

MONTREAL'S MUSLIM COMMUNITY/ ISLAMIC RELIEF CANADA ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

IN SUPPORT OF A GREEN MONTREAL

Brief presented to the Office of Public Consultation of Montréal (OCPM)
by Islamic Relief Canada

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In the realm of Climate Change, Islamic Relief agrees with scientists all over the world that it poses an existential threat to life on earth. The impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed, the poorest of the poor are the most affected and IR advocates that industrialized countries should substantially reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and globally encourage their governments to do the same.

We affirm that

- Allah is the Lord and Sustainer (*Rabb*) of all beings
- Praise be to Allah, Lord and Sustainer of all beings (Qur'an 1: 1)
- He is the One Creator – He is *al-Khāliq*
- He is Allah – the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form (Qur'an 59: 24)
- He Who has perfected every thing He has created (Qur'an 32: 7)
- Nothing that He creates is without value: each thing is created *bi 'l-haqq*, in truth and for right.
- And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play. We have not created them but in truth (Qur'an 44: 38)
- We affirm that He encompasses all of His creation – He is *al-Muhīt*
- All that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah.
- Allah encompasses all things (Qur'an 4: 125)

“Islamic Relief is inspired by Islamic teachings, on justice and stewardship of the Earth, to recognize climate change as one of the greatest moral, social and environmental issues facing humanity today. As a matter of urgency, we will support communities to enhance their resilience by prioritizing the development of climate change adaptation and risk reduction work in communities that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and improve learning on environmental issues amongst our staff and supporters. We also aim to significantly reduce our carbon footprint as well as undertake advocacy at all levels to promote substantial and equitable reductions on greenhouse gases.”

Islamic teachings concerning environment were identified in more than 250 verses of the Quran. They are classified in four basic principles:

1. Unity (tawheed)
2. Creation (fitra)
3. Balance (mizan)
4. Responsibility (khilafa)

They can guide Muslims to the highest standards of sustainable environmental management.

Tawheed defines the Islamic worldview. It is based on the emphasis of God as being the creator of everything. (Az-Zumar, 39:62). It describes not only the oneness of God, but emphasizes that the earth is one, and everything is connected.

Fitra accentuates that the human species was created as PART of nature, and not separate from it. In the verses 30:30 of Ar-Rum, 10:5-6 Yunus, 24: 45 , An-Nur and 96: 1-2 Al-Alaq, Allah mentions this fact in addition to our innate natural disposition similar to other creations. There is a patterning of functioning.

Mizan is the balance of these patterns kept by the forces of nature that give us stability. In Chapter Ar-Rahman, 55:7-9 this is clearly stated and it warns us not to tip this balance over.

The **khilafa** principle underlines the human responsibility, thus we are trusted to act as guardians and protectors of the environment and to ensure that we conserve and sustainably use the earth's resources. (An-Naml 6:165, Al-Ahzab 33:72)

We also find evidences in the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. He said:

"If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (sadaqah) for him." - Imam Bukhari.

"If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you was holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it." - Al-Albani.

Muslims internationally and locally here in Montreal are to promote and apply these Islamic principles to protect our environment and therefore , Muslims are encouraged to act with other organizations and faith groups and share solutions regarding Climate Change.

1. Islamic Relief calls upon Mayor Denis Coderre for the vertMTL to lead the way in phasing out Montreal's greenhouse gas emissions as early as possible and no later than 2042, the 400 anniversary of the city of Montreal and to

measure our emissions every two years plus enable policies to strictly regulate emissions to reach that goal.

2. We call upon the different levels of the government to invest in the creation of a green economy.
3. Islamic Relief invites the Muslim communities and their leaders in Montreal to raise awareness within their congregations, through Khutbahs, seminars, workshops, etc.
4. We call on all groups to join us in collaboration, co-operation and friendly competition in this endeavour and we welcome the significant contributions taken by other faiths.