

The Rome Dialogues III

Identity
Formation
and the
Environment

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This is a joint publication with the
Central European Journal of International and Security Studies (CEJISS)

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Introduction to the EGIC

The Euro-Gulf Information Centre (EGIC) is an initiative that aims to build social, political, strategic, cultural and economic bridges between the people of Europe and the Arabian Gulf.

While the EGIC was only formed on 01 October 2015 as a legal association in Rome, Italy, it draws on the expertise of a multitude of scholars, policy makers, economists and members of European and Gulf civil societies to enhance inter-regional relations.

The EGIC has tasked itself with five activities over the short, medium and long terms:

Publishing Hub—the first objective of the Centre is to act as a publishing hub on information related to the wider Arabian Gulf. This entails the launching of a new journal (re: *The Arabian Gulf*), book series (the *Rome Dialogues*), online commentaries, policy papers and newsletters. Literature will be made available in several languages (Arabic, English, Italian, German, French and several of the Slavonic languages) and be done in both hard and soft copy formats.

Seminars, Conferences and Roundtables—in order to continue to attract attention for the Centre, a series of seminars, conferences and roundtable discussions take place on a regular basis.

Specialised Certificate, Internships and Scholarship Programmes—the EGIC will begin a targeted certificate programme for university-ages students, run as Spring Schools. Themes will vary, but stay related to European-Arabian Gulf dynamics. Also, the EGIC offers a three month internship based on the European ERASMUS Programme. This programme will focus on building the skill-set required of a socio-political organisation and includes: organisational, writing, presentation and innovative thinking skills. Since 2017, in partnership with Universities around Europe, the EGIC offers special Master's programmes on Middle

Eastern Studies. Finally, the EGIC will offer monthly and annual scholarships for research on Arabian Gulf-related topics.

Cultural Events—the EGIC strives to offer a comprehensive cultural platform to expose the peoples of Europe and the Gulf to each other’s cultural rites, rituals, festivals and writings. From book launches, poetry readings, talks, films and cookery, the EGIC sponsors and organises events to create cultural bridges and bring people together.

Web and Tech—the EGIC has adopted a tech-savvy approach that entails the use of high-tech platforms to generate an interactive platform beyond the physical boundaries of the EGIC headquarters. All EGIC research and events will be made Open Access and the deployed technologies will reflect this approach.

Outreach Activities—the EGIC puts a special effort in organising and coordinating a variety of outreach activities with the aim of building and sustaining people-to-people contacts and professional networks between Europe and the Arab Gulf. The EGIC runs annual Parliamentary Dialogues in both regions and facilitates strategic meetings in all phases and at all levels (business, politics, society) from which joint projects, coordination activities, partnership and cooperation are established. The EGIC offers ideas, support and its good offices to smooth dialogue and collaboration.

Introduction to Rome Dialogue III

One of the most obvious, yet neglected, sources of identity formation.

Few things are as global as climate change and few challenges have the power to unite countries around the world as environmental challenges. As Europe lives in one of its hottest years, climate change in the Arabian Gulf is advancing desertification, threatening water supplies and food security. In March 2016, the EGIC choose to organise an event to reflect upon these challenges and explore the many venues for developing co-operative solutions – both at the institutional level than at the level of civil society. To this aim, the EGIC gathered an international panel with speakers from various backgrounds:

Khawla Al-Muhannadi—Environment Friends Society Bahrain

Federico Brocchieri—Italian Climate Network

Alessandro De Rossi—University of Lecce

Giuseppe Carrus—Roma Tre University

The roundtable was focused on a variety of topics that ranged from the importance of the physical environment in determining national narratives, images and national as well as personal identities, to the manner in which environmental changes and degradation are forcing adaptive changes to people, values and the societies they inhabit. This discussion was not only centred on physical spaces, but also on the diverse ecosystems that rely on them and the relationship between people, animals and plant-life. In all, Rome Dialogue III generated a powerful message of environmental awareness for the sake of preservation. In addition to the dynamic panel discussion, the people in attendance added an important layer of public engagement, further encouraging debate and laying the

ground for a tighter future synergy on environmental protection in various sectors.

The Opening of the Dialogue

Mitchell Belfer: First of all, thank you all very much for your support, after all this is the beginning of the Easter weekend and to have all of you sitting here, considering that in just a few hours you will be on the road going to celebrate and relax, is really important to us. It is also very important to see that issues related to our Environment are capable of bringing you out and I am very much looking forward for the discussion that will follow.

This is our third round table, our third Rome Dialogue, and perhaps I shall give you a little bit of a picture of what a Rome Dialogue is, because it is not a conference as you would imagine. The speakers today will give us an introduction about who they are and what are some of their ideas in relation to today's topic: the environment and identity – two fundamental things. The two things are so all around us that we have the tendency to forget them. The fact that we have identities that are unique to us as individuals, identities that are formed through experiences and through shared experiences and the fact that all this takes place in an environment, a physical space.

Now the Rome Dialogues are also an environment. They are a physical space here in via Gregoriana but also in some of the other events we will organise around this country and around Europe. And they are a space that brings people together. So the whole concept of the Rome Dialogue is to base here in Rome an interaction between people from very different backgrounds with very different identities. But as long as you are here, this is a neutral place, it is the place where ideas are not going to be attacked or criticized but rather are supposed to be built upon.

So will be the Rome Dialogue that we are going to be conducting today. It is this kind of interaction between people from every point of view that we are looking for, and that every idea is somehow going to meet in the

middle of this table. This is what is going to produce a positive outcome: more information, more awareness of the “other” point of view, better understanding between people from every corner of the world.

The Panel Speaks

Part 1

Khawla al-Muhannadi: It is a pleasure to be here and to meet all of you, my name is Khawla al-Muhannadi. I come from Bahrain. My specialty is the environment and I studied environmental protection and environmental awareness, protected area management, and, finally, Islamic ethics in protecting the environment. I worked as an NGO activist for 16 years, I established the first mixed gender NGO in Bahrain. It was for environmental protection. I come from a country that is very advanced in everything, but a mixed gender NGO was a big step! We started it for protecting the environment, and thanks to that experience I will be speaking here today.

Federico Brocchieri: Thank you very much for the invitation. My name is Federico Brocchieri. I am a project coordinator of the Italian Climate Network, working on climate change issues. My background is environmental engineering as a Bachelor's degree and I am currently studying environmental economics here in Rome. I've been working quite a lot on climate change during the last six years and last year I had the chance to be the climate change advisor to the Mayor of Rome. I will be very happy to discuss about climate change and the latest developments in the international negotiations.

