



PEOPLE, PEACE, PLANET: PATHWAYS FORWARD

7–9 JUNE 2019

 **G20 Interfaith Forum**
2019 **KYOTO**

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2019 JAPAN SUMMARY REPORT

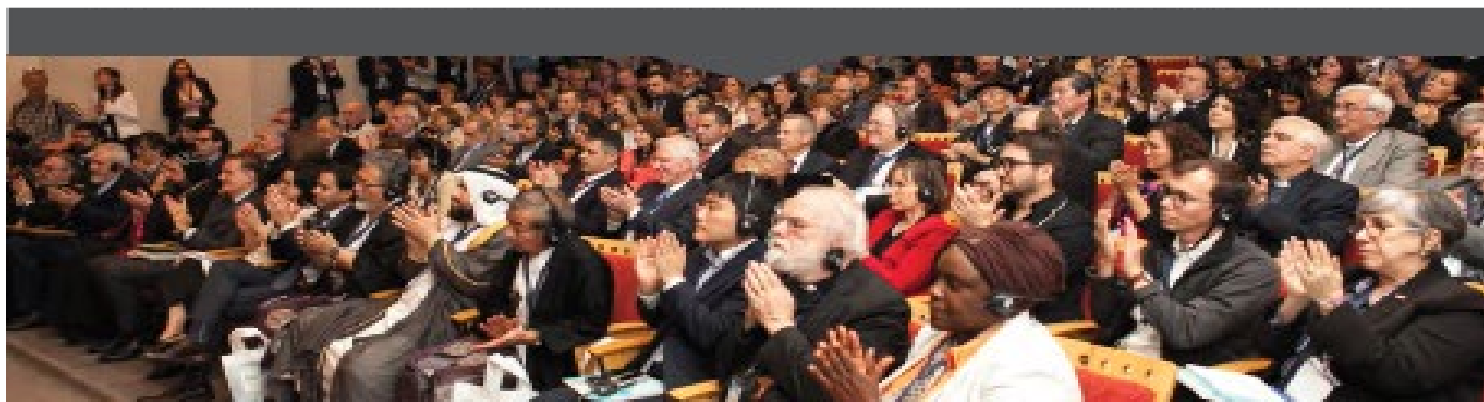


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EVENT SUMMARY

This note on the 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum highlights what happened, with some analysis of key points. This ambitious effort aimed to bring together a “network of networks”, linking religious actors working on global issues within the broad framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The core recommendations (see [link](#) below) were transmitted to Japan Prime Minister Abe and other G20 Leaders. A fuller set of policy recommendations were prepared, along with a full report on the event. Eight policy briefs, essential to robust and plausible recommendations, are available on the G20 Interfaith Forum website (see [link](#) below).

The event and its broad goal. The 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum took place in Tokyo, June 7-9. It was the sixth in a series of annual events linked to successive G20 Summits. Japan was the 2019 host, with the G20 Osaka Summit occurring June 28th and June 29th. The originators and core organizers of the 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum have comprised an informal association for several years, and a legal entity has recently been incorporated to provide continuity and to facilitate ongoing activities. The Association’s organizing committee will continue as an advisory council in the formalized structure. The Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue at Griffith University in Australia and Brigham Young University and especially the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS) in the United States have played central roles in the Forum’s evolution. They are delighted to see the ongoing expansion of the organization and formalization of its structure, with many other collaborating institutions assuming significant roles.

The Forum’s aims and ambitions have expanded significantly over the years. They are currently sharply focused on drawing on the growing network of religiously linked networks working on global agendas, to present robust recommendations to the G20 as well as to the “network of networks”.

Scope of Activities. The 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum was far larger and more ambitious than its predecessors - Australia (2014), Turkey (2015), China (2016), Germany (2017), and Argentina (2018). With substantial support from Worldwide Support for Development (WSD) (an organization supported by Dr. Haruhisa Handa, Japanese religious leader and philanthropist) as well as the ICLRS, and KAICIID (King Abdallah bin Abdulaziz Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue), over 200 international speakers and participants (including Japanese specialists) and an audience of over 2000 were involved. The World Faith Development Dialogue (WFDD) based at the Berkley Center at Georgetown, ICLRS, and KAICIID played particularly active roles in planning and execution of the Forum. (KAICIID is looking especially towards plans for the 2020 G20 host, Saudi Arabia). Among the other networks that participated actively were the UN Interagency Task Force and Faith Council, the Joint Learning Initiative, the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Global Network of Religions for Children, the Transatlantic Partnership on Religion and Diplomacy, the WASH Alliance, the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, leaders of large faith-inspired organizations, and several networks and academics focused on religious freedom, religious peacebuilding, human rights, and sustainable development. Bill Vendley, Secretary General of the World Conference of Religions for Peace,

brought Religions for Peace insights to the meeting. Many other organizations continue to provide ongoing support for Interfaith Forum initiatives.

Supplementary Meeting. Strong interest in the issues among religious organizations in Japan led to the organization of a separate supplementary event organized as the “G20 Interfaith Forum Kyoto.” One of our organizing committee members, Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake, initiated the Kyoto event, with support from a distinguished committee of Japanese religious and government leaders. The Kyoto event was held on June 11-12, and was attended by a number of our Organizing Committee members. The Kyoto event provided opportunities for expanded participation by Japanese religious communities. Because of the difference in focus, the Kyoto event did not have the same breadth and depth of policy expertise of those participating in the Tokyo conference for purposes of shaping global policy recommendations. But there was a fundamental alignment of recommendations and a shared sense of the importance and merits of religious engagement in G20 processes.

Focus on linking political and religious approaches and leadership. The Forum was marked by its attention to political processes with the active presence of three former Prime Ministers (David Cameron, UK; Sir John Key, New Zealand; and Enda Kenny, Ireland) and Graça Machel, a notable African stateswoman and civil society leader. Two senior Japanese political leaders represented Prime Minister Abe (who wrote a welcome message). Diverse religious voices included (via messages) Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with active participation of Lord Carey of Clifton (103rd Archbishop of Canterbury), Sulak Sivaraksa, Bishop Gunnar Stålsett, and many other leaders, representing a broad spectrum of traditions. Other participants, speakers, and close involvement came from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Sport at the Service of Humanity (SSH). A full list of speakers and panelists can be found at the [link](#) below.

Goals, focus, and central premises. The Forum was organized around the theme: Peace, People, Planet: Pathways Forward. This reflects the deliberate focus on the SDGs as the leading global agenda, though it was reiterated on several occasions that the Forum’s goal is to bring a prophetic voice to global discussions. The SDGs were discussed often (few who were there could have come away without an awareness of their scope and significance). Working sessions focused on work for peace, human development (people), and care for the environment (planet), with additional urgent topics including trafficking and modern slavery, religious cultural heritage, and fighting corruption (see full program [link](#) below). The core premise is that religious voices, both as a “moral compass” and reflecting vast networks and experience, belong at global policy “tables” like the G20, and can enrich the contributions of other communities and sectors. A Pew Forum data point suggesting that some 84 percent of the world’s population has some religious affiliation was cited repeatedly to underscore the importance of religion in shaping and responding to global agendas.

Special features of the 2019 Forum. The diversity of voices at the Forum was a notable feature this year, as was the large Japanese audience (4000+). The Forum benefitted from facets of Japanese and Asian culture (including Japanese drums, music, Chinese gymnasts, and a Ninja theme). A compelling feature of the closing plenary was a powerful speech by a young leader, Kim Tran of Fridays for Future Tokyo.

Outcomes and recommendations. The Forum had three tangible outcomes:

First, an urgent, short document has been presented as the Forum’s priority recommendations to Prime Minister Abe and other G20 Leaders. This focused on five key

recommendations, reflecting areas where extensive analysis and dialogue among different participants and associates supports specific recommendations. The five topics are: (a) working for peace with a new framing of religious roles in conflict and polarization. (b) a sharp focus on children backed by resources; (c) meaningful action and partnerships to protect rainforests; (d) strengthened rule of law and protection of human rights, with particular emphasis on freedom of religion or belief and action to fight against corruption; and (e) strengthened commitments to combat trafficking and modern slavery as a long-term G20 priority.

Second, a fuller set of recommendations with robust policy recommendations (supported by analytic briefs) was prepared before the Osaka Summit. These included, alongside the five topics listed above, action on refugees and displaced populations, disaster risk reduction and resilience, and challenges and opportunities presented by aging societies. Significant discussions on education, health, cultural heritage, water and sanitation, and inclusion of women were highlighted together with recommendations for further work to sharpen recommendations in the months ahead. The Kyoto Forum added a recommendation on nuclear disarmament, reflecting extensive religious involvement on this issue, but the G20 Interfaith Forum Association has not yet prepared an in-depth policy analysis on that topic.

And third, as has been the practice over the years, this full report has been made available. The pages that follow draw on the 22 separate working sessions where specific topics were discussed, and linked to the larger plenary sessions and ongoing work and materials.

In sum, the Forum reflects a remarkable and continuing partnership, crossing continents, cultures, disciplines, ideologies, and religious traditions. For the future, the intention is to continue annual Forums, adapted to the agendas and focus of the host countries, which will be in Saudi Arabia in 2020, Italy in 2021, and India in 2022.

Advisory Council – Institutional affiliation is for identification only

Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Senior Advisor*, KAICIID Dialogue Centre, Vienna, Austria; **Dr. Brian J. Adams**, *Director*, Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia; **Rev. Prof. Dr. James Christie**, *Director*, Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy University of Winnipeg, Canada; **Prof. Pieter Coertzen**, *Faculty of Theology*, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa; **Dr. Ganoune Diop**, *Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty*, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Maryland, USA; **Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr.**, *Founding Director*, Int'l Center for Law and Religion Studies, BYU Law School, USA; **Prof. Cristina Calvo**, *Director*, Int'l Program on Democracy, Society, and New Economies, Univ. of Buenos Aires; **H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel of France**, Ecumenical Patriarchate and KAICIID Board; **Prof. Alessandro Ferrari**, *Director*, Center on Religion, Law and Economy in the Mediterranean Area, Insubria Univ., Italy; **Prof. Marie-Claire Foblets**, *Director*, Max Planck Institute for Law & Anthropology, Germany; **Dr. Haruhisa Handa**, *Chairman*, Worldwide Support for Development, Japan; *Patron*, G20 Interfaith Forum; **Prof. John Kirton**, *Co-Director*, G20 Research Group, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, Canada; **Dr. Elizabeta Kitanovic**, *Executive Secretary for Human Rights*, Conference of European Churches, Belgium; **Prof. Asher Maoz**, *Dean*, Peres Academic Center Law School, Israel; **Prof. Katherine Marshall**, *Senior Fellow*, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs Georgetown University, Washington, DC; **Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake**, *Superior General*, Konko Church of Izuo, Japan; **Ms. Midori Miyazaki**, *International Executive Director*, Worldwide Support for Development, Japan; **Prof. Faizan Mustafa**, *Vice-Chancellor*, NALSAR University of Law, India; **Prof. Juan G. Navarro Floria**, Pontifical Catholic University; National Justice and Peace Commission, Argentina; **Prof. Norberto Padilla**, *President*, Latin American Consortium for Religious Liberty, Argentina; **Dr. Peter Petkoff**, *Director Law and Religion Programme*, Regent's Park College, Oxford University, UK; **Dr. Raúl Scialabba**, *President*, Argentinian Council for Religious Liberty (CALIR), Argentina; **Dr. Humberto Shikiya**, *Director General*, CREAS – ACT Alianza, Argentina; **Prof. Xiaoyun Zheng**, *Deputy Director*, Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China

Links:

Core Recommendations: <https://www.g20interfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/G20-Interfaith-Forum-2019-Core-recommendations.pdf>

Policy Briefs: <https://www.g20interfaith.org/2019-policy-recommendations/>

Panelists and Speakers: <https://www.g20interfaith.org/speakers/>

Full Program: <https://www.g20interfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final-2019.pdf>

G20 Interfaith Forum Advisory Council: <https://www.g20interfaith.org/our-council/>

SUMMARY REPORT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum was co-organized by Worldwide Support for Development, the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, International Center for Law and Religion Studies (Brigham Young University Law School), and World Faiths Development Dialogue under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, and Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs (Georgetown University). Dr. Haruhisa Handa, Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr. and Prof. Katherine Marshall constituted the G20 Executive Committee. Four support teams helped organize the event – Worldwide Support for Development Staff (Kevin o’Brien - Lead, Tom Briscoe, Grant Campbell, Robyn Cooper, Ched Dumances, John Hanes, James Hunt, Martha Lein, and Alice Muglia), Georgetown Support Staff (Ruth Gopin – Lead, David Jose Bennett, Rebecca Cataldi, Jasmine Curtis, Suzie Dhere, Gabrielle Mendelsohn, Brendan Stelmach), Brigham Young University Support Staff (Donlu Thayer – ICLR Publications Director, Austin Atkinson, S. David Colton, Erin Cranor, Rick Durfee, Janel Durfee, Stephanie Maynes), and Communications & Media (Blythe Shupe – ICLR Communications Specialist, Christopher Wilson and his BYU Public Relations Capstone Class, Adam Durfee – Media & Branding Consultant, and Anna Gazdik, Glen Gonzales, Spencer Narawong, Adriana Ojuka, Hanna Ruf, and JoAnne Wadsworth). Five core recommendations reflecting urgent priorities for G20 action were transmitted to Japan Prime Minister Abe and other G20 Leaders prior to the G20 Osaka Summit:

1. Commit to working for peace in collaboration with faith actors, with a new framing of religious roles in conflict and polarization.
2. Focus sharply and explicitly on the needs of children and commit resources vital to address those needs.
3. Put resources behind promises to protect the planet, focusing in particular on rainforests in partnership with religious, indigenous, and local actors.
4. Bolster action to strengthen rule of law and protection of human rights, with particular emphasis on freedom of religion or belief and action to fight against corruption.
5. Initiate and commit to global and national measures to combat trafficking and modern slavery as part of a long-term G20 priority.

The [online version](#) includes short justification statements. A short summary of the Kyoto Meeting and a fuller set of [Policy Briefs](#) are also included. Katherine Marshall wrote a reflection on [“The G20 Interfaith Forum: Why it’s Important.”](#) The lengthier format of this full report provides a detailed account, despite its limitations, of the “Davos-style” dialogue that occurred throughout the 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum. The institutional affiliations listed for each speaker are for purposes of identification only. I would like to offer special thanks to those who assisted with summarizing concurrent sessions in 2019. Contributors to the report include Austin Atkinson, Stephanie Aldous, Ruth Gopin, Jasmine Curtis, Suzie Dhere, Gabrielle Mendelsohn, and David Bennett.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sherrie Steiner, Special Rapporteur to the 2019 G20 Interfaith Summit

PLENARY SESSIONS

LAUNCHING THE 2019 G20 INTERFAITH FORUM

Description: The inaugural session launching the 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum was chaired by David Eades (Chief Presenter and Senior Broadcaster, BBC News; Management Team, Sport at the Service of Humanity). Welcoming remarks were conveyed by W. Cole Durham Jr. (Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, USA) and Álvaro Albacete (Deputy Secretary General, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue). Presentations were made by Mustafa Ali (Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children; Director of Arigatou International), Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace), Katherine Marshall (Executive Director, World Faiths Development Dialogue), and Enda Kenny (Former Prime Minister/13th Taoiseach of Ireland; Patron of Worldwide Support for Development).

David Eades introduced the theme of Peace, People and Planet, and welcomed the youth leaders of Sport at the Service of Humanity. He talked about the threatening challenges that we need to respond to so that we can choose our pathways. He quoted Yogi Berra as saying, “When you come to a fork in the road, take it!” This is where this group comes in. It is incumbent upon us to help youth choose which fork to take. The list of topics are daunting that will be addressed in the days ahead, but today we launch the process. He then introduced Cole Durham and offered comments between speakers summarizing their key ideas and making introductions.

Cole Durham thanked the many people who did work behind the scenes, especially to Dr. Handa who has been able to lift this event beyond what we have been able to do in the past. This is the 6th G20 Interfaith Forum. After announcements, he spoke about the history of bringing interfaith voices together to provide input into the G20 policy process. Brian Adams was very involved in launching the process in Brisbane. Subsequent events have been held in conjunction with G20 summits in Turkey, China, Germany, Argentina and this year in Japan. Each year, the program has expanded in scope and coverage and added new organizations into the process. The aim is to provide high level input into the forum where NGOs, faith groups, academics, etc. could come together to provide input into the G20 process much like other satellite groups. This year, the common thread is to give people greater confidence in the future. Improved confidence is needed for public support for multilateralism. Other engagement groups include the B20, C20, L20, S20, T20, W20 and the Y20. The G20 Interfaith forum does not have the same level of engagement as these other engagement groups (partly because of how it should even be named), but in some ways, this offers greater flexibility for input. We welcome a broad range of participants. We hope to continually broaden this network of networks to formulate policy information to enhance policies such as the UN SDGs. We have focused on goals where interfaith groups are able to have a larger impact. We have focused goals here that can be passed on to G20 Leaders and others affiliated with government to have direct impact on policy formation and implementation. We have developed well thought-out policy briefs along with a set of short and concrete recommendations (see the website for the policy briefs). The briefs will be finalized immediately following this forum. They are credible and effective recommendations for those working in the policy world. We encourage you to review them on the website. If you are aware of policy documents that can expand those recommended, let us know. Too often, important religious insights and recommendations fail to gain traction because they are not framed in a way that policy makers can work with. Our aim is to frame the briefs in a way that

are actionable. We aim to offer briefs that allow the faith community and policy makers to be able to work together. There is a unique time crunch this year because there are only seven months between the Argentina and Japan summits. If you have other ideas, they may become working groups for next years' summit. We have committed ourselves to identifying contacts in G20 administrations in other countries who may be receptive to policy briefs made here. If you can help us develop those contacts, we welcome your input. Many of you have your own contacts that can facilitate this networking. We live in a world with such alienation and difficulties, religious factors are too often a source of problems. Our society suffers from the ambivalence of the sacred. It is important that we frame recommendations with a clear sighted understanding of this ambivalence, finding ways that understand the challenges, but also the opportunities. We need to overcome the policy inertia that fails to access the interfaith synergies because it is too complicated to do so. We hope to help underscore one of religion's deepest resources – its continual affirmation of hope and future survival. Thank you, and I think we are launched.

Álvaro Albacete spoke on the topic of “Policy and Religious Leaders Working for Peace.” He was involved in planning the meetings for Argentina, and a series of topics were without dissent that these topics should be addressed in the sessions. The second consensus was that there was one specific area that conditions all of them: peace. Development, security and peace – climate change, security, and peace – gender and peace. If we want some kind of area to be addressed, there must be peace for progress to occur. This consensus around peace and trying to decouple the use of violence from any religion is a common understanding that we need to work together around. Religious communities and leaders agree to work together in favor of peace. What we will discuss is not the need to work together for peace, but rather, *how* we are going to do so to complement the efforts of policy makers and politicians. This is one of the panel topics that will be addressed here in this process. We are not starting from scratch. We are building on things discussed in previous sessions in relation to the G20. The first conclusion, although obvious, is not so easy: respect versus manipulation. Those two realities – religion and diplomacy (official efforts) – have to find a way to respect one another. There is a tendency and a temptation to manipulate others to achieve our own objectives. There is a temptation to manipulate government to achieve religious objectives, and for policy makers to manipulate religious leaders to achieve their goals. This question of manipulation was on the table of the Kofi Annan briefings convened last year. The second one is engagement – we want religious leaders to be engaged from the beginning, and not utilized at the last minute because of the influence they have in their communities. For example, in Columbia, religious leaders were engaged in the whole process with the government on the definition of goals and the methodology and the outcome is promising there. Engagement versus utilization is demonstrated in the peace agreement developed in Columbia. Religious groups are involved beyond the signing to remain engaged in the implementation of the agreement in local communities. My third point is that we need to take a holistic approach. Various UN resolutions involve peace in other topics. Many religious leaders have experience in these diverse topics because of their holistic approach to engagement. We need to find ways to complement one another in our mutual efforts toward peace. We are not going to speak only about so-called track two diplomacy of religious leaders. We are speaking from a broader perspective of complementarity in the definition, methodology, conclusion and results. That can only happen through respect and real engagement and the acknowledgment of the real complementarity of the two very different realities that we have in common – peace. During the discussion, he noted that the G20 is not a structured organization. Rather, it is led by the government hosting the process every year. The Interfaith Forum cannot be part of a structure that does not exist. The Interfaith Forum has to become part of the organization that leads the process every year. Some years ago there was a proposal to be

brought to the official preparatory meetings of the G20, but the leaders of the Interfaith Forum decided to take another track and to run on a parallel avenue where we could have more flexibility in terms of the topics we wanted to discuss and the participants we wanted to invite and be heard. That is an open discussion we are still debating about how to engage while preserving enough autonomy and independence to debate, reflect, and have independent conclusions.

Gunnar Stålsett spoke on the topic of Planet. All religions contribute to culture and building religions that build toward peace by applying religious texts to changing circumstances and changing contexts. Religious narratives can confirm, and challenge, the present order of things. Today's proposition is defining the model challenges of our time. In doing so, we are not alone. We do so with people of good-will in government, and in collaboration with civil society. As we look at the agenda before us, I note the common values and interests. If we work only on the basis of interests without values, self-interest is the outcome. The convergence among religious communities about the challenges we face is being transformed into cooperation. Some of the topics before us globally is the climate issue and deforestation, the nuclear threat and the new arms race, poverty, migration, the human right to life, and violent extremism propelled forward by religion, nationalism, ethnic identity and racist attitudes. [The Osaka Summit](#) in a few weeks with the G20 is said to be the largest summit meeting in Japan ever. The Prime Minister has said that Japan seeks to promote a free, open, inclusive, human-centered, sustainable society. Defining human-centered in the religious context is an all embracing concept where climate, security, and poverty issues belong. The G20 countries shape a strong agenda that influences countries outside the summit. How do we contribute? We are here not only to focus on the G20 meeting itself, but also where we identify with a particular country. In doing so, we need to seek not only national interests, but values. Being interest driven without values creates self-interest. If individual self-interest is the driver, family fails. If communal self-interest prevails, society collapses. If national self-interest is the driver, the common good fails. Humanity, diversity, solidarity and love of neighbor is what builds community. Let me focus on two key issues. When we speak in the context of religion, our voice is a voice of conscience from within (not outside). It is not politics against religion. The majority of political leaders are themselves imbued within cultures that also are imbued with faith. It is not we and them, but us. Regarding religious extremism – in different combinations they are marring the face of religions in all regions. The specific element is difficult to identify, but the religious factor is the easiest to detect. It is deep in hatred, and is more often a betrayal of the religion rather than an authentic reflection of the core values of the tradition. Shared features of religious extremism is that it is anti-democratic, anti-human rights, anti-feminist, and it rejects pluralism. It is a culture of conflict not peace. Its way to supremacy is the way of violence. The second point to highlight is care for creation; it is an imperative across religious divides. We are all well informed and shaped by the [Paris Agreement](#) and we have the [IPCC](#) statements and the alarm bell the situation brings to humanity. One of the key issues is tropical deforestation which undermines one of the earth's most vital life support systems. The Paris Agreement is a road map, too. IPCC's global warming of 1.5 degrees is not being taken seriously enough, today. The threat of climate change is there before us. That can only be compared to the [nuclear threat](#). We need sustainable development to manage the climate issue, but we also need to eradicate poverty. Deforestation is a human rights challenge because it attacks the rights and identity of Indigenous people. I was part of the [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#) that was recently established. It brings together leaders of all major religions to bring to bear religious forces to do that which politicians alone cannot do. Norway has been involved with great efforts in financing the program to safeguard rainforests in many countries (e.g., the Amazon, Congo, and Indonesia). The Minister of Environment returned from Congo to Oslo and said that we will never be able to deliver unless we involve the structures on the ground

– the religious communities. So, they turned to me as [Religions for Peace representative](#), to see if we could cooperate, and I said, ‘Yes’. In two years, this has turned into one of the most dynamic programs in UN environment circles. The point I want to make is that we have to move from general affirmations of common values into practical cooperation where we show that religion is not the main part of the problem only, but it is also part of the solution. The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative is a new initiative which promises a future to people concerned about the climate and to the Indigenous people. We will mobilize the structures of religion to change that key element in the struggle for a better climate for our children. Let me indicate some of the proposals that I hope will come from this gathering to the G20. They should take global leadership to stop subsidies and incentives leading to deforestation. [The May Report](#) indicated extinction of many species as rainforests decrease. The G20 should show global leadership to protect forest landscapes to reduce greenhouse emissions and protect species. This approach would also reduce hunger. The G20 should also take action against countries that do not address deforestation in their supply chains. There are other recommendations. We cannot save the rainforest without working closely with Indigenous people who are the genuine protectors of the rainforest.

Mustafa Ali spoke on the topic of “People: Major Priorities for Human Development.” He focused on children and climate as missing links in the current approach to human development. The challenges children and climate face call us to act. Children and climate call us to provide the prophetic voice for action. Faith communities, faith-inspired organizations, and faith-based development actors usually look at development from a holistic perspective, and rarely compartmentalize development. Faith-based approaches rarely use compelling statistics to describe their work, or the challenges the human community faces with regard to development and underdevelopment. Faith-based actors build relations, and focus on the poorest, most neglected and uncounted, paying attention to the balance between human, nature and the divine, the spiritual, and the connection with Almighty God. Faith-based actors also focus on the prophetic voice, and on warning about impending disasters. Faith-based actors focus on a different kind of a simple, yet enduring equation - the sum-total. If X is not done, then, Y is going to be the result. Mustafa Ali then focused on statistics pertaining to children. According to the [Global Partnership to End Violence against Children](#), in 2019, the world will lose \$7 Trillion USD worth of development. According to the [Economist Intelligence Unit](#), in 2019, the world will lose \$4.2 Trillion USD worth of development because of changes in climate. Children and climate are two critical facets of human development that, if ignored today, this fragile earth may not hold out for long. Together, children and climate will cost us a combined \$11.2 Trillion USD worth of development, every year. This is a huge price we will pay for ignoring what we really should be paying attention to; we should be making early interventions. How much have we put in place to reduce violence against children? How much have we invested to check climate change? Where do we invest most? Are we investing in addressing the most challenging issues that are affecting the well-being of this extremely fragile earth? Are we investing in addressing the most fragile inhabitants of this earth who are aged between 0 and 18 years and numbering 2 billion? No. The investments are elsewhere - in places that will continue to damage this fragile earth; in places that will continue to damage the fragile inhabitants of this earth. Very little is invested to bring down, or eradicate, various forms of violence that is affecting 1 billion children every year. Very little is invested in stopping or reducing the number of children trafficked into forced labor, sexual exploitation or abducted to serve as child fighters. Very little is invested to reverse the damage caused by humans to this earth. Can we recover this loss to human development? The short answer to this question is, unfortunately, not in the short term. What should we do to change course? This is the question that I hope the G20 Interfaith Summit, with your collective genius and wisdom, will find answers to, and that you will present those answers to the G20 Summit for action, as well as implementing them in your own ways within your

various networks. For if we do not find the prophetic voice, we will be failing in our duties. We are compelled to act. We must act because we are not the owners, but the custodians of this earth for our children, their children and the future generations. Every child born comes with a message that God has not yet despaired of humanity and earth. Let us not violate these two important issues: childhood [humanity] and the earth. And let us not violate the children, whose birth, brings the glad tidings to the human race and this earth. Children come with a special message that God the Divine is not despaired of us and the earth. You can bring your prophetic voice(s) to bear on this agenda - the agenda of increased care for children and the earth for a truly, and fully flourishing human race.

Katherine Marshall highlighted urgent issues that also belong on the G20 agenda. She took a practical approach, and reviewed the upcoming five parallel sessions which address areas that have involved extensive networks that hold the promise of robust recommendations. There is another category of hot topics and cross-cutting issues that don't fit in the classic issues of the SDGs. She identified five additional topics, and two new areas for discussion. The first topic she discussed was inequality. The [G7 meeting in France](#) in August is also focusing on inequality. This is a complex issue where multiple people can be on a panel with each claiming the opposite regarding inequality. We are launching an exploration of this topic here this year. A second topic is corruption. A [Gallup poll](#) says that corruption comes up most often for discussion among policy topics. It is also a major theme for extremist groups reflecting ethical and moral failures of governments and yet in the integrity alliances (e.g., [Alliance for Integrity](#), [International Halal Integrity](#), [Transparency International](#), etc.), few religious voices have participated in this discussion. This is a major gap where we would like to see us bringing the collective energy and action to bear on the global agenda. A third topic to be explored, which is new this year, is the issue of cultural heritage. [The UN Secretary General](#) has expressed concern about religious links to problems regarding cultural heritage. We will bring together networks and groups to discuss this. The fourth topic is human trafficking which includes child marriage. There is an enormous variety of religious engagement on demand and supply sides and engagement to end this modern form of slavery. The fifth topic is media. How do we take our ideas and recommendations and translate them into language and forms that will be heard so that people are moved to action? It requires us to deal with the phenomena of fake news (misinformation), and hate speech which is driving much of the angst in different parts of the world. Two other areas that are important is [Sport at the Service of Humanity](#). They have a parallel program and will also have a session where we will have a chance to benefit from their wisdom. Finally, there is an effort by a network that we are focusing on to bring together the efforts of different governments to consider how they relate to the religious world. For some governments, this has been deeply engrained (e.g., Argentina), but in other government structures, there has been the classic separation of church and state accompanied by quite a bit of religious illiteracy. We have invited this year a series of representatives who have the responsibility of thinking about religion and its engagement with public policy in the G20 Governments. Some people who are working on this transatlantic partnership will have a session where they share their wisdom. We hope you will push us to think more concretely: What do we want the G20 to do? For me, the central issue is priorities. Secondly, what should religious networks be working on more intensely? There will be many conversations where we challenge, push and seek direction with one another.

