

# AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

## QADIRIYYAH MOVEMENT, NIGERIA Long-term plan on the environment – summary

### INTRODUCTION

The Qadiriyyah Movement is Nigeria's largest Islamic sect with an estimated 15 million followers in the country. It has 1,500 full-time imams and muqaddams (spiritual representatives) largely in Northern and South Western states of Nigeria as well as in Northern Sudan, Niger, Chad, Togo, Cameroon and Ghana. The movement runs 118 primary schools, 34 secondary schools, two theological colleges and has more than 8,000 affiliated mosques.

Khalifa Sheikh Qaribullah Nasir Kabara is the leader of the Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement in Nigeria and the entire West African region. He was one of four leaders who attended the ARC/British Council-organised visit of Nigerian leaders to the UK in November 2010 and who committed to drawing up a long-term plan of action on the environment.

In November 2011, the Qadiriyyah Movement in Nigeria, along with the city of Kano in Nigeria, joined as founding members of ARC's new initiative, the Green Pilgrimage Network, launched at Assisi, Italy. This is a global network of green pilgrim cities and sacred sites of all faiths. One and a half million Muslim pilgrims from West Africa go to Kano each year to visit the tombs of the local Qadiriyyah saints for the annual Maukib festival. A charter to green the city has been drawn up and signed by the state government and the eight municipal local governments as well as the Qadiriyyah Movement.

The pilgrimage is set to become environmentally friendly, with a ban on cars and motorcycles. Local school children will be involved in a 'pick up' campaign to collect plastic water bags from the streets; children will have a target of picking up 100 polythene bags each week which will then be recycled. Environmental studies will be introduced in primary and secondary schools in Kano and there will be a campaign to get all school children to plant trees. Alternative energy will be installed in mosques. In 2012 the Qadiriyyah movement also adapted and translated into the Hausa language The Green Guide for Hajj for use by the thousands of pilgrims who travel from Nigeria to Mecca in Saudi Arabia each year.

These commitments build on the existing environment commitments of the Qadiriyyah movement. For example, it already has a programme in which its schoolchildren are given two tree seedlings to plant at the start of the school year; one to plant in the school orchard and one to take home. At the end of the year pupils are assessed on how well they have looked after their trees, and this contributes to half their academic marks.

The Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement intends to expand the school tree-planting programme further among its 120,000 schoolchildren. In addition, over the next seven years it will:

### EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

- Develop a tree seedling nursery to supply the schools with seedlings;
- Establish gardens and orchards in Qadiriyyah schools to teach agriculture and

environmental care and to provide fruits and vegetables to Qadiriyyah 'Green Grocery' kiosks to be set up within Kano metropolis as official retail outlets for products from its orchards and gardens;

- Hold a teacher training workshop on environmental care;
- Hold a workshop on tree planting and care for teachers and muqaddams (religious officials);
- Organise weekly collections of used polythene water bags; the children will collect the bags as part of a street cleaning programme and they will be recycled for use in the tree nursery programme. The aim is that 120,000 children will pick up 100 used poly bags each per week and each child will be rewarded with academic points as part of their school continuous assessment. The poly bags will be recycled and used to grow tree seedlings in tree nurseries. Excess poly bags will be sold to poly bag manufacturers. Longer-term, the Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement intends to lobby for a plastic bag recycling plant to be established in Kano city;
- Develop an environmental care curriculum for Qadiriyyah schools;
- Establish Green Clubs in schools;
- Organise monthly public school visits in Kano by Sheikh Qaribullah to promote 'environmental talks and tree planting'.

#### ENVIRONMENT

- Develop environmental education materials for schools;
- Develop a theological guide on Muslims & the environment;
- Establish a local weather station to monitor air pollution in Kano city for educational and public information;
- Plant trees in selected streets to green Kano metropolis; a projected 350,000 trees will be planted annually on roads in Kano city over seven years;
- Distribute blessed tree seedlings to muqaddams (religious officials); qadiris (members of the Qadiri Sufi Order); and Maukib pilgrims. The Sheikh will conduct special prayers on the seedlings and they will be distributed for planting at homes and mosque premises to 8,000 sheikhs, 1,500 imams of mosques, 150 headmasters of schools and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. The Sheikh will also speak about environmental care during the pilgrimage.

#### FOOD

- Acquire land to develop a 'Green Pilgrims Orchard';
- Develop organic gardens and orchards in its schools. Fruit and vegetables will go to local groceries to provide revenue;
- Develop a Qadiriyyah orchard and local vegetable garden. This will supply organically grown fruits and vegetables at affordable prices and act as a demonstration centre for sustainable farming. Members of the Qadiriyyah movement will be levied to fund the project until it becomes sustainable.

#### FAITH & LIFESTYLE

- Green the Kano Hajj Pilgrims camp;
- Distribute tree seedlings as part of its Green Cemeteries Programme; this will provide tree seedlings for distribution to seven major cemeteries in Kano city. Seedling depots will be established at each cemetery to distribute seedlings to funeral undertakers and undertakers will assist in planting a tree besides every new grave;
- Introduce solar power for lighting in its mosques;
- Compile Islamic wisdoms from the Qur'an and Hadiths on food, water and conservation for radio programmes. Radio jingles will also be produced from Islamic scriptures on the environment, food, water, sustainable lifestyle and

conservation. Local artists, poets and musicians will be commissioned to produce special works on sustainable lifestyles;

- Organise the mass production and distribution of fuel efficient stoves;
- Install a hybrid solar and wind power system in the headquarters of the Qadiriyyah Movement in Africa, in Kano city. This will be used for practical demonstrations during religious gatherings to promote sustainable energy.

#### MEDIA

Several media campaigns are planned on local radio stations including:

- Islam & Your Environment;
- Your Faith & Your Carbon Footprint;
- War Against Polythene Bags;
- War Against Bush Burning;
- Fighting Materialism with Sufism;
- Longer-term, establish a Green FM Radio station in Kano – the first of its kind in Nigeria.

#### PARTNERSHIPS/ALLIANCES

The Qadiriyyah Sufi Movement intends to build alliances on environmental action with other local Islamic groups and develop secular and technical partnerships with Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Kano State Government of Nigeria through Kano State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority, Kano State Ministry of Environment, the Federal Forestry Research Institute and the National Horticultural Research Institute.

It is also working with ARC and the Kenyan Organization for Environmental Education to draw up a toolkit for environmental education in faith schools.

*This plan has been endorsed by the Qadiriyyah Movement's leader Khalifa Sheikh Qaribullah Nasir Kabara*

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