



Knowing and Caring of Nature - An Islamic Perspective

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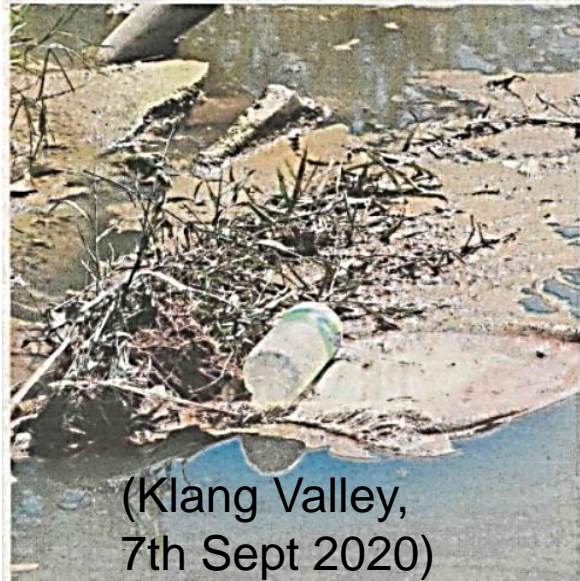
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Outline & Introduction

- Need to Understand Current Realities, Causes & Effects of Unsustainability
- Critical Role of Religion/Spirituality
- Islamic Perspectives:
 1. Harmonising Science & Religion
 2. Restoring Balance – Physical & Spiritual
 3. Need for Worldview Change
- Call for Action

Multiple Crises of Unsustainability



(Klang Valley, 7th Sept 2020)
Rubbish thrown into Sungai Gong in Rawang, Selangor. Effluents, allegedly from a machinery maintenance factory, have caused several water treatment plants along the river to shut down. PIC BY FATHIL ASRI



<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/water-on-a-raging-forest-fire-surround-you-in-360-degrees/>



NST LEADER

Apathy unlimited

Water woes will keep happening if we remain unresponsive

POLLUTION is a problem that refuses to go away because those who can stop it when they can do not. Polluters know this only too well. Apathy is a national enemy, but some of us wear it very proudly. We must bury it before it buries us. Take the case of the factory that discharged used engine oil, among others, into Sungai Selangor. The factory is allegedly a repeat offender (NST, Sept 6 — What were enforcement officers doing?). The owners were previously fined RM660,000 for a similar offence. This must be peanuts for them to do it again. Faltray, is what one expert described the compound imposed as. We agree. They must not be allowed to walk away so lightly. But polluters often do. Whenever such pollution becomes a national concern, authorities lament that laws are inadequate. Then a national chorus of ministers and regulators promises laws with better bark and harder bite. We have heard it all before: The French have a term: *déjà vu*. Welcome to *déjà vu à la Malaysia*. By all means, go ahead and give the law a harder bite. Some of our laws do need that. Punish and perish should be the aim of the new laws. Contamination of a resource as vital as water is a crime deserving punitive punishment, repeat offenders or not. Imprison the owners, directors and managers. Shut the factories down and do not allow them to come back to life in another guise. It is not uncommon for factories and restaurants to be shut down but see life again under another name. Regulators must see to it that this doesn't happen.

We have heard it all before. The French have a term: *déjà vu*. Welcome to *déjà vu à la Malaysia*.

In the meanwhile, the authorities owe the nation an explanation as to why the full force of the Water Services Act 2006 was not applied on the owner who walked away with a RM660,000 compound. There is yet another explanation the authorities owe the people. After having imposed the compound, why wasn't the factory kept on the regulators' close watch? It appears that the regulators need regulating. The frequent lament by the regulators is that they do not have the manpower to regulate all that needs regulating. This is an aged excuse. Last year, there were 1.71 million civil servants. We shall not get into a debate as to who is and is not a civil servant. We leave that to analysts who slice and dice the civil service. Nomenclature isn't our mission. Taking the armed forces (182,957), police (128,536), and those involved in health (240,763) and education (523,226) out of the equation for obvious reasons, we are still left with 665,068 civil servants in "vastous categories". Surely, many of them can be trained as regulators to boost the numbers. If we start now, the complaints from regulators may not be as shrill.

If you think pollution is peculiar to rivers and lakes, think again. Our land and air need regulating, too. Open burning and illegal landfills are a common sight. If this isn't enough, we



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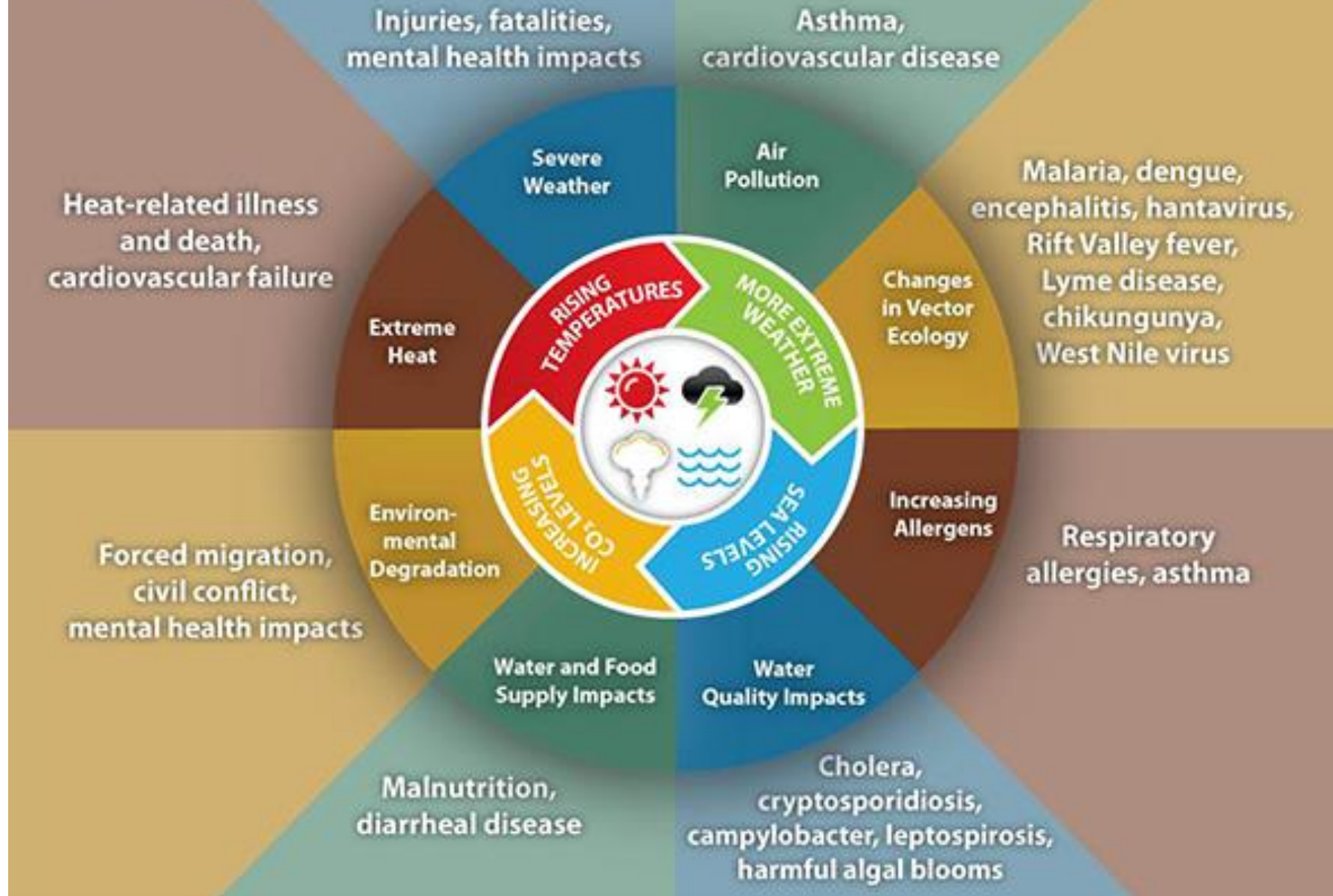
<https://www.thebalance.com/pollution-facts-economic-effect-4161042>



