

AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ABUJA, NIGERIA Long-term plan on the environment – summary

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja in Nigeria has 270 priests and 550 reverend sisters, and around one million members. It runs 63 schools and 19 training facilities, educating 50,000 students, along with 28 organisations from women's associations to young people's groups.

In December 2010, its Archbishop, John Onaiyekan, attended a three-day event in London organised by ARC and the British Council for leading Christian and Muslim leaders in Nigeria to discuss environmental issues and the drawing up of a long-term plan on the environment. The Nigerian faith leaders met with HRH The Prince of Wales, the Anglican Bishop of London, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, the Lord Mayor of London and other British faith leaders and politicians.

As a result of that meeting, the Archdiocese of Abuja has drawn up a long-term plan of action on the environment. It has established Catholic Archdiocesan nurseries which have provided more than 5,000 seedlings free of charge to parishes, schools and non-Catholic institutions.

Earlier this year it organised a tree planting for 250 Christian and Muslim young people in the streets of the capital Abuja in an event entitled 'Planting for Peace and Development in Nigeria'.

It has also been raising awareness in its schools about the environment and participating in drawing up the ARC/Kenyan Organization for Environmental Education toolkit for introducing education on the environment and sustainable development into faith schools, and has shared this work with 40 of its head teachers and schools, as well as the Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Ministry of Environment, and Senate/Parliamentary Committees on Climate Change and Environment.

In addition, it has been working with its parishes, convents, schools, hospitals and training centres to promote the use of solar energy for generating light.

The Archdiocesan seven-year action plan aims to continue and build on the existing success of these initiatives.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- Create awareness on the causes, consequences, adaptation & mitigation methodology for climate change;
- Green the environment by establishing nurseries where seeds will be grown. Distribute seedlings from the nurseries to Catholic schools to green school land and premises;
- Plant trees and beautify Abuja cities/highways with plants;
- Integrate religious values into education for sustainable development in our faith schools and communities – including organising retreats and seminars for students

on environmental issues and awarding prizes to schools that green their environment;

- Advocate on issues of climate justice at all levels of our government for a sustainable environment;
- Educate our young people on how to conserve energy by tapping energy from the sun (solar energy);
- Introduce water harvesting and management to farmers and in our schools. Build reservoirs for storing water in schools;
- Engage in networking and partnership with government and non-governmental organisations on climate change;
- Build capacity for those who will be responsible for executing the project.

It is hoped to expand this plan to cover the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja Province which covers four states in the middle belt of Nigeria and six Dioceses.

This seven-year plan is endorsed by Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria.

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