

Conference in Oslo 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at  
Soria Moria Centre for Sustainability:

**‘Religion, the Environment and Development:  
The Potential for Partnership?’**

**Organisers and hosts**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Norway  
The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), UK  
The World Bank (WB)  
The United Nations Development Program (UNEP)  
The Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo, Norway

**SUMMARY PAPER**  
**Speeches, papers and summary of**  
**discussions**

Oslo, December 22th 2006



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## PROGRAMME (REVISED)

### Religion, the Environment and Development The Potential for Partnership?

November 7th – 8th 2006

Venue: Soria Moria Centre for Sustainability, Oslo

Monday November 6<sup>th</sup> 18:00-20:00 hrs: Registration for early arrivals

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### Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November

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08.00 – 09:00 Registration and coffee

#### **09:00 Conference Opening**

##### **Welcoming Remarks**

- 09:00 *Mr. Erik Solheim*, Minister of Development, Government of Norway  
09:20 *Mr. Martin Palmer*, Secretary-General, The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)  
09:30 *Mr. Richard Scobey*, Advisor to the Vice President for Sustainable Development, the World Bank  
09:35 *Mr. Olav Kjørven*, Director, Energy and Environment Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP
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**09:45 – 10:45**

#### **Responds to the overarching issue of “Religion, the Environment and Development: The potential for Partnership?”**

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- 09:45 *Dr. Agnes Abuom*, Executive Committee, All Africa Conferences of Churches, and former Africa President of the World Council of Churches  
10:05 *Ms Maimuna Mwidau*, Executive Director, The League of Muslim Women of Kenya, and Secretary General of Africa Muslim Environment Network (AMEN)  
10:25 *Dr. David Lehmann*, Faculty for Social and Political Science, Cambridge, UK  
‘Can the religious upsurge contribute to institution-building towards sustainable development?’
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**10:45 – 11.10 Coffee tables and refreshments**

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**11:15 – 13:00 Session 1**  
**How perceptions of nature influence the management of natural resources**

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**Convener: Nina Witoszek**, Research Professor, Centre for Development and Environment (SUM), University of Oslo, Norway

- 11:25        *Ms. Jacomina de Regt*, Sector Lead Specialist for Social Development, World Bank and *Mr Martin Palmer*, ARC Secretary General.  
                 *Master Ren XingZhi*, China Daoist Association
- 11:45        *Director General Ronan Murphy*, Development Co-operation Directorate, Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland
- 12:05        *Prof. Bron Taylor*, the Samuel S. Hill Professor of Religion, University of Florida, USA:  
                 “World Religion”, ‘Nature Religion’, and the Quest for Sustainability’
- 12:25        Panel discussion/Questions from Audience
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**13:00 – 13:50 Lunch**

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**14:00 – 16:30 Session 2**  
**The relationship between conservation and development:  
Insights into key development and environment issues**

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**Convener: Rev. Dr. Sam Kobia**, Secretary General, World Council of Churches

- 14:10        *Sangha Raja Bour Krey*, Patriarch of Cambodia  
                 *Prof. Mohamed Hyder*, Executive Trustee of the Muslim Civic Education Trust (MCET), Kenya
- 14:30        *Kul C. Gautam*, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF  
                 ‘Partnering with religions to protect the children and the environment as key to sustainable development’
- 14:50        *Prof. Marja-Liisa Swantz*, Professor Emerita, University of Helsinki, Finland  
                 “Religion, Gender and Development”
- 15:05        *Prof. Øyvind Dahl*, The School of Mission and Theology (MHS), Stavanger, Norway
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**15:10 – 15.40 Coffee tables and refreshments**

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- 15:45**        **Session 2 continues:**  
Panel discussion/Questions from audience
- 16:30**        **End Afternoon Sessions**
- 18:30**        Evening Event  
Followed by Dinner
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## **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November – Revised programme**

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**Chair: Olav Kjørven**, Director, Energy and Environment Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP

**09:00 Opening summary of the previous day**

09:05 *Prof. Padmanabh S Jaini*, Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley, USA

09:15 *Research Prof. Desmond McNeill*, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo, Norway

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**09:30 – 10:30 Session 3**  
**Roundtable: Conditions and criteria for partnerships**

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**Chair: Olav Kjørven**, Director, Energy and Environment Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP

**Roundtable participants:**

*His Grace Diarmuid Martin*, Archbishop of Dublin

*Rt. Rev. Mark van Koervering*, Bishop of Niassa, Mozambique

*Dr. Aud V. Tønnessen*, Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, Norway

*Reverend Japhet Ndhlovu*, Council of Churches in Zambia

*Mr. Arild Øyen*, The Norwegian Ambassador to Angola

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**10:30 – 11.30 Workshops in groups including coffee and refreshments**

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**11:30 Plenary Discussion**

**12:30 Planning for future developments in partnerships**

**13:00 Closing remarks**

Richard Scobey, World Bank

Martin Palmer, ARC

Gerd Pettersen, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**13:30 End of Conference**

Lunch

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# OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

## **Agnes Aboum**

Dr., Executive Committee, All Africa Conferences of Churches, and former Africa President of the World Council of Churches

Chairperson,  
Your Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon,  
Excellencies,  
Yours Holiness, Sangha Raja Bour Krey, the Patriarch of Cambodia,  
Your Beatitude, Diarmuid Martin, the Archbishop of Dublin,  
Your Grace, Rt. Rev. Mark van Koevering, the Bishop of Mozambique,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

First and foremost, I would like to start by expressing my sincere gratitude for the choice of our topic today. Our dialogue "Religion, the Environment and Development: The Potential for Partnership?" is both timely and crucial. It is taking place at a time when the importance of the views of the society at large is being recognized as crucial in the attainment of sustainable development. It goes without saying that, sustainable development above all is about development that is sustainable – i.e., long lasting. To put it simply, it is a structural change leading to enduring, widespread improvement in the well-being of societies and their members. This process involves self-sustained economic growth, technological change, the modernization of institutions, and changes of attitudes and values. From this characterization it follows that enhancing individual and collective well-being is the central aim of sustainable development as well as the key criterion for evaluating it.

Chairperson, Your Royal Highness, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

In Our Common Future (United Nations 1987) of the World Commission on Environment and Development, more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs". This definition emphasizes the need to protect future generations while also improving the well-being of the current generation, particularly the poor and vulnerable. Hence, sustainable development can be characterized as a pattern of development that ensures non-decreasing flow of well-being over time.

Meeting essential needs requires not only an era of economic growth for nations in which the majority are poor, but an assurance that those poor get their fair share of the resources required to sustain that growth. Such equity would be aided by political systems that secure effective citizen participation in decision making and by greater democracy in international decision making.

Chairperson,

Let me quickly remind the Conference that the topic of environment and sustainable development has taken a central stage since 1987. To mention just a few important gatherings that have attempted to debate on the subject matter are the world summit of Heads of State and Government of the United Nations members (UN) converged at the Millennium Assembly, New York, in September 2000. The Assembly adopted the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of which environmental sustainability is one of them. At the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the issue of environment was further highlighted and given prominence.

Chairperson,

Today, a host of religious groups are, in one way or another, involved in development work. For instance, increasing number of Christian theologians and ethicists are responding to environmental challenges as the world gets hotter, stormier, unequal crowded and more violent, and less bio-diverse. In deed, some have and are in the process of forming partnership with the secular groups and other development agencies. A case in point is when an extraordinary conference was organized jointly by the Council of

Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA) and the World Bank in Nairobi in March 2000, to explore closer collaboration, especially at grassroots level. In such partnership, the World Bank is expected to bring a wide and varied experience of dealing with, among others, the issues of poverty and environmental sustainability and widely researched information of specific aspects of sustainable development. The Church brings its ability to influence constructively, based on its position as the moral conscience of nations, its closeness to the poor, and its own accountability to God. Therefore the Church seeks to hold forth humane and spiritual values to underpin social, political and economic development. For three decades or so, scholars from many disciplines have addressed religion's role in shaping human relations to nature and come up with the conclusion that religion helps shape environmental attitude and practice in virtually every culture.

Chairperson, Your Royal Highness, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Development is not an end in itself, nor is it a mere business that can be measured. It is about people, societies and life. It would be misleading to assume that development programmes have no particular value basis. In fact, there are rules and norms that guide programme activities. Most programmes are based on values of efficiency, prudent use of economic resources. The scripture gave us a fundamental lesson in teaching that: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). Economics yes, but something extra. It is this something extra -- that we argue has been mission in development work. A Christian approach to development entails a passionate involvement with the objects of development, turning them into subjects of their own lives. In my view, more harm than good can be result from handling development work impersonally. What is called for is spirituality in development that sets the context of interaction, making sure that people are not reduced to a mere case or number.

Chairperson,

Overarching questions

There a couple of overarching questions, among others, that I would like us to ask ourselves during our deliberations in the next two days:

- How much involvement have churches had on environmental issues today? If the answer is "to a great extent", has it had any significance to affect national, regional or international environmental policies? If the answer is "to an insignificant extent", what have been the main reasons behind this?

Another overarching question is that:

- While great religions of the world may exhibit theologies quite different from each other, are their approaches to nature also alike? If yes, how can these be strengthened with a view to addressing the issue of sustainable environmental development? If no, how can we work together and harmoniously to narrow the differences in approaches?
- What is the status of cooperation among religious groups in addressing the issues related to environment and development in various regions of the world?

My final question relates to partnerships between religious groups and other development partners.

- Why call for partnership between religious groups and other development actors involved in environmental issues? Has there been such partnership before on the subject matter? If yes, what lessons have we learnt from such relationships?

Chairperson, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Challenges:

Three challenges are in order. Firstly, while the importance of environmental development through inter-religious collaboration and partnership between national inter-religious councils cannot be overstated, the challenge is that various religious groups would have to forge a sense of common purpose, while respecting their religious differences with a view to contributing to environmental development. Faith

Based Organizations not least Churches have not mainstreamed their ethical values of creation into environment and sustainable development debate despite a lot of work on this theme.

Secondly, although commendable, partnerships between various development actors, if not well planned, can result into some difficulties. These may include:

- Making the less powerful partners feel that other partners control the partnership;
- Result in loss of identity and important values and ethics for some partners;
- Causing one partner to feel stifled by another partner's direction of policies; and
- Dispersing responsibility, allowing one partner to blame another if the partnership falters.

Indeed, the features of successful partnerships are transparency, accountability, a sound governance structure and a well-defined leadership. Below are some of the issues that must be taken into account while forming partnerships:

- Create clear vision and goals. Vision is a picture of a better future, formed by considering the potential outcomes of the partnership. Goals are a roadmap of how to get there. There is need to test whether we as FBOs share the same visions with other stakeholders.
- Be broad-based and embrace key stakeholders from the outset. Partnerships are most effective when they are able to draw from a broad range of perspectives, resources, and expertise. The specific contribution of churches and FBOs is the moral ethical base of their work in the search for a Just, Participator and Sustainable Society. This requires leveling and consensus.
- Set-up clear governance structures that defines partner roles and responsibilities. It is equally important to define the various roles that partners will play and to make sure that all the partners understand and accept these roles.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress. Regularly monitoring progress allows partnerships to assess whether activities and strategies are meeting goals, and what changes should be made to make partnership efforts more effective.
- Work to maintain sustainability. The most successful partnerships plan right from the start on how to maintain momentum and sustain efforts.

Finally, all development actors need to keep in mind that each one has something to contribute towards environmental development and none should feel superior.

Chairperson,

May I conclude by cautioning that there is no "magic bullet" and/or a single solution that can address the global environmental challenges. Overcoming the challenges is possible but only and only if the potential for partnership among all the stakeholders is well explored and enhanced. In its broadest sense, the strategy for sustainable development should aim at promoting harmony among human beings and between humanity and nature. Achieving sustainable development therefore requires participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches, involving a wide range of actors: Governments, private sector, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), academia, grassroots organizations and other interest groups. Indeed, more and more entities -- religious groups, governments, development agencies and other local actors -- are getting aware of these challenges. We must strive to be the people who chart their futures by what they can give to the next generation, not what they can take from it. This workshop should reaffirm the priority of the issues at hand and adopt actions that would jointly address the environmental challenges to development. Action Plans must recognize contributions made so far by FOs and indigenous knowledge acquired over decade that must inform our practice and theory. As churches we are aware of the state of the groaning and bleeding creation and its inhabitants. We have a responsibility to nurture and protect creation by our methods of approaching it. It is time for Justice not profit, it is time for creation and not exploitation and plunder that risks to sink all of us. Our actions stand judged and condemned if we fail to re-dress our steps.

I thank you for your attention!

## **Maimuna Mwidau**

Executive Director, The League of Muslim Women of Kenya, and Secretary General of Africa Muslim Environment Network (AMEN)

Honourable Ministers, His Royal Highness, Fellow participants, ladies and gentlemen Assalam Aleikum!!!!

On behalf of the Africa Muslim Environment Network (AMEN), I wish to take this great opportunity to thank the organizers of this conference for making it possible for all of us to be here today to discuss, learn, understand each others' faiths better, at the same time focus on a united world.

As you may all be aware, political or geographical boundaries are currently the source of all conflicts and the ever rising cases of border insurgency, regional feudism and hatred among communities, but according to the Islamic perspective, a community is not necessarily people living within a given geographical area or with a certain ethnic background. It is more to do with people who profess the same faith, whose interests, beliefs and aspirations transcend their cultural, national, racial and continental differences.

Ladies and gentlemen, In the Sub Saharan Africa, there's a co-relation between religion, culture and society that has greatly influenced what happens in both the urban and the rural setting. Over time, a distinctive feature of traditional African religion has demonstrated a way of life, whose sole purpose is to foster cordial relationships amongst humans, with a view of harmonizing the environment, the spirit, nature and society.

Ladies and gentlemen, Africa happens to be the poorest continent in the World today as poverty levels continue to surge even as we are gathered here today. Incidentally, the poorest of the poor in the African diaspora are Muslims who are in dire need of basic necessities like food, decent housing, water, healthcare, education and security. In fact, it is the lack of such basic necessities that prompted founders of the African Muslim Environment Network (AMEN), which I am representing today, to establish an African network that would coalesce Muslim groups in the continent with secular ones. Besides, AMEN has been keen on disseminating crucial information to members on environment and spirituality. So far, the network has made substantial progress in having membership in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and is still spreading its tentacles to other parts of the continent. However, one of the key initiatives AMEN would be involved in is developmental projects. The network intends to facilitate the launch of viable developmental projects but will relinquish the management of the same to the local communities, to (AMEN) concentrate on newer initiatives. Moreover, AMEN will conduct periodical monitoring and evaluation on all its projects to ensure that they run professionally to achieve their intended goals. Previously though, Mosques were only concerned in Theological and spiritual matters, but AMEN has gone an extra mile in encouraging Imams to beside spiritual nourishment, tackle social - economic issues that are bedeviling our society as it is today.

Ladies and gentlemen, religion and culture are complex issues in Africa as opposed to the West where they hitherto remain a personal matter. For instance, a wedding, a funeral or even a birth in a community is a collective responsibility in the African context, whereas in the developed World, such ceremonies are highly personal portraying a very individualistic trait. Take the example of the Mijikenda and the Maasai communities in Kenya. In Swahili, ladies and gentlemen, Miji means settlements and Kenda means nine. So Mijikenda were nine communities or sub tribes that lived together in small enclosures called Kayas for many years epitomising brotherhood, sisterhood and solidarity. Eventually, due to population explosion and globalization, most of these MijiKendas have shifted their economic activities mainly from pastoralism to modern day farming like poultry keeping, textiles, metal work and sculpture. The Maasai too, a legendary pastoralist tribe with no written heritage, has managed to pass on to its descendants some of its coveted virtues and wisdom through tales, proverbs, riddles and songs. Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, living in this materialistic world today, it's hard to believe that the Maasai community to date subscribe to love for children among other humans. They also value humane virtues like generosity, truth, humility and are proud of their unique culture which is the greatest challenge today vis a vis brain drain. Similarly, most African cultures have a three stage rite of passage practised throughout Africa. It begins with birth, then initiation-circumcision for boys aged between the age of 12 to 14 years. Some cultures also practise crineridectomy, the now infamous female genital mutilation(FGM), touted as a greivous human rights violation against girls, but its gradually scaling down and AMEN is also making concerted efforts to sensitize local communities on the repercussions of the same. The final rite of passage is death which is universal. In the same breadth, I find it imperative to quote a book titled Wild Law reviewed by Philo

Ikonya, who argues that the socio-economic crises facing African states are a direct consequence of poor governance and lack of understanding of our cultures. She goes on to state that the World can only dream of positive change if it embraces practices that honour the earth community, which brings me to the Muslim Criteria.

Ladies and gentlemen, in February the year 2005, Muslim leaders in Africa held an Afroasian conference in Mombasa that discussed the Islamic criteria in depth. Among the key issues that emerged in that conference was the nature of partnership between Western cultures and Islamic cultures with a sense of mutual learning, challenge and acceptance. It was unanimously agreed that the respect for Islamic teachings be a common denominator in every project implemented, denouncing any other project that didn't comply with the Sharia Law. According to the Islamic Consultative Process (shura), stakeholders of the said projects should map out their expectations from the projects, but most significantly, partners develop a symbiotic kind of relationship to enjoy mutual and equal respect, as opposed to the conventional donor-donee relationship. Equally, the gender issue took centre stage with varying opinions on representation and participation, but consensus was to separate gender as per the Sharia Law, so long as the sacred balance is maintained. Likewise, ladies and gentlemen, acceptance of each others' ways and decisions be upheld with a view of employing a bottom up approach in resource allocation and implementation of such developmental projects.

In spite of all that, there appeared to be a challenge in fully assimilating other faiths, due to conflicting cultural and environmental inclinations. Nonetheless, The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) has devised mechanisms and modalities to mitigate such discrepancies.

Ladies and gentlemen, in view of the above, it's my considered opinion that if we all play our respective role towards achieving our collective dream, then I have all reason to believe that a more united and peaceful World would be born out of this conference. Thank you all and God bless!!!!!!

### ***David Lehmann***

Reader in Social Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cambridge, UK:

#### **'Can the religious upsurge contribute to institution-building towards sustainable development?'**

'Religion may have a salutary effect on civil society by encouraging its members to worship, to spend time with their families and to learn the moral lessons embedded in religious traditions. But the impact of religion on society is likely to diminish if that is the only role it plays.' (Wuthnow 1999:362)

I am extremely honoured to be speaking at this gathering in the same programme as some highly distinguished individuals. I am as humbled because I am not a person of action or a policymaker, and I am not representing any religious tradition: I am merely an academic observer. I have however had the privilege of doing research in a variety of places (Brazil and Israel notably) and on several religious traditions (Catholicism, Evangelical Protestantism and Judaism). I should emphasize, also, that my research has tended to be on the 'hotter' religious movements: Liberation Theology, Pentecostalism and ultra-Orthodox Judaism. I should also emphasize that I have not done field research among Muslims, and this is a limitation.

