer to the deity of water: *“The waters in the sky, the waters of rivers, and water in the well whose source is the ocean, may all these sacred waters protect me” (Rig-Veda 7.49.2)*.

Our tradition asks us to protect all life that God has created. The first line of the Isha Upanishad reminds us that God pervades everything on Earth. There is nowhere, no being whom He does not pervade. All of creation is, therefore, Divine. At this time of global, critical ecological crisis, Hindus must protect and defend our most endangered species in India, such as the tiger and the elephant, and the forest areas where they live, which are also home to innumerable species of animals, birds, flora, fauna and indigenous peoples. In so doing we protect all life and ensure that generations to come will benefit from bountiful natural areas that give us clean water, clean air, and ensure the proper functioning of so many natural services of value to mankind.

As Hindus, we know that all life is sacred. Our tradition calls upon us to recognize the eternal being in everything. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says the wise see all living beings equally. This equality is based on the understanding that we are all part and parcel of the eternal, divine, supreme reality. Wherever we see life, be it human, animal or plant, we see atma, an embodiment of that Divine.

Dharma encourages us to be respectful of all life on Earth and this includes protecting those animals under threat from exploitation. Animals feature prominently in Hindu scripture. Most of the metaphors we find in the Upanishads are drawn from nature. In the Ramayana, some of the central characters have an animal form, and many Hindu deities have animal companions.

Another one of our essential principles is ahimsa, non-cruelty. The practice of ahimsa impels us to avoid harm to any living being -- through word, thought or deed --, to offer respect to all and to develop the virtue of compassion in our hearts.

May our holy cities and towns, our land, the forests, the ecosystems and the wildlife that live there, and along the way, be maintained for generations to come as India's great heritage.

Swami Chidanand
ॐ

Swami Chidanand Saraswati



Hindu Theology of the Environment

We believe that our life is a sacred journey and we are all pilgrims on planet Earth. Our scriptures tell us that being pilgrims is not just wandering aimlessly, or earning karmic merit by enduring hardship on a strenuous journey: they exhort us to follow Dharma so we may lead a daily life of contentment, discipline and righteousness without straining the Earth's resources.

As Hindus, how we follow the pilgrims' way is more important than the actual destination. The doctrine of karma cautions us that every step we take today will yield a corresponding result in the future.

Our ancient sages personified the Earth as Mother Earth and worshipped her as Goddess (Devi): "Mata bhumi putro aham prithivyaha", meaning, the Earth is my mother, I am the Earth's son (Atharva Veda).

We worship trees as Vriksha Devata (tree gods), forests as Vana Devatas, mountains as Giri Devatas, rivers as Goddesses, cow and cattle for their agrarian utility. Kautilya's Arthashastra prescribes various punishments for destroying trees and plants. The Vedas state, "Vriksho Rakshati Rakshitaha", meaning, "Protect trees, trees will protect you."

We believe water is a purifier, thus we offer a daily prayer to the deity of water: "The waters in the sky, the waters of rivers, and water in the well whose source is the ocean, may all these sacred waters protect me" (Rig-Veda 7.49.2).

The notion of subjugating or exploiting Mother Earth is akin to violating the body of one's mother. Our Dharma teaches us to love the Earth and treat her with love and respect.

As followers of Sanatana Dharma, which teaches harmony and respect for nature, we pledge to:

- Develop an action plan to be the roadmap for improving the environmental impacts of our city or place and pilgrimage routes.
- Bring faith and secular groups together to work in partnership towards this vision.
- Work with pilgrims to make their journeys as environmentally friendly as possible.
- We will do this through greening our transport, accommodation, food, water supply, waste, sanitation and wild places, as well as encouraging green parks, environmental education and wildlife protection for and by local residents.
- We also pledge to support and help each other, and to promote green pilgrimage ideas where we can.

The Green Pilgrimage Network vision



Green Pilgrimage Network

The vision of the Green Pilgrimage Network is of pilgrims, and the pilgrim cities and places that receive them, becoming models of care for the environment and leaving a positive footprint on this earth.

We, the members of the Green Pilgrimage Network support this vision, and commit to create an action plan to transform our pilgrim city, place or route into a green, sustainable model in keeping with the beliefs of our faith or the faiths of our pilgrimage place.

This action plan will be the roadmap for improving the environmental impacts of pilgrimage in our pilgrimage cities, sites and routes.

Each of us also commits to bring faith and secular groups together to work in partnership towards this vision.

We pledge to promote this in the local media, and we will work with visiting pilgrims to make their journeys as environmentally friendly as possible. We will do this through greening our transport, accommodation, festivals, food, water supply, waste, sanitation and wild places, as well as encouraging environmental education, parks and wildlife protection for and by local residents.

We also pledge to support and help each other, to report on our progress regularly, and to promote green pilgrimage ideas where we can.

