



Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands Policy on the Environment

Background

A policy for the environment is based on Resolution #7, agreed by the 142nd Annual Synod 2012 which states that *“the Bishop should establish a Diocesan Environmental Committee to work with the churches to formulate policies and guidelines for the use of renewable energy, the conservation of water, the protection of church environs and the sensitizing of congregations to our environmental stewardship responsibilities”*.

The rationale for the policy on the environment is to achieve the mission of the Diocese as it relates to the environment, stated in the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion: *“To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the Church”*. All aspects of the Mission must be achieved in order to fulfil the vision of the Church.

The overall aim of the Policy is to aid in developing a sound theological foundation, and encouraging practices to guide attitudes and lifestyles that support:

- Reverence towards Creation
- Justice within and towards the environment (natural and built), recognizing the imperative for a) environmentally sustainable and b) socially equitable access to resources and to healthy environmental conditions.

The importance of these objectives of the behaviour required of the Church are as follows:

Reverence towards Creation

Consideration of Creation as an expression of God brings about a deeper sense of the Divine presence in the natural world and challenges the way in which we relate to the physical world (McFague 1990).

Justice Within and Towards the Environment

Integral to the mission of the church is:

- a) Commitment to social justice and, therefore, the just use of common goods (Earth's resources);
- b) Our mission is set in the context of community, that Christ is encountered in existence with and for others;

c) Environmental degradation (including climate change based on excess/persistent use of non-renewable energy) throws into sharp focus the unjust balance of wealth, resources and economic power between rich and poor that characterizes the world today. “Nature has become co-victim with the poor.”

d) Eco-justice advocates that being in a right relation to each other is part of being in a right relation to the natural world. This implies the just sharing of limited resources and the real cost of environmental usage.

Thus, Environmental Justice combines the existing concern of mission for social justice with concern for the environment, especially as it affects the impact of environmental degradation on the poor (for example, via flooding and landscape devastation, food insecurity and hunger, pollution and ill- health).

1. Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of the environmental policy are to actively encourage:

- (i) Understanding of **the place of humanity in Creation**;
- (ii) **Spiritual growth** of persons - individually and collectively - in relation to our interaction with our environment;
- (iii) **Responsible environmental behaviour** in the care and use of Creation;
- (iv) **Cost reduction** in the functioning of the Diocese.

2. Strategies for Implementation of the Policy

The policy is to be advanced through:

- (i) An Action Plan to be developed by the Environmental Committee
- (ii) Environmental Groups formed by volunteers at regional, deanery and church levels, for the communication and implementation of such programmes;
- (iii) The policy is to be communicated through:
 - The clergy in **every** cure
 - The governing boards of **all** church institutions (such as educational institutions, hospitals, residential homes)
 - The existing Diocesan organizational structure, namely, the Education and Youth Department (to the Church Schools, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Sunday Schools, Camps, Vacation Bible Schools), Jamaica Church.

- Missionary Society, Mothers' Union, Women's Auxiliary and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew).
 - The structures offering lay persons and clergy training;
- (iv) Specific church services. For example, a minimum of one per year in each church is to be dedicated to environmental concerns, including a) the spiritual dimension of our relationship with and response to Creation; and b) our stewardship of Creation requiring responsible environmental behaviour.
- (v) The inclusion of environmental issues and awareness (including practical activities, competitions and games) in the Sunday School curriculum, Vacation Bible School and Summer Camp.
- (vi) The inclusion of environmental theology as part of the UTCWI Anglican training.

3. The Practical Sectors of the Policy

The main practical sectors of the Policy include:

(i) The built environment

This relates to newly built and renovated structures which must conform to currently acceptable environmental standards for energy saving (see paragraph ii below), reduction of the risk of hazard risk (earthquake, fire, flood and hurricane resistant). (Details of compliance standards will be communicated at a time to be determined).

(ii) Energy

a) The reduction in energy usage

- Create opportunities for natural lighting and natural ventilation
- Use energy saving light bulbs
- Reduce outdoor concrete surfaces and increase shade around buildings – for example, in car parking areas and other areas surrounding buildings – to reduce heat generation, for example, plant neem trees and moringa (which are fast growing and have therapeutic qualities) and other trees to provide shade in open spaces.

b) Converting to alternative energy sources

This includes the evaluation of photovoltaic systems for lighting and other electricity powered requirements.

Energy usage must be audited twice per year.

(iii) Biodiversity

- Encourage tree planting and landscaping on all church-owned/managed premises using native vegetation (as opposed to introduced species about which details will be made available)
- Conserve biodiversity on idle lands belonging to the church
- Encourage the appreciation of natural environments as prayer and worship spaces.

(iv) Water

- All church-owned structures must be fitted with guttering and storage for water harvesting
- Install low-flush toilets in all new or renovated premises
- Water usage of all church-owned/managed properties must be audited twice per year and corrective measures must be taken as soon as possible.

(v) Waste

- Reduce the generation of solid waste, for example, through discontinuing or reducing the use of styrafoam and plastic containers
- Reduce the use of paper for use by churches and church organizations
- Separate recyclable materials and arrange for collection for recycling purposes
- Re-fill printer cartridges
- Encourage composting and small-scale recycling (eg. of paper).

5. Responsibilities

a) The Environmental Committee

- (i) To provide a template and timeframe for auditing, monitoring and changing environmental practices and structures at all church-owned premises, lands, outreach programmes, and other activities.
- (ii) To provide sources of literature, teaching and training opportunities to help guide the process;

- (iii) To suggest information to guide activities and programmes that encourage responsible environmental behavior;
- (iv) To provide suggestions of potential sources of funding/donor agencies to assist in auditing and retrofitting.

b) Congregations and the managers of church-owned and operated institutions to:

- (i) Select Environmental Focal Groups for leading the development and implementation of programmes;
- (ii) Undertake the environmental audits and monitoring (facilitated by the respective Environmental Focal Groups) within the relevant timeframe;
- (iii) Undertake the necessary fundraising and/or make applications for grants from relevant donor agencies to support the implementation of programmes at the local level.

Submitted by:
The Environment Committee
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