My expertise is mostly in the fields of development and religion, and I will focus my few words on the extent to which religious movements can contribute to social capital, that is to institution-building, especially in the 'unfavourable circumstances' of poverty and problematic governance. The relevance to the environment is simply that if religion is to contribute to protecting the environment then it must help to build institutions for society as a whole. This is something which Christianity has done over the centuries with great success in the West to the point where the state, the welfare system, the education system in the West are unimaginable without our Christian heritage, and in many very poor countries it sometimes seems as if the churches – especially the Pentecostal churches – are the only force able to begin building institutions. My words will give support, albeit qualified, to the optimism associated with this impression.

## Institutions and social capital

Countries characterized by extreme poverty often exhibit a high level of religious participation side by side with what might be called the *degré zéro* of civic institutional life. This caricatured correlation, of course, raises innumerable questions about what type of involvement and what type of belief (from possession cults to high Catholicism in the style of Opus Dei), but even if we restrict ourselves to institutionalized religion, the upsurge of evangelical Christianity in Africa and Latin America has to merit consideration as *prima facie* evidence of religion's contribution to social capital. In his study of the extent and limitations of civic life in the United States, *Bowling Alone*, however, Putnam creates a basis of doubt: it shows sustained high levels of involvement in associative life on the part of people who profess a religion, but also shows that this involvement is concentrated among evangelicals, and evangelicals tend to be inward-looking, strengthening their own communities but not the community as a whole – though there are exceptions (p. 78). Evangelical churches are organized quite differently from other types of church and also from the standard model of civic association. Authority tends to be concentrated in an individual who is not subject to participatory decision-making: he, or very occasionally she, is after all a charismatic leader. The followers pay dues, but they do not appoint or elect a pastor unless the church has become institutionalized and therefore less charismatic. The same goes for ultra-Orthodox Jewish organizations where authority stems from a dynastic leader, a central committee or from the head of a Talmudic study centre (*yeshiva*) – not from a congregation; and increasingly nowadays we find entrepreneurial Rabbis who develop a following and a community which will survive only until their leader withdraws or dies, or maybe loses his 'touch', like evangelical pastors. In other words, levels of democracy among the ultra-Orthodox (Chassidim and 'Lithuanians') as far as religious organization is concerned, are low: on the other hand, like among what American sociologists call 'mainline', or institutionalized, Protestants and Catholics, there will be much concern to have committee and participation-based management of linked charitable bodies. But among evangelicals and fundamentalists, although the tightly knit local basis of loyalty may provide an appearance of democracy, the pastor centralizes both religious leadership and administrative and the all-important financial authority. Pentecostal pastors in small churches retain control and often ownership of their premises and donations are directly or indirectly *persona* to them – to pay their salaries. Even in the vast Brazilian-based Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, with its millions of followers worldwide and its highly centralized management, it has been unclear whether the ownership of its television network, TV Record, rests with the church or with its leader, Edir Macedo .

This concern with impersonal administration links in with Putnam's Italy book (Putnam, Leonardi et al. 1993), which was more directly concerned with trust and its importance for the development of modern institutions. In the South, with its patronage-ridden politics and its pattern of social loyalties revolving around family and extended kin, regional government had difficulty in laying down a basis of legitimacy for modern state administration, while in the North, with a tradition of popular participation, these difficulties were far less pronounced. Of course, matters are more complicated<sup>1</sup>, but that was the core concluding argument. Evangelical churches and fundamentalist sects share these 'Southern Italian' characteristics to some extent: authority may not be entirely family-based, but it is personalized in the figure of the pastor. In the Assemblies of God in Brazil, for example, the President of a state convention, which is the *de facto* locus of power (rather than the national organization which is a loose confederation), routinely holds office for decades and if he passes it on to his son nothing would be thought strange . Among the Chassidim, dynastic succession is the rule (though there are frequent disputes among the heirs) . In the Church of England or the Catholic Church procedures are more elaborate and presumably more transparent, though still the voice of the laity is secondary or, in Catholicism, scarcely heard. But in both churches parishioners and followers have a wide scope for running institutions with little or no hierarchical interference: charities, fiesta management, Christian Base Communities (CEBs in Spanish and Portuguese), Sunday School, etc. are operated with varying degrees of independence from hierarchical control. Crucially, great institutions have mechanisms for ensuring a degree of recourse against abuse of power. These may not always be used appropriately or when necessary (as illustrated by the sex scandals which have engulfed the Catholic Church in recent years) but they do exist: in Pentecostal and fundamentalist organizations, Christian or Jewish, avenues of recourse against abuse of power do not

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<sup>1</sup> Notably because no sooner had the book been published than Italy's entire political system was engulfed by the fistful of corruption scandals known as the *mani pulite* inquiries. These led eventually to a complete destructuring of the parties as they then were: the Christian Democrats and the Socialists were dissolved, as were the Communists. The scandals started not in the South but in the North, arising from deals involving the building of the Milan metro for example. It would nevertheless be wrong to draw conclusions from these affairs involving the elite about the tenor of social relationships in the streets and neighbourhoods of Northern Italy.



exist. They have powerful leaders and apparently followers trust these leaders; but that word 'trust' needs dissection: their trust is in individuals, not guaranteed or protected by an institutional apparatus governing the exercise of their authority as leaders.

There is then a structural tension in the model of social capital, between trust and participation. As the trustworthiness of institutions depends on their impersonality, the more trustworthy they become, the less participatory and the more bureaucratic – leading ultimately to personal disengagement, which does not feed or reflect social capital, and which some claim weakens the appeal of the more institutionalized churches. Some find the sort of 'hot' social capital which evangelicals promote too partisan, too exclusionary of others: it does not feed the community at large, but promotes inward-looking and narrow-minded groups whose participation through for example phone-ins and perhaps mass meetings does not provide a forum for 'real conversations' and 'democratic feedback' (p. 341) but instead stimulates and rewards polarized and uncompromising stances. Social capital, then, is associative life and transparent institutions *plus* a lively informed and engaged public: a demanding agenda indeed.

So there is little to gain in asking how religion 'in general' can encourage trust and social capital, we have to ask how *different varieties* of religious institution and especially of religious authority help to build trust: some cases may be a bit too 'hot' for comfort, while others, which because of their institutionalization may contribute more to the general good, may be too 'cold' to fuel participation.

We must first, however, emphasize the word 'institutions': the issue for a social scientist is not just the striking success of churches in building themselves up, but the impression gained that they are the only institutions, and that they stand out when compared with the apparent fragility of state institutions and with the weakness of civil society. But are the churches really building institutions, as distinct from large and lively organizations?

Secondly, our introductory discussion points to the importance of analysing different forms of religious authority. Variations in trust between leaders and led, and variations in the degree of personal dependence governing these relationships, affect the production and maintenance of social capital.

There is a climate of opinion in these matters which takes it for granted that, in Latin America especially, the only successful movements are Pentecostalism, or Pentecostalism's cousin the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Successful here of course means little more than fast-growing, so now is the time to delve deeper and lay the basis for asking questions about the real contribution of these rapidly growing movements to the creation of social capital, and to compare them with their less dynamic competitors.

We are told repeatedly, for example by David Martin and Rodney Stark, that the most institutionalized churches often rest upon scant real associative life. They are described as a moribund bureaucracy while in contrast the movements of renewal and return are an example of 'hot' religion, mobilizing the faithful in their hundreds and thousands. But the story can hardly end there. Even a moribund bureaucracy may be heir to a stock of social capital and this type of capital, though not very active, having been painfully built up, does not fritter easily away (unlike financial capital). We see this in the curious legitimacy of the Church of England which, despite declining attendance and financial contributions in many places, still remains a treasured piece of English culture, and indeed of English-speaking culture worldwide<sup>2</sup>, so that the largely non-churchgoing public and the thoroughly irreverent media express vehement opinions on issues such as the sex life of priests and whether the heir or heiress to the British throne should marry a divorcee. Conversely, we should be wary of judging the contribution to social capital of churches and movements simply by the size of their rallies, attendance at services, or the number of their hinterland outposts and urban storefronts.

In fact the real question may be whether they do not give birth to other organizations which may create it – such as Base Christian Communities, NGOs, schools, religious orders and medical institutions. The Church of England may be moribund, but one way or another it invented much of the British education system and the Catholic Church invented health care as well as education in many countries, just as Christianity invented secularism.

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<sup>2</sup> As witness the ferocious debates about same-sex marriages and homosexual priests in the worldwide Anglican communion.

## Varieties of authority

It was hard not to notice, in December 2004, that as the tsunami receded, the only buildings left standing were often churches and mosques. This image of permanence and stability in the midst of chaos is complemented by accounts, in documentaries and journalism, of *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro where gangsters inspire fear and the only respected figures are the pastors, many themselves former dealers: even the gunmen respect them.<sup>3</sup> But how far can this image of trust amid distrust really go? The 'unfavourable circumstances' refer to the lack of institutions operating on the basis of abiding rules subject to disinterested application and adjudication – an environment in which the frontier between the private and the public sphere is far less clear than in the standard model of modernity and secular society, and in which patron-client relations are the dominant form of power and authority, inhibiting universalistic rule-based behaviour and encouraging relations of personal dependence. So how do we explain that it is precisely in these circumstances that evangelical churches have apparently proliferated with the greatest rapidity?

One answer may be that precisely that on account of their charismatic character, evangelical churches and other movements of religious renewal cannot ever be fully institutionalized, and transparent and must retain a certain amount of personal authority and social closure. Building an institution means formulating and implementing a set of rules and rituals which set and protect boundaries, offer predictability and iteration (in rituals), and ensure trust. This may seem elementary, but in religion it touches on sensitive areas. Religion sets about governing rites of passage, regulating the sex lives of followers. Being involved in such intimate matters it differs from others because it straddles the public and private spheres in ways that make it impossible to be totally transparent and modern. Other institutions, such as medicine and the law, also straddle these spheres, but whereas doctors and teachers are supposed to apply a specific type of knowledge only to specific areas of people's intimate lives under specified conditions and rules, in some movements, churches and sects, pastors, priests and Rabbis give instructions in unlimited spheres and are bound only by rules of their own making. Furthermore, when people consult certain sorts of priests, pastors and Rabbis, or submit to their authority, they trust them for their innate gifts – hence the word charisma which refers to qualities received or confirmed by a magical procedure - which confer unconstrained authority on them, not for their qualifications. And the trust placed in them can on occasion know few limits. Of course, many religious institutions, especially the most mainstream, hegemonic and respectable, place limits, but even in the most ponderous there remains this charismatic authority. Furthermore, it is the most dynamic contemporary movements – evangelical Christians, Jewish *t'shuva* (return) movements, even West Bank settlers – which place the most authority in the hands of religious leaders, who themselves have often acquired their office through self-designation.

In some movements, enormous powers are in the hands of individual pastors, who are free to diagnose possession and conduct exorcism for example, or Rabbis whose advice is sought on everything from the choice of marriage partner to business decisions, and who also occasionally conduct exorcisms too. Generally where there is less institutionalization officiants have more unfettered power and become more closely involved in followers' personal and family lives, a pattern which is not easily compatible with rule-based trust.

This uncontrolled crossing of public-private boundaries goes together with a degree of closure and esotericism. In a trivial sense no institution is entirely open because all impose conditions of entry, membership or protection. But religion conditions entry in quite distinctive ways: Christian institutions, even those whose followers are mostly 'born into' their faith, require all individuals to pass certain ritual tests or to go through certain symbolic performances, to be members – baptism as a minimum, but more elaborate procedures for Pentecostals such as kneeling in public and 'accepting Jesus', and eventually baptism by total immersion. In some sense, these rites of passage involve or invoke the supernatural. In Judaism the supernatural is not invoked because entry is by birth and conversion is extremely laborious. Jews born into the ultra-Orthodox community go through a series of stage: among Chassidic sects children have their first haircut at a certain age, graduate from one type of hat to another, wear a prayer shawl and attend the ritual baths only after marriage. Married women attend the ritual baths every month after marriage.

This obviously means religion is not an open institution, and indeed the building and maintenance of frontiers is central to a religious institution or movement. In the more dynamic and evangelical sects and

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<sup>3</sup> Joao Salles' documentary *Historia de uma guerra particular*, a realistic complement to the film, and book, *Cidade de Deus*.

movements, rituals of joining become more and more elaborate, and are equivalent to the establishing of frontiers, even though they are not codified and are almost entirely unspoken. Secularized Jews who change their lives and return to strict observance or ultra-Orthodoxy change the way they dress, the way they talk, the way they walk, where they live, their jobs, and so on until they have burnt their bridges with their previous life. In the evangelical case a person graduates from being just a regular attendant to 'accepting Jesus', to paying dues, to receiving gifts of the Spirit (speaking in tongues, the gift of oratory<sup>4</sup>), being entrusted with small jobs like sweeping the Church, teaching Sunday school, patrolling the aisles during services, eventually teaching, preaching and so on.<sup>5</sup> Secularized Jews who return to strict observance also have to go through a series of stages, notably generational stages, before they can marry their children into longstanding ultra-Orthodox families.<sup>6</sup>

All these ritual practices draw and thicken frontiers and thus close the organizations off to outsiders. The campaigning ethos of evangelicals opens certain doors, but does not open the organization; rather the contrary: the most evangelical (the Jewish Lubavitch sect, the Pentecostal Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) are the most secretive. Researchers are made acutely aware of this when they appreciate that certain subjects – notably money, internal politics and decision-making – are off-limits, and also when they realise how hard – indeed impossible - it is to feign membership: even where dress seems not to be a badge of belonging, an outsider stands out and is aware of standing out.

These closure mechanisms are in contradiction to the assumption in a model of secular society that religious organizations are much like others: open to scrutiny, and operating on the basis of impersonal rules. Here authority is personal, especially when healing and exorcism come into play, so the ability to generate social capital despite great commitment by followers, is in doubt, for reasons arising from core features, especially of the evangelical movements, which are precisely the ones which flourish in 'difficult circumstances'.

Although these evangelical and fundamentalist movements are very closed, they can generate a remarkable array of organizations for their followers, and those organizations are operated on a rational basis: among ultra-Orthodox Jews schools, charitable works, old age homes, community centres providing (for example) fixed rates for weddings, and rotating credit societies (*gemachim*)<sup>7</sup> on a truly remarkable scale. Followers also contribute substantial proportions of their earnings to the organization, both among Chassidic Jews and among Pentecostals. It sounds like a lot of social capital, but does it increase the social capital available in society as a whole? And was not the point of Putnam's theory that somehow associative life and the modes of interaction it encourages are of benefit not merely to those directly involved but to society as a whole, notably to the construction of institutions?

We can illustrate the point by noting that rotating credit functions among Jewish communities of ultra-Orthodox on a delicate balance of trust and gossip: although borrowings are not secured against assets, they are guaranteed by individuals and registered in a legal document: the individual who defaults has trouble both with the guarantor and with other members of the community. This can only operate in a tightly-knit community where everyone knows everyone else. Religion's contribution to social capital, therefore, may itself be a question of balance between internal and external, public and private, openness and closure in a movement or organization's relation to potential followers and outsiders.

### **Religious affiliation as everyday life**

There is an approach to the sociology of religion which focuses on why it is that those religious organizations which impose the most stringent demands on their followers seem to attract and retain so many of them. The answer is that these organizations provide benefits to their followers in the form of charity, solidarity and shared facilities, whose maintenance requires collective effort. The sacrifices imposed on the followers ensure that only true believers will join, and free riders will be discouraged. The analysis seems to work well when benefits of membership in a 'club' (economists' technical term) are material and observable: for example in Israel, where direct and indirect government subsidies flow into

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<sup>4</sup> I Corinthians 12:8-10. Wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues

<sup>5</sup> A pattern observed during fieldwork in Brazil in the 1990s, especially in the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.

<sup>6</sup> Observations in fieldwork in Israel and North London in 2003-5.

<sup>7</sup> An acronym of *gemilut chasadim* – acts of kindness.

the institutions of ultra-Orthodox Judaism, and where men who attend religious study institutions full time are exempt from military service, the incentive to free ride to avoid military service could be substantial, and so the leaders of the ultra-Orthodox institutions have to take measures to insure that those who do benefit from these provisions are sincere in their adherence. Among Chassidim there is quite often a division of labour between those who study or otherwise devote themselves to full-time religious activity and those who are involved in business. The latter make large donations to the religious institutions, so again the leadership must make sure that these donations only support the true believers. Pentecostals in Latin America, and perhaps elsewhere, have an excellent reputation as honest and hard-working employees, so they too must guard against impostors. This self-protection is helped (though perhaps not exactly 'caused') by the imposition of austere dress codes – as among Chassidim and other ultra-Orthodox Jews - of the sort which impostors would find troublesome and imposition of penalties like (usually temporary) exclusion. The Brazilian *Deus é Amor* church offers an extreme example of an austere dress code among Pentecostals, but others do the same to a less stringent degree. All Pentecostal churches, from the largest federations to the tiniest local chapel, demand tithes at a standard rate of 10 per cent of income, and sometimes donations beyond that: some do so in a very public way during services, others more discretely.

### **Power**

Social scientists hesitate to allow that faith could be its own reward – and indeed religious spokesperson do not often claim that either. There is usually some sort of promise of an after-life, however vague, but it is hard to believe that this is sufficient to persuade individuals to make sometimes extremely onerous sacrifices. Some rewards of religious participation are clearly social – friendship, the prospect of support in times of hardship - but these could be obtained in other, less expensive ways. We should therefore also ask whether religious leaders do not also exercise power which increases the availability of their followers to make sacrifices for the sake of their movement or organization. This power is particularly evident in charismatic and fundamentalist movements and it is manifested in forms of organization, in political involvements and, less tangibly, in the dynamics of interpersonal relations at the grassroots – gossip, in short. The power over followers exercised by religious leaders can be substantial: they may forbid or fiercely discourage secular education for children – viz. among ultra-Orthodox Jews and apparently among some Muslim renewal movements in Europe – thus denying them the chance of a professional career and making them more dependent on the community or sect; they often act as counsellors or confidants on intimate personal and familial issues and thus possess unique and detailed knowledge about many followers' lives; they also have resources, either material or immaterial notably in the form of political connections and also connections in international religious networks which may in turn give access to material resources.

This is a personal sort of power, but religious leaders have to navigate between personal power inherent in the charisma of their position and trust-enhancing institutional power – or social capital. Persons or institutions who provide funds probably want two things (among others): one is some degree of confidence that the funds will be properly spent, and the other, in the case of individuals, is to be spared pressures from hordes of petitioners, scroungers and hangers-on. On the other side, those who stand to benefit from their largesse want to be assured individually that they will benefit, and that others will not benefit unduly. So, in a perfect world, everyone has an interest in a rational, impersonal and highly institutionalized method of distributing the benefits. Donors might seek out, as leader, a person ready to make sacrifices, a saintly Rabbi, shiekh or pastor, who, because his or her personal vested interest is not at stake, is more likely to be trusted by others as a partner or leader in a cooperative venture. One can quote examples also where the followers themselves look for an impersonal mechanism of resource management based on trust, like the Jewish credit societies mentioned above.

