



RELIGIOUS LEADERS AT COP 22 CALL FOR ADDENDUM TO PARIS AGREEMENT: 33 PERCENT REDUCTIONS IN GREED, HATRED AND IGNORANCE

Marrakech, Morocco, November 17, 2016 - Religious leaders who gathered at the UNFCCC Climate Conference COP 22 in Marrakech called for an addendum to the Paris Agreement to help nations meet their climate reduction goals. In addition to reducing carbon emissions, the religious delegation at the COP 22 proposed efforts to mitigate human greed, ignorance and hatred of the "other" -- which are at the root of the devastating climate crisis. According to the delegation, if the human community is to learn to live within the carrying capacity of Earth to survive then a major shift in consciousness is required. As an outcome of the Marrakech conference, religious leaders announced a new Interreligious Climate Agreement to guide the way forward for the human community.

“We need a reduction in the emissions of greed, hatred and ignorance,” said African Buddhist monk and founder of the Uganda Buddhist Center, Venerable Bhante Buddharakita. “It is ignorance that prevents us from understanding our interdependence with all life and our relationship with Earth. It is this change in mindset that will help us address the ecological and climate crisis. More empathy and less apathy is needed so that we can feel what we are doing to Mother Earth,” he continued.

Venerable Buddharakita presented this moral vision at a Green Zone side event at COP 22 on the *Inner Dimensions of Climate Change*, organized by The Global Peace Initiative of Women in partnership with the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association and support from the International Council for the Day of Vesak, (ICDV), a non governmental organization based in Thailand with ECOSOC status with the United Nations.

The members of the religious delegation included Egyptian Sufi leader Dr. Aliaa Raffa; Chief Tamale Bwoya, Healer and Chief, Kingdom of Buganda; Tiokasin Ghosthorse, Sundancer from the Lakota Nation; Venerable Chang Ji, Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association, USA; Reverend Richard Cizik, President, New Evangelicals for the Common Good, USA; Jana Long, Founder, Power of One Yoga, USA; and Sraddhalu Ranade, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, India.

Among those who spoke at the side event was Chief Tamale Bwoya, who said, “For millennia indigenous communities have lived in harmony with nature. We knew how to listen respectfully to the wisdom of nature. Today this knowledge is in danger of being lost. We must regain the respect and love for Mother Earth.”

The side event highlighted the role of the traditional knowledge of the Earth with science and innovation to generate new possibilities for solutions. By reframing the environmental crisis as a spiritual and cultural one, communities can be mobilized to renew their relationship with nature and adopt approaches that conserve and protect the planet. Even amid uncertainty about the U.S. commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement following the recent U.S. election, it was clear from statements and presentations that momentum for carbon reduction was already in place.

“Being here in Marrakech is a reminder that the United States is not the only star in the sky, as over 100 countries have committed to implementing the Paris Climate Agreement,” said Reverend Richard Cizik, who represented the religious delegation at the Marrakech Conference in the Blue Zone. “While America may depart from its leadership role, given the election outcome, our biblical duty as Christians remains the same -- to be stewards of creation (Genesis 2:15). We have to re-double our commitment to ecological protection and speak



the truth about any retreat from protection of creation.”

As the end of the COP 22 draws nears, government leaders are striving to create stronger action plans to mitigate the physical causes of the climate crisis. However, the religious and spiritual leaders announced their commitment to build an accompanying movement to effect the spiritual and ethical lapses that have given rise to ecological destruction and climate instability.

“The climate crisis is at heart a spiritual crisis, and that is why we bring spiritual leaders each year to the United Nations Climate Change Conferences,” said Dena Merriam, founding member of the Contemplative Alliance and founder of The Global Peace Initiative of Women, organizer of the religious delegation. “The human community is being called to undergo a spiritual transformation in order to affect the economic, political and social changes needed. If we place Mother Earth at the center of our thinking and consider how our acts affect Her communities of life, we will find our way forward.”

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About the Global Peace Initiative of Women

The Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW) emerged from the first World Summit of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the Palais des Nations in Geneva in 2002, a summit convened in response to the lack of women in the ranks of world spiritual and religious leadership. GPIW was founded to provide faith leaders with a forum to engage in causes for social transformation and to provide women in this sector with a strategic network to support and advance their efforts. Today, GPIW engages men and women religious and spiritual leaders recognizing the divine feminine qualities across a wide range of programs addressing conflict resolution, climate change, poverty, and inequality. For more information, visit www.gpiw.org.

About the Contemplative Alliance

Launched by GPIW in 2008, the Contemplative Alliance is an inter-spiritual movement grounded in contemplative practices and approaches with the goal of heightening awareness and generating actions to address the critical issues of our times. We seek to accomplish this by creating an alliance of organizations and individuals from across religious, faith and worship traditions who believe that inner development is an essential element in the positive transformation of the global community. By sharing this message, our vision is that individuals and organizations will act from a place of deep inner wisdom to advance the wellbeing of the global community.