<https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-image-dry-land.html>

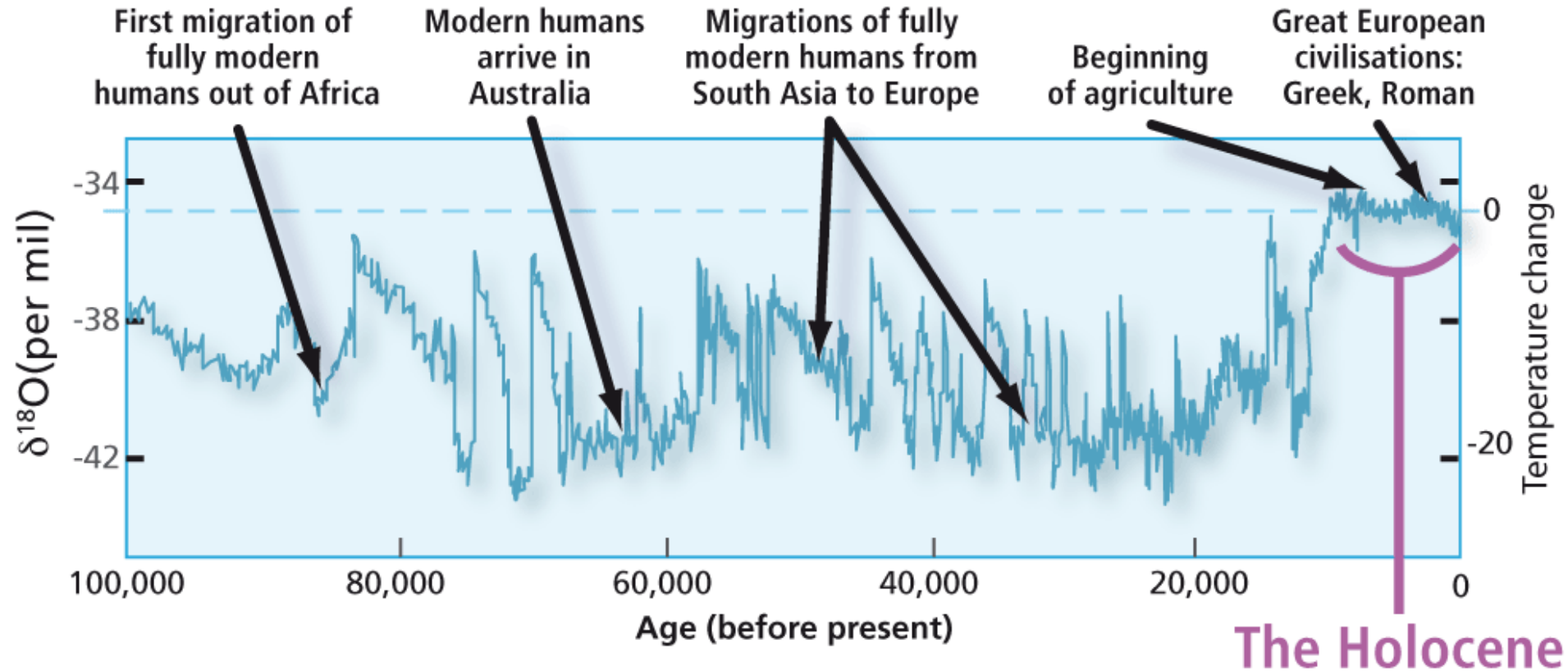


Impact of Climate Change on Human Health



Source: US Centers of Disease Control and Protection (CDC) / The Star, 7 Nov 2021

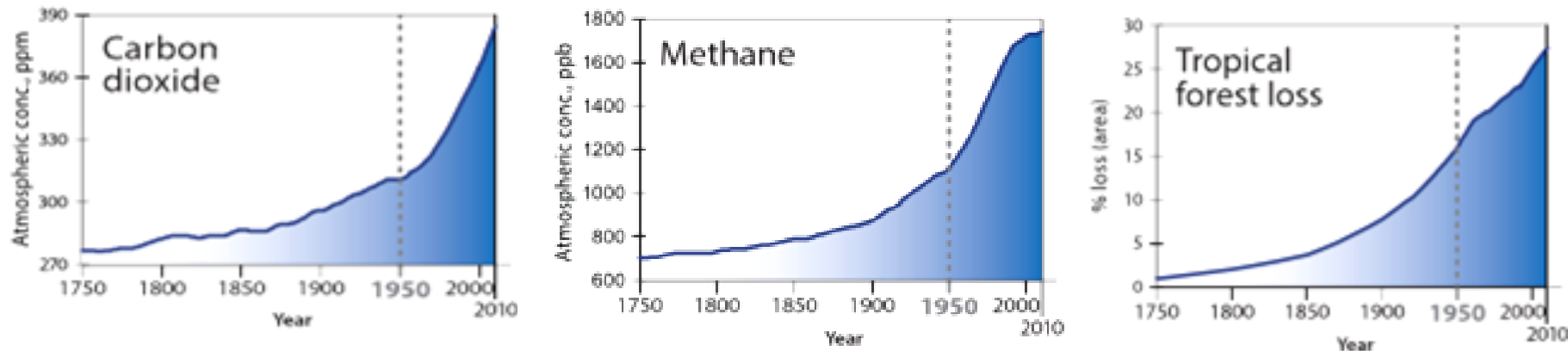
Holocene – World in Balanced Condition



- Today, the Holocene is superceded by the **Anthropocene**.
- **Anthropocene** → relating to or denoting the **current geological age**, viewed as the period during which **human activity has been the dominant influence** on climate and the environment.