Part One:

The Process of Greening Pilgrimage



*Devotees like you who have become tirthas themselves,
are the ones who make the tirthas into tirthas
by embodying the presence of God there.
— Maharaja Yudhishthira to Vidura in the Mahabharata*

1.1 Living and Sharing our Theology of Caring for the Earth

The Hindu Theology of the Environment presented in this handbook can be adapted and serve as the basis of environmental action within your community. Many religions and many secular organisations recognise that the environmental crisis is a spiritual issue, and that therefore its solution can only be found through exploring the root causes of this degradation. This can best be done by fostering an ethos or an atmosphere of compassion and care for the natural world. While many wish to legislate our way out of these crises, the religions wish to guide by example and mindfulness, care and companionship, rooted in their experience down the centuries.

1.2 Developing a vision

Our vision is of pilgrims and the pilgrim cities that receive them becoming models of care for the environment, and leaving a positive footprint on the Earth. What would your pilgrimage site or route be like if it were green and sustainable?

1.3 Making a Commitment

Make a commitment to green your pilgrimage site by signing the Green Pilgrimage Network Vision Statement.

1.4 Reviewing Current Practices

It is vital to look at your buildings, land, places of worship and practices at an early stage to give a clear idea of what religious leaders and government authorities are already doing, and to indicate where you could have a more positive impact.

For example, between 2008 and 2009, communities from 31 different faith traditions worldwide worked with the ARC /UNDP Long-Term Plan Guidebook to assess their environmental impact and potential. The Guidebook looks at 7 key areas in which faith communities can often have huge impact: their buildings, land, forests and assets; education; their teachings and wisdom; their impact on lifestyles; their media outreach and advocacy; their partnerships; their experience in organising inspiring celebrations.

1.5 Creating a strategic plan

Without a clear plan, many great ideas come to very little. Start by asking the following questions: what do we want to have achieved in 5 years? In 10 years? In 20 years? For the next generation? Other questions you need to ask are:

- What does it mean, for us, to be a green pilgrim city or town?
- Who will help us?
- Where will we look for funding?
- What are the next steps?

Part two:

Five key areas to make your pilgrimage site greener



The earth, the air, the land and the water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So we have to hand over to them at least as it was handed over to us.
— Mahatma Gandhi

There are many ways that you can make your pilgrimage site more environmentally friendly. This section outlines some of the main themes to explore when putting together your action plan. These include the areas of:

- 2.1 Waste
- 2.2 Energy
- 2.3 Wildlife, Biodiversity & Wild Places
- 2.4 Celebrations
- 2.5 Infrastructure, buildings, land & transport

2.1 Waste

*Let him not discharge urine or feces into the water,
nor saliva, nor clothes defiled by impure substances,
nor any other impurity, nor blood, nor poisons.*

— *Manu Samhita IV.56*



With higher numbers of pilgrims visiting our religious sites, enormous levels of waste are being generated. Plastics make up a large portion of this waste in the form of bags and bottles. It is often an overwhelming task to deal with large amounts of plastics.

Lack of adequate sanitation also leads to dangerous levels of waste. Left untreated, such waste can be a serious health hazard.

Flowers and other items used in our temples can also contribute to waste. We often see flower garlands, containers for prasad, and temple leaflets discarded and left on roadsides or in rivers.

Think what your temple, city or religious site would look like if it was free of waste. Could you encourage pilgrims to leave a positive footprint such as planting trees in a certain area, or picking up rubbish as they go? Clean-ups could be encouraged by funding rubbish bins along the route, with beautifully written notices about how pilgrims should not only clear their own rubbish but also clear after others less thoughtful than they are. Could local authorities encourage this, and advertise it?

Current examples:

- Sri Sailam is the largest tiger reserve in India. It is also home to two famous temples. Access to the temples is via a road that cuts through the reserve. Conservationists at the reserve have put up signs along the road encouraging pilgrims not to drop litter. Using imagery and language that is easily understandable, the signs are an effective way of communicating a simple but important message.
- Vrindavan is considered the land of Krishna and his cows. Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of cows that have died or suffered from eating plastic bags. Recently, a law was passed stopping shopkeepers from giving plastic bags to customers. They now hand out cloth bags. Similar laws have been passed in other towns and cities across India.
- The Africa Bhumi Plan promotes the use of ' Bhumi bags' or specially made durable cloth bags. These will be promoted for use in Hindu temples and Hindu community centres and shops. Could you encourage their distribution and use as a symbol of Hindus commitments to protecting the environment?
- Kano authorities in Nigeria are taking care to provide public mobile toilet facilities and rubbish bins along all pilgrim roads on Maukib day, when 1.5 million pilgrims visit their holy shrines.
- In partnership with the DRDO, Parmarth Niketan ashram in Rishikesh are installing 5,000 zero-waste toilets along the river Ganges.
- In summer 2007, Muslims in the British city of Birmingham hosted a "Cleaner Medina" street party – with music, street clean-ups, video, information and fun. It is being used as a model for action and information in other Islamic communities.
- One recent environmental problem in Nigeria is caused by the widespread use of "Pure Water" – clean water packed in polyethylene bags. Several thousand tons of used water bags are dumped everyday. Sheik Qaribullah Kabara is the leader of the Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement, with 15 million followers. He estimates that if every schoolchild picked up 100 pieces of used poly-bags each week, Kano's neighbourhoods would be cleaner, and children who pick up the bags will probably be less inclined to throw them in the first place. Every child will be rewarded with academic points as part of the school's continuous assessment. Collected poly-bags will be used to hold tree seedlings at his nurseries. The seedlings will then be distributed to schoolchildren and the public. Excess poly-bags at the nurseries will be sold, with the proceeds going to the schools.