Power also derives from magical or supernatural powers attributed to charismatic individuals. Although individuals know that they can deceive one another and are also, broadly, aware that if they persist in deceiving one another, the 'moral basis of community life' will founder (Atran, 2003:117), there is always a risk that people will try to 'get away with' something. That is why witches and mafia, who live by deception and by doing deals behind the backs of others, are held up as examples of what can go wrong, but that is also why they are feared. It is why special powers are attributed to charismatic individuals, who are not only prepared to risk sacrifice, but are said to possess charismatic gifts and special powers of insight. The risk of abuse is evident.

The personal quality of the relationship with the pastor varies a lot, from churches where he administers cures, exorcises, diagnoses and cares for souls in a very personal manner, to others where we observe 'wholesale' exorcisms and cures – as in the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which rotates its pastors and preachers to prevent them from getting too close to their followers. Power is present at the micro and the macro levels. At the macro level examples abound: the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA - which does not necessarily enjoy the support of mainstream Assemblies) seems, like some other examples, to be an organization riddled with personal enrichment and led by people who cosy up to local dictators . In Guatemala the civil war reached its bloodiest phase under a military dictator who preached the evangelical word on the radio and encouraged the army to polarize the country's indigenous people and farmers into (friendly) evangelicals and (subversive or Communist)) Catholics .

So, somehow, the leader has to tread a delicate path between rational authority and supernatural empowerment. If the balance goes too far towards the former, then the institution loses its supernatural qualities and becomes a company or a legal apparatus, which is almost what has happened with established Protestant churches in Europe. If it goes too far the other way it can go to the extreme of self-destructive cults, though more likely it will just fail to develop and rise and fall with one single leader.

### **Politics**

The need for resources to distribute to followers – especially when these tend to be very poor, as is certainly the case for Pentecostals in Latin America – draws the leaders of movements of religious renewal irresistibly to politics, and their strong leadership and influence over their followers, especially at the local level, also draws politicians irresistibly to them. Pentecostals may advertise their disinterest in politics, citing merely the doctrine that it is incumbent upon them to obey the legitimate authority, but recent experience shows that they are getting involved at several levels. In Brazil the last Congress had 70 people in the 'bancada evangelica' or evangelical caucus, though many have withdrawn or been defeated in the 2006 elections; in Peru President Fujimori was elected the first time in 1990 thanks to support from evangelical pastors, in Guatemala we have seen the sad identification of dictator Ríos Montt with the Iglesia del Verbo, in Mexico the Iglesia La Luz del Mundo has a long identification with the once-ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party which helped to found the Church). In Africa we have mentioned the ZAOGA . It should be noted that the identification of Pentecostal Churches and pastors is not with left or right – it is a pragmatic involvement in politics with the aim of trading their undoubted vote-getting power for resources. Evidently Jewish sects and institutions have benefited from the unprecedented wealth of the world Jewish community in the post-war period and from the support of the Israeli state, in which their political involvement is legendary and – like the Pentecostals – largely pragmatic.

### **Conversion**

An extremely important factor in explaining sustained participation and submission to stringent requirements in evangelical sects may be the prominence of converts among their followers. This phenomenon of churches whose membership is almost entirely accounted for by converts is relatively modern – i.e. twentieth century – and has also spread to certain Jewish sects (notably Chabad/Lubavitch and, in Israel, Shas) and Islamist movements where the converts, though strictly speaking returning to their own heritage, can to all intents and purposes be counted, sociologically and psychologically, as converts. This helps to empower religious leaders and thus helps them to impose a tight framework on the choices made by followers, because, having 'burnt their bridges', converts are heavily dependent on their new community and eager to show readiness to help and contribute. Converts are in demand because they bring in skills and knowledge of the 'outside world'; they also tend to accentuate pressure towards thickening frontiers and tightening up rules, because as novices they are anxious not to break rules or violate traditions and so will lean towards the sorts of options which thicken frontiers and tighten up rules.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, this paper has defended the following broad theses:

1. Social capital holds society together, but it is not built up out of goodwill, enthusiasm and community feeling alone. It needs institutions based on trust as well as participation, and on a dialogic exchange as well as claims-making. High levels of participation without personal engagement tend to polarize society.
2. Institutions are built on trust but also on a degree of impersonality and transparency: institutionalized religions have built up institutions and do operate with some degree of

impersonality, but they lack the dynamism of charismatic and fundamentalist movements, and in developing countries seem unable to mobilize large segments of the population, even if they are politically and culturally influential.

3. Charismatic and fundamentalist movements tend to be characterized by a personalistic style of authority, but even so, they do develop a degree of institutionalization - otherwise they implode into cults.
4. Leaders of charismatic and fundamentalist movements need resources and they obtain them through the sacrifice of their members principally, through their personal power, and through pragmatic political involvement. The result is that the more dynamic movements have vast followings, but seem not to have left much of a mark on the development of society.
5. The micro-dynamics of charismatic and fundamentalist movements favours tight social control from the leadership, and a pressure to stringency and conformity from below through gossip. Frontiers tend to thicken as the sacrificial element of the movement is accentuated to discourage free riders and impostors. This dynamic is further accentuated by the prominence of conversion in the ethos and following of the movements.
6. Thus we observe that religious movements build strong organizations and vast followings, but certain features which help them to succeed in this way may also inhibit their contribution to building social capital in society as a whole. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that in the longer run they will evolve this ability, even if this is at the expense of their extraordinary grassroots vitality and thanks to their stringency and their Puritanism.

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# SESSION 1 How perceptions of nature influence the management of natural resources

## **Jacomina de Regt**

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Exhibit of mountain gorilla: Last Saturday I was at the foot of the volcanoes of Rwanda, close to the park with 600 remaining mountain gorillas. It made me reflect of the title of the session: perceptions of nature. Humans can not enter this park if they have a cold; humans have to disinfect themselves before going in to avoid contaminating the gorillas with our diseases. This brings home how close we are to nature, we are part of it and how great the damage can be if we don't realize our place.

Good morning

I am Jacomina de Regt. I have worked for the World Bank for almost 32 years and am their longest serving sociologist. This gives me a unique perspective on the organization of which I am a part. For years, I have participated in the induction course for new staff and introduced myself as the square peg in the round hole. Rick (Scobey) calls me subversive.

I would describe myself as a very value centred person; my values are informed by my upbringing in the Netherlands. Like the Minister (Mr. Erik Solheim) I grew up in a white, homogeneous Protestant environment. I grew up in a more privileged and secular class with the strong ethic of civic engagement (the first French I ever learnt was from one of the my great uncles 'Noblesse oblige"). My values were formed by being a university student in the sixties and working for participatory management of the universities then and, thirdly, by my choice to work for and in development. My values are now strongly grounded in my active participation and leadership a liberal religious movement: the Unitarian Universalists. ([www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)). This faith prods me to work for peace and social justice in the world and for the respectful dialogue among different faith traditions. This faith pushes me to respect the inter-dependent web of all existence of which we are part. That is our way of formulating the stewardship of the earth principle.

Empowerment and giving voice to those who are voiceless is the leit motif of my life.

I also see this reflected in my work. It started right away in 1975 with organizing the female professionals, together with Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, to lobby for participation of the Bank in the 1975 Mexico conference on women and for subsequent changes in the WB procedures and statistics to reflect gender into our work. I have been part of just about all internal change management task forces which have tried to introduce improvement internally: participatory management under McNamara or country team based decision making, training sexual and racial harassment advisors. You name it. I have worked on it, eternally optimistic.

And it is reflected in the work I choose, because being this square peg I had the privilege to choose more than current professionals do. So, this was being a leader for education in native languages in the 80's; in the 90's, this was working on introduction of lending instruments which would allow our client countries to lead the agenda and oblige the donors to pool their resources and on bringing in participation into our normal way of doing business. In 2000, I was very privileged to be able to create my next assignment and I said to the Vice President who offered me that opportunity: "I only want to work on something which is totally in line with my value system and which will push out the frontier of development on the African continent." I chose to lead the work on community driven development, an approach which allows the communities to manage their own funds on prioritized development projects and which now represents 10% of Bank lending.

I am not the only one in the Bank who works based on personal values. In one of my change management incarnations, I have had the privilege of bringing management teams together and asking them to reflect on the reasons why they wanted to join the Bank and work for this development institution. Below the surface of the education and secular/scientific layer, lies a deeply held set of values of wanting to serve humanity. These conversations have often been referred to by managers as allowing them to get

in touch again with their deepest motivations, their value systems, their beliefs, in many cases to express their faiths to their colleagues. You should see the adherence to Ramadan, and celebration of Eid at the Bank; this is deeply felt and observed.

Of course, my work does not only reflect my value system. There is the interaction with the changes taking place in the organization and in the world as a whole. When we, an informal group of professionals started pushing the participation agenda in the early nineties, we had an uphill battle. But in the World Development Report of 2000, not having access to information and not being able to participate in decision making became part of the expanded definition of poverty. Ensuring that all stakeholders are represented is considered normal at this moment. Yet, the faiths are not yet stakeholders, neither at the level of policy dialogue, nor program development nor program implementation.

So, it should not be a surprise that I am an internal champion for dialogue and collaboration with the Faiths. As a sociologist, I say, we can not ignore the faiths: the faiths are the largest growing social capital in the world and Dr. David Lehman already referred to this. The people in the communities fully live their faith identity and trust their faith leaders much more than their governments, because the faith leaders are present. Every meeting in Nigeria is opened and closed with Christian and Muslim prayers; a high party official of SWAPO in Namibia told me last week at the local governance donor harmonization workshop that there is only one organization which has the power to destabilize this one party democracy; the council of churches. We can not ignore the faiths in the development community. At the community level, we want the same: poverty reduction, protection of the natural environment (often considered sacred) to pass on the children and good governance and service delivery at the local level.

Yes, we do want the same. The World Bank has a set of implicit values which drive the work on improvement of the lives of the poor; which drive the protection of the environment; which drive the nitty gritty rules we impose on our projects regarding inclusion of the voices of the powerless through participatory processes. We may dress it up with economic research which shows that this makes sense; that democracies grow faster; that decision making at the local level with all voices heard leads to greater sustainability, and that environmental protection leads to sustainability and carbon finance markets make sense from the sustainability point of view, but nevertheless we both impose a value system and are driven by a value system. Making explicit that development agencies are driven by values and that the staff in them are often driven by personal values to work in such agencies and introducing this understanding into our dialogue I see as a great step forward.

### ***Message of the President of Mongolia***

NAMBARYN ENKHBAYAR PRESIDENT OF MONGOLIA, 7th November 2006

#### Unofficial Translation

To all participants of the Oslo Conference

Allow me, the President of Mongolia, to convey heartfelt greetings to representatives of governments and international organizations, world religious figures, scholars and academics, gathered in Oslo, the capital of Norway, for the discussion of such a crucial topic as "Religion, the Environment and Development", and deliver my genuine wishes of success to the Conference.

It is with absolute confidence that I view the conference as an impetus to increase environmental consciousness and foster further the world-scale partnership for development – a part of the key objectives outlined in the Millennium Development Goals, which target common and acute social development issues faced by the world nations.

I would like to emphasize that the significance of the Conference lies in streamlining the aspirations and efforts of governmental and non-governmental institutions, national and international organizations, civil and religious societies, and in serving as a clear expression of mutual understanding and cooperation between the religions and the civilizations.



Mongolia which maintains its centuries-long tradition of the veneration of nature, the Heaven and Buddhism, has been able, to a relatively greater extent, to preserve its nature pristine. This is due to the influence of Mongolia's underlying culture and nomadic way of life, which rested on the harmonious co-existence of man and nature.

In the recent years, however, as a result of the various factors facilitated by the domestic and worldwide developments, disturbing events have unfortunately taken place, such as the disturbance of the ecological equilibrium, extinction of biological species and reckless exploitation of natural resources.

Therefore, Mongolia strives to reflect the principles of nature preservation in its nation-scale policies and agenda, create an appropriate legal environment, encourage civil society monitoring, and at the same time, revives and adopts religious traditions and customs of the nature preservation to this common end. The establishment of the five natural sacred sites of vital ecological significance by the Decree of the President of Mongolia into the state recognized places of worship and, thus, taking them into religious and cultural protection, has given positive results.

A particular initiative of Mongolia's Buddhist institution in implementing the President's decision, its resourcefulness and ability to foster mass participation, is a clear indication of an effective cooperation existent between religious and civil society.

I am delighted to inform you – participants to the Conference, that the projects implemented by the World Bank and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation in Mongolia have been effective in increasing the participation and significance of the religion in nature preservation, as well as in demonstrating the availability of the resources and capability of the development agencies and religious organizations in their cooperation.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Norway, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), and other organizations and individuals, who supported and took active part in the organization of the Conference.

I, the President of Mongolia, who had the honour to serve as the International President of ARC, would like to express my full support to your endeavours, my unity in mind and heart with you, and also call for a greater and more solid cooperation for the well-being and development.

With heartfelt wishes and cordial respect

### ***Master Ren Xingzhi***

Louguantai monastery in China:

#### **'The New role of Daoists - The story of an ecological Daoist temple in China'**

First of all I would like to thank ARC inviting me for such an astonishing conference. My thanks also go to Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Bank and UNDP.

I should like to start my presentation by telling you about a meditation I used to practice every morning when I was in Longmen cave monastery, about ten years ago. Daoists believe that the early morning is the time when Yin is falling and Yang is rising with both of them in balance with each other. We say that if you find yourself in a forest at that time, then you will surely be veiled in the wonderful smells of earth, trees, flowers, and grasses as if you are taking a fragrant bath. This "forest bath" idea has been my dream for many years, but I was too busy in temple affairs and had no time to develop it into action.

I come from the Daoist academy at Louguantai monastery in Shaanxi province, which holds a special place in the heart of Daoists because we say it is at this monastery that our sage, Lao Zi, wrote the Dao De Jing, our most important text. It addresses the importance of having a harmonious relationship between heaven, earth and humanity. It describes how humans should respect nature and live with all species.

But it is not my monastery that I wish to talk about today. It is another one that lies some 100 kilometres southwest of Xian city. It is a much smaller place, called Tiejia tree Taibai monastery, after a sacred tree nearby and the biggest peak of the Qinling mountains, at whose feet it nestles.

The Qinling mountains range forms a natural climate division between northern and southern China and it acts as a water catchment area for our two most important rivers: the Yangtze and the Yellow Rivers. It is a place of sacred sites, noble rivers, and ancient cities. It is also home to around a fifth of the world's giant pandas as well as a good variety of other species.

The temple was originated from the West Han Dynasty in the early of the first Century. From the beginning the monks worshiped three "Taibai" gods, and another god who was named Tiejia-shu after a nearby sacred tree. Every year from June to July there were many religious activities held at the temple, and because it was a site that all pilgrims had to pass before climbing Mt Taibai, it came to be an important stopping point. It is a beautiful place, with the mountain behind, the river stream in front, and the air fragrant with the smell of ancient pines.

During the Cultural Revolution the Monastery was destroyed - as were so many sacred buildings. Even so, after rules were relaxed in 1980, people started visiting the ruined site for spiritual comfort. So many went that local believers soon built some simple rooms on the site. In 2002, my monastery formally took over responsibility for managing the monastery. We sent a priest to be in charge of the temple affairs, and we also raised funds from local government and private sponsors to build extra rooms to worship the three gods and the accommodation.

That year, by chance, I met Dr. Liu Xiaohai from WWF-China, who was there to launch a Panda Protection programme with Shaanxi province. I learned that WWF-China was planning to collaborate with the local Forest Park to create an eco-tourism centre named Panda House, using traditional building materials and architectural techniques.

Dr. Liu's ideas about environment and ecology inspired me to think about further development of Tiejia Taibai monastery. And particularly to remember that wonderful dream I had had, to build up a "forest bath site" surrounding a rural temple.

I was delighted when Dr. Liu and the Secretary General of WWF came to visit Louguantai in the autumn of 2003 - when we at last got a chance to realise this dream. Together - and with the help of experts from Shaanxi Academy of Social Science, Shaanxi Teaching University and Xian Daily News, we chose a site between the temple and Panda House and built a small garden. We called it the "harmonious garden".

Not long afterwards the Forest Park introduced me to Peter Zhao from ARC, who told me that ARC was proposing to rebuild an ecological temple, and wish to collaborate with our Louguantai. If talking with Dr. Liu of WWF China gave me a concept of ecological protection in the West, constant meetings with Mr. Zhao helped me readjust my worldview. Later when I met Martin Palmer and Dr. He Xiaoxin from ARC I felt ashamed to realise that the classic Daoist teachings we chanted everyday were not being fully realised in our dealings with nature. This really woke me up. I started to think quite differently about the environment, and how we, as Daoist monks, can protect it.

The name will be the Taibaishan Tiejia Ecological Daoist Temple. It will include an exhibition centre and training centre to demonstrate the harmonious relationship between Daoist teachings and nature, to encourage eco-tourism and to develop professionally trained Daoist monks, responsible for the key sacred mountains of China.

After long period of discussions, a formal agreement between ARC, the Louguantai Daoist Association and the local government of Zhouzhi county has been reached, and we are all agreed that this Ecological Daoist Temple will be one of the branches of my monastery. My monastery will take responsibility for the future use and management of this ecological Daoist temple and the training centre.

With the support from a Dutch Foundation called EMF the construction of the major hall started in autumn 2005, and by May of this year the major part of the building project had been completed. We are very proud of it. This will be China's first religious ecology centre, training visitors and pilgrims in the ways that Daoists have always taught how to look after nature. But more than that, we hope that it will be one of the ways that we will use the message of Daoism to give China strength in making wise decisions about our

future.

The first ecology workshop was held this July. We had invited 14 Daoist monks and nuns from ten temples in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. At the end we all signed a commitment - known as the Qinling Declaration - to protect the environment around our sacred lands and buildings. We hope this will be a model for future declarations to preserve some of our country's most sacred landscapes.

We have also formed a "Daoist Temple Alliance on Ecology Education" and have agreed to send representatives regularly to workshops and to share our experiences - in protecting our country's sacred Daoist landscapes.

Daoism judges a person's affluence by the number of different species in his or her environment. If all things grow well, then a society is affluent. If they don't grow well, then the kingdom is on decline. This view should encourage both governments and people to take good care of nature. Because we all want a truly affluent society in which to live.

Thank you.

### **Ronan Murphy**

Director General, Development Co-operation Directorate, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland

### **Summary of Paper**

The presentation described a development practitioner's perspective on the relationship between the environment and development. While the basic texts for development practitioners are secular, there are links of various kinds with religion. The dimensions where the environment and development intersect are examined under three headings: livelihoods, health and vulnerability. Development interventions include specific environmental projects, support for multilateral environmental organisations and mainstreaming environmental concerns in the overall aid programme. Examples of interventions are described. Partnership is the key to development. The role of religious leaders in supporting sustainable development was discussed.

### **Bron Taylor**

Samuel S. Hill Professor of Religion, The University of Florida:

[www.religionandnature.com](http://www.religionandnature.com)

'World Religion,' 'Nature Religion,' and the Quest for Sustainability'

*What follows is an outline/overview of what was planned to be presented and embellished at the conference.*

While I have been have spent considerable time documenting the rise of environmentalism among the world's most prevalent faith traditions, including in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, which I edited and published recently, in this presentation my focus today will be different. I will argue:

- 1) The notion of "world religions" is increasingly recognized by scholars as problematic. This ought to give us pause when we use conventional understandings of what count as "world religions" as an organizing principle for considering human religious and spiritual relationships to nature.
- 2) Choices that privilege "world religions" over forms of religions and spiritualities that are not generally understood in this way, exclude a great deal of human religious perception and practice that is directly relevant to the quest for sustainability and the possibility that "religion" might inspire positive environmental action. This is the case whether these choices are made by conference organizers or scholars.

