

AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

GREENING INITIATIVES, UGANDA MUSLIM SUPREME COUNCIL AND UGANDA MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION Long-term plan on the environment – summary

INTRODUCTION

This plan has been drawn up by Hajjat Sebyala, an International Climate Champion, and a 2010-2011 British Council Climate Ambassador, in consultation with the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) and the Uganda Muslim Women Association.

The UMSC is an umbrella body for the estimated six million Muslims in Uganda. It is led by a Mufti and a Director of Sharia with more than 2,000 sheikhs throughout the country. The UMSC runs a hospital and a radio station at its headquarters in Kampala, along with many Muslim-founded schools. The Uganda Muslim Women Association is a UMSC affiliated group. Consultative meetings to draw up this long-term plan were held with the Uganda Muslim Women Association, the UMSC, the National Mosque Committee, the Director of Sharia in Uganda and the National Mosque Chief Imam as well as with Senior officials of the National Forestry Authority and the Pan Africa Muslim Journalist Association.

With the support of, and in collaboration with, the UMSC, there have already been a number of achievements:

- Distribution of more than 30,000 tree seedlings to community based groups, Muslim leaders and the Muslim community.
- Initiation of a dedicated day (Greening Friday) for honouring the environment in the Muslim calendar once a year. In partnership with UMSC, Greening Fridays were initiated every second Friday of the month of Ramadan. These have been conducted twice (2010 and 2011).

The long-term greening plan also builds on 'The Muslim Women of Gomba District Environment Protection Project' which is sponsored by ARC. This was launched in 2011 to train 20 women leaders from key mosques in Gomba District in central Uganda.

Women have been planting fruit and ficus trees at their homes, gardens and around their mosques to improve their livelihood through the practice of agroforestry, provision of firewood material and installation of energy saving stoves. They have received training in environmentally friendly income-generating activities such as tree nurseries, making of charcoal briquettes and tomato and bean growing.

This pilot scheme was extended in 2012 to add water-harvesting schemes and pest control to improve the tree growth rate to more than 80% and to include more women. The aim is to expand the project to other mosques throughout Uganda. It is estimated that 12.5% of the budget of this long-term plan will be self-financing – for example, with a number of trees planted as Sadakatul Jaria or a gift to Allah.

Geographical Scope: Activities are planned in five selected districts which have the highest population of Muslims and are also affected by deforestation. The plan ranges from

community awareness-raising efforts to energy-saving initiatives to the planting of almost half a million trees.

1. ASSETS

A total of 210 mosques will be selected in the five target districts. Trees will be planted on the demarcated land and agroforestry promoted over seven years.

2. EDUCATION & YOUTH

Environmental activities will be promoted in 50 schools and 15 institutions through the introduction of Greening Fridays; annual environment talks; green clubs; competition quizzes on Islam and the environment; inter-school debates; and establishment of school tree nurseries.

3. WISDOM

Capacity building for 210 sheikhs, imams and other leaders who will be expected to promote environmental protection through popularisation of Greening Friday. Training of trainers for 100 teachers and mullahs from selected schools; a simplified Khutba Tool on Islam and the Environment will be developed in Arabic. It will be translated and printed in the five languages of the target districts: English, Luganda, Lusoga, Swahili and Lugbara.

4. LIFESTYLES

To promote a culture of domestic energy saving, 2,100 stoves will be constructed for selected households and 10 groups will be supported to promote charcoal briquettes. To reduce the carbon footprint associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca, Green Hajj and Green UMRA will be promoted; best practices from ARC's Green Hajj Guide will be followed and trees planted before travel. A halal food certification mechanism will be improvised.

5. MEDIA & ADVOCACY

A communication and dissemination strategy will be developed. Specialised training organised for environment journalists with regular radio programmes and columns in magazines; A media team formed.

6. PARTNERSHIPS & DEPARTMENTS

The UMSC Climate Change Desk will be enlarged, district focal persons identified, carbon trading possibilities explored with Uganda Carbon Bureau (UCB), Government bodies will be brought on board, and in partnership with ARC, the Inter Religious Council of Uganda will be engaged in exploring environmental issues.

7. CELEBRATIONS

Faith-based entertainment groups (Matali Groups) will be supported to produce songs and other entertainment outputs on environmental protection. Such songs will be promoted during key celebrations such as Iddi and graduation parties; living presents like tree seedlings will be popularised at such activities.

8. WOMEN & ENVIRONMENT

To involve 700 women at the selected mosques and also ensure the entire family involvement in environmental and sustainability activities. Work closely with Uganda Muslim Women Association (UMWA) – 50 women to establish a model farm for tree planting and agroforestry. With the UMSC Women desk, to mainstream the environment agenda in Ugandan Muslim Supreme Council programmes. This will lead to the initiation, promotion and marketing of a Uganda Wangari Mathaii Day every two years;

at least 3,000 trees will be planted and activities to raise awareness of water harvesting schemes will be held.

This plan has the support of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council and the Uganda Muslim Women Association. The UMSC's National Mosque Committee has selected two Sheikhs from the committee to finalise the environmental tool to be used on Greening Fridays, to support the Green Hajj and UMRA and to identify where trees will be planted by those performing Hajj or UMRA.

This plan was launched at ARC's Many Heavens, One Earth, Our Continent celebration held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2012