

**UNEP PRESS RELEASE**

***NEW UNEP BOOK LOOKS AT LESSONS FAITHS PROVIDE  
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION***

**NEW YORK, 28 August 2000** -- The interconnectedness of religious and environmental concerns and the fundamental significance to all traditions of safeguarding the planet as a common inheritance are the subjects of a new publication from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

***“Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action”*** is the result of a unique and longstanding collaboration between UNEP and its Interfaith Partnership for the Environment (IPE), a global network of faith traditions and organizations working to bring together the forces of religion and ecology. It has been made available to all delegates attending this week’s Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, which has included the environment among its main themes.

The 80-page book gives a brief overview of the critical environmental issues confronting humankind as it enters a new millennium, from climate change, to the assault on our marine resources to the impacts of globalization, and presents UN efforts to address these critical issues. Then, through the use of primary texts of religious traditions, it presents, from various faith perspectives, the theme of human responsibility to protect the natural world.

As a call to people of faith to act for the protection of life on Earth for future generations, the inspiring illustrated book offers practical suggestions on how to increase the ecological awareness of congregations. It also presents projects, big and small, which can be taken to help save the planet from further ecological degradation.

The book also provides additional sources of information on the interrelated concerns of religion and the environment. Scattered throughout the book are examples of how ordinary people, inspired by their beliefs, have made a difference to the environment in their part of the world.

As Klaus Toepfer, UNEP’s Executive Director, remarks in the book: “We have entered a new age. An age where all of us will have to sign a new compact with our environment and enter into a larger community of all living beings. A new sense of our communion with planet Earth.”

Today’s launch follows the release by UNEP, earlier this year, of ***“Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity”***, a detailed review of the diversity of spiritual and social values that various cultures have placed on biological diversity. Through papers, stories, poems, case studies, photographs, drawings and song lyrics, the report’s contributors highlight the central role of cultural and spiritual values in the appreciation of all life.

“Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action” has been edited and designed for UNEP by Ms. Libby Bassett. The co-editors are Dr. Kusumita P. Pedersen, Chair, Department of Religious Studies in New York’s Saint Francis College, and Father John T. Brinkman, MM., Ph.D. It has been made possible, in large part, through the fundraising efforts of Partners for Environmental Quality of New Jersey and by generous donations from the Lifebridge and Germeshausen Foundations, and the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, New Jersey.

Copies can be obtained via the UNEP online publications site – [www.earthprint.com](http://www.earthprint.com)