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Bioethics and Climate Refugees

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Bioethicists are well familiar with the axioms and the virtues of bioethics. Bioethics is one of the flourishing disciplines in Europe, United Kingdom and United States of America. The influence of the west, in the case of Bioethics, is not found in the Asia-Pacific and African nations. Though some nations in the Asia-Pacific and Africa have set up National Bioethics Committees, many are yet to establish National Bioethics Committees though there are many activities going around these nations and a good number of bioethicists are found in these countries. This cannot be brought about as a Top-to-Bottom approach but as a Bottom-to-Top approach. Bioethicists in Asia (who have been trained at home, by UNESCO and European/North American nations) should come together and organize seminars and workshops for prospective Bioethicists, College, and High School students in their respective regional languages. Bioethics education in India can rekindle the patriotic spirits in the people, as they have already been influenced by the noble Bioethics deeds of the practical bioethicist, Mahatma Gandhi. In this dry moment when people are slowly forgetting the great sacrifices laid down to the nation and the world by Mahatma Gandhi and his peace movements, the introduction of bioethics education in schools and colleges will bring about a culture of peace in the minds and hearts of the students, who will be the leaders of India in the future. Bioethics education will also create a climate of peace and harmony in the school and college campuses and in the hostels.

We are familiar with refugee movements caused by war, famine and natural disasters. It is overwhelmingly the poorer and developing nations that do not close their borders and accept millions of refugees, some of whom remain for many years. Today, among the developed countries, the United States, Sweden and Finland offer temporary shelter to victims of natural disasters, and Denmark accepted some Afghan drought victims from 2001 to 2006. Global warming will be creating a new category namely —Climate Refugees. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that climate change may displace 150 million people

by 2050; the Stern Review puts the figure at 200 million. Larger climate changes pose potentially gigantic refugee problems. How are we going to face and tackle this problem? The poor countries will suffer most and in the greatest numbers. In this presentation we will highlight the reports of one of the projects in which many bioethicists all over the world have joined together and are in the process of evolving some concrete recommendations, under the UNESCO-ECCAP project. Though this is one of the biggest leaps made to find ways to tackle Climate Refugees Problem, it is not enough we stop with this project. Each nation has to set up their own Ethics Committees under the relevant ministries and start researching the problem of climate refugees with the assistance of bioethicists, climate and environmental specialists who are capable of giving their best to find solutions to this grave concern as our children and grand children should appreciate the wisdom of the present generation. We will also present our views in finding probable solutions to the Climate Refugees problem with human dignity valued as the best treasure of humankind