What you could do:

- Put up signs to encourage pilgrims to not drop their litter
- Provide and promote composting and recycling initiatives at your religious site
- Work with local businesses to stop them using plastic bags
- Carry reusable water bottles with you that you can refill
- Install water fountains around the city
- Ensure there are enough toilets for pilgrims and are cleaned regularly
- Educate pilgrims on the need to keep the pilgrim town clean and green
- Form partnerships with local NGOs and concerned citizens to actively reduce litter and waste

2.2 Energy



There are many ways that pilgrimage cities and towns can create more energy efficiency. Can you look at your energy conservation policies for your pilgrimage area, your buildings and transport?

In a bid to reduce the use of conventional fuel and make conservation a high point of the government's energy security agenda, the ministry of non-conventional energy sources has placed before all state governments the option of solar cooking for pilgrimage/spiritual sites and other large institutions, including industries.

Current examples:

- Sikh gurdwaras around the world all have free kitchens, feeding 30 million people every day. A few are now running their stoves on bio fuel, made from their compost. The Golden Temple in Amritsar recently approved a proposal to shift the cooking of 'langar' (community kitchen) to solar energy.
- In 2008 the Church of South India's Christian Women's Fellowship in Kottayam, Kerala, set up a snack centre run on biogas. At Rs 40,000 the set up costs were comparatively high but within a year they had saved that much from reduced fuel bills.
- In 2007 WWF in Australia invited people in Sydney to switch off their lights and appliances for one hour, which they called Earth Hour. More than 2,000 businesses and 2.2 million people did that. It reduced the city's energy consumption by 10.2 percent, equivalent to taking 48,000 cars off the road for a year. 6 Indian cities - Hyderabad, Kochi, Jaipur, Coimbatore, Bhubaneswar and Delhi - have been shortlisted to participate in the Earth Hour City Challenge 2013. Could your city (led by faiths in your city) join Earth Hour (in March every year)? And could faiths take that example and use the privilege of electricity, or the importance of saving energy, in their sermons and teachings that week?

- The Muslim city of Kano in Nigeria plans to reduce carbon emissions by 15% per annum. This will be accomplished by, for example, banning vehicles on specific celebration days, introducing electric buses, and taxing non-eco vehicles. Kano is also promoting the use of alternative energy in its buildings by introducing biomass programmes and incentives for alternative energy use, as well as using solar street lights and traffic lights and lighting systems.
- Some of the largest solar cooking systems are being used in Shirdi and the Tirupati temple complex, where food is served to millions of devotees every year. In Tirupati the system reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 1.2 tonnes per day and has the added benefit of saving Rs. 17 lakh a year.

What you could do:

- Consider installing solar power in your temple
- Look into using more energy efficient light bulbs
- Conserve water and consider harvesting rainwater to reduce CO₂ emissions
- Use fuel efficient cooking methods for your celebrations

2.3 Wildlife, Biodiversity & Wild Places

Ether, air, fire, water, earth, planets, all creatures, directions, trees and plants, rivers and seas, they all are organs of God's body. Remembering this, a devotee respects all species.
— Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana 2.2.41

2.3.1 Tiger Reserves



So many of India's holy sites are found in nature. Many of our stories feature the animal kingdom. We worship certain trees like the Banyan and Pipal trees, view mountains and hills like the Himalayas as sacred, and immerse ourselves in holy rivers like Mother Ganga.

As wild natural places become more accessible with improved infrastructure, millions of people are now visiting these once remote, fragile areas. As such, pilgrimage is putting increasing pressure on India's natural landscapes and its wildlife.

India's tiger reserves in particular are being impacted greatly by pilgrimage. Many temples and holy sites are located inside or near some of India's most important

tiger reserves, those few vestiges of forest and natural landscapes where some of the world's last tigers reside, as well as countless other globally important animals.

The tiger is on the verge of extinction. Only 3,200 wild tigers are left in the world and more than half of these are in our Motherland. The tiger is a symbol for all animals and forests, and is our national animal, symbolizing our natural heritage. It is said that if the tiger is lost, the forest and other threatened animals are easily lost. As it says in the Mahabharata, "The tiger perishes without the forest and the forest perishes without its tigers."

The tiger has sacred status in our tradition. Lord Shiva bears the name Lord of the Tiger and is often depicted seated on a tiger skin. As Durga's vehicle the tiger is the symbol of immortality and power. But the tiger's immortality – and by extension that of India's other threatened animals and forests - is threatened by hunting, conflict with communities, shrinking habitat and a declining food base. Pilgrimage is an added threat as large numbers of pilgrims move through the reserves, disrupting animal movements and rhythms. Traffic is a danger to animals and cuts through important wildlife corridors. Mountains of waste are left in their habitat and choke their rivers.