Giuseppe Carrus: My name is Giuseppe Carrus, I am a professor at Rome Tre University here in Rome. I am a psychologist, in particular a social and environmental psychologist. I have been studying for almost two decades now what are the fundamental mechanisms or the determinants of human behaviour in the relation to the environment. So I am here to elaborate the topic from a disciplinary point of view. Let me say that I am here also because I share the privilege and the honour of participating to an event which is called a dialogue. Whenever I feel I listen to the word dialogue this immediately attracts me whatever the topic. In

terms of interdisciplinary collaboration and research projects, looking at things from different perspectives and points of view I think is a great and the right way to understand human beings.

Khawla al-Muhannadi: I think he likes dialogues so that he can analyse all of us.

Alessandro De Rossi: Good afternoon, thank you for invitation to this interesting event. I am an architect; my name is Alessandro De Rossi. I teach engineering, planning and transportation at the university of Lecce. I have a very deep interest in this problematic – the environment. Let me kick-start the dialogue by explaining you how.

In my line of work, I am constantly faced with the idea of a “sustainable development.” My technical training is also influenced by my membership in the Italian League of Human Rights and with this vision for years I have been committed to adopt a human-centred perspective in my work. Let me tell you, the purpose of a harmonious balance between the environment, development and infrastructure is the real challenge of the contemporary civilization. The term proposed here for our reflection is essentially the climate change in Europe and the Gulf countries and what is necessary to do to ensure life of a man in a decent natural environment.

As an architect and a planning expert I can only appeal to the need to consolidate more and more holistic and systemic culture. That is seeing the environment as a primary element without which life could not exist. The priority on all government desks should be – first and foremost – to promote actions aimed at mitigating risk factors. Firstly, life-threatening issue in all of their forms, most importantly those that threaten the whole environment. To achieve this, it is necessary to work on two roads which are different but aim in the same direction. On one hand, the political actions on the central and the local government level, on the other hand cultural initiatives in schools, universities and various cultural institutions.

The current debate on the environmental balance and the negative causes of its radical transformation has been an issue of studies by science and the conclusions are still being discussed among the scientists. Unfortunately, the discussions in parties are still characterised by general ideological approaches depending on different political parties—we must try to find the happy medium between the environmental risks that made pollution such a common phenomenon and an expanded need of human and industrial activities and new employment opportunities. The idea of a sustainable habitat design is now based on the awareness of

the strong interrelationship and interdependence of all the phenomena together: physical, biological, environmental, social, cultural, economic etc.

The conception of a reality as phenomena that are interacting with each other, takes a special place in the area. I have had business in the Gulf countries, such as Oman, where temperatures are very high and I found with surprise and admiration, a tradition wisdom in the matter of building. A perfect example and conventional knowledge of the correct way of protection against the extreme heat and also environmental protection.

Old houses in Muscat are equipped with wind towers, a real fireplace ventilation that keeps the temperature constant and low through the continuous exchange of natural air. All environments are provided with inner gardens in the houses. The comfortable and safe techniques there – the weather, the water and the green – create harmony and enable environmental protection. On the contrary, today the steel and glass construction are prevalent, especially in the Gulf countries, which need a large amount of energy for air-condition. Air-conditioning systems generate high levels of pollution and energy loss. Most of the new building techniques are considering the environment as a resource to be exploited and not to be protected. Sure technology now provides anything but everything is for its price.

The artificial islands in the sea, higher and higher skyscrapers... this all serves only to pollute the environment, to get to the edge of the human health. On the contrary to save the environment we must work hard on the maintenance of the territory. The future for Europe, and not only for this continent, goes towards greater attention to the quality of air and the waters, the cultivation of vast green areas and the protection of forests. This requires a drastic reduction in the use of the land. In Europe there are technical and legal regulations for industries imposing serious studies on environmental impacts. This should be applied also systematically in those regions where it is still not applied.

The difference in local identities between European and Gulf states should be more encouraged and pursued through the respect of environment-aware traditions and the pursue of new technologies. Some of the priorities could be: increasing research on renewable resources, decreasing the most polluting industrial emissions, recycling urban and suburban waste, rationalising the transportation network by making it more efficient, systematically reviewing all the criteria for the construction of

new buildings, reducing land use, recreating new areas for intensive green employment. Other ideas to be pursued include the systematic maintenance of a territory and urban environment, maximum authorisation of the use of the recyclable materials, environmental education in primary schools with regards to the energy choice and environmental sustainability. I know these are ambitious goals but it is fundamental that we talk about these ideas as often as we have the chance. Thank you!

Khawla al-Muhannadi: So we started with our work 16 years ago and we established an NGO that Bahrain has seen for the first time—an NGO for protecting the environment. The first question I had to answer from everybody was: ‘Why the environment? Couldn’t you find any other topic but the environment? What does it mean?’ And I had to answer these questions and I couldn’t see, I truly couldn’t see, why anyone living in an island that is so beautiful, that is surrounded by the sea, by the birds, by the palm trees, why anyone couldn’t see that we should protect the environment.

For one thing our poetry, it’s all about the sea, it is all about the palm trees. How could people even ask this question? “Why the environment?” But then I had to answer that because I had positioned myself to be an environmental activist. I was in places where I have asked the government to stop certain projects because they were harming the environment. I have asked parents to allow their children to join us in our NGO bearing in mind that that was the first mixed-gender organisation in Bahrain. Bahrain has never seen anything like this before and we were seen as a group of youngsters who want to do something strange. So I had to explain why the environment. My bachelor’s degree was in Information Technology – I’m a scientist, pure scientist – so I was faced with accusations like: ‘What do you know about the environment? Why do you stand there and tell us that we have to protect the environment? Why do we have to listen to you?’

To continue in my pursuit in serving the environment, I decided to get a degree in environment. So I studied protected area management, ecotourism - and I came back with an understanding of what meaning does the sea, the palm trees, the birds have in the ecosystem. We all live in one universe, we all live on one Earth, if the birds, if the fish are impacted, if the sea is impacted, climate change happens and all sorts of related phenomena happen. Yet it was not enough! People still asked: ‘Why do we have to care? Why do I have to care in Bahrain about climate change that is happening anywhere else in the world? And elephants?’

Let them die to the last one - why do I have to care in Bahrain? We don't have elephants; we don't have whales - let them go extinct. What about sharks, why do you protect sharks? Why would anyone on the Earth want to protect them? They are killers! And snakes? You want us to stop killing snakes when we see them? How come? They have to be killed on sight!' So science and ecology was not enough! I needed more weapons in my fight! I went and researched in Islamic ethics.

I wanted to tell people it is Islam, it is God, who is telling you to protect the environment. You pray, you fast, because you want God's blessing but if you don't protect environment, the blessings will go, that's exactly what I wanted to say, but I needed a proof! I first of all went to the Imams, to religious people trying to get them to do this but they didn't care much or didn't see it as priority. So I had no choice but to go myself and research in Islamic Ethics.

