

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES'  
ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SAFCEI)**



**SAFCEI  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2009-2010**

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# The Executive Director's Report

## 1. Critical Times

This is a critical time for our planet and it is a crucial time in the witness and development of SAFCEI. It is hard to believe that SAFCEI has been in existence for five years.

Since the important *Summit of Religious Leaders for a Sustainable Future* held in February last year, SAFCEI has continued on the dual track of working with government and faith leaders. There is also a growing need for action at the local level. This is where we hope Eco-congregations will take off.

In all three areas, that is of government leadership at all levels, faith community leadership and local congregation membership, there is a huge amount of work to be done. Prof Ernst Conradie, a member of SAFCEI's Management Committee, has consistently reminded us that we should follow our identified areas of concern lest we become overstretched. The trouble is that the environment is all encompassing! In more and more areas and from more and more directions we find the sustainability of the natural environment – and therefore our own future – under threat.

In my youth I recollect cartoons of an old man with a long beard bearing a banner proclaiming "The End of the World is nigh – Repent!"

Having never been an advocate of such apocalyptic theology, I am increasingly fearing its possibility. However, it won't be God bringing it about! In my lifetime we have developed horrific weapons of mass destruction, and have so altered the natural environment and atmosphere that we could bring about the end of the world as we know it.

We are developing two crucially important programmes, namely on climate change and on eco-congregations. Our natural world – our home – is in a critical state. Biodiversity loss continues at an ever-increasing pace, threatening all of life. This is alarming in itself but is being hastened by climate change. The planet is saying to us that we either have to live in balance and harmony with the rest of creation, or there will be severe repercussions. Those repercussions could produce rising temperatures, melting ice caps and rising oceans, all resulting in famine and loss of life. We pay the price – bluntly – of too many people and the endless consumption of material goods on a finite planet.

## **2. The Challenge to Faith Communities**

I believe it might only be through the faith communities that we can get onto a sustainable path, but we still have to convince all faith communities that this is their role.

There are, it seems, still the churches and religions that say their role is the spiritual development and growth of people and their task is to “get people to heaven” and therefore environmental issues are not of their concern.

However, gratefully an increasing number of faith communities are realising their responsibility to care for creation, and the work of SAFCEI is increasing at a wonderful but at times almost alarming rate - alarming because the work is becoming more and more overwhelming.

This means that we must have more people involved. I look at the Economic Justice Network and 90x2030 and Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban and I see their staff and I see the work they are doing. There is much that SAFCEI should be involved in, but we must have more people running and driving this work. It is my prayer that we will be able to act on this need at our Management Committee. I add that we are extremely grateful to our supporters who are now making this a possibility.

It is through and with our spiritual development that we, from the faith communities, can make a distinct difference.

## **3. The World Watch Institute**

The World Watch Institute, in its 2010 Report, called for a change of culture from consumerism to sustainability. It recognises that we have to move from our present culture of endless consumption, so that we change the culture of acquiring riches and wealth to one of aspiring to improve the sustainability of the planet.

## **4. *“The love of money is the root of all evil”***

It is increasingly clear that our present Washington Consensus or neo-liberal economic system is the root cause of both the increasing poverty and environmental destruction of our planet. We have to have a paradigm shift which no longer places economics at the centre, with all our energies and activities directed to the pursuit of wealth, but places the well-being of the planet first, with the priority of the well-being of people as integral. Economics, or money, is a resource to be used by us to bring about the well-being of both planet and people.

Our present economic system panders to our self-centred acquisitive instincts of greed and is proving to be disastrous. It is becoming urgent that we establish a more just economic system, not only for our own highly unequal country, but for the world.

## **5. World Bank**

I was asked by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) to attend the World Bank's Spring Meetings in April this year, when they have a special programme for civil society,. It was an eye-opener to see the world of the World Bank, with incredibly smart offices and huge buildings in the heart of Washington.

A separate report on the World Bank is available, but suffice it to say that I had the privilege of attending the President of the World Bank's address to civil society and the opportunity of questioning him regarding the loan to Eskom for the Medupi Power station. I stressed the need to place the well-being of the planet before considerations of economic growth.

## **6. Climate change and South Africa's energy policy**

Liz McDaid will present a separate report on this subject. I wish to point out that climate change is a harsh reality. We have to respond responsibly. To date it seems the rich/developed countries of the world continue to place economics before the well-being of the planet. Following the failure of the Copenhagen talks in December last year, it is essential that we reach an agreement. However, we believe that South Africa should be setting an example and we find it extraordinary that the government persists in pursuit of nuclear and coal-fired power generation when we have some of the best solar and wind resources in the world, providing ample scope for the development of renewable energy.

What is of utmost concern is that it is clear that it is vested interests that explain the government's addiction to coal. However, we cannot allow the vested interests of the wealthy and those in power to further the destruction of the planet. We cannot play political games or manipulate economics at the cost of the environment. We cannot fool the environment. We continue to pay the price for our corruption and irresponsibility. Recent weather reports just this last week of floods in Pakistan and China and drought in Russia are clear evidence of this.

## **7. SAFCEI's letter to the Faith Leaders regarding COP 17**

Attached to this report is a copy of the letter SAFCEI has written to the UNFCCC COP 17 meeting to be held in SA at the end of 2011. At the request of faith communities, SAFCEI is seeking to facilitate the coming together of faith communities, not only of Southern Africa but - working with others - of Africa, to organise a southern African and then a pan-African position paper which is based on principles so that we ensure that we bring a moral imperative to decisions that we make at COP17.

It is critically important that we don't allow financial considerations to continue to dominate our decision-making. Again, the well-being of the planet must be at the centre, and the governments of the world, particularly those of the rich and so-called developed countries, must realise that they have to reduce their carbon emissions and arrive at a meaningful agreement at COP17.

It is therefore proposed that there should be significant worship services and even marches to support the call for a realistic climate agreement that brings justice to the planet and its people.