Causes of Climate Change

Earth system trends



- The use of science & technology **not guided sufficiently/ unintentionally** by the hard facts of the limits of nature.
- Many of the Earth's capacities have been **breached**.
- For example: CO² increase led to increase loss of H₂O catchment areas, increase floods due to destabilisation processes.
- Decrease of resources for medicines, etc.

Source: Steffen, W., Broadgate, W., Deutsch, L., Gaffney, O., & Ludwig, C. (2015). The trajectory of the Anthropocene: the great acceleration. *The Anthropocene Review*, 2(1), 81-98.

The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?



Photos: Mattias

Climate Change (CC) and Political Instability (globally)

- **CC affects socio-political parameters leading to wars/conflicts.**
- **Competition over resources.**
- 1980 – 2010 statistical research → **heatwaves, droughts & other natural disasters increased because of global warming pushing countries into armed conflicts**, particularly those already split along ethnic lines. (eg. in Africa)



Refugee Influx



- New phenomenon - Environmental refugees
- Migration is a global issue → a **priority for all Governments**
- **More than 1 billion out of 7.9 billion human population are migrant-refugees.**
- There are roughly **74 million** forcibly displaced persons.
 - **31 million refugees**, because of disasters (2020)
 - **3 million asylum-seekers**, and
 - **40 million internally displaced persons**

Climate Change and Agriculture Production



- **Food crisis** – a looming threat for everyone.
- Mitigation efforts include seed banks (biobanking): but who monopolises the sources?
- Issue of rising gap between rich and poor – touching upon economic systems.
- Need to balance earth capital, human capital and financial capital.

Effects of Climate Change: One Islamic Approach

**Corruption has appeared on land and sea,
Because of what people's own hands have wrought,
So that they may experience/understand something of what they
have done; So that hopefully they will turn back.*

(Quran 30:41)

*The corruption **(fasād)** that humans have caused on the Earth
Need to differentiate between disasters that are due to natural
events wrought by people acting contrary to the Divine moral values



Natural Calamities & Human Sufferings

- Natural and reasonable for people to ask questions:-
 - What is the real causes of the losses?
 - Is it a result of God's fury or man's folly?
 - Do the calamities have something to do with the moral behavior of the victims or are they outcomes of negligence & lack of respect for the limits of the Earth's capacities?



<http://talesfromthelou.wordpress.com/2011/04/02/natural-disasters-or-divine-retribution/>



<http://thecomingcrisis.blogspot.com/2011/03/markets-second-guessing-how-aftershock.html>

Worldviews



Man-Centered

- **Man is the measure of everything**
- By his reason alone he can know and solve everything
- Resources are infinite, other species are of utilitarian value only
- In synchrony with materialism

Life-Centered

- **Man is not the measure of everything**
- Reason need to be aided by revelation (**values**)
- Resources are finite, limits exist
- The material dimension is balanced with the spiritual dimension

RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW

Religion and Science are harmonized

Religion Should Help To Address The Crisis of The Loss of Meaning (Of The Self)

- In the 10th International Congress on Obesity: **There is an estimated 1.5 billion overweight people globally, ten years later it is 1.9 billion and 650 million are obese.**
- **In 2019, 39% are obese worldwide.**
- **yet...in developing countries, one out of 10 children dies before the age of 5 due to malnutrition**
- **690 million people, of which 21% are children, are perpetually hungry**

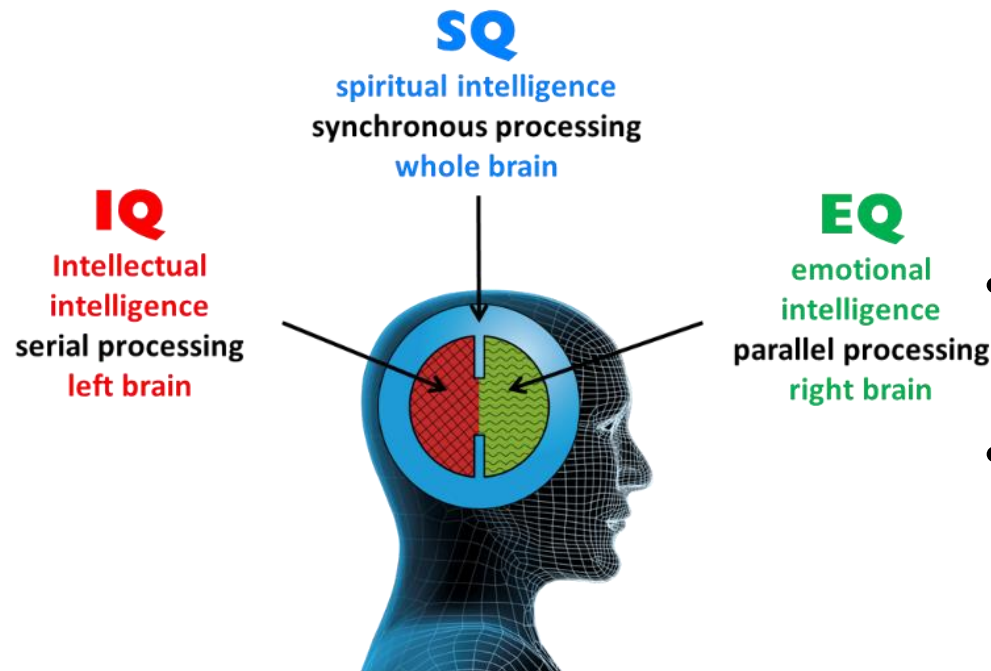


"Poverty exists not because we cannot feed the poor,



but because we cannot satisfy the rich."

IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE (SI)



- **SI** is the innate human need to connect with something larger than self
- The Quran for example sees **SI** as an integrated view that deals with questions of existence and creation, modelling the texture of human intention, morality law and social interactions
- **SI** is the ability with which we exercise goodness, truth, beauty and compassion in our lives
- **SI** implies presence of intuitively gifted **knowledge and soft skills** that includes one's worldview & purpose of life, ego and self plus the awareness of the universe and laws of the Divine.
- Seat of **SI** is the **HEART/QALB**.

