MEDIA KIT

BACKGROUNDER
GREEN PILGRIMAGE NETWORK

In an initiative led by Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Naomi Tsur and backed by **ARC** (Alliance of Religions and Conservation) and **ICLEI** (Local Governments for Sustainability), the **Green Pilgrimage Network** (GPN) was founded in November 2011 in Assisi, Italy. This global forum of pilgrim cities and holy sites around the world strives to integrate green ethical standards into the experience of pilgrimage; to encourage faith communities, their leaders and the pilgrims themselves to recognize their collective and individual responsibility as stewards of divine creation; to "leave a positive footprint" and to effect positive change at the grassroots level. Founding members alongside Jerusalem include Haifa, Assisi, Amritsar, Trondheim, Etchmiadzin, Kano and St. Albans, and important sites from around the world such as the sacred Shintu forest in Japan and the St. Pishoy Coptic Monastery in Egypt. Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Naomi Tsur was named as the International Goodwill Ambassador of the global Green Pilgrimage Network at its launch in Assisi.

GPN was borne out of a concept first raised by Naomi Tsur at a major symposium held in November 2009 at Windsor Castle, UK, organized by ARC in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It was here that nine major world religions launched long-term commitments to environmental action including greening pilgrimage cities and routes, in what the UNDP described as "potentially the world's largest civil society movement on climate change".

According to figures estimated by GPJ, about ¼ billion people go on pilgrimage each year, creating additional stress on the water, sewage, waste disposal and food supply systems of their pilgrimage destinations and often causing environmental damage. This constant stress and burden affects the local infrastructure, constitutes a threat to the beauty of the ambiance and to the flora and fauna that form part of each heritage landscape.

Members of the Green Pilgrimage Network are committed to developing sustainable urban infrastructure for pilgrims visiting their city and to ensuring that transport, accommodation and other related facilities contribute to making the pilgrims' visit a significant and ecologically-friendly experience. The impact of the network reaches beyond member cities and sites, appealing to faith leaders and pilgrims to integrate green ethical standards into their spiritual experience, and subsequently into their daily life.

http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/Green_Pilgrimage_Network_Handbook.pdf

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