- 3) There has been significant “greening” of the some of the world’s largest religious traditions, namely, those conventionally labeled “world religions.”
- 4) These trends, while in some cases dramatic and rapidly unfolding, have yet to widely affect environment-related behavior within any faith tradition.
- 5) While there is significant if not yet widespread environmental concern and action emerging from some religious traditions with numerous devotees, there is sufficient evidence available to hypothesize that the most dramatic forms of religion-inspired environmental action may be found among diverse forms or spirituality that consider nature itself to be sacred in some way.
- 6) These types of religion, which I variously call “green” or “nature religions” are increasingly prevalent and influential. Despite dramatic diversity among them, it is possible to spotlight and analyze some of the most prevalent types, and these are as important to study as religious forms that are conventionally understood as “world religions.”
- 7) There is little data on the role that religion plays, positively and negatively, in fostering behaviors that impact the earth’s living systems. Too often, lay people and researchers alike make facile assumptions of close connections between religious beliefs and behaviors, even though the research that has been conducted challenges assumptions of significant, strong correlations, let alone causal links, between religious beliefs and environment-related behaviors.
- 8) This said, ideas for integrating folk and religious knowledge, and related environmental understandings, into contemporary sustainability efforts, have been articulated and deserve exploration. One such approach is called “integrative adaptive management,” which seeks to fuse the knowledge of those both trained and untrained in western scientific methods about the functions of ecosystems, in an on-going, reciprocal learning process, with the goal of maintaining ecosystem services for people as well as biological diversity. As promising as such approaches may be, there is as yet almost no testing of these approaches where religion/spirituality is carefully considered and where religion-experienced researchers are deeply involved.
- 9) There is a dramatic lacuna of information, about the negative and positive roles, extant or potential, of religion/spirituality in environmental change. This is the case from the smallest to the largest scale of environment-related decision making.
- 10) A robust research agenda is imperative if scholars and environmental actors are to discern whether and if so, under what circumstances, religion/spirituality might play a salutary role in promoting environmental sustainability. Such a research agenda must be led by scholars who are methodologically agnostic about the outcomes but are open-minded, if not hopeful, that positive relationships between religion/spirituality and environmentally beneficent behavior might be found.
- 11) Such research requires a multi-year funding commitments and the development of research teams that are collaborative, interdisciplinary, and international.

Each of these points can be elaborated at length. I have explored a number of them in earlier publications. I will spotlight a few of these that seem particularly relevant on this occasion.

## SESSION 2 The relationship between conservation and development: Insights into key development and environment issues

### ***Sangha Raja Bour Krey***

Patriarch of Cambodia

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, allow me to express my deep gratitude to the organizers of this prestigious conference in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, the World Bank, UNDP and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) for their kind invitations. It is a privilege and pleasure for me to address this august assembly.

In the beginning, we believe, human beings lived in harmony with Mother Nature. It provided everything we needed. Then the world evolved, and this wild race towards modernization happened. The good balance of nature has toppled, creating all sorts of natural catastrophes and unprecedented ecological disasters.

And despite the arrival of all sorts of technology at a speed of lightning, many lives today are lives of pain and suffering. Reduction of poverty, protection of the environment, management of natural resources, management of balanced and fair development programmes... These are issues that have never been so important, and that have never been so discussed by leaders all over the world. But are they possible?

I would like to remind you about our own situation, in Cambodia, where because of a terrible, secular ideology that wanted to get rid of all existing balances and harmonies, my country was made to start from nothing. They called it Year Zero.

Today, after decades of war, Cambodian people are trying somehow to rebuild their society, and many have chosen to do so thanks to the Buddha's teachings. Monks and nuns play a primary role in Khmer society, putting themselves at the service of the nation. They have actively participated in the reconstruction of the country on a macro-scale, as well as on the smaller scale - helping the population in their daily life.

But we couldn't have arrived at this point without the help of developed countries – which of course is why we are here in Oslo today. Thanks to the World Bank and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), several local NGOs were able to emerge through the Monastic network. These new organisations have allowed Cambodian people to become aware of the importance of education, protection of the environment, flora and fauna, the problem of deforestation. And most importantly, they enabled Cambodian people to act on these things.

Why the monasteries? Buddhism teaches us that all things are related: the forest provides shelter to wild animals; the wild animals protect the trees against aggression and incursion. Human beings, on their side, should also protect the forest, so that the seasons follow each other in order, thus avoiding climatic disorder.

The great events relating to the existence of Lord Buddha are very eloquent in how they are all bound to nature. Prince Siddhartha was born under a tree in a grove in Lumbini which is now Nepal. He reached Awakening under a Bodhi tree in India, and his first great teaching was given in the deer park at Isipatana. Even his last moment was spent among trees: when the Blessed One lay down peacefully and entered into the state that we call Maha Parinibbana – meaning total Extinction - it was in the forest of Kusinara.

We have a story that when the Buddha was thirsty an elephant brought him water, and when he was hungry a monkey brought him fruits. So for us, animals are lay-Buddhists as well, and we human beings should treat them with respect.

How can Buddhism actively contribute to the safeguarding of nature and the environment?

First, ecologists have said that it is necessary at all costs to preserve flora and fauna, to stop the destruction of the Amazon forest, to put an end to the massacre of whales, to stop nuclear proliferation, etc. In these cases, the ethics and precepts of the Blessed One can be put into practice.

Second, I understand that in some western countries there is a big division between developmentalists and environmentalists. The former often want to build big buildings and construct great roads, and the latter often want to leave nature natural. In Buddhism we don't have such a division. Perhaps we can help other people think more about harmony and balance.

Thirdly, we have ceremonies that touch people's hearts and we can apply those to the environment. In Cambodia we have tree ordination ceremonies to let people know what is happening in the forest. This is something that Buddhists do well, and people come and listen.

We have been fortunate with Cambodia's government today. When we say we want to protect the forest they say OK. We have to write down what we want and fill in all the official forms, but they are happy that monks protect the forest. I hope and pray that this continues.

To conclude, I think if humans respect nature, and if each one puts there a little of his time and energy, then, I believe that the world could live in peace and harmony. And that this peace could be based on respect: respect of identities, respect of civilizations, respect of religions and cultures.

The Lord Buddha always made reference to the individual responsibility of each person. We should endeavour to spread this individual responsibility as a universal responsibility to bequeath the best world to the future generations.

I wish you all good health and a great success in your noble missions.

May all sentient beings live in peace and serenity!

### **Mohamed Hyder**

Professor, Executive Trustee of the Muslim Civic Education Trust (MCET), Kenya:

#### **'Squaring the Circle: Between Development and Conservation'**

Of all the millions of living species none has had the impact on his environment like *Homo sapiens*. From an understandable exploitation of agricultural practice to feed himself, Man has by and large been quite irreverent in his relations with Nature except for the preservation of religious sites. Since Darwin's Voyage of the Beagle, there has been a more global realization that Man has played a direct role in the extinction of a number of species of fauna and flora within the last two hundred years or so contrary to our mistaken belief that extinction is of events long gone and refers only to species that had disappeared long before Man even appeared on the surface of Planet Earth. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, mass productions has always gone with massive environmental damage. As the voice of those who cared for the environment and those that were irreverently changing it, tensions between the two have inevitably grown. Industrialists were pointing to the economic gains of their pursuits while environmentalists were pointing to the desecration of Nature resulting from it. To confound the situation enters a third party: the poor newly-emerging countries that see development (equal industrialization) as the only route to economic prosperity and poverty elimination. Tensions grow even further and the Brundtland doctrine of 'Sustainable Development' seems the perfect answer. But is it?

The battle between two opposing but very unequal forces is still raging. The voice of the Environmentalist has been relatively feeble but it is growing both in volume and influence among the educated peoples of the world. But the richest countries of the world and their Multi-National Corporations (MNC's) measure their success in terms of economic growth and not in terms of restoring harmony with Nature. Between the very rich and the aspiring rich are the very poor peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa who tend to see themselves in the image of the so-called 'developed countries'. They are even suspicious sometimes about the Conservationists who seem to prefer the preservation of fauna and flora at Man's expense. But the picture today is much more complex than we knew only forty to fifty years ago. We have come to understand more about environmental pollution as a global phenomenon and its relationship to the industrial processes and their wastes. We understand the impact of the excessive use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides on the very people we are trying to nourish quite apart from its effects on the original natural residents of the farm areas and hedgerows they were expelled from. We understand about the ozone layer and its protective cover to all living creatures and have learnt to measure its deterioration. We know more about global warming and the impact of fossil fuels on this. Rich countries and their industrial lobbies regard those who point out the apocalyptic impact of such global warming label them Prophets of Doom and find false solace in the last frontier: science and technology will find a solution before disaster sets in. The Brundtland 'Sustainable Development' is supposed to provide a compromise approach to dealing with poverty without swallowing hook, line and sinker the doctrine of development oblivious of the need to restore harmony with Nature in the pursuit of that development.

What is the Islamic perspective in this hot pursuit of development? Islam like other world religions have been systematically marginalized in the quest for development. While a huge network of mosques is inviting us to use them to educate, to mobilize and to unleash young men and women onto their respective societies. There are any number of verses in the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) to support a deep respect for Nature and its conservation. To translate this into an Islamo-friendly set of practices is quite another matter. This is a challenge to Islamic scholars as well as economic developers to chew hard at. We pray hard for their joint success.

### ***Kul C. Gautam***

Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF:

#### **'Partnering with religions to protect the children and the environment as key to sustainable development'**

Excellencies, Venerable Religious Leaders, Distinguished Participants and Friends,

It is an honour to be with you here in the Soria Moria Centre for Sustainability where the Norwegian Government's most recent Declaration on International Policy was promulgated last year. What an inspiring Declaration it is – a testament to Norway's enlightened commitment to human solidarity, multilateralism, and faith in the principles of the United Nations. If all countries of the world made similar commitments, and honoured them, the state of humanity would surely be much better. And we would be living in a world truly fit for our children.

Two decades ago, an International Commission on Environment and Development led by a great leader of this country Gro Harlem Brundtland, defined for us "sustainable development" as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Yet the development patterns we have followed so far have largely failed to achieve the lofty goals outlined by the Brundtland Commission in its memorable report on *Our Common Future*. The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals are our latest attempts to lead us in that direction. And we owe it to our children and their children to ensure that these goals are achieved, sustained and surpassed.

As the world's leading advocate and activist for children, UNICEF's work for the past 60 years has been and continues to be to ensure that children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation are protected at all times. The three focus areas of this conference: Development, Religion and

Environment are all highly relevant for safeguarding children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. And children and young people themselves can be great partners to build a better world which they will inherit from us.

As their core values, all the great religions of the world preach love, peace, solidarity and compassion. Yet, in today's world, far too many crimes are committed, hatred is spread, injustice is justified, and intolerance inculcated often in the name of religion. We also have far too many instances where, instead of teaching children to appreciate and value diversity, children are taught to see their own religion or faith as superior to that of others. Yet in this increasingly materialistic world, the religious and spiritual convictions that we adults inculcate in children should inspire them to adopt an ethical-moral value system in which they learn to appreciate diversity; service and solidarity; peace, tolerance and gender equality; and living in harmony with nature and environment.

Indeed all the major religions of the world also teach us how to live in harmony with nature; and how to enjoy the nature's beauty and bounty without destroying it. Many religions consider nature itself as sacred – its rivers, mountains, lakes and trees as gifts of God to humanity. Yet these gifts are abused and exploited unevenly, and often irresponsibly. In an unequal world, the environmentalists' exhortation for conservation and preservation of nature may sound hollow to the poor who need to eke out a meager living, while the well-to-do continue to squander natural resources to maintain their inflated living standards. A model of development that allows the rich to fill their swimming pools and water their golf courses, but preaches to the poor not to cut trees to meet their essential needs for fuel or fodder is likely to be indefensible.

We the religious leaders and public policy advocates have a major role to bring about a balanced discourse, so that as the Brundtland Commission said, we can pursue development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs. The Millennium declaration and the Millennium Development Goals offer a good, universally agreed roadmap in this context.

Children are not just part of the MDGs, they are at the very heart of MDGs. It is their survival and development in dignity and equality; their education, health and protection from deadly diseases, environmental disasters, and from violence and exploitation; and partnership and solidarity for these that are the highlights of MDGs. To take a specific example, the Millennium Declaration and the Goals recognize the importance of safe drinking water and sanitation to meet these global commitments. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 set the target of halving, by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have sustainable access to basic sanitation. This is now an integral part of Target 10 under Millennium Development Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability: to halve by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Environmental hazards threaten the survival and well-being of children across the globe each and every day. Over 40% of the global burden of disease attributed to environmental factors falls on children below five years of age, who account for only about 10% of the world's population. Environmental risk factors often act in concert, and their effects are exacerbated by adverse social and economic conditions, particularly conflict, poverty and malnutrition. According to the World Health Organization, the proportion of deaths attributable to environmental factors among children between 0 and 14 years of age is as high as 36 per cent. Each year, at least three million children under the age of five die due to environment-related diseases. Inadequate and unsafe water, poor sanitation, and unsafe hygiene practices are the main causes of diarrhoea, which results in nearly two million under-5 child deaths annually. More than 4,000 children die each day as a result of unsafe water for drinking and unsanitary living conditions. The only way to sustainably reduce this massive burden of disease is through the use of safe drinking water, sanitation and improved hygiene practices, in particular hand-washing with soap.

The sacred texts of every major world religion contain not only reverence for water and conservation of natural resources, but also promote ablution rituals. The promotion of sacred ablution rituals of washing hands before prayer, before eating and after using the toilet can reduce the burden of diarrhoeal disease by nearly one third. UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) promotion strategy for the coming ten years, highlights WASH as an important prerequisite for ensuring the right to basic education. Children commonly miss school because they are too busy fetching water or are sick with a water-related disease. Girls – especially older girls who have reached the age of menarche – are often reluctant to stay in school when toilet and washing facilities lack privacy, are unsafe or are non-existent.



Even when children are in school, they are often not meeting their learning potential due to ill health and inconvenience caused by helminth infections and diarrhoea. Programmes that combine improved sanitation and hand-washing facilities in schools with hygiene education can improve the health of children for life. Where properly integrated into wider community initiatives, school-based programmes also promote positive change in communities as a whole. Bhutan offers a good example of UNICEF partnering with the government and religious leaders to address critical environmental issues.

The "Religion and Health Project" conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the National Council of Religious Affairs, helps improve the health situation of the child monks through a programme of upgrading water, sanitation and hygienic practices in monasteries. About 1,800 child monks and 1,200 adult monks in more than 30 monasteries have benefited from this project.

In forty-years of water and sanitation work in the field in 91 countries, UNICEF has learned some valuable lessons, including the fact that sustainable service delivery depends on decentralized authority; public and private sector resources and expertise, with adequate central support; and empowered communities making well-informed choices in technical, management and financial options.

In war-torn Somalia, UNICEF is working in partnership with nearly 200 mosques to pilot an approach which has been successfully implemented in other Islamic societies whereby water, environment and sanitation management committees are established through the local mosque. These gender-balanced committees are formed and trained in financial management, operational maintenance and social mobilization on hygiene and sanitation. Income generated from the water point is reinvested in the water supply system to ensure its continued operation.

UNICEF has a long history of working with religious communities across the globe. Their moral authority and their vast constituencies make them uniquely powerful allies for children. Worldwide, UNICEF and religious groups work together on a wide range of programmes for children in areas such as education, environment, child protection and health care. This past August, UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Ann M. Veneman, joined religious leaders from countries around the globe gathered in Kyoto, Japan for the Eighth World Assembly of Religions for Peace. Ms. Veneman called for greater cooperation among religions to protect children from the threats of poverty, disease and violence. "Too many members of the human family do not share in the benefits of real and lasting peace", she said, "the conflicts that rage around the world are ever-present reminders of what divides humanity. But there is so much more that unites us, including concern for the survival and well-being of children."

Let me share with you a couple of examples of outstanding work done by faith based organizations in support of child survival and development: In several countries of the Mekong Delta region in Asia, including Cambodia, Southern China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, UNICEF has been working with the *Sangha Metta* or "Compassionate Monks" project to combat HIV/AIDS. This project involves Buddhist monks and temples in the prevention and care of people suffering from HIV/AIDS.

The idea and initiative came from the Buddhist monks themselves, who apply Lord Buddha's teachings to show compassion for the needy and the vulnerable as their inspiration. As the monks go to villages to beg for alms, or as they preach at their temples, they teach villagers how to avoid high-risk behaviour, help to set up support groups, train people with HIV/AIDS in handicrafts, donate their alms and take care of AIDS orphans. Because people are accustomed to telling monks their troubles, these monks have become a conduit for identifying many HIV-positive people who then can be referred to support groups and public assistance.

In Cambodia, for example, UNICEF has been working very closely with monks, nuns and local elders for the prevention and care of HIV/AIDS during the last six years. They have been trained to minimise discrimination and stigmatization of young people living with HIV/AIDS and to provide psychosocial support at the community level.

Recently, this established collaborative mechanism was rapidly extended to deal with an urgent topic - avian influenza. UNICEF was able to tap into the extensive network of religious and community leaders already involved in HIV care and support activities to rapidly disseminate avian influenza-related messages.

More than 5,000 monks and nuns from 2,500 pagodas were oriented on key information and practices to prevent infection with avian and human influenza between September and October 2006. There are many examples of Christian missionaries performing similar tasks in Africa. With the catastrophe of HIV/AIDS decimating whole societies, faith based organizations have become the key providers of services to assist people with HIV/AIDS, including AIDS orphans in Africa.

In another example, this one from the Islamic tradition, a group of religious leaders from 16 countries in Africa are working to counter violence against girls and women, with special focus on the cruel practice of female genital mutilation, or FGM. The initiative, organized by the InterAfrica Committee on Traditional Practices, includes messages from Islamic scholars from Egypt and Senegal that FGM is not based on religious injunction but on customary practice, which can and ought to be changed.

There are many other global initiatives, such as the push to eradicate polio, which have benefited tremendously from social mobilisation activities at community level. I recall in the mid-1980s UNICEF worked with the Catholic Church in El Salvador, where together we were able to stop the civil war for a few days each year to allow children on both sides of the conflict to be vaccinated. Indeed all over Latin America, the Christian Churches played an instrumental role in promoting National Immunisation Days working closely with Governments, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

UNICEF has made a commitment to support children and young people's rights both in their local communities, at schools and in non-formal educational venues, as well as in global advocacy opportunities such as at the first and second Children's World Water Forums, and even at the G-8 Summit of the world's most powerful leaders, as we did at the St. Petersburg this year and we expect to do in Germany next year.

One such event, which I was honored to attend two years ago in Mongolia, the National Summit on Children focused on harnessing the contribution of Mongolia's children in achieving the MDGs, a truly memorable and meaningful event.

