

**Earth-Mates Dialogue
Centre
EMDC**

We need to talk, We need to listen



Speech prepared by Dr Mahmoud Akef, Executive Director of the Earth Mates Dialogue Center, for the Windsor Celebration, November 2009

In the name of God the most merciful

Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to share with you some points now that we have participated in this celebration for the last two days. Yesterday I was interviewed by a BBC reporter regarding this event. He asked me about the importance of this celebration and what religions have to do with environment.

I replied that the most important thing in our event is the participation of the United Nations and its initiative in gathering all religious leaders to find a solution for the environmental crisis. Even though it is a secular organisation, it needs the help of religions to deal with the current problem of climate change. So, the UN counts on us and this is a good new direction of the UN because I believe religions have solutions for all our contemporary challenges.

I also told the reporter that religion not only encourages its people to protect the environment but also to love the environment. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said in one of his *hadith*: “The mountain of Uhud is a mountain that loves us and we love it.” Also, if a person has changed his behaviour due to a religious reason, that means his behaviour will be changed forever. That means our plans are not seven, eight, nine, or even 876,530 years but are plans for life, and as long as there are believers, our plans will be implemented.

The second point is the practicality of the plans. Religions are not just prayers and teachings; they are how to practice and implement principles and values. The early believers understood this issue very well. The building of Solimania mosque 600 years ago in Istanbul is an example to show how those believers were aware of protecting the environment.

The Muslim architect designed pipes to collect the smoke from candles used in lighting the mosque in order to filter it before it went out into the atmosphere. Not only did this protect the environment but also he used the particles gathered on the filters as ink to write the holy Qur’an. This was the first time in history the idea of recycling was applied.

My last point was also a question by the reporter who asked me: ‘Tomorrow you are going to finish your conference, what do you have for Copenhagen?’ I said first, we are not finishing. In fact, tomorrow is the start. As for Cop15, I think all the people going there know the solution but the problem is no one is willing to commit to it.

For us, we are committed to our plans, and implementing our plans will be rewarded by Allah. So we should set the example and apply our cherished values. If our brothers in china implement their plan, they will save us in the Middle East; if we implement ours, we will save people in Europe; if the Europeans do theirs, they will save the people in America, and if the Americans do their job, they will save the Chinese. That is because we are all in the same boat.

Please do your homework and do not let the UN down.

I pray to Allah to return all of us back home safe and healthy.