SCIENCE IS INSPIRED THROUGH AWE TOWARDS NATURE (THE PANDEMIC INCLUDED)



- Role of *Tadabbur* and *Tafakkur* (to relate what we observe in nature with what is revealed).
- The importance of *kauniyah* verses in the Quran (referring to objects, phenomena and events in nature and history).
- The significance of *Ulul Albab* (those who never fail to reflect on the phenomena of nature as signs of the greatness of the Creator).

‘Those who dwell ... among the beauties and mysteries of the Earth are never alone or weary of life’ – Anonymous

From Faith to Action

UN Climate Chief: Faith groups must act on climate change



Carey Lodge

CHRISTIAN TODAY JOURNALIST

Published 08 May 2014



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Source: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/un.climate.chief.faith.groups.must.act.on.climate.change/37288.htm>



| AP

UN Climate Chief Christiana Figueres has condemned climate change as "one of the great humanitarian issues of our time", arguing that faith leaders must take a stronger stance against it and encourage their followers to do the same.

In an article for the [Guardian](#), Figueres contends that "Saving the Earth and its peoples from dangerous climate change is an economic, social and environmental issue - and moral imperative

* Roles of religion and ethics in addressing climate change

Paula J. Posas*

Department of Civic Design, 74 Bedford Street South, University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 7ZQ, UK

ABSTRACT: After a brief introduction summarizing current climate change knowledge and potential responses, climate ethics are discussed within an historical context and a preliminary timeline of climate ethics is set forth. The paper argues as its central thesis that religion has major roles to play in enabling the world's societies and individuals to take the actions necessary to address climate change causes, impacts, and related issues in an effective and ethical manner. The pivotal roles of religion in issues of climate change and environmental justice hinge primarily on religions' functions in society, ethical teachings, reach and influence, and ability to inspire adherents to action. Religions' ability to inspire action is evaluated empirically against data from 2 compilations of religious activity on climate change. The analysis indicates significant religiously based involvement and influence on ethical aspects of climate change and point to much greater potential for the role of religion in future solutions to the climate crisis. *

Significant Role of Religion in Climate Change

- Religion has a major role to play in addressing climate change.
- Role is **empirically verified**.
- Religious ability/function is through its **ethical teaching**, its reach and influence as well as ability to inspire its adherents.
- Potential for the role of religion in future solutions to climate change very much emphasized because it is linked to the **ethical aspect of climate change**.

NST 2/7/16

TRANSFORMASI NASIONAL 2050

'RELIGION PART OF DEVELOPMENT'

Vital to boost understanding of faith through education,

TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday religion and spirituality are important aspects of development.

In his blog, najibrzak.com, he said it was important to improve the understanding of faiths through education, as suggested by

Netizens on their National Transformation #TN50 aspirations throughout Ramadan recently.

He said Netizens suggested via Facebook and Twitter accounts, using the hashtag #TN50, that better understanding among diverse cultures and faiths would promote unity among citizens, educating them from young.

He said one such person, Nastasha Nor Jaafar, suggested that moral studies in schools must be restructured and implemented with religious elements for students to understand the diverse cultures in Malaysia.

Another social media user, Joshua Chan, recommended more interfaith dialogues be organised as platforms for people to discuss and exchange opinions

on issues and topics regarding any religion, in a relaxed and casual setting for the benefit of the country.

Religious institution such as temples, mosques and gurdwara, should arrange activities and programmes that included all faiths and reduce the gap between the people. This suggestion came from social media user Cynthia.

Social media user Puspasalamender said mosques should hold lessons on the religion every day for people to have a better understanding of Islam.

Najib said Ahmad Khalid Yong said Muslims should refer to the Quran, not only for knowledge, but also research and development (R&D), adding that they should produce a "Quranpedia"

to serve as a source of knowledge not only for Muslims, but also for those interested in learning about the religion.

"Alhamdulillah, the country has been actively upholding the Quran in Malaysia where our *wasatiyyah* (moderation) approach has led to the establishment of the Nasyrul Al-Quran Complex in Putrajaya, making the nation the second biggest distributor and printer of the holy book in the world after Saudi Arabia.

"When we are strong in our faith, it will indirectly create a responsible person who will want to shape and maintain harmony and peace in the country," said Najib, referring to the first line of the Rukun Negara, which is belief in God.

The Sustainability Imperative



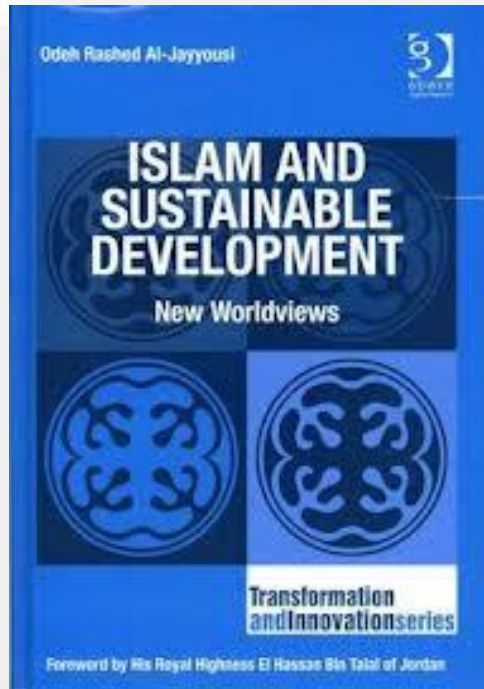
Rijsberman (2000) dan Al Jayyousi (2008)

- Religious thinking (Islamic) can influence all the 4 areas

Religion (Islam) & Sustainable Development



Prof. Odeh Rashed Al-Jayoussi
Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain



- **Pollution** and **corruption** (*fasad*) are due to **the breaking of the unity between man, nature and the Creator** (*hablum minannas, hablum minallah, hablum minalbi'ah*)
- The need for *fiqh al-biah* (**environmental ethics + ecological knowledge**)
- **The need for transformational leadership** to address the threats of climate change globally.
- The global debate on climate change needs to be informed by religious (Islamic) discourse regarding **trusteeship** (*amanah*) and a holistic approach of Green *Jihad* (**striving**), *Ijtihad* (**innovation**) and *Zuhd* (**moderate living**) principles.
- **Green JIZ** (Al-Jayoussi, 2012)

Source: Rashed Al Jayoussi (2012) *Islam and Sustainable Development*. Ashgate Publishing: United Kingdom.