### **8. Eco-congregations**

In order to develop the witness and challenge that we believe the faith communities need to present to the government we want climate change to be on the agenda of every faith community from the highest level to the most distant congregation. In order to develop our awareness, we believe the answer is in the growth of eco-congregations. Kate Davies will be presenting a report on eco-congregations. We hope that this will increase awareness about environmental justice and will enable and encourage faith communities to become involved in projects directly improving the environment and will be a unifying force as we recognise our mutual dependence on the environment, which provides our life-support systems. We repeat, there are no Muslim waters or Christian forests or Hindu atmospheres. We are all part of this amazing planet and we must share it with one another.

### **9. The development of eco-theology**

It is becoming increasingly clear that we need to develop an eco-theology which we can bring to our members at the level of the congregation. We believe we need to enter the ecozoic era, leaving behind us the strongly anthropocentric attitude that we have held. I think the Christian Church has been particularly guilty. As we become, more aware of the wonder of life and the web of life, so that we can become aware of just how integrally connected and dependent we are with the rest of life on this planet. Many of our supporters are keen to help us develop eco-theology, and I see this as a priority.

This would apply not only for training material at the congregational level but for ministerial training, so that the new generation of faith community leaders are equipped to lead their members into the ecozoic era.

### **10. Environmentalist of the Year**

In November 2009 I had the singular honour of being given the SAB Environmentalist of the Year Award. SAFCEI was recognised for the work that we are doing in seeking to bring faith communities together with environmentalists to take on responsibility for caring for the environment. I want to pay tribute to all in SAFCEI who are helping in this challenge and whom I thank for the honour of this award. It was a recognition of the importance of the work we are undertaking. If we can indeed motivate the religions of Southern Africa to take on their environmental responsibility we will be communicating with the largest network in the world and awaking a sleeping giant that can help us transform the environmental crisis we are facing.

I have found that environmentalists are delighted that people of faith are now beginning to recognise their environmental responsibility. In the past there was a sense that they felt people of faith were so heavenly minded, they were no earthly good! They wondered why we who - certainly in the Christian quarter - worship a Creator God, so disregarded God's creation. We have an exciting and wonderful challenge to continue to make our faith communities aware of their calling.

### **11. A Vision of Paradise**

I want to warmly thank all SAFCEI members who took part in the SABC programme on global warming and religion titled *A Vision of Paradise*. It was a four-part documentary series examining the role of religions in the fight against global warming. It was excellently done. I don't think it has had the viewing it deserves, and I encourage you to obtain a set of four DVDs for the very reasonable price of R100 and to get your congregations to view this. It explains the position of global warming very clearly. I was delighted that so many SAFCEI members stared in it.

### **12. Parliament of the World's Religions (PWR)**

I was asked to be part of a panel on Christianity and Ecology at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne in December. This was certainly a very significant event. I ended up by speaking in four panels.

The significant aspect was the number of sessions on ecology at this Parliament. There were tracks that you could follow on spirituality, meditation, peace and justice, but there were significant tracks this time on religion and ecology. We hope that the Parliament will continue to develop this and become bolder in its stand for the environment.

### **13 Financial position**

SAFCEI went through a precarious and alarming financial position at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, arising predominantly from the fact that our very good and first partners for funding, KerkInActie, who have now merged with ICCO, had so many changes in their merging that they did not keep track of their partners. Their 2008 funding did not arrive. At the same time, the funding we had anticipated from Bread for the World in November was postponed till March. We therefore got to January and February of this year with no money whatsoever.

We are extremely grateful to those who helped bail us out with loans while we continued in confidence that ICCO/KerkInActie would come up with their third year of funding and that Bread for the World would see the exciting challenge that SAFCEI presents. Our confidence was rewarded and we are now receiving funding from Bread for the World and we have received the ICCO funding and hope to establish further funding in the future.

Our climate change programme is being funded this year through Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and once we change our financial year to the calendar year,

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) plan to support SAFCEI directly There are many funding opportunities for SAFCEI and there is a huge need for this, but it all takes time. I therefore hope that sufficient funding will be forthcoming for us to make the appointments that are needed.

#### **14. Staffing**

We have Liz McDaid heading up our climate change programme on a part-time basis; we have Kate Davies heading up the Eco-Congregation programme, officially on a part-time basis, but pretty much a 24-hour basis (and so far unpaid!). We have acquired two new members who have replaced Roshan and Natasha – who was on very much an intermittent part-time basis: Ingrid Heuwel is now our part-time office administrator and Carola Meyer is PA to the Executive Director and in charge of communications. The office has never been in better shape. I am extremely grateful for their work, their support and their commitment. However, much needs to be done. We desperately need a finance manager who can take on fund-raising and manage the office, and we need somebody who will work in tandem with me.

I find huge conflict of demand as we are wanting to witness to government, and so we attend government meetings and consultations and write letters to government as it is crucial that government makes the right decisions with regard to climate and energy. At the same time we need to bring on board the faith communities, and I need to spend more time in contacting faith leaders and bringing the faith communities on board. I have had a number of worthwhile presentations this year, such as to the 350 Methodists who attended the Black Methodist Consultation and the 300 students who attended the Anglican Students' Federation 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I spoke to both of them about environmental and climate change challenges.

#### **15. Caring for Creation**

Many people are saying that they are looking to SAFCEI to see what projects we are involved in. Kate will explain this, but we need to be clear that it is at the congregational level that projects on the environment will flourish. We will encourage and point to projects that need to be developed but we hope that they will happen at the congregational level and we can then direct people to them as they will have become inspired through the Eco-congregation programme to care for God's creation. Our thanks to all.

Bishop Geoff Davies

6<sup>th</sup> August, 2010



# Climate Change Programme 2010

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## Introduction:

In February 2009, SAFCEI held a national summit of faith leaders from which arose a climate change resolution. This resolution forms the policy that guides the SAFCEI climate change programme. The resolution recognised that the communities of Africa are particularly vulnerable to climate change, and acknowledged that for faith communities “Part of our role as faith communities is to engage with leadership, including government leadership”.

