

## **Environmental Justice and Food Security in Kenya**

### **Abstract of the talk given by Archbishop Makarios at the Round Table on Climate Crisis: the role of Christians in Environmental Care, held at the Orthodox Church on Valley Road, Nairobi, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

This talk sought to explain the connection between environmental justice and food security. It focused on the role of human beings as the cause of the environmental deterioration of planet earth. More specifically, it showed that effects like land degradation, lack of soil fertility, pollution of rivers and lakes and lack of safe drinking water are caused by human activities such as poor farming techniques, destruction of forests, unrestrained use of plastics and of noxious chemicals as well as charcoal burning. These human activities have resulted in the uncontroversial fact that "man has become the greatest enemy to the environment he lives in."

What is the solution to this crisis? "Every spiritual person who understands the creation doctrine ought to take ... responsibility" by regarding the earth as a life-sustaining sanctuary. "Man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself (Rachel Carson).... "Man's continued unhealthy quest at food sustainability efforts emerges as a war against ... mother nature. ... If we conserve our environment we insure our own lives. The collapse of entire eco-systems means the end of life ... We therefore need to awaken to the reality that earth is here with us, not just for us." We must ... "eliminate processes and activities that are likely to endanger the environment." With respect to food security and environmental justice, "we are faced with a dangerous cycle where efforts to produce enough food leaves the environment degraded and, in turn, subsequent efforts at food production become futile and unachievable." Without effective public awareness about the connection between food insecurity and environmental protection, efforts to achieve either food security or a safe environment will be futile.

## **CLIMATE CRISIS: THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANS IN ENVIRONMENTAL CARE**

### **Summary of a talk given by Lilian Njehia on 26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018 at a 'Round Table' held at the Orthodox Church, Valley Road, Nairobi**

In her talk, Ms. Lilian Njehia answered the following four questions: (1) What is the environment? (2) What is sustainable development? (3) What do we mean by 'ecological footprint'? (4) How are our consumption habits? The answers to these questions made it clear that our present environmental habits militate against sustainable development. In other words, if we continue with these habits, we will not leave enough resources for future generations to meet even their basic needs. Though a safe environment is **our entitlement** (according to Kenya's 2010 Constitution) it is at the same time our **responsibility** to keep the environment safe for our descendants. "All natural resources are finite; if we exploit them at rates higher than natural replenishment/regeneration, we run into '**ecological deficits**', and we can actually be '**in the red**,'" on account of having depleted our reserves. "When God created everything, He did so with great order and purpose, arranged around symbiotic relationships among various life forms." As human beings we must urgently learn to become part of this symbiosis and adopt environmentally sustainable habits, it being "impossible to draw the line between ourselves and the environment."

***CLIMATE CHANGE: ADAPTATIONS AND MITIGATIONS IN KENYA***

Michael K. Koech

**Abstract**  
**26/05/2018**

Planet earth is increasingly experiencing the challenges of climate change. These include changes in normal patterns of weather conditions and more frequent occurrences of regional, national and local disasters such as floods, droughts and natural fires. In addition, we see a rise in coastal waters, more rigorous vector illnesses, economic instability and an increase in conflicts over natural resources. The causes of climate change may be natural or man-made. Natural causes include changes in the earth's orbit, in the amount of energy coming from the sun, ocean changes and volcanic eruptions. Man-made causes are the burning of fossil fuels, clearing of forests, increased livestock production, the use of nitrogen-based fertilizers and fluorinated gases, thus sending trapping gases into the atmosphere.

The agriculture, forestry and manufacturing sectors in Kenya contribute slightly to global warming. But the country is very susceptible to climate-related effects and extreme weather events pose serious threats to its socio-economic development as well as to the health and wellbeing of its citizens. This is understandable since the key drivers of the economy are primarily natural resource based. The country is negatively impacted by climate change in nearly all its economic sectors, such as agriculture, tourism, transport, industry and forestry. The Government of Kenya ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994 since it recognized the problems posed by climate change; and the importance of taking the necessary action to mitigate or to adapt to its impacts. It has since enacted various laws and policies to reduce the country's vulnerability.

This paper focuses on Kenya as a case study of climate change adaptations and mitigations measures. The paper briefly describes the causes of climate change and its effects. It also identifies what the Kenya government is doing, has done, and plans to do, including suggestions of various activities and actions in certain sectors of the economy. These suggestions and actions can also be carried out by other groups: religious bodies, NGOs and schools. The efforts include actions in the following areas: agriculture, forestry, energy, solid waste management in addition to environmental advocacy. All such efforts will contribute to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change to our country.

**Key words:** Environment, climate change, mitigation, adaptation, global warming