

The Istanbul Conference to Declare the Muslim Seven Year Plan: 6-7 July 2009

The Muslim Seven Year Plan is being created through Earthmates Dialogue Center in partnership with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC)

Introduction:

Since it was created last year, the draft Muslim Seven Year Plan to Protect the Natural Environment (<http://tinyurl.com/d86gll>) has been welcomed and discussed at several different events in the Islamic world as well as in the seventh Annual Dialogue between the Islamic world and Japan, in March 2009 in Kuwait (<http://tinyurl.com/dy828l>). The Istanbul Conference is the next stage in the process.

Islam does not have one agreed identity to represent the whole Muslim world, and so the Istanbul conference will gather between 60 and 80 scholars representing the Muslim UMMAH from different Islamic countries and communities to discuss and endorse the plan.

This is an important model of how to deal with this major world issue. It is a dream of many - in both the faith-based and the secular worlds - to have religions working to solve one of the most challenging problem facing humankind today: the environmental crisis.

The plan:

The environmental crisis is one of the world's most challenging problems. It has united many segments of humanity and constitutes a common concern of a world-wide movement.

In the West, many groups are campaigning against the abuse of the environment, exerting pressure on their governments to enact legislation to limit pollution and prevent over-exploitation of nature. But protecting the environment depends not only on legislation, but also on the awakening of conscience.

Islamic law underpins the daily lives of Muslims, yet despite the availability in Islamic literature of texts, teachings, and rules protecting nature, Islamic scholars have been slow to enact environmental laws derived from the Qur'an and from the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Vision:

“We envision a world that is environmentally safe for our children and the next generations where all nations of all religions live in harmony with nature and enjoy justice and fair share of God's bounties”

The mission:

“To mobilize all the resources of the Islamic Ummah to contribute to the ongoing global efforts dealing with Climate Change based on a Seven Year Environmental Conservation Action Plan that reflects Islamic Principles and Values”.

The strategy:

The strategy includes focusing the efforts on selected Islamic Leaders and Institutions, partnering with key relevant Institutions from other religions, and complementing ongoing efforts of National, Regional and Global bodies to help protect the natural environment. All the actions have been discussed from different aspects: the priority of the action, the action output, the target group, the players, the time frame, the input, and indicators for evaluation of accomplishment. Islam is different in many respects from other religions, so we have to deal and use different methodology. The draft 7YP was developed by conducting many meetings of specialists and environmentalists with an Islamic background. Then we introduced the draft to many different conferences and events (including in Morocco, Kuwait, Turkey, UK, Indonesia, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) to increase the awareness about the plan and the number of stakeholders. Through this, we received endorsement from key scholars in the Islamic world –both official and non-official.

The next step is to organize the conference with 60-80 Muslim scholars from different regions and backgrounds to represent the spectrum of the Islamic religion. The scholars have been chosen to cover both sides of official and non-official in the Islamic world. The gathering will discuss and declare the plan to be the Muslim seven year action plan to deal with the climate change for the next generations.

The program:

As well as opening and closing ceremonies the program will be roughly as follows:

Day One

1. The importance of nature conservation in Islam
2. Presenting the draft M7YP with examples of actions and good practice.
3. Group discussions - 1
4. Group discussions - 2

Day Two

1. General discussion
2. Making agreed changes and declaration of the M7YAP
3. The next steps and the Copenhagen meeting
4. Final words from key scholars to encourage implementation.

Sponsorship:

The conference will be sponsored by many organizations and entities. The main

sponsor will be the Great Istanbul Municipality for the accommodation for the attendances and participants. The Fatih University of Istanbul will contribute the venue. Other sponsorship includes the ARC, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization (ISESCO00), the Ministry of Environment in Turkey, the Ministry of Awqaf in Morocco. Further sponsorship is being sought for covering travel costs etc for key delegates from the developing world.

Background:

Details of the background to the draft Muslim Seven Year Plan and the plan itself can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/d86gll>