A number of specific outcomes were then specified that SAFCEI would work towards in its climate change work. This included the promotion of renewable energy, particularly through the mechanism of the feed-in tariff (international experience indicates that this is the most effective mechanism for implementing renewable energy), and the importance of providing some energy security and climate change resilience to the poor and marginalised through appropriate tariffs and local climate change adaptation methods.

## **Progress in 2009:**

The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) initiated a process of implementing the feed-in tariff and held public hearings on a proposed feed-in tariff. SAFCEI participated in these hearings. As a result, NERSA brought together a small number of influential stakeholders together in an advisory committee to assist in redrafting the feed-in tariff. SAFCEI was invited to be part of this advisory committee and participated in the revision of the feed-in tariff that were eventually published in March 2009.

Eskom (the electricity supply monopoly utility) applied to the regulator for a 33% increase in 2009. SAFCEI participated in the public hearings that were held as part of the process and opposed the increase because of its impact on the poor. Many other stakeholders also opposed the increases but Eskom was given its requested increase (with a nominal reduction to 31.2%).

In late 2009, Eskom applied to the regulator for a tariff increase that would amount to 33% increase every year for three years. This increase would include new build programmes of coal generated electricity.

SAFCEI presented to NERSA in January 2010, opposing the increase on the basis of its impact on the poor and marginalised, as well as its implied support of coal based electricity as a future supply option. This was opposed for environmental justice and climate change reasons. SAFCEI has now been asked by the regulator to provide further information to assist them in arriving at an equitable decision on the tariff increase.

SAFCEI has also engaged with the labour movement and NGOs and community organisations in local networks such as the energy caucus, community justice network and South African climate action network. SAFCEI has also presented to national parliament on the impacts of climate change on poorer communities and the need for more directed government support of climate change adaptation activities.

## **Climate Change programme 2010.**

Arising from the 2009 activities, there were three projects that formed part of the 2010 climate change programme. It must be noted that the FIFA world soccer cup took over the nation from the middle of June and any national meetings, or liaison with government at political level was suspended, for a month. Ironically, the FIFA world cup's impact in terms of carbon footprint is significantly larger compared to the 2006 German event. The South African event generated six times as much carbon as the 2006 event in Germany.

### ***1. Tariff structure engagement:***

SAFCEI was asked by NERSA to supply information regarding both free basic electricity and ideas of how to include renewable energy in the current tariff revisions. Such information is available in academic circles and some has been compiled by civil society organisations that SAFCEI works with. However, NERSA failed to engage SAFCEI on the exact information it needs.

The result of these presentations was that Eskom was awarded its increase despite SAFCEI and many other organisations' articulate well reasoned arguments against the increase.

SAFCEI has been liaising with various organisations regarding supporting their possible court action to challenge the NERSA decisions but legal action is a lengthy process and it is not clear that the legal action will go ahead. See following section for the basis for legal action.

Some of the focus has therefore shifted from tariff engagement at the regulatory level towards engaging with the Integrated resource plan (IRP2) at a national strategic level.

During 2010, it is also anticipated that RE power purchase contract templates and other administrative tools that are needed to implement the published REFITs will be finalised. SAFCEI has participated in such processes during 2009 and would continue to engage around this issue. The outcome that SAFCEI is striving for is contracts that are balanced and fair to both Eskom and the potential IPPs (the current situation is unfairly skewed towards Eskom with IPPs having to take all the risks).

**Specific interventions:**

See IRP2 section of this report.

## ***2. The basis for Legal action***

SAFCEI has engaged with local NGOs and other bodies including the Gender Equality commission, on the possibility of taking legal action against NERSA. We believe that the basis of the legal action is that NERSA has failed to take environmental considerations into account as required by NEMA. Our position is that if it did so, then renewable energy would be shown to be much cheaper and a preferable option, both from social benefits, environmental benefits and economic viability. SAFCEI has pointed this out to NERSA through our submissions over the years but NERSA has failed to consider this particular aspect. SAFCEI is not in a financial position to take legal action but would provide technical advice in terms of its knowledge of the environmental issues and climate change impacts. The anticipated outcome would be a working partnership with like-minded organisations specifically to look at the success of a legal action against NERSA. SAFCEI's role would be to make the substantive energy and climate change case for considering legal action, such a case would then be considered by lawyers in terms of its possibility of success. This aspect of the climate change programme would obviously link closely with the Tariff Structure Engagement.

## ***3. Education and training in solar water heating programme***

In our discussions with labour, it has become apparent that trade unions do not necessarily understand the full potential of future job creation in the renewable energy sector and the positive implications for currently retrenched workers.

With the government announcement of the roll-out of 1 million solar water heaters, there is huge potential for job creation (8733 jobs per unit energy vs 700 jobs per unit energy in coal)<sup>1</sup>

SAFCEI and COSATU (western Cape) have agreed to work together to assist COSATU to develop a labour education and training programme that would then be proposed to government as the model for the practical implementation of the 1 million solar water heater programme.

This model would be developed and hopefully rolled out within 2010 although the 1 million solar water heater programme would continue past 2010. For 2010, the anticipated result is that a) a swh education and training model would be developed and accepted by government and b) that at least one or two municipalities would have started the roll-out. However, SAFCEI acknowledges that this is largely dependent on factors outside of our sphere of influence but we would engage with local government in order to expedite such a project. Such a project would hopefully result in real change in people's lives - increasing livelihoods amongst poor and marginalised communities.

#### ***4. Advocacy at political leadership level***

This would include meetings with ministers, parliamentary committees and the aim of the meetings is to explain our position on climate change, why we support renewable energy and motivate political leadership of the moral obligation to "do the right thing".

Letters were written to various ministers in cabinet and to chairpersons of parliamentary committees. Correspondence has been received from Dept of Energy and Dept of Public Enterprises but it is largely unsatisfactory.

