

# AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMEROON

Long-term plan on the environment – summary

### INTRODUCTION

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is a national faith-based organisation with a strong presence in all the 10 regions of Cameroon. The Church has 1,364 congregations with around one million Christians.

The PCC operates nearly 180 schools as well as a teacher training college and a degree-granting theological seminary. It has four movements: the Christian Youth Fellowship, the Christian Women Fellowship, the Young Presbyterians and the Christian Men Fellowship. It operates four general hospitals and around 20 health centres. It runs several development projects including a rural development and agricultural programme, micro financing, gender and women's projects and several vocational training projects.

In the area of environmental protection, the PCC was among the first non-state actor to engage in tree planting as a contribution to alleviate the effects of climate change. Since the early 1960s, the PCC has planted over one million trees in different areas of Cameroon. The PCC has also championed the protection of water catchments in several villages and runs a rural development agricultural programme at the Presbyterian Rural Training Centre in the northwest region of the country.

In November 2009, the PCC presented its long-term plan of action on the environment at the ARC Windsor Celebration. Shortly after, it signed a Convention on Tree Planting and Forest Development with the National Forest Development Agency (ANAFOR) for a joint project to plant trees in the three northern regions of Cameroon and to extend community forests.

Its 'Operation Green, Plant a Tree Now' was chosen by US-based Interfaith Power and Light as part of its Internet 'Carbon Covenant' project – where members in American are encouraged to offset their carbon footprint by supporting faith-based environmental projects in Africa. 'Operation Green, Plant a Tree Now' is a three-year project aiming to plant 100,000 trees in different communities in Cameroon and ensure water catchments in communities are protected and developed. This is an interfaith project with the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Mission and Muslim communities.

It aims to work through young people in Presbyterian colleges and government schools to form clubs to plant trees and mobilise PCC organisations to plant trees as volunteers in collaboration with the ministries of Forestry, Environment, Agriculture and Research. In October 2011, with support from IPL and logistical support from the National Forest Development Agency and the British High Commission in Cameroon, 35,000 seedlings were planted.

In September 2010 the PCC held an ARC-sponsored workshop to develop a draft curriculum for the teaching of environment and climate change in its 150 primary schools. This was attended by head teachers, education professionals and ANAFOR.

In early 2012, also sponsored by ARC, it held a follow up workshop on the implementation of this draft curriculum as well as a consultation with teachers, parents and government authorities. The finalised curriculum has now been adopted by the PCC. The PCC is also taking part in the development of the ARC/Kenyan Organization for Environmental Education toolkit on introducing environmental education into faith schools.

## ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon will commit itself to the following activities as measures towards responding to the climate change challenge:

### SENSITISATION, AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION

- Organise Green Week Celebrations in all PCC congregations and schools;
- Preach sermons on the environment;
- Develop and implement curricula on environmental education in PCC schools;
- Organise conferences and training courses on environmental protection and climate change for community leaders;
- Organise a yearly information day for climate change campaigns;
- Publish articles on environment in PCC magazines and radio, public talks and campaigns in PCC congregations;
- Identify and protect water catchments in Northwest Cameroon.

### COMMUNITY FOREST DEVELOPMENT AND TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME

- Plant 100,000 trees in communities nationwide;
- Design a national tree planting map;
- Develop community forests in two communities in NW Cameroon;
- Curricula and teaching courses on environment and climate change introduced to PCC schools/colleges/theological seminary;
- Organise a training workshop for all Green Clubs in PCC schools;
- Provide fuel efficient cookers in PCC boarding schools/colleges;
- Support communities in the development/management of community forests through Community Forest Management teams and networks;
- Train communities in tree nursery development.

### FOOD CROP AND LIVESTOCK PRACTICES

- Carry out community training in modern food crop & live stock practices;
- Train local farmers in sustainable agriculture and agroforestry techniques in 14 communities through the PCC agricultural extension and training project.

### ENERGY AND WASTE

- Promote and monitor the use of energy efficient options in PCC institutions, including the use of solar panels and fuel efficient cookers;
- Monitor and encourage proper waste disposal at PCC institutions, such as support Green Clubs in PCC secondary schools to help the schools monitor waste, construct modern incinerators in PCC hospitals and health facilities.
- Develop radio programmes on climate change;
- Organise workshops with media practitioners about the environment.

*This plan is endorsed by the Moderator of the PCC, who is the Spiritual and Executive head of the Church, and the Synod Clerk, who is the Chief Administrator of the PCC.*

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