I'm not a religious scholar but when I presented my papers all those scholars present had a reaction of: "We haven't seen anything like this, there is nothing wrong in it and actually we have learned from it." This is all taken from the Prophet's life—how he acted and verses from the Holy Quran and Hadeeth. Many people did not know for instance that our amazing Prophet – Peace Be Upon Him – one day was about to give a speech with his people, with his followers, where they built a mosque. When he was about to speak he turned his back to them and walked back. And there was a tree, not even a tree, just parts of an old tree and he walked there and held or hugged it. Everyone looked at him and asked what he was doing and he said: 'The tree was crying because for a long time I was standing next to the tree addressing you and now we have the mosque built and I am leaving the tree, and she is sad, so I had to speak to the tree, I had to calm the tree down.'

It is there, it is in all references but no one paid attention to it. No one taught it at school. No one cared much about it to turn it into a life principle. Another story, Prophet Muhammad – Peace Be Upon Him – is going to war with the army, he goes to do something and when he comes back, there is a bird. That bird is flying up and down, up and down and the Prophet stands there, stops the whole army and asks who dared to take the chicks from the mother bird, and one of his followers said I did, I liked them. And Prophet Muhammad was so angry, he turned red and he went like: 'Give her chicks back!' in a very very angry tone. And he is almost never got angry, but he did turn angry for the birds! For the sorrow of the mother! It is there, it is in our books there are references but no

one cares turning it into a teaching tool for protecting the environment. The imams, the religious people talk about praying, talk about so many things but they rarely mentioned these stories. So in my research I found a list of stories, and Islamic ethics about protecting the environment. It was very good, but yet not enough because the question that was thrown at me was as simple as: ‘Why do I have to care? It is me Ali, Mohammed, George, why do I have to care myself? What does it mean for me?’ and as it turns personal, then here is the story.

I come from Bahrain; do you know the meaning of Bahrain? It is Two Seas. One sea is salty and one sea is fresh, pure, water. And the two seas come together but they never mix and that is the name—in the middle of the salted sea. We are an island, we are actually a group of islands, there comes the fresh water from the middle of the sea that is the name of Bahrain. So looking at Bahrain let’s focus on one thing and understand environmental identity. What is better than the sea? If I’m tired I just take a boat and go to the sea. The most amazing picture that cheers me up no matter what is the silver slim fish jumping on the sea. And if I see that, I know that the whole world cannot be bad. Everything is lovely if I see that.

So for me the sea has its own intrinsic value, it is the feeling that I get from being around it. But on the other hand, we also eat from the sea. If we had nothing we could survive on fish only, if it came to it. If no one would export food for us, if we cannot import anything we can still eat the fish and we can survive. And then we have the fresh water in the middle of the sea. We have the freshwater on land and that is what we need. We have the palm trees too – and so our food security.

But our environment is also entrenched in our history. In the past, thousands of years ago, in Bahrain there was a great civilisation called Dilmun. The meaning of Dilmun is land of immortality. In the very old epics it says that the Goddess has ordered the land to bring the fresh water. If you look at the whole Arabia, no one has freshwater. It is only Bahrain that has fresh water all over the country, so we were called the country of a million palm trees and the land of immortality, although we are a very small island but not to be compared to anybody. An interesting ancient quote is that in the old documentation of Iraq, a country that not only has palm trees, but also exports palm dates to the whole world. When they wanted to talk about their great Kings and how they were treated by the people living in luxury they said that they were treated with care “just like the Dilmunians treated their palm trees.” So we were

the example of how a human being deals with the palm tree, deals with any other entity in the world and the Dilmunic dates were the most expensive in the whole world. It is the most delicious date, and you cannot find a better one than the Dilmunian date.

Not only. In our two seas lied a blessing for our country which is the pearls. Our divers will dive in the sea and get the most expensive pearls in the world. They just have to dive and get it. These pearls are also central to the first story ever known to a human being, the Epic of Gilgamesh, the great King who ruled Iraq with strength and power. Gilgamesh was living like he will never die, but he discovers one day that he is only two thirds of God. He is a human being, not a God, so he looks for a secret of immortality. In the end he comes to Utnapishtim that is the only human being who, according to the epic, has managed to find immortality. Utnapishtim advised him, if you want the secret of immortality go to Dilmun, the land of immortality, and dive in the middle of the sea where freshwater and saltwater meet, and there you will find the white flower. Get the white flower and eat it. If you do you will get immortality. So he dives, and he searches and – my interpretation is that the white flower is the pearl – and he gets it. But Gilgamesh gets out of the sea and sleeps instead of eating it. He has to eat it but he's too lazy and, instead of eating it, he rests. While he is sleeping the snake came and ate it and so snakes are immortal, but he is a human being, he will die. Then he thinks: 'What should I do for my country so I will be immortal in the minds and hearts of people instead of being immortal in my body?' So he is back in a better way of looking at life. Dilmun has taught him this! My great country has taught him this.

Now when I think of all of these things together... Who am I as a Bahraini? Who am I without the two seas? Who am I without the pearls, who am I without the palm trees; who am I without those lovely stories that are telling me where I belong? That I belong to one of the most amazing places in the whole Earth; no one can stand next to me and tell me: 'My country is better than yours.' No, you don't have all that I have. That's how I feel because of this amazing environment that I live in. If I did not have the pearls and the two seas then Gilgamesh would have never come to me. Utnapishtim would have sent him somewhere else. This is why when I think of identity and environment—you cannot separate them. It is who you are, it is the palm tree, it is that bird, it is this flying silver fish in the sea. Without them we are not the same, we are different. We are almost like Gilgamesh when he wants everything for himself and is not

able to relate to anything else around him, thinking that all that he wants is to live forever. But I think that the environment and identity make us the new Gilgamesh – the one who thinks that he would be immortal only if he considers everything. Only if he makes everybody happy and live in harmony with everything else. So environment and identity are inseparable for me.

Giuseppe Carrus: The speakers who preceded me mentioned some really fundamental points and assumptions that I think almost all of us share when we approach this issue. I am very happy to follow on with my speech about environment and identity precisely from the point when Dr Khawla concluded, saying that environment and identity are two inseparable things, very connected. I will try to give you a perspective of my discipline and my studies on these issues.

First I would like to say I am very happy we are talking about it because actually it is an issue, the relation between identity and environment and human behaviour. It is an issue that I have been studying long time ago when I completed my PhD dissertation, so I am happy that I can go a little bit back in my younger years when I was a graduate student, which is always an epic period of one's life. Why are identity and environment so connected? Well psychological science tells us various things about this, tells us some reasons, that have been the subject of empirical investigation as well, which precisely point into the direction. We know that for psychology, identity, the concept of identity reflects the process of every individual defining him- or her-self, defining who we are.