Enda Kenny offered concluding reflections. He has sat in many of the G20 meetings. This is the first time he has attended an interfaith conference like this. He comes from a place in the European Union that had been colonized by a number of years and ended up in wars for a number of years. To the young people here - [the Pale Blue Dot](#) - if we don't do something about this, the legacy we leave to you is not good. Every time a whale washes up with trash in its

stomach, you say policy is responsible. There is no one here who has had the challenge of being elected as a prime minister. Do you know what that means? If you make a decision, it affects workers and families. If you make a decision as a country leader, it affects millions. You have to have within you a feeling that what you do is fundamentally important. In my country, we had decades of war done in the name of religion where the differences are often a result of organized crime. Every time there was a tragedy, the religious leaders always stood together, and said to the political leaders: You need to do something about this. This year, there were 50 people murdered in the [mosques of Christ Church](#). And because of our empathy to understand that, the Prime Minister reacted in a way that was recognized worldwide. The government took action. What does it mean if you are a prime minister heading to Osaka in two weeks' time? Is this on the agenda? Do you know anything about the recommendations from last year? Have they been acted upon? I spent several years going to the European Council. Politicians are elected to make decisions. There is never an issue of having complete harmony on most things, but you have to understand that prime ministers who have economies in difficulty and many problems that have to be dealt with, are sometimes not interested in the religious aspect. Some countries are interested, but others practice a separation of 'church and state.' In our country, there are opportunities for dialogue with faiths. Fifty years ago you would have found that the country was religiously homogenous with a religious majority dominating the culture. Now it is very diverse. You point out how you receive immigrants who are different. We are heterogeneous now. He then summarized key points made by each speaker. In conclusion, he asked: But will anything happen at the G20 that results from the recommendations made by the group here? We can't write the rules of the G20, but I am used to attending political meetings where decisions have to be made and discussed. It was Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who made the first official visit by any Japanese minister to Ireland. In the short introductory letter found in the *G20 Interfaith Forum Japan 2019* booklet (p. 6), he said that he finds it of great interest and encouragement that the SDGs would be discussed here. He also says that he hopes that the G20 summit will be significant and successful. We have several former prime ministers coming here and some others. Katherine, perhaps you can put together a short synopsis, and have that noted by the Prime Minister here. Perhaps he can say, structured or unstructured, here are some of the recommendations so that we can take note of them. Participants here can then discuss this with each of your prime ministers afterward. It won't happen unless you make it happen.¹ Have it noted. We have exceptional challenges and exceptional differences at a time when we find trash everywhere, famine, war, migration. From a political perspective, the challenge is to have the essence of what comes out of this noted at the G20. Katherine, make sure that this happens. The G20 process gives you a door to make that happen. Politics gives you the opportunity to have an impact, but you have to provide an opportunity to understand what you are doing.

Key Points Made:

- Peace is foundational for all other development processes
- Mutual respect, and not manipulation, should characterize the relationship between policy makers and religious leaders

¹ During the discussion, Cole Durham, Jr. clarified that there have been two ways that the Interfaith Forum has been communicating with the G20. Several of the leadership have spoken directly to some of the G20 officials. In 2018, a set of recommendations were passed on to the G20 through the Argentinian collaborators who gave it to their leaders in the country and to various ministries. He acknowledged that they need to get better at finding channels that work.

- Policy makers should engage religious leaders from the beginning and throughout the peacebuilding process (e.g., Columbia)
- A holistic approach is a best practice for peacebuilding
- The Interfaith Forum continues to evolve in regards to the topics that are addressed
- The Interfaith Forum continues to explore how best to communicate their recommendations to the G20 process

Recommended Points of Dialogue with the G20:

- That the G20 Leaders exercise global leadership to stop subsidies and incentives leading to deforestation.
- That the G20 Leaders exercise global leadership to protect forest landscapes to reduce greenhouse emissions and protect species.
- That the G20 Leaders take action against countries that do not address deforestation in their supply chains. There are other recommendations.
- That the G20 Leaders work closely with Indigenous people who are the genuine protectors of the rainforest and a sustainable climate.
- That the G20 Leaders prioritize significant financial investment in programs to reduce violence against children and check climate change.

FORMAL FORUM INAUGURATION – WORKING FOR PEACE, PEOPLE, AND PLANET: CHALLENGES TO THE G20

Description: This formal inauguration of the Forum included greetings from the hosts and from other invited leaders. Messages from global religious leaders, including Pope Francis (read on behalf by The Most Reverend Joseph Chennoth, Apostolic Nuncio to Japan), Video Message by His All-Holiness Bartholomew (Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch), and Lord Carey of Clifton (103rd Archbishop of Canterbury) called the Forum to action. The key note speeches aimed to outline the challenges facing global leaders (religious and political alike). These included the core challenge of inequality, among and within nations, and highlighted avenues of dialogue and action to address it. The linked topics of conflict and peace, development of human capacities and addressing poverty, and protecting the planet were addressed in both the keynote address and in messages from senior world religious leaders. Moderated by Haruhisa Handa (Chairman, Worldwide Support for Development), introductory greetings were offered by W. Cole Durham (Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, USA), Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar (Secretary General, KAICIID), William F. Vendley (Secretary General of the World Conference of Religions for Peace), Vishwanath Karad (UNESCO Chair Holder for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace Nedžad Grabus (Grand Mufti of Ljubljana; Co-chair, Muslim Jewish Leadership Council), and Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace).

[Detailed descriptions of this session were not recorded for security reasons.]

WHY WE CAN HOPE: PEACE, PEOPLE, AND PLANET

Description: The central theme for this plenary was that because a just and sustainable world are possible, working together to achieve it is an imperative. It examined ethical challenges that come from progress and explored approaches to overcoming challenges linked to inequality and exclusion. It aimed to draw together themes from different tracks and sessions (planet, people, and peace) and linked them to global challenges of building what is termed a just economy. Questions were addressed such as: How should global agendas take into account the deep religious yearnings of over 80% of the world's population? With religious leaders among the world's most trust and respected guides, how can their insights and drive contribute to global agendas? What practical steps can help to overcome patterns of exclusion and discrimination, so that, indeed, no one is left behind? Moderated by Haruhisa Handa (Chairman, Worldwide Support for Development), the keynote address was given by David Cameron (Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom). Additional panelists were Enda Kenny (Former Prime Minister/13th Taoiseach of Ireland; Patron of WSD), Sir John Key (Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Patron of WSD), Graça Machel (Stateswoman, First Education Minister of Mozambique; Deputy Chair, The Elders; International advocate for women and children).

[Detailed descriptions of this session were not recorded for security reasons.]

ACTION AGENDAS: TESTING IDEAS WITH EXPERIENCE FROM FIELD REALITIES

Description: This panel aimed to test ideas emerging from the Forum discussions against the realities experienced on a daily basis by a critical group of religious actors that are involved each day in addressing needs across the world: especially both international and national faith-inspired organizations. The leaders are linked in differing ways to religious institutions, but all share deep ethical commitments to ending poverty, building peace, and supporting human flourishing. They work in constant interaction with political and business entities. Koichi Hagiuda (Member of the House of Representatives; Executive Acting Secretary-General, Liberal Democratic Party) delivered a message from the President of the Liberal Democratic Party. The session was moderated by Lord Cary of Clifton (103rd Archbishop of Canterbury). An introductory speech was offered by Elder Gerrit W. Gong (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Responding remarks were offered by Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace), Denise Coghlan (Lead, Jesuit Relief Services Cambodia; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Senior Advisor, KAICIID), Ganoune Diop (Director of Public Affairs & Religious Liberty, Seventh-day Adventist Church) and Jonathan Duffy (President, Adventist Development and Relief Association).

Presentations Overview:

Koichi Hagiuda delivered a message from Prime Minister and Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe to talk about the Japanese governance endeavor. The G20 will be held in June. Abe noted that the discussion at the Interfaith Forum is going beyond different religions, which he found both interesting and encouraging. He considers interfaith dialogue a sign of hope.

Lord Cary of Clifton moderated this session. He greeted the young people, in particular, who have the responsibility to put right what prior generations have wrecked. He introduced Gerrit Walter Gong. It is rather symbolic that he has a Dutch first name, an American second name, and a Chinese surname. His PhD is in international relations from Oxford University. He was a Rhoades Scholar. Currently, he serves as a member of the Quorum of the 12 Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is an internationalist and is welcome. After Dr. Gong's presentation, he introduced the panel discussion. He raised several questions such as: How do we implement the goals? How do we wake up the G20 to address these problems? Have we ever asked the government officials, 'Who is speaking on behalf of the voiceless?' He spoke of the t-shirt slogan, "Just do it!" He closed with a quote from Archbishop William Temple (1881-1944) who said, "The art of government in fact is the art of so ordering life that self-interest prompts what justice demands." We hate giving up anything, but we have to give up because justice demands that we focus on the very poor, and give education and health to everybody.

Elder Gerrit W. Gong made the following presentation:

Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, at this G20 Interfaith Forum in Tokyo, we deeply congratulate the ascension of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. We join in prayers for the prosperity of the Imperial family. Some years ago, Emperor Showa (Hirohito), grandfather of His Majesty and a well-known biologist, asked: "Why have I not seen butterflies recently in my

garden?” That famous question galvanized Japan to address serious environmental pollution.² It is a powerful example that focused questions and recommendations can have significant impact. This G20 Interfaith Forum, including this session on “Action Agendas: Testing Ideas with Experience from Field Realities” provides us with a significant platform to ask impactful “butterfly” questions and to raise the level and effectiveness of religious inputs and values relating to global policy issues.³ The philosopher Mencius offers hope: “山徑之蹊间·介然用之而成路”⁴ — that is, a mountain path can widen to a road if it is often used. Or, paraphrased, imagine hope as a countryside path: originally there was no path — yet, over time, as people walk over the same area, a way appears. Human dignity plays a foundational role in “forming, guiding, and sustaining consensus on core human rights values despite tensions in a highly pluralized world.”⁵ A plenary theme is that “because a just and sustainable world is possible, working together to achieve it is an imperative.” We ask: how can global agendas include the yearnings of the 80% of the world’s population who are religiously affiliated?⁶ In pursuit of a just economy, a significant input is our human ability to unite in imagining, working, and sacrificing for a shared, brighter future. Throughout history, religion has provided inspiration, discipline, and transcendence, as well as moral wellsprings of faith, hope, and goodwill. They have helped define what is just, right, and in the common good. Each of our ideational weltanschauung draws on four inter-connected realms of I-It-We-Thou — that is, the self; natural world; society; and faith and values.⁷ In my faith tradition, a global Christian religious community with congregations in 191 countries and territories, we are committed to synergies of faith and effort that improve standards of living and life through productive investment in each element of I-It-We-Thou. Such strengthens families and individuals; it promotes peace, builds people, and preserves our planet. I offer my religious organization’s experiences as part of the broader picture of field realities and look forward to hearing from our esteemed other panelists about their ideas and experiences. Accordingly, I will discuss peace, people, and planet using illustrative examples and principles from Latter-day Saint Charities, the humanitarian arm of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Specifically, I will reference three initiatives within Latter-day Saint Charities we call Humanitarian Services, Self-Reliance Services, and

² Max Singer, *Passage to a Human World: The Dynamics of Creating Global Wealth* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 163, Google Books, last accessed May 15,

2019, <https://books.google.com/books?id=5zCwUjYyeNkC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

³ See “Forum 2019,” G20 Interfaith Forum, <https://www.g20interfaith.org/forum-2019/>. See also “G20 Interfaith Forum: Forum Concept Paper,” 1, G20 Interfaith Forum, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.g20interfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/G20-Interfaith-Forum-2019-Concept-Paper-1.pdf>, which describes the G20 Interfaith Forum as offering “an annual platform where a network of religiously linked institutions and initiatives engage on global agendas” that “builds on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting their rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values”).

⁴ This is what Mencius told his student Gaozi, who came from Qi during the spring and autumn period. See *Mencius*, trans. Irene Bloom, ed. Philip J. Ivanhoe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 160, Google Books, last accessed May 15,

2019, <https://books.google.com/books?id=4tDaS1WfJwoC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁵ “Punta Del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere: Introduction,” International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.dignityforeveryone.org/introduction/>; see also [dignityforeveryone.org](https://www.dignityforeveryone.org).

⁶ See “The Global Religious Landscape,” Religion and Public Life, Pew Research Center, Dec. 18, 2012, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>; this “comprehensive demographic study of more than 230 countries and territories . . . estimates that there are 5.8 billion religiously affiliated adults and children around the globe, representing 84% of the 2010 world populations of 6.9 billion.”

⁷ However we individually define such, and allow others to respect, reverence, or worship how, where, or what they may.

JustServe.⁸ Let's begin with peace and humanitarian service. There is no peace when we are in conflict with ourselves, the earth, or our neighbors. There is no peace when we are in conflict in the name of religious belief. In our post-9/11 world, some argue religion inherently leads to violence. However, historical and empirical analysis dispels the “myth of religious violence” — the notion that religion *ipso facto* is somehow responsible for violence.⁹ We promote peace when all voices seeking the greater good participate, where none is disparaged or denied, even if the inevitable disagreements of healthy pluralism persist. For example, the 2017 Beirut Declaration with its 18 Faith for Rights commitments recognizes “religious or belief convictions as a source for the protection of the *whole spectrum of inalienable human entitlements* — from the preservation of the gift of life, the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, belief, opinion and expression to the freedoms from want and fear, including from violence in all its forms.”¹⁰ We promote both personal peace and societal peace when we look beyond our narrow selfish selves in compassionate service to those around us. Whether on an individual or mass scale, peace through human understanding and service comes one person at a time. Here's one example, among hundreds. For many, reflecting our deep desire to preserve at-risk rainforests, trees symbolize hope for peace, people, and planet. Many in Japan revere the *hibakujumoku*, 170 “survivor trees” which weathered the Hiroshima bomb. These “survivor trees” represent the regenerative miracle of deep roots and strong resilience.¹¹ Another example is Haiti, which suffered massive deforestation even before its devastating 2010 earthquake. On Agriculture Day, the national holiday when Haitians often do volunteer work, local community members gathered to plant nearly 25,000 trees for future generations.¹² Among those planting trees were 1,800 local members of my faith community, which donated the trees. Planted on riverbanks and mountainsides, these trees are not just shade trees; nor are they just trees for soil conservation; these are fruit trees. If you ask the Haitians who will harvest this fruit, they say, “Whoever is hungry.” The multi-year reforestation project anticipates a total of 400,000 fruit trees in nine areas of Haiti. Beyond the planting of trees, this project nurtures united, community partnerships. Haiti's prime minister and senior government official applaud the reforestation. Communities welcome volunteers working side by side, planting sapling tree by sapling tree. These tree-planting efforts reflect all facets of “peace, people, and planet” and symbolize the broader religious contribution in each area. No single group can address the totality of global needs. Our faith community's humanitarian services arm (created in 1985) works with many partners while focusing on nine core programs. These include food production (through the Benson Food Initiative), clean water and sanitation, community projects, emergency response, immunization,

⁸ See information on these initiatives at www.ldscharities.org, <https://www.lds.org/self-reliance?lang=eng>, and www.JustServe.org.

⁹ See William T. Cavanaugh, “Chapter 1: The Anatomy of the Myth,” *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ *The Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights*, 6th edition (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission, April 2019), English version, 8, emphasis in original, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/Faith4Rights.pdf>.

¹¹ See Ariel Dorfman, “The Whispering Leaves of the Hiroshima Ginkgo Trees,” *New York Times*, Op-ed, Aug. 4, 2017, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/04/opinion/the-whispering-leaves-of-the-hiroshima-ginkgo-trees.html>.

¹² See Jason Swensen, “LDS Church Celebrates 30 years in Haiti by Planting Thousands of Trees,” *Deseret News*, May 1, 2013, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/765628515/LDS-Church-celebrates-30-years-in-haiti-by-planting-thousands-of-trees.html>; see also “Church Donating 400,000 Trees in Haiti,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Philanthropies, May 2013, last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.ldsphilanthropies.org/humanitarian-services/news-features/church-donating-400000-trees>.

maternal and newborn care, refugee response, vision care, and wheelchairs.¹³ Our Humanitarian Services also sponsor diverse welfare and self-reliance programs, including vocational, rehabilitative, counseling and other services. Our well-known “Helping Hands” programs mobilize volunteers to help with disaster relief. We work with a broad range of interfaith partners and other established agencies, absorb our own overhead costs, and draw on a global network of volunteers who contribute their time and expertise. Known world-wide as part of Latter-day Saint Charities, our humanitarian services have worked in 141 countries and territories on 2,885 projects with over 1,900 partners. Please find further details at ldscharities.org. Second, we promote peace and planet when we build people. Around the world, we meet individuals who have changed and improved their lives. Many say, I know better who I am. I am more confident. I can shape my future with new attitudes and better skills. They say, I am more responsible and accountable *because* of my religious beliefs. As the Buenos Aires G20 Interfaith Forum Policy Recommendations declared, “Macro goals cannot succeed without micro-implementation, and religious communities are often optimally placed to facilitate advances in reduction of poverty, hunger, provision of health care and education, promotion of decent work and equal treatment, and so on through the list of SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals]. Firm protections for freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) are essential.”¹⁴ In 2001, my religious organization launched a “Perpetual Education Fund.”¹⁵ The principles reflect our history. Fleeing religious persecution, our early pioneer ancestors planted crops as they crossed the American plains so those coming after would have food to harvest.¹⁶ These pioneer seekers of religious freedom also established a corpus of funds to assist those buying passage for their journey. Those who borrowed from the funds later repaid them.¹⁷ These rotating perpetual funds illustrate a familiar principle and pattern — that each individual can receive, multiply, and return. Today, our perpetual education fund helps tens of thousands of individuals in approximately 75 countries to gain an education otherwise beyond their reach. As they become self-reliant, they lift themselves, their families, and their communities. As they repay their modest educational loans, the fund continues to generate opportunities for future generations. These initiatives, principles, and programs represent sustainable investment in human identity and capacity development.¹⁸ We have developed and authored self-reliance courses that build on three simple steps: Discover Needs; Choose a Path (for example, starting and growing a business; finding better employment; education for better work; personal finances); and Act in Faith. These Self-Reliance courses

¹³ See “Summary of Initiatives,” which describes the nine core programs of LDS Charities, in the *2018 LDS Charities Annual Report*, 6–7, last accessed May 13,

2019, https://www.ldscharities.org/bc/content/ldscharities/annual-report/2018/LDS_Charity_2018_English.pdf.

¹⁴ “Policy Recommendations for the 2018 G20 Summit,” G20 Interfaith Forum: Buenos Aires, Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future, forum on September 26–28 2018, section 9: Religious Freedom, Religious Vitality, and Religious Contributions to the G20 Agenda, last accessed May 13,

2019, <http://s3.amazonaws.com/berkeley-center/181129G20InterfaithForumPolicyRecommendations2018G20Summit.pdf>.

¹⁵ See “The Perpetual Education Fund,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, available at <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance/pef-perpetual-education-fund>. Note that since 2001, the Perpetual Education Fund has “touched the lives of more than 90,000 individuals around the world” (“Learn More,” last accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance/pef-perpetual-education-fund/learn-more?lang=eng>).

¹⁶ See “The 1846 Trek,” a United States National Park Service publication on the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, available at <https://www.nps.gov/mopi/learn/historyculture/the-1846-trek.htm>. This brochure describes the creation of a farm settlement in Iowa called Garden Grove where pioneers planted crops to feed the second wave of emigrants already on their way across the plains from Illinois to Utah.

¹⁷ See Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Perpetual Education Fund,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 52–53, available at <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2001/05/the-perpetual-education-fund>. This article describes the Perpetual *Emigration* Fund’s principle, which is at the core of the current Perpetual *Education* Fund’s program).

¹⁸ See “Self-Reliance Services,” available at <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance>.

work. To date, they have helped 691,000 individuals in 130 countries. Small groups of about 8 to 10 people meet each week for up to 12 weeks. They are led by facilitators who seek to empower each participant. This creates a network of daily accountability, encouragement, and personal growth. This self-reliance approach builds individual identity and commitment to new patterns of thinking, acting, and growing. This core learning strengthens confidence, practical skills, and measurable accountability for results. Further details on Self-Reliance principles, procedures, and results can be found at lds.org/self-reliance. We come third to planet. In today's cluttered, noisy, polluted world, we need places and ways the human spirit can be refreshed, inspired, and edified. Bright spots occur when I-It-We-Thou converge in synergistic ways. Here's an example. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, is the world's coldest major city. It also has the world's most severe winter smoke pollution.¹⁹ Mongolia's government and international organizations have identified this significant environmental challenge as a priority.²⁰ Eighty percent of Ulaanbaatar's smoke comes from coal burning stoves used to heat *gers*,²¹ the familiar round Mongolian homes made of wooden frames covered with pressed felt. Recently, a small Capstone team of bright young engineering students from Brigham Young University (BYU) was challenged to see whether they could sufficiently insulate a *ger* so it could be kept warm with a small electric heater. This innovative approach could dramatically and economically reduce Ulaanbaatar's winter air problem by replacing the burning of polluting coal with existing electric grid and night, off-peak electric capacity. After analyzing and testing many options, the team developed a way of using Mongolian-sourced materials to add insulation between the layers of felt in the *ger* wall and under the *ger* floor. For less than US \$300, conventional *ger* insulating R ratings jumped from 1 to 6. This allows a single 1300 watt electric heater to warm a *ger* during even the coldest -40C winter nights. These BYU students are applying engineering, respecting Mongolia's proud past, and expressing their religious commitment to fellow human beings and planet earth. The Prime Minister of Mongolia and Mayor of Ulaanbaatar met the Capstone team to congratulate their local partnership and international inputs. Similarly, this spirit of strengthening communities by identifying service opportunities and inviting wide-ranging participation motivates an initiative we call JustServe.²² JustServe is a community service initiative designed to provide a platform where interested individuals can find volunteer opportunities to relieve suffering, care for the poor and those in need, and enhance the quality of life in the community. To help organizations find volunteers willing to help, we developed and provide without cost or obligation the website: [JustServe.org](https://www.justserve.org) New JustServe volunteers are added each month. Current JustServe registered volunteers now number 434,500. Since 2012, cumulative JustServe projects posted number 69,835. There are 14,846 JustServe projects currently posted. We have considered how faith, hope, and goodwill contribute to peace, people, planet, including as illustrated in Latter-day Saint Charities initiatives my faith community calls Humanitarian Services, Self-Reliance Services, and JustServe. We conclude by reviewing seven ways religious inputs and values can contribute in practical, principle-based policy approaches to address sustainable development goals and advance peace, people, and planet. First, religious communities help inspire and

¹⁹ See Sophie Cousins, "Air Pollution in Mongolia," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 97, no. 2 (Feb. 2018), 73–168, last accessed May 14, 2019, doi: <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/97/2/19-020219.pdf>; Beth Gardiner, "Kids Suffer Most in One of the Earth's Most Polluted Cities," *National Geographic*, Mar. 2019, last accessed May 14, 2019, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/03/mongolia-air-pollution/>.

²⁰ See World Health Organization "Air Pollution in Mongolia," available at <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/97/2/19-020219/en/>. The Asian Development Bank lists a \$130 million loan to help the Mongolian government address air pollution; see <https://www.adb.org/projects/51199-001/main#project-pds>; also, <https://www.adb.org/news/adb-loan-help-improve-air-quality-living-conditions-ullanbaatar>.

²¹ Mongolians prefer their word "ger" instead of the Russian word "yurt."

²² See [www.JustServe.org](https://www.justserve.org).

sustain the essential human freedoms, aspirations, and core values attendant to human dignity. Second, religious communities offer important spiritual, philosophical, and moral experiences and capacities related to human potential and development on which societies and communities can draw to achieve sustainable development goals. Third, religious communities are an important practical source of volunteers, professional resources, motivation, training, and funding for international development. Fourth, religious communities have both surge capacity to respond to immediate needs such as arise with natural disasters and also staying capacity to help address long-term human needs, e.g., refugees, chronic needs for food, shelter, education, and employment training, and support for those needing water, sanitation, handicap mobility, vision care, and so on. Fifth, religious communities offer unique connection between international and local organizations. These allow macro sustainable development priorities to be addressed in effective micro solutions, sometimes one village, one person, one tree at a time. Sixth, religious communities offer important diversity in interfaith expertise and capacity. These wide-ranging, pluralistic religious experiences and faith add to the cumulative storehouse of wisdom and determination for human problem-solving. Finally, each religious and philosophical tradition offers its own, unique experiences to the rich human storehouse of practical, principle-based approaches to sustainable development. In my now-global religious community, our experience includes the spirit of “making the desert blossom as the rose.”²³ Across the earth in manifold diverse circumstances, members of my religious community promote inner and collective peace; protect and treasure precious natural resources; foster harmonious social cooperation; and invite mutual respect for religious freedom and core moral values. May this G20 Interfaith Forum process achieve its lofty goals of creating hopeful pathways forward as we together offer and seek peace, people, planet through faith, hope, and goodwill.

Gunnar Stålsett said the house is on fire, and the call needs to be heard. He said that he received a call yesterday when he received a letter from the Archbishop in Myanmar who expressed concerns about the more than a 1 million displaced Rohingya, and the more than 4 million youth who are forced into migration and slavery; more than 10 million are economically displaced. There are so many tears and so much brokenness. The poverty rate hovers around 40%. This is a human-made disaster. God does not will it. If it is a human-made disaster, then humans must address it. He talked about the privilege he has working with leaders from many faiths at Religions for Peace. They have built an advisory forum in Myanmar where the generals, State Counsellor H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, representatives from the religious communities, civil society and ethnic minorities come together in one room to address the issues before them. There are several topics they try to develop in that unique forum. They call these topics: equal rights and responsibility for all ethnics and minority groups. Another working group on the situation in Rakhine State where 700 Muslims have been thrown out into Bangladesh addresses the theme of identity, diversity and the common challenge. These Muslims are stateless. They are arguing for their identity to be respected as citizens. They have another topic of youth who are engaged and connected on the internet and in groups. They have a working group on women’s situation. The last group is on education. The issue that one can say is a lack of trust that impacts how you can move people out of that situation through education in the home, community, schools, and at the university level. They base their work on the [Kofi Annan Report](#) which gave recommendations to Myanmar in keeping with international law. This is a concrete example of religious communities being welcomed by military, government and all those who are skeptical. People see the problem, but not the solution. We had planned 4 forums over 2 years. We are about to

²³ See Isaiah 35:1, Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible, ChurchofJesusChrist.org, last accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/scriptures/ot/isa/35.1?lang=eng#primary>.

prolong the dialogue because State Counsellor H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is supporting this process. We believe these long-term conversations and participation is the way to the future.

Denise Coghlan made the following presentation:

It is very special for me to be speaking to this G20 Interfaith Forum in Japan as the Founder of Jesuit Refugee Service. Pedro Arrupe, a Jesuit priest with medical training, was in Hiroshima when the atom bomb fell. The next day, he walked the streets trying to help the afflicted. This searing experience was part of the background to his call in 1980 for Jesuits to respond to the refugee crisis in South East Asia. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese and Cambodians fled by boat from the war in Vietnam and the atrocities in Cambodia. As a member of [Jesuit Refugee Service](#), I am happy to name on behalf of the interfaith leaders gathered here in Tokyo some of the challenges that cry out for action in the area of refugees, migrants and human trafficking. They along with statelessness are part of the complex mixed migration flows that characterize our times. We speak to the leaders of countries, the many youth gathered in this hall, the 85% of people of the world who claim they belong to a religious faith and to all people of good will. Hate speech must be replaced by narratives of decency. All people, regardless of their status, whether they are refugees or asylum seekers or enslaved migrant workers or trafficked women and children, whether they arrive by boat or foot or plane are persons with human dignity and rights. All need to be treated and spoken about with respect. Human trafficking is a sin and a crime. This demands that faith leaders and political leaders denounce it as a crime against humanity. Forms of trafficking include sexual exploitation of women and children cheap slave labour in multinational and small businesses, the enslavement of fishermen on boats, the abuse of domestic maids, brides and surrogate mothers, criminal use of child labour and abusive trafficking of human organs. It is a multibillion dollar industry and governments use tax payer money to buy goods and services of exploited labour. Not only is it a sin and a crime but it seems to have become part of the corporate culture. Does the cult of efficiency mean the cheapest labour for the biggest profit? G20 and other leaders must steadfastly eradicate this scourge now. I speak especially to the youth gathered here. So many of your peers, and girls not much younger than you are abducted and beaten into submission and imprisoned in brothels and raped and raped. Get out on the streets on behalf of your sisters. Tell the politicians, the traffickers and criminal business men and women that you will not allow your generation to endure this agony. ‘Nothing about us, without us,’ is the cry of many trafficked people who have escaped and are trying to prevent others from suffering in the same way. This calls for dialogue between decision makers and those victimized. The new compacts on migration and refugees call for governments to make national plans to address urgent challenges. This is a chance for trafficked survivors, refugees and exploited migrant workers to be at the table with the government as new effective action plans are formulated. The drivers behind refugee and migrant flows and trafficking of persons are often war, unbearable poverty, persecution of minorities. Environmental issues and statelessness. The sustainable development goals which are the platform of all countries including the G20, aim to address these issues by 2030. We encourage urgent and sustained action for peace, for poverty reduction and care of the planet so that the whole globe experiences a better quality of life.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer addressed our inability to deal with differences constructively. Humans who have the capacity to go to the moon, are capable of dealing with the need for resources. But when we encounter someone who is different, we are not relaxed until we can find how the other is like us. Then, when I find what I am comfortable with, he said, we try to impose it on the other. We focus on commonalities because it is easier for us. We look for common rituals, because it is easier for us. I work in the Philippines. A Muslim girl there talks about how

scared she was of a Christian. ‘I was raised to turn my face away,’ she said, ‘because I might be tempted to become a Christian.’ The Christians wanted to reciprocate with her about their fears. The Christian girl got scolded when she brought the *Holy Qur’an* home. ‘You are not allowed to look into this book because you might become a Muslim.’ Someone else took the time to explain to each of them that neither of them belonged on the island ‘because it belongs to us; it was given to us by Buddha, and you only came here 1500 years ago. We were here first.’ How do we deal with these differences? We offer dialogue so that they can discover how similar they are. After three days, how do you find this meeting? Wonderful because they discover that the other is human, like us. Those basic discoveries are not there because of divisions. We offer dialogue to make them less fearful. Another example: In America, I was leading a workshop, and a Japanese participant met a Black person from Africa. In his excitement, he said, ‘Can I just shake your hand? I have never shaken a Black person’s hand.’ Then, spontaneously, he wiped it, because he thought the Black skin had come off on his hand. It took hours to get past that experience of racism. Policy makers have discovered, in the past two decades, that if they can find the right religious leaders, they will work with them. They are always looking for the one that fits their criteria. They instrumentalize the leader and don’t engage in authentic dialogue in a respectful way. Dialogue should build relationships and be transformative. I feel ashamed when the community tells the leader to stand up, but the leader is too afraid. The leader needs to speak truth to power, and they give up a crucial leadership role as a trusted leader with a prophetic voice. There are hundreds of thousands looking to see what you will see and do, but they cannot because they were not trained that way. Most of our activities are declarations and statements. That is easy. In most conferences, words are easy. What are you doing on the ground? We want to work with policy makers, but we lack the tools to do that. Our religious institutions themselves are not serious about interfaith dialogue. Most Buddhist institutions use interfaith dialogue as lip service, and do not put resources into it. But can you put staff members toward this, and shift your priorities? Then you will have a challenge. Religious institutions marginalize people, and it is a struggle to bring youth and women into the front of the institution. Here is another t-shirt slogan for the group to consider: “Never give up.”