Children and adolescents naturally, have a stake in sustainable development. Their survival, protection and development depend on it. With today's knowledge about the special susceptibility of children to environmental risks, action needs to be taken to allow them to grow up and develop in good health, as well as to support their efforts to participate in plans and actions that affect their lives. So often, children are the forgotten victims of our failure to provide basic life-saving services to all of our fellow citizens. But we, governments, international organizations, religious leaders, donors and decision makers, must not forget them. Indeed, there is much we can learn from them and we have a long way to go to keep our Millennium promise to reduce their suffering and cut the proportion of people in poverty by half by 2015. Let's remember 400 million children going to bed tonight without having touched a drop of safe water all day. Let's remember the 4000 children who died today because of that deprivation.

Religious leaders are by nature expert communicators, opinion leaders and social mobilisers, accustomed to translating complex texts into understandable messages. We look to you to help convey the key messages of the WFFC, CRC and the MDGs in a language more readily understandable to ordinary people, including children. For, to quote a great religious leader of our times - the late Martin Luther King Jr. - "There is no deficit in human resources; the deficit is in human will."

As one of the religious leaders attending the 2002 UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children said, "Every child is a gift from God, and every child has a touch of divinity".

There is no nobler task for those of us working to secure God's blessings for humanity than to work for the wellbeing of children, who, as another religious leader reminded us at the Special session, are "the harbingers of the future, the joy of the present and a reminder of our past".

Let us invoke all of our best religious and spiritual traditions to promote sustainable development and to protect the environment for our future generation.

Thank you.

## **Marja-Liisa Swantz**

Professor Emerita, University of Helsinki, Finland:  
**'Religion, Gender and Development'**

### **Introductory thoughts**

I have worked over fifty years closely with grassroots engaged in participatory research and practice and as a development critic and practitioner, mostly in Tanzania. I started by teaching the first generation of certified women teachers on Mt. Kilimanjaro, did five years participatory village research on the coast and then have developed and practiced Participatory Action Research with colleagues and villagers in various parts of the country. My present involvement is within North-South local government co-operation between a Finnish municipality and a Tanzanian district.

In my intervention I relate first to such African traditional form of life, which respected life and helped to conserve plants and forests, and in particular women's part in it. I go on to discuss the women's dilemma in more generalized terms and end relating thoughts to institutionalized Christian religion.

I have followed development from bottom up in areas, which in statistical terms have been listed as the poorest and most backward in Tanzania. From that perspective the terminology and theory of sustainable development looks very different from the prevailing economic view to development. I argue that women's view to their own life situation does not fit into the policies and strategies promoted for those who in statistical terms are counted poor, nor even into the vocabulary of poverty reduction.

Tanzanian women as a category are not the poorest of the poor even if we recognise that the number of wealthy women is small. The educated women's situation has changed radically in 50 years. At the time of independence there were no women with an academic degree, yet today 45 years later six women are government ministers and the President of the African Union Parliament is a Tanzanian woman. Women have long had posts as Principle Secretaries in the Government Ministries, they head several of the important government offices and are professors in the universities. A woman professor is also the Director of the Institute of Development Studies. In terms of education Tanzania has made great advancements.

The Millennium Development Goals promise poverty reduction and for women promotion of their rights. The way the economy of communities living on one dollar a day is conceived and measured does not fit the reality of those communities. We face the same problem also when the external environmentalists meet the common villagers. The *built-in contradictions* hinder true uplifting of the world's population, whether they are contradictions of belief, knowledge or economy. Common people's *knowledge and wisdom are by-passed* and *the way domestic economy works is ignored*. The systems and structures, to which the bureaucratic officialdom and scientific methodology are bound, lack tools, time and willingness to penetrate into the reality of people.

### **Learning from traditions and history**

I relate the issue first briefly to women's role in traditional society and ask whether it is conceivable that people can fetch ideas and relate to practices from the disappearing traditions. As the writers of the book *Making of Tradition* show, traditions even in Europe have been discovered and revived conveniently to strengthen national identity and even commerce. (Ranger, T. & E. Hobsbaum) There are signs that this is beginning to happen also in Africa.<sup>8</sup>

In the Tanzanian coastal societies maturing girls were secluded for long periods of time. The practice still continues in some form but the universal primary education has brought it into conflict. Both boys' and girls' rituals had aspects, which related to our topic. Rituals symbolised regeneration, passage through death to life. Much of the symbolism was derived from nature, plants, animals and insects, which were used as metaphors, showed people's close knowledge of their qualities and living habits. Rubbish was swept on to the edges of dwellings where it decomposed and regenerated, there also medicine men and women were initiated gaining regenerating power. With the coming of dead substances, tins and plastics, the process of regeneration died and people were at a loss to know what to do with them..

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<sup>8</sup> One must hope that this trend is not commercialized. The development of museums and the Department of Antiquities have been placed under the Ministry of Tourism.

The Zaramo myths of origin related to the maturing girls included that of the proto woman Nyalutanga who had discovered the domestic plants and taught her husband their use. She found and prepared each one in turn and gave it to her husband to eat and they became as items of food. Thus women originated cultivation. Contrary to it, forests were men's feared sphere, their hunting grounds, into which women did not in general enter.

Before adopting *jando* circumcision ritual with Islam the Zaramo boys spent nine months in the bush. They learned the living habits of mammals, reptiles and birds as well as qualities of trees and plants. Little boys in Msoga village had still amazing knowledge of birds and plants in mid 1970s as my biologist colleague had an occasion to verify. The participatory appraisals in southern Tanzania also showed the villagers' keen knowledge of their environment.

The initiation rituals continue to be performed in the coastal areas in changing forms. In them selected trees and plants have specific powers and qualities. Each tribal group has its own symbolic tree to which the youth are bound. The gate to the circumcision camp of the boys was tied with branches from symbolic trees and the hardness of certain wood was used to signify the male qualities taught to boys. The most significant ritual of girls was performed *mkoleni*, at the mkole tree, in which white flowers turned to red fruits and became eventually black symbolizing the physiology of woman. (Swantz M-L. 1970/85)

Studies have been made of medicine plants used as traditional medicine (e.g. Raimo Harjula's study of a Meru herbalist) and an institute for the study of the medicinal qualities of herbs was established in the Medical Faculty of the University of Dar es Salaam, but little cultural knowledge of the way people made use of them was connected with it. It is not too late to benefit from such knowledge since the mere demonstration that the value of such plants and trees is appreciated would assist in conservation.

The Tanzanian Forest Research Institute TAFORI has been involved in documenting remnants of sacred forests, which people have preserved or the tradition of which is still alive. A doctoral dissertation was lately published on Sacred Forests in two parts of Tanzania indicating that they still have significance. (Ylhäissi, J, 2006) In my own research with coastal medicine men I went with a *mganga* to a forest when he collected his specific medicines. The way he approached the tree and plants of healing qualities impressed me. He first circled the tree three times, then knelt, talked to the plant as to a living being and told for whom and for what purpose he needed the roots or the leaves he was taking.

Sacred forests consist of individual trees, clusters of trees, woods, at times areas of hundreds of acres which connect people with their past traditions in one way or another. The trees and forests are used for making offerings, they are believed to be dwelling places of specific spirits or they are feared for specific reasons. On Kilimanjaro slopes trees were planted where the skulls of family heads were buried, among the Kwere a tree is planted where an umbilical cord of a child born is buried, making it the place of origin for the person, *kitovuni*. The dead might have been buried in specific grounds, which are connected with forebears and the place is used for family meals at certain memorial times also among the Christians in Kilimanjaro. A field grown into a forest on the slopes of North Pare mountains was never touched, as a parent had cursed it at death because of the son's neglect of her. Mother's curse is especially powerful.

In several cases when local people have expressed the need to preserve a part of a forest or specific trees such requests have been respected. In Kawe suburb of Dar es Salaam a patch of land had been left untouched and its traditional guardian had a story to tell why. All who had tried to build on it, Europeans included, had died in a few months. When such a guardian of knowledge dies the belief connected with the rationale for protection might not be carried on. I do not find the patch of woods in Kawe any longer. In the middle of the Mbegani Fisheries Training Centre, built and initially run by the Norwegians, there is a small wood close to the main office. It had been left untouched for the respect of the local people whose sacrificial place it was. Whether the people who related to it were able to come through the netted wall of the campus was a question to which I got no answer.

At the time of villagization people were moved with little or no regard to their customs. There were exceptions. A road in Bagamoyo District was made to circle around the area of a sacrificial tree. In this case the place sacred for the people was respected. Nearer to coast, where people had planted coconut trees, people were moved away from their trees and they often came to live under someone else's trees. Even then, they continued to recognize the ownership of the trees separate from the land but they were an obvious cause for later quarrels.

These are isolated cases in which by some chance the past has been respected. Conscious protection of quickly disappearing forests around concentrations of population has required specific measures. It is obvious that a clash of cultures has affected the traditionally guarded areas. Development agents have been unaware of the positive side of traditions, and young people who are caught with the attractions of modern life are quick to reject what to them looks old-fashioned and ancient. Whether development is conceived as modernization or brought about by change of religion the first educated generation wants to make a full about turn. The third generation might be ready to reconsider and begin to find some treasures in the lost traditions. The problem is that any research, which would have genuinely recognized the people themselves as owners of past knowledge, has been very slow in coming.

### **Women's domestic economy**

The second thing I take up is the women's economy.

*Market economy dominates development* everywhere. With it follows the sole emphasis on cash crops and the dependence on fluctuating prices forcing changes in production patterns. The trend makes any resistance to it sound conservative, simplistic, belonging to the past mode of production. When companies become big trans-nationals outside of any state or local government control they operate with their own rules with pretence of highest profit calculations. In EU the politics of centralization is supposedly balanced with the subsidiary principle to strengthen the local government and even international co-operation between local communities across the continents. Some project funds soothe the minds both in the North and South to keep people active. The allocations for projects hardly counteract common people's loss of power in their fight against prevailing expert knowledge and calculations solely based on market figures.

The statistics evidence that while the world is wealthier than ever before the number of the poor grows everywhere, also in industrial countries. *What exactly in this situation means reduction of poverty?*

To counteract the pursuit for wealth poverty reduction permeates today's development discourse and *women become prime targets*. The poor subdue to the outsiders' view of themselves as poor in need of help in hope that some good is in it for them. Instead of identifying *women as prime actors and active contributors* they are made targets.

Poverty is indeed a central problem in today's world, and people deserve better life, but *poverty as the characterising epithet* of two thirds of the world *is offensive to them* and being labelled poor robs people of their self-confidence. *Many people with scarce resources feel that they live more satisfactory, mutually caring life than the wealthy but dissatisfied people of the rich world*. Furthermore, an increasing number of the world's wealthiest individuals live in the countries called poor.

*The concepts of who are poor also vary*. The male assistant of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tanzania, took me to my former research villages from 30 years ago, among them today's President's home village. I saw little change since our time of study but my host did not think that people there were poor. In his view the women had their children, they grew their food, they had their houses and water, and there were some shops for buying goods. He could have added that their social life, celebrations and rituals enlivened their lives.

Different cultures' *views about satisfactory life vary*. The show of wealth today in many Asian cities bypasses any present or future show of wealth in countries like Finland, a country of unassuming, low-key people, where the custom is not to brag with wealth. A Nepalese student of development studies visiting my home made the discovery that development did not need to mean luxury or a modern house. He could identify our renovated grey log houses as development, "Just what we have at home", he put his thoughts into words.

In the economic language poverty is measured by counting the value of the marketable produce in ratio to population. *Women's domestic work and much of their productive work remains unaccounted for*. Informal calculations evidence that it even surpasses the official GDP figures.<sup>9</sup> Rural people still live largely in subsistence economy and informal economy is the rule. In a country like Tanzania most production of

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<sup>9</sup> I refer to the calculations and the writings of Hilikka Pietilä on the subject.

food as the work of women remains outside the official market figures. A Kenyan economist professor G. Mwabu, who worked in WIDER in the 1990s, calculated that only 10 per cent of the agricultural production in Kenya was included in the official production figures.

In 1990s I studied the way the agricultural and fisheries' statistics were collected in southern Tanzania. The one square meter in the middle of a field in selected farms, the produce of which the farmers were asked to measure, hardly could give a picture of the production, especially as only some crops were included. Women as the actual producers were not included in this exercise. People had fought with the agriculturalist experts for the right to plant several species in one field to have crops mature in different times for food security. The insistence of experts to plant single crops in rows often prevailed and the order to plant an acre of cassava as a hunger plant meant at times that the best fields, which were needed for millet or maize, grew cassava to avoid the fine. The agricultural officers' gave standard advice, if at all, going mainly to the farms of people who paid for their services, and even then seldom dealt with women. The retraining of the government officers in good practices using a participatory approach is a pressing need.

Women's strength is in their capacity *to manage many chores and responsibilities at one time* and to be able to shift from one activity to another if one fails. The forbidden child labour does not concern domestic household or farm work, but long school hours inefficiently spent in Tanzanian schools contradict with the help that children could offer at home. The less children are able or expected to share work at home the wider the gap between the parents and children grow. This is a problem especially in areas or homes in which the first generations of youth go to school. The parents conceive that the Government has taken the responsibility of bringing up their children. When they finish school a phrase used indicates that the government now returns them to the parents. Their integration back to home community has been problematic and caused *fleeing to towns and cities*. The youth are not allocated own land, or the land available is in a distance from village centres. The elderly women are left to do most of the agricultural work.

In fishing communities in southern Tanzania such youth started dynamite fishing, which became a real hazard. Participatory work with the fishermen, who joined in a fishermen's union from Kilwa down to Mozambique border, was successful in stopping it. Women joined to defend their way of fishing when such youth started fishing in their waters. Fisherwomen joined together under the leadership a powerful Mwanashulu to defend their waters. The destruction does not in general come from the communities practicing their trade. It comes from disturbances the cause of which needs to be clarified rather than accusing communities as such as so often is the case by environmentalists.

Such was a case in Mnima in southern Tanzania where the Makonde plateau edges showed signs of breaking off. Villagers' fields were banned as areas of cultivation, but no provisions were made instead. On the other side of the village there was a large forest reserve area within the borders of which cultivation was forbidden. Women found that a large part of the reserve area had no trees and they started cultivating there. In a participatory session people were hashing the problem with the officers. It was an obvious case in which the women's potential for growing crops was not considered when orders were given. There was no reason apart from the border drawn by distant experts why the area of cultivation could not have been extended.

I came across a similar case nearer to coast where the environmentalists had camped to fight the village women who were starting to cut the protected forest. It was again a case in which outsiders lacked understanding of the situation of the villagers and to which a solution could have been found, if the environmentalists would have had a common language with the people in more sense than one. Even with an interpreter the conservationists should have changed their attitude that the women did not understand the importance of protecting the forest.

*Women manage their economy by forming groups to help each other.* The important finding in research was that rural women in southern Tanzania worked in groups rather than individually, while the men did not form groups. Women could trust each other, men less seldom. Women belong to the same age group, go to the same mother child clinics, they have been initiated together or they find likeminded neighbours. In southern Tanzania women owned goats together as a group so that their men could not decide to butcher a wife's goat. Women form traditional savings groups in which women of approximately same level come together. Each puts the agreed sum of money to a fund on an appointed day and select one as the treasurer. In this way each one in turn gets a bigger sum for a better roof, payment for a

school uniform or whatever her need is. The amount depends on the wealth of the women. Market women in northern Tanzania organise informally taking turns in going to sell to markets in some distance while some stay home to take care of their children. The women help each other in numerous informal ways and make it possible to manage with scarce resources. Women in groups could keep their personal right to the produce and control their own income themselves and not together with husbands. Women's differing ways to earn and to keep their earnings need to be known if women are assisted in lifting up their families from poverty. Also the ways in which the earnings of women are cheated from them need to be known. I found that village women pay much larger total sum than men in their market stands for market fees. Women pay each time when they set their small products in front of their houses or in rows at the roadsides while men in their market stands pay a fee once a year.

In such things women leaders of *the churches could potentially be of great help*. In doing research in Kilimanjaro we found that women who had been together to confirmation classes, had gone to maternity clinics or taken their children to clinic at the same time, had formed their own groups. On the other hand we also found that some next house neighbour women did not fit into any of the groups if they were unable to contribute their share because of many children and lack of support from the husband. They dropped out of the social support system and required special attention, which the church members or workers could give, when they became aware of the need.

In areas where the Christian family spirit prevails there is some sharing of work between the husband and wife but even then fathers and husbands need to be reminded of their shared family responsibilities in special meetings. In patrilineal societies, in which inheritance goes to males, enlightened fathers have been found to bequeath land to girls for personal possession. An enlightened Christian husband had taken precautions before he died leaving his wife with nine children, the youngest not yet two years, by making a testament, which left all the property they had together built up to the wife and family. Otherwise the husband's brothers would have taken it. The Churches are indeed negotiation parties in the uplifting of women, but often the negotiations have had to be carried out with women separately as well as with councils of both parties. The churches have not succeeded to overrule the male domination, but awareness among women is high and they are open to be approached as groups. The Aids/HIV situation has challenged and activated the churches in a special way.

In today's Tanzania the women's right to the means of production is not a straightforward matter. Traditional, religious or new state laws are used with convenience. I have come across many women who have individual rights to trees and land, while on the other hand others have lost even the property that by their right of inheritance belonged to them. The southern and eastern groups are traditionally matrilineal which gave women the right to their lineage land. The villagization created new villages and enlarged the old ones robbing at times women of ownership of their traditional land. Fortunately many households were at the time headed by women without husbands and thus the land allotted to them around the house was given in their name, but often the matrilineal rights were not respected or are now contested anew. These are issues in which women need support and in such a matter the churches need new awareness of the situation.

The main problem is that in the male dominated society *development and government agents tend to take all the issues first to men* who dominate committees. In planning sessions, special attention need to be paid constantly that women are well represented and given a voice. *In all the churches there are women leaders* and women are used to making their voices heard politely if given a chance. But women do not transgress the rules of good conduct and speak out if not given a voice.

### **Knowledge gap**

The problem of organized development projects is that they seldom meet the acute needs of women. Women agree to what the development agents offer and organize. There hardly ever is enough time or the means available to find out the women's actual situation. Consequently the project works while supported, after it ends women are left to find their way as before, at best with a few improvements.

With the bureaucratic paper work, endless plans, reports, assessments and appraisals it is almost impossible to take the people's actual living conditions as a starting point in development assistance. We promote partnerships and two-way planning, yet forever we outsiders tend to know better rather than what the actual situation demands. For this reason the main problem the outsiders as well as the national governments face is *to let the common people think and act and do their work listening carefully and*

*allowing initiatives to be born.* The problem is, however, that the pattern of cooperation has been established and it is difficult for either side to get out of it.

Whether the development agents fail to understand the women's actual situation or whether the fault is in the bureaucratic and unfitting institutional ways of operating the cure, more participation of the "targets", is the same. *Participation* has indeed become the slogan in development industry, but putting it into practice and integrating it into the local governing systems has not been easy. Both the way research is in general performed, statistics collected, assistance is organized and the civil servants are trained the key problem remains to be the distance between operators and common citizens. *In practice* people continue to be taken as *objects* and they are even called *targets* rather than *subjects* and *authors* and *actors* in the process of research and development. *The distance is growing between the decision makers and common people* also in a country like Finland. It is even bigger in countries in which less information is available about the social and economic conditions on the ground.

