

Name: Dr Elizabeth JOY

Date: 24th March 2021

Environmental Racism: Earth, Wind & fire (and Water) -Theme for 24th March 2021

I deeply appreciate the UN for addressing Environmental Racism focussing on **Environmental Justice, the Climate Crisis and People of African Descent, the coming three days, and for this opportunity.** The concept note, pertaining to the **‘28th Session of the Working Group of experts on People of African descent** reflects on its importance and urgency adequately. However, I feel, there is a gap in one area where it says, “Environmental racism is a measurable contemporary manifestation of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, Afrophobia and related intolerance”. I firmly believe that we need to add Islamophobia also here.

It will be worth bringing people of all faiths and no faith in God together from an interfaith perspective. This will enable people to respond to the need of human beings’ role in protecting the earth appreciating interfaith perspectives. Although it may look very daunting, it needs to be explored with an aim of speeding up reconciliation to deepen peace between faith communities and their responsible relationship with the earth.

I suggest that each religion or faiths and beliefs communities bring out what is the calling from their community to Environmental Justice. An Interfaith perspective upholding the faith of each community to care for both environment as well as the people of African Descent will be helpful. One of the themes for a starting point for such a venture could be the fundamental elements – space/ether, wind, fire, water and the earth to explore how each faith addresses this theme?

We have witnessed the drastic consequences of many wars – we have destroyed our earth, wiped out communities and polluted those regions as well as the rest of the world. Intolerance based on religion and faith needs to be addressed and therefore, there is a genuine need to include Islamophobia also along with Afrophobia in order to bring Environmental Justice to People of African Descent.

Dr Elizabeth Joy