Pilgrims do not set out to damage the natural world. However, the sanctity of the pilgrimage journey is being lost as huge numbers of people move across the land and forests to get to their destination without realizing that these areas, and their wildlife, are also sacred.

The Hindu community has an important role to play to ensure the immortality of the tiger and India's other great creatures and their forest homes. Our tradition is founded on principles of non-violence, care for those that cannot defend themselves, and a sense that all creation is holy, be it a person, a tree or a tiger. Let us remind all pilgrims of our inherent respect of the Earth, of the interconnection of all living things, and that every step of the pilgrimage journey is a time to honour God in all its forms. May our holy cities and towns, our land, and the forests and the wildlife that live there be maintained for generations to come as India's great heritage.

We can help reduce the pressures that threaten tigers, elephants and other wildlife and forests by directing our compassion to them and by increasing the awareness in our communities about the connection between our faith and nature protection.

What you could do:

- Remind all pilgrims that when we step into a tiger reserve during pilgrimage, we can be conscious and mindful that we are in a sacred place.
- Make sure that there are systems in place for trash disposal so that the forest is not littered with plastic and other waste. Put in place a ban on plastic bottles and bags while on pilgrimage. Create a sacred place for puja waste.
- Take measures to limit the noise made in the forest during religious celebrations so as not to disturb wildlife populations, particularly at night.
- Ensure that pilgrims stick to certain designated pathways, so that we do not infringe upon the homes and pathways needed to protect the park's animals. Work with the reserve authorities to make pilgrim trails more environmentally sustainable;
- Spread messages among pilgrims to treat each tree and creature, and the great rivers, as holy in and of themselves, rather than treating the forest as an area to walk through on our way to a pilgrimage site. The forest itself is the sacred space, where God dwells. Encourage pilgrims to follow the dharma of protecting all life on Earth.
- Exercise stronger, more visible and practical leadership in response to the wildlife crisis by spreading these messages within the community and beyond;
- Deepen engagement and collaboration between religious leaders of different faiths, with government representatives, and conservationists to develop creative solutions to safeguard and honour wildlife and the natural world;
- Lead by example and encourage the religious community to actively respond to the wildlife crisis by advocating for greater protection, and by extending respect and compassion to wildlife and the natural world.
- Create a Green space beside a place of worship and manage religious lands more ecologically.

2.3.2 Ecology in Pilgrim Towns and Cities



A religious group does not have to own the land to have influence over its use. Can your religious group or city authority look at the parks inside the city, and established roads, and make sure they are protected and cared for? Can they look at the trees, and see whether there could be more urban trees along roads to the pilgrim site, and if so whether there could be a way to care for them, because they are holy, and if not, whether more could be planted. Can they start, or expand, community garden programmes?

Our pilgrim towns have large numbers of cows which roam the streets. They are often subjected to harsh treatment and in danger of being hit by cars and bikes. They can often be seen eating plastic bags, cardboard, and other discarded waste. As a living representation of the Earth, could a cow care programme be developed to ensure they are treated with the love and devotion they are due? Could we develop cow sanctuaries where sick cows can recover and live out the rest of their natural lives?

Current examples:

- In Bhutan, Buddhist monks are traditionally asked to pray for the success of a new road or building project. As part of the monks' ecological action plan, the monastic body has decided to play a more leading role in decision-making about infrastructure. "Only we know what deities live in the rocks and the trees," said one monk.
- Ganga Action Parivar in Rishikesh is planting thousands of trees and other plants that will provide shade, fruit, medicines and other benefits for communities.
- Chicago has set up more than 50 community gardens in its parks. According to the Chicago Park District website: "Visually, the community garden can reflect the health, unity, creativity, beauty, culture and diversity of its community. Physically, the community garden can become a natural outdoor gym, where lifting, bending, pulling and pushing all promote muscular and cardiovascular activity. Socially, the community garden can bring neighbours together by providing a setting for acquaintances to become friends. Mentally, the community garden is a safe place for residents to connect with nature through caring for ornamental and edible plants."
- The holy Muslim city of Kano in Nigeria is planning to re-green old roads as well as plant trees along new roads, including the major routes between the city and the Maukib shrine.
- In 1999 British Sikhs planted woodland on the outskirts of Nottingham, UK. Ten years on, Khalsa Wood is a quiet place used for walks, picnics, ceremonies and meditation by many communities – and has become a model for faith-created woodland around the world. Sikhs began to distribute saplings at ceremonies, in place of the traditional prasad of sweets.
- The Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church is replanting an ancient historical forest that used to grow near to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, and has a plan to plant 1.5 million trees throughout the country in the memory of the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide at the beginning of the 20th century.

What you could do:

- Develop a cow care / protection programme
- Develop green areas in your towns and cities
- Create community and meditation gardens
- Choose areas along roads or rivers that can be re-greened and begin a tree planting and care programme

2.4 Celebration



Can you make all your festivals and events more environmentally friendly?

Hindu festivals add colour, laughter and joy to our lives. They are times for families and communities to come together; to share with each other and worship God. Such festivities bring an increasing number of pilgrims to our religious sites. Are we doing all we can to ensure these festivals are environmentally friendly?