Ganoune Diop noted that most global treaties have been ratified after horrible destructions. The [1648 Treaty of Westphalia](#) followed 8 million who had been killed in religious wars. A second famous one: The [1919 Treaty of Versailles](#) ended the [First World War](#) after 16 million people died. A third example: The [10 December 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) after [World War II](#) and the deaths of 70-85 million people. We don’t need another devastating war to come up with another treaty. There is a need to be proactive to motivate all people of good will who will take being humane seriously. We need to put in place deliberate educational strategies based on a love for life, not death. This means the concrete adoption of a global lifestyle characterized by the following - this is not new. Several groups have come up with global ethics and moral imperatives. *A global culture for the respect of life. A global adoption of peace in a culture of nonviolence. A global culture of solidarity, and a just economic order. A global culture of tolerance that is not condescendence or imbued with superior sentiment. Global partnership. Freedom of religion or belief and the dignity of difference.* This common good is a compound freedom presupposing freedom of choice, conscience, and translates into freedom of speech and assembly. It is also freedom from being hurt, inflicted with pain, being humiliated, discriminated against, or criminalized just because one believes differently. *A global culture where every person’s conscience, their center of moral deliberation and decisions, is respected.* A global culture of peace and the right to peace. This means developing partnerships according to our different values and traditions where we cultivate respect and affirm the promotion of life, compassion and forgiveness. *Partnerships that practice offering hospitality to migrants, displaced persons and refugees.* We need to develop solidarity in our common humanity based

on respect for every person. These are a few expressions of moral and religious imperatives that the world needs today. But why act now? In 2017, an estimated 65 million people were displaced from homes. Almost 50% were children and youth. Migrants' dignity is challenge by religious intolerance, governmental and social hostilities. Climate-induced displacement generates massive and unprecedented movements of people in search of better environments. Human trafficking treats people as objects and commodities. It is not just a denial of dignity, but a denigration of others' right to life. Being vulnerable should never mean having diminished human dignity. This realization is the foundation for religious and moral imperatives. Humans are sacred. Today, it goes beyond decency when we think of the children that are abused. When the most vulnerable are violated, trafficked or murdered, a root cause of this behavior is the legitimization of violence that instills fear in anyone who would challenge the status quo. I will conclude to say that the test to build a humane world is shown in how we allow children to be treated. The pulse is measured by how the human family treats the most vulnerable among us. What are we going to do to not allow children to be dehumanized and abused? What are we going to urge world leaders and decision makers to consider, discuss and creatively reverse the tide of destruction on the lives of little ones. The current crisis of meaning should not intimidate us. What would our world be if people were more important than holy places and objects? That would transform the way we look at one another.

Jonathan Duffy spoke from his faith tradition, quoting Matthew 5 where people are called to be the salt and light to the world. He quoted John Stott, who said, "Our Christian habit is to bewail the world's deteriorating standards with an air of rather self-righteous dismay. We criticize its violence, dishonesty, immorality, disregard for human life, and materialistic greed. 'The world is going down the drain,' we say with a shrug. But whose fault is it? Who is to blame? Let me put it like this. If the house is dark when nightfall comes, there is no sense in blaming the house; that is what happens when the sun goes down. The question to ask is, 'Where is the light?' Similarly, if the meat goes bad and becomes inedible, there is no sense in blaming the meat; this is what happens when bacteria are left alone to breed. The question to ask is, 'Where is the salt?' Just so, if society deteriorates and its standards decline until it becomes like a dark night or a stinking fish, there is no sense in blaming society; that is what happens when fallen men and women are left to themselves, and human selfishness is unchecked. The question to ask is, 'Where is the Church? Why are the salt and light of Jesus Christ not permeating and changing our society?'"²⁴ *Faith* communities provide refuge for people in crisis. They offer a personal sense of belonging. Faith communities encourage their members to impact the communities around them by offering health care, services that address poverty, etc. And yet, a central theme here is that faith leaders must be a stronger voice for change. Forums like this allow us to come together around the faith values we share to work for the common good. Many faith communities here play a role to transform their communities. [The UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development](#) partners with the United Nations to fulfill the SDGs. The joint learning initiative works with more than 100 agencies to develop evidence-based research that demonstrates sustainable development. We can't wait to be invited. We must use the resources of faith communities to claim a place at the table. We must be agents of change, agents of hope and healing in echoing the voice of our communities. People speak here of peacebuilding and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable. I could have shared anecdotal stories of how we have partnered to transform communities. But to give scale to the work we do, we must learn to give voice to our actions. We are more comfortable with action than voice, but we must learn to be actors on a political stage. If we put resources around joint action, these issues of justice for all cannot be ignored. Our

²⁴ Stott, John (1984). *Issues Facing Christians Today*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

willingness to participate in global action, united and in common is our mandate and we must not leave without it.

Cole Durham reflected on some of the catch-phrases that had been thrown out by various speakers over the past few days - “just do it” and “never give up.” But what is it that we need to be doing? We have had a lot of suggestions. We will be refining these suggestions so that they can be passed on. One recommendation by the former Irish Prime Minister is that we need to get Dr. Handa to take the recommendations and get them noted at the G20 Summit. We will work on that. We will do what we can. But what is it that we need to be doing ourselves as a practical matter? The image of the Emperor asking where the butterflies were in his garden captures the need to be alert and aware of our surroundings, notice the problems, think about them, and communicate in a way that gets the significance communicated to others. We are aware of massive problems that we face. This conference has helped highlight some of the problems. Some of them seem unmanageable. And yet, we know from the MDGs that you can make real progress on these things. Though massive, the SDGs need to be worked on. See where the butterflies are not. The second thing is: cultivation of conscience. Conscience is the core of human dignity, and it can be deadened. We can let it grow dim. We need to take steps to reenergize conscience. Religious traditions can do this. They make us sensitive to things and values in ways that can provide the kind of moral authority, drive and momentum to work on these serious problems. I think we need to think of dignity and return the wellsprings of dignity – on one level it is vague, but historically, at the time when the UN Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, it represented a notion that invited people to new depths. The declaration encouraged people to think about their own background and values, and recognize that others are doing similar things, and while different people may understand their dignity in different ways, it can be a notion that leads to common ground. It points our moral compasses upward, and we need to respond to that upward thrust. With respect to people, we need to find ways to build other people. I was struck when one of our speakers was asked about the most important SDG, she said education. Education is a powerful way of building people. With respect to peace, focusing on commonalities and the problems of getting people to recognize them - religious communities can teach us how to make those encounters and get to understanding other people without the \$52,000 tuition. Some of the most powerful teachings comes in that way through religion. One of the things I am conscious of is the example provided by the Japanese scholar who talked about the success they had in getting people to understand one another by working side-by-side rebuilding forests. It created understanding across differences and reduced conflict. As important as dialogue is, frankly, what works best is rolling up your sleeves and working side-by-side with other people in the neighborhood, city and community to address identified needs that everyone recognizes. Roll up your sleeves, and work on it. This is a powerful way of learning respect and resolving differences. This could be a seedbed for peace. With respect to planet, I couldn't help but think of the images of Jamaica where trees are being replanted. We need to address environmental degradation. Part of this is tree planting. One of the interesting roles that religious and belief communities play is they magnify our ability to make progress working on things. There is a lot of social science data that shows world religions teach altruism and teach people to donate and volunteer more, but the data indicates that it is more effective if it happens in a congregation – in a group. What you need is social reinforcement. Religious groups can provide a place for linking up to help people work together on some of these learning projects. That is more of a general principle. That is what the G20 Interfaith Forum is about. Identify ways that different faith traditions can come together and reinforce one another to pursue massive goals to be accomplished if we get practical about focusing on the problem, making clear recommendations, and figuring out what we ourselves can do to fulfill the process. As we do that, we not only figure out the sources of light, but we also learn how to be sources of

light. We do that by finding ways that we can contribute to these massive goals that are before us. These have not been set by the UN, but by a lot of thoughtful people recognizing some of the most urgent things that need to be done. As we sit together with this large group of people, one cannot help but have a sense of the power that can come when people come together to do these things.

Key Points Made:

- This G20 Interfaith Forum provides us with a significant platform to ask impactful questions that raise the level and effectiveness of religious inputs and values promoting human dignity, peacemaking and environmental sustainability in relation to global policies.
- Religious communities help inspire and sustain the essential human freedoms, aspirations, and core values attendant to human dignity.
- Religious communities offer important spiritual, philosophical, and moral experiences and capacities related to human potential and development on which societies and communities can draw to achieve sustainable development goals.
- Religious communities are an important practical source of volunteers, professional resources, motivation, training, and funding for international development.
- Religious communities have surge capacity to respond to immediate needs and staying capacity to help address long-term human needs.
- Religious communities offer unique connection between international macro-level and micro-level local organizations.
- Religious communities offer important diversity in interfaith expertise and capacity through their wide-ranging, pluralistic religious experiences in addition to the unique experiences each tradition contributes to the rich human storehouse of practical, principle-based approaches to sustainable development.
- Conditions are urgent and we need to respond with appropriate urgency.
- Hate speech must be replaced by narratives of decency because all people, regardless of their status, whether they are refugees or asylum seekers or enslaved migrant workers or trafficked women and children, are persons with human dignity and rights.
- Religious organizations need to be more comfortable with difference, and increase organizational support for dialogue across differences.
- Religious organizations need to proactively motivate people of good will to take being humane seriously, develop partnerships that put in place deliberate educational strategies based on a love for life rather than death, promote lifestyles that respect life, nonviolent culture, solidarity, a just economic order, freedom of religion or belief, and the dignity of difference.
- Faith groups have a responsibility to be agents of hope and healing in communities, so they must learn to be actors on the political stage, and use their resources to claim a place at the table rather than wait to be invited.
- The 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum should ask Dr. Handa to present recommendations to be noted at the G20 Summit.
- The Interfaith Forum should take steps to reenergize conscience focused on human dignity to make it sensitive to things and values that can provide the kind of moral authority, drive and momentum to work on these serious problems.
- That the Interfaith Forum promote *diap Praxis* as a best-practices model of working side-by-side with other people in the neighborhood, city and community to address identified needs that everyone recognizes.

- That the Interfaith Forum identify ways that different faith traditions can come together and reinforce one another to pursue massive goals to be accomplished through a practical focus on problems, the making of clear recommendations, and personal exploration of what we ourselves can do to fulfill the process.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Leaders engage in urgent and sustained action for peace, for poverty reduction and care of the planet in fulfillment of the SDGs so that the whole globe experiences a better quality of life by 2030.
- That G20 Leaders take note of the 2019 Interfaith Forum Recommendations and Policy Briefs.

IDEAS TO ACTION

Description: This plenary drew upon the Forum’s central themes to highlight next steps. It drew on the specific recommendations emerging from working groups and sessions that highlighted refugees and religious peacebuilding, a focus on education and children, the rainforest initiative and on lessons for extractive industries, and on trafficking and good governance. The session reported on initiatives of G20 Governments to engage with religious actors and to address issues of religious freedom. To set the context, the previous day was summarized by Katherine Marshall (Executive Director, World Faiths Development Dialogue). Keynote addresses were given by Graça Machel (Stateswoman, First Education Minister of Mozambique; Deputy Chair, The Elders; International advocate for women and children), and Sir John Key (Former Prime Minister of New Zealand; patron of WSD). Moderated by Azza Karam (Senior Advisor, United Nations Population Fund; Coordinator, UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development), the speaker panel consisted of Sharon Eubank (President, Latter-day Saints Charities), Ishmael Noko (Founder and President, Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa), Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam (Director of the Ecology Department, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development), Audrey Kitagawa (Chair, Parliament of the World’s Religions), and David Moore (General Counsel, U. S. Agency for International Development).

Presentations Overview:

Katherine Marshall identified common themes for the group to focus upon. The first theme is a focus on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). The second theme is to clarify why it is so important to have religious voices included in the discussion of agendas. Religious groups provide a moral compass that helps direct knowledge and develop trust which is eroding – religious actors should be at the table in discussions for peace, people and planet. We heard compelling arguments, but also heard where this discourse is ‘fire from above’ in terms of leadership, and ‘fire from below’ in the form of mothers’ unions, civil society, and grassroots action. We heard a challenge for us to look to, hear, and put forward a prophetic voice. What does that mean? It means looking more broadly with deep questions, but also deep conviction to address the direction society is going in - going beyond the daily routines and really looking to the directions and the future. We had a rare opportunity yesterday to hear from several major global leaders who have actually been at these policy tables reflecting on things like Brexit. One of the G20 agendas is to keep the focus on Africa. We also had political leadership from Japan which gave us some insights as to how Japan will deal with the political crisis - bridging the gulf so that there is a dialogue, a seat at the table, and a common frame of action that is mutually

developed. We also heard passionate and provocative presentations on a number of issues we face such as the Rohingya crisis where a million people are living in camps, the worry of what this means for Myanmar which is at a crossroads, and the power of the Religions for Peace collaboration. We were reminded in various ways about the crime, horror, and sin of trafficking and slavery where we are each and every one of us called to do something about, but also to admonish the G20 Leaders to do something about. We were also reminded about the situation of children, and doing better regarding differences among communities which is a source of conflict, and the path for solutions. The salt and the light – the salt which is flavor and quality of presentation, and light which is working here to shed light. We were reminded of the importance of youth and the reference to the t-shirt “Just do it” admonition to action (as opposed to words). This was a short summary. A more detailed analysis of what was discussed yesterday will come later. She then introduced Graça Machel.

Graça Machel thanked the organizers of the dialogue for giving her the opportunity to enrich herself. Because of the dialogues yesterday, she said, I feel like the human being I am has been enriched from the dialogue. I chose to center my contribution this morning on children, more importantly refugee children. More and more, we find ourselves on a planet where millions of people are displaced in search of safety, security, shelter and freedom of expressions. Millions of children are born and raised outside the confines of their homeland, and denied a safe place to grow and learn. Young people are exploited as forced laborers and slaves. When I think of how we have failed the youngest and most vulnerable, it brings about sadness and frustration, but it also reignites a passion within to keep finding and joining hands with like-minded change agents who are determined to create safe and loving spaces for the children of the world. I am pleased to be here with so many allies who are just as concerned as I am for improving education for children. We have religious leaders, civil society, coupled with the private sector – together we have the resources and power to create and implement multi-sectoral approaches to ensure a bright future for refugee children. Let me share UNHCR statistics that should set off alarm bells for us. Given these escalating numbers of conflicts and climate change, there has been a steady upward trend of refugees and displaced persons globally. There are more people displaced now than at any point since WWII. Conservative estimates put numbers at 65 million people. More than half – 52% of them – 7.4 million people are of school age. Half of the 3.5 million refugee children are of primary school age and they do not go to school. In 1996, when I presented [the report](#) on the impact of conflict on children to the UN, I emphasized that education be part of the humanitarian assistance provided to refugee children. It pains me that 23 years later, the world is still not paying sufficient attention to the needs of the refugee child: 91% of children around the world attend school, whereas only 50% of refugee children attend primary school. The [Education Cannot Wait](#) global partnership indicates that \$8.5 billion in support - which is \$113 per child annually - would provide an education for these children. As a human family, we can afford this. Behind the numbers are human beings. These are precious children being robbed of their future. They are like our own children, and they are deserving of an education that creates professional opportunities just like any of our own children. I stand here today, not only as an international advocate for children’s rights, but also as a mother and grandmother, encouraging us to give these statistics a human face. Refugee children need and deserve the mental, physical, and spiritual nourishment that we give our own loved ones. This morning, I want to touch on the importance of laying a holistic and sound foundation for education, and highlight a few perspectives that nurture the body, mind and spirit of refugee children. Refugee children must be given the proper condition to reach their abilities to engage as citizens of the world. I want to challenge conventional norms today, and begin investing in the refugee child from the moment of conception. It begins long before primary school. To maximize the potential of a child, we must start with the first 1000 days of their life. Proper nutrition from the first 1000 days is

monumentally transformative to developing a child's potential. It begins with calling for pregnant women to receive adequate nutrition. We know pregnant women have never been part of refugee assistance. Without adequate nutrition, children are stunted. This hampers the development of lean mass, internal organ size, and function. Adequate nutrition contributes to mortality as well as stunting, so inadequate nutrition translates into a loss of human capital for development as well as for host countries. Studies in several African countries, indicate that malnutrition has a significant impact on a country's economic growth. The mark on economic growth is about 10.3% of GDP in Malawi, 11.5% in Rwanda, and 16.5% in Ethiopia. It is also an economic loss. A development program that provides nutrition for the first 1000 days is an investment: it builds brain, improves growth, improves school readiness, reduces disparities in economic potential, and reduces the possibility of disease development. Nutrition needs to be supplemented with an investment in early child development (ECD). ECD refers to socio-cognitive and emotional development until the children enter primary school. ECD is particularly important for the girl child who is often sidelined which translates into a gender gap later. Often neglected in refugee settings, ECD is a critical foundational block to the academic career of a child. Investment in ECD of the girl child is an investment in socioeconomic activities. We must demand that government, the private sector, NGOs, and faith-based communities contribute to the investment in the education of the refugee child right from the start. ECD centers, primary, secondary, and vocational institutions should be viewed as multi-purpose, safe havens for refugee children. They are more than places for academic instruction. They play an important role for social cohesion and the identification of children who are at-risk of sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Educational centers also contribute to medical support services. UNHCR says that quality education is an anchor that will keep children in the classroom, and facilitate transition to secondary education and beyond. More investment is needed to be given to: 1) increasing assets, 2) improving the quality of education, 3) providing teacher training, development, and infrastructure, 4) provision of educational materials, and 5) providing supplemental education and after school activities. Two-thirds of primary school children don't make it to secondary school, whereas 84% of their adolescent counterparts enjoy a secondary education. Girls are dropping out in alarming numbers and not graduating from secondary schools on par with their male counterparts. There is an urgency for investment in impactful initiatives that speak to the needs of the girl child in order to change this tide. The average stay of a refugee is 17 years, and only 1% of refugees return to their country of origin. This means that we need to invest in adolescence as they transition to becoming vibrant adults. We need to develop their skills, talents and their ability to make informed decisions about their reproductive options. In many refugee settings, the educational setting is already overburdened in host countries. Integration of refugees into mainstream educational systems is a challenge that requires solutions. Expert practitioners have advised that refugees be encouraged to transition to secondary education either inside, or outside to be included into the school system of the host country so as to transition them to a national curriculum to obtain recognized qualifications. [Lebanon](#) has taken great strides forward. In 2012, the Minister of Education opened the public schools to refugee students by adding a second shift to enable more children to attend. They mobilized UNHCR and UNESCO funds to reach all children with education to provide free education for all children. Refugees and Lebanese children are equally educated up to the 12th grade. This shows that it is possible. They partnered with UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and others to provide free education to all alike. Lebanon is just one example, but it shows that it is possible if domestic and international stakeholders work together. Without the safety net of secondary education, adolescents easily fall prey to abuse, trafficking, child marriage, teen pregnancy and confinement to domestic labor or sexual exploitation. Secondary school is an important means of providing protection and psychological support to refugee children as a way

of addressing child trafficking, sexual exploitation, and early pregnancy. Mental health is equally important to the educational journey. The provision of mental health services is important to counter the psychological strain that many refugee children have to endure. For example, the Palestinians have lived with the occupation. [A Palestinian NGO](#) uses arts education and music therapy to work with Palestinians to address the emotional, cognitive, and social needs of diverse groups including youth at-risk, youth in camps, prisoners, survivors of sexual abuse and other vulnerable members of the community across Palestine. Things can be done, and are being done. Another example is [Uganda's African Youth Initiative](#) networks. Schools collaborate with survivors of war, ex-child soldiers, and child-headed households to help them become compassionate problem solvers to produce leaders for human rights, and lay foundations for national harmony, peace and unity. Faith-based organizations can play a role as custodians of the spirit, encouraging integration and a balance of mind, body and soul so that people can become the best version of human beings that we can be. We are positioned to disrupt the inequality and injustices of our political, economic, and social systems - the materialism and consumerism and the unhealthy imbalance of mind, body and spirit that plagues the world. Be bold in our submissions to the G20. In practical terms, I focus on closing gaps. Yesterday, we had an education of: 'Just do it,' and 'Never give up.' Now, I add: 'Close the gaps.' 1. The financial gap. Recommend that the G20 close the twelve billion education financing gap so that all refugee children can receive quality ECD, primary and secondary education. 2. Close the equity gap to provide equal assistance to refugees wherever they are. Currently, the way that they are treated differs from one country to another. It is an equity issue. 3. Insist that educational assistance to refugee children have a focus on closing the gap between the primary/secondary education and 0-6 years of age. Focus on a child from the early years of age. We don't start caring for them at age 6. The refugee child is no different from our own children. Ensure that nurturing an education is a lifelong investment. 4. Close the gender gap between refugee boys and girls and ensure girl children are valued and treated equally. 5. Close the curriculum gap by providing curricula that includes psychosocial support and mental health to refugee children. Around the world, someone is displaced every 3 seconds - forced from homes by violence, climate, war and persecution. We cannot afford to not fully nurture the mind, body and spirit of refugee children. We need to provide them with the basics to develop to their potential as adults. The SDGs have the mantra of 'Leave no one behind.' I believe this is within our reach. There is an effort to realign priorities, but in essence, it is within our reach, so it is an imperative that we make it happen. Does the world have the will to do this? I will leave it to each one of us to give an answer to this question.

Sir John Key reiterated Katherine Marshall's point that events like this can cause one to begin to wonder if there is any hope for solutions. When we think of the SDGs, we can easily wonder if there will be any resolutions to these problems. It can be overwhelming when you think of something like the refugee crisis. A feeling of no hope seeps in as one recognizes how difficult it is to succeed. If we heed those feelings, we will never make any progress. I was tempted to respond to a question posed at a panel – is there any hope? Can we actually achieve any outcomes that are better? I think it is quite possible, and we will achieve successes – never completion because it is a journey, not a destination. But, if we continue to communicate to leaders what is required of them and advocate for change, in the end, we will get better outcomes and help the lives of so many people around the world. Why? When we reflect on human nature, you see all the extremes - the worst and the best. The very best is on display more often than the worst. The terrible massacre in Christ Church a few months ago was the worst. One guy coming there as a White Supremacist - hating those who follow the Islamic faith; he entered a mosque and indiscriminately killed 51 people. To make it more terrible, he chose to film it, and live-stream it on Facebook. That is the worst of human behavior. But what came out of that was a

unifying factor around the world. Images of our Prime Minister meeting the families of victims, marches of solidarity of diverse people saying this is not who we are or what we believe - out of that terrible event came at least some hope for all of us that we have this natural human nature to want to help people in desperate times. That was equally true when the [Christ Church earthquake](#) occurred which was followed shortly afterwards by the [Japan earthquake](#). Out of that came an outpouring of support and commitment to help those in need. Many people in this room will remember when the tsunamis took place in Indonesia and the world came together to offer help. Some of you are aware of [Rotary Club](#). They are trying to raise enough funds to eradicate polio. Their drive is supported by Bill Gates. Thousands of clubs are giving small donations – people doing small things with a big goal. When you reflect on the terrible behavior of one individual, it is dwarfed by human nature wanting to help the community. The second reason why I have optimism, we have a great capacity to forgive. Your country has suffered terribly if you considers the nuclear bombs. I took my children to visit [Peace Park](#) in Hiroshima and, while there is terrible sadness, this is a country that accepted that this occurred, but you have chosen to forgive. Similarly, if you go to Germany where so many people were affected by Nazi Germany, the world has forgiven Germany. I have great faith that we can achieve great things because we will forgive others. The third reason why I am optimistic is because many of the things we think of can be resolved because of technology. Consider climate change. Half of our emissions come from agriculture. [The Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases](#) intends to resolve this problem by giving this technology to developing countries that have an economy of food production similar to ours. We are already seeing progress in this area. Consider cars. Tokyo is a great example. By next year, there is a belief that the emissions profile should be electric and nonpolluting. Twenty years ago we would have thought this impossible. On one hand, there is a growth in the number of cars being used, yet fuel consumption is decreasing because of the growth in electric cars. Consider the outreach of the internet and the capacity for online learning. There is a lot we can do to help refugee children. I want to finish by commenting on the SDGs. The purpose of a conference like this is to get a communique that can be presented to the G20 Leaders to put our concerns on the table and clearly state the progress we want to see. It would be so easy to look at the issues and say it is gloom and despair, but yesterday, I spoke about women's equality, and that noted that it is one of the most important SDGs. But look around. There has been a lot of progress. Poverty elimination – look at the number of people lifted out of poverty. In China and India alone, we have seen tremendous change. Education – look at the average level of attainment, and, yes, there is enormous progress to be made, and it may not be fast enough, but a lot has happened. Corruption – the effect it has on democracies and institutions. David Cameron is right. How can you feel there is fairness in society if there is corruption? But again, world leaders have decided to become more transparent, and ask more difficult questions. I used to be frustrated by discussions at the UN where leaders could not agree, but if we didn't have a UN, we would not have a forum where we talk about issues that matter. Yes, we are right to have great concerns, but most importantly, we should leave with hope that we will look deep within ourselves to do the right thing by other people. You are here because you care about the plight of others. Human nature is fundamentally a good one. We should take confidence that we will get real outcomes.

Panel Discussion

Azza Karam moderated a panel response to the previous presentations. The purpose of this panel was to move from ideas to action. Should the servant leaders that you have heard over the last three days have an opportunity to meet with G20 Leaders, what would the panelists like them to know with respect to what has been discussed here in relation to peace, people and planet? The last three days have been enriching times of developing comradeship and

strengthening interfaith engagement. These are precious beyond words and money and precisely the treasures that faith communities enable when they come together by virtue of the communion that they share. Perhaps the most important word I have heard here, she said, is interfaith – the opportunity to convene across nations, faiths, regions, and genders to come face-to-face. She proposed another t-shirt slogan for consideration: ‘Religious leaders cannot do this alone.’ It is high-time to engage across the religious and secular divides. Everyone has multiple identities. We need to make sure we do not overly focus on the religious and not forget that there are other dimensions along which people identify. It is normal to be diverse, and it is necessary to look at the other and realize that they are different from us; although they may not be from our own religion, they are nevertheless human beings. We have heard mention of the G20 and the G77 – may I mention the G193 which is the UN system? It contains the ideal of all. The point here is that we have a mechanism that represents all of us that opened its doors in 2000 to welcome religious leaders. From this journey came many gatherings like this that are powerful. Let us not overlook the multilateral spaces, but let us also not overlook that the religious and the secular are equally important. The proximity of the two has not always been a good idea, but the derailment is also not a good idea. It takes two to tango. We will realize that there is no way that women alone or men alone can do it, but women do remain behind. It is high-time that religious leaders pay attention to the other within – women and girls and other genders who also have a divine need to be acknowledged.

Sharon Eubank reflected on what might be key takeaways and impressions that you would be comfortable to walk up to G20 Leaders and say, ‘Here is what you need to know.’ She shared an example from a breakaway session on the topic of how to respond to refugees. A church gave part of their land to build a mosque, and they put a hall connecting the two buildings so that there would be social interaction between the two communities. This is an established building. The G20 is another, and we are trying to build a hall so that there is social interaction. But I realized that I am not fully prepared to engage in that hall. Some key takeaways have been personal challenges – we need more compelling data. We don’t have enough data scope to be prepared to talk to G20 Leaders. We heard interesting data here about the percentage of people oriented to faith; the \$11 trillion cost to the world’s economy of not educating children. We engaged in discussion about developing compelling questions such as the Japanese Emperor who asked ‘Where are the butterflies in my garden?’ Additional compelling questions emerged such as: “Are there ways to put people who have experienced violence in the presence of people in power so that there is no filter.” A woman testified who had been in slavery 3 weeks prior to her testimony. The powerful people had all kinds of questions. She did not want to talk about any of that. She kept saying to them: ‘What are you going to do about my 3300 sisters who are still in captivity?’ She would not give up. She kept pressing them. Another question: ‘Do we have the will to educate refugee children?’ We have to be able to develop laser focused questions and then ask those questions. I know we can develop focused questions by this time next year. Next, the Forum had a focus on rainforest and trees. So many examples come to mind such as the community of people in Haiti reforesting - images of people walking hand-in-hand while holding trees. Another was a community analyzing data and recognizing that the most effective projects all had a tree component. Another example of people working together after the tsunami – *diapaxis* (the practice that we do together). I believe that we can be more creative about inviting G20 Leaders to come to the ground, and see the work that we are doing with the SDGs. The people in this room are responsible for a hefty part of SDG fulfillment. For peace, we have a responsibility to pull things into unity and not separate them. When Joseph Smith was in jail, he said that “a very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm in the time of a storm,

by being kept workways with the wind and the waves.”²⁵ We need data, focused questions, and to build a connecting room where we can come together.

Ishmael Noko began by saying, ‘I came, I saw, I heard’ many things that cannot be summarized in one word, but I can say that I came and sensed that there is a new community on the march. This will take us forward. We shall never be the same again. Some of the essential things is that it is important to give emphasis to those things that honor the elders. A call was made here to mobilize positive traditions of respect in addressing aging societies. A silver power and silver economy is on the march. It cannot be ignored. Our future that is behind us belongs to our children. Secondly, what you call ECD – early child development. When you invest in children’s education, you can get so much right. If you invest in healthcare, you can have a healthy society and nation. If you invest in children at an early stage, you can count on having a literate society. The investment will go a long way. In my institution, we are establishing a faculty of education and a faculty of theology. We have decided to work on ECD to build faculty around whatever is implied by this. We are calling for ECD investments so that we can better our society.

Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam presented three takeaways. In the words of Albert Einstein, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”²⁶ In engaging with the G20, my three takeaways address each topic of planet, people and peace. On planet, we need to change the paradigm to rediscover earth as our common hope. We are living in a critical moment. We have ten or twelve years to preserve our home for the rest of God’s creatures - biodiversity loss, water scarcity, etc. The 50th anniversary of Earth Day will be an important year. At the Vatican, we believe it can be a year of grace as a turning point. Ask the G20 to make 2020 the Year of the Earth. We are the last generation that can act to save our common home. We should have acted 40-50 years ago, and we didn’t. The second takeaway is on the topic of people: Think of humanity as the common human family. In a family, we take care of the weakest. When a child falls sick, the entire family takes care of the child. When you encounter the G20, think of the G77. I come from India. Ghandi once said that when you are in a difficult situation and you need to make a decision, “recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen, and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be any use to him.”²⁷ It is not just charity or philanthropy; it is justice. Most of the greenhouse gases come from the richest countries, and the poorest contribute hardly 5%, so it is a question of justice. Religious communities should rediscover our prophetic voice. So, the second paradigm shift is to think as a common human family, and put the weakest at the center. The third paradigm shift is peace with God, the Creator, the rest of creation, and with ourselves. We need to create an alliance that puts Indigenous communities and women at the center where we come together as all religions. We are not waiting for you, the G20. The alliance is on the streets. You – G20 - just need to join them.

Audrey Kitagawa said that this conference speaks to the sleeping giant of civil society. The rise of civil society is extremely important to raise global landscape issues that directly impact all of us. This dialogic platform of dialogic process is extremely important for engagement of civil society with the G20 Leaders, but also for all those of good conscience and faith who want to address these issues that impact all our lives. To be able to come together with respectful ways to a respectful Forum to listen to the voices of each other and tell our stories - that is the record of the long march of humanity to negotiate the ways to deal with the ever increasing complexities of life on earth. It is unprecedented that we have 7.2 billion people (and soon there will be 9

²⁵ Section 123:16, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/123.17?lang=eng>

²⁶ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/albert_einstein_385842

²⁷ Mahatma Gandhi, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/93644-recall-the-face-of-the-poorest-and-weakest-man-you>

billion) inhabiting the earth. The complexities mean that we need to keep in mind this global landscape that includes all of the people that comprise this landscape. There are connections that are heart-to-heart in this entire process of engagement. It is humbling to see the intellectual rigor, the scholarship, and the hearts-of-gold here. It is important to find place in this civic space to mutually seek solutions to concerns that can impact the whole of humanity. It is hoped that in our collective voices and will, we will be able to create the critical mass that will have the tipping point that will impress those people in political power that the political will expressed in the people must be ultimately exercised in the political will of the leaders. What is the essence of the interfaith voice? To remember that life is sacred. Life is important, and we must all find those ways to reinforce, and find the ways that allow sacred life to flourish. I have heard people explore how to bring to the centrality of public spaces and political processes, the ethics of how we behave towards each other. May that ethical foundation be the basis for all our engagements. May we remember that we come from a divine source that compels us in our conscience to behave with loving thoughts, speech and action as the supreme expression of the source from which we all came, and to which we all return.

David Moore came to this Forum with an already developed sense of the important role of religious organizations in development and humanitarian assistance. USAID engages with religious actors to increase the impact of development efforts. But he said that he away from this Forum with a conviction that religion and religious actors have a critical role to play in their efforts. He hopes to communicate that to the G20 Leaders. He made mention of a number of presentations and examples (e.g., John Duffy’s presentation from the Adventist tradition, the work of Islamic Relief, what the LDS is doing, etc.) that demonstrate how FBOs are making a difference around the globe. He also made note the staggering statistic that 84% of the people in the world have religious conviction.²⁸ This is part of reality and G20 Leaders need to recognize what a prominent role religion plays in people’s lives around the world. The Forum provided an opportunity to reflect individually on how religion motivates development work. He heard people talk about how, ‘when you are in the service of fellow human beings, you are in the service of your God.’ This helps secular people understand how religion strengthens people’s dedication to development work. But religious influence needs to go beyond conviction. He said that they have adopted a written policy on how they are going to engage. They adopted a regulation that mandates that religious organizations compete on level ground with one other, and that they can maintain their religious identities. He encouraged the Forum to not only communicate that they are key to humanitarian assistance, but to also adopt a policy that specifies that they will engage, and delineate the terms with which they will engage and the extent to which the Interfaith Forum will engage with the G20. He sees value in finding a formal way of engaging, but he also tempered the notion that this is the only way this Forum will have real impact. From a financial perspective, go back a few decades, and government assistance was the way that development happened. That has changed dramatically. Development assistance is only 10% of funds that go to the developed world. In 2010, it was estimated that FBOs provide several billion to the developed world - more than universities or foundations. He emphasized that the faith-based groups can cooperate and do things independent of linkages to the G20.

Key Points Made:

- The Interfaith Forum should continue to focus on SDG fulfillment by the G20 and amongst ourselves, and continue to clarify why religion is an important engagement partner for G20 Leaders.

²⁸ <https://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>

- The Interfaith Forum should prioritize education, including the integration of refugees into mainstream educational systems, with a focus on early education as a foundational basis for all of our engagements.
- The Interfaith Forum should cultivate optimism rooted in gradual progress, the human capacity to forgive, and our ability to develop new technologies to meet needs.
- The Interfaith Forum should promote engagement across the religious and secular divides to develop partnerships and joint collaborations.
- The Interfaith Forum should continue to engage with the UN System and other multilateral spaces as collaborative partners.
- The Interfaith Forum should ask religious leaders to pay attention to the other within – women and girls and other genders - who also have a divine need to be acknowledged.
- The Interfaith Forum needs to develop more compelling data and probing questions in preparation for talking to G20 Leaders.
- Religious leaders have a responsibility to promote things into unity for the making of peace in relation to SDG fulfillment.
- The Interfaith Forum should promote paradigm shifts that rediscover earth as our common hope, thinks of the global population as a common human family that puts the weakest at the center, and that creates alliances that puts Indigenous communities and women at the center where we come together as all religions.
- The Interfaith Forum is an important aspect of civil society engagement with the G20 Leaders, and for all those of good conscience and faith who want to address these issues that impact all our lives.
- The Interfaith Forum should adopt a policy that specifies that they will engage, and delineate the terms with which they will engage, and the extent to which the Interfaith Forum will engage formally with the G20.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 countries close the twelve billion education financing gap so that all refugee children can receive quality ECD, primary and secondary education.
- That the G20 countries close the equity gap to provide equal assistance to refugees wherever they are located.
- That the G20 countries close the gap between the primary/secondary education and 0-6 years of age, ensuring that nurturing an education is a lifelong investment.
- That the G20 countries close the gender gap between refugee boys and girls and ensure girl children are valued and treated equally.
- That the G20 countries close the curriculum gap by providing curricula that includes psychosocial support and mental health to refugee children.
- That the G20 countries make 2020 the Year of the Earth in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

TOWARDS 2020

Description: This plenary highlighted the path from Germany to Argentina to Japan, with insights on possible themes for 2020 and beyond. Youth participants offered their voice. Cole Durham (Founding Director, International Center for Law & Religion Studies) introduced the keynote speaker, Enda Kenny (Former Prime Minister/13th Taoiseach of Ireland; Patron of WSD). Chaired by Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Senior Advisor, KAICIID), speaker respondents were Juan Navarro Floria (Professor of Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica), Alvaro Albacete (Deputy Secretary General, KAICIID), Rahul Karad (Executive President, MAEER's MIT World Peace University), Jean Duff (President, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities), and Kim Tran (Core Member, Fridays for Future Japan).

Presentations Overview:

Cole Durham highlighted several themes that have emerged over the past few days such as a willingness to forgive, the importance of raising focused questions, and the need to feel the urgency of some questions. Sometimes leaders need to be directly confronted with the problems. Faith leaders need to find ways to ask G20 Leaders to come see some of our projects. They often go to catastrophes, but we need to show them how we are responding to the catastrophes and what things we are doing that make a difference (I see a community on the march). We live in a world of growing population that is increasingly complex – technologically and socially. That means our legal systems are getting more complex. What that means is that we need more simple systems. Sometimes we need to have more simple things to say. My welcome focused on the SDGs and the importance of the religious factor working synergistically with religious voices if the SDGs are to be achieved. David Moore said that if you look at development aid from governments, it is dwarfed by aid coming from other factors. The forces of the honorable and the just are not exclusively in governmental budgets. They are heart-to-heart contributions. About 50 years ago, the LDS tradition began a humanitarian aid initiative. At first, we thought big donors would make it work, but over time, it was the small commitment – the widow's mite- that dwarfed the contributions of big donors. We need to find the heart-to-heart things where everyone can be involved in making a difference. And we need to change our paradigms of thought. Part of the problems are the conceptions themselves; we need to find new ways of thinking. The diversity of the religious world is a rainforest of ideas. We need the rainforest of ideas to provide the inspiration and revelation to solve the problems of our times.

Enda Kenny said that this was his first time at an interfaith conference like this, and it has been a revelation. I have seen so many topics for discussion and contributions from so many people and so much wisdom, expertise and experience giving witness to the things you have been discussing. What did I hear? Planet, people, peace, prosperity, pathways, children, education, women, religious freedom, rainforest, trafficking, religion and heritage. If all these issues are dealt with, we would live in a utopian world. I heard about the forcibly displaced and 25 million refugees, over half of whom are children. Would anyone here want to have your children in a refugee situation? How can some of these countries absorb these numbers? How can our world tolerate forced economic famine? Does anybody care? And the answer is: Yes, they do. Can any impact be made on the migration numbers we speak of? Can we put together a structure that can impact the lives of those millions of people so that the goal of not leaving anybody behind can apply? Today is Sunday. Tomorrow and Tuesday, in normal democracies, cabinet meetings are held. And the officials will say, 'Here are the agendas for the meeting.' Will there be any item on those agendas about what you are talking about here? Each of the G20 countries will have their political meetings to discuss the next week's business and a little bit beyond. The G20 meets

shortly in Osaka, and for the first time, in Japan. What are they going to talk about? Will there be any reference to what you are doing here? There should be, because the prime ministers have to deal with the millions in their countries that are faced with many of the difficulties you talk about here. Here is the [Japan Times](#) from yesterday: “The G20 to Tax Firms.” Is that of interest at the Interfaith Forum? It is because if there is tax paid, that is money that can be used to pay for services. At the bottom of the page, “Births at Record Low.” Is not aging something you were talking about? [The New York Times](#), yesterday on page 10, they had an article about immigration saying ¼ a billion people are migrants. On the same page, there was an article about shootings in Colorado but in 48 hours, there will be no more mention of that despite that young Kendrick, 18 years old, died in his attempts to prevent one of those shooters from killing further people. On the same page is an article about tariffs, and the impact tariffs make on vulnerable people in our societies. How do interfaith groups impact this? If you check the [G20 website](#), it says that recent G20s have focused on macro economies and trade issues, but also on global issues like development, climate change, energy, health, counterterrorism, migration and refugees. So, do they hear you? Is this not an indication that we need to look at the structure of how the Interfaith Forum does its business when it finishes its discussions so that the prime ministers, when they get the agendas on Tuesday of this week, then wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if they would say, ‘Can you help us?’ Let me give you some reflections about where I come from in Ireland. St. Patrick came there in 432, and since then we have celebrated St. Patrick's Day all over the world. It is a small country that was also an emigrant country where people went to Australia, the U.S., etc. In the 19th Century, Catholic priests were hunted down for saying mass to people; if they were caught, they were hanged. Many went abroad. The interaction between religion and politics was espoused by someone representing the country in the House of Commons, Daniel O'Connell, often referred to as The Emancipator. His continual raising of the issue in politics resulted in a decision that was made to allow for freedom for Catholics in Ireland. Church and state, while separate in Ireland, are also very involved in working together on issues of interest to state and religious convocations. You can travel to Ireland now, because we opened our doors to the EU, and you will see that it is now a place of many nationalities. Go to a primary school, and there might be five or six different religious practices. It is a different country that is no longer primarily Catholic. Where is the leadership? In the communities, because if they understand the people coming to them and work with them in the communities, that strengthens human bonds. We send from our country educators and priests to Africa to assist with famine and hunger. 50 years ago, the Irish government set up an agency to assist communities in Africa suffering from hunger. In the 1840's, the potato crop failed for 3 years, and many died or emigrated. We lost a million to the Atlantic – to the coffin ships. This experience gave us a sensitivity. We don't have a big navy, but in recent years, we sent people to pull people from the Mediterranean who would have otherwise drowned. Church and state can work together but you have to also be flexible because in some cases, we have had to siphon money away from countries where corruption was interfering with funds intended for development. When I was Prime Minister, we set up a couple of citizen assemblies. We have a written constitution. If you want to introduce something different, you have to ask people for a referendum. Young people wanted marriage equality. We were the first country to respond to a citizen's convention by holding a referendum that was approved and inserted into the constitution on marriage equality. If you ask people to respond, they will. It takes it away from the political center to say that a democracy is about the people and their families, and they feel empowered by doing that. They feel that politics does matter. We hold a national commemoration sermon every year. I was struck when the prayers were introduced at the commencement of the conference; there was a commemoration of church and state for those who fought and died for liberation of others in all the wars. They have readings and prayers from different faiths in Ireland. The G8 and G20 are made up of people who are

supposed to be focused on decisions that affect their people and the countries around them. Solidarity and conviction and belief and resilience are required to make things happen. So, my second point is to emphasize collaboration and cooperation. With all the problems in China on a huge scale, Henry Kissinger pointed out the major threat is not that the U.S./China two powers collide but the subtle danger of the failure of two powers to cooperate in the interest of their common humanity. We show we are human by recognizing the humanity of others. Next year will be the presidential election in the U.S. The outcome of that will have a bearing on everyone in the world. Britain may have left the EU, and may not. Obviously, there are issues ahead of enormous challenge. I would say to young people, social media, digitization of things is an essential part of life. But the political process in the countries of the G20 need to hear from young people like [Greta Thunberg](#) who went on strike regarding climate change. If we are saying we are leaving a legacy to people coming behind us, we have to deal with that challenge. As far as science tells us, there doesn't appear to be another populated planet. We are on our own, and we have to deal with this. Jean Duff referred to a Nobel laureate from Ireland who, before he passed away, sent his wife a text in Latin, "Do not be afraid." We should always have faith in ourselves, and belief in the process that the decisions we make will have a beneficial bearing on the people who come after us.

Panel Discussion

Mohammed Abu-Nimer explored themes and challenges for the Interfaith Forum to focus on at the next gathering in Saudi Arabia. There are competing priorities for faith-based actors depending on the contexts. Muslim in Indonesia, Tunisia or Paris will have different priorities because they face different issues in their respective contexts. Imagine us making the claim that we know what should be priorities. It is an illusion. We are projecting and speculating. We can only state that this is what we think are the priorities and challenges, and identify what faith communities are currently doing to address these priorities and challenges; we have heard many stories. It is a joy to hear people describe what they are doing. But still, it is hard to get faith groups to be more reflective and critical of their work. We love to project the positive, good story, but there is space for critique. How can interfaith agencies engage with policy makers? What is the best strategy to introduce and communicate these messages to policy makers? We struggle with how to communicate this. We need to think about it more systematically, even asking if this gathering is the most useful way to convey the message.

Juan Navarro Floria made the point that the Interfaith Forum in the context of the G20 is not about discussion of religion or theology. It is the leaders of the G20 who choose the issues that we discuss. The presidency this year, Japan, chose the issues of concern. We try to answer these questions from the perspective of religious communities. This year, the topic was peace, people and planet. In Germany, the main issue was refugees. Last year, in Argentina, children was a priority, and we are dealing with this issue even this year. This year, Japan proposed aging societies as a concern, so we had a session today on it, and we realized it will remain an important issue in the future. What are religions doing to address these priorities? The opportunity the G20 Interfaith Forum offers is to present best practices to explore common work within a network of networks. Religion is an important part of societies. The aim is to manifest the importance of religious voices; we have a responsibility to remind governments that religions have something to say. A prophet is not announcing calamities; prophets announce hope and a promise of the voice of God for the man and woman of today. A prophet is announcing a better future for us. The church is an expert in humanity. We can say that for all major religions, the voice can discuss necessities, hopes and dreams for people in our time. How can we engage with policymakers to be part of the solution to challenges faced by the G20? It is different country to

country. In some, religions are more, and in other countries, less important. In some countries, there are major religions that have stronger voices than others (e.g., Protestantism in Germany, Catholicism in Argentina). This allows us to discuss common issues. But the voice of several religions delivering a common message is much more powerful. Religions have a lot of coinciding areas that recognize the dignity of human beings. Religions do not choose the agenda, but we can enlighten the agenda by drawing attention to the poorest. Regarding the best strategy to introduce and communicate to policymakers: Last year, our strategy was to involve policy makers in the meetings. They heard what people said in our conference. I also think we need to present it to the press to communicate because policymakers read the newspapers more than the common people. What happens on television and radio is important for them. It is important to involve significant leaders of different religions to make sure it is diverse and inclusive. The framing of the agenda may be even more important than the introduction of new themes.

Alvaro Albacete emphasized that the Interfaith Forum will not finish today. It is a continuous exercise in dialogue, and it should continue beyond. Whenever that does not happen, we should continue to promote the dialogue and exchange of views from different faiths. KACIID does it through conferences and gatherings, but also through different initiatives on the ground in different areas of the world at the grassroots level to complement what Religions for Peace is doing at the governmental level. We hope to start soon initiatives in Latin America. The Interfaith Forum is not going to finish today. We have the obligation to continue working in terms of the promotion interreligious dialogue. Secondly, the fact that the Interfaith Forum is not an official engagement group of the G20 summit itself. Do you want to be part of the G20 Summit? Do we want to be part of the official bureaucracy? I am speaking as a diplomat. If we join the flow of the bureaucratic exercise, we will be limited in our work in a way that we will not have the freedom to select the topics and speakers that we currently have to summarize recommendations to the political leaders. If we want to preserve our autonomy, then we should keep our distance from the G20 Summit in order to maintain our freedom to organize as we do now with different contributions from different faith contributions that are not shaped by the Sherpas preparing the work for the G20 Summit. The detachment from the process is valuable for keeping our independence. It is healthy to keep our distance. We want to be influential, and for that to happen, we need the presence of political leaders and policy makers in the G20 Interfaith Forum. It happened in Argentina. We had the presence of the Vice President of the country and several ministers. In a way, we have followed that approach similarly in Japan. Yesterday, we had someone from the Japanese government. This year, we also had the presence of foreign political leaders and former prime ministers. We had a very interesting panel, listening to them discuss the important decisions they made. It was an attractive panel to hear from the politicians how they made the decisions that they did. But we can go beyond that setting with former prime ministers. What if we invite religious leaders to join them and exchange views about the decisions that they took, and confront them with another perspective? We want to challenge the political leaders. For that to happen, the best setting is to sit them together and provide space to exchange views. We need to help religious leaders remind political leaders the spiritual grounds for decision making and the need for compassion. The best way to accomplish this is to mingle religious and political leaders.

Rabul Karad presented a core thought emphasizing the union of science and religion/spirituality as a process that produces universities and universalization. It is observed that today universities are not focusing enough on the universalization. Universities must adopt an inclusive approach that is not so exclusive. Just establishing a cursory centre of studies for religion will not suffice. Religion and religious scriptures have a capacity to address the need for universalization in education. All of the religious scriptures contain life guiding scriptures. Education must not build

walls in the minds of youngsters. Religions that advocate that we are all the birds of the same feather can be an effective tool to demolish those walls. Universities can play a big role in the days to come. Technology and the internet also play a role in making the universalization work at universities. Technology will help include the masses who are currently deprived of higher education. In India and many other developing countries, a large portion of the population is deprived of higher education. Technology can provide a solution. Fundamentally, all religions communicate the one message that all the religious scriptures are life guiding scriptures. Adulteration of religion can occur when self-interests prevail over the interests of society. Selfish thoughts and short-sightedness has adulterated the purity of religion. No religion in the world is an exception to this. However, a mindful integration of education and religion will help demolish global geographical as well as psychological boundaries to make this world a global village. If governments were to resolve to allow universities to become more important, they could use religious teachings to stimulate the educational process. Einstein once said that ‘science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.’ Education and religion can be safely linked.

Jean Duff began by sharing how the professional honor of this visit also fulfills a childhood dream. As a young girl in Dublin, she corresponded regularly with her Auntie, Bessie Duff. She was a nun of the Sacred Heart order who was the Reverend Mother of the Fuji Sacred Heart School in Susono, not far from here. From her, Jean had her first lessons about life in Japan. Bessie wrote to Jean about how much she loved Japan, she loved her students. She loved the beauty of the land around the school including the tea plantations. She served education here for over 50 years until her death. This week, Jean will have the opportunity to place a stone from Ireland on her grave, meet her community of sisters, and see something of her world and work. As part of this sixth G20 Interfaith Forum, we have been extraordinarily privileged to spend the last 3 days with colleagues from all over the world in an intense community of learning and exchange. Jean highlighted two urgent challenges, relating to children and refugees. In the words of the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral, “We are guilty of many errors and many faults. But our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the Fountain of Life.” There is a vast scale of violence against children all over the world. Children are sexually abused, and trafficked, enslaved and sold; Every 7 minutes an adolescent is killed by an act of violence; 7 out of 10 small children experience violent discipline at home; one out of 5 homicide victims is a child. The scale of this violence against our most vulnerable treasures –against our hope for the future-- requires a coordinated response from everyone. Faith actors are using their powerful influence in raising awareness for prevention, in caring for victims, and in encouraging positive parenting. We must also acknowledge the appalling damage to children perpetrated by some faith actors in the violence of child sexual abuse and in sanctioning corporal punishment, and we must support every effort to safeguard children and enforce child protection laws. My organization has just the past week released a [comprehensive report](#) on the many ways faith actors are involved in the elimination and the perpetration of violence against children. Turning now to refugees and displaced people –more than 68 million people are displaced from their homes---by war and conflict, by climate change, natural disasters, and extreme poverty. More than 85% of displaced people are being hosted in developing countries. Faith actors play central roles in every stage and space of forced displacement. In every country, they are welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating people on the move, with special priorities for children on the move. The universal and essential roles of faith actors in meeting the needs of refugees and migrants are well documented on [reports](#) available online. How can religious agencies engage with policy makers to be part of the solutions to these challenges? We should think about our roles as people of faith in giving prophetic voice to world challenges and bringing them to the attention of world leaders –soon to meet in Osaka. Prophetic voices here at the Forum have called faith actors to courageous action: Mohammed Abu Nimr called on Faith Actors to “Wake up, to dare to take a

stand,” Graca Machel called us to fight for education, Jonathan Duffy exhorted faith leaders to use their collective voice—to *be* the moral compass. During these days at the G20 Interfaith Forum, we have had the benefit of wise advice from former prime ministers about how to go about getting the attention of world leaders. We should follow the advice of my own former prime minister, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, who has suggested that the G20 Interfaith Forum succinctly summarize its major recommendations, have the most important leaders attending the Forum –the dignitaries, the top religious leaders, the former prime ministers, and Dr. Handa, endorse them, and that they be conveyed personally to Prime Minister Abe for presentation and noting at the G20 Summit. Faith actors may then systematically follow up with G20 Leaders in their own countries. In closing, let us be people of hope. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the scale of the challenge, but as people of faith, we are people of *hope*. She then quoted the renowned Irish poet Seamus Heaney, who said:

History says, don't hope on this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime, the longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up, and hope and history rhyme.
So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that further shore is reachable from here.
Believe in miracle and cures and healing wells.

Kim Tran represented the voice of the youth. She said, “I am 18 years old, and I am a school striker as well as a youngster of my generation.” Every single day passing by, the globe is warming, animals are going extinct, and humans are suffering. As every day passes by, we are coming close to the point where human destruction is irreversible. But nothing is being done to reverse this. That is why as every Friday passes by, young people who will not accept this are out - 1.8 million of us - in cities on all continents. Youth are united in solidarity. Our demand is clear. Support for the Paris Agreement and to take climate action seriously is growing. I hope we are loud enough for you to hear. We are already feeling the impact of climate change on everyday lives. The only planet we have was handed to us raped and exploited. We have no other choice but to stand up for our only home. But there is little hope. I want to remind every one of you, that all of us are victims of this climate’s breakdown. The cost of severe weather is painful. Record rains caused landslides that directly threatened our population. This year, we experienced the highest temperature, ever. Scientists say we will face food and water supply shortages, growing heat stroke death, increased communicable disease and natural disasters. Typhoons remind us how fragile we are. The future of Japan can only be foreseen with even more suffering. But if we are going to be below 1.5 degrees, coal needs to be phased out. But how can we do this when new coals plants are being built everywhere - even here in Tokyo Bay? How can we talk about stopping emissions when, since the Paris Agreement was ratified, *more* investment in fossil fuels has continued? If politicians refuse to change because they claim that the transition is ‘too expensive’? Is the price tag still too high when you consider the suffering of your grandchildren? We are thankful for the [Extinction Rebellion](#) and [Fridays for Future](#), but it is not enough. We need to treat this climate crisis as a real crisis. That means unprecedented efforts. And if there is anywhere this needs action is in the G20 countries. They account for most emissions. We have the means to change. We can do better and we must do better. Gathering here are people united with hope to create a better future - people united by faiths. In Japan, we are no stranger to disasters. This country has taught us a valuable lesson: In times of disaster, we face our fear and come together. It was fear that fuelled us to take to the street and take action. This is not the last day we will take to the street. We will not stop. We will keep fighting. And we count on you.

Key Points Made:

- The 2019 Interfaith Forum highlighted the importance of cultivating forgiveness, raising focused questions, and the need to feel the urgency of some questions.
- One effective strategy for communicating to leaders is to create situations where they are directly confronted by victims of the problems.
- Faith leaders need to find ways to ask G20 Leaders to come see some of the faith-based projects.
- We need to find the heart-to-heart things where everyone can be involved in adopting new ways of thinking and engaging with the issues in impactful ways that make a difference.
- The Interfaith Forum needs to assess the structure of how it engages with Prime Ministers so that faith-based contributions can connect to the secular agendas.
- The Interfaith Leaders should emphasize collaboration and cooperation with political leaders based on common interests and our common humanity.
- The Interfaith Forum should consider broadening the strategy beyond involving policy makers in the meetings, to engage the press, involve significant leaders of different religions to make sure it is diverse and inclusive, and attend to how they frame the agenda.
- The Interfaith Forum may want to remain detached from the G20 bureaucratic process to preserve their autonomy.
- As the Interfaith Forum prepares for Saudi Arabia, organizers should embrace a spirit of humility, reflection and self-critique –including consideration of whether the Forum model is the best strategy - for introducing and communicating messages in relation to issues Saudi Arabia chooses for policy makers to discuss in that context.
- Religious leaders must acknowledge the damage to children perpetrated by some faith actors in the violence of child sexual abuse and in sanctioning corporal punishment, and support every effort to safeguard children and enforce child protection laws.
- Religious leaders and agencies should give prophetic voice to world challenges and bringing them to the attention of world leaders.
- Faith actors should systematically follow up with political leaders in their own national contexts following the G20 Interfaith Forum.
- The next generation is counting on current religious leaders to take urgent action on climate.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Leaders treat climate change as a real crisis and make unprecedented efforts to reduce emissions.

CLOSING PLENARY

Description: Haruhisa Handa (Founder/Chairman, Worldwide Support for Development; Patron, G20 Interfaith Forum) made closing remarks as host. Katsuei Hirasawa (Member of House of Representatives of Japan, Former State Minister of the Cabinet Office) reflected on the context in Japan. Chaired by Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace), speakers included Enda Kenny (Former Prime Minister/13th Taoiseach of Ireland; Patron of WSD), Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar (Founding Secretary General, KAICIID), Osama Al Azhari (Inter-Parliamentary Union; Senior Advisor to President El Sisi for Religious and Cultural Affairs), Ján Figel' (Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief Outside the European Union, European Commission; former EU Commissioner on Education). W. Cole Durham Jr. (Founding Director, International Center for Law & Religion Studies) and Katherine Marshall (Executive Director, World Faiths Development Dialogue) discussed the road to recommendations. Closing greetings were offered by Lord Carey of Clifton (103rd Archbishop of Canterbury).

Presentations Overview:

Haruhisa Handa had made multiple introductory comments as host throughout the plenaries. At this closing session, in particular, he offered some summary reminders of who came together to make the Interfaith Forum possible. He made his presentation with distinctive humor and engaging hospitality. He indicated that he would communicate the message from the Interfaith Forum to the Inter-Parliamentary Union which unites the parliaments of the world and serves as a root organization for such activities. He talked about the unique and important role of the Interfaith Forum. There is a meeting in Davos that also looks at politics. The leadership has convened there since the September 11th attacks in the United States (which ignited the meetings). Politics, economics and religion are all interconnected. The MDGs made significant progress, but not all were met. The SDGs extended the timeframe to incorporate a revised set of goals to be fulfilled by 2030. Article 16 is part of the SDGs, and he talked about accessibility to law to be a part of the SDGs. David Cameron was coordinator of making Article 16 part of the SDG agreement. He was happy to have had the former prime ministers as part of this Interfaith Forum. It is so nice to have so many world leaders participating in this symposium. They are very knowledgeable when it comes to immigration, politics and religion. It is important that we continue to single out the findings of this Interfaith Forum. As we achieve each of the 17 SDGs, the world will be better. Everybody has to go beyond the boundaries of the sectors of economy, politics and religion in order to share a common concern to close the various gaps. We cannot be successful if we are sectarian. There is a good portion yet to be resolved regarding religion and belief. We would have to see a political resolution or compromise to identify what to keep, and what to give up, when it comes to religion. If you are stubborn about your own belief, there can be no middle-ground. The process of finding a middle-ground is an act of politics. With 84% of the world's population being affiliated with religion, even though people have complex identities, nevertheless, we cannot ignore religion's touchpoints. Religion goes beyond political and economic barriers. It is all about the goodness for the human race. It is a tight-knit relationship between the SDGs and religion. Each and every one of us is a grassroots activity. Noticing that there are differences, we do realize what we share in common. The commonalities are greater than the differences. Only with such a spirit can we achieve the SDGs. When it comes to political and economic leaders, everyone has to bear in mind our common humanity. The root of human nature and the relationships between the governments, when it comes to religion, religion talks about the human race and the next generation – emphasizing that the children are

important. Taking a holistic approach is important. After reviewing what this event is about, he then introduced the final speakers.

