

06 July 2021

CAPE TOWN INTERFAITH INITIATIVE URGES A RE-THINK ON AMAZON'S TWO RIVERS URBAN PARK DEVELOPMENT

Cape Town Interfaith Initiative (CTII) stands in solidarity with the Observatory Civic Association, the Philippi Horticultural Association, Claremont Main Road Mosque and others who have objected to the proposed Amazon development at the site of the Two Rivers in Cape Town.

Our objection is based on environmental, historical and moral considerations. At a time when reconciliation and common purpose are paramount, we see the creation of yet more division, anger and hatred by separating sibling from sibling, a nation from its land.

Our history is a shared history. This land is the site of two of the world's oldest civilizations: the Khoi and the San. It is a site of resistance to invasion, dispossession and slavery - a resistance that began almost 4 centuries ago. This is sacred land that carries the memories of the earliest ancestors of humankind itself. National and world heritage cannot be for sale. Neither can the environment.

This is the convergence of two rivers which have run since the dawn of time. It is a flood plain which plays an important role in the balance of Nature and the changes of seasons. It is home to endangered indigenous species. Survival of humankind and our planet depends on the mitigation of climate change by protecting, not destroying our natural resources.

CTII cannot reconcile with any form of epistemic violence that ignores the voices of the unseen, the unheard, the marginalized and the forgotten; nor that which desecrates or tramples sensitive ecologies or sacred histories. Instead we seek respect for the preciousness of history, the dignity of our ancestors and the sanctity of Mother Earth. We urge this in the knowledge that Nature requires humanity to work with, not against her; and the threat of rising sea levels and predicted climate change related extreme weather events may well exact a tragic revenge when we seek to colonise the natural order that God has ordained.

International best practice for climate resilience and building a future that will be sustainable for all, says we should protect our waterways, our biodiversity and our ecologically sensitive areas which are our natural filtration systems, our lungs and our temples.

While we welcome investment and job creation, there are other places within our city where such endeavours can be effectively maximised. New construction is not always necessary. In our pandemic-gripped world, there are many existing buildings reaching out for new life and a rejuvenated purpose.

Riches lie not just in capitalism but also in history and in spiritual wellbeing. Through various structures including CoCT's own Environmental Management Department and Environment and Heritage Resources Information Centre, City of Cape Town aspires to ethical custodianship of our land and our unique heritage. We call on our City fathers and mothers to uphold the standards they have set themselves to ensure legacies that our children and future generations may be proud of.

Let us never forget who we are as a people and where we have come from.

Cape Town Interfaith Initiative
July 2021

Reverend Berry Behr
Chairperson

Mobile: 0766721932
Email: ctii.capetown@gmail.com



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK
The Official UN Observance in the 1st Week of February

