



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Barcelona 2008



IUCN Media Advisory

Spirituality and Conservation

Sustainability Dialogue: Thursday 9th October 2008, 09:30 –11:00, Auditorium

The Story

Religious and spiritual traditions are fundamental drivers of human behaviour. In different ways, possibly all religious and spiritual traditions have something significant to say about our relationship with nature, but in many cases this wisdom seems to have eroded over time. The spirituality of indigenous and traditional peoples has been key in maintaining and supporting stewardship practices, but it is also affected by many factors – including religious intolerance. Can faiths and spiritual traditions of the world engage more deeply in safeguarding life on Earth? Recent experiences seem to show a very positive development in this direction, with notable examples from many religious and spiritual traditions – but much remains to be done. Can the conservation community be more helpful in engaging with religious and spiritual traditions for better caring for the planet? IUCN wants to offer the opportunity for dialogue between faith and spiritual traditions and the conservation community, and to promote greater engagement and collaboration for sustainable living on a sustainable planet.

Key Issues

- How do the value systems of religious and spiritual traditions support conservation?
- Do religious and spiritual traditions have special role to play in addressing urgent environmental problems such as climate change?
- What kind of support can religious and spiritual traditions realistically offer to promote sustainable living on a sustainable planet?
- What lessons are being learned about the engagement of religious and spiritual traditions on environmental issues?
- What is the relevance of the ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue for the conservation community?

Panelists

1. Ms Mary Evelyn Tucker (Forum on Religion and Ecology, Harvard University, USA).
2. Ms Masoumeh Ebtekar (Former Vice President of Iran, Tehran City Councillor).
3. Mr Jonathan Rose (The Garrison Institute, USA).
4. Bishop Geoffrey Davis (Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute, South Africa).
5. Mr Satish Kumar (India).
6. Ms Stella Simiyu (A Rocha International Trustee and Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, Kenya).
7. **Moderator:** Mr John Grim (Forum on Religion and Ecology, Harvard University, USA)

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Lead Organisers:

- IUCN: Senior Adviser on Social Policy, and WCPA Delos Initiative of the Task Force on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas
- Forum on Religion and Ecology, Harvard University, USA

Related Book Launch: Wednesday 8th October, 20.30- 21.30, Room 114, IUCN/WCPA best practice guidelines on Sacred Natural Sites

Focal Points

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