It is envisaged that the SAFCEI climate task group will focus on addressing the challenges with regard to this issue. The engagement of the faith connected parliamentary offices will be strengthened.

#### ***5. Participation in national policy processes***

Government was supposed to open up space for civil society to participate in policy processes such as renewable energy policy review, review of the energy mix for the country (IRP) and participation in climate change coordinating committee positions.

Government has embarked on a number of consultative processes that impact on climate change, including the renewable energy policy review, the climate change policy process and the IRP2 strategy. South Africa is the power house in the region in terms of energy and SAFCEI has strategically engaged in these processes nationally as their outcomes will have major impacts on the regional economy of Southern Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> Agama 2003

## **6. Electricity Plan for South Africa - Integrated Resource Plan (IRP2):**

SAFCEI has been part of engaging with government on issues of administrative justice, collectively engaging and achieving an extension for public comment on the IRP2 process. SAFCEI has also engaged the climate change process and it is clear that these two processes are linked.

Our resources do not allow us to participate in a similar manner with all of the energy related policies, such as the energy efficiency, renewable energy policy, food security or other aspects of economic development. However, we work with partner organisations such as WWF-SA, the Diakonia council of churches, the SACC and others in order to build capacity and provide support.

### **Specific interventions:**

Government released an IRP2 inputs document for comment and SAFCEI prepared a considered input into this.

Government released a draft pre green paper on climate change. This non-paper was open for comment and SAFCEI commented on this.

Further engagement with DWEA was held and additional inputs were then sent to DWEA.

This quarter has seen a number of preparatory meetings and discussions over email and phone about how civil society can participate effectively in the IRP2 process firstly and on other climate and renewable energy related processes later in the year.

SAFCEI participated in the energy caucus held in Gauteng and was part of challenging government on its failure to engage meaningfully with civil society. SAFCEI also partnered with IDASA Electricity Governance Initiative (EGI) to co-host three capacity building meetings (non SAFCEI Funded) around the country focused on the IRP2. SAFCEI members attended at each workshop and this has strengthened the knowledge of energy issues amongst SAFCEI members.

### **Challenges and Way forward:**

With a small amount of resources, SAFCEI needs to ensure that we choose the specific processes that will influence other policy reform and other strategic processes. We have identified the IRP2 as the key strategic priority of 2010 as Government is fast tracking the process and appears to be compromising the outputs in order to pander to the needs of industry.

See section on Recommendations at the end of this report.

## **7. Education workshops with faith groups.**

Although the top leadership of faith groups generally have a good grasp of climate change and due to SAFCEI's high level interactions between Bishop Geoff Davies and other faith leaders, most faith groups actively support SAFCEI's position in principle. However, the work on the ground with lay preachers and middle management of faith groups still needs support. The programme would aim to run climate change workshops with faith grassroots leadership in order to enable them to prepare their communities for climate change adaptation and to input into policy processes from the faith perspective.

**Specific interventions:**

A worthwhile workshop was held 14<sup>th</sup> April in Durban with high level members of faith communities. Thank you very much to Rev Sue Britton who organised the gathering. A few key points arose from the meeting as part of the way forward. These included:

- Circulating small packets of info about climate change and the need for action
- Exposing the corruption and conflict of interest in companies with vested interests
- Educating faith communities and NGOs that work with faith communities
- Being part of developing a SA climate change position that would be one that the rest of the world would be inspired to follow
- Endorsing the open letter to the president about the world bank loan.

The KZN workshop showed how SAFCEI can be a driving force in inspiring faith leaders to take action and be a supportive organisation to provide facts and figures and suggestions of what kind of action will be effective.

**Challenges:**

Similar workshops were planned for Gauteng and for Cape Town and more effort needs to be put into making these key workshops happen. The involvement of Rev Sue Britton in providing advice to SAFCEI in this regard is strongly encouraged.

See main recommendations at end of report.

***8. Regional and International Engagement*****The Economic Justice Network conference:**

SAFCEI participated in a two day conference with faith leaders and social justice organisations from the region, looking at the impacts of climate change. SAFCEI presented some ideas for how regional organisations could build awareness about climate change, and a suggestion was made that the Green Connection climate change DVD and the other climate change materials produced by SAFCEI be distributed to faith leaders in SADC through EJN.

Some follow up is needed as EJN was happy to facilitate this but it is not clear how far this has progressed. One or two individuals took copies of the DVD with them but there were not sufficient for all that needed them. However, SAFCEI will be working with EJN in capacity building faith communities as part of a civil society response and lead up to COP16 and 17, as well as national climate change processes.

**SAFCEI response to World Bank loan:**

SAFCEI responded to the Awarding of the World Bank loan to enable MEDUPI coal fired power plant to go ahead, by writing an open letter to President Zuma and the President of the World Bank, asking that they reverse the decision.

The World Bank representative for Africa engaged Bishop Geoff Davies around the issue but there is no indication that the loan will be reversed. SAFCEI continues to support calls for greater transparency and accountability regarding how the money is spent.

The letter to the World Bank was also supported by other faith groups. The World Bank has recently announced that they will investigate the Medupi loan and SAFCEI will be engaging with this investigative panel.

### **Preparations for COP 16 and 17.**

COP16 (UN conference of the parties climate change meeting of all governments) will take place in Mexico this year and COP17 is due to take place in South Africa in 2011. Our first quarter programme focused on national energy questions as well as how South Africa will negotiate differently in the run-up to Mexico in order to ensure meaningful progress in the climate change negotiations.

Clearly, with South Africa a major energy player in the region, our decisions regarding coal-fired power and nuclear energy vs renewable energy have implications for those countries that buy South African electricity.

At the international level, preparations are underway for the next assessment report AR5. Part of the terms of reference includes considering ethical issues. Part of the discussions amongst faith communities would need to look at how people of faith can influence the negotiations so that the health and wellbeing of the planet can transcend the short term money grabbing approach that has characterised the negotiations up to now.