So identity as a psychological term is a mechanism or the process that drives our knowledge of ourselves. We know from many studies in social and environmental psychology that there are different fundamental sources to define ourselves. One source of definition of our identities is social, so we define ourselves on the basis of what other people tell us. We register, we are continuously engaged in social interactions and the messages that the other people tell us contributes to define ourselves. But an important source of identity for an individual is also a group, a membership to groups. Groups to which we belong or to which we feel to be part of. This is also a very important part of human cognition and there are fundamental needs that each of us has.

The need of being part of a bigger entity, of something that transcends the narrow individual. But the third source of our identity that tells us who we are is the place. Places where we were born, places where we have lived for most years of our lives or where we have spent our childhood.

Place, the physical context, the geographical context of real life where we have been. We call this 'place identity' in psychological terms and it tells to individuals, to the subject who you are by reflecting on where you live or where you were born. We know that this is a powerful source of identity but the other important thing that we need to know is that identity is a powerful driver of our behaviour. Our choices in daily life are in a several circumstances pushed, determined and driven by our identity. By how we define ourselves whether we define ourselves in terms of a singular individual, a person different from anybody else, or whether we define ourselves as a member of a group - and we constantly are part of multiple groups or whether we define ourselves as person from a place. I was born in the city, I am an Italian, I come from an island. For example, we have studied identity processing in relation to people who were born and lived in islands and we know that being born in and living in islands is a strong driver of an identity. You know the island – be it very big or very small - psychologically has a meaning because islanders share this common idea that there is a tangible border between us living, which is the sea. I was born on an island, Sardinia, which I consider rather big but in world scale maybe it is rather small. But anyways that there is this constant mental process, the feeling of identity, of identifying yourself with a group or a place. Sometimes the biggest driver is a role: for example, some of us are more driven by their role identity—I am a President of a nation or I am the chief of a big company. In any of these cases we do behave following to what our identity tells us.

This process is very important also in relation to the actions that we do towards the environment: we have seen this, and we have made some studies by interviewing people, seeing that many actions that are important for the environment and have important consequences for the environment in terms of what now is trendy to define as our carbon footprint, so our daily life, can be strongly driven by our identification process. For example, when we are strongly feeling a sense of a membership in a group we may undertake actions that are considering the interest and the outcomes for the group rather than ourselves as single individuals, and sometimes this is very important to drive the person to postpone the narrow self-interest in favour of a bigger one. This is also very important for the environment because many of the environmental problems that are urgent nowadays can be reduced to this simple idea of the individual versus the collective interest and immediate versus long-term temporal perspectives. When human beings are faced with this kind of dilemma,

identity is an important push, although not the only one, channelling our behaviour: it has the power to channel behaviours in a positive direction which will ultimately lead to the collective well-being. This is the important point.

Federico Brocchieri: My focus is on climate change negotiations taking place at the United Nations. I had the privilege and the chance to participate at the last five Conferences of the Parties (COP). So starting from 2011, I had the chance to witness the beginning of radical changes in climate negotiations compared to the previous schemes that were in place. Before Copenhagen in 2009, many of you may remember, there was a failure in reaching a global agreement that was expected. There were a lot of expectations, probably too many, because President Obama had just been elected to the White House and he mentioned climate change during his very first speech, so there was a lot of hope among the civil society that the issue could be solved and an agreement could be found in Copenhagen.

Instead Copenhagen was the end of the process, of a scheme, which was the top-down approach. So basically before Copenhagen and in Copenhagen we were trying to impose on countries a certain target based on their historical responsibilities, common but differentiated responsibilities and other factors. That approach failed, countries couldn't accept targets that they believed they couldn't afford.

After Copenhagen it took the civil society and the UN bodies a couple of years to recover from what was a very tragic event for the climate movements from all around the world and then in 2011 a new process, a new approach, begun and that was a bottom-up approach. The basic concept of the bottom-up approach was no longer asking countries to accept specific targets and instead was asking countries to submit a national voluntary contribution. The so-called INDCs, which stands for Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, are those that countries were supposed to submit during 2015 ahead of COP 21, last December. The outcome is that now COP 21 is gone and we finally have a new global agreement, the Paris agreement, which will replace the current protocol in 2020.

That was a historic event, it is an historic agreement. It is not perfect, but it is very big progress for the world because as you know the current protocol did not involve number of countries, it didn't involve the United States for instance, and all major developing countries, which were not a problem back in 1992 when the UN conventions were established,

but now for instance India and China represents respectively the third and the first global emitters in terms of CO₂. While someone believes they shouldn't be pushed to adopt binding targets because they were not responsible for the problems we are facing now, if we want to look at the future and we want to ensure intergenerational equity - that the planet is inherited to future generations in liveable conditions - we must involve them. So I guess the COP 21 is a new beginning.

Personally, I am very positive about the outcome of the conference because it is the first global binding agreement in history. We had over 180 countries submitting an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution. So all countries are on board the same platform, in different ways but they are all on board, and they are all going in the same direction. Well of course not everything is great because experts decided to make projections putting together all the INDC's and they found that the aggregate effect of these measures which are supposed to keep the temperature increase below the two degrees at the end of the century, sadly does not fall within this scenario. Current projections show that in 2030 we should add no more than 40 Giga tonnes of CO₂ emissions and instead even if those INDCs would be fully implemented we are projected to a 50-55 Giga tonnes scenario which means that we are 15 Giga tonnes away from our target in 2030 to make sure that we reach our goal at the end of the century.

Therefore, we have a lot to do because we must fill in the gap. Science is telling us we have no more time, we cannot be any more late. Still I think the Paris agreement apart from this mentions many important features. First of all, it mentions important principles such as intergenerational equity that I've been personally advocating for. Young people from all around the world made working groups and we lobbied in different countries all around the world to include the principle and they eventually did. The agreement also mentions education; education is crucial. We cannot think to just solve the problems without radically changing our way of teaching students about environmental issues. So we must invest in education this is why for instance with my organization, Italian Climate Network, we have been running for three years a school project dedicated to schools to bring climate change lessons even outside of the traditional curriculum. And it is something that what we have to invest in, the government should invest in it.

This is actually what the Paris agreement says, there is a chapter of the Paris agreement which is fully dedicated to education, it is not very long

- just five lines - but it is a beginning we did not have that before. Still we intend to keep the pressure high because now that we reach the Paris agreement we must ensure that what world leaders promised to do would be actually turned into action. We have five years to update the INDC's before 2020 agreement enters into force and we must ensure that INDCs are renewed, updated, so that we can try to fill in the gap and we have all the tools to make it.

To conclude I would like to mention the way that the Least Developed Countries commented the Paris agreement, which was criticised by some as not very effective but the LDCs - among the most vulnerable countries in the world – thought differently: “It is the best outcome we could have hoped for LDCs but not only for LDCs, for all citizens in the world.” So again we have all the tools we just have to keep pushing and hopefully we will succeed.

