



THE CRANS MONTANA FORUM

in association with ISESCO

"Africa and the South-South Cooperation: Toward a better Governance for a sustainable Economic & Social Development"

17-22 March, 2016 (Dakhla, Morocco)

RE: Participation of Swami Agnivesh to the Crans Montana Forum in Dakhla, Morocco in the following special session co-organized with ISESCO.

SATURDAY - 10:00 - 12:30 : A PARALLEL SESSION

____ AN ISESCO'S SPECIAL PROGRAMME ____ on:

**"THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION EDUCATION"**

Description:

1. Towards an interactive relationship between religious leaders and educational institutions in favor of environmental protection
2. Educational methodologies for a religious discourse preaching environmental protection
3. Information and communication and environmental protection education
4. Success stories regarding empowerment of religious leaders towards active involvement in environmental protection awareness

<http://www.cmf.ch/wp-content/uploads/Tab-Afrique-2016-32.pdf> (scroll down to p. 10)

(بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم) AUM- Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem)

Presentation by Swami Agnivesh:

- My presentation will begin with a preamble and be followed by recommendations directly related to the above first topic, as well as the second one indirectly.

Preamble:

The vision of One God,

One Universe

One earth as Home

One Human Family (with birds and animals as extended family)

should guide our Mission for an Education System to promote a Spiritual Paradigm for a sustainable development that includes at its heart environmental protection. From a spiritual perspective the earth, the air, the water, the forests, the mineral wealth and everything that mother nature has to offer to her 7 billion children is the most sacred and the most precious gift of Allah the Creator. Our education system should bring out:

1. The Sacredness of our human body which is a great miracle;
2. The Sacredness of the environment;
3. Our Sacred religious duty to celebrate Interdependence of all life and integrity of Creation.

As believers, we should promote & preserve the environment. Neglecting this means worshipping false gods.

The climate change crisis is essentially a man-made global crisis. The root cause is an over-consumeristic life style bordering on hedonism in the rich industrial North and a similar North in the South. It is this life style based on a dominant development paradigm that is the threat to human-environment relation.

We urgently need a paradigm shift- from a greed-based to a need-based sustainable development

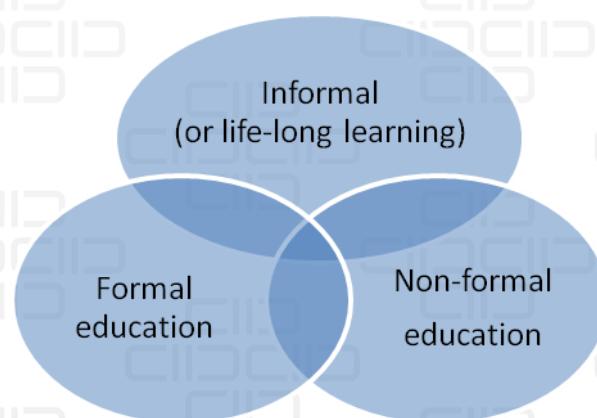
model. Mahatma Gandhi had famously said “Mother Earth can fulfil the needs of all human beings. But it cannot fulfil the Greed of even one person. As remedy he had

suggested that: “We should live simply so that others can simply live”. Our education system should therefore inculcate the values of “Simple living and high thinking” as opposed to “eat, drink and be merry”. We religious leaders should lead this movement for spiritual, moral, ethical values in Education so that the future of humanity is not waylaid by the dark forces of crass consumerism.

These values, from my perspective as a Hindu, should aim for:

1. Alcoholism, Tobacco, Gambling and drug free culture;
2. Vegetarianism and veganism;
3. Emphasis on Being, and not on having;
4. Sharing and caring and not personal material aggrandisement;
5. Dialogue and not violence to settle disputes and differences;
6. Peacefully resist privatisation of natural resources for profit & profiteering;
7. Monitoring all development projects from the perspective of an environmental activist.

- Finally, to come to the first topic of this panel, it is important, from the outset, to recognize three overlapping forms of educational contexts:



- In all three kinds of education, religious leaders must play a role.
- Here are some recommendations, which can also be adapted depending on the location and the responsibilities of religious leaders in each of the following cases:

1. In formal education where religious leaders are part of the official teaching and curriculum design of religious education (often called ‘confessional education’), within ministries of education or in collaboration with them, religious leaders have a direct responsibility to ensure that any topic related to ethics/morals and/or values/virtues must include **environmental protection** through the lenses of each religious heritage (sacred texts, interpretative traditions, and role models (i.e. saints, etc.)
2. In formal education where religious leaders participate in giving input into the curriculum design process, whether for ‘religious education’, ‘interreligious education’, ‘values education’, ‘ethics and religious culture education’, or ‘citizenship education’, religious leaders must work dialogically with both other religious leaders across religious diversity as well as with educational experts who may, or not, be religious themselves or represent either a secular or religious ministry of education in order to promote **environmental protection education**.
3. In non-formal education, religious leaders can play a role in ensuring addition or strengthening of **environmental protection education** when they are already part of the institutional make up and internal process of decision-making. Ex: World Organization of Scout Movement (WOSM). Non-formal education can be done through religious or non-religious NGOs; in the first case, the links already exists for religious leaders; in the second case, religious leaders can approach such institutions/organizations to seek to add their voices on the importance of adding or strengthening **environmental protection education** by ensuring that sacred texts, stories, people be included in such non-formal education.
4. In non-formal education that takes place through the various ways religious institutions engage their members, especially in daily and/or weekly preaching (sermons, khutbah, etc.), religious leaders have a particular responsibility to ensure frequent references to **environmental protection education**, in both direct ways (when the main topic of the preaching is ‘**environmental protection**’, at least annually) as well as indirect ways (references to environmental protection is embedded in other topics, on as frequent a basis as possible).
5. In informal education, religious leaders must become exemplars of daily living with sensitivity and care for environmental protection. To this end, many of them need to be trained in this direction.
6. For all the above recommendations, it is important to develop better religious and interreligious online resources on environmental protection from various religious perspectives as well as from the overlap between those perspectives and many international declarations and statements that are not religious per se.

7. For all the above recommendations to be implemented more effectively, training of religious leaders is essential so that they can learn how to use the above-mentioned online resources and be the leaders in their own communities to create groups of people dedicated to environmental protection starting with their own religious buildings, grounds, and community behaviors.

Thank You!