### **Recommendations for the Way forward -**

SAFCEI's involvement in the climate change and energy challenges to date lead to a number of key observations. These are not revelatory but do need to inform our way forward. SAFCEI needs to consider how to make the most meaningful impact in these debates given its unique faith based constituency:

1. South Africa has a wealth of expertise and developed some resources to build capacity and adaptation to climate change and this could be shared with faith communities in neighbouring countries to assist them to engage in climate negotiations leading up to 2011.
2. South Africa's climate change response and choice of energy for electricity will influence the region - eg increased coal, nuclear or large hydro and Eskom expansion into Africa versus small scale distributed systems and renewable energy. .
3. South Africa is renowned as a world leader, respected internationally by powerful economic blocs such as BASIC and the USA and can play a significant role in taking the negotiations forward. The current capital intensive development paradigm is now being recognised as socially and environmentally unjust.

4. Faith based communities are being recognised as having an important role in defining public policy and ethical and moral considerations are receiving some consideration at the political level.

As stated, this is not earth-shattering but to date, SAFCEI has had limited influence. If we change our focus, can we extend our influence in the climate change arena. So, if we acknowledge this, what can SAFCEI do:

**Materials development:**

The eco-congregational materials need to ensure that they contain updated climate change related information and action plans that extend beyond the church. Find or develop a faith based (important that it is not just Christian) calendar of plans for action that would assist faith groups to understand the timetable for international negotiations and also to develop (or refine) some positions that faith groups could present to their governments in the climate change negotiations.

**Training and capacity building of faith communities:**

Conduct outreach activities (either in South Africa or in neighbouring countries) where train the trainer workshops can be held for faith leaders (especially youth) who can then further build capacity of climate change through existing faith networks. This is an initiative that has been discussed and found support at the Diakonia church council level and is a way of maximising our limited resources. Such a workshop would also address the challenges experienced in trying to bring faith groups together at provincial levels to address climate change.

**Input into South African energy and climate change related policy review processes.**

Given the influence of South Africa both regionally and internationally, SAFCEI cannot afford not to concentrate on working at policy level to attempt to get the government to adopt progressive climate change policies both nationally and in international negotiations.

SAFCEI must therefore continue to participate and influence the relevant government processes, particularly the IRP2 process, and climate change policy process.

SAFCEI must work with allies in the NGO and trade union sector, as well as business and government in order to develop common negotiating positions and must maintain the unique role it has to date - that of providing quality technical input (through collaboration with allies) and raising the ethical moral high ground of doing the right thing because it is right, not because it is expedient.

SAFCEI should therefore focus the second half of 2010 on the following:

- Track and input into IRP2
- Work with SACC, Energy caucus, Economic justice, climate justice movements, to continue to develop common positions and to extend this common position to other faith groups and broader trade union groupings



- Input into the climate change response strategy at the technical input level
- Continue to engage with political leadership on our alternative vision for sustainable development/ climate change response. This to take place at provincial, national ministerial and national parliament level. <sup>2</sup>
- Hold one train the trainer workshop for faith representatives who play an outreach role in their communities - in partnership with Diakonia possibly.
- To produce and disseminate material (and gather material from other faith groups) to train the trainers workshop for the trainers to take further.

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<sup>2</sup> Civil Society alternative energy vision technical data to be developed through BIC funded project. SAFCEI to draw on this in our advocacy

# Eco-Congregation Programme

## Background

As core business, SAFCEI seeks to engage, encourage and support faith communities in learning about and taking eco-justice action in order to help bring about a more sustainable future for all life on the planet. This must happen at all levels, from senior leadership to individual and community action taking in local congregations. The intent of the Eco-Congregation Programme is to mobilize a groundswell of civil society action at the local level so that congregations become centres of good and compassionate sustainable practice. Involvement at this level is seen to be crucial component of SAFCEI's work.

As a young and growing organisation, SAFCEI has had neither the financial means nor the staff capacity to invest in a dedicated Eco-Congregation Portfolio. In spite of this, informal clusters of eco-congregation activities have sprung up around South Africa. Local faith-based communities have begun to explore an array of ideas and activities, undertaking sterling and exciting projects which are leading to the development of more sustainable living practices in their congregations. These involve a variety of activities like vegetable gardening, water harvesting and conservation, installing energy saving interventions, growing indigenous and water-wise gardens, recycling waste, celebrating a *Season of Creation* and environmental days and drafting eco-justice strategies and policies. An emerging body of Eco-spirituality and Eco-theology literature and thought and a growing concern about the health of the planet has done much to inspire many of these initiatives.

Much of what the SAFCEI Eco-Congregation programme is now doing has been underpinned by the hands-on experience of faith community champions who have pioneered these projects. A number of these champions have been founder and Board members of SAFCEI. While not wanting to single out individuals, I want to pay particular tribute to the Revd. Tim Gray, from the Church of St Francis of Assisi, Parkview and The Revd. Andrew Warmback, from St John the Baptist Church in Pinetown, KZN – and their teams. In addition to trying out eco-actions on the ground, they have also been exploring the process of how to embed the concept of *cherishing living* earth into all aspects of life in their congregations so that it becomes core business and not just another 'add on' social justice issue. This is what the SAFCEI Eco-Congregation programme is aiming to do.



## **Eco-Congregation Task Group**

SAFCEI facilitated a very useful Eco-Congregation workshop hosted by St John the Baptist Church in Pinetown in June 2009. The two day meeting was attended by an interest group of 21 with representatives from the major religions, a cross section of Christian denominations and from different geographic regions in South Africa. Following the discussions, a resource development working group (Garth Barnes, Alistair Clacherty, Kate Davies, Ridwaan Gallant, Tim Gray, Peter Just, Paddy Meskin, Craig Morrison, Sayed Saydoon and Andrew Warmback) was tasked with creating a handbook and establishing an implementation process.