The Dialogue

Part 2

Donatella Vincenti—Good evening, my name is Donatella Vincenti, I am a Phd Candidate at LUISS University based in Rome. I have a question for Dr Khawla about Islamic environmental ethics because I'm writing my PhD thesis about so-called Eco Islam and social movements for sustainability in Arab Islamic countries, especially in North African countries. My question is, in your view, to what extent and how is it possible to accommodate the Islamic ecological wisdom to the current challenges related to environmental protection conservation? Because I have analysed the Islamic legal, juridical instruments and techniques, such as 'Waqf', but most of them are instruments elaborated by the classical law schools and so on. For example 'Hisbah', to what extent can be recovered and applied to tackle the current ecological problems? Because the same concept is also misused by terrorist groups. So I would like to know what you think about this.

Khawla al-Muhannadi: Thank you very much for the question. You mentioned some specific Islamic Sharia terms that maybe are like Chinese for everybody else – so let me address your questions with trying to bring the audiences with us too.

She is talking about some Islamic concepts that can be used for protecting the environment. I will start with the last one she mentioned, 'Hisbah.' The meaning of 'Hisbah' is assigning an official for monitoring and taking corrective actions. He is not the ruler, he is not the government, he is not the judge, he's the Muhtaseb. His job is to look at the society, if there is corruption, if there is something impacting the group, impacting the people, and welfare of the society especially financial corruption then he answers to a Muhtaseb. He is almost like an independent ethical audit, he is not part of the government, and the (Khalifat) ruler cannot impact him. His power is just above every authority. That is why

Donatella mentioned the possibility of the misuse of power. This was one of the principles in my research, and I think it can be very effective powerful tool in restoring lots of ethics and values in the society, but it has to benefit from the modern criteria of international norms of behaviour: merge it to principles of social responsibilities but taking it back to the Muhtaseb and giving it the religious value and religious weight.

The other concept Donatella talked about is 'Waqf.' 'Waqf' is another amazing Islamic concept where you put your money, whatever you choose, your land or farm, for example say that after I die no one inherits it, not for my sons, or his sons not for anybody. This is for the public use, and for the goodness of the society and that 'Waqf' is to be spent in certain criteria like supporting orphans or feeding the poor. In Kuwait they have managed to add a new approved possibility to approved domain of 'Waqf' and also of 'Zakat' (which is another financial system) and that is for environmental protection. Why they managed to do that? Under the concept of: 'protecting people from harm.' So if you protect the environment you are avoiding diseases, you are preventing people from suffering, you are avoiding all sorts of harm before it happens so this is how 'Waqf' was added to the domain. Not many countries have that but in Kuwait they do, because there are those amazing courageous scholars who have pushed forward. So, yes, every single concept that you have talked about was included in my research and yes I think it is applicable. Let me also talk about the 'Hima' because it is of a greater relevance to identity.

We, as Arabs, used to adopt a lifestyle of moving and settling in search of water and fauna and flora in the extremely arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula- so whenever there was no water and no plants we moved to another area. But then we came together into big tribes and they settled. In the big tribes, we had some amazing systems that the ruler, or the first person of the tribe, will be able to protect the right of the people via an array of systems and traditions.

So what did they do? One of the most amazing systems that they used to have, long time back, before Islam, before anything, is that they had the 'Hima', 'Hima' means protection. So a ruler will say: 'Now I am the ruler and you are my tribe.' I declare all this region is our 'Hima': at certain time none of you can take your camels to graze inside that 'Hima' because learning from our experience we want to give it time to regenerate. We want to give this area a chance to flourish again because learning from our experience if everyone keeps grazing on the natural plants they will die eventually. So instead of us moving from one place to another

let's have a system so this lovely place is ours forever, but we will protect it." This is how the 'Hima' started and then went to people, that if you were in someone's 'Hima' no one can harm you before asking the ruler. Even if someone is not a member of my tribe I will protect them because they are in my 'Hima.' This is again about identity what has made the Arab tribe settle finally is the feeling that they are protected in that place and furthermore, they belong to the place and the place to them. Environment and identity...if this is my place if I am responsible for it, if it is providing me with all I need, I will give it all that it takes including giving my life to defend it, so that my children will have a home in it.

Cinzia Bianco: Dr Khawla mentioned the relation between protecting the environment and considering the environment as social good and it made me think about two things which I am going to ask Federico. I don't know if you remember there was this episode, it was even a joke on the Internet, that there was a guy in Canada selling bottles of pure air to Asia, do you recall this story? This bottled air was very expensive, he was sending out bottles literally full of air from Canada to Asia and it was an expensive air because it was very fresh and taken from the mountains. And so it made me think about one thing which Dr Khawla recalled again. Has it ever been discussed, at an international level, to kind of introduce the protection of the environment and living in a healthy environment as part of the richness of a country, literally another alternative indicator for the GDP for a country? It is in a way a richness if you think that an unhealthy environment can cause diseases and can add pressure on the health system, or even worse it can have damages on the economic system of countries. Think of the hurricanes and all the environmental disasters and how much they affect business in every part of the world including the United States. So is it even discussed – an idea like that?

Federico Brocchieri: To be honest I'm not sure whether the FCCC (the Framework Convention for Climate Change) deals with it, this is not the sort of discussions they usually have. However, what I know is that for instance the OECD already has the environment as an indicator when they make their annual reports about the quality of life in a certain country, so that is already used. Then there are other countries that are gradually introducing the protection of the environment inside their Constitutions. I heard that Tunisia a few years ago, and other countries more recently, when they are reforming their constitutions, are beginning to gradually introduce the protection of environment as a core value. I am not sure if this is ever going to replace or at least to integrate into the GDP but I

guess that the fact that the environmental conditions are getting worse worldwide and are bringing significant consequences, will lead governments to gradually consider the environment and the protection of the environment as a more important value and maybe they will account for this indicator when making economic evaluations.

Khawla al-Muhannadi: I have a question for Professor Carrus. When you talked about how identities are very powerful drivers to behaviour, I was listening carefully. The categories driving behaviour that you have mentioned, the social identity, the group, the place and then the role that we are playing in life. So according to your studies - what would be the most important driver, or most likely to be the most important driver for decision-makers?

Giuseppe Carrus: This is a good question. Well first we have to consider that, according to psychological studies, since we are engaging in multiple identities. Each one of us at the same time has an identity as a male versus female, being from one country versus another country, working in a certain field as an academic or a professional etc and which of these identities is really counting, is affecting our choices?