The problem is the *gap between the expert bureaucratic knowledge and the practical knowledge of common people*, which is not taken seriously. In the past the gap was between the social classes, today the gap exists between the knowledge systems. The elitist expert knowledge distances educated people from the commoners whose *knowledge is well adjusted to practical life* even if less analyzed in theory. The way that research or administrative operations are organized does not allow the needed time for the meeting of the two separate spheres of life nor does it take seriously common people's knowledge. Research creates more or less sophisticated surveys and draws conclusions from research results at times reached in other parts of the world. Furthermore, research results serve the research communities but seldom truly benefit the practice. *Participatory Action Research* is practiced to solve this problem, but the present day *research and planning structures do not allow the time* for it to be carried through.

The knowledge gap is particularly wide between the women who do the actual productive agricultural work and the agriculturalist experts who continue to be men. Cash economy has made all the advisory work to be depended on per diem payments. The officers trained to be advisors move only when they are paid either by customers, donors or the government. *The government workers have been customized by the aid organizations to move only when paid.*

### **Advantage of religious organizations**

This is where *the religious organizations* on the ground, of which I know the churches best, *have the advantage*, which hardly any other organizations have. People in local congregations form a community, know each other and are used to working together without payments or receiving sitting allowances for attending teaching sessions. They do so though if they are approached with a *project terminology!* This means that the work has to be part of the regular work of the congregation, *not separate externally paid project.* For a long time the development agencies treated the churches as any external voluntary organizations, NGOs. The agents have dealt with mission organs and not directly with the churches or local congregational groups. In many places the congregations form a well-knit local community, which acts on the ground, not from above. A congregation can be communicated with similarly as the World Bank agent TASAF, some NGOs and even local government in Tanzania have communicated with people using PRA, participatory rural appraisal, with villagers. The churches have their head offices for easy communication.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania has a special office for development and officers specializing on development, which might no longer be able to avoid the project language. In the Nordic countries, in which according to the Lutheran theology education and health services are the duty of secular governments, the existence of separate church institutions is not commonplace as it is in Catholic countries. In Tanzania some bigger institutions, which were transferred to the state, have been returned to the church for funding and administration. The forty decades old Tanzanian Christian Refugee Service, which used to operate under the World Council of Churches, is a good example of development work with great success in activating local development. Its success deserves a study.

The aid organizations have not in general cooperated with the local churches on the ground for a fear of favouring one church or religion against another. In this way development is separated from the heartstrings of people and removed away from their everyday life to a project administered by *ad hoc* organs. Women's groups in churches might have spiritual content in their meetings, not dealing with development issues as such, but there is no reason why they would not become active in their own development if approached in that way.



The churches in Africa could potentially serve as the alternative channels for development and be channels for training and funds, but women and youth would have to have their representatives as part of the planning and implementation from the start. The people on the ground should be more informed what potential assistance is available, where it comes from and for what purpose. There are many examples of project work in which women were elected as treasurers because women were found to be trustworthy, if well informed. However, the art of making the work people's own and not dependent on expectations for funds from far is the secret of all

I have worked with communities in which women are supposed to be withdrawing and quiet – and indeed ignorant. It is a myth that men like to perpetuate, because women tend to withdraw where men speak for them. Working with the Maasai, women had to meet separately because women were not supposed to be present where men ate meat. The same Maasai have now changed and the women's progress is fast. The prejudices between ethnic groups are at times found to be greater than between foreigners and such groups as the Maasai. The need to learn each other's cultural peculiarities is as necessary between ethnic groups within countries than between foreigners and them, not to speak about caste differences.

*In closing,*

I would like to claim that in Africa as in many other parts of the world the development work was started through mission organizations. I worked first serving the Tanzanian church being paid by what was a development organization of the Church. Missions were engaged in education, health, agriculture, literacy etc. The achievements were remarkable. It would be worth a historical study from the viewpoint of its development methods and approaches. What was the crucial difference why the work had permanence and why again today the Government of Tanzania, which first nationalized all the education and health institutions, have returned some of them to churches and have given its full recognition of the quality of and at times its co-operation with church institutions.

As far as the expatriates are concerned engaged in development, a basic fact in the mission service was first learning the local language and getting to know people as friends. Another aspect was devotion to service. With the modern life style people are encouraged to look for opportunities abroad for their careers rather than to devote themselves for service. If the church organizations have anything to give it should be this kind of devotion.

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## **Øyvind Dahl**

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### **'From Green to Red and From Red to Green? Christian Education at the Service of Environment. A Case Study from Madagascar'**

#### **The Green Island**

When the first human immigrants came to Madagascar about 1400 years ago, the island was an untouched natural paradise. It slid out from Africa perhaps 175 million years ago. The separation had as a consequence that unique species developed that do not exist elsewhere in the world. None of the African predators followed on the voyage. Therefore about 80 percent of Madagascar's plants and animals are endemic, that is, they evolved on the island and existing only there on the whole earth.<sup>10</sup> There are about 8,000 species of flowering plants, including up to 1,000 native orchids. Six whole plant families have evolved on Madagascar. There are 150 species of frogs, all endemic, some 300 species of reptiles, 90 percent endemic, the most known are the turtles and chameleons. All Madagascar's 50 chameleons are endemic – two thirds of the chameleons in the world. There are 250 breeding birds, half of them endemic. Virtually all the hundred kinds of mammals are unique, except for bats, which like the birds, may fly in and out to Africa. Only on Madagascar have the lemurs been free to grow large and diurnal and to live in families and social bands without interference from monkeys. Madagascar lemurs now form some 50 species. About 15 are extinct. They range from the mouse lemur, small enough to sit on your thumb, to the indri, which has the size of a dog. New species of Malagasy flora and fauna are still discovered every year as more and more scientists explore the forests.

Before the arrival of human beings most of the island was covered with green rainforests. In the dry spiny forest in the south of Madagascar 95 percent of all plants are endemic. Cactus like huge fingers seven meters high or octopus trees silhouette against the sky. Seven species of baobab trees are native to Madagascar, while all of Africa boasts only a single species.

#### **The Red Island**

Madagascar was the green island for thousands of years. The arrival of austronesian speaking peoples from Indonesia in Southeast Asia about AD 600, has dramatically changed the picture. If you fly into Madagascar, you will see the Betsiboka River haemorrhaging red earth into the cobalt sea. Your plane lowers slowly over bare savannas, slashed by the red gullies called *lavaka*. In the beginning of last century, the geographer Gautier described the island as having "colour, consistence and fertility as a brick". Madagascar has become the red island.

Over the past 30 years, Madagascar is among the world's poorest countries, and among the countries with one of the world's highest average population growth rate. The population of 7.9 million in 1975 has increased to 18.6 million in 2006 and is expected to reach 23.8 million in 2015 – a threefold increase during a period of 40 years. The exploding population's day to day survival is dependent upon natural resource use. Their poverty costs the country and the world through the loss of the island's endemic biodiversity. Madagascar's major environmental problems include<sup>11</sup>:

1. Deforestation and habitat destruction
2. Bush fires
3. Erosion and soil degradation
4. Overexploitation of living resources
5. Introduction of alien species

Deforestation is largely the result of slash-and-burn agriculture and pastoral fires. Every year as much as a third of Madagascar burns. At the end of the dry season huge areas especially in the southern and western part of the island is covered with smoke, being turned to ash desert. The fires are mostly set for

<sup>10</sup> These informations are from Jolly, Alison : *The Naturalist's Promised Land*, in Lanting, Frans (1990): *A World out of Time. Madagascar*. Metuchen New Jersey: Aperture.

<sup>11</sup> According to WILDMADAGASCAR.org.

land-clearing and to accelerate the new vegetation period, but also of traditional reason without reasonable objectives. The annual burning over long time has caused a dramatic degradation of wide areas: loss of fertility, tremendous erosion problems, fall of ground-water level, inundation of agricultural land getting choked up with sand etc. The pastoral fires are one of Madagascar's biggest ecological problems and a main reason for increasing poverty of the rural population. "The forest disappears as you watch it," says the American natural scientist Allison Jolly. Massive deforestation has taken place since the 1970s also accelerated by logging for timber, charcoal production and fuel wood collection. The deforestation has reduced Madagascar's forests from 20 million to 9 million hectares<sup>12</sup>. Only a fragment of the island's original forest cover remains and over 300 species of its plants and animals are threatened with extinction. With rivers running blood red and staining the surrounding Indian Ocean, astronauts have remarked that it looks like Madagascar is bleeding to death.

Madagascar is a country with agricultural vocation, like the majority of the developing countries. Agriculture constitutes one of the dominant activities, and the agro-alimentary sector represents half of the national production. The waste of natural resources and destroying of unique ecosystems by non-sustainable resource administration is a serious problem for the development of the country.

Madagascar belongs to the group of "Least developed Countries" with a Human Development Index (HDI) below 0.500 for several years.<sup>13</sup> The HDI combines measures of life expectancy, school enrolment, literacy and income. In spite of poverty and economical decline during many years the country has a potential for coming out of despair. The island is rich of natural resources, there are good conditions for agriculture, the population is rather homogeneous and there are no serious ethnical or social conflicts. Gender disparity is lower than in many other developing countries – and the actual political situation seems to be characterized by stability and there are serious attempts to achieve good governance since president Marc Ravalomanana came into power in 2002. During the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa in 2003, President Ravalomanana highlighted the key roles of international conventions in Madagascar's environmental action plans and promised to increase the protected areas in Madagascar in the years to come.

### **Return to Green?**

Fortunately there are big variations. Madagascar has benefited from a 15 year World Bank sponsored environmental program<sup>14</sup> with the goal to save biodiversity. Natural parks have been arranged for where authorities try to conserve the flora and fauna. Ecotourism has become a source of income. Tourism is now the most important source of foreign currency. The conservationist policy of the government tries to turn part of the income into development projects for the people who inhabit the forests. Some of the income from ecotourism is used to build public schools, health care centres, and facilities for the population. The idea is that when people benefit from the natural resources they also see the necessity of conservation. The national objective for the national efforts is to "reconcile the Malagasy people with its environment".<sup>15</sup> It is not possible to develop further the *Plan d'Action Environnemental* (PAE) here.<sup>16</sup> I shall turn to the case of the Malagasy Lutheran Church and its effort to establish "green schools".

The Malagasy Lutheran Church – Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (FLM) is a result of Norwegian, American, French and lately Danish missionary efforts. The first Norwegian missionaries started the work in 1867 – 140 years ago. The church now has about 2.5 million members of a total population of 18 million. The church is autonomous and locally administrated, and the shrinking number of missionaries now only play the role of specialized support. Since the very beginning education has been an integrated part of the outreach of the church. In the policy statement of the Church it is said: "Evangelical and diaconal actions are interdependent and there is a strong relationship between testimony through actions and words. Christians have a special responsibility for good deeds because they are all brothers and sisters created by the same God who has given them this earth as a common heritage for all peoples and

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<sup>12</sup> UNESCO: World Heritage News 2005

<sup>13</sup> UNDP: Human Development Index

<sup>14</sup> Plan d'Action Environnemental with three phases : PE 1, PE 2 et PE 3. The program started in 1990 with duration of 15 years. In 2004 started the third phase of the Environment Action Plan PE 3 with duration of new five years. One of the goals is to "reconcile Man and his environment so that the present generation and those to come can live in total harmony."

<sup>15</sup> Office National d'Environnement (ONE), Madagascar.

<sup>16</sup> Consult Office National d'Environnement (ONE), Madagascar.

creatures.”<sup>17</sup> The developmental work of the FLM is now organized in five departments: health, education, economic, social and cultural development, specialized education and promotion of deaf and blind, and information and communication. The diaconal mission of the Church is fundamentally integrated into the total mission of the church.

The newly introduced “Green Education Program in Madagascar”(ProVert) is a program established to co-ordinate projects related to “Green Education” in the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM). The program shall “contribute to an improvement of the living conditions of the Malagasy people and, on the basis of locally based, sustainable development processes and a special focus on education, environment and human rights, promote the achievement of the Millennium Goals of Development. There will be a special focus on achieving education for all, sustainable development and reduction of poverty.”<sup>18</sup>

The “Green Education Program” combines theoretical learning with practical ways of living in a modern pedagogical conception, and reconciles economic development with sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment. Furthermore, the program, based on Christian conception of man, focuses on the protection of human dignity, the rights and the needs of the children, the civil society and good government, the empowerment of women and the special promotion of marginalised groups and areas.<sup>19</sup>

The Green Education Program in FLM is based on the Christian conception of man. Man is, according to this conception, created in the image of God and therefore has a unique value and inviolable rights. “Man has a responsibility to administer God’s creation for the benefit of the community.”<sup>20</sup> The policy document for the development sector of FLM states: “Man consists of spirit, soul and body. This holistic approach is the foundation for all activities in FLM. To contribute to better living is therefore also an important matter for the church. This concerns opportunities for education, better health, and development in the economic sector. [...] In FLM, we will underline the responsibility for every member of our church and every citizen in our country, through cooperation with others, to use their capacity and resources to make better life for themselves, their family and the community. This is the most important source for economic development. In a way, development is no assistance. FLM, which has a trusted position in the society, has a special responsibility to encourage and to support initiatives from the grassroots.”<sup>21</sup>

The ProVert program will, based on its Christian set of values, emphasize the protection of:

- Human dignity – especially that of vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Community – the significance of interaction and participation in processes of change.
- Environment – forming attitudes as well as performing sustainable conduct.

Man has a responsibility to administer nature and environment. Nature has an intrinsic value. The right to a rich, diverse and viable environment should benefit all people of our time and future generations. “Green Education” emphasizes therefore the responsibility of conserving and protecting natural resources and biological diversity. Sustainable processes must be an aspiration in the tension between consumer interests and preserving interests, and environmental thinking and teaching about sustainable living – and development processes must be an integrated part of all education efforts. Environmental considerations are crucial in all projects included in ProVert.<sup>22</sup>

The educational program and methods will enhance “the development of respect for the natural environment and a special Christian responsibility for God’s creation, a profound understanding of the needs of a sustainable way of thinking and acting and by this way contribute to sustainable development for the region and the whole country. The Green Education Program emphasizes methodical renewal and promotes “integrated education” which ranges a broad spectre of subjects ensuring the development of the student’s entire personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. All subjects have to be related to sustainable development, protection of the environment and respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

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<sup>17</sup> “A Policy for the Developmental Sector of FLM”, 2004, p. 5:14.

<sup>18</sup> “The Green Education Program in FLM: ‘ProVert’ ” FLM, Madagascar

<sup>19</sup> “The Green Education Program in FLM: ‘ProVert’ ” FLM, Madagascar

<sup>20</sup> “The Green Education Program in FLM: ‘ProVert’ ” FLM, Madagascar

<sup>21</sup> “A Policy for the Developmental Sector of FLM”, 2004. Introduction.

<sup>22</sup> “The Green Education Program in FLM: ‘ProVert’ ” FLM, Madagascar

In general the Green Education Program will be a local approach – proceeding from the student's environment, their customs and their needs. Thus the whole teaching – and learning process considers the local conditions and give birth to suitable strategies for sustainable local and regional development.

The Green Education Program of the Malagasy Lutheran Church is ambitious. It is based on Christian concepts and embraces a poor population who live on a rich island where environment and biodiversity is greatly endangered to the loss of all living creatures and also for the whole humanity of the world. Can this church initiated program be an important contribution to the return from the Red to the Green Island?

## **SUMMARY OF SPEECHES DAY 1**

***Padmanabh S Jaini: see separate pdf-file***

Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley, USA

***Desmond McNeill***

Research Professor, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo, Norway: '**Three Major Dilemmas**'

On the basis of the discussions yesterday it seems to me that we face three dilemmas.

### **The relationship between conservation and development (Session 2)**

If I were to try and explain to a child what is 'conservation' and what is 'development' I might say: "conservation is like standing still and development is like moving forward". The child might well reply: "Then how can you do both at the same time?"

Ever since the publication of the Brundtland Report we have been trying to 'square the circle'; to maintain that we can eat our cake and have it. But in reality we cannot, I suggest, pretend that the world can combine conservation with economic growth. I use the term 'economic growth' here rather than 'development' because I am aware that 'development' may be interpreted in different ways. But the reality is that for many of the world's population, and decision-makers, 'economic growth' and 'development' are virtually synonymous; and for the billions of poor in the world, development cannot be achieved without economic growth.

Since the publication of the Brundtland Report we have learnt that it is affluence, not poverty, that is the greatest threat to the global environment. Global warming is the most obvious demonstration of this. Without a substantial change in consumption behaviour by the rich, many of the world's environmental problems will become worse. (Even though the problems will impinge most severely on the poor). Poverty and environmental degradation are both very serious challenges; but in only some circumstances can we hope to find 'win-win' solutions. And, as the World Development Report 2002 demonstrated, even where 'win-win' opportunities exist they are often not realized.

In brief, what is needed is a radical change in values and attitudes – as Agnes Abuon so rightly stated in her introductory presentation. Probably the greatest hindrance to achieving sustainable development is the idea that development is an ever-upward process towards increased consumption. But how to get away from rampant consumerism? Here I would refer to Marja-Liisa Swantz' presentation, where she spoke about 'regeneration'. As I understood it, she was referring not only to the important, but well-recognized, fact that many goods can and should be recycled. She was making a more radical suggestion: that development itself might be seen as a sort of cyclical process – of regeneration. Certainly we need to think very differently if we are to take the challenge of sustainable development seriously.

### **How perceptions of nature influence the management of natural resources (Session 1)**

It is increasingly common for the management of natural resources to be based on an economic rationale. Nature is seen as a 'resource', with a market. A watershed – seen from this perspective - provides 'environmental services' whose value can, and should, be estimated in money terms. And economic instruments (notably taxes and subsidies) are increasingly favoured for implementing policy. These are certainly effective instruments, but it is important to recognise that such an approach implies that decisions about public wellbeing are increasingly driven by the logic of the market, and controlled by the expertise of one particular professional - the economist. This is an example of a more general tendency in modern society for the ethics of the market to be increasingly dominant. Despite much talk of 'global ethics' in recent years, I suggest that an anthropologist from Mars who was invited to make an empirical study of the behaviour of earthlings (or at least those who exercise most power in the world) would conclude that the dominant ethic is not that of Christianity, or any other world religion, but rather that of the market.

(The need to argue in economic terms applies also in the field of health, as we have found in recent studies from the WHO. I recently read an article in an English newspaper about the possible impact of avian 'flu. The headline announced the billions of pounds that such an attack would cost the economy. One had to read far into the text of the story to find the apparently secondary consideration that millions of people would die).

The dilemma for those concerned with the management of natural resources is whether to accept the – very powerful – approach of economics, or to argue against it. It is difficult to 'have it both ways'. To accept this logic involves committing to a whole mindset that may turn out to be inimical to nature. To reject this logic is to risk being marginalized when important political decisions are taken.

