The Role of Environmental and Spiritual Ethics in Galvanizing Nature Based Solutions

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Unprecedented Multiple Crises
Science and technology alone will not solve these pressing problems.

Transitioning to a more sustainable future requires the employment of innovative approaches that address climate change and protect the natural environment based on behavioural and environmentally ethical changes in production and consumption patterns.
Religious ethics are the moral principles that guide religions and set the standard for what is and isn’t acceptable behavior, flow from the core beliefs and ancient wisdom of religion and its teachers and traditions, honor God or reflect a higher state of being.

Secular ethics:
- Based on scientific understanding of the world
- Reality, truth, and goodness do not depend on the existence of a god
- The primary difference is in how values are justified

Nature-Based Solutions is an umbrella term for various approaches designed to protect the natural environment whilst addressing societal challenges, inspired to work with nature itself and its capacity to self-heal.
Diversity not homogeneity

Common notion of a Moral Duty
Previous Approaches

• The Seoul Declaration on Environmental Ethics was adopted on 5 June 1997 by an international seminar on environmental ethics for the twenty-first century

• 2000 Millennium Declaration included respect for nature among the six fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century

• World Charter for Nature, which provides: "Every form of life is unique, warranting respect regardless of its worth to man, and to accord other organisms such recognition, man must be guided by a moral code of action."

• Common declaration on environmental ethics of JOHN PAUL II AND THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH - 2002

• UNEP’s Engaging with Faith-based Organizations Strategy

• UNEP Governing council discussion paper UNEP/GC.21/5 18 January 2001 The Environmental Dimension of the Dialogue Among Civilizations.

• Environment, Religion and Culture in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

• The Earth Charter: The Earth Charter is an ethical foundation for actions to build a more just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It articulates a mindset of global interdependence and shared responsibility. It offers a vision of hope and a call to action.

• Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions
1. To think of the world's children when we reflect on and evaluate our options for action.

2. To be open to study the true values based on the natural law that sustain every human culture.

3. To use science and technology in a full and constructive way, while science findings evaluated on the centrality of the human person, of the common good and of the inner purpose of creation.

4. To be humble of ownership and to be open to the demands of solidarity. Our mortality and our weakness of judgement together warn us not to take irreversible actions with what we choose to regard as our property.

5. We have not been entrusted with unlimited power over creation, we are only stewards of the common heritage.

6. To acknowledge the diversity of situations and responsibilities in the work for a better world environment.

7. Everyone has a part to play, but for the demands of justice and charity to be respected the most affluent societies must carry the greater burden.

8. To promote a peaceful approach to disagreement about how to live on this earth, about how to share it and use it, about what to change and what to leave unchanged.

9. We commit ourselves to respect the views of all who disagree with us, seeking solutions through open exchange, without resorting to oppression and domination.
Religious leaders support water conservation

Green fatwas: the imams championing the environment in water-scarce Jordan

Jordan is facing severe water shortages and as refugee numbers rise, so is demand. The world is calling imams to help.
Buddhist Monks
Ordinating Trees
Indonesia issues fatwa against forest fires
Churches put their faith in green energy
Religions
Botanic Gardens

Quranic botanical garden
Skálholt Church

Gardens of the Bible

The Living Chapel
Mangroves

Building with Nature

To Control Floods, The Dutch Turn to Nature for Inspiration
Food Security
To waste or not to waste
EMBRACING MODESTY WITHOUT SACRIFICING STYLE

Sustainable Living

Should Religious Organisations Manage Their Sustainability Impacts?
Recommendations

- Interfaith collaboration to form a global platform “Faith for Earth Coalition” to bring the common understanding of religions towards our spiritual and moral responsibility toward earth.

- Strengthen interfaith collaboration in the implementation of the SDGs contributing to peace-building and environmental sustainability.

- Inter and Intra-Faith collaboration capacity building of faith leaders on ethical, moral and spiritual responsibility towards earth.

- Strengthen educational materials building on ethics, values and cultural norms to raise a future generation linked to moral standards and not material world.

- Religious scholars to continue engaging with scientists in building guidance addressing moral, ethical, spiritual, and practical responses to adopt NBS.

- Governments to embrace religious and cultural diversity, knowledge and sustainable practices in building back a better future.

- Empower UNEP and its partners to continue engaging religious leaders in policy dialogue through UNEA.