Specific contexts can make one of our identities more salient than the other and this makes our behaviour very complicated to be predicted. But if I have to answer your question, I will say that for people who have important responsibilities in terms of taking choices, choices that affect a large number of people, well if the choice is not interfering, it's not affected, disturbed by geopolitical issues, I will say that the role identity is the most important. Or for a politician a big role is played by political ideologies, I consider myself as a leftist-oriented person, or as a centrist-oriented. However, my guess is that in many instances that are relevant to environmental issues, like for example as Federico was saying before, also an intergroup process comes into play. In a context of supranational institutions, then I think that identity also comes in terms of country membership. They always say that when it comes to intra-European negotiations for example, the nationality of the leaders is a huge weight and often in negative terms because it may sometimes undermine the quality of the negotiations, or of the final negotiations outcome because countries have their self-interests that override the global common interest. I think this is a complicated issue. I think in international negotiations there is always a risk when it comes to the place identity – as you feel like you have to defend your country, your people – and this thought is especially present in the mind of the decision-maker.

If we are able to lower down this inter-group frame it might be that the decision is more rational in the end because it doesn't only answer to your identity. At the same time group identities can also lead to negative outcomes for the environment. For example, when there are two groups in competition for one resource: in this case the more one individual feels part of one group, the more he will be ready to compete with the other group instead of finding a common solution. So this is also very important.

Khawla al-Muhannadi: And the same goes for traditional whales hunting etc. It is the belonging and feeling of respect in a group and that's why we carry on doing it.

Giuseppe Carrus: Yes because it is a group activity and you want to protect your identity.

Khalid Chaouki: Thanks everyone. First of all, I'd like to say I am here not as a politician or a Member of the Italian Parliament, but mostly as a supporter of the Euro-Gulf Information Centre, and a supporter of Dr Belfer.

I think the challenge of climate change, and our environment is a great opportunity for us to relaunch and restart the dialogue in our region, the Euro-Mediterranean region, on several points. Not only on political relations and partnerships, but also on common values. For that I think the conference in Marrakech will be a good opportunity to really define the morality of dialogue and cooperation between not only the countries but also between people and civil societies, and on that my question are the following. The first, what do you think about actual cooperation between civil societies in the region, especially between Europe and the Arab Islamic world? Can you tell us about some examples of cooperation? And if not, how can we improve the cooperation between our civil societies, our young people and universities? What can we, realistically, imagine to do together for our common future?

Roberto Sciandro—I am very interested in what Dr Brocchieri said that the top down approach didn't really work but instead the bottom down did. It makes more sense because there is someone that takes responsi-

bility to do something so there is a way, you were saying that it is possible to insert the environmental agenda inside some traditional instruments that is part of the culture. It is not something that is imposed from outside, by law or something else but it's something that has actually always been part of a country as an identity because at the end as you said yourself the environment is part of what we are. This is more or less true for everybody, of course the identity can change, there are some countries that have different relations, but still there are many instruments and many points that are possible to insert in a way that it is something that is rediscovered, something that is lost, but it was always there and now we have the chance to finally find it again. That can in a way unify everybody in this area and in the other parts of the world because in the end this is the common ground for everybody. That was the point that I would like to explore.

Finally, my question is very simple. Of course local situations are influencing the identity of the people, I would like to ask – are the Bahraini people moulded by their island? Can we realise immediately the difference between for example Bahrainis and other people from the same region? And the second question I had, as a matter of fact, is a psychological question: do you think that the similarities of the environment, of a place could help to improve relations, good relationships between similar?

Federico Brocchieri: I wanted to add something regarding the issue of countries representatives protecting their national interests in international negotiations. That is something I have seen many times in the United Nations and this is probably the reason why they usually come up with solutions at 3-4 am at night, after being late and having surpassed the expected end of the conference. Indeed, the Conference of the Parties always run one day late at least, and this is why we, the civil society, usually spend the last night inside of the conference centre. So at 3-4 am, when they are so tired they will not even stand up, at that moment they usually start putting aside their divisions and coming up with solutions, because they know very well that if they don't come up with solutions, the civil society will get angry. So that is something common that actually happens.

To answer the questions about the actual cooperation between civil society groups, from my experience at the UNFCCC, where you can find

different constituencies representing different civil societies, the youth NGO's and the businesses-industries NGO's, research, innovation, women and gender, and farmers etc. I think they are united. We don't have the same problem we have with politicians or national country delegates in civil societies. It is not people trying to protect their countries' positions. They are very united in this way.

There is however one big difference that divides them at the UNFCCC, which a distinction between those advocating for climate justice very strongly, and those who support a softer approach whereby you try to engage with negotiators to propose solutions. While the climate justice movement is rather radical and even refuses to discuss with politicians trying to impose their views, others prefer engagement and compromise. This is the reason why there are sometimes even arguments among civil society groups and even young people - something that we have been trying to fix for the last three years. We did not come up with a solution because there is a radical distinction on the ways that delegates from civil society see the UNFCCC process. Some of them see it as just a useless process that has been running for over 20 years, and some others see it as a way, as the only way, with all its problems but the only way to come up with real and concrete solutions. So this is something that we must fix, honestly I don't know how. I've been trying myself with many others in the last three years but we need to keep discussing about how we can come up with a unique position. Because in the end we have the same goal, the ultimate goal is the same we just have different ways of getting there.

And the second question about the bottom-up approach which was mentioned I would just add that this is a question that is very frequent when I try to explain the way that this agreement was reached. People ask: 'So, it's a bottom up approach? Countries can do whatever they want? They are not bound? They are just going to do nothing!' Undoubtedly this is what could apparently happen but when it is about international reputation countries cannot do just nothing. When for instance China decides to adopt a plan and the European Union decides to do the same, the US cannot just stay there and watch because they have their reputation to defend. The same obviously goes the other way around. So this is precisely the point: the bottom up approach may seem risky but it was actually the only way of putting leverage on the countries' reputation to make them come up with an agreement. The problem is, as I said before, that we are still far from the target we need, we need to keep working on

this and gradually updating all countries' INDCs which is what we need.

Giuseppe Carrus: I have a very small comment on this about the top-down and bottom-up approach because I think that what happens between countries also happens with regards to individuals' behaviour. We know it from many psychological studies that what we will call a top down approach in terms of enforcing norms for individual behaviour often fails to work properly if it is not accompanied by a process that leads the individual to internalize the norm. If it is only an imposition of a norm without acquiring and acknowledging the reason behind the norm, why it is important then this is typically a situation that is unsustainable in the long-term. That is why for example in terms of environmental regulation driving individual behaviour, sustainability education is crucial. It is fundamental because there is not only the prescription, there is the prescription that all people must be aware of what is good and what is bad for the environment but there must be the education work and civil society is fundamental for this. Not only regarding the educational systems in schools but also outside - in the real life - through civil society intermediation between institutions and individuals to bring people to reflect on the reasons behind one prescription, or the reason why you should not kill a snake or you should not kill a shark etc. This is fundamental and it is the same process in the institution and in an individual.