Gunnar Stålsett indicated that we have come to the end of a process of learning about something that is quite unique. But the most unique dynamic is your participation; although you are silent, you are listening with a sense of presence. I hope you have enjoyed these sessions together and that it inspires your work. There is a Jewish philosopher who has reflected on the ethics of proximity – how we understand how we deal with each other when we are face-to-face. The commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ is understood better when we hear it as ‘Thou shalt not kill *me*.’ That means that it is the existential encounter with people - the victims, the suffering, the children of this world in refugee camps, with those who struggle every day to survive – that makes all the difference. They are not theories or systems or economies for us; they are our face-to-face brothers and sisters. We have been here on a topic of peace, people and planet. As a member of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee for many years, the first peace prize that I was part of deciding on was in 1995. That experience has given me an inclusive understanding of peace that is about the quality of life. The prize has expanded my understanding of the quality of peace, the strength of the quality of human beings, the strength of people marginalized in their own context, the importance of people who really interpret to us what pain is all about, what suffering is about, and also what hope is about. We have a large enough understanding of peace to include all aspects of human life including the issue of climate. The issue that has received the most peace prizes is the nuclear issue – based on the hope to stop nuclear armament. In the session this morning which I chaired with the young people, we shifted from the theme of ‘peace, people, and planet’ to ‘facts, future, and faith.’ If we speak about faith, we speak about prayer. Today, on this wonderful day, I hope we would enter into the spirit of listening by St. Francis when he prayed, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.” If we would add that title onto our business cards under your impressive titles, write ‘instrument of peace,’ that is what this has been about. I hope we will all in our consciousness move through this session with a sense of privilege and determination. Japan is one of the few countries that is comfortable with working with the religious groups on the ground, and in Myanmar, they also do this.

Katsuei Hirasawa focused his comments mostly on what we do to protect children. The G20 2019 Interfaith Forum has made efforts to contribute to the peace and happiness of humankind. He talked about a current dispute Japan is having with Russia. From the Japanese perspective, Russia is occupying one of their territories. Going to war with Russia to retrieve their island is strictly prohibited under the existing constitution, so they have begun to discuss the possibility of revising the constitution. The lower house unanimously passed a denouncement resolution. The person making the statement was absent. This kind of denouncement may have exceeded the referendum rights of the nation. It was unfortunate that the person made the statement. Please understand that this was not a Japanese comment – it was an individual’s comment. We also need to revise the law in Japan to accept more people from overseas. Right now, there are many non-Japanese individuals working in Japanese convenience stores and restaurants, but they usually come here as students studying overseas or they come here for vocational training. These individuals’ work is appreciated, but we don’t have any identification guarantee for those with vocational apprenticeship. Non-Japanese individuals work under stressful labor conditions where they are not paid for overtime. A legal framework needs to be established so that people coming from overseas will have status in Japan as part of the workforce. This law, once it is completed, implicates an estimated 25,000 people who will be invited into the Japanese labor force. When people come here to work from overseas, Japanese fear that crime rates will increase, but empirical evidence does not support a correlation between foreign workers and crime. We recently released a worker visa process, and the number of foreign workers has increased from

10 million to 30 million, but crime is actually declining rather than increasing. We are at record lows for criminal cases. Maybe the police will lose their jobs for having nothing to do! We have had solid customs controls, and we have security cameras at entry points. We have good deterrence's in place. Initially, there was opposition saying that security cameras would be an invasion of privacy and a violation of the constitution, but it has been two decades, and the monitoring cameras have not been used as an infringement on privacy. Rather, the cameras have been active deterrents to crime. We want to go for a safe society. Regarding the SDGs, they are difficult to understand. Why don't you make it easier to understand? Our Prime Minister is a core individual, and bureaucrats support the process. We should have a more lucrative and prosperous society that does not leave anyone behind. Generally speaking, most people don't want to understand what the SDGs are. But when you translate this into Japanese society, it needs to be made easier to understand. Extend what we do now, and SDG fulfilment will occur naturally. In terms of how cities are ranked for SDG fulfillment, Kyoto is ranked as number one. Why? Kyoto has been addressing global warming issues, and they have been working on reducing inequality gaps. They created a walkable city that has public transportation and is friendly to people. He discussed other cities and what they have done to be ranked highly for SDG fulfillment for things such as increased bicycle use, public transportation use, linking bicycle and bus transportation locations, etc. The government cannot implement SDGs alone. The business community must be involved. He read a statement from the Foreign Minister regarding issues they are going to address. He talked about using shopping bags to reduce plastic bag waste, and taxing the plastic bags to lessen their use. In sum, the government already has in place the task of implementation of the SDGs. Each municipality will have to compete with one another to advance the SDG targets. Each local region will have different tasks depending on their context. Political leaders will report on the progress they make here in Japan. It is good that we have competition among municipalities here. Aging is happening too quickly in our country. What should we do with the decreasing population? There is a lot of centralization as the population base decreases. In short, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of SDGs for Japan to have sustainable growth for the future.

Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar emphasized the importance of reaching out to policy makers and decision makers to communicate the concerns emanating from the Interfaith Forum. If we don't win the hearts and minds of policy makers, we will have problems over and over again. In KAICIID, we spent seven years talking to ourselves in the beginning until, with the help of the founding states, we started talking to each other. After September 11th, policy makers considered religion to be bad and ugly. I remember that well, since I came from Saudi Arabia. Whenever we talked to people about interreligious dialogue, they would say, 'Stay away from us'. How can we consider 84% of the population to not be our friends? It is not good to consider the silent majority to be criminals when criminal acts are done by criminals. We have to believe that religion is part of the solution, and not the problem. This is our principle now at KAICIID. He agreed with the former prime minister of Ireland when he said that there is a huge gap between religious leaders, institutions, and policy makers. If we don't bridge that gap, it will get worse. The gap is currently getting bigger. In the last few years, extremism related to religion has been complicated by an added factor of extremism related to politics. Unfortunately, this is related to elected officials. We see presidents and MPs getting elected who are saying something that is not very different from others who were saying it in the name of religion. We also have a problem in interfaith business. In our region, we have different priorities than in your region. The East differs from the West. For example, the importance of protecting people – security is more important than anything else in the Middle East. He then greeted everyone including the youth who he considered to be the stars of this event. He then proudly announced that Saudi Arabia will host the G20 next year. He learned from the Saudi authorities that there will be many

activities. He hopes to see most of you there. We have to find a better mechanism for our discussion and recommendations. He expects that this can be done next year. The people of Saudi Arabia are also wanting to bridge and respect everybody inclusive of the religious differences. They want to welcome them as brothers and sisters into the Holy Land which is proud of hosting two holy mosques. We are proud that 1.8 million Muslims come every year to visit the holy mosques. So this, for us, is an honor. It would be even more of an honor if we receive people like you coming from different parts of the world.

Osama Al Azhari made the following presentation:

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful - I am honored to be among you today at this important forum, where we cooperate to achieve the highest good of all mankind.

We, as Muslims, have two courses of action: The first track is the inner discourse in which we reject and break down extremist and terrorist ideology. The second track is to share the world's and humanity's concerns and issues, and to extract from the religion of Islam its true goals and sublime objectives that safeguard life and call for prosperity.

As for the first track, confronting terrorist ideology, I have written a book on the subject, translated into 14 languages, and we started a long path together with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We aimed to coordinate the mechanisms to counter extremism and terrorism and prevent it. A session convened in Geneva and a second meeting was held in Luxor, Egypt. Immediately after this summit, I am headed to Niger for the Coast Nations' parliaments meeting with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations to effectively confront terrorism on the ground.

Regarding the second track, sharing the world's concerns and issues, I am glad that our gathering today is a constructive step on this path. Allow me to very briefly present a number of issues and causes through which I hope to be able to render beneficial participation:

- The first cause: Combating hunger. I had great hopes for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, declared by Mr. Ban Ki-moon. The declaration defined 17 points requiring governments' and states' collaboration, starting with eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. I examined the efforts made by both the World Food Programme and the World Food Council. Then, I dwelled back exploring the culture that I learned as a Muslim in Al-Azhar Mosque. I contemplated the gracious Prophet's Hadith, his sayings and teachings, which shape the scholarly character in Al-Azhar. Prophet Muhammad, PBUH, said: "O people! Feed others, spread greetings, and be kind to your relatives, and pray at night while people sleep; you enter the paradise of your Lord in peace." Prophet Muhammad here is addressing all of humanity, establishing four objectives for the religion of Islam. First, combating hunger; second, spreading peace in the world; third, preserving family ties that bind all people and fulfill the essence of righteousness, and at the very end, come rituals and prayers. We must take these goals beyond individualism and personal actions to the institutional level. We need to forge the institutions through which we cooperate to eradicate all manifestations of hunger in the world. Shame falls on all of us if one person suffers the pain of hunger.
- The second cause: Revival. The *Holy Qur'an* did not restrict its verses to talk about life and its sanctity, but surpassed that to what is much farther and greater, by addressing the concept of revival. The *Holy Qur'an* says "*He who saves but one life, it is as if he had saved the lives of all people.*"²⁹ The proper perception of every sincere Muslim — his or her supreme objective — is to seek to revive all people and to uphold their security.

²⁹ The Qur'anic Arabic Corpus, Verse 5:32

Hence, we begin with confronting and combating all forms of killing, domination, aggression and hatred. We reaffirm and shed light on the truths of religion concerning the love of life and its preservation, expansion of its circles and securing of its requisites. To transport the human being towards ascending revival stages begins with the protection of human life against death and murder, and progresses to reviving humanity by providing the requirements of a decent life, taking us to the ultimate stage of reviving humankind with hope and protecting humans from all forms of sadness and despair.

- The third cause: Prosperity. The *Holy Qur'an* speaks extensively about prosperity, construction, development, crafts and professions, and vehemently forbids corruption and corrupting. The *Holy Qur'an* comprises severe warnings in fifty different places of text against corruption, cautioning against a particularly deviant human model: a well-spoken individual, who appears to be ingenious and convincing, but one who moves only to ruin the earth, destroying crops and offspring. Then the *Holy Qur'an* comments on this magnificent Qur'anic principle saying: "*God does not like corruption.*"³⁰ The *Holy Qur'an* has repeatedly stressed this important concept: "*Do not spoil the earth after its restoration.*"³¹ Hence, we aim to confront and combat all forms of corruption — be it the killing of souls, destruction of plantations and fruits and human deception (giving the example of cheating in measuring or weighing goods), along with other forms of financial and administrative corruption. On the other hand, the *Holy Qur'an* calls continually for honesty, integrity and mastery, and asks humans to avoid cheating and being deceitful, and to be keen on delivering the rights of others.
- The fourth cause: Science, education and the making of civilization. The *Holy Qur'an* spoke in about 700 locations about knowledge and science and its importance, about cherishing education and revering the enlightenment of the mind. The *Qur'an* encouraged the acquiring of different types of science, ordered us to think, reflect, contemplate, reason, seek evidence and proof, urging our minds to have passion for diverse fields of science and knowledge. The *Qur'an* revealed that scientists, scholars and knowledge seekers are the closest of humans to Him. "*Scholars are the most fearful from God.*"³² God asked Prophet Muhammad to pray for himself for more knowledge: "*And Say God further my knowledge.*"³³ The Muslims understood that and excelled for over a thousand years in medicine, astronomy and engineering, building hospitals and astronomy observatories. We aspire to partner with different religions to maximize the value of the various forms of knowledge, to eradicate illiteracy and develop educational systems. We seek to revive the idea of endowments allocated for spending on schools and universities, like we used to have as Muslims over the course of history — a system now adopted at Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge and other universities.
- The fifth issue: Acquaintance of civilizations. Here we face all forms of confrontation and eruption of wars. We devote ourselves to the concept of religious diplomacy. There are many forms of diplomacy, foremost among which is official diplomacy, represented in embassies and foreign ministries. Then, there is another path for diplomacy, at the top of which is the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as well as all other forms of coordination between parliaments of the world and among their legislative bodies to meet the needs of peoples of the world, in a manner appropriate to their special circumstances and cultural context. This synchronization launches legislative coordination to address common threats. The third course of diplomacy is popular diplomacy, represented in

³⁰ Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 205, *Holy Qur'an*

³¹ Surah Al-Baqarah 2, Verse 259, *Holy Qur'an*

³² Surah Al-Baqarah 35, Verse 28, *Holy Qur'an*

³³ Surah Al-Baqarah 20, Verse 114, *Holy Qur'an*

cultural exchange, and the various forms of soft power, including tourism, arts, music and literature. Last but not least, we arrive at the fourth level of diplomacy, religious diplomacy, which we must all work together to reinforce. In this context, we Muslims reject all philosophies that portray the relationship between civilizations, cultures and religions as being in conflict or at war. Quite the opposite, the Qur'anic verse clearly states that God differentiated people, dividing them into nations and tribes for a specific, clear, and useful purpose, namely, mutual acquaintance. We call for knowledge-based interchanges, events, and dialogues, creating religious diplomacy activities and promoting the values of cooperation among peoples.

- The sixth value: Protecting the environment. As Muslims, we believe this is one of the most critical issues that should unite all our efforts, because this challenge not only threatens people's existence today, but also threatens future generations. Here we face all dire forms of wastefulness and aggression against the planet's resources. We must face up to the causes of climate change and forms of pollution, and we must protect the forests. Over and over again, in multitudes of verses, the *Holy Qur'an* depicts gardens of joy, plants, fruits, beauty, sea, clouds, rain and wind. Islamic legislation (*Shari'a*) repeatedly stressed that all of these natural elements are entrusted to the hands of man. I would like here to state a *Hadith* of our Prophet Muhammad, speaking of a mountain in Medina, Saudi Arabia. He said: "This mountain loves us and we love it," and he, PBUH, also said: "If doomsday comes and one of you had in his hands a bush, plant it." The Prophet also spoke of a man who gave water to a thirsty dog, and God forgave this man all of his sins because of this one kind deed. He also told us about a pious woman who tortured a cat and was severely judged by God for it. Numerous other evidences are stated in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, sufficient to firmly establish the environmental protection standpoint, in fact surpassing this to an even loftier and greater perspective of dealing with nature through love.
- The seventh value: Making peace and extinguishing the fires of war and hatred. Islam forbids aggression and domination, and is deeply averse to war. Prophet Muhammad, PBUH, said: "I love the names Abdullah and Abdul Rahman, and I dislike the names Harb (war) and Mourra (bitter)." True Islam has such hatred for war in all its forms that even naming a human being "*Harb*" is rendered ugly and loathed. On the other hand, God has the name: The Peace. Muslims' greeting is "peace be upon you," and our prayers end with the word peace. Paradise in Islam is called "*Dar El Salam*" (the home of peace). If a person is addressed in a manner that he or she detests, Islam orders us to respond by words of peace. Even the word "Islam" itself is derived from the word peace. Thus, the authentic Islam fills the consciousness of the Muslim with the meaning of, and inclination towards, peace in every step he or she takes.
- The eighth value: Honoring the human being. We face and fight all forms of slavery, whether visible or veiled. We exert great efforts to purge public culture from the various manifestations of human enslavement, starting with human trafficking, until we reach swamping people in excessive consumption, utilizing advertising and marketing techniques to drench people in a flood of gluttony for repeated purchases of goods out of desire rather than function.
- The ninth and final cause: Building values. The law is at the lowest threshold of means for preserving the rights of people and preventing oppression. Upholding moral values is far more superior as a base and instigator of preserving the rights of others and respecting their feelings out of love, conviction and self-commitment. We want to reinforce ethical values that call for crafting the human-centered human being; passionate about

knowledge, virtuous and determined; able to face all forms of frustration, depression, aggression and destruction.

There is no doubt that tens of international and local institutions are at work on each of these issues. We need to coordinate the efforts of these institutions and emphasize the unadulterated and authentic religious discourse that grants the intellectual, philosophical and ethical core of these worthy efforts.

In this context, a resolution was adopted by the United Nations to organize a conference in 2022 inviting heads of state, parliaments and religious leaders to come together to discuss these issues. I hope that our Forum here today will serve as preparatory work for the 2022 Summit. Please also allow me to convey the recommendations of this conference to the next meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, to be held in Serbia in October 2019.

In conclusion, I declare that we as Muslims extend our hand and are open to any cooperation with different religions and civilizations for the benefit of humanity, especially with the great Japanese people, whom I hugely admire and esteem. As a Muslim, I admire the majestic and noble values of the Japanese people, and as an Egyptian, I respect the ancient and grand Japanese civilization. This aspect entwines us Egyptians with the Japanese people as long-time brothers, ancient nations owning a history and civilization that extends over thousands of years.

I extend special thanks to Dr. Haruhisa Handa for all his generous efforts, and especially for contributing his vision to establishing and developing the Peace and Security Programme of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He contributed to initiating the first agreement between the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC). We thank him for his gracious vision that has granted us the basis on which we are building many programmes of action that aim to benefit all of humanity. Thank you very much.

Ján Figel' emphasized how the G20 Interfaith Forum is growing in quality as well as quantity. Since Australia, this is the 6th iteration; it will increasingly turn into a strong community of those who make a difference for a better and more humane 21st Century. This is possible. This is our responsibility. This is our opportunity as well. What happened these past two days leads me to share many important messages. The top priority of many recommendations is education as the most influential tool for changing persons and society. We can speak about different micro/macro policies, but education is the most influential. Two objectives are important regarding education: access and quality (relevance). All people should have access to education, including refugee children. Education should also be relevant to the time in which we live. Everyone has a smart phone, but so do terrorists. And criminals are clever with digital technologies. What we need is smart people with smart phones who are educated to live and exist together in diversity. Diversity is growing because of migration. We need religious literacy to understand our differences and commonalities. Those who abuse religion cannot understand what is going on in the world today. If we don't understand, how can we help? How can diplomats help if they are not educated and trained to live with religious diversity? These are lessons from history which is the best teacher. We can have small classes, the best technologies, and lifelong learning that is pupil centered, but what is the most important is having a good teacher. So, we need to invest in good teachers. Paradoxically, we speak more, and do less. In 2016, the SDGs were adopted for 2030 fulfillment. At the same time as these commitments, we also had genocide in Syria and Iraq. On one hand, we promise great achievements, and on the other hand, we neglect mass atrocities that are going on right now. The atrocities are broadcasted, not hidden. This is a failure and an abandonment of our commitments. A

commitment after WWII was ‘human rights for all’ and the world came together in 1948 to say ‘never again’ to the Holocaust. The reality was genocides occurring again and again – and yet there was Rwanda, Cambodia, and the Rohingya. How come? We have to change that. How can we speak about the three P’s (people, planet, and peace), if we don’t care about the other P’s (prevention, protection, and punishment)? We need to prevent wars, protect victims, and punish criminals. It is important to remember that if we don’t do what we promise, why do we have such gatherings? Why write declarations and papers? This is our responsibility. In the 20th Century, Europe was a source of a lot of inhumanities. We learned. There are 19 countries in the G20 and the European Union market. That is why I am here. We changed something. We learned. One of the founders of the European community once said, ‘I am neither an optimist nor a pessimist; I am committed and determined.’ Development is another name for peace. Sustainable development is lasting peace. Peace involves justice and human rights for everyone. A foundational principle of all human rights is human dignity - dignity which speaks of equality. We have dignity because we have rights and duties. If you read the UN Declaration, there are only two duties and if you respect the duties, we can enjoy many rights. First is the duty to behave with a spirit of brotherhood, one to another. The second is duty to the community we live in, starting with the family. I mention this because religious leaders and FBOs should understand and promote human dignity as front runners. You provide a moral compass. You have prophetic voices that should show that brotherhood is possible in daily life, and not just at festivals. Brotherhood is possible in difficulties. Religious freedom is coupled with religious responsibility. Freedom will not last or deliver without responsibility. As we promote corporate social responsibility we should promote religious responsibility. We cannot fulfill the SDGs by 2030 without working together. Political leaders should have a clear priority of security and justice for people. These priorities are not replaceable by other priorities. Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. Justice delayed is justice denied. Consistency and credibility is meaningful for developing trust. We have to respect the rules, and honor the commitments that have been made. Fight corruption. Respect international law. Ego is the enemy. Ego destroys family, business, companies, sports teams, political parties - because ego is not compatible with a team spirit of mutuality. Ego is the source of xenophobia, nationalism, and ‘my interests first’. Language can be adapted, but ego is there. What we need, and what we miss, is the emphasis on the common good. Win-win strategies is the best way to move forward. Ignorance, indifference, and fear are three allies that destroy. If we don’t know, don’t care, or are afraid to say something or raise our voices on behalf of the voiceless, then evil grows. Goodness also needs allies: Education, responsible acting and courage. The same courage that you see here. A few points on the freedom of religion or belief. The human dignity of each person starts with freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and the freedom to believe/not believe/or change. If freedom of thought, conscience or religion is not respected, then freedom of association or expression will not be respected as well. I lived half of my life in communist Czechoslovakia. My uncle disappeared by secret services. Freedom of religion is an issue of life and death. Many people mention the Pew data finding of 84% of the world’s population having religious affiliations. But 73% live in countries with high obstacles for their freedom of religion. This means intolerance, discrimination, or persecution. In some contexts, it is at the level of genocide. These are worsening trends. The negative news requires a religious climate change to accompany our efforts to address climate change. We need a religious climate change for people living today and tomorrow. With the North Koreans, you can discuss disarmament, security, and food delivery, but you cannot discuss the hundreds of thousands that are in prison. I conclude by saying that learning from the 20th Century that was characterized by totalitarianism, wars and genocides, the 21st Century can be either business-as-usual, or a time of hope. This is our task. This is not theory. We are all different in identity, but equal in dignity. Equal dignity is a principle of morals

and ethics. Equal citizenship is a principle of politics. These two are linked. Firstly, *when we claim equal dignity, we should work for equal citizenship for all*. This is a must for a more humane 21st Century. This must be a message to all leaders. Secondly, *we need to promote dialogues, not monologues*. We get synergy and added value. Thirdly, *cooperation instead of unilateralism*. We need to promote the common good instead of individualism, forced collectivism, or old-fashioned balance of powers.

Haruhisa Handa referred to the various discussions around, for example, Muslim learnings about elements and values in Islamic teaching that challenge the first impression that all teachings are related to terrorism. In Japan, we practice Shintoism. It is similar to Jewish teachings in many ways. The blessing of God appears in this world, not after death. It talks about the blessing being given to the existing house as prosperity. Shintoism offers blessing on the professions and blessing on the household. Noble people tend to think of life after death. If you think of the Japan-China relationship in the 11th Century, the noble people usually visited all different shrines while alive, but when they passed away, they prayed to Buddhism; they were very practical. Judaism and Shintoism are a lot alike. We have an affinity. Holy people tend to also be business people and promote sports. This co-existence is present in myself who is both a religious and a business person. The original meaning of Shintoism forbids us from being antisocial. Japanese are extremely peaceful people. There is also the thought related to the seven gods in a boat. Three of the gods are Indian, and the others are Chinese, except one that is Japanese. There is a female god; as long as we get along, we don't worry about the gods' identities - as long as they bring happiness. 15,000 years ago, we had a history and story related to that history even though we have no doctrine or holy book such as the *Qur'an* or *Holy Bible*. Shintoism originated from Buddhism and contains some elements from Confucianism. We are practical, and so the blessing is all about having prosperous families and community success. The biggest difference between Judaism and Shintoism is that Judaism says there is only one god. Shintoism has multiple gods. We try to include all in one; we are not trying to completely get rid of the idea of believing in one god. In Christianity, there is one god who is almighty. So Japan thinks maybe it is a good idea to get closer. So, I support a Lutheran school. I also support an Anglican hospital. I am a generous person. Shintoism is not animism. God does not exist in a mountain or in the ocean. We select a certain holy mountain, and the rest can be used for cultivation. We believe there is a spirit in the mountains, but there is a specific mountain. So Shintoism can integrate hydro-technologies, as well as honor the custom that goes back 15,000 years. We are able to be friends to people of other religions. We have the teaching and the ceremonial aspects of religion. There is a deep ecology aspect, as well. We have an international Shinto organization at the UN. The deep ecology thinking of Shinto promotes many messages regarding sustainability. When we think of the future sustainability of the planet, the possibility of Indigenous religions can be very important.

W. Cole Durham Jr. talked about the approach taken by the Forum. You can have a final document, and spend most of the conference correcting that document, or you can share ideas as a rich buffet. We have done the latter. That means we are not going to read a final document at this point, but we hope you will have continued confidence in us as organizers to convey the rich ideas that have been brought forward. We anticipate having a short set of recommendations that can be given to Dr. Honda to pass on to the Prime Minister which is one way to close the gap between ideas here and the G20. We have taken notes on all the sessions. We hope to have something like what we had last year – a short document backed by the policy briefs. It is important that the effectiveness of what we do here is not just what goes to the G20 Leaders, but that it also help us find other ways to close the gaps. Once we finalize these ideas and have them

on the website in the next day or two, we are looking for and finding ways to move forward. We look to continue the process next year in Saudi Arabia who will host the 2020 G20.

Katherine Marshall said this has been a remarkable partnership. We have advice that if you are going to come to something like the G20 Summit, don't come with 100 recommendations. Come with ideas that we can be framed into a short, two-page document that is a distillation of some of the work that will go to those leaders. We have at least 100 recommendations and ideas, and we have a sense of areas where there really is need for further work. These are the areas we plan and there will be more discussion over the next hours to include as the five points: They reflect the themes of this forum and some others issues.

- Peacebuilding - addressing the deep misunderstandings between religion and conflict and religion and peace. It has profound implications of failure to include religious voices in peace processes. The religionization of politics and the securitization of development. The military is often playing greater roles in development roles than others. Our aim is to draw some pithy recommendations to frame a short piece. Each areas has had extensive discussion and analysis among the network present here. KACIID, Religions for Peace, and the UN have all been working hard on extremism, violence, conflict and peacebuilding.
- Children - the anniversary of the convention on the rights of the child should have a spotlight on children. It would be a terrible loss if there was not a concerted focus on doing something about the children who face conflict, displacement and part of the migration situation. Remarkable work by religiously linked institutions on these topics.
- The Rainforest Initiative - a critical issue for planet and one where there is a robust serious exciting set of ideas and recommendations that we can go to the G20 and say you are missing it if you don't act on this.
- The Rule of Law and Revival of Human Rights, Freedom of Religion and Belief - the set of issues around guaranteeing people security which is the foundation of hope. There are things the G20 can do to highlight and point them out. Highlight the fight against corruption. Missing this opportunity
- Trafficking and Modern Slavery - the need to act forcefully. It is a sin and a horror and should be prominently on the agenda.

We will also be look at aging, refugees, and other areas to put forward recommendations. As we look toward 2020, an area emphasized here is to prioritize quality, meaningful education. It has had the least focus among secular communities on the religious element. Various reasons having to do with this includes a fear of the role of religion in education ranging from religious literacy to childhood development to reaching marginal groups. It is my personal commitment to work on that issue. The second one that will be prominent in the 2020 Global Agenda, and hopefully in the G20 agenda, is the role of women. There are many anniversaries coming and it should be high on the agenda. Thinking of the strengths and challenges is worth at least a year of dialogue if not more.

Lord Carey of Clifton referred to the Christian calendar celebration of Pentecost as an international gathering where God poured his spirit on them all and then said, 'Now go out and do something about it' as a closing emphasis on *diap Praxis*. He referred to the story of Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, who gave a great invention as a gift to the world even though he was not much of a businessman. He phoned a friend and eventually, Steve said to John, 'Do you want to carry on selling sugary water, or come with me and change the world?' It is no exaggeration to say that our task is not to sell iPhones or iPads, but it *is* to change the face of the world for the better.

Over the past 24 hours, three mottos have arisen: “Just do it,” “never give up,” and “Be the difference.” I want to leave you with this. Let anger motivate us to get cross about things. Let’s go out and tell the message in the streets.

Key Points Made:

- Haruhisa Handa promised to communicate Interfaith Forum recommendations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- Strategies that support existential encounters between leaders and others - the victims, the suffering, children in refugee camps, people who struggle every day to survive – can be effective.
- Saudi Arabia will host the G20 next year, they are eager to embrace religious differences, and they are interested in developing a better mechanism for bridging dialogue between religious leaders and leaders of G20 governments.
- Muslims are engaged in an inner discourse of rejecting and breaking down extremist and terrorist ideologies, and a discourse of sharing the world’s and humanity’s concerns and issues, and extracting from the religion of Islam goals and objectives that safeguard life and call for prosperity.
- A case can be made within Islam in support of combating hunger, reviving humankind with hope, promoting prosperity, development of educational systems, development of diplomatic paths between civilizations, environmental protection, peacemaking, the honoring of humans and value building.
- The Interfaith Forum should promote educational access and quality as a top priority and influential tool for changing persons and society.
- The Interfaith Forum cannot implement recommendations related to people, planet, and peace, if we don’t attend to preventing wars, protecting victims, and punishing criminals.
- Religious freedom is coupled with religious responsibility, so religious leaders should promote religious responsibility along with corporate social responsibility.
- When religious leaders claim equal dignity, they should work for equal citizenship for all, they should promote dialogues rather than monologues, and they should promote cooperation for the common good instead of unilateralism based on individualism, forced collectivism, or an outmoded balance of powers.
- The 2019 Interfaith Forum will develop a short set of recommendations to be given to Dr. Honda to pass on to the Prime Minister that will be backed up by a set of policy briefs; a full report will be made available that includes notes on all of the sessions.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 Governments address the deep misunderstandings between religion and conflict and religion and peace.
- That the G20 Governments spotlight the needs of children in recognition of the anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- That the G20 Governments respond to recommendations made by The Rainforest Initiative.
- That G20 Governments take action to strengthen the rule of law and revive human rights and protections for freedom of religion and belief to guarantee security and provide a foundation of hope for people.
- That G20 Governments act forcefully to stop human trafficking and slavery, and place the issue prominently on the 2020 agenda.