## **Resource Materials**

SAFCEI finally published a draft Eco-Congregation handbook and leaflet in June of this year. The handbook aims to provide a simple framework to enable local faith communities start a journey of engaging with eco-justice issues. The intention is to help congregations find ways of improving their earthkeeping practices, so that all decisions and actions are undertaken with due consideration and compassion for the long-term wellbeing of the planet and all its inhabitants.

The development has been far more complex than was first envisaged because the material needs to be easily accessible to the diverse contexts of all the faith groups in the region. In addition to the differences within and between faith groups, we have had to take into consideration accessibility for communities from a wide variety of socio-economic, cultural, historic, demographic, geographic and literacy backgrounds.

The material has been sent out for comment to over fifty interested parties from both the religious and environmental education and sustainability sectors. We have asked for constructive comments and criticisms and, most importantly, for stories and photographs of what has been done and what is currently happening in congregations. It is hoped to have comments processed by mid-September and a first edition available before the end of the year. The basic material and process will be generic but we will offer faith specific handbooks so that each resource is infused with quotes, images and stories of practice relevant to specific faith groups.

## **Website**

A brand new Eco-Congregation page on the SAFCEI website is currently being developed. The framework is up and running but it needs further work. The plan is to enable participating congregations to upload their own stories and photographs.

## **Actions**

The groundswell of local eco-congregation activities is expanding. Shaik Gallant has reported how mosques in Cape Town are hearing sermons about the environment for the first time and are beginning to respond with interest and actions. The *Season of Creation* liturgy and practical action handbook has provided a starting point for many Christian churches. Congregations are responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic by developing community gardens providing both employment and fresh

vegetables. In November 2009, Faith leaders participated in a march in Cape Town to highlight the need to cut CO2 levels to 350ppm in order to avoid catastrophic climate change. The list of actions is growing.

During the past year, SAFCEI has facilitated workshops and done presentations on Eco-Congregations for a number of organisations including Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban in 2009 and 2010, the Unitarians in Cape Town, the Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod, the Black Methodist Connection Annual Consultation, the Anglican Students' Federation, the Economic Justice network (EJN), addressing Leadership of the National Christian Councils from the SADC countries through FOCISA (Fellowship of Christian Councils of Southern Africa) and the Limmud Conference for the Jewish community of Cape Town.

### **The Way Forward**

The year ahead will be busy. Work needs to be done on finalising and publishing the resource materials. The implementing and reporting processes must be planned and trialled. While we see SAFCEI as the overarching organising agency of the Eco-Congregation Programme, community champions will drive the process at the local level. SAFCEI must facilitate workshops to inform and support this local cluster leadership. The reporting and sharing of stories, communication strategies and monitoring and evaluation processes must still be agreed upon and built into the programme. As SAFCEI's institutional capacity improves, we anticipate being able to support the steady organic growth of local faith communities who are striving to become centres of sustainable good practice through creative and compassionate action for the planet.

Kate Davies

## **The World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings April 2010**

Bishop Davies was asked by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) to attend the World Bank Spring meetings in April 2010 on behalf of both NCA and the faith communities of Southern Africa. A full programme was developed by Jostein Hole Kobbeltvedt, advisor on global economy for NCA, and Chad Dobson, Executive Director of the Bank Information Centre (BIC) in Washington. I thank them both for their work in arranging the programme and for the support and assistance of Moreblessings Chidaushe from the NCA office in Pretoria, Southern Africa.

The visit was longer than originally planned due to the disruption of air traffic because of the Icelandic volcano.

### **Monday 18th April**

Bishop Davies and Moreblessings arrived at Dulles airport, Washington, in the early morning.

### **Tuesday 20 April**

Jostein took us both to the World Bank (WB) main centre to show us the civil society meeting rooms. The EURODAD meeting was cancelled due to the flight disruptions but we noticed the launch of a book by Peter Maass entitled Cruel Oil. This was a survey of the impact and inequality and violence resulting from the exploitation of oil in many countries. In a most worthwhile discussion following the launch, a young World Bank employee from Canada made a plea for morality in the decision making for the exploitation of oil and extractive industries in general. He said that there are vast oil resources in the tar sands of Canada but exploiting them will have huge consequences on the environment. He made a plea that faith communities should put forward the moral issues regarding economics and the environment. He was most impressed on hearing news of SAFCEI and hoped that this would be an example for other countries to speak out regarding economics and morality.

### **Wednesday 21st April.**

9.30: We met at the BIC for a briefing with Chad Dobson regarding the programme for the week. This was followed with a lunch meeting with church leaders of Washington at St Alban's Church (alongside Washington Cathedral). Participation involved predominantly Episcopal and Roman Catholic clergy and laity, including Mark Kresowik of the Sierra Club, and lay members of church environmental groups. Bishop Davies was asked to give an overview, including the consequences of the WB loan to South Africa for the Medupi coal fired power station. A most worthwhile discussion followed. A crucial point arising out of the discussion was whether the Christian Church should be concerned about the wellbeing of humanity only, or of all life. It was considered

helpful to extend the understanding of “neighbour” to include all life, as God declared all that he had brought into being as ‘very good’. (Genesis 1:31)

## Thursday 22nd April

Attendance at presentation on Governance challenges in Green and Sustainable Energy Policies.

10.45 Meeting with WB Energy Sector Director for Africa, Vijay Iyer, Ruth Kagia, WB Country Director for southern Africa, and Heather Worley, WB Communications Officer for Africa.

