



Pic: A view of the Zomba Plateau: from 27vakantiedagen.nl

The 6th International Conference on Sustainable Alternatives for Poverty Reduction and Ecological Justice (S.A.P.R.E.J 2025), University of Malawi, Zomba, Malawi, November 18-21, 2025 Mode: Hybrid

Conference Theme

"Religion and Sustainable Development: Towards Biodiversity and Climate Justice in Africa"

Today, climate change has become one of the central issues in the discussion of sustainable development. The increasingly changing weather patterns across the globe, evident in the recurrent droughts and floods, the rising rate of biodiversity loss, and increasing poverty, are raising critical questions on sustainable development. Goal 13 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda indicate that the world's plan of action to achieve sustainability and resilience for people and the planet is closely linked with climate (UN, 2023). According to the Paris Agreement (2015) and the 2030 Agenda, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires all hands-on deck. All this suggests the need to harness all the local resources, both material and social-cultural, to achieve climate justice. Religion is an essential cultural phenomenon in the world. It significantly influences people's understanding of scientific findings and the adoption of policy interventions. Besides, religious practices such as religious tourism (Pilgrimage) and religious group's use of natural green space significantly impact the environment and climate change. Therefore, fostering constructive engagements of religious thought with climate science could be foundational to building a critical mass for alternative sustainability options at the individual, community, and national levels.

The urgency of the science-religion engagement in Africa is necessary given the distressing state of biodiversity in the region (UNEP 2010) amidst growing religiosity. According to Pew Research (2018), Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for over 20% of the world's Christian population, most of whom directly depend on biodiversity products such as firewood, water,

and wild edible fruits and fish (Convention on Biodiversity, 2014). Despite this substantial Christian presence, the region continues to grapple with persistent environmental challenges, including land degradation, deforestation, and biodiversity loss (UNEP, 2010, p.1). At the current rate of overexploitation and degradation of biodiversity ecosystems, it is estimated that by the end of the century, Africa will have lost 50% of its bird and mammal species and 20-30% of lake productivity (UNEP 2016). This highlights the paradox of increasing religious consciousness and continuing biodiversity loss, suggesting a missing link in the relationship between religion, biodiversity management, and sustainable development in Africa.

This conference will bring together international scholars, scientists, religious leaders, civil activists, religious-based institutions and foundations, and policymakers to discuss the challenges and opportunities in promoting biodiversity management in Africa. This conference call, therefore, invites submissions around the following and other related themes:

- Science, Religion and Sustainable Development
- Religion and Climate Science
- The Status of Biodiversity in Africa
- Religion, Sustainability and Creation Care
- Religion and Biodiversity
- Biodiversity Management and Poverty Nexus
- Higher Education and Sustainable Development
- Interreligious Perspective on Creation Care
- The Role of Religion in Community-based Natural Resource Management
- Interreligious Perspectives on Economic Justice and Climate Change
- Religious Education and Sustainable Development

Registration and abstract submission: Indekha@unima.ac.mw copy to louk.Andrianos@wcc-coe.org

Registration Fees:

International Participants: \$170
 African Participants: \$100
 Online Participants: \$60

Registration Fees sent to: Account # 402117, UNIMA FCDA, National Bank of Malawi, Zomba Branch, SWIFT CODE: NBMAMWMW, REF: SAPREJ2025.

Abstract Submission Dateline: August 31, 2025

Participation Registration Dateline: October 31, 2025

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Travelling to Malawi:

Through Chileka Airport, Blantyre (the conference organisers shall arrange the logistics from airport to the hotel).

Accommodation:

Accommodation will be available around at Mango Lodge: <https://mangolodgezomba.com>. Those requiring visas, an e-visa can be applied from: <https://evisa.gov.mw>.

Organisers:

- **Andrianos Louk**, World Council of Churches, Greece
- **Nadja Furlan Štante**, Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies, Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia
- **Sabada Lesya**, University of Saskatchewan, Canada
- **Seyed Masoud Noori**, Representative of the I.M.A.M. Organization at the UN and a Visiting Scholar at New York University (NYU).
- **Tomas Insua**, Laudato-Si Research Institute, Italy
- **Antonis Kalogerakis**, Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece
- **Linda Vogt Turner**, Intercontinental Open University, Simon Fraser University, Canada
- **Alemekeze Chikondi Phiri**, Malawi Council of Churches
- **Isabel Apawo Phiri**, Blantyre Synod University
- **Louis Ndekha**, University of Malawi