Many of our festivals revolve around or include the worship of nature. Could we emphasise the care and protection of nature in these festivals? Perhaps we could develop environmental messages to deliver at these festivals to devotees.

Current examples:

- Both the Mayors of Kolkata and Howrah are committed to environmental best practice and greening the Durga Puja, which attracts around 30 million visitors each year for the 9 day festival.
- At the annual pilgrimage to the tombs of local Qadiriyyah Saints in Kano, Nigeria, pilgrims are encouraged to drink from natural cups made from duma – which is like a dried gourd – and clay pots are used for cooking. Pilgrims are led by the example of Khalifa Sheikh Qaribullah Nasir Kabara, leader of the Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement in West Africa with an estimated 15 million followers in Nigeria. He gives an annual green message and asks all his followers to plant one tree.
- The Bhumi Project, which produced a Nine Year Plan of Environment Action by Hindus in the UK, has created a list of minimum environmental standards for any Hindu Festival. It has suggestions for catering, waste, carbon footprint, travel, etc, when planning a large event. The Bhumi programme suggests that religious festivals are opportunity to offer homegrown produce at the temple and recommends devotees bring their own plates to temple gatherings or at least promote biodegradable plates, cups and spoons.

- March 14th was celebrated for the first time in 2011 as Sikh Environment Day. More than 450 schools and gurdwaras led the celebration. Gurbanis (hymns) celebrating nature were sung in the gurdwaras and on Sikh radio that day. Eco notice boards were set up in gurdwaras, saplings were given as offerings, lectures were arranged, clean-ups organised, and many people went to the countryside or parks to share their experience of nature.

What you could do:

- Use environmentally friendly paints when painting statues of deities
- Centre your celebrations around environmental themes
- Make sure waste is disposed of effectively at your festivals
- Be mindful of ways that noise, lights and traffic can be limited during your celebrations around environmentally sensitive areas

2.5 Buildings, land and transport infrastructure

2.5.1 Greening your buildings – temples, ashrams



Religious groups can develop more environmental places of worship, while local authorities can look at how to green public buildings and how to establish green criteria for new buildings. They can work in their role as planning authorities and work with the religions to source funding and expertise to transform the buildings visited by pilgrims into models of good ecological thinking.

Is there anything you can do to improve the footprint of your office buildings and places of worship? This can range from using eco light bulbs and cutting down heating and air-conditioning to using solar energy and rainwater harvesting.

Current examples:

- Daoists in China are installing solar panels at all their temples in China. The first Daoist ecological temple – at Taibaishan pilgrimage mountain in Shaanxi Province – was built in 2007 with local sustainable materials. It is now a model for ecological temples being planned throughout China. The Daoists have produced a handbook, *How to Green Your Temple*.

- As part of their EcoSikh initiative, Sikhs in Punjab have started the process of deciding what would constitute a green gurdwara (Sikh temple), with the aim of setting up a network of green gurdwaras around the world.
- The Bhumi Project has developed a resource page to help you green your temple at www.bhumiproject.org/the-green-temple

2.5.2 Greening your transport

Transport generates around three quarters of the 5% of the global total of CO₂ emissions contributed by tourism. Transportation has a high carbon footprint and careful consideration should be given to how pilgrims will arrive and travel round your pilgrim destination. Could your city encourage carbon-neutral travel through outreach, travel agencies, tour groups or tour leaders? Could you work with the local authority and local environmental NGOs to improve the green transport network in your city?

For city administrations, is it possible to restrict motorised vehicles from certain areas and encourage non-motorised transport in these areas? Are there adequate parking facilities in the outskirts of your city in order to reduce the adverse effect of pollution caused by vehicular emission? Could you discuss this issue with the local authorities?

Current examples:

- 1.5 million Muslim pilgrims from West Africa travel each year to visit the tombs of the local Qadiriyyah Saints for the annual Maukib festival in Kano, Nigeria. On Maukib day, conventional vehicles are banned. Cars and motorcycles must be parked several kilometres from the celebration, with buses bringing pilgrims to the site. The leader of the movement, Sheikh Qaribullah Nasir Kabara uses a horse-drawn cart for the pilgrimage, setting an example of carbon reduction. In addition Kano plans to introduce electric buses, and ban the purchase of diesel buses in the Kano Metro Bus service fleet. It will be introducing mandatory emission tests for motor licensing, and will push for tax hikes on non eco-friendly motorcycles and cars.
- In Assisi, cars and buses park outside the city in designated areas and people walk through the mainly narrow and often steep streets.
- Jerusalem is outlawing vehicles in the old city and has opened a new light rail system to help the environment and make the pilgrim experience more pleasant.
- Amritsar has made the area in front of the Golden Temple accessible by foot and cycle only. The City has also introduced locally-made eco-rickshaws, lighter than other cycle rickshaws, linked to a call centre by radio (so more convenient to use), with financial structuring so that for the first time it is easy for rickshaw pullers to buy their vehicles, with repayments covered by advertising banners on the back.
- The Green Guide for Hajj was translated and adapted for use in Indonesia. It recommends that each pilgrim leaving for Mecca should plant a tree in their own district before they leave to help offset the carbon emissions of their travel.