Khawla al-Muhannadi: I would also like to address the international cooperation between NGOs in Europe and the Arab world from my own experience as an NGO working with different institutions, organisations and being part of a long processes leading to drafting international documents I would say that the presence of Arab NGOs is not that prominent, and regarding the statement heard here before that 'All NGOs are united,' I would like to say that I don't agree with the simplicity of it. Yes, we have to be united under a purpose but identity has to be there because the problems in my country, in my region are different. For instance, I was in Nairobi and I remember that we raised the issue that a very important subject has to be addressed and that is: "wars and environment." And I remember a very strong reaction like 'Do not bring in politics' and I said: 'I am not bringing politics! Wars are destroying my region. The wars in Iraq has destroyed the trees, the rivers, the soil and everything in Iraq. The use of depleted uranium has destroyed not just the future of this generation but the generations to come, the generations after and after. If we, as environmentalists from this region will not mention the wars then we are not true to our causes, to our environment. Therefore, I think

one of the issues is that identity is not there enough in the mind, heart and words of NGOs. It has to be there for us to reach real international solutions for environmental problems. We have to understand what are the regional problems, we cannot come and talk about climate change for everybody and ecosystems for everybody, some ecosystems are more vulnerable, and some places are more impacted by climate change and we have to understand that certain species running the risk of being extinct in certain areas because of certain circumstances that are specific for that area. We have to address that.

The other thing is that there are extremists among NGOs, there are moderates and there are weak NGOs. We have suffered from this. We as part of any NGO system are not decision-makers in most UN meetings, we don't vote, we just encourage or discourage the decisions of country representatives. We just play the best games we can with them so they vote for the right things, so that they remember the people when they are making their decisions, so they remember the majority of poor people who are hardly able to make a living. When we talk about food security, there are people who cannot sustain their living because their small businesses are taken by big corporations in the world. Food industry is taking over and the small farmers and the small scale food producers cannot produce even their own food for their access to the river or to the sea is taken from them, their access to the forest is taken or actually the forests are destroyed. While we think about all of this, the big states are there just thinking of the money value, the big companies behind them back home and all of this. So we have to stay up all night during negotiations to study how we can make the best impact.

Indeed, there are different positions among NGOs: some NGOs want to please their countries or to please the strong countries—they are always there, they are always present. Some NGOs want to keep their relations and the dialogue because if you don't keep the dialogue then we all have lost and these are the ones in the middle. Some have certain stands and they cannot accept not fighting for them, without them because they are extremists or because these represents real cases and principles and if we lost them then what are we? Why are we NGOs? So NGOs are very diverse, and it comes to identity again and how you define yourself. Yes, there is cooperation but we are waiting for people like you, Khalid, to find mechanisms, to find ways, to find tools for further cooperation and understanding as well. We should never risk losing our identity. I communicate with you with my identity, you communicate with me with

yours and we find beautiful ways to communicate and from that we form our relationship. We can never be one thing. Actually the beauty and the richness is in this diversity and we have to keep this diversity going on. I, myself, face situations when I am with Arabian NGOs and I found it very much difficult to make them understand the urgency or importance of my environmental stand, because they have never heard of it. It is something new for them and I sound as if I am speaking another language. It is just a different language. We need lots of work in order to form the dialogue and have it going on.

Regarding the question about islands. Yes, they have their own personality. In Bahrain the most prominent values in Bahraini personality are openness, welcoming, and a willingness to help. If you are in an island, you always welcome the ships that are coming to you. They bring goods, ideas, letters and new people.

Sometimes they are coming to occupy your country though and you don't welcome that very much, but even those, they bring things with them. Even those occupying your country, they build things in your country and one day they will leave and they will just leave their beautiful things that they brought with them. In Bahrain we have got a wealth of culture, the wealth of ideas, the wealth of how to build everything. We make amazing things out of pottery, out of metal, out of wood, palm leaves, out of everything. I often think of the different nations who visited Bahrain or whom we went to and learnt some of that from. So we always had this personality of welcoming whatever is coming. These features have a place also in the history of Islam. When Islam started in the far west of Arabia, much farther away from us, in Mecca, we were among the first nations who welcomed Islam, because we have that heart of welcoming all new ideas, and knowing a precious pearl when we see one.

The last thing, Federico, when you talked about the COP arguing that the big achievement is that it mentions education and intergenerational equity – I am not sure why you see this as a big achievement for the COP? We don't need a COP to do this; NGOs can do this on their national level. Yes, I am one of those NGOs who was very much disappointed with the results of the COP, I always think of two things. First of all, the huge money wasted on those meetings, second the environmental impact for flights, for cargo, for paper printing, for all of this - what did we achieve after that? We were in Kyoto and Kyoto was by the way not a great thing but it was a good thing, only good. Then we went from Kyoto down and

down and then we settle for 'Everyone can do something good, let's see what's going to happen.' In the end when we say it is legally binding – what is it binding whom to what?

Again, as an NGO, I feel whatever decision has been made it is left to us as NGOs to monitor, to report, to try to push more and more. And the question is, are we getting anywhere with that? When we talked about the bottom-up approach, I think this is the work of NGOs. We don't need COPs, we don't need huge meetings for states that are not willing to change their positions, who are coming there just to show their power. We need to work on our societies; we need to work in our small countries and try to make a difference there because if we have achieved it there, we have achieved a lot. Of course we need international agreements about lots of things, when you talk about climate change we know that the first people who will suffer from climate change are those people who have nothing to do with that. The very pristine, poor nations who are living in the forest, who have no impact on climate change whatsoever; they don't have machinery, they don't have factories, they have never done anything with huge change environmentally, but they are the first people who are being affected by floods, by storms, by every single impact of climate change. So yes, we need an international solution but I don't see COPs and all these huge meetings taking us anywhere further. It is using our resources and it is using us in all ways possible but it is taking us nowhere in the end. This is just my opinion.

Federico Brocchieri: We are not very aligned in these topics but I will try to express my position. I do think we really need COPs and, yes, there is money which is spent for it but I think it is well spent because it is the only process which brings together 195 countries. It is the only occasion in which we actually have all the countries together and they can agree on something, they can agree collectively. So this is the only opportunity for us to have these meetings, it is not something we can do online via Skype or anything else. Having the people together is something that is really helpful. For instance, in 2013 in Warsaw, COP 19, there was some very bad typhoon that hit the Philippines causing thousands of deaths and I remember the head of the Philippine delegation started crying in the room because he couldn't reach his brother on the phone and he wouldn't know if he was still alive or not. That maybe had an impact on some of the decisions that were taken there. Now obviously, I trust and I am convinced that we do not need disasters to happen to make these conferences useful but they undeniably had an impact. I do not believe that we didn't make

any progress since these conferences have been established. Progress is definitely too slow, that is true, but we have the Kyoto Protocol, which for the first time was an international instrument that allowed countries to take concrete measures to reduce emissions.