Example of Hybrid Knowledge (Science* & Spirituality): Complementarity Between SDGs & *Maqasid Shariah* (Objectives of Religious Law)



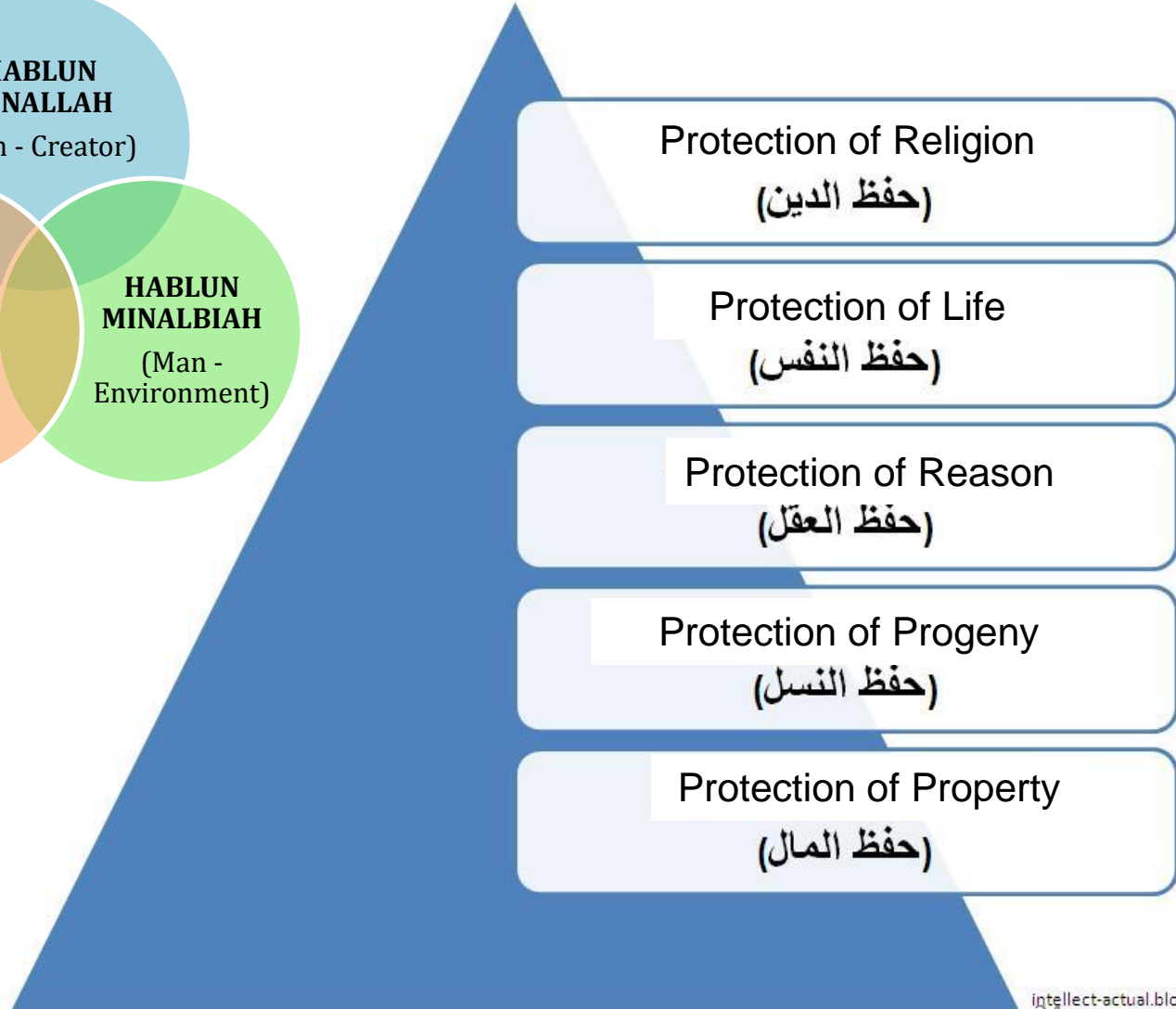
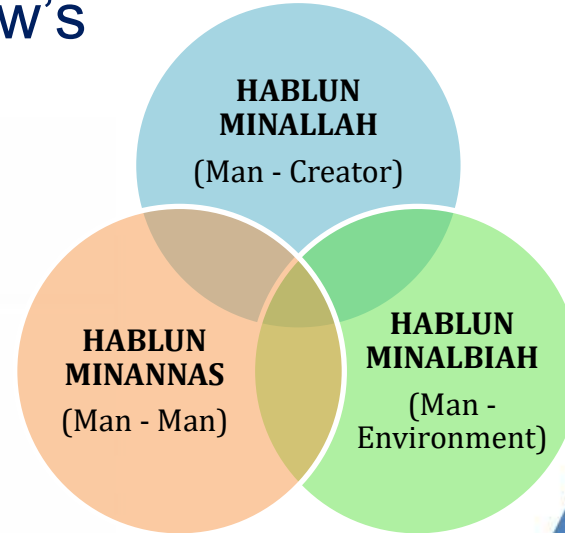
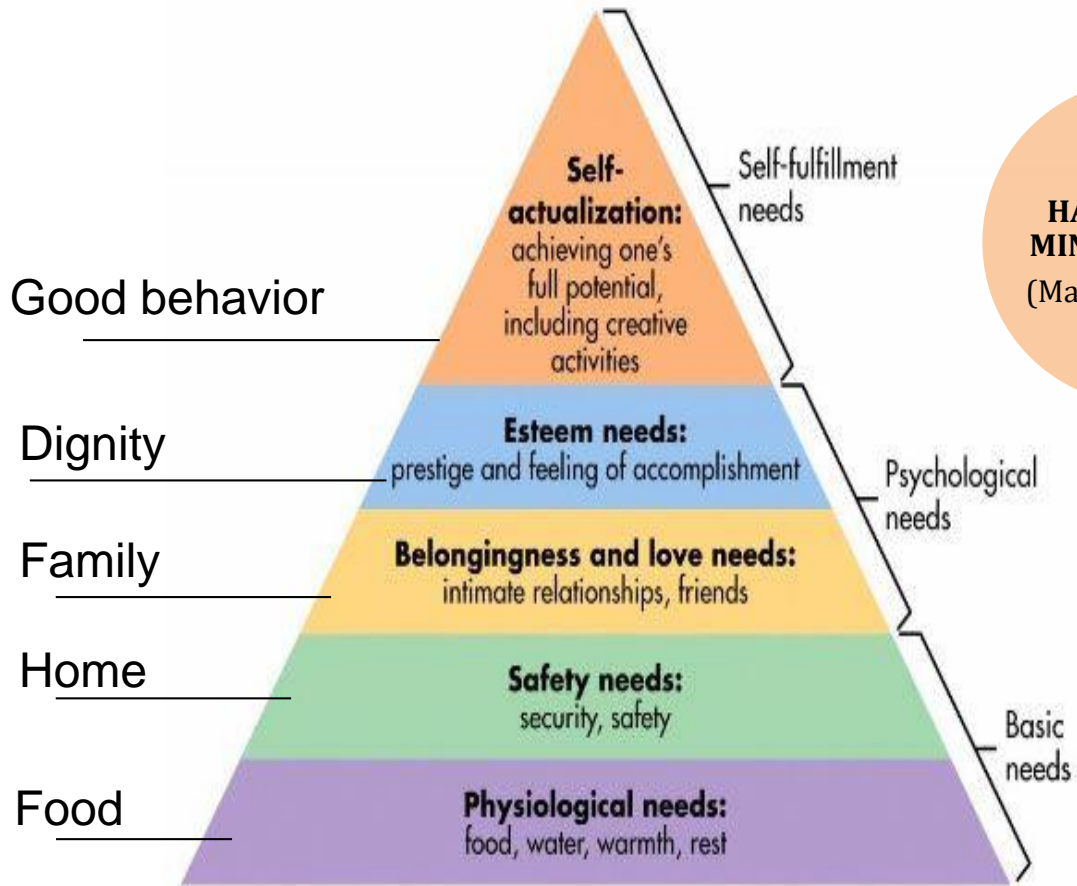
Holistic dimension/principles of *Maqasid Shariah*