What you could do:

- Introduce mandatory environmental labeling for all new vehicles, with the aim of doubling fuel efficiency within a decade

- Replace diesel-powered buses with buses powered by hydrogen fuel cell
- Can you work with rail and coach companies to promote pilgrim rail-passes and bus-passes to help people not to choose air flights?
- Try to reduce the use of on-site vehicles in any events organized by the city and use electric or bio-diesel powered vehicles.
- Consider using shuttle buses powered by green energy.
- Provide information about how pilgrims can use public transit by showcasing maps, bus and subway routes.

Part three:

Education & Awareness



*Om. May there be peace in the sky and in space. May there be peace on the land and in the waters. May herbs and food bring us peace. May all the Personifications of God bring us peace. May God Bring us peace. May there be peace throughout the World. May the peace be peaceful. May God give me Such peace.
— Atharva Veda*

Central to ensuring our religious sites are environmentally friendly is the ability to effectively share our messages with devotees. Without education and awareness raising, our plans and projects will fail to realise their full potential. Education and awareness raising can help devotees take responsibility for their religious sites.

3.1 Education, young people and volunteering



Are the schools in your holy city included in the plan to make it greener? Can your religious organisations and city administration look at the schools and buildings in your Green Pilgrim City, and see how they might be greener? Both in terms of the immediate environment effects, and the long-term effects of educating children in a beautiful place where they learn to value the natural environment?

3.1.1 School curricula

What potential is there to include teachings about the environment in the school curriculum in your holy cities and towns, which incorporate knowledge of green pilgrimage? These could include history, theology and geography lessons, but also could inspire creative writing, art, pottery and literature, etc. Can you have vegetable patches where you teach pupils how to grow food? Do you look at and promote preparation of food grown without pesticides? Or go into nature to paint and study birds and wild plants, to help young people appreciate their beauty?

Current examples:

- In 2006 some quarter of a million Baha'is participated in study circles, devotional meetings and school classes on the environment. The environment has been set as the focus for all such Baha'i education initiatives 2009-2014.
- The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has pledged to develop: "a sense of awe and wonder for creation in our young people through all subjects and ground them in a spiritual awareness of the need to care for Creation". For example, on Earth Day 2008, the entire timetable at All Hallows Catholic school in Somerset, England, centred on the environment. It included cleaning a stream and having a lesson in the life found in it; dyeing with natural ingredients; and making prayer flags on which to write environmental prayers.

3.1.2 Informal education and youth camps

Often it is out of the classroom that children will learn some of their most important lessons. Can you work with the youth organisations in your pilgrim town or city to inspire them to care for the environment? Do you have religious youth organisations where environmental ideas could also be integrated – for example, through running youth camps in nature and organising street cleaning projects?

Current examples:

- The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference is actively practicing green living, gardening and food in all its schools and places of education.
- In June 2011 the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana announced plans to form eco-clubs in all of its schools throughout the country. Eco-clubs will include learning farming and gardening techniques, protecting trees and understanding issues around climate change. Prizes will be given to schools with the best-performing eco-clubs.

3.1.3 School buildings and grounds

What potential is there for making sure that all new builds and extensions in your pilgrimage city, town or village are rigorous in their attention to environmental details, and that any playing fields and gardens pay attention to the needs of wild flora and fauna as well as children?

Do you have water and energy conservation policies for your educational buildings? What do you do about paper, food, sewerage and other waste?

Current examples:

- In 2009 the most ecological school in England, scoring the highest UK BREEAM rating (a world-wide recognised standard for sustainable building design) was the Krishna-Avanti Primary school in Harrow, North London, the country's first state-funded Hindu school. It has: ground source heat pumps; an eco-friendly timber structure; hardwood larch cladding; sedum roofs to help with rainwater harvesting; a sophisticated building management system monitoring heating, oxygen concentration and natural light; vegetable gardens for lessons, vegetarian locally cooked food; an eco-curriculum. Before it was built, the community was consulted to see what a Hindu school should be. Everyone agreed that if it was truly Hindu it should be truly environmental.
- The Church of England has pledged that all 4,700 church schools will become sustainable schools by 2016.
- The Kagyu Buddhist tradition in India and Tibet has encouraged all its schools, as well as its temples and one million followers, to recycle all materials. It has set up boxes for all recyclable items, even in remote places where there is nowhere to send the items yet – in the hope and faith that it will encourage local government to act. This is an example of where faiths walk ahead, in the hope that governments will come and walk beside them.

3.1.4 Green seva (service)

Some pilgrims come on pilgrimage to visit, pray and then make their way back home, but others would like to stay longer and do seva. Are there green seva opportunities for these people, many of whom will be young? Are these opportunities advertised? If you were to have green sevaks (volunteers), what could they do that would be good for the city, good for them, and good for the Earth?

3.1.5 Training teachers and religious leaders

How are religious teachers and future religious leaders trained on environmental issues? Could your religious training be “greened”? Could you introduce greener standards environmental messages to your religious rituals and festivals throughout the year?