Countries in the European Union reduced their emissions, Italy did its part, not in a very easy way to understand because we ended up buying credits from Poland, but even our country did something. Meanwhile other countries, the Developing Countries, raised their voices because they are growing. This is why COP 21 is crucial because it's written down that countries like China or India as they do not hold the historical responsibilities of the problem, they will continue to have a growth which will coincide with the growth of their emissions until 2025-2030, but will then start decreasing their emissions as well. We are all headed towards a scenario when at the end of the century we will limit our emissions and temperature. Of course we are not just waiting for the end of the century to achieve this, we have intermediate steps but I truly believe in the value of these conferences, of these agreements because we have achieved something.

And, even mentioning intergenerational equity and education was crucial because they were mentioned in the Preamble of the text which means that every decision, included in the text later on, should be reflected on those principles. So if countries know, because they have to, that they should respect not just the principles of equity but also the principles of intergenerational equity, which means not only ensuring equity across this generation but across the next generation, this is very important. Of course our job as civil society organizations is to make sure that countries do not forget this but I truly believe that this process is the only process, it is not perfect but it is the only process which can lead to in progress.

Cinzia Bianco: Actually now that you mention education I would like to just go back briefly to what has been previously said about what drives the choices of decision-makers. I have a question in my mind which I want to ask Dr Rossi: when you get to a project on urban planning, on architecture, and they ask you for the project to be respectful of the environment - what do you think drives this choice? So for example what is the difference between one person who wants a project to be compliant with the environment and another person who doesn't care and have different priorities?

Alessandro De Rossi —I think in my opinion what is fundamental for

this discussion is the roots and traditions of a natural habitat and an artificial habitat. The problem for me is the following: I work a very long time in an artificial world, because urban design is artificial, and this habitat for me is a very strong driver for behaviour. When you live in Rome, the conditions of buildings and the streets, the fountains, is very strong—nature doesn't exist. I think this is the problem. The second problem is that now the design and architecture, something terrible in my opinion, is kind of a new international language. When I go to a new country, or a new city, or an old city sometimes I cannot tell the difference because the international style of architecture is equal. It is a very big problem because it destroyed the tradition, it destroys the human history, it destroys everything. In my record, the problem is in this international style: the steel skyscrapers in Dubai, in New York, they all look the same.

Riccardo Mazzucchelli—I am here representing MUN Academy, an organisation that is involving the youth, promoting youth participation in political processes. I was living in Beirut last year and I was relating to what Dr Rossi just said about the constructions of all buildings with new materials that come from other identities. Especially in Beirut, right now, they are building a lot of skyscrapers, all the buildings I have seen are like 29 floors or higher. I think it is a bit of a disgrace because Beirut is one of the places where humankind has existed for millennia, I think it's in like the top 10 places where human civilization has existed ever. So I would like to make one example: they used to have wonderful souqs, just like in Damascus, and they were destroyed during the civil war and now they have this new, what they call the souqs again, but they are actually shops in a shopping mall. When I was in Lebanon everybody was bringing me there saying: 'Look, this is an Italian architect who did that.' And I said: 'Well I really wouldn't like to hear that.' This really relates to the environment and identity discussion that we were having and I would like to support that.

On the other hand, I would like to give another example, basically regarding the cooperation between NGOs and civil society organisations and social movements, about when I went to Georgia, actually it was during the CFS reception. Many people don't know that but the CFS underwent a deep reform in 2009 and now it has two delegations: the civil society mechanism and private sector mechanisms of which my association became part of recently. This mechanism, although it is really hard to make it to work well, has delivered very important results in negotiations done by the CFS. For example, there were some Lebanese

NGOs supported by some Jordanians NGOs in the development of what was the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Areas of Protracted Prices, and they were essential and they would have never managed to have an impact without this type of coordination that was put in places. So I think that, yes, we should have an impact at the national level and we should be agents monitoring the doing of each government where we operate. But at the same time this type of institutional cooperation among NGOs, I think it's like the next step to bring a more effective impact on many issues, especially what is now emerging from COP 21 and to other environmental issues.

Khawla al-Muhannadi: Yes, civil society mechanism has managed to succeed in so many things actually, and it has few Arab NGOs by the way, from Bahrain, and also from Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Lebanon. So what you were talking about it was a result of about five years of work, to just highlight the fact that if your country is occupied, if your country is facing war, this is a different situation. You cannot just have it similar to any other country, you cannot just say all the countries of the world are equal. So I think this comes back to today's topic of identity—identity that has to be kept, and identity has to be celebrated. Identity has to be there even during negotiations and even when we will be trying to agree on reaching our common goal. It should not be dissolved ever.

I wanted to refer to your question about the bottom up and whether we can find from each culture, or each society, a solution from within. 'Hima' the one that was mentioned before is one example. And it was found from Arabia, we think and we believe, from many meetings and discussions we had and supported by the UN and UNESCO in particular, that 'Hima' can offer a solution not just for our region but for many other regions. Because when we started the 'Hima' principle, which is a pure Arabic principle according to us, it turned out to be that in China, in other South American states they have similar systems as well. Only they have different names, different sub-systems that work for them better, but it is something that is coming from within, and it has its rules and customs and values that are kept by the community. This is in contrast to the examples of protected areas that were enforced in Africa or in India. How was it done? It was done in the most radical ways: people were moved out of the protected areas and you had all sorts of fences around, and policemen were brought and have them shoot anyone who was trying to hunt an animal. The results were amazingly horrible. NGOs have

well-documented stories about incidents of that kind—that the day they were celebrating the launch of the protected area they came to find that elephants in the protected area killed. The reason was that people got so frustrated and antagonised about that way they were treated that they took the liberty to go and kill every single elephant. Yet in the past they never killed one, they killed them only when they came to their villages, when it was a fight between the elephant and the people there. They would never take the effort of hunting them just to kill them but they did it this time because it was enforced on them, because it was the system that did not respect the culture that is there.

In contrast to this, when they were protected areas following the community - based management, so the people of the community are managing the protected area, they are benefiting from it, allowing only controlled with maximum benefit to conservative and the community where only one elephant is hunted per year and people will eat from it and they will use it in every single way to support the community. It is working very well but just because, as you said exactly, it is coming from within the community in contrast to imposing it from above or from outside which never worked and even if it worked for some time it would fail at the end. So yes, definitely what you said should be found in every community and I am sure that every single community in the world has systems from within that they can study more and build upon.

Cinzia Bianco: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you and please let us thank our panel. I am sure that they will be happy to keep chatting and answer any questions you may have during the reception. Please help yourself and we look forward to seeing you again soon at one of our events.

