

Caux 2013: CDLS: addressing the human connections between poverty, conflict and environmental degradation.

On behalf of Initiatives of Change International I would also like to welcome you to Caux. I am delighted to be here and part of this important conference. I wanted to address two issues in my brief remarks. Why I am interested in the issues that this conference is addressing and why IofC is also interested in them.

I am a pediatrician – so children’s health and wholeness is my daily passion. But I also wonder a lot about what sort of world they will inherit from us. As I have taken part in the previous meetings in Caux about Land degradation, I have learnt a lot. I am no expert of the scientific issues being discussed here, but I know that all the technology and solutions are known – it is the human factors that stop them being implemented. What is required is a paradigm shift in people’s attitudes and behaviours to enable the technical solutions to be implemented. That gives me hope that I, and all of us can play our part in implementing solutions.

Initiatives of Change, is a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who are committed to the transformation of society through changes in human motives and behavior, starting with their own. Our mission is to inspire, equip and connect like-minded people who wish to address world issues through the same approach. We have three focus areas: trust building, ethical leadership and sustainable living.

Our aspirations and aims on these three focus areas are summarized as follows:

1. Trust building

Peace and social cohesion can only be achieved by building trust and reconciliation across divides.

2. Ethical leadership

Good governance at every level is rooted in developing a leadership culture based on moral integrity, compassion and selfless service.

3. Sustainable living

Economic justice and environmental sustainability can only be achieved by inspiring a transformation in the motives and behaviours of all people.

The Caux conferences each summer continue to serve as a home for the world – a common space where people from all cultures and all walks of life can come together to seek answers to the world's challenges, starting with themselves. The conference themes intersect with the key focus areas of the national and international work of lofC: Trust building, ethical leadership and sustainable living.

This conference, with its theme of **Land and security: addressing the human connections between poverty, conflict and environmental degradation** brings together lofC's three focus themes in a complete package. Trust building is essential for ending conflict; ethical leadership and good governance is important in the fight for equity and the rightful use of resources to meet the needs of all and a change in attitudes and behaviours is needed for sustainable living that would enable us to restore the environment and land.

You will shortly hear more about the history of this remarkable house from Andrew. A number of things struck me when I first came to Caux as a medical student at the age of 21:

1. I caught a real glimpse of a diverse community that cut across divides of culture, religion, enmity and barriers of history working together to create a better world – seeing it here, made me feel it was really possible to work to create this real community wherever I was.
2. It made me realize that to build a different world where everyone's basic needs are met – you need to combine big thinking with take small steps to be part of a critical mass that applies the theory into practice on a daily basis before you could even take it wider afield.

3. It brought home to me that to create a better world we needed to work at both grass roots level as well as political level in a creative collaboration to find solutions. It was not just politicians and leaders who need to find solutions. Everyone is responsible and important if we wanted to enshrine equity, dignity for all and meet the basic needs of everyone in our communities.

4. It reinforced my belief that the way I choose to live my life with integrity and values was a prerequisite for anything I wanted to do professionally, in my community and in the wider world.

Over the coming days, Caux can help us individually and collectively – in our inward search to equip ourselves with the necessary personal values and leadership tools; and in our outward search for an integrated solution to poverty, conflict and environmental degradation.

At the heart of lofC and Caux's approach are four elements:

1. Taking time to reflect and seek inner wisdom to discover the inner tools that can unlock the creative potential in each person
2. Examining our own motives and behavior to develop a culture of moral integrity in our own personal lives – increasing our credibility.
3. Reaching out in dialogue to build authentic relationships with others that build trust an essential prerequisite to working together on issues that concern us all.
4. Searching together for the focused action we can take individually and collectively to meet local and global needs.

I hope you will take enough time to be refreshed in this oasis that is Caux - through reflection and quiet, learning from each other, dialogue – so that we can find the inspiration for the common tasks we take on together as we explore the themes of this conference. There is an imperative to do so, if we wish to enable all children everywhere to live in peace and security on a restored earth that meets their needs and enables them to fulfill their full potential.

Omnia Marzouk