### **Religion, the environment and development: the potential for partnership? (Introductory Session)**

The research in which I am currently engaged involves studying a number of multilateral organisations, to see how they deal with issues of ethics. Each of them has a moral purpose – the reduction of poverty. But they are to very varying extents effective in this endeavour. It has become apparent that each of them faces a dilemma, which may be expressed simply in terms of a choice: between having power (derived mainly from their financial resources and their economic expertise) and having moral authority (derived from their political legitimacy as representing the interests of the poor, and their 'moral prestige'). It is difficult – perhaps impossible – to have both.

I suggest that religious organisations seeking to enter this same field may be faced with the same dilemma. The moral authority of religious organisations is surely very considerable. So too, at least in some case, are their resources. There is, therefore, a choice to be made. And they should be wary of believing that the two can be easily combined.

### **Conclusion**

It is the poor who will suffer most from environmental degradation, both now and in the future. Sustainable development is, to a very large extent, an issue of fairness – on a world scale. In his welcoming remarks, the Minister of Development Mr. Erik Solheim urged participants to 'take on the global issues'. Yesterday, we were discussing predominantly local issues in poor countries. These are important. But on the basis of the three points above, I want to suggest that the highest priority for religions concerned with sustainable development should be to lend their moral authority to a challenge to the dominance of economics in policy-making, and to consumerism in behaviour - a battle to be fought primarily in the North.

## SESSION 3 Conditions and criteria for partnerships

Roundtable participants:

### ***Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin***

Archbishop of Dublin, Primate of Ireland

For many years I was involved directly in the area of development policy at the international level through my work at the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. I would like to begin by sharing some of my experience in various dialogues between faiths and development agencies, and especially by indicating some of the pitfalls which have made such dialogue and the subsequent partnerships less successful than one had hoped them to be.

In one of the early discussions between leaders of the World Bank and the Vatican on partnership with religious bodies in development programmes, one senior World Bank official was asked what the overall aim of the World Bank in such partnerships was. The answer, part in jest and partly serious, was: "We at the Bank are the world's leading wholesaler in development theory, and you guys have a magnificent worldwide retail outlet system".

It is certainly in the interests of all that people who are working for the same goals should work as closely as possible together. But the challenge is not quite as simple as matching wholesaler and retailer in order to get it right.

The first thing that any partnership must understand is that partnership is the work of two partners, each with its own identity and specific contribution. There is a tendency for governments and international agencies – for legitimate and well intentioned reasons - to want to use religious bodies. Religious partners have their own identity and are not simply useful outlets for the products of others. Their identity is intimately part of their activities. To continue using the market analogy, their outlet is an integral part of their product. That is why their outlets are so effective. Changing the brand could mean smothering the entire operation.

Partnerships must be marked in the first place by profound respect for each partner, which means looking sensitively at the originality of each contributor and being aware of the fact there may not be perfect synergy between both partners. This means being prepared to work together where that is possible and at the same time to respect differences where these exist.

Religious bodies are precisely that and are not easily "harnessable" into the patterns of others. Indeed, the message of religious bodies may be opposed to the thought patterns of secular organizations. Religious bodies are there to bring a message of faith, a message about the transcendent, which will not always be manageable within utilitarian categories or in plans to get things done quickly and efficiently. Take an example of the Christian message which preaches a God whose love is gratuitous and superabundant. The terms "gratuitous" and "superabundant" are hard to fit into in a market context in which everything has its price and you get just what you pay for. Yet it is the concept of superabundant generosity which is the secret of the success of many Christian and many other religious projects in health care and education. Dialogue between international agencies and religious bodies needs rigorous evaluation. But that evaluation must also be able to look at the contribution that religious bodies bring in contexts which are not so easy to measure in traditional accounting or monetary terms.

Saying that religious bodies are not easily "harnessable" does not of course mean that they should ask to be or allowed to be unaccountable. It should be the opposite, particularly in the area of the environment. The very first religious concept which springs to my mind when I think about the relations between humankind and the environment is that of creation. The term creation defines not so much the mechanics of the origins of the universe (creationism tries to do that), but much more the relationship between humanity, the creator and the rest of creation. If the world is created, then the world and all that is in it is not our own private possession. It is gift, which must be used in accordance with certain intrinsic principles which cannot be interpreted just according to our own private whim. Recognising that all creation is gift is a fundamental call to accountability about the way we use resources of any kind.

The world is not ours to use just as we please. It is given to us in stewardship, for the present but also for future generations. It is not ours to be used just for our advantage. Creation has its own laws and its own integrity. Human intervention in any part of creation will have its effects, positive or negative, in other parts. Our life-style as individuals and as a human family must be such that we use the things of the cosmos as they should be used, for the benefit of ourselves and for what Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* (n.47) calls “the earth’s own requisites”.

The goods of creation should be used according to the design of the God who created them. There is an inner integrity within creation, an integrity which respects humankind within the cosmos, but which also requires humankind to respect the integrity of the cosmos, to respect the earth’s own requisites. A second factor which has bedeviled partnerships between Churches and development organizations has been the difference in scale. Churches are extraordinarily decentralised, even the Roman Catholic Church. When I worked in the Vatican I was constantly visited by people trying to enlist the support of the Pope for this or that project. They felt that should the Pope just once mention their plan or organization a whole mechanism of Roman Catholic collaboration around the world would simply click into action and they would be on the road they desired. Churches and faith communities are rooted locally and partnerships have a much better chance if they begin with solid local relationships. Things rarely work well from the top down. Most Church development projects are local and in terms of scale can be miniscule compared to the global thinking of international organizations. And one of the ways to destroy the creativity of an innovative local environmental project is to flood it with funds or to flood it with external experts. The functionaries and experts who deal with millions of Euros or dollars each year can very often only think in “macro” terms. They appreciate the originality of local projects but they want them immediately replicated elsewhere. These grass roots organization are however essentially local, linked with particular circumstances, with the nature of a particular community and its values. They have grown over time, very often with a particular notion of time.

International functionaries can get frustrated with projects which cannot be easily inserted into their time scale. But so often the knowledge of the local and the rhythms of the local which have been observed over time constitute the added value to be attained in working with the local community. In environmental and development policy you ignore the local at your peril.

There is equally a temptation for governments and large international organizations to deal with the like minded. Large development agencies are easier to work with because of their scale and their broad outreach. They may not have the direct access to the local community based groups, but they can talk the international talk and fill out the forms well and they somehow belong to the same fraternity. Taken collectively, however, the scale of the involvement of small religious based activities is extraordinarily broad and effective even though this may be difficult to measure because of its wide diffusion. I am aware that I am presenting these factors in a caricaturised form. There are many examples of successful collaboration, but over my own years of experience in international development questions I have seen many promising forms of partnership break down by misunderstandings of this kind. Another difficulty that emerges is in understanding the underlying philosophies of religious groups. For me the major contribution which grass root religious organizations bring is an integrated vision of development, because it springs from an integrated view of life. Religious groups can provide an integrated view of three dimensions which should belong to any integrated vision of development: respect for the dignity of the person, a realisation that humankind is created as a family and the fact that humankind lives within the integrity of an environment which is both its sustenance and home. If we do not get the right balance between these three dimensions: individual dignity, responsibility for all, integrity of creation, then we end up on the wrong path. In the past religious groups have been accused of being too anthropocentric, looking on the environment primarily as resource for people. Today, as the recent Catholic Compendium on Social Teaching notes, there is a much greater awareness of the fact that “the environment as ‘resources’ risks threatening the environment as ‘home’”. Establishing the correct balance means that we must use and treasure the cosmos just as we might use and treasure our own home. We would not burn the roof or the doors of our own home, making it uninhabitable. But home does not mean just the roof over our heads, but home is also the complex network of relationship with people and generations, between our needs and the needs of creation in its own integrity.

All environmental reflection must also be anthropocentric, not in the sense that the environment is there simply as resources for humankind, but that the environment will only be protected when human dignity and human potential are fostered, where human capital is shared responsibly and where the environment becomes a true home for all with the exclusion of none.



Religious language contains much of the wisdom which has been refined through a dialogue on the deeper questions of humankind over the centuries. Religious insight can lead to an understanding of the human condition which can be readily recognized and understood even by the non-believer.

Using religious language in speaking about the human situation is not a question of imposing religious belief on anyone. Neither, however, should discussion of the human condition in a modern pluralist society disenfranchise the believer from bringing his or her specific contribution to social and environmental reflection, springing from a mediation of religious concepts to the challenges of the world in which we live.

One principle of Catholic social teaching which is particularly interesting here is called the universal destination of the goods of creation. The Second Vatican Council put it this way: "God intended the earth and all it contains for the use of all persons and all peoples, so that created goods should flow fairly to all, regulated by justice and accompanied by charity". The Compendium notes that "as regards the ecological question, the social doctrine of the Church reminds us that the goods of the earth were created by God to be wisely used by all. They must be shared equitably, in accordance with justice and charity".

The Catholic Church has always spoken of respect for private property but it has never elevated private property to the rank of an absolute principle. All possession brings with it social responsibility, a "social mortgage", which conditions which behaviour is to be judged moral and which immoral. Traditionally this principle was applied to questions of ownership of land and natural resources.

Today one would apply this principle also in a qualitative manner. It is not just about a just distribution of the goods of the earth in a measurable way, but also about the qualitative dimensions of such distribution. We have the responsibility to use the resources of creation, human and environmental, in such a way as to enhance the overall integrity of all of creation. Development is about specific quantifiable goals, but it is above all about producing harmony and integrity. No one aspect of development should have priority, leaving the other totally aside. That is why in developmental policy we must strongly reaffirm that the fight against poverty and the fight for the protection of the environment must go hand in hand.

Today therefore we would also have to say that there is an "ecological mortgage" on all private property, physical and intellectual, and thus on all economic development. This has been expressed in a slightly different way for example by Klaus Töpfer when he said, in the context of Germany, that we need to add an ecological dimension to the idea of social market economy.

The way we may use the goods of creation should be conditioned by the effects that our behaviour has on the environment. This is not an optional extra for use on the occasions in which it can suit us. It belongs to an integral understanding of the relationship between the individual person, the human family and the environment which is both our nurture and our home.

The universal destination of the goods of creation must also apply to equitable access to the decision making processes which concern the future. The more imbalances emerge among States in the international system, the more even valid international norms become lopsided in their application, with the result that the family of nations becomes a dysfunctional family. Development policy must enhance capacity, both the capacity of persons and the capacity of communities and nations. Development will only be sustainable when it generates voice, ownership and relations that are harmonious and responsible. Partnership with local religious communities must therefore enhance their capacity to negotiate their place within the wider environmental constellation and enable them to defend local environmental interests in the face of powerful economic interests. Communities must be enhanced to become active and participatory communities.

The ecological question must not be faced solely because of the frightening prospects that environmental destruction represents, rather it must become above all a strong motivation for an authentic solidarity of worldwide dimensions, which will guarantee a future of hope for all. Religious messages contain certain reference to dimensions of human activity which go beyond the measurable and the rational. The human person is however not just rational and intelligent. The human person and society need to rediscover values should as hope and goodness and truth and beauty. Religious bodies with their openness towards the transcendent can open people to horizons which bring them beyond themselves and such hope – not a measurable commodity – can curiously produce measurable results in the way in which people interact with nature and with each other.

**Rt. Rev. Mark Van Koevering**

Bishop of Niassa, Mozambique:

***'A profitable, environmentally sound North-South investment. Imagine, its easy if you can'***

I have a story to tell you today.  
It's not a very likely tale, but nonetheless it's true.  
Imagine.

Imagine organizations investing their wealth based on the ethical principles of environmentally sound and sustainable development.

Imagine turning established patterns of charitable dependency between north and south into an innovative mutually beneficial, partnership.

Imagine generous financial returns and the conservation of indigenous forests.

Imagine jobs for the poorest of the poor and a vibrant rural development program.

Imagine Chikweti.

Chikweti, a Yao word for forest, is a creative initiative of the Church of Sweden's Diocese of Västerås, The National Endowment of the Church of Norway and the Anglican Diocese of Niassa in northern Mozambique.

Together we are implementing a dream to provide a just return for investors and to make a positive contribution to the livelihood of hundreds of individuals and dozens of communities in the Province of Niassa.

You see, for us in northern Mozambique, poverty threatens all:  
the average life expectancy is a mere 39 years,  
46% of our people live with chronic malnutrition,  
and 1 in 7 children die before the age of 5.  
Something must change, life demands that we dream of something better.

Chikweti offers such a new dream:  
An 80 million USD investment over ten years,  
The Chikweti dream is powered by a significant venture in commercial forest plantations. We carefully follow Forest Stewardship Council guidelines to plant indigenous and exotic species on degraded and deforested land;  
In the first year, 1,100 hectares had been planted,  
And 2.500 hectares are being prepared as we speak.  
Already, Chikweti has created 400 new jobs, stimulated secondary industries and attracted substantial investment from major international partners.

But Chikweti is more than commerce.  
It also means conserving indigenous Mozambican forests and rejuvenating degraded and deforested land;  
In truth, no native Mozambican forests are being destroyed by our program.

Chikweti also means sustainable community development;  
We aim to change the current slash and burn farming tradition by offering education and extension to promote renewable and economically beneficial agricultural practices.

These development programs will mean better food security, improved marketing through farmer cooperatives, adult literacy, community health care and a team of life to fight against HIV/AIDS.

Chikweti means really developing local capacity.

The Anglican Church of Mozambique is not an outside organization, NGO or service provider,

We are a key community stake holder

Living, working, laughing, crying, being - striving together in community as community.

Yes, there have been and are many challenges and difficulties:

- Plantation agriculture
- The introduction of exotic species
- Use and ownership of land and water resources
- On-farm labor shortages and food security
- Gender and employment policies
- Bureaucracy
- Limited local capacity

But, despite these obstacles, for us,

Chikweti means a professional well-run, ethical, sustainable commercial, business investment;

It means Conservation of Mozambique's natural resources, and

It means Community Development to improve the lives of some of the poorest people in the world.

For us, Chikweti is a step toward that dream of a better future.

Imagine, it's easy if you can.

### ***Aud V. Tønnessen***

Dr., Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, Norway:

#### **'Criteria for partnership. A gender perspective'**

Partnership has for a long time been a key word within development. "Today's rule-of-thumb in international development is that everybody wants to be a partner with everyone else on everything, everywhere" Alan Fowler (2002) says (243). At the same time it is stated that "the talk of partnership often fails to address potential conflict and inequalities" (Crewe and Harrison 1998:87). What I will say today has to do with potential conflicts and why partnership with religious communities and faith groups should not be on everything, everywhere.

Partnership has been an answer to two interrelated but different problems within development. On the one hand partnership is a description of a way of working. Instead of, say, a Norwegian development agency operating their own development project in another country, employing their own staff, a staff often consisting of a majority of expatriates, partnership means the agency is collaborating with one or more local organizations or groups that are responsible for a project or program. The roles are changed from donor-recipient to partners. And the terminology presupposes a collaboration the whole process through. It is no longer the donor telling the receiver what to do, since longtime experience from operational projects have taught that this seldom results in local ownership to the projects. Partnership is therefore a strategy to promote and secure local ownership, something seen as fundamental for sustainable development.

On the other hand partnership is a normative way of describing an ideal relationship within development. As opposed to the donor-receiver relationship, partnership means a symmetric instead of an a-symmetric relation, where the partners are mutually sharing responsibility and obligation. Instead of the paternalism of the operational model, partnership is seen as based on equality and a balance of power. Transparency must go both ways. Empirically though, it has been seriously questioned if partnership is any solution to paternalism. A Swedish study concluded that despite the partnership model, Swedish and Danish aid workers in Tanzania still maintained an image of themselves as representing the "reliable and trustworthy Western Self" whereas their local partners were seen as unpredictable and unreliable (Baaz 2005:167). At the same time the local partners did not experience the relationship as being based on mutual

transparency and equality, rather that the transparency was one sided from their part. There existed a paternalism of partnership.

Experiences of inequality on the one hand and dominance from the donor part on the other form the basis of the criteria for partnership worked out by Christian and Muslim faith communities presented to us by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC). Recognizing that religious communities and faith-based groups play an important role in many peoples' lives and in society and therefore "could bring to bear relevant traditions, teachings, and understandings of our relationship with the environment and human development", as is stated in the conference presentation, ARC works out from the presumption that the faith communities are relevant partners to major economical institutions as the World Bank and states like the Norwegian. But is this true? And: If so, what are the costs of such partnership given the criteria presented to us by ARC? (I must here confess that my presentation is based on the Muslim and Christian criteria, because I only got the Buddhist yesterday here at the conference, but I do not think that that would change my main conclusion).

The presumed context of power that is at the bottom of the criteria is the one between donor and receiver, between a "North" and a "South". As a discussion of power within partnership this is important, but not enough. It is not adequate to discuss power in a North-South perspective addressing the issues of political and economical power and inequality, when at the same time leaving out probably the main conflict of power related to religion, and that is gender. The criteria presented are mostly gender blind, or at best I would say that they are gender blind, though I suspect that it is not blindness but rather awareness of this problem that has resulted in the lack of gender or reference to women in the criteria.

The potential conflict in partnership not talked about neither in the Muslim and Christian criteria nor in the conference presentation and hardly in the discussions we have had so far, is the conflict between religion, gender and power. More precisely it is the problem of human rights and gender equality. There has been a mentioning of human rights as being central to partnership, but what does that mean for women? Does it also apply to them? These are troublesome questions, but they need to be asked.

With very few exceptions, the norm within all the world religions is that a gender based hierarchy and segregation are constitutive to the religious and social order. Women are neither seen nor related to as equal to men nor having the same rights. When ARC therefore introduces to us partnership criteria that states that "existing structure of the community should be respected and underlined", as said in the Muslim criteria, I think this ought to challenge the World Bank, UNDP or the Norwegian government, because what does such a statement mean from a gender perspective? As most existing structures in a community are male dominated, one consequence of entering into a partnership with a religious community based on such a criteria, would in most cases mean accepting and supporting faith based discrimination of women. That would contradict one core value within for example the Norwegian government, namely womens' human rights and equality to men. It would violate the human rights of women. It would lead to a strengthening of the power of those already in power. Is equality of women something that is negotiable whereas male domination is not? This is an important question to raise in order to

I am not suggesting that gender segregated communities can not form a basis for development and environmental projects. But when such projects are performed within a community based on gendered hierarchy and segregation these projects will remain outside the realm of power, the project and their women being the constant other (cf the presentation by Marja-Liisa Swantz). Very often good projects run by and very often for women (or children or elderly), are fundamental to the livelihood of the community they live in. But these same projects are seldom accounted for and do even more seldom challenge the power structure. As a consequence women's work load often increases without increasing their rights. One example could be the important work of care for HIV/Aids infected and affected that many women perform. This is fundamental to the communities, but it very ofte takes place in a form that simply confirms the segregation between men and women: Women become the caring mothers for all the sick or affected in a community, but their right to their own sexuality, the right to say no to sex with a man or even their husband, is denied them.<sup>23</sup> It is therefore not enough to discuss power as a North-South question. When the issue is religious communities, power from a gender perspective has to be addressed.

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<sup>23</sup> The reason for taking up the issue of women's rights to say no to their husbands is the problem of HIV/Aids infecting faithful women through promiscuous husbands.

