

Sheikh Ali Goma'a, The Grand Mufti of Egypt's Speech at the Windsor Celebration, November 2, 2009

I am very delighted to be with you as we come together to celebrate our achievement, honour what we are committing to undertake to protect the living planet, and to help each other to plan for a better future for ourselves, our children and many generations to come.

The issue of the environment has become on the top of the humanities challenges and international concerns. The question of how to utilize religious teachings to solve environment-related problems has become an urgent one. In this context Islamic teachings and rules are extremely rich. The Qur'an states "... do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order: this is better for you, if you are believers." [7:85] Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), taught that "Those who plant a tree and patiently tend to it until it bears fruit will have the reward of charity from God". I am sure that all the religions have similar teachings and values.

It is 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. Environment-related issues ought to be a significant component of educational curricula. It is the duty of all religious scholars to acquaint themselves with the environmental crisis we are facing.

According to the Islamic Paradigm, human beings are the vice regents of God on earth and will be judged in the hereafter for their actions and held accountable for the way they handled the environment. Humankind is not free to consume or pollute carelessly. Preserving nature and preventing corruption on earth is one of the core responsibilities of all believers. The Qur'an changed the hearts and minds of its hearers when it dawned on the Arabian Peninsula, enriching humankind and providing a vivid lens through which we can look at nature. Today, at a time of environmental crisis, religious teachings can once again play a pivotal role and provide us with a fresh perspective and consciousness of nature.

We envision a world that is environmentally safe for our children and the next generations where all nations of all religions live in harmony with nature and enjoy justice and fair share of God's bounties. We are committed to contribute to the ongoing global efforts dealing with climate change based on the Muslim Seven Year action plan that reflects Islamic principles and values. The Muslim Association for Climate Change Action (MACCA) has been founded to be responsible for implementing the plan. The response to this action plan that we launched in Istanbul has been remarkable in a lot of ways and practical steps to execute the plan are underway. Major Islamic cities are to declare the Green status soon, such as Sala in Morocco and Madinah in Saudi Arabia. I am also very pleased to share with you that Egypt's Dar Al Iftaa, over which I preside, has started taking practical steps to go carbon neutral in 2010.

We ask God to bless our efforts and grant us the strength and courage to see our vision come true.