PEACE WORKING SESSIONS

FROM VILE TO VIOLENCE: FREEDOM OF RELIGION & BELIEF & PEACEBUILDING

Description: Addressing violence, especially when it is framed expressly in the name of religion, and its many dire consequences, is an imperative interreligious and inter-sectoral concern. Preventing violence while protecting the fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief (however disturbing, or “vile” its forms) has critical importance in cultivating just and peaceful societies. This session explored specifically how efforts to promote freedom of religion and belief could feature more prominently on the G20 Leaders’ agenda. Links include the polarized extremes of conflicts linked to religious differences, the rise of populism that can link to religious norms and institutions, and violent extremists who use religious claims to tear societies apart. The session explored creative leadership, religious and secular, to protect those who face discrimination and violence. The session’s aim was to gather insights on rebuilding societies, communities, and families devastated by conflict and violence and to link peacebuilding goals to the human right to freedom of religion and belief. W. Cole Durham Jr. (Founding Director, International Center for Law & Religion Studies) chaired the panel whose theme was focused on addressing root causes of violence linked to religious identities. Speakers were Elizabeta Kitanović (Executive Secretary for Human Rights & Communications, Conference of European Churches), Abou Zeid (Senior Judge, Family Court of Saida [Sidon] in Lebanon), Kazuo Takahashi (president, Liberal Arts 21; Advisor at the Library of Alexandria), Liviu Olteanu (Secretary General, International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty), and Hisae Nakanishi (Global Studies, Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions, Doshisha University, Kyoto).

Presentations Overview:

W. Cole Durham Jr. introduced various speakers outlining how the history of the G20 Interfaith Forums has made clear that there is a two-step analysis: religion is important to achievement of many of the policy goals being considered, and that freedom of religion or belief is important to enable people to be able to do those things. This parallel session is an anchor session that addresses the conditions that enable many of the other things to occur. After opening statements, Cole highlighted that there are some global shifts. He asked panelists to elaborate on the changes each of them sees in the global setting for religious freedom, in particular, as a universal that protects particulars. He asked panelists questions such as, ‘How does this fit into the civilizational change you each talk about?’ He talked about the importance of *diapaxis* for building community. If you are in the forest working together, for example, you learn some things about one another regardless to your relationship to nature. He asked panelists to consider ways of working together that add the dimension of awe to nature. He highlighted how religious freedom is a powerful filtering mechanism for separating out the vile in a way that protects the rest. But, what is vile to one, may not be vile to another. This may go to the level of civilization and civilizational change. At the time that the UN Declaration was made, it brought people from various human viewpoints together. The emphasis upon dignity brought people together in a way that lifted people’s views away from the vile.

Elizabeta Kitanović showed two short videos. The first was filmed this year and involved a woman being hit by a religious leader on the street. The second video was from 2004, and showed a man attempting to take the cross off a historic church site in Kosovo. Events like the ones in the videos are why we must discuss religious freedoms - to ensure that these things never

happen again. She then raised the question: Why is there so much violence linked to religion if there is a UN general consensus that freedom of religion is a human right? Some of the answers can be found in the current protections, or lack thereof, of religious minorities. While there are many legal protections on paper for these groups, it is missing on the ground. These religious minorities face many challenges, including discrimination, exclusion, and in some cases even failure to gain these legal protections. Moreover, in cases where there is a strong historic bond between a specific religion and the state, minorities are often perceived as disloyal citizens. Often governments use religious minorities to manipulate citizens in ways that stir up distrust and capitalize on perceived differences between groups. Because of this dynamic, social space needs to be created where religious minorities to flourish. While laws and articles have been created to tackle these issues affecting religious minorities, we need to combat religious prejudices that still exist in society writ large in order to reduce social hostilities. There has been a rise in attacks against religious minorities, and behind some of that is hatred on religious grounds. While the Conference of European Churches is convinced that minorities bring an added-value to societies, sometimes governments do not see that, but treat them as a threat to national security. A second point is that religious minorities can be very easily used for political purposes in stirring up one community against another. Quite often, state officials lack religious literacy and have not yet developed a deeper understanding of the benefits that can spring from creating space for religious minorities to flourish. A third point is that laws that are discriminatory towards religious and ethnic minorities must be corrected. Efforts are underway to change laws that are discriminatory towards religious and ethnic minorities in some European contexts. The violence associated with religion can be persecutions of religious and ethnic minorities in the form of public executions, rape, abductions, enslavement of young girls and women, brutal violence against children, forced recruitment of children, migrants and refugees. Unfortunately, today there is a rise of attacks that target religious minorities and people, in general, because of their religion or belief. This includes incidents as shown in the video of demolition of the worship places and holy sites. Behind all of that is hatred on religious grounds which is transformed into incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. Any sort of hatred means absence of the respect of human dignity. In the Universal Declaration, Article 1 says that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” Therefore, coming from Brussels and the European Union, and being a member of the G20 Interfaith Forum, we can recommend a good proposal to improve the situation on the ground for millions of people who are under attack due to their religion or belief.

Mohamad Abou Zeid spoke as an Imam coming from Muslim faith tradition. The *Qur'an* talks about Abraham taking his child, Ishmael, to the wilderness. He prayed to God saying, “*Our lord, I have settled my descendants in an uncultivated valley near your sacred house, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So, make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful.*”³⁴ In this verse, we can find an empty place where the human civilization is about to start and where there is nothing except Abraham, Haggai and Ishmael. How can civilization start? Prayer and faith are fundamental and foundational to civilization. People with good and tender loving hearts create a community – people who have love and care for one another and want to live with each other. Then the resources follow. These are the three fundamentals of civilization. Unfortunately, these three undo civilization when religion is misused to encourage people to hate one another to incite violence. When people, instead of having loving hearts, become animals, then resources are used selfishly because of greed. What started as the fundamentals for building civilization become the

³⁴ Surah Ibrahim 14, Verse 37, *Holy Qur'an*

main threat for civilization. He reflected on his experience in Lebanon which is a neighboring country to Syria. Even after independence, the Syrian influence continued. Over the past 800 years, most of the Syrian religious discourse has promoted violence, hatred and disharmony. In his studies he could only identify two promoters of peaceful discourse.³⁵ The emphasis on violence may have been a reaction to repeated invasions by religious ‘others.’ Even so, the important question to ask is: Who *interprets* religion? Is the divine and holy text self-evident, or is it the man who made the commentary and analysis for the text? He is convinced that religion is not the same as God. Holy book scripts and divine teachings may be the main thing, but religion is also man who interprets the teachings. If we can find an uncorrupted person who has a loving and caring heart who is open to the other, he can understand God and the scripts better so that religion may be interpreted in a positive and peaceful way. If we are having scholars with agendas, they will introduce God as a god of hatred and make certain selections to present religion as one that promotes violence. It is not religion, it is man misusing religion. Man can make religion part of the problem, but man can also make religion as part of the solution. Forgiveness can be a starting point, but you cannot forgive or love someone who you do not know. We need to begin by knowing each other. In our holy book, we have an important verse where God speaks to all mankind, ‘*I made all of you into tribes, groups and nations. I want you to come and know each other.*’³⁶ Ignorance can cause hatred, fear and insecurity. If I come to know you, I can start to love, cooperate with, and forgive the one I have come to know. Bringing people together is the starting point. In Islamic stories, there were people who used to meet the Prophet. It only took one meeting to change the picture of the other they had in their mind. Good deeds can work, but knowing each other is a starting point. He mentioned, for example, how *jihad* accurately means exerting effort. The concept has been hijacked and used to promote violence. We cannot compare this modern form of hatred to the crusades because the crusades had the support of political and religious leaders. Now, the violence is rejected by the religious leaders.

Kazuo Takahashi spoke from his experience of addressing global issues. He said that we live during a rare time of civilizational change. The first global civilization of the past two and half centuries now shows increasing signs of its end which initially was discussed by Western intellectuals such as Spengler and Toynbee at the beginning of the 20th Century. It has been based on individualism and universalism, promoting such values and institutions as democracy, freedom, human rights, rule of law, secular government and market economy, and expanding the nation-states system globally. It has been the Western civilization which has been globalized by Pax Britannica followed by Pax Americana. While most of the values and institutions that have been promoted by the West have been well received by non-Western opinion leaders, their bases have been questioned by increasing number of them in recent decades. Individualism has come to be questioned as something that is easily twisted into egoism. At the same time persons are understood by most non-Westerners as those who grow only through relations between them. People are understood as communal beings. Therefore, values beyond individualism are central for those non-Westerners. While avoiding grand theories such as communism or fascism, importance of a community is highlighted by them. Universalism is also questioned by increasing number of non-Westerners. Their long traditions and highly cultivated cultures simply do not accept the idea of universalism which justifies Western dominance. Cultural diversity is understood by them as a fact. Values beyond individualism and emphasis on diversity have begun to cast some skeptical glance at democracy, human rights, and other traditional Western

³⁵ See *From the Heart of the Syrian Crisis: A Report on Islamic Discourse between a Culture of War and the Establishment of a Culture of Peace*. Adyan, 2015.

³⁶ Surah Al-Hujarat 49, Verse 18, *Holy Qur'an*

values. This trend was promoted by economic ascendance of Asian economies in the course of the 1970s and the 1980s. With the end of the Cold War, the lack of political authority in the former Socialist camp combined with renewed discovery of cultural diversity enhanced traditional group identity, such as ethnicity. Civil wars broke out mainly along the lines of cultural divides in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, spreading south-ward to include the Middle East and Africa. The 1990s were characterized by the crash of civilizations. The most basic factors of cultures being religions and languages, religions at that time were identified as a major root cause of conflicts. The unipolar world around the United States began to shift towards a multi-polar world. The ascendance of China has brought about a world of hegemonic battle between the United States and China, a world where plural value systems compete with each other. Diversity of values is becoming a common ground where voices of non-Western values are becoming louder. As Umberto Eco suggests, the contemporaries do not understand where they stand historically. While mindful of his wisdom, I would venture to characterize the current historical situation as a rare time of civilizational change, a change on the verge of the birth of the second generation of a global civilization. The question of peace and conflict has to be considered against the background of this change, a change from the Clash of Civilization's world (Huntington's thesis) to a new world. A religion does not have to be a root cause of conflict, if we treat a religious war from the viewpoint of a long history, culture, and the mother earth, factors that will become integral parts of a new global civilization. Violent crashes of sectarian battles characterized the period of Huntington's clash of civilization's world of the 1990s. It was assumed that the religious conflicts were the most difficult wars due to the fact that they were not amenable to compromises. Indeed, these battles proved to be vicious and out of control, rejecting any attempt at peacebuilding at the time when these battles were at the center of the crashes of civilizations. However, history proceeded to a next stage as these battles raged toward the end of the 1990s, a new stage, upon reflection, which was a start of a new global civilization. In January 1999, a few young people started a fight at a city plaza of Ambon, the capital city of the province of Maluku, Indonesia, a typical quarrel of youngsters in a normal situation. However, with the departure of President Suharto who ruled the country over three decades, the unstable Indonesian society was easily affected by the prevailing global atmosphere of sectarian crashes. While the province of Maluku was characterized by peaceful co-habitation between Muslims and Christians, this little fight immediately spread over the city which was 60% Christians and 40% Muslims, and engulfed the whole vast region of Maluku. Some of the whole villages were burnt down and villagers were molested. The mutual reprisals continued into early years of the 21st Century. After the initial period of humanitarian rescue operations, the difficult phase of peacebuilding began. In a number of cases, the failure of this critical phase led the fragile peace to renewed violence. In the case of Maluku, however, a series of peacebuilding projects brought about traditional co-habitation between Muslims and Christians. Most of these successful cases were reforestation projects jointly implemented by Muslims and Christians, organized by NGOs some of which were established by faculty members of the sociology department of the University of Indonesia as reported to the Symposium which was held at the United Nations University in 2004, a meeting which was organized by me. The discussion at this symposium and at a subsequent session at the University of Indonesia led me to formulate a hypothesis which requires a proof, which, however, is likely to be true. It is as follows. As Aldous Huxley says, the essence of religion is the sense of awe in the face of immensities of Nature. The critically important part of Nature in the Maluku region is the amazing environment of tropical forests which must have been integrated in the mind and heart of the people of Maluku. From way before the arrival of Islam and Christianity, tropical forests may have become an integral part of religious feeling for them. By jointly reforesting, Muslims and Christians may well have discovered a comfortable bondage around the tropical forests, overcoming the agonies

of recent battles. In fact, the sectarian battles at the turn of the century, spread over the vast region of Maluku, has not seen any revival of conflicts unlike other parts of the world. The importance of Indigenous culture where nature plays a critical role over exogenous factors has begun to be felt invisibly around the world from the beginning of the 21st Century. Even in the field of religion, cultural diversity has become a critical factor. In the field of peacebuilding where sectarian battles are generally considered as an impossibly difficult endeavor, attempts at discovering historical roots of the religious feelings may offer practical solutions. Universalism which characterized the first global civilization is giving way to cultural diversity which is becoming a dominant feature in the new global civilization in the offing. The question of freedom of religion which has gone through different challenges throughout history has to be answered in yet another context. Democracy has been the best guarantor of both peace and the freedom of religion and has been supported powerfully by the market economy. However, the inter-action between the two has come to reveal contradictions of democracy and of market economy as well as mutual undermining between the two. Peace and religious freedom rest on a fragile ground, a ground on which the global civilization of the West has flourished. Democracy requires a number of prerequisites for a successful operation. Critically important factors are capable leadership and active civic organizations linked closely with dynamic local governments. History makes it clear that a first class leader is best trained in a major war. The most important contribution which can be made by democracy is to avoid war. In fact, predominance of democracy in the latter half of the 20th Century in the form of the political West succeeded in avoiding a major war and in maintaining a precarious peace characterized as a cold war. The lack of a capable political leader around the world for the past well over half a century comes from the success in achieving the primary objective of democracy. Emergence of populism in multi-party democracies comes partly from the success of democracy, resulting in the absence of a first class leader anywhere in the world. The market economy has flourished under democracy which has provided a political support to initiatives of individuals, a system which has been criticized by a number of political economists, starting from Marx on down from the 19th Century. Acceleration of the market operation from the end of the cold war, described as globalization, has promoted global economic growth at an unprecedented pace. The traditional break to this trend in liberal democracies, socialist parties, was weakened considerably in the course of the 1990s. Fast pace of globalization has expanded politico-economic space of freedom in liberal democracies. However, resulting expansion of the gap between the rich and the poor has brought about grave consequences politically and economically. The manufacturing sector in the industrialized economies have moved out to where cheaper labors are available in an unprecedented pace and the service sector has been changing in a drastic manner. The middle class has shrunk considerably and the remaining part feels insecure. These are the people who traditionally have been the backbone of civic activities and local governments. Liberal democracies have been truncated by the shrinkage of the middle class. The increasing sense of insecurity felt by the remaining middle class in most of the liberal democracies is similar to the psychological situation of Germany at the beginning of the 1920s, which was characterized as “escape from freedom” by E. Fromm. Globalization has brought about massive escape from freedom in liberal democracies at large, promoting populist movements. Increasing powers of populism has made it difficult to maintain fiscal disciplines which have been the political basis of the efficiency of globalization. The shrinkage of the middle class has been diminishing the purchasing power of the major consumers, resulting in prevailing low growth rates in industrial economies. The weak economic growth promotes xenophobia, strengthening political hands of right-wing political movements. Marriage between populism and xenophobia results from the combination between liberal democracies and rapid globalization of market economy. The lack of capable political leaders, resulting from the success of democracies in avoiding major wars,

makes it extremely difficult for the world community to find ways to turn around from this vicious cycle. The contradictions of democracies and market economy have been undermining the credibility of the first global civilization significantly. It is time for opinion leaders and those who are in the position of influencing political courses to get out the box and discuss the immediate issues before us from a long historical perspective. Because we are already at the threshold of a civilizational change. At a rare time of civilizational change, integrating major elements of a new civilization to come in the process of addressing the current serious problems can provide us with a political space of creative solutions to them which were thought of as being insoluble, like in the case of Maluku region of Indonesia. On the contrary, sticking to traditional thinking in trying to find solutions to contradictions inherent to the existing civilization leads us to nowhere, like in the case of combined contradictions of democracy and market economy. Inter-faith dialogue at the time of civilizational change has unprecedented importance simply because religion and belief are central to the formation of any civilization. Religious extremism as the major source of international terrorism and the question of religious freedom have to be examined from the viewpoint of cultural diversity and values beyond individualism. Only by recasting the relevant issues in the light of a new civilization, inter-faith dialogue can lead political leaders in addressing the major issues of the time, including long time issues such as environmental challenges. Rather than providing concrete policy ideas for them, it is essential for religious leaders to lead them by showing them a useful example of inter-faith dialogue characterizing it as a critically important endeavor to lay a ground for a new global civilization.

Liviu Olteanu identified rights, liberties and values that belong to the patrimony of humanity. The world today is different and plural: a world of religion, tradition and culture; a world with ‘rule of leader’ and dictatorship, and a world with ‘rule of law’ and democracy; a world with surveillance, crimes, discrimination and lack of respect, and also a world with human rights, fundamental freedoms and good practices. Fundamental freedoms include those rights and freedoms considered essential to the functioning of a democracy: freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, etc. or based on Roosevelt’s structure: freedom of expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. We have to foster the protection of fundamental freedoms based on *human dignity* and respect for differences; we are encouraged to know the philosophical principles and historical events that shaped the current views and world order and, if is necessary, to know how to correct them. We must focus and foster on the UN declarations and international legislation and doing everything for the best of every human being. To avoid a mutual undermining of the authority of human rights standards, we have to know one another better, not forgetting the source and fundament of it that is *inherent dignity* of every person. Also is needed is a critical defense of universal human rights in a way that gives room for different cultural and religious interpretations. For all concerned issues that have to be debated is necessary to focus on the most important actors that must work together; by protecting and fostering human rights and fundamental freedoms, we support peace and respect for human dignity of every person. He spoke about how *historical events* can influence and shape people’s understanding and influence the creation of new approaches and *public policies*. For example, having observed the old Stalinism as a child, he now has the perspective of human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and human dignity. European revival of extremist parties supports populism against refugees, migrants and religious minorities etc. Europe and our world, day by day, are attacked or manipulated, by national extremism and terrorism that affect global ‘order’, legislation and practical life of the people from every country and continent.

The Dialogue Five (D5) framework was created as an international pattern on the new paradigm for defending and promoting human rights in relation to freedom of religion or belief with a focus on peace, security and development. Different entities such as the UN, the Council

of Europe, the EU, the OIC, different national or/and religions approaches are ‘worlds’ of their own. And for it we need *coordination*, to avoid a mutual undermining of the authority of human rights standards and for that reason we have to know each other better, to be aware of what’s happening at different levels of every institution/organization. The D5 approach helps to avoid damage, risky situations or a loss of authority because one institution/organization could be played off against other institutions; by joining together all actors, the D5 contribute to learn from one other how mutually support and reinforce one another rather than possibly undermine it without even knowing what we are doing.

Dialogue Five project brings together: 1. Diplomats, 2. Politicians, 3. Scholars, 4. Religious leaders, 5. Civil society and others (NGOs, media, business) with the objective of developing a space for collaboration and coordination with representatives from three different levels: a) national, b) regional and c) international. At national level, diplomats and politicians representing some of the most influential Ministries must participate together: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, others; the representatives of these ministries have to work together with religious leaders, academics and civil society and other representatives. On a regional level it is important to participate in every debate on the issues concerned such as: religion, freedom of religion, discrimination, violence in the name of religion, extremism, terrorism, genocide, populism... that can influence peace and security; the main regional human rights organizations that have an important expertise and interest in this arena are the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organizations for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the African Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, etc. At the international level, the United Nations must be referred to as the main Actor/Arbiter and coordinator of all other actors concerned with worldwide issues. There is an urgent need for education and training of religious leaders regarding interreligious dialogue, tolerance and respect of other religious and faiths; also is a special need on training of other actors and policymakers (parliaments members, ministers, officials); the purpose of the D5 paradigm being is the coordination of all these actors on all specific and concerned issues of our times. This Plan of Action based on D5 being developed here will be guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 16 and 17, which reference partnership and institution-building, and also SDG5 on achieving gender equality. He worked with H.E. Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General, and Special Adviser of the UN Secretary- General on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to co-organize two summits: the First Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security and Second Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security. These two summits and three international conferences were based on the ‘Dialogue Five’ (D5) framework. The main objective of the Second Global Summit was to establish an International Platform on Religion, Peace and Security, aimed at connecting various relevant stakeholders, as well as enhancing their cooperation on matters related to peace, development, security, human rights and religion, but concretely on the situation of religious minorities, migrants and refugees in polarized contexts (rising populism, illiberalism and ultra-nationalism). Several G20 recommendations came out of this process that are listed below. Their group committed to promote and coordinate inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogues and conferences, fostering a civil public arena with room for a wide variety of voices and opinions as a ground of exchanges and knowing other’s religions and cultures by constructive discussions on how to practice respect, fostering peace and living with differences. Their platform also committed to cooperate with the G20, the G7, the Alliance of Civilizations, the Security Council, the UNESCO, other regional organizations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the African Union, the OIC, etc., all Member States and other partners on exchanges and education/training of all actors, regarding *prevention* of hate speech, violence, discrimination, conflicts, genocide and wars.

Hisae Nakanishi made two points: 1) all religions affirm forgiveness, and 2) many pursue peace and reconciliation through the driving concept of forgiveness. You cannot resolve conflict without forgiveness. But religion is a double-edged sword. All major religions also have existential threat mechanisms which can be used to mobilize people against others who do not share their faith (e.g., crusades, jihad). When governments fail to satisfy the needs of citizens, the subsequent loss of confidence in the state weakens national civic identity. A vacuum surfaces when the nationalist project and the ideologies supported by the institution of governance fails. The people need somewhere to go and that place is to religious identities. A distinction should be made between the hearers and others who are involved in the social distribution of power in the context of the declining state. The global economic system assists the empowerment of populism as a third mechanism for economic survival. The problem is that populist religious leaders do not speak of forgiveness, and the religious divide flourishes. This dynamic is prevailing in the developed as well as the developing world. In the context of Afghanistan, where she has experience, vile is a way that people think they can participate in society. Activists on the ground find it difficult to reach policy makers to change the prevailing inequality.

Key Points Made:

- Religious and ethnic minorities do not enjoy the legal protections that they should.
- State officials lack religious literacy, and religious minorities can be very easily used for political purposes in stirring up one community against another.
- Efforts are underway to change laws that are discriminatory towards religious and ethnic minorities in some European contexts.
- We are living during a time of civilizational change that is increasingly pluralistic and communitarian.
- Religion is socially constructed by fallible humans who influence the tenor and tone through the interpretation process.
- Humans can make religion part of the problem or part of the solution through the interpretation process.
- The Dialogue Five (D5) framework was created as an international pattern on the new paradigm for defending and promoting human rights in relation to freedom of religion or belief with a focus on peace, security and development.
- Dialogue Five framework brings together: 1. Diplomats, 2. Politicians, 3. Scholars, 4. Religious leaders, 5. Civil society and others (NGOs, media, business) with the objective of developing a space for collaboration and coordination with representatives from three different levels: a) national, b) regional and c) international.
- Many religions pursue peace and reconciliation through the driving concept of forgiveness which is a concept that all religions affirm
- The destruction of holy sites may be a sign of hatred full stop, where religion may serve as a site for the manifestation of an emerging discourse that has not been seen since the times of the inquisition.
- The ideology factor embedded in universalism can make hope problematic, but it is also the basis for the human rights agenda that is being challenged now more than ever.
- Value relativism links vile to violence in ways that can be disrupted if the right to safety is emphasized as equally fundamental to the right to freedom.
- The family may be a good way of discussing how to balance the right to safety and the right to freedom in secular societies

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 work with the existing international platform on ‘Religion’, ‘Peace’ and ‘Security’ to facilitate regular meetings of all stakeholders based on the D5 framework, at national, regional and international level based on common values of dignity, freedom, freedom of religion or belief, peace and security.
- That the G20 make use of the D5 framework to create new venues for dialogue, partnership among different stakeholders, and coordination for action.
- That the G20 prioritize building bridges and fostering inclusivity between all actors in society/ to highlight the importance of working with different actors.
- That the G20 work to prevent and counter hate speech, religious intolerance and incitement to violence.
- That the G20 protect the rights of religious minorities, refugees and migrants, in particular their freedom of religion or belief in polarized environments.
- That the G20 address political, human rights and humanitarian challenges that religious minorities, refugees and migrants are facing.
- That the G20 take up implementation of binding international and regional documents and relevant declarations, processes, plans of actions that are already there, like the UDHR, the ICCPR, the UN Declaration of 1981, the Resolution 16/18, the Rabat Plan of Action, the Istanbul process, the UN Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence, and Faith4Rights.

THE DIPLOMACY OF RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING

Description: Religious leaders and actors (men and women) bring special insights and skills to the challenges surrounding protracted conflicts, especially when they involve actual or perceived religious tensions. They can play important roles in preventing conflict, and also finding solutions that help end conflict and find resolution afterwards. This session focused on broad lessons arising from experience in addressing complex conflicts and explored their policy implications in a range of settings around the world. Alvaro Albacete (Deputy Secretary General, KAICIID), chaired the panel which asked speakers to respond to “What lessons and council can we draw from religious involvement in complex conflicts”? Speakers were Ahmad Dallal (Dean, Georgetown University Qatar), James Patton (President, International Center for Religion & Diplomacy), Ralph Cossa (President Emeritus and WSD-Handa Chair in Peace Studies, Pacific Forum), Melissa Nozell (Program Officer for Religion and Inclusive Societies, US Institute of Peace), and Mohamoud Fawzy (Vice-President of the State Council of Egypt; Head of the Legislative Research Unit of the IPU-UNODC-UNOCT Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism).

Presentations Overview:

Alvaro Albacete introduced the session by saying that there are not two kinds of diplomacy—one for diplomats and another for religious leaders. It is the same singular diplomacy which should be supported by religious leaders.

Ahmad Dallal said that religion has been used both to justify violence and to advocate for justice, dignity, peacemaking and coexistence. At times of revolution and upheaval, actions tend to derive from a sense of localized authenticity rather than via international norms. This conflates legality and legitimacy as discussed before. At moments of revolution or upheaval, legitimacy is not grounded in the legal norms which govern during normal times. Religious violence is

sometimes dismissed as an aberration of the ‘true religion.’ For example, responding to the problems created by ISIS by saying that ISIS is not Islamic is inadequate. ISIS invokes Islam and appeals to followers by invoking Islam, so we can’t just dismiss it by saying that ISIS is not Islamic. They *are* Islamic, but they are Muslims who have made choices that are un-Islamic—and we have to address this as such. One needs to identify the ethical and moral choices that are being made in order to deal with them. These choices may, or may not, be informed by religion. Any religious tradition is imparted by its followers and practitioners. The promotion of tolerance is a minimum standard. We need to go beyond this to promote respect and recognition of the other. For example, building bridges by convening religious leaders to study an issue together from each of their faiths’ perspectives can move the community toward developing this respect and recognition across differences. Religion plays a role in fueling conflict, but so do other issues. Diplomats should not “remake religion in their own image” by promoting a certain religious sect or interpretation over another. The practice of religious favoritism is not the goal.

James Patton also emphasized that there isn’t enough discussion of the relationship between politics and the sacred. Diplomacy can have multiple meanings. In some contexts, it can mean someone is a mouthpiece for government interests. However, a better way, he argued, is to understand diplomacy as the process of finding common ground across differences, finding solutions across conflicts or ideas, and finding win-win approaches that serve both sides. As a former State Department official, he contends that traditional diplomacy does not often effectively engage the religious sector. Diplomats often fail to understand the unique way in which religion and, more importantly, *faith* inspires action. The state mechanisms have a difficult time articulating the unique component of the transcendent that characterizes the religious sector and religious identity. In many cases, religious leaders are brought in by diplomats because they are important members of the community, but that is very different than having a profound understanding of how faith shapes attitudes and actions. The [International Center for Religion & Diplomacy](#) (ICRD) has worked for 20 years acting as a bridge between policy-makers and religious actors. ICRD’s success is a function of four objectives. The first is to remove religion as a driver of violence. In Saudi Arabia, for example, we have been studying the public school textbooks, particularly those related to religion, and identifying intolerant content. These books have helped to fuel a spread of radicalization globally, and have been used by groups like ISIS in their own educational efforts. In the latest iteration of this program, we have been able to supply the Saudi’s with our findings as we progressed, which they have integrated into the ongoing plans for textbook reform. But the books are only a small part of the problem. ICRD is now set to begin implementing a truly historic program to change the mindset of Saudi teachers, training them on issues of pluralism, globalization, human rights, religious tolerance, and prevention of violent extremism. Our second objective is to increase the capacity of religious peacemakers. We do so through a series of trainings on conflict resolution and preventing violent extremism in places like Yemen. Picture, if you will, a Yemeni faith leader standing over a pit in the desert surrounded by young men. This is an area where militant groups like al-Qaeda are very active in recruiting such youth. But here they are struggling to install water pipes. After our training, religious and tribal leaders determined what kind of programming would not only relieve local conflict, but also engage at-risk youth in a way that gave them a much needed sense of purpose in the community. After the project, community members said that they used to think the *government* had to do these programs, and when that failed, they turned to the militant groups to provide those services. Now, they feel like they can do these things themselves and no longer need those groups and will no longer accept them. One youth participant stated “After this project, I want to be an important person in my community. I want to be a mediator of conflicts.” Our third objective is to create more religious peacemakers. In Colombia, we have worked with

religious women to train them in the art of reconciliation. Many of these women were themselves victims of violence, but they are setting aside their own pain to help *heal* relationships, supporting the reintegration of former combatants into conflict-impacted communities. Unlike with traditional diplomacy, their faith plays a key role. In one session, a discussion with former combatants was going poorly, and emotions were raw. We took a break, and a group of Christian women went into the rooms of the convent where we were staying and came back dressed in bed-sheet robes. They began to enact a passage from the *Holy Bible*, where an adulteress is dragged through the streets and thrown in front of Jesus. He is goaded by the authorities to order her to be stoned, as the law requires. But instead, he delivers the well-known line, “Let the one amongst you who has not sinned cast the first stone.”³⁷ The women then talked about how they, as followers of Jesus, should act when confronted with unrepentant perpetrators of violence. This allowed them to overcome the challenges in communication and return to the dialogue with fresh inspiration. Our fourth objective is to tie *religious* peacebuilding together with *other* peacebuilding and policy-making efforts. For the last few years, ICRD has been producing reports on how to best engage with non-violent, fundamentalist religious actors in areas where recruitment to militant groups is very high. Research demonstrates that those who best know their faith are less likely to be swayed by extremist narratives that abuse the doctrine and tenets of that faith. In places like Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, and Spain, we have looked at how to engage Salafi communities as allies in the struggle to prevent violent extremism. We have produced policy papers that answer questions such as: “If you were to engage these communities, what would you need to understand?” We engage with fundamentalist communities because they share identities with youth that are particularly vulnerable to extremist recruitment, and they are best positioned to persuade them to reject these groups. Importantly, however, ICRD is going to begin to look at domestic programming inside the United States. In 1790, President Washington wrote a letter to the members of Touro Synagogue, insisting that the government of the United States must give “to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance. . . .”³⁸ All Americans should be able to “sit in safety under [their] own vine[s] and figtree[s],” with “none to make [them] afraid.” Can it be said that this describes our current state of affairs in the U.S.? The [Tree of Life synagogue shooting](#), the [Charleston church shooting](#), the [Mississippi church burnings](#), nationwide mosque threats and the [Wisconsin Sikh Temple attack](#) – the rhetoric of race and xenophobia mixed with religious persecution has erupted into U.S. civil and political discourse in shocking extremes.³⁹ We live in a time of “reciprocal prejudice,” where negative rhetoric and group conflict spiral ever more out of control, feeding one upon the other. And that rhetoric is justifying terrible things: The demonization of beliefs, the dehumanization of whole cultures, and violence against entire communities of people. Arguments are no longer about differences in *ideas*, but about the *value ascribed* to a person or group *because* of those ideas. In fact, our commitment to belonging in a group often depends on the extent that we reject others. It is not only a concern because of the harm that is done in the United States, but also because of the reaction abroad. When we gathered U.S. Evangelical pastors and conservative Pakistani Imams together, it became clear that perceptions of the treatment of religious minorities in each country’s context fed directly into the religious prejudice toward the other community. Sadly, much of the hateful rhetoric comes from those who claim *to be* religious people. There is a sacred Hadith in the Islamic tradition, a saying of The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), in which he is asked, “*Who, O Messenger of Allah (is not a believer)?*” He replied: “*One whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil.*”⁴⁰ So, what is the alternative? It

³⁷ John 8, Verse 7, *Holy Bible*.