1. Protection of **Religion/Faith**
2. Protection of **Life**
3. Protection of **Intellect**
4. Protection of **Lineage**
5. Protection of **Wealth**

*Science – inclusive of social sciences

Elements of Hybrid Knowledge: Knowledge/ Science and Spirituality to be Harmonised

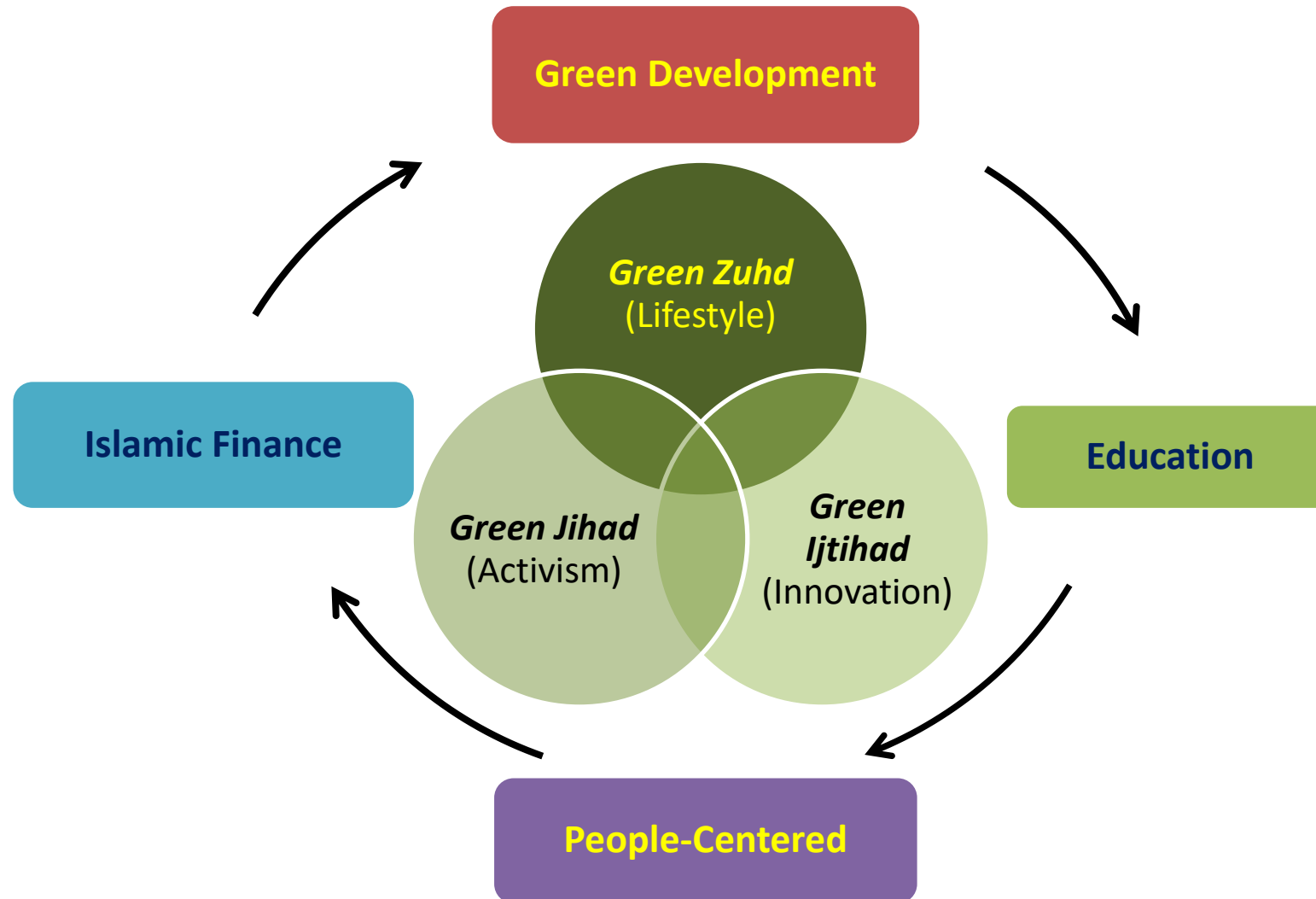
Restoring the Balance: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory



Islamic Model to Address Climate Change

- Three (3) components: Green *Jihad*, *Ijtihad* and *Zuhd* → **Green JIZ** → represents a holistic response to climate change from an Islamic perspective.
- **Green Jihad** → harnessing the civil society activism to save nature and people's right in a free, safe and healthy living → unlocking the potential of human innovation to improve human well-being.
- **Green Zuhd** → living tightly on earth and to avoid over consumption, overuse and over-exploitation of resources → Muslims as a median community of all nations (*as ummatan wasatan*) → should take responsibility & transcend the consumer culture and develop models for renewable energy and clean production.
- Input for *Fiqh al-Biah* → schools/universities.
- Islam is Deen → total way of life.

