

PRESS RELEASE FOR THE LAUNCH ANNOUNCEMENT OF FAITHFUL CITIES

Wednesday November 18, Lambeth Palace.

A major new religions and conservation initiative is announced today at the Archbishop of Canterbury's medieval Lambeth Palace in central London. The initiative comes from Arnold Schwarzenegger's R20 organisation, and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), which was established exactly 20 years ago by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, in partnership with the Danish eco organisation Sustainia.

In a unique move, the three organisations are launching "Faithful Cities – pilgrims for a living planet" which will work with the major pilgrimage cities of the world to develop conservation and sustainable technology implementation programmes to help such places deal sustainably with the millions of pilgrims they handle at each place every year, and inspire those who live there to make their cities greener, cleaner and more resilient.

The UN World Tourism Organisation estimates that some 330 million people make some kind of spiritual pilgrimage each year and the numbers are rising. The impact of such growing numbers on cities such as Amritsar for the Sikhs; Makkah and Touba for Muslims; Rome, Lourdes, Fatima, and Mexico for Christians; Tai Shan for the Daoists of China or Ise for the Shinto of Japan, the four Kumbh Mela cities in India and many others, is enormous.

The ecological footprint of pilgrims is now causing serious problems and this new initiative aims to help reduce and in many cases enhance that footprint.

As the initial agreement between the three organisations says:

"[We are] moved by the desire to contribute to the required paradigm shift for the green economy, with high spiritual values and principles, foster concrete bottom-up actions through green public infrastructure services (waste management, biological sanitation, renewable energy, energy efficiency: LED street lighting, energy positive buildings, e-mobility, organic food and reducing food waste, etc....) to be implemented within a number of pilgrimage cities of the most powerful religions, faiths and spiritual organisations."

The initiative to create this new movement arose from work that all three groups have undertaken in recent years. R20 has led the way of finding investors who will come in to invest in sustainable development such as the first large-scale 50 MW solar PV plant in Mali worth USD 100 million; a USD 500 million ESCO for LED street lighting in Brazil; municipal solid waste management in Oran, Algeria; as well as community-based projects in Burundi and Nigeria (biogas digesters to convert food

waste into methane for cooking, solar ovens for a bakery, biosand water filters for households).

ARC launched a programme in 2011 to explore the feasibility of working with pilgrimage world wide through its Green Pilgrimage Network programme.

Sustainia produces an annual document *Sustainia 100 – a guide to 100 sustainable solutions* which highlights and encourages new technological solutions to key environmental issues.

The three parties agreed in principle to create Faithful Cities in July at the Summit of Conscience, co-hosted by the French President.

The first projects will include:

First projects in the pilgrim cities will be:

1. Bus: Electric and/or hydrogen vehicles for transportation of pilgrims.
2. Solar panels for air conditioning, fans etc.
3. Parking lots covered with solar panels for air conditioning and lighting.
4. Plastic bottles: to be recycled or replaced by reusable containers.
5. Food waste composting.
6. Waste management with energy production: waste-to-energy.
7. Tunnels and streets for pilgrims lit with LED lights.
8. Prayers about preserving and protecting Mother Earth to be distributed
9. Booklets linking environment and religion to be created and distributed.

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