³⁸ See <https://www.tourosynagogue.org/history-learning/gw-letter>

³⁹ See the Southern Poverty Law Center for more documentation at <https://www.splcenter.org/>.

⁴⁰ See also <http://comparativreligion.blogspot.com/2012/11/quran-554-4829-ruthless-to-disbelievers.html>

may be as simple as to disregard the presumptions we have about one another, to reach across difference, and seek what the Quakers call, “The light of the divine in the other.” At ICRD, we believe there is more that binds us together than what pulls us apart. But the only *way out* is to *participate* in difficult conversations and relationships of change, even with those whom we abhor. Otherwise we risk *becoming* what we abhor.

Ralph Cossa talked about the social context of the United States that is characterized by paradoxes. We claim the separation between church and state, while, at the same time, every politician claims God is on his or her side while demonizing the ‘other.’ Never has the need for faith-based diplomacy been so great, or the understanding of its usefulness been so small. We can infuse society with faith-based diplomacy by inviting religious leaders to our Track II security dialogues (also known as backchannel diplomacy). Invite religious leaders to collaborate in developing policy recommendations. This may be less “threatening” than involving them in Track I initiatives. He shared a recommendation from Madeline Albright that the US State Department should train diplomats who can engage with religion.

Melissa Nozell made observations for policymakers to consider for engaging with religious actors: Firstly, *let religious actors be religious actors*. Don’t try to fit them into a “diplomacy” box. Partner with them in ways that allow them to continue to be religious. Don’t try to make them adapt in ways that can hurt their credibility or be detrimental to their leadership position. Recognize that they may be involved in peacebuilding daily even if they don’t call it that. For example, there is an Afghan woman who has negotiated the release of hostages. She may not use the language of “hostage negotiator” to describe what she does, but she is successful because she is a woman of faith. Secondly, *engage religious actors early and often as partners*. This can help programming to be tailored to their context. Be flexible and open to learning from religious actors themselves. Thirdly, that political leaders engage inclusively with recognition of the nuances and complexities of religion in conflict contexts. Recognize the unique roles of religious actors, including those of religious women and religious youth. Be aware that when you engage religion you’re shaping religion. If you engage only men, you can undermine women in the community. If you support programs by only one religious group, this can escalate tensions. Evaluate the context in which religious actors have influenced their communities—how and why? As an example of inclusivity, there was a Muslim youth in Uganda who created an organization to facilitate engagement between religious leaders, elders and youth to prevent and address violent extremism. To facilitate inclusion, it’s important to find safe spaces.

Mohamoud Fawzy emphasized that religion is important for how it impacts people. Religious leaders, in particular, can have a large impact on people and help prevent disputes. Egypt has drafted a law that is currently under consideration regarding organizing and delivering religious opinions. The state wants to educate religious leaders to promote tolerance and positive values. He says that the government should not be the one to train religious leaders. Rather, scientific institutions like Al-Azhar University would be a better choice for offering this type of training. The issue of potential government interference in religion was brought up. He felt that the government has no right to interfere in the practice of religion, but has the responsibility to intervene in the misuse of religious interpretations as this could lead to crimes. He felt the government has the responsibility to deliver a true interpretation of religion to the people.

Key Points Made:

- Religious actors can play various different roles in peacebuilding and diplomacy, beyond simply engaging in discussions on theology.
- Fully actualizing these roles may require not only further capacity-building for religious actors, but greater awareness on the part of both the religious actors and policymakers of the various roles that religious actors can play in peacebuilding.
- We live in a time of “reciprocal prejudice” where arguments are less about differences in *ideas*, and more about the *value ascribed* to a person or group *because* of those ideas.
- In relations between government and religion, government should not interfere with the practice of religion, but government has the responsibility to intervene when religious interpretations are misused to promote criminal behavior.
- Perceptions of the treatment of religious minorities in social contexts feeds directly into religious prejudices towards others in the community
- Participation in difficult conversations, even with those whom we abhor, is the only way to exit reciprocal prejudice.
- Track II diplomacy may be more suitable for religious diplomacy than Track I.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Leaders engage with religious actors early and often in a manner that lets religious actors be religious.
- That the G20 Leaders train diplomats with the skills necessary for engagement with religious actors in a manner that is sensitive to nuance, complexity and diversity.
- That the G20 Leaders support trained diplomats to engage in Track II diplomacy with religious leaders to develop collaborative policy recommendations.

NEW WAYS TO SERVE AND INTEGRATE REFUGEES AND FORCIBLY DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

Description: Finding better ways to meet the challenges facing refugees and migrants are pressing issues on the global agenda. So are challenges resulting from the refugee crisis for host societies. Ethical and practical leadership by religious communities can contribute in many ways, drawing on wide and varied experience in working with affected populations. This session built on prior G20 Interfaith explorations of refugee and migration issues, highlighting the religious experience of refugees and migrants themselves and of the communities that provide aid, both physical and spiritual, along their journey. It explored implementation issues linked to the Global Compacts on refugees and migration, including on religious dimensions of the challenge to ensure the active involvement of local communities. Speakers were asked to address root causes of protracted refugee situations. Chaired by Enda Kenny (Former Prime Minister/13th Taoiseach of Ireland; Patron of WSD), speakers were David Eades (Chief Presenter and Senior Broadcaster, BBC News; Management Team, Sport at the Service of Humanity), Jean Duff (President, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities), and Atallah FitzGibbon (Policy & Strategy Manager, Islamic Relief Worldwide).

Presentations Overview:

Enda Kenny reflected on a time when he was Prime Minister and went to Messines in West Flanders, Belgium with David Cameron on a very cold November’s day. They visited the Irish Round Tower at the Peace Park where Irish craftsmen and stoneworkers had built a war memorial to the Irish soldiers who died, were wounded or are missing from World War I during Ireland’s involvement in the conflict. It was opened by Mary Robinson and Queen Elizabeth.

Afterwards, local school children came out and sang Silent Night (in remembrance of the famous war story where opposing forces at Messines stopped fighting on Christmas to play football together). He suggested that every child and student in Europe be brought to Flanders as part of their education. In a similar vein, the European Union should not be taken for granted. The EU grew out of an understanding between Germany and France that what had happened before would never happen again. Nothing we are seeing now is new. When Stalin abolished Chechnya and forced Russians to central Asia, 100 million people were internally displaced in China. He has repeatedly heard EU country leaders say that they are having problems delivering services to those who come into their country. When he visited the United States, he told President Trump that the waters that divide us are the same waters that brought the Africans to slavery and the Irish to independence after the great famine. His experience interacting with leaders from many EU countries. His approach was challenged by religious leaders speaking on behalf of the voiceless in Jordan's refugee camps where geo-political dynamics from Russia and Iran are interfering with refugees' desires to return to their homes. In response, he said that politicians really have to be pressured because the G20 does not have a decision-making structure. One way to use geopolitics to influence the conscience of political leaders is to put G20 Leaders in a position where they must take note of the conclusions of the Interfaith Forum. This Forum should make recommendations that get communicated to the G20. The G20 Leaders don't have to debate the recommendations to take note of them and recognize the experience and expertise from which the recommendations are derived. When people migrate from one country to another, you can't leave them alone and still expect them to become model citizens. If governments and faith-actors do not engage with them, they will drift to extremist positions.

David Eades spoke to helping refugees through the power of sports which influences peoples' lives by shaping their identities and offering them community, a sense of self-worth and, of course, bragging rights! Sports offers exhilaration, entertainment, and inspiration. Sports offers stories of bravery, compassion, mutual respect, team spirit, jubilation and utter despair - if only for a moment - and of total absorption in that moment. But Sport provides infinitely more than sentiments; it also conveys values. [Sport at the Service of Humanity](#) is one of several groups engaged in these types of activities that bring faith and sport together. Our credo comes from Pope Francis who encouraged people to "Challenge Yourself in the Game of Life as you Challenge yourself in the Game of Sport." Train hard, play hard, get fit, be a team player, give it your all, and accept defeat graciously. After all, as one athlete put it, you never lose, you only learn. Show respect, savour the moment, and love the game you play. Drawing on the values which lie at the heart of sport, we developed Sport at the Service of Humanity. It is a movement built on common values to be found within all faiths and which also apply to Sport: Compassion, respect, love, enlightenment, balance, and joy. These values are spread through the power of inclusion, the power of involvement, and the power of inspiration. How does all this relate to Refugees, and their integration? The UNHCR has itself come to recognise and acknowledge that sport is not just a game, or a welcome distraction, but that it is a high priority for raising awareness among youngsters, in particular, of what a community is, how it works, and why they should be involved. Little wonder that sport has found its way into the rubric of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sport is characterised, among other things, as an enabler of social inclusion, of equality, and of empowerment, particularly for girls and women. All of this applies to refugees. If you travel to [Kakuma](#) and [Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement](#) in Northern Kenya, you will find a refugee community of 186,692 people at last count. Most are from 7 different nationalities. Between them, they have 68 volleyball courts, 42 football pitches, 3 basketball courts and 600 football teams. Initially, the teams were tribal –all the same nationality, ethnic background, and often the same tribe. But that created far more problems than it solved. Games

turned violent, tribalism became a threat, and exclusion became a disturbing element of the sporting set-up. So UNHCR turned it round. Teams would have to be of mixed ethnic background, mixed nationalities, and include local, Kenyan, host community players too. To show they were serious, they arranged professional training for 66 referees, 40 of whom are recognised by the Kenyan FA. Coaches were also trained, and sports Councils were created to manage the playing fields – again, with leadership and management training as a prerequisite. Now, in the Kakuma Premier League, there are 21 teams made up of players from 7 different nationalities. And there is Kakuma United Football Club – which has made it into the Kenyan National Football League – 2nd division. They even have fans travelling with them to away matches now. There is also a womens’ league in Kakuma, the ‘Divas League’ – and the Kakuma First Team has also made it into the Kenyan National Women’s League. They have their own special identity and support which extends not only to the refugees living there, but to the local community, as it includes local players. And they are building on this: They have themed tournaments, with a focus on drug abuse, early marriage, and women’s empowerment. They even have their own Ambassadors for Peace. The overall message is “Do no harm,” and it is promoting behavioural change within Kakuma to include tolerance, even admiration, for different ethnic and religious cultures. Another example is the [Barcelona Foundation](#) that builds on Sport-as-a-tool-for-good. They have brought their stars into the lives of refugees, giving them a meeting, and an experience that any youngster would cherish for a lifetime. It has opened the eyes of many of the players too. [Barca’s Futbol Net programme](#) uses football, providing matches, training and sports education to thousands of young refugees across Lebanon, Greece and Italy - 24,000 to date. Among the children, these FutbolNets lead to fewer conflict situations, and result in calmer, less angry kids with growing friendships, female empowerment and growing self-confidence for almost everyone taking part. Barca has developed a programme with UNICEF specifically aimed at finding the best practices being used by all sorts of groups. This is a massive ‘mapping’ project if you like. They have produced an evidence-based report, [Getting in the Game: Understanding the Evidence for Child-Focused Sport for Development](#). It is the first concerted attempt to develop a good governance template for sport-related projects, which continue to grow exponentially around the world for communities of all sorts. Another example is [The Turkish Olympic Committee](#) for those affected by the Syrian conflict. Turkey has more than 3.5 million refugees from Syria – many living, not in camps, but in towns and cities around the country. They offer a broad sporting range that covers a growing number of the Olympic sports, in particular, giving children a chance to find something that works for them. The Secretary General of the Turkish Olympic Committee, Nese Gundogan, has described the organisation of sports activities for local and refugee youngsters as the most effective tool she knows for building social cohesion among hosting nations and new societies. Another example comes from Jordan who has three quarters of a million refugees to accommodate. HRH Prince Faisal of Jordan – one of our Sport at the Service of Humanity mentors, has worked tirelessly to use sport to help educate, include and encourage refugees. His [Generations for Peace programme](#) has used sport as the very base of educational programmes bringing young people together from many different backgrounds, and helping them to learn from each other and to understand each other. From a sporting base, has grown a far more involved operation. Finally, a reflection on the [Olympic Refugee Team](#). In conjunction with the UNHCR, the International Olympic Committee has supported and opened the door to a team representing 68 million people. They first competed in Rio, and they will soon be coming to Tokyo. How many medals will they win? In Rio, they didn’t win any medals. Yusra Mardi swam in the 200 metres freestyle. She trained non-stop for it. It was the swim of her life. In 2014, Yusra had literally swum for her life, as the dinghy she took from North Africa to Lesbos failed her and her family, leaving her to cope in the choppy seas, where so many others have perished. What a powerful message they sent out: It is a

message of inclusion, involvement and inspiration - the three pillars of Sport at the Service of Humanity. Sport has provided that. Faith has provided that. When you reflect on the tensions that have so often existed between development organisations and religious bodies, this is invaluable progress.

Jean Duff provided an overview of the refugee situation. There are approximately 68 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, 40 million of whom are internally displaced. 85% of the world's displaced peoples are being hosted by developing countries. The 2018 [Global Compact on Refugees](#) was adopted by 181 votes in favour. This calls for responsibility sharing, and the recognition that sustainable solutions to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. The Global Compact on Refugees only briefly mentions faith actors. It references how they could support the planning and delivery of arrangements to assist refugees. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General at the United Nations has issued a strong call for faith-based organizations to exercise leadership for peacemaking. The Pope has also told people to personally respond to refugees. He has welcomed 12 Syrian refugees who travelled home with him from a refugee camp. The Pope has encouraged every parish to adopt a parish family, and provided 12 action points for use by Roman Catholic dioceses.⁴¹ There are multiple roles for faith actors to engage with refugee relocation across different stages and spaces of forced displacement. These include welcoming refugees, protecting the inviolable dignity of those who flee dangers, and promoting the interests of refugees. The [Joint Learning Initiative](#) has an active [Refugees and Forced Migration Learning Hub](#) where 100 members are collaborating to gather evidence on faith-based engagement through scoping, and using that evidence to inform and improve policy and practice between faith groups, humanitarian, and development communities. The hub works to respond to research gaps and promote collaborative research. The hub operates at multiple levels to develop policy briefs, scoping studies, UNHCR Good Practice Case Studies, handbooks, and UNHCR Global Compact joint recommendations. Many different faith communities prioritize hospitality values that 'welcome the stranger'. Hinduism emphasizes *dharma*, Buddhism teaches *karunā*, and the *Holy Qur'an* calls for protection of the asylum seeker. Currently, there are many faith-based actors taking advantage of the situation to engage in aggressive proselytization of refugees, but it is a question of capacity building. Local actors can be worked with to reach international standards of fair practice and human rights. The Joint Learning Initiative is working to develop a series of tools and strategies that can be used to build this type of competence in faith actors and faith leaders. Faith communities are struggling with the whole new world of forced migration. JLI's documentation will help to build their capacity to implement best-practices, and engage more broadly as advocates who are the 'voice for the voiceless.' Prophetic engagement can have a powerful influence, but this alone cannot make the difference that is needed. The faith community has to become more political if they are going to meet the needs of displaced persons.

Atallah FitzGibbon talked about the large scale migrations to Europe, South America and West Africa as a foretaste of what is to come on a larger scale as population increases coupled with the devastating effects of climate change force large scale movement. Migration will increase diversity. Traditional national identities and culture will be confronted and challenged. Anxiety within receiving populations will increase. How we prepare societies for large scale population changes and increased pluralism is a defining issue of our time and of the human race. In the past, large scale migration movements such as the millions of Afghans who settled in Pakistan during the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the Syrian and Rohingya exodus to neighbouring

⁴¹ For example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides resources in support of opening your home to a refugee youth. See <http://www.usccb.org/about/children-and-migration/foster-care/index.cfm>

countries has been in the context of mainly Muslim populations received into nations of co-religionists. There is no doubt that religion is a bonding factor socially which ensures empathy and patience by host populations with the disruption of large scale migration. Within Europe and in increasingly in the future in other regions migrants have been and will be from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds raising more complex political and social challenges for host countries. The reaction in Europe to taking in forced migrants from other religious and ethnic backgrounds has been varied and in some ways extremely worrying. The G20 needs to take account of what has happened and prepare to mitigate and respond to medium and long term migration patterns to avoid large scale conflict and political disruption. Despite Europe having low population growth and needing migration, they have responded to the people with rising insecurity from host populations around cultural change and a degradation of what they perceive as national identity contributing to the rise of nationalist and right wing and extremist ideologies and political parties. This has contributed to widespread disruption to liberal and centre ground political parties leading potentially to the break-up of Europe as we know it. In some cases, national governments hardening their identity around a particular religious identity and building alliances with the mainstream churches to build support for policies that exclude migrants and deny human rights. We see the rise of social media campaigns by right wing entities that exaggerate the negative impact of migration and contribute to xenophobia, hate speech and increasing violence against migrants. Religious communities, sometimes in conflict with government policy, have rallied around refugees and supported integration into local communities. National churches have had to fundamentally review their theologies around religious pluralism in order to address the reality that societies will be different in the future. There has been a broad social adaptation and acceptance over time of pluralism by mainly urban societies based on social contact, the rule of law and the need for migration, and an acceptance of large scale migration based on economic need and low population growth. What are some of the current forecasts for large scale migrations that will affect social and religious diversity? Muslim pastoralist communities of West and Central Africa will migrate into majority Christian areas. The migration of mainly Muslim and other migrants into Europe from the Middle East and Africa will continue. Bangladesh citizens will flee catastrophic flooding into neighbouring Hindu and Buddhist majority countries. We will see large scale migration of Muslim and other religious groupings from the Punjab basin into neighbouring areas and other countries. There has been some discussion of turning refugee camps into cities, and while there is significant potential for a place like the Gaza strip to become a successful economy if it could be opened up, refugee camps are more akin to huge prisons that require political decision making.

Key Points Made:

- The G20 Interfaith Forum should make recommendations for communication to political leaders.
- The G20 Interfaith Forum should use geopolitics to influence the conscience of political leaders by putting G20 Leaders in a position where they must take note of the recommendations, and the experience and expertise from which they are derived.
- When people migrate from one country to another, you can't leave them alone and still expect them to become model citizens.
- UNHCR has made sports a high priority for conveying community values to refugee youth.
- Population increase and climate change will increase forced migration in the near future.
- Preparing societies for large scale population changes and increased pluralism is a defining issue of our time and of the human race.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Governments support the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees, the Global Refugee Forum and the coordinating and planning role of UNHCR
- That G20 Governments work with their national agencies to encourage attitudes and standards of acceptance and protection of migrants from minority religions, promoting resilient and value based concepts of national identity and citizenship supported by law and educational reform.
- That G20 Governments address on-line hate speech and regulate content by social media platforms.
- That G20 Governments encourage civil society and work with national religious movements/institutions to adapt and embrace social diversity and advocate for protection of migrants with special attention placed on ensuring shared public space, dialogue and social contact.
- That G20 Governments champion models of social integration based on respecting diversity and celebrating common values.
- That G20 Governments increase religious and cultural literacy amongst government and agency staff.
- That G20 Governments responsibly plan for migration and acceptance of refugee quotas from areas of the world that is no longer viable for large scale habitation.

PEACEBUILDING IN PRACTICE

Description: Respected scholars point to measurable declines in deaths from war since the devastation of the Second World War. But protracted conflicts plague many nations causing death and suffering and blocking progress towards fulfilling lives for citizens. Worse, human rights abuses are on the rise, with human rights challenged both by populist narratives and by extremists nursing grievances and prepared to destroy peace. Religious actors and religious narratives are part of the problem when they fuel tensions and prevent reconciliation. They are part of the solution when they draw on their deep commitments to peace and respect for human dignity. That involves active peacemaking and, deeper still, on modern conceptions of societies where different cultures, religious beliefs, and approaches are celebrated. A further challenge is the securitization of development through narratives that focus on countering or preventing violence extremism. This session highlighted for religious leaders and for the G20 Summit promising ways to translate potential into action. Speakers were asked to respond to the theme of peacebuilding in a fractious, culturally plural world. Chaired by Brendan Scannell (Former Irish Ambassador to Japan and Denmark), speakers were Nobuyuki Asai (Program Coordinator, Soka Gakkai International), Ralph Cossa (President Emeritus and WSD-Handa Chair in Peace Studies, Pacific Forum), and Nika Saeedi (Policy Specialist on Gender, Political Processes, and Peacebuilding, UN Development Programme).

Presentations Overview:

Brendan Scannell was the lead Irish diplomat in the Irish peace process. He was also exposed to peace processes when he served as ambassador to Israel. Peace processes are difficult things where each situation is unique. You need political will and sometimes outside involvement to facilitate the process. Lessons that he has drawn that has led to success include first, initiate a process of dialogue, and secondly, maintain the dialogue over time. Some important ground rules of peacebuilding are: 1) Inclusion must be based on clear guaranteed principles; 2) The process itself is important because people learn by participating in it; 3) The people involved is more

important than the territory they hold; and 4) Bring justice and security. These are fundamental process that you have to get right. Other important elements include the protection of human rights and gender dynamics and attention to the role of women. The women's movement played a very important role in the Irish peace process.

Nobuyuki Asai presented a case study of [Soka Gakkai International](#), a community-based Buddhist peacemaking network that was established in Japan before WWII during the era of the military government. In order to garner popular support for its war campaign, the Japanese government imposed the religion of state Shintoism, with its nationalistic mythology and ideology of emperor worship, on the populace. It also grew increasingly intolerant of dissent. Our first President, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, staunchly opposed these repressive actions. In 1943, he was arrested and died in prison of malnutrition, refusing to the end to compromise his beliefs. In this sense, peace has been a critical issue for SGI. In order to promote peace, we have long been keen on how to foster global citizenship among people. We consider three elements as key factors in doing so: 1) The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living; 2) The courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them; and 3) The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. We believe that these elements can be fostered through education undertaken as an integral part of daily life and interactions with others in each local community, based on dialogue and participation. In particular, dialogue has been central to the SGI since its inception. From the earliest years in the 1930s in Japan, small group discussions have been the key venue for study and practice. One-on-one dialogue and encouragement rooted in a sense of mutual respect and human equality have also played a central role. Dialogue in Buddhism is not merely a vehicle or means for communicating its message. Rather, the practice of dialogue expresses a central tenet of Buddhism—faith in human beings, in their limitless dignity and potential as possessors and embodiments of universal truth. In the Buddhist tradition, dialogue has played a central part in the quest to discover and identify common or universal values that would allow human beings to live in the best, most humane and empowering ways. The conquest of our own prejudicial thinking, our own attachment to difference, is the guiding principle of open dialogue, the essential condition for the establishment of peace and universal respect for human rights. Bearing that belief in mind, many SGI members or local groups across the world have conducted such dialogues within their own communities. It always goes beyond boundaries of race, ethnicity and religion. In countries from Singapore and Malaysia to Australia and the USA, SGI is active in interfaith dialogue and activities. In the UK, members promoted the [3 Faiths Project](#) involving Buddhists, Christians and Muslims. This project involved frequent meetings amongst young people over a six month period, during which time they were really able to confront and overcome their prejudices and build mutual respect and trust. London Mayor Sadiq Kahn once joined the event as he was the local MP. In Japan, interfaith dialogue is not a critical issue, and also, we haven't gone through war since the end of WWII, but other types of social divisions have been occasionally serious that we have had to address. For example, we had a dialogue campaign in Minamata City. The city suffered from mercury poisoning from 1950s through 60s. This incident is one of the best known pollution incidents in Japan. More than two thousand people passed away and several thousand became impaired. After the incident, a severe rift was generated between local people benefiting from the mercury factory and those who weren't. Further, some victims received compensation from the factory, and others didn't, and it made the rift wider and more complicated. Soka Gakkai local members were deeply concerned with it and had a lot of debates. They concluded that disease would be cured by professional medical doctors, but human ties among citizens had to be recovered by citizens themselves. They started to organize dialogue meetings inviting citizens from many

groups. Some researchers point out that it was a rare opportunity for different groups in the city to sit together in those days. It's not only through our efforts, but nowadays the majority of citizens are thriving toward an ecology-based community and a few years ago succeeded in hosting an international conference where the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) was adopted. Another example is more recent. Over a couple of decades, political tension has been serious among East Asian countries. Due to the tension, Japanese people's views on those neighboring countries have become quite negative. Some surveys indicate that only 10-20% of Japanese have a positive image on those countries, and vice versa. Furthermore, in the online sphere, hideous posts against those countries are prevailing. Some young Japanese are so much affected by hate speeches and such online posts that they tend to have a severe prejudice, and minority ethnic groups are facing discrimination. Given the situation, SOKA Gakkai youth division launched a peace initiative called "[SOKA Global Action](#)," one of whose three pillars is to promote exchange with people from Asian countries. The youth division has organized exchange events and conducted awareness surveys. There were some background factors that motivated the youth division to launch the campaign. The first was Japan's wartime military atrocities that brought about the bitterness of people in many Asian countries, particularly in China and Korea. The second was our President Daisaku Ikeda's educational activities on the wartime issue to us members. He apologized on visiting those countries, laid wreaths on relevant monuments, and wrote extensively about the issues on our organ publications. In 1968, he released a proposal for the normalization of Japan-China relations. It caused a lot of criticism from then Japanese establishment, but he continued his efforts. After the normalization in 1972, he accepted the first Chinese students to Japan as personal reference and they could enter our affiliated university in Tokyo. Back in the youth division's campaign, we have reached tens of thousands of youth in exchange and awareness raising events for the cause. Last year, Soka Gakkai student division made an awareness survey on Japan-China relationship. They got answers from more than 10,000 Japanese students and 300 Chinese students in Japan. According to the result, less exchange promotes prejudice and misunderstanding of each other. Also, surveys showed that Japanese students have a more positive view of China than do adults. They understood that the tension had been too much emphasized by mass media. Many students remarked that they could change their views toward a calm one, and expressed their hope to share their finding with their family members or friends. One of the other two pillars of the youth division's campaign is restoration of disaster-stricken areas. After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, numerous religious organizations conducted relief activities. At the timing of 2014, mental recovery was one of the most serious issues, so we started to address it as the youth division. In this context, we had an opportunity to join an interfaith platform for disaster relief and recovery activities that was formed by some academicians in 2011. They have held a bimonthly meeting over the 8 years with participants from academics, temples, churches, other types of religious organizations and FBOs. We have exchanged views toward shared goals and could learn a lot from each other. It is one of the most successful interfaith initiatives in Japan. Apart from that, I'd like to briefly mention Soka Gakkai women's peace committee's activity of promoting a culture of peace. Every year they pick up different topics and conduct dialogue at the grassroots level. For example, last year they highlighted the atomic bomb survivors. In their local discussion meetings they invited friends and watched a film containing the survivors' testimonies. The number of the participants reached some hundreds of thousands. For a lot of newcomers, it was their first opportunity over the decades to directly think and talk about peace. They often expressed their determination to spread the message in each family or working place. It's highly resonant with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that articulates women's commitment and involvement to peace at various stages. These activities might have been conducted even without faith, but I strongly feel that faith can motivate us to learn from each other through dialogue and build ties

with each other, instead of dividing the human society. In this context, I'm reminded of Shakyamuni's phrase "An invisible arrow piercing the hearts of the people". According to our president, this 'arrow' could be termed the arrow of a discriminatory consciousness, an unreasoning emphasis on difference. If we can mentally overcome attachment to the difference, we will be able to celebrate diversity in society.

