

## « 100 doctors for the planet »

### INTERVIEW REQUEST

In order to prepare the next United Nations summit on climate change which is due to take place in Copenhagen from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, ASEF (French Environmental Health Association) has decided to point out the link between global warming and health by releasing the operation « **100 doctors for the planet** ».

**The operation.** From the 10<sup>th</sup> of September until the end of the Copenhagen summit, ASEF would broadcast each day on its brand new website an interview of a doctor who works for the planet ([www.asef-asso.fr](http://www.asef-asso.fr)).

This series of 100 portrayals realized by the **Dr Sandrine Segovia-Kueny**, ASEF General Delegate in Paris, aims at presenting those who are engaged treating their patients' everyday and trying to save the planet. Here, they could share their eco-citizen propositions.

**We would be glad if you accept to join this operation.** To be involved, answer briefly the following questions and send it back to us along with a portrait of you. This present document and the picture have to be sent back to Ludivine Ferrer, ASEF Press and Communications Manager, at the following e-mail address: [asef.presse@gmail.com](mailto:asef.presse@gmail.com) .

INTERVIEW

**Introduction of you:** Today, the Dr Butler, would explain how he tries everyday to do his/her best for our planet. *A sum up of your activities in 2 or 3 lines*

I am a founding director of BODHI ([www.bodhi.net.au](http://www.bodhi.net.au)), one of the first Buddhist influenced development NGOs based in the West. I am a professor of environmental health. My work principally concerns the influences of climate change, sustainability and inequality upon health.

*! For layout reasons answers do not exceed 8 lines.*

*Dr Sandrine Segovia-Kueny : What do you think about Global Warming ?*

Dr BUTLER : Global warming is not the emperor of global problems, but is certainly one of the princes. It combines with its brothers and sisters (eg weaponisation, human greed and our tolerance of poverty and inequality) to threaten the foundation of civilisation. There are many plausible pathways by which global warming is likely to contribute to collapse, such as regional food scarcity, famine and food riots and relentless sea level rise and massive population dislocation. Unless we are very lucky we will initiate feedbacks which worsen both greenhouse gas emissions (such as by warming the tundra) and governance (such as by bad short-term reactions to long-term problems). The interaction of these issues threatens to overwhelm us.

*Dr Sandrine Segovia-Kueny : In your everyday life, how do you act to help the planet ?*

Dr BUTLER : I have spent much of my life as a physician trying to get doctors and the public to understand the peril we face, by writing, speaking and doing. In 1983 I was arrested in Australia's largest environmental protest. In 1989 I stood for the Greens and co-founded BODHI, an NGO which raises funds to help 'change agents' in low-income countries improve health, education, rights and justice. I try to be a role model, including by cycling to work and buying electricity sourced from renewable energy. We chose not to have children. I try to minimise waste, especially of food and paper, and I eat mostly vegetarian food and fish. I try to buy ethically sourced products. I own 130 acres of forest which I have protected from clear-felling.

*Dr Sandrine Segovia-Kueny : As far as you are concerned, what are the more important risks of the climate change?*

Dr BUTLER : I would stress that civilisation – especially its economic system – has not evolved necessarily mature progress indicators. In 1989 I heard Paul Ehrlich use the analogy of two men falling from a skyscraper, one of whom is an economist. The economist says 'not to worry : demand will create a parachute'. Twenty years later some of us are desperately hoping for a parachute as we fall to Earth, but most of us don't realise the danger we face. We are getting richer in income but impoverishing nature. We may realise our predicament so belatedly that desperate acts are required such as emergency geo-engineering. The ultimate risk is that climate change-exacerbated resource competition will drive regional or global nuclear conflict.

*Dr Sandrine Segovia-Kueny : At work what do you do to fight against climate changes ?*

Dr BUTLER: I work at a university which is one of the 'greenest' in Australia. Despite the good work there is still unacceptable complacency. Our university could be a role model – peppered with cyclists on paths, photovoltaic cells, solar hot water heating and even solar-thermal generated electricity (we have a research project on this). We run awareness campaigns for double-sided printing, recycling and to turn out lights but have far too many carparks ; we don't even source 'green' electricity. In my department, many cycle to work and most understand the

ecological footprint concept. Some colleagues are declining conference invitations unless they can attend virtually. I am an agitator but it's easy to alienate people by pushing too hard.

*Dr Sandrine Segovia-Kueny : Do you know your ecological footprint ?*

Dr BUTLER : I know my international travel makes it very, very high. Increasingly I ask if conferences can arrange electronic attendance, but that choice is still rarely available. Earlier in my career it was difficult to decline invitations, but I am now increasingly selective. I try to find several reasons to travel anywhere by air. I almost always use public transport if available. Before I moved to Canberra I had solar hot water and a well-insulated house. I now live in an apartment, but am trying to persuade the body corporate to install photovoltaic cells – and also my university. I console myself by thinking that most of my work, for many years now, has focussed on trying to alert people to the dangers of overpopulation and over-consumption.

*Thank you for answering this interview. We would let you know as soon as possible of its date of broadcasting.*