



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

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

Celebration of Faiths and the Environment Many Heavens, One Earth: Faith Commitments for a Living Planet

Windsor, November 2, 2009: One of Islam's most important cities, Madinah, is to become a model 'green' city under a Muslim Seven Year action plan on the environment, unveiled yesterday by the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Ali Goma'a. Madinah is the second holiest city in the Islamic world, after Makkah and is also known as "the City of the Prophet". Other cities to be greened include Sala in Morocco and the Grand Mufti's own city of Dar Al Iftaa, in Egypt, which Sheikh Ali Goma'a said "had already started taking practical steps to go carbon neutral in 2010".

The Grand Mufti made his announcement in front of some 200 faith and secular leaders from around the world on the first day of the three-day Celebration of Faiths and the Environment, organised by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and the United Nations Development Programme.

But his words were also aimed at the global population of 1.3 billion Muslims for whom the Muslim Plan is intended to bring about long-term changes in lifestyle and attitudes through transforming their relationship with the environment. Speaking through a translator, Sheikh Ali Goma'a said: "We are committed to contribute to ongoing global efforts dealing with climate change, based on the Muslim Seven Year action plan that reflects Islamic principles and values."

It was, he added, "a religious duty to safeguard our environment and advocate the importance of preserving it. Pollution and global warming pose an even greater threat than war, and the fight to preserve the environment could be the most positive way of bringing humanity together."

Commenting afterwards, ARC secretary general Martin Palmer said: "This is part of a hugely complicated process: Islam saying to Islamic governments that this is how you should act Islamically. It also involves launching an umbrella association – the Muslim Association for Climate Change Action, MACCA."

UN Assistant Secretary-General Olav Kjørven said the Windsor gathering could not have come at a better time: negotiators were meeting in Barcelona this week ahead of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference next month. They would, he said, continue "the age-old rite" of climate change negotiations in which each participant would try to

secure the best deal for their country, and leave the others with as much of the bill as possible.

“Action is considered expensive and there is scarcity of hope, resources and will on all sides,” he said. “But not here. You have come to Windsor with the opposite mentality – that there is an abundance of possibilities and ‘let’s offer as much as possible, let’s come up with as many commitments as we possibly can’.”

This mentality of possibilities, abundance and hope – which was why the Windsor event is called a Celebration – was exactly what was needed in the Copenhagen Climate Change conference, said Mr Kjørven, adding that this was precisely why the United Nations was here.

Tomorrow, UN Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon will make a keynote address at Windsor Castle, in the presence of HRH The Prince Philip, founder of ARC. The Muslim Seven Year plan is one of 31 practical plans for long-term change that will be formally presented to HRH Prince Philip and HE Mr Ban.

See the Event website www.windsor2009.org

To read the summaries, please follow the link from this page:
www.windsor2009.org/page4.htm

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