A Model for Addressing the Climate Change from the Religious (Islamic) Perspective



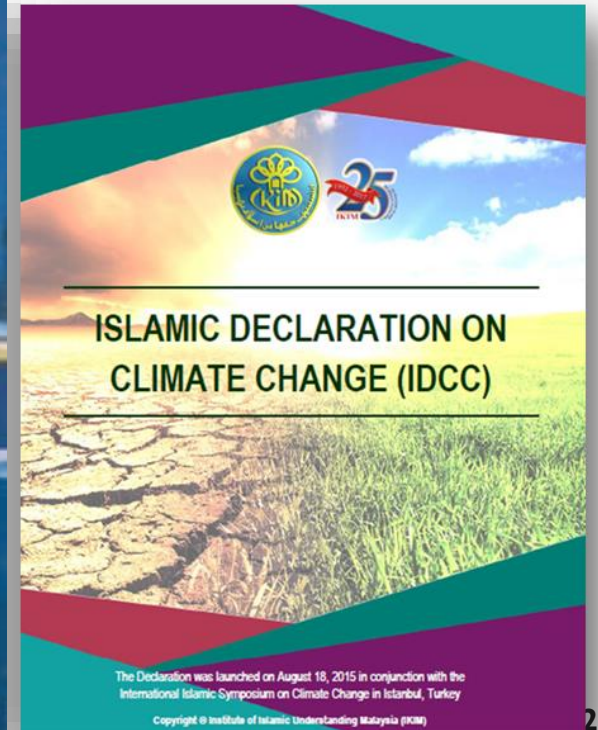
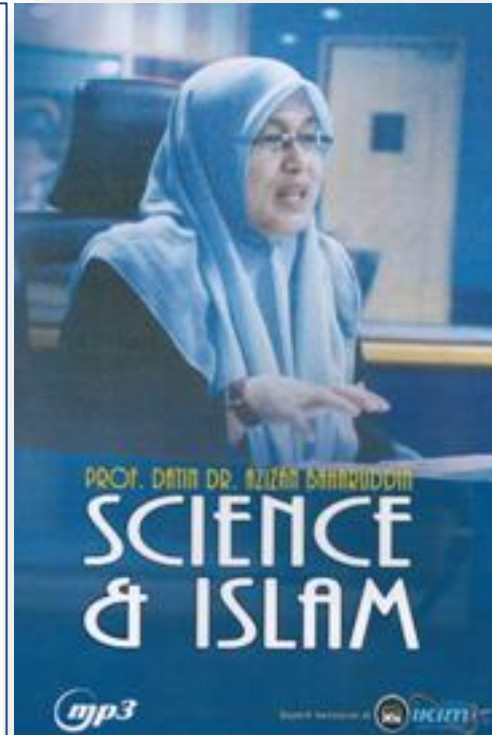
What Can Faith Groups, NGOs, Youths, DO?



AL-MIZAN: ISLAMIC CHARTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

<https://www.unep.org-al-mizan-co...>

2021



2015

From Faith to Action

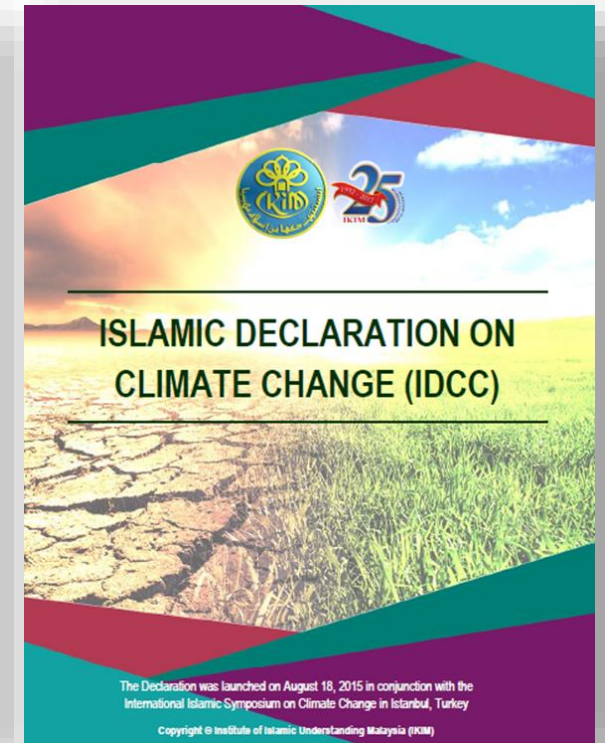
The Islamic Declaration on Climate Change (IDCC)

URL: <http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-on-global-climate-change/>



- Conference brought together scientists, policy makers, *ulama* and leaders from various faith based groups.
- Interfaith dialogue on climate change took place.

ISLAMIC DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IDCC)



