

DR. CHRISTOPHE NUTTALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, R20 REGIONS OF CLIMATE ACTION, MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2017

GREEN SACRED CITIES AND FAITH CONSISTENT INVESTMENT

ARC – R20 – Blue Orchard,

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Dr. Christophe Nuttall, CEO R20

"Faith communities are vital for global efforts to address the climate challenge. They remind us of the moral dimensions of climate change, and of our obligation to care for both the Earth's fragile environment and our neighbours in need. Green Faith in Action is helping several of the world's pilgrimage cities reduce their emissions and strengthen climate resilience. I commend this work for both its practical and strong symbolic value."

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General, July 2015.

1. General Context

- Even if largely ratified by conventions, protocols and agreements, climate change and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain ideal targets. Even though largely endorsed by scientists, activists, media, United Nations and important multilateral institutions, they still do not speak to the general public, whose concerns are access to water and food, health, energy, education, peace etc.
- As has become apparent many sections of the general public feel that they have been ignored or marginalised and these feelings and fears are increasingly being expressed through nationalism, populism and isolationism, which make global challenges even more difficult to tackle.
- Faith, spirituality and religious identity remain very high worldwide – 80% of the world's population claim they belong to a religion. More than 500 million pilgrims go to a sacred city every year to find inspiration and to reconnect with the core values of their faith.
- Within every faith, spiritual and religious group, there is a traditional wisdom, often based on sacred texts about protecting our Living Planet.

2. Specific context

- In the UN SDGs Summit and the Paris 2015 Summit on Climate Change, faith, spiritual and religious communities have been very actively involved.
- For COP 21, the French Government at the highest level, with the support of ARC and R20 organised the Summit of Conscience. From this a "Why do I care" call was sent to all heads of delegations coming to COP 21 in December 2015.
- ARC and R20 have launched, the faiths in action of the green agenda with a focus on the Resilient Pilgrim Cities. Considering that over 400 million pilgrims go to pilgrimage cities around the world annually, this makes them

high impact tourist destinations, which also have the potential for building awareness of sustainability issues, demonstrating solutions and mobilising action.

3. Vision

- ARC and R20's vision of the faiths in action of the green agenda is specifically aimed at the greening of a number of major Pilgrimage Cities around the world as a spiritual and practical demonstration of the commitment of religious institutions, faith and spiritual organisations to design, develop and implement low carbon and climate resilient infrastructures within pilgrimage cities. The focus is development of environmental and sustainable development infrastructure, which the huge rise in pilgrims worldwide necessitates. The faith basis of the Sacred Cities provides clear faith consistent values which give focus and depth to practical projects addressing zero waste management, biological sanitation, renewable energy production, energy efficiency transport, building and lighting, environmental education and management, sustainable city development, bio-food, access to water etc.
- To secure investment such faith based green infrastructure development need to be able to convince investors of the potential for return of their investment. The attraction of combining faith finance, faith structures, international investment and the focus on practical outcomes with real impacts on SDGs and climate change is proving very attractive. Indeed many now see that this combination can unlock the real potential for "green economy" to become normative worldwide.
- The impact of this faiths in action of the green agenda focusing on the Resilient Pilgrim Cities' initiative is not just confined to the cities themselves. Pilgrims returning home will become advocates for similar measures in their own countries and cities.

4. Work already undertaken

- ARC and R20 have worked together to identify the first batch of potential Sacred Cities¹ These have provided a basic outline of their proposed green infrastructure and are currently working on a fuller business plan in partnership between the faith and the secular authorities.
- A list of these projects now exists with a minimum set of data and official mandate letters.

¹ 1 Kano, Nigeria (Muslim) 2. Cebu and Naga, Philippines (Catholic) 3. Rameshwaram, India (Hindu) 4. Jiangsu, China (Daoist) 5. Etchmiadzin, Armenia (Christian) 6. Puri, India (Hindu) 7. Dwarka, India (Hindu) 8. Amritsar, India (Sikh) 9. Makah & Madina, Saudi Arabia (Muslim) 10. Fatima, Portugal & Lourdes, France (Catholic) 11. Kairouan, Tunisia (Muslim) 12. Nazareth, Israel (Jewish, Muslim & Christian) 13. Kalakad & Mundanthurai, India (Hindu) 14. Rishikesh, India (Hindu) 15. Touba, Senegal (Muslim) 16. Tiantai Shan, China (Daoist)

- A meeting has been organised late July 2017, which has brought all the key Sacred Cities participants together to create the collective movement of Sacred Cities and to address full business plan criteria.
- A fund is being created between

5. Strategy and next steps

Over the next months the following steps are being taken.

5.1. Create a dedicated Fund

- ARC and R20 are organising a major consultation with Blue Orchard, a impact investment fund manager in order to create a dedicated investment fund for Green Infrastructure within pilgrim cities.
- The fund is named **The Pilgrim Cities Impact Investing Fund (PCIIF)**
- It will be proposed to some faith investors here in Zug to access their appetite and therefore discuss with them next steps.

5.2. Create the appropriate international structure to enable Sacred Cities and investors to collaborate:

- Develop an independent stand alone Foundation which will be in charge of creating partnerships, overseeing, securing the finance, implementing the projects, and reporting on their development. ARC and R20 have agreed to explore different options.

Christophe Nuttall, R20 Regions of Climate Action

Christophe Nuttall has been Executive Director of the R20 Regions of Climate Action since January 2012, following exchanges between Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. He was previously Director of UNDP's Hub for Innovative Partnerships, and has developed a number of initiatives (such as the Territorial Approach to Climate Change which aims to chart a new low-carbon route to development at the subnational level) and has been in charge of Geographic Information Systems at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. He launched the International Multi-Partnerships Initiative on access to basic services, adopted at the 2007 UN-HABITAT Board. The Initiative was later adopted at the 2009 ECOSOC, which led to the listing of access to water as a human right in 2011. He has an Ecological Engineering degree and a PhD in Development Geography. He has worked as a space engineer at CNES (the French spatial agency), and been Scientific Advisor within the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (France)