I was both surprised and impressed that SAFCEI’s letter to the President of South Africa and The President of the WB was in front of them. This did, however, distract from the main gist of our purpose in meeting which was to consider how the WB could move ahead in support of renewable energy in Africa and help directly in the alleviation of poverty among rural people. Instead, there was quite a heated discussion as a result of our comment that we should avoid accepting this loan if at all possible. I record two notable points which they made:

- 1 Eskom has already embarked on the construction of Medupi. This has been in progress since 2007 even if most of civil society was unaware of it. ESKOOM has also received a loan of \$2.8 billion from the African Development Bank, unbeknown to much of civil society. The WB was therefore facing a virtual *fait accompli* in that much had already been expended on the building of the Medupi power station.
- 2 One of the conditions of the WB loan is that ESKOM will build two renewable energy plants, a concentrated solar power and a wind energy plant, both of 100MW. We could say that ESKOM is being forced into investing in renewable energy even if it is kicking and squealing in doing so. The WB conditions also stipulate that there must be transparency with regard to energy tariffs and that there will be regular reports and inspections. The overall concern remains that no country should be building coal fired power stations, particularly of the scale of Medupi which will be the fourth largest in the world and will be emitting 30million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> a year. We continue to be persuaded that this sum of R140 billion should be spent on renewable energy and not coal power stations. Moreblessings and I had an intense hour and a half discussion with the three members of the WB staff.

From 5 to 6pm we had the opportunity of attending the joint **CSO World Bank Roundtable** on *Post-economic crisis recovery* addressed by the WB President, Robert Zoellick. Andrew Kumbatira, Executive Director of the Malawi Economic Justice Network had been asked to Chair the meeting. I was able to catch his eye in the discussion following the President’s presentation. I was able to say that I realised, after an hour and a half with his staff that morning, that the issue of the Medupi loan was highly complex, but that the WB should never ever again make such a loan. I made a plea on two counts: First, that the WB fund renewable, decentralised energy programmes and second, that the WB recognise that we have to make the wellbeing of the planet our priority. We can have economic recovery and energy security, but that is pointless on a dead planet. I believe it noteworthy that my comments were the

only ones to receive applause from the 100 participants present. There seemed to be a strong sense of agreement from civil society, with my comments resonating with much that was being asked and said by those present.

### **Pelosi Amendment 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reception**

We had to leave the President's Round Table early in order to get to the Capitol for a dinner with Nancy Pelosi, a Speaker of the House. This was a remarkable gathering celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pelosi amendment which "established a national environmental policy on the participation of the United States in the multilateral development banks. The Act is cited as the 'International Banking Environmental Protection Act of 1989'" requiring Environmental Impact Assessments for US Congressional funding. I was asked to give the blessing and was told that it wasn't just saying "grace" but was making some brief comments about the importance of the occasion. These comments are attached. Speaker Pelosi then gave a very informative, amusing and delightful speech during which she interposed three or four times, turning to me and saying how important it is that the faith communities are involved and are bringing morality to bear on environmental and economic justice issues.

Her speech was followed by Chairman Edward Markey of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming and a speech by Barney Frank, Chairman of the House Committee on Financial Services. In general discussion at the end of the dinner I was able to explain a bit more about the Medupi loan and to say that we were calling for funding for renewable energy projects only and again I stressed the importance of putting the wellbeing of the planet at the centre.

It was a memorable occasion with 100 participants from civil society and environmental organisations providing some valuable insights into the political workings of Washington.

### **Friday 23rd April**

We met at 9.00 for a briefing session prior to meeting with the European WB Executive Directors.

**10.50: Civil society held its meeting with the European WB Executive Directors.** There were a number of issues, including representation from developing countries on the WB, the Eskom loan and the WB Energy Strategy. The representative from Germany said that they could not vote against the loan to Eskom as Germany was building a new coal fired power station. Sunnita from Groundwork introduced the position of Eskom and asked me to take it forwards. I said that those present were concerned about banking. There was a strong interjection saying that they were concerned about development and overcoming poverty. We again made the point that if they are wanting to assist the poor, they must find means through renewable, decentralised energy and micro-projects to bring energy to the rural poor of Africa. It is going to be hard to move both the mindset and the practice of the WB away from large scale energy projects backed by government to decentralised micro-generation. Two critical points arose. They claimed that:

1. The South African government had requested the loan and this was now a democratically elected government. We tried to point out that they need find ways of consulting with civil society as well as governments. The Hitachi contract underlies the importance of such consultation. The vested interests of the ANC in the coal industry is a point in hand, as it represents a serious threat to the future health of the planet.
2. Many developing countries, particularly those in Africa and India, are requesting support for coal fired power stations as they believe these the only means of bringing energy to the poor and closing the energy gap. Again, we stressed the need to recognize the reality of climate change, support renewable energy and end all subsidies to fossil fuel, for the sake of the planet.

### **2.00 to 3.30pm** Energy panel organised by **World resources Institute**

I was a speaker on this very worthwhile panel. All the speakers stressed the need to care for the planet and spoke of the abundant possibilities of renewable energy. Speakers included Jake Schmidt from the Natural Resources Defence Council, Richard Caperton from the Centre for American Progress and Michael Clark from the UN Conference on Trade and Development.

**4.00pm:** Jostein, Moreblessings and I spent an hour and a quarter with the **WB Inspection Panel**. We had before us the request for an inspection of Madupi power station by Bobby Peek of GroundWork and Earthlife Africa. We considered their request and added our own concerns. (Attached)

We were well received by the WB Inspection Panel who will be visiting South Africa in May and will need to meet with civil society as part of their inspection. Our meeting was followed by a reception hosted by the Inspection Panel. There was a good cross section of civil society present, including Bruce Rich, who gave me a copy of his book *To Uphold the World*. This is a fascinating and timely call for a new global ethic, following an examination of the principles of Emperor Ashoka who, 2 300 years ago, built his vast multiethnic, multicultural state on fundamental values of tolerance, non-violence, and respect for life.

This was followed by a reception for **African civil society** by Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, WB President for Africa. In a very lively presentation she said some wise words: development in Africa should be for the people of Africa, and not for the benefit of overseas investors!

### **Saturday 24th April**

**12.30 – 2.00 pm:** was one of the three main speakers at the official side event of the **Bank Information Centre on the WB Energy Strategy**. After presenting the strategy, I spoke about the ESKOM loan and the need for support for renewable, decentralised energy. A research student from Kenya spoke about the application for a loan for a dam in Ethiopia which will have severe repercussions on the people of Kenya and will only aggravate conflict and tension in that part of Africa. Amory Lovins, an energy specialist from the Rocky Mountain Institute in Colorado, through a video link, spoke of



the huge progress in renewable energy, stating that decentralized energy production is now, by a factor of a hundred, cheaper than centralized coal or nuclear generation.