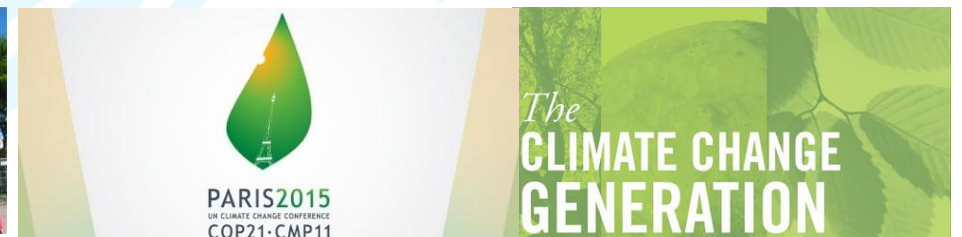
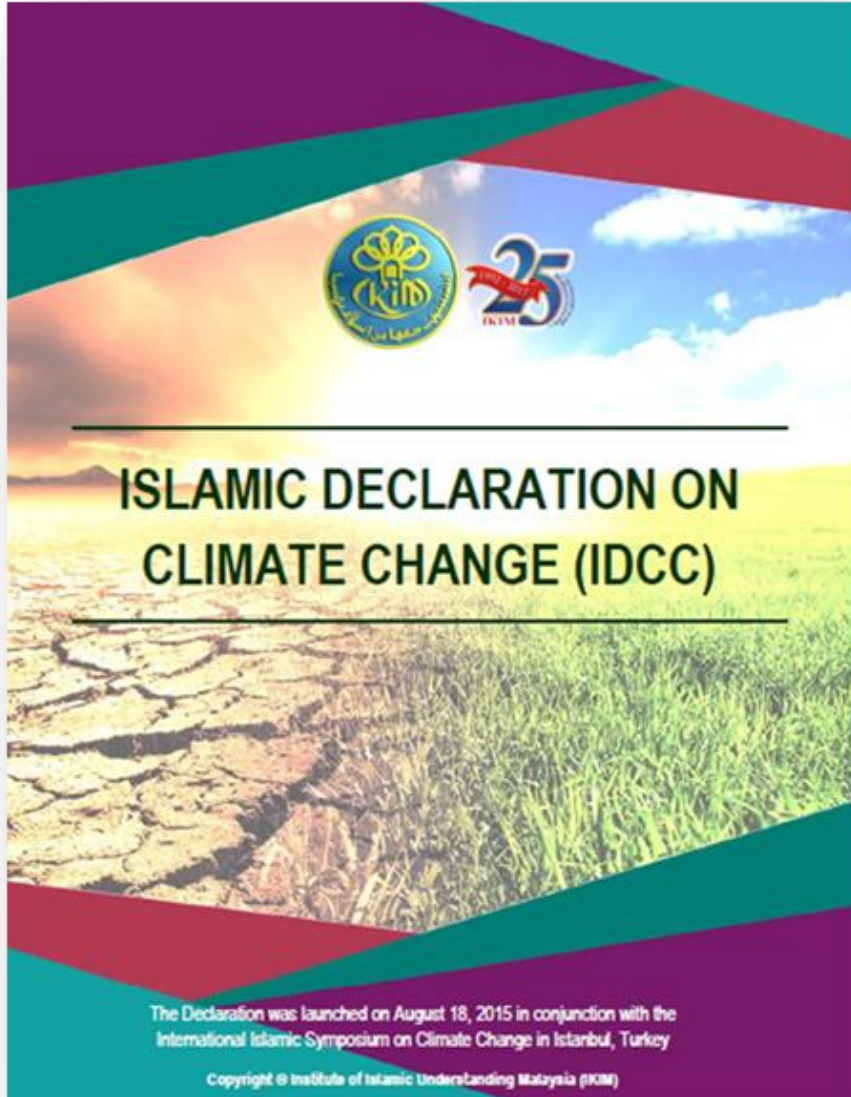
Declaration consists:

- **Preamble** – the what & why of climate change
- **Affirmation** – the Islamic view regarding environment & climate change
- **Suggestion (call)** – call for responding the way (*shariah*) & living alongside it (*maqasid shariah*)
- **To do list for stakeholders, citizens, leaders, governments, corporations etc**

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

PREAMBLE OF IDCC

God – Whom we know as **Allah** – has created the universe in all its diversity, richness and vitality: the stars, the sun and moon, the earth and all its communities of living beings. All these reflect and manifest the boundless glory and mercy of their Creator. All created beings by nature serve and glorify their Maker, all bow to their Lord's will. We human beings are created to serve the Lord of all beings, to work the greatest good we can for all the species, individuals, and generations of God's creatures.



THE IDCC THEREFORE AFFIRM

- Allah is the Lord and Sustainer (*Rabb*) of all beings.
- He is the One Creator – He is *al-Khāliq*.
- Nothing that He creates is without value: each thing is created *bi 'l-haqq*, in truth and for right.
- He encompasses all of His creation – He is *al-Muhīt*.
- He created the Earth in **perfect equilibrium** (*mīzān*) .
- By His immense mercy we have been fertile land, clean water and all the good things on Earth that makes our lives viable and delightful.
- The Earth functions in **natural seasonal rhythms and cycles**: a climate in which living beings thrive.
- The present climate change catastrophe is a **result of the human disruption of this balance**.

AFFIRMATION

- We recognize that we have the **responsibility to establish good and avert evil in every way we can.**
- We also recognize that -
- We are but one of the multitude of living beings with whom we share the Earth;
- We have **no right to oppress the rest of creation** or cause it harm;
- Intelligence and conscience behoove us, as our faith commands, to **treat all things with care and awe** (*taqwa*) of their Creator, **compassion** (*rahmah*) and **utmost good** (*ihsan*).
- We recognize that we are accountable for all our actions (Quran 99: 6-8)
*Then he who has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it;
and he who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.*

AFFIRMATION

- Our responsibility as Muslims is to act according to the example of the Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and blessings be upon him) who:
 - Declared and protected the rights of all living beings;
 - Established inviolable zones (*harams*) around Makkah and Al-Madinah, plants may not be felled/cut and wild animals may not be hunted or disturbed;
 - Established protected areas (*himas*) for the conservation and sustainable use of rangelands, plant cover and wildlife;
 - Lived a frugal life, free of excess, waste, and ostentation;

THE IDCC CALL

We call upon the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Kyoto Protocol taking place in Paris December, 2015 to bring their discussions to an equitable and binding conclusion, bearing in mind;

- The **scientific consensus on climate change**, which is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate systems;
- The need to **set clear targets and monitoring systems**;
- The **dire consequences to planet earth if we do not do so**;
- The **enormous responsibility the COP shoulders** on behalf of the rest of humanity, including leading the rest of us to a new way of relating to God's Earth.

All Muslims wherever they may be

- Tackle habits, mindsets, and the root causes of climate change, environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity in their particular spheres of influence, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and bring about a resolution to the challenges that now face us:

Do not strut arrogantly on the earth. You will never split the earth apart nor will you ever rival the mountains' stature. (Qur'an 17:37)

Waqf – Islamic Financial Instrument

- **Waqf – something that is given for the use of public; or something provided or reserved for the needs of the public.**
- Paper by Sukmana 2020: Since 2010, 84,860 papers were published covering microfinance banking, non-bank finance → financing education, agriculture, housing among others.
- Lessons: 1) collaboration between *awqaf* and financial institution may have a significant impact on development. 2) Cash *awqafs* managed by financial institutions have zero costs – the money need not be returned to the *waqif* (*waqf*-giver).
- However better governance is crucial, government has to focus on *waqf* innovation through comprehensive and updated rules and regulations, particularly on the use of CSR as a *waqf*.
- **Study showed that the 17 SDGs are in line with the long-term objectives of the *Shariah*.**
- Stakeholders can undertake developments on the basis of *awqaf* for the SDGs framework.
- **Example of water *waqf* (*wakaf air* under KASA) under Ministry of Environment and Water.**

Educating and Empowering Communities

Community Project Involving Scientists from University of Malaya and University of Kyoto, Japan as well as Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM).



THE YOUTH RANGERS

AIMAN
14 years old

IQRAM
14 years old

YUSRI
15 years old



FACILITATORS



AFFAN



ASIAH

NAZRI
13 years old

MUHAIMIN
14 years old

FITRI
13 years old

IQWAN
10 years old



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