

Sikhs formulate Green Plan

SIKH COUNCIL (USA) INITIATIVE

* Courtesy: Dr. Rajwant Singh. Email: rajwant@aol.com

UN OFFICIALS AND SIKH LEADERS recently met in New Delhi to discuss the greening of the Gurdwaras and schools. They endorsed a five year 'greening plan', which includes a long-term commitment to transform Gurdwaras into ecologically safe places in terms of energy use, the types of building materials used, and incorporating environmental education into Sikh education curricula. 'EcoSikh' a five year plan crafted by the U.S. based Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE), organizer of the conference, will be used to disseminate 'green knowledge' throughout Sikh community in India and abroad to develop environmental activism.

UN Assistant Secretary-General Olav Kjørven from New York and Victoria Finlay of UK based Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) joined this Sikh Environmental Summit. Among those who attended and presented their views on this *EcoSikh* conclave were Union Cabinet member Dr. Manohar Singh Gill, Secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Dilmegh Singh, President of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) Paramjit Singh Sarna, former Supreme Court Judge, Justice Kuldeep Singh, MP Tarlochan Singh, and Vikram Singh Sahney of World Punjabi Organization, Major General M.S. Chadha, Sikh Forum Secretary R. S. Chatwal, artist Arpana Caur, Makhan Singh, Dr. Mohinder Singh. Many other eminent Sikhs from all over India and abroad also participated. Baba Sewa Singh of Khadoor Sahib, Baba Balbir Singh Seechewal, former Jathedar Prof. Manjit Singh, Punjab Secretary D.S. Jaspal were honored for their environmental activism. **Dr. Farooq Beg from Pakistan, who has documented trees associated with Sikh Gurus, was also in attendance.**

"Sikh heritage is known to promote a balance of spiritual values and stewardship of Nature. Guru Nanak taught that Nature is gift from God. Throughout history Sikhs have stood for weak and downtrodden and it is impressive that now you are ready to commit to protect Nature," said Olav Kjørven, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP's Director of Development Policy.

Dr. Rajwant Singh, Chairman of US based SCORE said, "This is perhaps the first time that so many Sikh leaders have gathered to declare their commitment to save the planet. Sikhism teaches us to be environmentally conscious and this conference with UN was an opportunity for Sikhs to demonstrate to the world that we are ready to translate our beliefs into action."

