

## ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE TO MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN

On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Asia Culture and Art Organization (aka Asia Culture House) and the United Nations in Afghanistan organized a dialogue with environmental activists in Kabul. We thank Avicenna University for their technical support in organizing the dialogue. Five panelists discussed the environmental crisis, the future and what it holds, what we need to do now to make the world is a better place to live, and what role the United Nations can play.

The dialogue was part of a series of global consultations that the United Nations' Secretary-General launched for its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We thank the following panelists for their unique insights:

- Mohammad Sadiq Dehqan, Lecturer, Avicenna University,
- Masihullah Safi, Lecturer, Professor Rabbani University,
- Sediqa Fahimi, Director, Asia Culture House,
- Hussain Ali Jawadi, Lecturer, Bamyan University,
- Yasin Sitez, Environmental Activist,
- Zohra Karimi, Environmental Activist.

You can access the dialogue video [here](#). The following is a summary of this discussion, prepared by Masooma Masih:

### PRIORITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO BETTER RESPOND TO THIS CRISIS

The effects of the Covid-19 epidemic have been profound on countries' economic situation. Governments are trying to bring their economies back to pre-pandemic health, changing their priorities away from the environmental crisis.

The international community could prioritize environmental laws, environmental education and ethics, and publicity in renewable energy use.

### THE WORLD IN 2045

By 2045, participants most wanted to see that:

- Temperature not to rise more than 2 degree Celsius, 50% of energy resources be renewable and environmental awareness among Afghans increase by about 80%.
- Countries adopt environmental policies to reduce the production of greenhouse gases.
- Change in Afghan people's lifestyle and their culture to support a healthier environment, the use of trains, bicycles, a healthier diet, and change in fuel consumption.

However, because of the destruction of vegetation, deforestation, desertification, and destruction of green hills and mountains, by 2045, temperature could increase up to 2.5 centigrade. So, the increased temperature will cause inconsistencies in the environment, and we will have a bad climate in 2045.

## CHALLENGES

The following were the main challenges that participants discussed:

- Countries are no longer prioritizing environmental issues. Lack of resources in developing countries, population growth, lack of access to healthy drinking water, consumerism, and increasing greenhouse gases are environmental issues that hinder climate health improvement.
- Cities and villages are using non-renewable fuels because of a lack of alternatives. Production of large household waste, a large number of worn-out vehicles and smoke, expansion of industrial estates and industrial townships without serious supervision, loss of vegetation, traditional agriculture, government, and people's negligence in creating green space are also major issues.
- People's insensitivity towards environmental degradation, non-implementation of environmental master plans, low level of people's knowledge about environmental issues.

## ROLE FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations can help by taking the lead in ending the war in Afghanistan. The international community must work with the Afghanistan government to ensure peace, allowing the government to find the right solution and provide a healthy environment.

The international community can help acquire and report information about waste policy and clinical waste during the Covid-19 epidemic.

The international community can help people by increasing their awareness of using renewable resources such as water and solar energy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

Participants recommended the United Nations Secretary-General to:

- Control factories in industrialized countries that are the world's primary producers of environmentally harmful substances.
- Stop nuclear testing in the oceans, which already has killed 90 species and controlling greenhouse gases that are mainly produced by developed economies.
- Hire qualified individuals in environmental activities in Afghanistan. The entity can also cooperate in the production and maintenance of crops and planting seedlings.