It is not enough to base partnership on a mutual recognition of the equal worth of the different resources brought into partnership, as stated in the Christian criteria (presented to us by ARC), as long as it fails to address the one major potential conflict related to human rights based equality between men and women. Without taking up this issue, partnership with religious communities and faith group would in most cases mean a strengthening of male dominance and patriarchal structures. Too often the rights of women are sacrificed because some think there are higher goals to fight for. Such a goal might be concealed under the label sustainable development. The counter question then would: Could there be sustainable development without acknowledging the equal human rights of men and women? It is necessary to keep two thoughts in mind at the same time, when discussing partnership with religious communities: Certainly faith groups could have a role to play as advocates for changed policy on nature, conservation and development. But as long as the world religions are predominately patriarchal, it is also important to lift up a gender critical perspective in order not only to strengthen the male power but also to build an awareness of women being equal to men.

In the conference paper there is much talk about religious communities being a resource for development, even haven "a specific focus on the weak and vulnerable". Much empiri would show that it is not the male dominated religious leadership that has this focus, but the women. So when speaking about criteria: The issue of religion, power and gender must be addressed together with a discussion on human rights and a rights based approach. Otherwise the potential of partnership between development agencies, governments and religious groups might be a potential of oppression instead of sustainable development and a potential of increased male dominance within a patriarchal structure. There is also a need to be aware of the limitations of faith groups within development. Partnership with religious groups on everything, everywhere should not be the goal, rather one should enter into a dialogue before entering into partnership in order to rule out what such a partnership could result in and whether the result would be good not only for the existing structure but also for change.

#### **References:**

- Maria Eriksson Baaz (2005): *The Paternalism of Partnershi. A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid*, London and New York, Zed Books
- Emma Crewe and Elizabeth Harrison (1998): *Whose Development? An Etnography of Aid*, London and New York, Zed Books
- Alan Fowler (2002): "Beyond Partnership: Getting Real about NGO Relationships in the Aid System" in Michael Edwards and Alan Fowler (eds.): *The Earthscan Reader on NGO Management*, pp. 241-255, London and Serling, Earthscan Publications ltd.

Participated in the roundtable without presenting papers:

**Reverend Japhet Ndhlovu**, Council of Churches in Zambia  
**Arild Øyen**, The Norwegian Ambassador to Angola

## **SUMMARY OF WORKING GROUPS**

On the last day of the conference, participants were divided into four groups. Each group had one hour to discuss one of the questions below (proposed by Olav Kjørven) and then present a summary of the talks in the plenary session that followed.

#### **The questions to break-out groups:**

1. What would be the most useful and productive next steps from this conference? For example, would it be worthwhile producing a set of shared principles that would guide future collaboration between development agencies and faith-based entities? How should this best be done?

2. What would be the best ways to build awareness and knowledge of best practices in partnership and collaboration? What would be the best way to advance a productive dialogue on sustainable development challenges at global and national levels?

3. In terms of operational collaboration, what would be the main opportunities and risks involved in expanding the use of religious institutions and entities as channels for funding environment and other interventions? What are the principal barriers to be overcome? Do you see potential for large-scale programmatic collaboration, or is it more appropriate to develop locally grounded, small scale project interventions?

4. How, if at all, can religious institutions and entities become effective agents for strategic policy change (such as with regard to fiscal reforms that promote environmental stewardship, governance reforms addressing corruption, rights to information, expansion of women's rights, etc.)? What are the limits to collaboration between development and religious actors in taking such agendas forward?

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS (summarised by individual group members)**

### **Working group 1**

What would be the most useful and productive next steps from this conference? For example, would it be worthwhile producing a set of shared principles that would guide future collaboration between development agencies and faith-based entities? How should this best be done?

We proposed 6 steps to move forward:

- 1) Case studies: Independent, vigorous research of existing examples of partnerships that already exist. A wide range – geography, style, religions, areas of work and scientifically rigorous.
- 2) Pilot projects: Start up in a few places concrete projects based on the principle that faith-based organizations can collaborate with governments and development agencies.
- 3) Seminars/conferences of a similar type to be held in different regions/countries to continue the dialogue with more inclusion of the South.
- 4) Faith-based organizations clearly stating their theological reflections on development and the environment and being more proactive in presenting our positions.
- 5) Ask ARC to prepare a database of projects and organizations working in development and the environment with faith-based organizations.
- 6) Hold a conference of significant leaders: nations, development agencies and faith leaders to prepare a platform/declaration. This must include prominent leaders from stakeholders.

### **Working group 2**

*What would be the best ways to build awareness and knowledge of best practices in partnership and collaboration? What would be the best way to advance a productive dialogue on sustainable development challenges at global and national levels?*

(summary not received)

### **Working group 3**

*In terms of operational collaboration, what would be the main opportunities and risks involved in expanding the use of religious institutions and entities as channels for funding environment and other interventions? What are the principal barriers to be overcome? Do you see potential for large-scale programmatic collaboration, or is it more appropriate to develop locally grounded, small scale project interventions?*

The group concentrated on environment issues. The potential for partnership might be viewed differently when looking at other development issues. The group looked at opportunities and risks for development agencies/donors as well as religious groups.

Opportunities for development agencies from partnerships with religious groups were seen as follows:

- religious groups normally have a thorough knowledge of local traditions and customs which, by the way, are often established by them
- religious groups often enjoy much trust from the side of the population
- they may be able to influence or mobilise large sectors of the population
- they may have a more holistic approach to environmental issues

The risks of such partnerships for the agencies include

- the religious groups may lack expertise and professionalism to administer funds and execute projects
- the agencies may be drawn into competition between religious groups if they enable one of them to do more for the population of a region
- partnership may be limited insofar as religious groups do not fully accept universal human rights (what might not be that problematic in environmental cooperation as to compromise a partnership)

The risks for the religious groups lies in being instrumentalised by the agencies, a risk mitigated by the fact that the religious groups are not dependent on the funding by the agencies compared to many NGOs

The opportunities for the religious groups lie in gaining additional influence/legitimacy through successful and meaningful projects for their souls.

On the international/global level it seemed that the potential lies in the moral authority of the groups to foster larger programs of the agencies with specialised partners. It seems that the religious groups still have to develop their positions vis à vis the present important environmental topics beyond from very general ideas of the type of “preservation of the creation”. It also remains to be seen to what extent their influence can be exerted when it comes to questions like reducing the affluent life style of the West or other issues which really affect people or countries.

#### **Working group 4**

*How, if at all, can religious institutions and entities become effective agents for strategic policy change (such as with regard to fiscal reforms that promote environmental stewardship, governance reforms addressing corruption, rights to information, expansion of women’s rights, etc.)? What are the limits to collaboration between development and religious actors in taking such agendas forward?*

The group repeated one of the mantras of this conference, namely that we need to be aware of the different contexts in which religious groups work and are situated. The chances of different religious groups in being change agents differ from place to place, from country to country, between north and south and between different religions etc. In order to better understand how and when religious groups can create change, one needs to appreciate the specific distinctiveness of the context in which the groups are situated.

There is a need to find out what is the strategic level of engagement. Many of the examples of religious groups engaging in environmental concerns and projects are on the local level. The local level is important, but often the more lasting changes happen when actors meet on a higher (more global) level - and put the environment on the agenda. We need to find out what is the strategic level of engagement for each of the different (environmental) issues that we are engaged in, and how we best can create change at different level.

Faith groups should be selective in what they engage in. There are certain issues and areas where faith based organisations and groups have a specific reason and motive for being engaged. Areas like HIV/AIDS, anti-corruption, indigenous people are examples of issues where religious groups could add something. Here faith groups could draw from their ethical principles and moral authority and in this way bring something to the table that NGOs, government and business actors don't bring. It is important to acknowledge that faith bases groups are not NGOs and that they are not looked upon as such. They can bring a spiritual dimension to many issues, and in this way mobilise many people that otherwise would not be mobilised

Who are the changes agents? In order to have strategic work on a policy issues, one also needs to find

those actors who have credibility and legitimacy and can create change. There is need for a better mapping of the different religious communities, exploring who has the momentum to create change and who can speak on behalf of large constituencies. Within the Christian groups there are already a well developed structure (World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, The Catholic church) - but there is a need to know more about the organisational structures of other religions and who is best suited to forward the environmental case within the different religions.

A limit for collaboration between development and religious actors is that many faith groups do not see environmental protection as an issue they should be specifically occupied with (their core concern is often and only the issue of personal salvation). However, in many parts of the world the issue of poverty and injustice is at the core of faith based organisations agenda - since this is for many people a matter of life and death. The challenge now is for the faith based communities, in cooperation with other developmental actors, to merge the development and environment issue. How can we make the environmental issue the centre of our faiths? Faith based communities could be the ones carrying the torch here; promoting an understanding that caring for the environment is absolutely essential in order for poverty to be eradicated. Without environmental protection, there will be no development. This could be made into a life and death issue. The next challenge would then be: How can we convince other societal actors that the environmental issue is at the core of development?

A particular issue where faith based communities need to come together in a strategic effort is on the climate issue. Within the next 2-3 years it will be decided how the conference of parties under the Kyoto Protocol will take the climate regime forward in to the next phase (post 2012). It is absolutely essential that the faith based communities have a say in this important fingerpost - and that we unite forces in presenting our opinions.

## **PLANNING FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN PARTNERSHIPS AND CLOSING REMARKS**

### ***Olav Kjørven***

Director, Energy and Environment Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP:  
**'Elements of the Road Ahead'**

#### *Different Levels and Paths of Engagement*

- Levels of Engagement
  - Global (e.g., around global hot topics)
  - Regional (same)
  - National (national policy issues of significance)
  - Local (community mobilization and empowerment)
- Nature of Collaboration
  - Funding modalities for specific projects
  - Funding modalities for programmatic interventions
  - Partnership between agencies/NGOs and religious entities as co-investors in environmental stewardship or other sustainable development ventures
  - Collaboration in advocacy at global, national and local levels
    - Possibly in combination with funding elements
    - Can new channel for voicing global public concern (grassroots) be envisaged?
  - Policy dialogue or joint exploration of policy themes
    - Social policy (education, health, water),
    - Peoples' empowerment: both pure advocacy and building on the stakeholder strengths of religions
    - Human rights
    - Anti-corruption and other governance issues



- Environmental causes such as conservation, climate change, environmental education
  - Urban environment issues
  - Production and consumption issues, trade
- Knowledge sharing, lessons of experience (mapping, sharing lessons of experience), networks, publishing, etc (this, again can be broken down into global, regional, national, local)
- Partnership with other actors, such as the private sector, such as Global Compact, WBCSD
- What can we do on climate change??

*Clarifying Conditions, Criteria*

- Developing a Common Understanding as Basis for Partnership
  - Criteria from both sides..?
  - Shared principles..?
  - ..or short common statement?
  - Declaration of intent..?
  - A broader, higher level conference?

**Richard Scobey**

Advisor to the Vice President for Sustainable Development in The World Bank

Rick summarized possible follow up to the workshop/conference in four, parallel, areas:

**a. Knowledge sharing**

(i) create an inventory of successes and failures on the ground of the faith based organizations with or without development agencies and national governments focussing on NRM/environment issues. This inventory should focus on both the micro and macro level, e.g. community level projects as well as global coalitions;

(ii) create an inventory of donors' best practices and policies, e.g. Unicef's mandate includes that it should work with FBO, while other donors have explicit policies against working with FBO.

(iii) create stronger networks on the ground, like AMEN and link it with e.g. the Muslim work on environment in Indonesia

**b. Move from the micro to the macro, from the local project to the global issues**

(i) FBOs should launch more serious interventions at participating in the global public policy debate regarding public goods, such as global climate change, global legal empowerment of the poor or global migration

(ii) form a coalition of major development organizations, e.g. WB, UNDP, World Council of Churches, using ARC, and create a campaign such as Jubilee focussing on climate change

(iii) focus on critical underlying socio-economic drivers of environmental destruction, e.g. logging, corruption, conflict, and create coalitions between major faiths and development agencies;

**c. Scale up**

although there will be a tension between staying grounded in the local which is the strength of the FBOs and moving towards larger scale interventions

(i) donors to scale up channelling resources and advice to FBO; possibly, donors and FBO to organize a high level meeting of leaders of their respective organizations to focus on the next phase of collaboration. This plan needs to be coordinated with the Faith and Development Leaders Meeting that Mr. Wolfowitz has agreed to co-host with former Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, Lord George Carey. Notionally to be held in the summer of 2007 somewhere in Africa, the Leaders Meeting will be organized by Marisa van

Saanan, Faith Liaison Office and Katherine Marshall, Senior Advisor HDNDE. As with past Faith and Development Leaders Meetings, the focus will be on dialogue on a range of development issues.

(ii) scale up the use of private sector instruments and channelling of funds, e.g. pension and investment funds of FBOs to be channelled to socially and environmentally responsible investments, as the case study on the investments of the church of Sweden and Norway in successful private sector forest exploration in Mozambique demonstrated. Links with the World Business Council on Sustainable Development also to be explored.

(iii) focus on urban growth and the brown agenda. The success of FBO in Ghana in the clean up of the urban environment could serve as an example to all country teams. The Ghana CT basically acted as a catalyst bringing the FBO together with just some minor funding from the TFESSD.

(iv) focus on key strategic themes and bring key players together, e.g. FBO provide staggering amounts of education (and health) services all over the world. What influence could the FBO have on the learning of young people re. environmental issues.

**d. Carry out excellent analytical work**, e.g. M and E work on the impact of the partnerships.

### ***Martin Palmer***

Secretary-General, The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)  
ARC

This is the next stage of an interesting evolution in the way donor countries and agencies have related to developing nations, communities and cultures. In the 1970s and 1980s the norm was that development agencies worked directly with governments in recipient countries. Later, corruption was perceived as a major factor that often prevented effective projects on the ground. James Wolfensohn in the World Bank raised this taboo subject very forcefully.

In the 1990s there was a reaction – a popularly held sense that in order to be effective, development agencies should work outside the government. That was the decade of the NGOs. A problem is that many NGOs could be seen as clones, resembling their donors in almost every way, except that they are dependent. On the other side, donors see NGOs as service providers and as watchdogs.

Recently the buzzword is a wider, more amorphous body called “civil society”. Up until now the faiths have rarely been invited to the table except in their NGO incarnations (eg Christian Aid, Caritas) and Rick Scobey talking about recent meetings he has been to underlined the fact that most of the time religious groups had not been invited to the table as part of the civil society. Today, if development agencies are considering inviting the faiths to become partners, this is the next natural stage of evolution. There is no suggestion that they should ever be the only voices, but that in a plurality of groups, the faiths should always be there.

Sometimes people ask: where are the faiths? The truth is that many of the faiths have been working on “development issues” themselves all along. They have schools, forests, hospitals, old people’s homes, gardens, farms, small industries, buildings – and they too have been looking at issues like poverty reduction, organic farming, forest management – using their own language and teachings. And if the development organizations know little of this, it is perhaps simply because they have never asked. In many countries the faiths are the only providers of education, health services and so on because the governments have not been able to offer these services or they have given them back to the faiths.

Here are some examples:

\* The World Council of Churches set up a full time department of climate change in 1990, after a group of Christian women on islands in the South Pacific came to them and said that their lands were disappearing.

\* Sikhs feed more than 30 million people a day from their *Gurdwara* kitchens. They have in the past applied for grants from donors to help them switch to other power sources, and make the *Gurdwaras* more environmentally friendly. So far the donors have all said they do not work with religions.

\* The Church of Sweden, ARC and *Jinja Honjo* (Shintos) have started plans to set up what would effectively be a religious FSC certification system – useful for all those faiths who either own forests or who consume forest products (i.e. all of them). When the Ise Shrine is rebuilt in 2013 it is planned that all major religious forest owners will have been presented with, and hopefully signed up to, this Religious forestry certification scheme. Again it has been hard to get donor governments interested.

\* In urban areas many faiths are deeply involved in helping alleviate poverty. Indeed in many countries the poorest people tend to organise themselves through their religious organisations. For example the Kimbanguist church in Congo has eight million members. They operate a non cash based economy which has meant they have survived the chaos of the past few years.

From this meeting it is now clear that the huge scale of work that the faiths have already been undertaking in these areas has to become part of the equation of the international work for sustainable development and respect for creation. And this can be done only through real and meaningful relationships where all the parties respect each other's identity and specific contribution.

During the meeting we have identified a need for secular groups and religious groups to work together on development and environmental issues as partners. And there are plenty of potential partnerships. It has been suggested that ARC should be the broker in these partnerships – that now it is time for the invitations to be extended. We thank you for your trust and I highlight that ARC is very happy to facilitate this relationship and that we are ready to do so. But as with any dating agency we need to charge a fee. We are a small group and we are entirely reliant on donations from secular organisations.

In the early 1990s, I went to visit Patriarch Alexei in Russia. Most people think that the years under communism were the greatest trials for the Church. But they were not, he said. The danger today is that the expectations for the Church are now so great that we won't be able to meet them and then they will turn against us.

In 1986 WWF invited leaders and thinkers from five religions to come to Assisi. First WWF told them about the scale of the ecological crisis, and this was news to most of them. WWF was sure that the religious groups would be interested in what they were saying and they would deliver WWF's vision. Then the religions asked them what WWF and others were doing about justice and poverty. And it was news to the environmentalists that they couldn't think about addressing the issue of the environment without addressing social justice. Now it has become part of the way people think, but not then. Therefore it is true that religions have a great deal to learn from the secular world but the secular world has to learn a great deal from the religions too.

### **Gerd Pettersen**

Asst. Director General, Section for International Development Policy, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### Main points:

- From the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' point of view, we have had two main reasons for deciding to host this conference: Firstly, we feel it is important to shed light on the relationship – and in many cases the unfortunate *lack of* relationship and dialogue – between the donor community and the religions. Secondly, environment and climate issues are one of the Government's five main "pillars" in the area of development cooperation. This area will also enjoy a considerable budget increase next year, out of a *total* development aid budget that will for the first time top 20 billion NOK in 2007.
- Another pillar is that of gender and equal rights for women. This is an issue that has been raised in various contexts during this conference, and I would simply like to underline once

again the importance contributed to this area by the Development Minister and by the Government.

- Choosing the right channels for aid is one of the most important, yet arguably one of the most challenging tasks within development cooperation. We realize that we, even with our over 50 years of experience as a donor of development aid, really are newcomers compared to religious organizations and their extensive work to relieve poverty and provide basic services to the poor. In many countries they do have a network on the ground that very few, if any, can match.
- Norway has always worked very closely with civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations and religious institutions. We will continue to do so. In fact, a very large share of our bilateral aid is channelled through NGOs and other civil society institutions – Norwegian, international and those of our partner countries. These organizations play a very important role, not only as service providers, but also as watchdogs.
- We will continue to look into ways of working more *directly* with *organizations in the south*.
- We know, however, that no sustainable development can be achieved without a strong state, with sufficient administrative capacity to really take charge of the country's own development plans. Therefore,
- We hope to have provided an arena for discussion and reflection. We know there are challenges, but there are also most certainly opportunities for further cooperation.