Current examples:

- In 2007 the Armenian Orthodox Church introduced new approaches in the education process of the Vaskenyan Theological Seminary. Today all its students of theology, throughout the country, are trained on nature protection and the environment, and there are plans to set up a publishing unit for books on eco-theology.
- Both Chinese Buddhists and Daoists have pledged to promote a new “Three Sticks of Incense Programme” as a response to the recent practice in newly affluent China of people burning so many hundreds of incense sticks that it creates local pollution. By insisting that three sticks are enough, Daoist and Buddhist monasteries are not only protecting their own clear air, but are also sending a powerful symbolic message that wastefulness is not a good way to be faithful. That is part of creating an ethos of mindfulness and respect, which it is hoped will bring changes for generations to come.
- At Parmarth Niketan ashram in Rishikesh, Swami Chidanand Sarawati includes messages about protecting the river Ganges and India's wildlife and natural landscapes in his private and public gatherings.

3.2 Media and engagement: communicating the message



One of the key things about becoming a Green Pilgrimage site is telling people about it – and why it is such an important part of being a Hindu. This is not just about launching programmes, but about sustaining them in the long term, so your pilgrimage town or city becomes a living lesson and example of how to respond to the environmental crisis.

3.2.1 Media

How might you best engage with the local and national media? How can you pass on the message again and again, in different ways, that a dedicated pilgrim must prepare mindfully for pilgrimage and behave in a way that cares for the environment?

To what extent are religious and secular media outlets engaging in these general issues? Do local newsletters, radios, newspapers, TV stations, websites, etc, have special sections on ecology? Can you ask them to? Are the religious media using their editorial authority to promote simpler living, and looking after the natural environment with more care? Could your website have special sections, blog, picture galleries, etc, on the development of your Green Pilgrim City?

Current examples:

- Kano City in Nigeria is establishing a Green FM Radio Station, involving local artists in mass media environmental campaigns, and will introduce a mobile public film show about nature and environmental issues.
- The Armenian Orthodox Church runs the Shoghakat TV Company in Armenia that in 2010 launched the Green Theology project to broadcast environmental programmes.
- In 2007 WWF in Australia invited people in Sydney to switch off their lights and appliances for one hour, which they called Earth Hour. More than 2,000 businesses and 2.2 million people participated as a result of good awareness raising and media involvement.

3.2.2 Engagement with pilgrims

What kind of information do tourists and pilgrims look for? Are you providing them with information about the place, the prayers, and the history? Could you incorporate within that a sense of how your activity is part of a continuous ancient tradition of looking after sacred places in a responsible, loving way? Could you produce a well-written Green Guide for Pilgrims to your city and make this available online and at tourist information offices as well as in your place of worship? Can this be interesting and desirable for people who come as tourists and are surprised and inspired by the sense of pilgrimage, ready to experience something deeper?

Current examples:

- The Green Guide for Hajj gives the millions of pilgrims to the Hajj advice on how to be green in their pilgrimage and their life. It identifies simple steps that pilgrims can take to reduce the negative impact of their participation in the Hajj pilgrimage, and ideas of how their pilgrimage can be a blessing to the Earth. Over one hundred million plastic bottles as well as many tons of other rubbish are left behind every year after the Hajj. The Green Guide for Hajj asks pilgrims to avoid using plastic bags and bottles, to clear up their own litter and to choose travel companies with environmentally friendly policies. It also asks pilgrims to care for the environment once they return home from pilgrimage. The brochure is available in English (www.arcworld.org/downloads/Green_Guide_for_Hajj.pdf) and Arabic, and will be adapted and translated for use by Hajj pilgrims in Nigeria (which sends some 100,000 pilgrims to the Hajj every year) and Indonesia (which sends around 250,000).
- The Coptic Orthodox Church has produced a leaflet for pilgrims visiting St Bishoy Monastery in Egypt, visited by around 100,000 pilgrims every year. The leaflet explains what the monks are doing to protect the environment and reclaim the desert and recommends that pilgrims take care of the environment once they are at home. The Coptic Orthodox Church's Long-Term Plan to care for the environment has been endorsed by its late leader, Pope Shenouda III. Such endorsement on a leaflet or plan can give additional authority to the environmental message. The leaflet itself will often be kept as a treasured blessing and keepsake.

3.2.3 (National) Pilgrimage Centre

If people are employed to look after pilgrims in a formal way, whether as guides, as priests or in any other capacity, could they be trained about why this city is now a green pilgrim city, what this means, and why it is important?

Current examples:

- Trondheim, Norway, is one of the most visited Christian pilgrimage sites in northern Europe. A National Centre of Pilgrimage has recently been opened and several different pilgrimage routes to Trondheim are being restored and revived.
- St Albans in England has pledged that everybody who makes a pilgrimage to St Albans knows that it is a Green Pilgrimage City. A logo will be added on all visitor information, interpretation panels will be placed in the cathedral, on the website and on café menus. There is also a commitment that all cathedral guides will know about the environmental element of pilgrimage and include it in their presentations.

