

***Transcript of Remarks by Mohamed Bechari, Secretary-General of the World Muslim Communities Council.***

*Dr. Bechari's remarks were part of "Care for Our Common Planet: A Catholic-Muslim Earth Day Conversation." Watch the full conversation online: [https://youtu.be/FJ4-FuEU\\_yA](https://youtu.be/FJ4-FuEU_yA)*

*Dr. Bechari's remarks begin shortly after 1:47:43*

In the name of Allah, Merciful, the Compassionate, first of all I would like to thank all of the speakers, their excellencies, and their holinesses, the participants in this webinar, which comes to us on a holiday for Muslims, Friday eve. It is a great day and it is also one of the days of the holy month of Ramadan, and this day as well is a day where the entire world celebrates Earth Day—a day that is dedicated to protecting the environment and nature. This is a reminder to people of high ethical values and to religious individuals and believers and religious leaders, to remind the followers of this gift, this divine gift, to humanity. I mean the gift of nature, which has been dedicated to humanity and to human beings.

Eight out of 10 people in the world consider themselves religious in one way or another. So, at a time where religion does not control the general aspects of people's lives and the management of public affairs in many countries of the world, yet a sense of belonging to a certain religion or a certain sect or a certain religious community still exists to a great extent for most humans. Eight out of 10 people consider themselves religious in one way or another. This is something that represents a major figure. This means that religions will make us friends of the environment, will make us adopt a friendly approach toward the environment, and protect the environment.

The interventions are focused on achieving a united approach, and the common element among all religions. We have one destiny, and the planet on which we live makes it necessary for all of us to live together in harmony on this planet. So, we live in peace and harmony, and this is the option of religion. This is the element that all religions call for—and all individuals who have philosophical approaches that perceive of human beings as the center and the cornerstone of existence on this planet—by ensuring the sustainability of the environment and protecting this gift from Almighty Allah, who created us as viceroys on this planet. We need to protect this environment. These interventions pointed out that we use the common ground among all religions. This is an attitude that encompasses all religions and all sects. And many of the interventions that we have listened to today also seek achieving or launching a number of initiatives. Their eminences and their holinesses and their highnesses and their excellencies today have talked about a very critical element, which is launching practical initiatives to protect the environment, to protect human beings, animals, birds, oceans, and all the components of nature that represent . . . an added value to this planet.

I would like to conclude with a quote, and we are in the United Arab Emirates, with a quote that was said by the sage of Arabs, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the UAE. . . He said, "We are passionate about our environment, because it is part of all of us

and part of our homeland, our existence, and our legacy. Our forefathers and ancestors lived in the land, on the sea, and managed to survive in this environment despite all of the changes in this environment. Of course, they would never have achieved that if they had not realized how important it is to protect the environment, to take only what they need from this environment to continue to survive and to protect the environment for posterity and the upcoming generations, God willing. And God willing, we will continue to work on protecting the environment and natural life and our homeland the same way our ancestors and forefathers did before. And God forbid, if we fail to accomplish this task, our grandchildren will blame us for squandering a major section of our legacy and heritage.”

Thank you very much, and I wish you all the best and hope the entire planet will be at peace for posterity.