### **Sunday 25th April**

I preached at the 8.00. 9.15 and 11.00 services, all well attended, at St Columba's Episcopal Church, Washington, and spoke at their forum (with about 120 people present) on our need to work in harmony with the planet and uphold its wellbeing for future generations. I again stressed the importance of people of faith ensuring that our economic policies are guided by ethical principles. It was altogether a most worthwhile visit to St Columba's and evoked a very positive response. I was taken to lunch by the church environment committee who laid on a celebration for my birthday!

### **Monday 26th April**

Prior to our departure for the airport, Chad Dobson arranged a meeting with Mark Kresowik of the Sierra Club as they hope to visit South Africa in August. We then lunched with the Governor of Colorado who had just signed into law requirements that Colorado should have at least 30% of its energy generated by renewables by (I recollect) 2020. He said prior to signing into law, the mining companies spent \$2 million in advertising and campaigning against this legislation. This just underscores the huge vested interest of both mining and nuclear industries as we struggle to bring about a more sustainable future for our planet. I remain convinced that it is the economic policies with so many opportunities for corruption that are a major cause of the destruction of our planet.

Bishop Geoff Davies

May 2010

**Attached below:** Pelosi Reception Blessing  
Notes on response to the President of the World Bank

## **Blessing at the Celebration of Pelosi Amendment – 22nd April 2010**

*On this Earth Day, when we also celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Pelosi Amendment, it is good that we give thanks for this incredible world we are privileged to live in. The fact that there is life on this planet is a miracle in itself. We are thankful daily for this miracle of life and for the beauty and wonder of this planet.*

*We are aware that in the Biblical creation story God declared everything he had made as “very good” and that he mandated us to care for it and to keep it. We are to be Earthkeepers.*

*We have to confess that we have been pretty rotten earthkeepers and since the establishment of Earth Day the state of the planet has deteriorated alarmingly, so much so that much of life is now threatened.*

*We are therefore grateful that such interventions as the Pelosi Amendment are making us more mindful and responsible in our caring of the natural environment – our life support system.*

*Now let us pray God’s blessing on all who are gathered in Washington at this time of the Spring Meetings and this celebratory dinner tonight that we may be directed and inspired. We pray for those with political responsibilities that they may be guided and filled with your wisdom.*

*We pray blessing on this food we are about to receive, that we may be strengthened in your service;*

*And for all who are hungry in your world today, we pray we may establish greater justice and equity - and love, so that none go without and all life on your planet may flourish.*

*Amen*

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### **Comments made at the end of the dinner, among the speeches being made:**

We recognize that the WB’s failure to fulfil the Pelosi amendment almost prevented the Eskom loan to South Africa (The US abstained).

As a representative of Faith Communities in Southern Africa I have to say that we were horrified that the World Bank granted this loan which will benefit the already rich but in no way will assist the two million homes in rural South Africa who are without electricity.

It seems that again financial considerations have overridden the well-being of planet and people. It is our prayer that in future the WB funds no more fossil fuel projects, but instead enables us to harness the most abundant of God given resources, the sun and wind.

## **Comments in response to President Robert Zoellick's address to the World Bank Civil Society Roundtable**

(I might have used a combination of the two sets of notes below, as I spoke without my notes when the time came.)

We have sent and faxed you a letter, but would like to take the opportunity of giving you a copy. (He had already responded via the Africa representatives).

I am here representing many faith communities in South Africa and I have to tell you that we are horrified, appalled, that you have granted this loan.

We know our government asked for it. We also know that it is going to benefit the already rich and powerful and that none of the two million rural homes without electricity will benefit.

We wish you could reverse the decision, for many reasons that are becoming clearer and clearer to us in South Africa. If you can't, then we call on you to ensure that you never, ever, again grant a loan for fossil fuel generation.

We are desperately wanting you to provide the resources to assist in harnessing the greatest sources of energy God has blessed us with – sun and wind. We have the best renewable energy resources in the world. It is sheer madness that we don't utilize them.

Finally, we want to convert you to realize that we ask this because we have to put the well-being of people and planet first. I come to Washington and I see temples to economics/money. That is what governs your decisions, but if we are honest, we know it is also leading to our destruction. It is no good having abundant wealth and energy on a dead planet.

In my faith we are told we can't worship God and money. We are also told to establish justice and equity.

I see monuments to inequity

I am not saying we don't want growth – we want the right kind of growth – in health, education, provision of clean water, sanitation and environmental restoration

I see monuments to economic injustice. Establish justice and we won't need to spend billions on so called defence. Peace will be the reward.

I see abysmal recognition of the enormity of the challenge ahead because of climate change, environmental destruction and species extinction. You have some highly competent people in the World Bank. Surely they know the reality of climate change and the need for us to act urgently.

We pray you will leave behind you the dark (satanic!) ages of fossil fuels and enter the solar, ecozoic age of harmony and sustainability.

I am sure you are aware, after all, that this is Earth Day.

Thank you.                      22nd April 2010

*Notes to which I spoke to:*

**The World Bank President**

Make a plea that you put planet and people first.

I know you are all economists here! But it is no good having a vibrant economy and energy security on a dead planet – and that is where we are headed.

BBC report that the present trend of carbon emissions is putting us on course for a 3 degree temperature rise.

If we look after the planet, people will benefit, particularly the poor, and we can then generate more economic activity from an alive planet - with a green economy.

So please fund local, decentralized renewable energy.

We in the faith communities will be full partners in this transition, helping the poor in a sustainable way.

So, we need a revolution, when we no longer put economics at the centre – we put the planet and life at the centre, recognizing that our neighbour is all life.