3.2.4 Green maps and handbooks

Could you prepare a green pilgrim map of your city? Can you find ethical businesses – hotels and restaurants with green credentials that could advertise on that map? Could you make this a self-financing or even profitable enterprise, with the profits from advertising returning to a green city fund? Could you print the map on eco-friendly paper? Could you create information boards in the city (made of FSC or recycled materials) on which the map is printed?

Current examples:

- The global Green Map movement is now operating in 775 cities in 60 countries to develop maps that are appropriate and inspiring for both tourists and local residents. This non-profit organisation creates mapmaking tools used by schools, colleges, NGOs, governmental and tourism agencies. Places of worship, eco-spiritual sites, green living sites and others are highlighted with special symbols. There are tours, workshops and signage systems that engage a deeper understanding of creation protection that influences behaviour long after visitors have returned home. Green Map has put forward the suggestion of an interactive Open Green Map to include all Green Pilgrimage Network cities, towns and shrines. These can be embedded in any website and the data can also be explored from mobile phones.
- In 2009 the Daoist monastic community, working with ARC, created a Daoist Eco Handbook in Chinese and English. It includes ecological prayers, case studies of eco temples all over China, and suggestions of how pilgrims and monks can green and beautify the environment, preserve water, protect animals and follow the “three sticks are enough” principle to reduce the considerable air pollution and waste that comes from people offering armloads of incense at temples around the country.

3.2.5 Marketing

Can you develop a messaging and marketing campaign that promotes the Green Pilgrim City concept, incorporating sustainable local travel options as well as promoting local heritage and cottage industries associated with the pilgrimage? Can you sell your city as a green city?

Marketing outreach could involve developing leaflets and brochures, sending out newsletters linking relevant parties, publishing green pilgrim guides, and publishing tourist guides to pilgrimage designed specifically for secular visitors, emphasising the importance of Creation, or the natural world.

3.2.6 *Recycling the message*

You have spent a lot of time and energy thinking through your theology, your purpose and your strategy; you have created logos and lesson plans and newsletters. How can you now recycle that message? Is there anywhere else where the material you have developed might be useful?

Part Four:

Resources

This is a preliminary list of resources that can assist you as you consider formulating your action plan.

GPN Handbook

A longer version of the international GPN Handbook is online on ARC's website and can be downloaded at:

http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/Green_Pilgrimage_Network_Handbook.pdf

The Green Pilgrimage Network

The plans and best practice examples of each member of the GPN can be found on the ARC website: <http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=521>

Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC): www.arcworld.org

ARC has worked with faith groups around the world on environmental programs for almost 20 years and was originally under the umbrella of WWF. Our mandate is to facilitate partnerships between faith and environmental groups in order to catalyze long-term action by faiths on environmental issues, and to raise awareness among environmentalists about the role faiths can play in environmental protection and care.

ARC Resources page: <http://www.arcworld.org/downloads.asp>

The Bhumi Project: <http://bhumiproject.org/>

The Bhumi Project aims to educate, inspire, inform, and connect Hindus around the world who are interested in service to Mother Earth. The initiative is facilitated by the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, in partnership with ARC:

ICLEI: <http://southasia.iclei.org/>

ICLEI, or the *Local Governments for Sustainability*, is an international association of local governments and associations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. ICLEI is a partner of ARC and the Bhumi Project in the international Green Pilgrimage Network.

ICLEI has many resources to support cities in India with green pilgrimage including:

- Access to government programmes and funding on solar energy, waste management, combating climate change
- LAB India: a biodiversity management programme for cities
- Tools such as ecoBUDGET, to help municipalities manage their natural resources, and Harmonized Emissions Analysis Tool (HEAT), to quantify pollution and propose reductions.
- Support for the development of multi-city funding proposals to the Indian Government, European Union and other large donors

United Nations Development Programme: <http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/toolkit-sgp.pdf>

UNDP, with support from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and GEF, has a booklet on shifting to low carbon lifestyles, to reduce emissions and save money.

Wildlife Trust of India: <http://wildlifetrustofindia.org/>

WTI is a national conservation organisation committed to effective action for the protection of India's natural heritage. WTI's principal objectives include managing or preventing wildlife crises and mitigating threats to individual wild animals, their populations and habitats through holistic strategies and practical interventions.

WWF India: <http://www.wwfindia.org/>

WWF-India's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

May the Goddess Waters be auspicious for us to drink. May they flow with blessings upon us. May the Earth be pleasant and free of thorns as our place of rest. May She grant us a wide peace. May the Divine Waters which grant us blessings, may they sustain us with vigor and energy, and for a great vision of delight. May we partake of that which is their most auspicious essence, as from loving mothers. May the Heaven grant us peace, and the Atmosphere. May the Earth grant us peace, and the Waters. May the plants and the great forest trees give us their peace. May all the Devas grant us peace. May Brahman grant us peace. May the entire universe grant us peace. May that supreme peace come to us. May that peace dwell in me. Take this firm resolve: May all beings look at me with the eyes of a friend. May I look at all beings with the eyes of a friend. May we all look at each other with the eyes of a friend.

— *Shukla Yajur Veda 36.12-15, 17-18*



Green Pilgrimage Network