Ralph Cossa spoke about the [Pacific Forum](#), a Honolulu-based so-called track two/non-governmental, non-profit, and non-partisan institution working on promoting greater peace and security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. We were founded by a retired US Navy Rear Admiral, Joe Vasey, who promised himself while serving as a young submariner during World War II, that if he lived through that conflict, he would one day find a better way to solve disputes than having people drop bombs on one another. When he retired from the Navy in 1975, he established the Pacific Forum with that simple mission in mind. Today, "to find a better way," we are at the forefront in promoting dialogue between North Korea and its neighbors, between the US and China, China and Taiwan, Japan and Korea, and the list goes on. We also have a Young Leaders program which in the past 14 years has brought over 1500 young people from 60 different countries to sit in on our senior-level dialogues, to learn, but also to provide next generation input and fresh thinking into the deliberative process. These include a growing number of both resident and non-resident [WSD-Handa Fellows](#). When I started working on Asia-Pacific security affairs some fifty years ago, in the midst of the Vietnam War, everything seemed a bit simpler; we tended to view the world in terms of black or white. The Soviet Union was black; the US and its allies wore the white hats. Red China was, well, red, but clearly black; Japan, a former adversary a mere 25 years earlier, had turned white, as the US-Japan alliance provided the foundation for peace, security, and prosperity in the region. North Korea was black; South Korea, despite being run by a dictator at the time, was nonetheless white. Today, everything has changed, even as, in some cases, the more they have changed, the more they have remained the same. North Korea is still a threat, but even more so now that it has nuclear weapons, but remains backward even as its southern neighbor has embraced democracy. The Soviet Union is gone, and with it went the demise of monolithic Communism, even while Russia becomes less and less democratic and more troublesome. China remains communist but it is socialism with Chinese characteristics. We don't fear the spread of Beijing's ideology, but do worry about its increasingly aggressive behavior as it grows stronger, thanks in no small part to the generous assistance and investment over the years provided by the US, Japan, and the rest of the international community. Meanwhile, the US-Japan alliance remains the foundation for peace, security, and prosperity and we are all proud of, and thankful for, the increased role Japan has played as a peacemaker and an example of how a responsible major power should behave. But the black and white world we used to live in has been replaced by various shades of grey as the challenges we have faced grow more severe and diverse, and addressing them becomes more complicated. If major power competition is our greatest concern, then Russia and China exemplify the problem. But if North Korea is the greatest near-term challenge, then their cooperation is essential to finding a solution. And when it comes to what people now refer to as non-traditional security concerns -- environmental degradation, climate change, terrorism (including but not limited to religious extremism), trans-national crime, and the many factors at play that are worsening the human condition -- they, like us, are potential victims and necessary collaborators. I live on a very small island in the middle of a very big Pacific Ocean. I take the threat of rising sea levels seriously. Residents in my condominium just spent over one million dollars to repair the crumbling seawall that serves as the foundation to our building. Living on the ocean in Hawaii used to be my dream; as the oceans rise, it is becoming my nightmare. It's more than a personal problem. The nation of Japan, our kind hosts for this meeting, have one of the largest exclusive economic zones in the world, not because the main islands are so large,

but because all of its small outlying islands that today are above sea level are inhabitable. A one-meter rise in sea level will change all that. Tokyo, since the late 1980s, has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to keep Okinotorishima above water. What is today a 400-mile wide exclusive economic zone for Japan in the middle of the ocean 1000 miles south of Tokyo could become a free-for-all zone of economic competition at Japan's great expense. Multilateral cooperation from all countries, including my own and China as the world's two biggest contributors to global warming, is essential to deal with the problems caused by climate change. Yesterday, I participated in a very illuminating session on religious peace-building, where we discussed faith-based diplomacy at some length. I want to build on that discussion in a moment. But on this particular issue, we also need science-based diplomacy. While some are debating if global warming is real, our shorelines, our beaches, our coastal facilities, the foundations in many of our waterfront communities, and our exclusive economic zones are rapidly deteriorating. Add to this the tons of plastic waste that are filling our oceans and infecting and killing its inhabitants, as so vividly described by former Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny yesterday, and the problem quickly becomes magnified. I would hope this interfaith gathering would send a strong message to the G20 that saving our planet is a common concern and goal throughout the interfaith community. This session focuses on a fractious, culturally plural world. Watching the opening prayer session at last night's reception underscores what is possible; leaders of many of the world's religions focusing on what we have in common – love for mankind and a desire for world peace – rather than the differences in religion and culture that are too often used to separate us. We see cultural, religious, and ideological differences being played out in many destructive ways today. For example, I am concerned about the direction that China's leaders are currently steering that potentially great nation. But it is not, as some in my country are now asserting, a clash of civilizations. It's about behavior, not ideology. Taiwan and Singapore show us that Chinese societies do not automatically clash with traditional values which are universal, not merely Western. Vibrant democracies in Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan clearly demonstrate the universal nature of democracy and a commitment to human rights. When we describe differences of opinion based on culture or religion rather than simply bad behavior we misdiagnose the problem and make finding a solution even harder, if not impossible. While religious scholar Huston Smith has observed that "the surest way to the heart of a people is through their faith," religion has long been seen, regrettably, as an obstacle to diplomacy, especially in disputes and conflicts that seem to be related to or motivated by religion. In the United States, we profess to believe in separation of church and state, yet every politician claims that God is somehow on his or her side and, all too often, that the other side are representatives of the devil. Our ability to deal with religious differences, I fear, has gotten worse not better. I believe it is safe to say that "Never has the need for faith-based diplomacy been so great or awareness of its usefulness been so small." Therefore, I applaud the organizers for trying to change this mindset. I was particularly struck by Enda Kenny's comments during this conference's opening session. While religious leaders on both sides of the divide in Northern Ireland were preaching reconciliation, tolerance, and understanding, politicians on both sides were playing on, exploiting, and even inflaming religious differences for their own political purposes. While the name of the religions involved may have changed, we see the same kind of practices today in many countries, including (but not limited to) my own. At first glance, successful diplomacy, with its emphasis on empathy, dialogue, understanding, negotiation, and most importantly compromise seems to be the antithesis of religion, when one considers its concerns for dogma, truth, and certainty. But, in recent decades, more and more scholars are noting the interrelated nature of religion and diplomacy in this age of globalization. I wonder if an opening prayer at any meeting 10 years ago could have featured the diverse number of religious leaders we saw gathered among us last night. But efforts such as the interfaith dialogue

are making this possible and setting an example for others to follow. I would note however that all the religious leaders offering prayers at the opening reception were men. A few of the world's religions have evolved to the extent that they have welcomed a more active, equal role for women. But many still have a long way to go in this regard. This will become an increasingly serious issue that many of the world's main religions will have to deal with both individually and collectively in forums such as these. Nonetheless, religious diplomacy's time has clearly come. As Scott Thomas argues in his study of Diplomacy and Religion, "the changing nature of conflict has exposed the limits of conventional diplomacy in resolving these new conflicts in a global era, and this has opened up new opportunities for religious actors involved in diplomacy." What he calls "faith-based diplomacy" has emerged, which promotes dialogue within and between religious traditions. This is particularly true, and necessary, in the Islamic world. With a new generation of theologians and politicians, it is recognized that there is a key role for religious leaders and faith-based diplomacy in the Middle East. Some national leaders, former US President Obama among them, have alluded to faith-based diplomacy but little has been done to institutionalize this more holistic approach to the socio-political healing of a conflict that has taken place. Diplomacy aims at conflict resolution; faith-based diplomacy looks beyond this critical aspect to also address the restoration of the political order that has suffered from war and injustice, and the reconciliation of individuals and social groups. Reconciliation is the key, and this is a basic tenant of almost all religious persuasions, so it provides common ground upon which to build. Track II diplomacy is where we can most easily and quickly infuse faith-based diplomacy by inviting religious leaders to our security-related dialogues to broaden the discussion but also to broaden the recommended solutions. Such an effort presents an opportunity to apply moral insights and religious concepts towards the development of peaceful settlements of conflicts through diplomatic techniques.

Nika Saedi discussed her experience from working in 40 countries on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in association with the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP). Over the last 20 years, the international community has been concerned about countering extremist groups such as the far left, the far right, radicalism, ultra-nationalism, fanaticism, etc. All threaten our pluralist communities. Security-based counterterrorism measures need to understand community dynamics. The securitization of extremism that shrinks civil society is alarming. International cooperation action is essential on the ground. Extremism is a transnational threat. No region is immune. Violent extremism is humanity's cry for help. Opportunity to think about global unity in a way we haven't had before. UNDP is framed within secretary general plan of action to prevent extremism. CVE is important for fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 16. There is no universally accepted definition of CVE, but it usually refers to beliefs and actions of individuals who are motivated by ideological beliefs to justify violent action for political purposes. Religious values and practices are often deeply entwined. Practitioners are going beyond simplistic framing of understanding conflict. Attention is given to the fact that involved individuals and groups are not always religious. Sometimes religion is used as a proxy for group identity. Thinking of it as only religious is dangerous. We need to reframe our understanding to attend to how religion gets used as a tool to post facto justify violence. Studies show we assume religion is the root cause more often than it actually is. [A study](#) by the Network of Traditional and Religious Peacemakers of 1700 Boko Haram fighters in Nigeria found that only 9% joined because of religious motivations. Stronger motivating factors included the need for a sense of belonging and connection, peer pressure, social-economic factors, and ideological motivation. Extremist groups have the lowest level of literacy.⁴² Only a few say they

⁴² See UNDP Report *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment* at <http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/>

understand what religion is about. Faith-based organizations are often present at the local level. Interreligious dialogue is useful and needed, but also be aware that labeling everything as interfaith is dangerous. Sometimes people have multiple identities. We should not always call it interfaith. Serving together will be the best peacebuilding method. Women's organizations have a strong capacity to tap into stories. For example, women in the Middle East were able to redefine the meaning of the word "jihad" as including giving blood for those who have lost blood. When it comes to religion, her colleagues often feel like they don't know how to engage with it, so they don't engage religion at all. There is power in consultation. Look for the voices you don't hear. Although women are often included in talks, they are seldom included in actual decision-making. Women are the ones telling us when they see problems—they understand the pulse of the community. But we can't just use them to inform us when there is a problem—we need to engage them also in solving the problems.

Key Points Made:

- Best practices in peacemaking include basing inclusion on clear guaranteed principles, valuing and ensuring a sustained dialogue process, valuing people over territorial control, bringing justice and security, protecting human rights and attending to gender dynamics.
- Peacemaking involves fostering global citizenship by emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life, promotion of diversity, and maintenance of imaginative empathy to connect to those who are suffering in distant places.
- Discriminatory mindsets overemphasize an attachment to difference in ways that interfere with the celebration of diversity in society.
- There is an alarming trend of securitizing CVE in ways that shrinks civil society.
- Track II diplomacy is where faith actors can most effectively engage in security-related dialogues to broaden the discussion and contribute to development of peaceful settlements of conflicts through diplomatic techniques.
- Violent extremism is humanity's cry for help, presenting us with an opportunity to think about global unity in a way we haven't done before.
- Attention must be paid to how religion gets used as a tool to post facto justify violence.
- People have multiple identities so avoid labeling everything as interfaith.
- Serving together is the best method for peacebuilding.
- Women are often included in talks, but seldom included in actual decision-making.
- Women should play a more prominent role in the decision-making process.
- Cross-border dialogue and cooperation is needed to address the increasing cross-border, interconnected forms of violent extremism
- Challenges to peacebuilding include government inflexibility, measurement, positioning women to be decision makers

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- To the G20 Leaders subsidize and engage with religious groups and youth to create programs that address social divisions.
- That the G20 Leaders implement public school programs that address social divisions.
- That the G20 Leaders implement a program to raise students' internet literacy.

INTERFAITH AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE FOR ACTION

Description: Interreligious dialogue and action takes many forms in different world regions. At the global level, efforts to highlight the common good and to speak truth to power are significant.

Localized efforts address practical challenges in many ways. This panel drew on best practices and took stock of efforts to link the moral authority of religious communities in relation to global agendas. Speakers were asked to respond to the theme of interreligious dialogue and the Sustainable Development Goals. Chaired by Brian Adams (Director, Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University), speakers were James T. Christie (Professor of Whole World Ecumenism and Dialogue Theology, University of Winnipeg), Kiran Bali (Magistrate and Global Chair, United Religions Initiative), Chris Ferguson (General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches), Christian Krieger (President, Council of European Churches), Fletcher Harper (Executive Director, GreenFaith; Global Steering Committee, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative), and Mohammed Elsanoussi (Executive Director, Network for Religions & Traditions).

Presentations Overview:

Brian Adams introduced the panel as part of the peace theme and explained how interreligious dialogue contributes to fulfillment of the SDGs.

James T. Christie began his work with the Forum in the context of the 2007 Cologne's G8 Interfaith Shadow Summit. He spoke on issues principally internal to the Christian tradition but that are also relevant to the interfaith witnessing of, and promotion of, the SDGs. So, back to the future, following the 2005 Ecumenical Meeting, there was a 2006 Moscow Interfaith G8 Shadow Summit. But, with no disrespect intended, the 2006 conference was a showpiece that, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, helped affirm a new relationship that was developing between church and state in that context. It was the next year, at the Germany Summit, that the shadow summits began to be restructured to find a new way to engage in conversation between the religious communities worldwide and those nations that held much of the economic power in the global community. It was kind of a suspect engagement because both the G8/G7 and G20 are self-appointed clubs. The first task was to find a new way to speak to political and economic power that was neither co-opted nor unnecessarily confrontative. Since 2007, we have largely been able to achieve that. But there were other goals, as well. By gathering together with a common objective, we would also enhance and improve discourse and dialogue between and amongst religious communities. We have done much of that, as well. But there was yet a third implicit task – intra-faith dialogue. We ourselves will be changed. That has been true in the context of the Canadian church as a consequence of hosting the 2010 G8 Summit. All three of these objectives have been achieved. But, I had a disturbing experience in Montreal after a dialogue. A Romanian priest of significant repute reminded the gathering that we were only 7 years away from the 1700th year anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea. The First Council of Nicaea in AD 325 was the first ecumenical council of the Christian church. It was a big deal in terms of the early relationship between the Christian community in West Asia and the political authorities of Constantine who convened the Council of Nicaea in order to develop a parallel religious structure that would enable him to employ religious authority to uphold the authority of the empire. Some may dispute my interpretation in that Constantine is considered a saint, but for others, Constantine is *not* a saint. Many have argued that the challenge is that Constantine's co-opting of the Nicaean process is what established Christendom – implicitly an unholy relationship between church and state – an unholy alliance from which we have been attempting to recover for 1700 years. How shall we mark Nicaea? Will it be a simple celebration or something more complex? Will it be an opportunity to reflect on challenges we have not yet faced? The anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 Disputations was a good way of blending the two. Our internal homework is to assist the Christian members of this ongoing dialogue to come to grips with the implications of Nicaea and what it will mean for how to relate to political

structures in the years ahead. The implications going forward are: 1) Explicitly engage in the religious relationship to power and redefine that which was only implicitly named in 2007; 2) Encourage the G20 to develop safe-spaces for multi-faith dialogue and the opportunity to engage in this kind of conversation amongst ourselves and with political authorities, 3) Request that the G20 as a whole determine within the bureaucracies of individual countries, and within G20, the establishment of someone within Sherpa staff to be a permanent liaison so we can continue this kind of relationship. In 2017 attempts to celebrate Luther's 95 Disputations was a good way of blending the two.

Kiran Bali discussed the work of [United Religions Initiative](#)'s cooperation circles. URI is the world's largest grassroots interfaith network of action. A major area of focus in these circles is ecological overdraft – many of us have a bank account; what does it feel like to be overdrawn? We are overdrawing on our ecological resources. The beauty of the volunteers who participate in the circles is that they come from diverse religious traditions. Diverse people come together to take action to help us get back into credit. Cooperation circles focus on creating awareness and capacity building. The [Mother Earth Network](#) is in Nairobi, Kenya. All traditions talk of the earth as being a divine mother. Why have we let mother suffer in this way? It is important to measure the environmental impact we make. One pound of beef uses 25,000 gallons of water, 55 feet of rainforest, 16 pounds of grain, and 80 kg of carbon dioxide. How can we change to make a difference? Education, education, education. A group in Cambodia is teaching children at a young age to plant trees and care for the earth. Health and social services - we have a cooperation circle working with children and mothers in Palestine at a hospital. We have volunteers working in war zones. Community building – to build a community that is underpinned by respect, compassion, and understanding moves the culture from tolerance to acceptance. Tolerance is a good word, but it can be interpreted as 'I put up with you.' Let's see if we can move to: 'I accept you as you are.' Peacebuilding in the Middle East is doing teambuilding. Human rights - we talk about inequalities in society. What are we doing to reduce the gap? Are people less-abled getting their dignity? A key value associated with dignity is being listened to. Do we let them speak? Do we listen? When we take action, do we take action based on what they say? Compassion for all living beings – not just the human beings; we share our planet with animals and nature. What are we doing to explore how we can spread peace to them? Are we spreading that peace to the rest of creation? That is something we need to ask ourselves. Regarding recommendations - the people in grassroots communities are the change-makers. We have to translate words into actions as follows: First, promote better mental health and overall health in countries through introducing spirituality into clinical practice through partnership with FBOs. We listen to people to help guide them. Second, declare a Climate Emergency in the respective countries followed up by an action plan that includes faith communities. Finally, educate on sustainable living towards tackling poverty, climate change and violence and have faith communities as enablers of this work through capacity building. Integrate these topics into the official curriculums. Faith communities are essential to implementation of these policies, so partner with us. The beauty of the cooperation circle approach is bringing together diverse people from diverse backgrounds & walks of life to take action that gets us back to ecological credit.

Chris Ferguson talked about how we are living in a moment of crisis that threatens the future of human life on this planet. We have twelve years to fix it. Yet, by all estimates, we are not doing enough, and what we are doing, we are not doing fast enough. We understand that this is not just an ecological issue that requires changes in lifestyles, but it is a matter of economic systems that are making this planet uninhabitable. Since the crisis involves questions of life, quality of life, and justice, it is also a deeply faith-based and spiritual question. The fact is that we cannot fix

our ecological crisis unless we change our economic system. We are living in an unjust economic system in which the few benefits from the exploitation of the many. Today, global economic inequality represents a moral crisis. The world's ten richest billionaires own 745 billion dollars in combined wealth - a sum greater than the total goods and services most nations produce on an annual basis. The world's richest 1%, those with more than 1 million dollars, own 45% of the world's wealth. What is worse, those with extreme wealth have often accumulated their fortunes on the backs of people around the world who work for poor wages and under dangerous conditions. These are most often racialized and Indigenous communities and women. [The World Communion of Reformed Churches](#) is a global body of 100 million Christians from the Reformed, Presbyterian, First Reformation and United Traditions. The uniting traditions have long recognized our broken relationships with each other and the earth. In 2004, at our General Assembly at Accra, we spoke from a clear faith perspective that the economic and ecological injustices of today's global economy require the Reformed family to respond as a matter of faith. Rooted in Christian scripture we confessed that "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it."⁴³ In the process of developing the [Accra Confession](#), we recognized that there is a dramatic convergence between the suffering of the people and the damage done to the rest of creation. We understood that the root causes of massive threats to life are, above all, the product of an unjust economic system that is defended, and protected by, political and military might. We acknowledged that economic systems are a matter of life and death, and that our calling is to a God of life who offers the fullness of life to all. In the Accra Confession, therefore we said, 'We believe in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. We live under the promise that Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in fullness.'⁴⁴ Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit, we open ourselves to the reality of our world. We believe that God is sovereign over all creation. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"⁴⁵ Therefore, we reject the current world economic order imposed by global neoliberal capitalism and any other economic system, including absolute planned economies, which defy God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable and the whole of creation from the fullness of life. We reject any claim of economic, political and military empire which subverts God's sovereignty over life and acts contrary to God's just rule. The present global system is all consuming; it has extended its tentacles to the far corners of the earth, prying open new markets, and siphoning out resources with utter disregard for human community and the environment. It is all-subsuming because it has been able to commodify everything, and reduce all things to the logic of profit-making. In such a scenario, the present global economic system not only makes strong allies of global and local hierarchies such as patriarchy, race and caste, but it also subsumes these to the logic of the market system. It further even commodifies its very contradictions; therefore, if class antagonism is the contradiction, capitalism manages to commodify war and even dissent. If the environmental degradation is the contradiction, then carbon is commodified and is traded on the global markets, organic foods flood our supermarkets, and we are encouraged to 'buy green'. If loneliness and alienation are the contradictions, we are encouraged to buy a pill to cure our depression! The Accra Confession embraced a covenanting God who made a covenant with all of creation.⁴⁶ God has brought into being an earth community based on the vision of justice and peace. The covenant is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the market place.⁴⁷ It is an economy of grace for the household of all of creation. Jesus shows that this is an inclusive covenant in which the poor and marginalized are

⁴³ Psalm 24, *Holy Bible*.

⁴⁴ John 10, Verse 10, *Holy Bible*.

⁴⁵ Psalm 24, Verse 1, *Holy Bible*.

⁴⁶ Genesis 9, Verses 8-12, *Holy Bible*.

⁴⁷ Isaiah 55, Verse 1, *Holy Bible*.

preferential partners and calls us to put justice for the “least of these”⁴⁸ at the centre of the community of life. All creation is blessed and included in this covenant.⁴⁹ Therefore, we reject the culture of rampant consumerism and the competitive greed and selfishness of the neoliberal global market system or any other system which claims there is no alternative. What is necessary in this moment is a discerning imagination that is able to understand what it is that is actually going on. We need to understand why corporations are receiving bailouts while people are being rendered homeless, why people are being displaced in the name of development projects, why our public services are being systematically dismantled, and why there is this urge towards privatization of essential services. We need the skills of social analysis to be able to decisively determine the present context. A social analysis that is done from the perspective of faith and keeps the interests of the most vulnerable in mind - an analysis that is able to connect the economic, social, political, environmental and spiritual aspects of life - to enable us to understand the interconnections between patriarchies, militarism, racism, hunger, and religious fundamentalism. But we cannot stop with social analysis; while such analysis will enable us to understand what is going on and denounce that which is undesirable, what we also need is to be able to imagine another world. In our commitment to covenant for the economy and the earth, we called a meeting in Sao Paulo along with the [World Council of Churches](#) and the [Council for World Mission](#) to see how we can imagine another world. We realized that we were called find a new and just international financial architecture oriented towards satisfying the needs of people and the realization of all economic, social and cultural rights and human dignity. In this document, we clearly stated that “we need a transformative theological praxis that not only delegitimizes, displaces and dismantles the present social and economic order, but also envisions alternatives that emerge from the margins.” Such architecture must be focused on reducing the intolerable chasm between the rich and the poor and on preventing ecological destruction. This requires a system which does not serve greed, but which embraces alternative economies that foster a spirituality of enough and a lifestyle of simplicity, solidarity, social inclusion and justice. Through a process that we called the New International Financial and Economic Architecture we sought to imagine an alternative economic system which would take into account overcoming greed, social inclusion, gender and ecological justice, offer hope and link spirituality to economy. The Sao Paulo Document called for fiscal transaction tax, progressive taxation ecological taxation and for the addressing of tax evasion and avoidance. It further called for the ensuring access by poor and marginalized sectors to basic financial services as well as gender-just fiscal and social protection. The ideas of the Sao Paulo document were crystallized into addressing three key thematic areas for the next three years of work. The first year will concentrate on Justice for People and the Planet: Addressing Inequality and Climate Change, in particular this year, we will be launching a campaign for tax justice. The second year will concentrate on Building Alliances for Justice in the financial and economic systems and will concentrate on alternative banking, regulation and democratization of global financial institutions. The third year will focus on living sufficiently and sustainably, and will address de-growth perspectives as an alternative to growth economies. While we urge the United Nations and the Governments of the world to push ahead on the Sustainable Development Goals, we feel that these are not enough to ensure a just world for all. We understand that the 17 SDG’s do not adequately take into account the question of power and do not address systemic issues of colonialism, imperialism or racism. That they do not address adequately the privatization of public goods and that they ultimately turn to the market system for solutions when we have grown to realize that the market system is the problem. The SDGs do not address the unholy power of international corporations that are invested in the profit principle. We, as people of

⁴⁸ Matthew 25, Verse 40, *Holy Bible*.

⁴⁹ Hosea 2, Verses 18 and following, *Holy Bible*.

faith, must always and at all times place people over profit. The world cannot be as it is; it has to change. We realize that we cannot do this by ourselves, that we need like-minded partners of all faith and people of no faith. We understand that we need to turn from an interreligious dialogue that seeks to find commonality (or difference) in doctrine to a dialogue of life that would seek to struggle for a life in all its fullness for all. That we once more, as people of faith, need to insist that economic systems are moral and spiritual questions, and that they therefore must be held accountable. Structures built on supremacy and concentration of power are wrong from a faith perspective and go against the creation of life. Inequality is an entry point. If you don't attend to this goal, the others are not possible. There needs to be a structural entry point. With inequality, one place to start is in the news to focus on tax policies - but focus on just taxation. All these measures will make an immediate impact in terms of inequality. The objection is the rich and powerful who say it will delay growth. Let's hope so, because growth is killing us. It will interfere with building projects – let's hope so, because maybe it opens up opportunities with smaller projects. Let's hope that our interfaith engagement draws people to the real agenda. On a lighter note there is an old Canadian joke about a person lost in a rural area. They saw a farmer working in the field and said, 'I urgently need to get to this town. How do I get there?' The farmer said, 'If I was going there urgently, I wouldn't start from here.' The absolute premises of the G20 discussions are wrongheaded. We don't need to motivate more growth and defend the current capitalist system. We need a real economy focused on people and planet. Begin by talking about the environmental crisis by addressing the structure that makes the current system. We have tools like taxation. We disagree that a few self-appointed wealthy nations determine how the world's economy should work and how it impacts God's creation. If you want to get there urgently, don't try to please the current power brokers and work within what is here, but put your eye on saying: We need to change course. Focus on the intersection between inequalities, climate crisis, and justice. Do so by focusing on transaction taxes, wealth taxes and just taxation to keep our eyes on the ball.

Christian Krieger talked about the [Conference of European Churches](#), which is an organization that encompasses 114 European Member Churches. It includes the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches, the historic and Free Protestant Churches, as well as churches from the Anglican and Old Catholic traditions. Our members can be minority or majority churches in the forty European countries where they exist. They represent a broad spectrum of Church-state relations, going from possibly being the established church to *laïcité*, the norm in France where there is a strict separation between churches and the state. Most are national churches, some are cross national. All of them today are confronted with the evolution of western societies. Let me mention three aspects: a) an ongoing cultural and religious pluralization; b) an ongoing secularization – in France today more than 50% of society affirm that they do not belong to any religious body; c) a culture of singularization (a kind of radicalization of individual behaviour). Existing in this kind of framework, churches and church communities often feel weakened. They concentrate their efforts on survival and their own future, whilst in society more and more people suffer from a kind of religious illiteracy. They do not know much about religion or how to deal with ostentatious religious behaviour. They just feel insecure or attacked. Peace is high on the agenda of the Conference of European churches. In fact, the organization was established during the cold war to build bridges of reconciliation and solidarity between eastern and western churches and nations. For that reason, and for the sociological considerations mentioned earlier, I will focus on the implementation of the UN agenda 2030 Goal number 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This is a key goal in the work of the Conference of European Churches. Inclusion is important for democracies but also for sociocultural cohesion. The [Charta Oecumenica](#) was published in April 2001, a time when

Europe was still a self-evident fact. It was signed by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Roman Catholic Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE). Its goal was to mark the beginning of the millennium by calling the churches in Europe to a dialogue, unity and action, and particularly to make them aware of their joint responsibility in facing the issues of peace and justice in Europe. In the Charta Oecumenica, CEC and CCEE want to make a contribution to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and they, therefore, call on churches and church communities to seek reconciliation with peoples and cultures. For the Charta Oecumenica "Reconciliation involves promoting social justice within and among all peoples; above all, this means closing the gap between rich and poor and overcoming unemployment. Together we will do our part towards giving migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers a humane reception in Europe." And "to counteract any form of nationalism which leads to the oppression of other peoples and national minorities and to engage ourselves for non-violent resolutions." The Charta also calls us to strengthen community with Judaism, for with the people of Israel, "the people of the Covenant which God has never terminated" Christians "are bound up in a unique community". That also means their responsibility "to oppose all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the church and in society". We are called to cultivate relations with Islam, aware that while in some places there are good contacts and neighbourly relations, there remains strong reservation and prejudice on both sides. The Charta Oecumenica recommends speaking "with one another about our faith in one God, and clarifying ideas on human rights." The Charta calls us to encounter other religions and world views with awareness that "plurality of religious and non-confessional beliefs and ways of life has become a feature of European culture." The Charta Oecumenica recommends us "to take seriously the critical questions of others, and try together to conduct fair discussions with them", and commits the churches "to recognise the freedom of religion and conscience of these individuals and communities and to defend their right to practise their faith or convictions, whether singly or in groups, privately or publicly." In the sense of the Charta Oecumenica, dialogue is not a simple confrontation of points of views, a juxtaposition or collision of thoughts. Dialogue means entering into an open and receptive exchange, which can include the possibility of being changed by the thoughts or beliefs of another. CEC has three strategic aims, and the first one is promoting peace, justice and reconciliation in the broader Europe, with the specific goals of: promoting peace and reconciliation; contributing to the future of the European project; working on education on democracy, diversity, and pluralism; and supporting interreligious dialogue. How do we work on these goals? I will give you a few examples. CEC is working to establish a peace task force to act as the mediator in church conflicts and also to train and enable churches to intervene in conflict situations. In several seminars dealing with some of the roots of populism and nationalism, we have included a reflection on feelings of fears and dissatisfaction. Churches are based at the grassroots level, and therefore able to be in touch with people, to listen to them, to try to understand them, as well as telling them of the dangers and risks of nationalism. We will have a seminar designing a handbook on populism, to help churches and local communities deal with this phenomenon. We will also organize a consultation on inclusive ecclesiology, to help us welcome and relate with migrant churches. We have an annual [summer school on human rights](#). In two weeks, about seventy experts on human rights will meet together to study the theme "Freedom of Expression and Populism". Here is a [short video](#) of our last year's Summer School on Human Rights which had an interfaith component and discussed in an open manner religious freedom and populism and asked young Muslims and Jews what more churches could do to help in eradicating anti-Semitism and Islam-phobia.

Fletcher Harper works with partners in 18 countries. If there was a saying capturing how they engage, it would be: "Is this a private fight or can anybody get involved?" We face an undeniable

crisis in relation to environmental concerns. Governments and our own faith groups are not yet acting in a way consistent with the crisis. The interactions and campaigns we undertake are aimed most often with diverse faith groups but also key partners with civil society to engage governments in a critical manner about what they are doing and what they need to be doing. When we look at the climate crisis, the dramatically unsustainable use of fossil fuels, and the state capture by lobbyists - they get huge government subsidies and spend more than \$1 billion daily searching for new sources of oil and gas – business as usual is untenable. Nature industries and governments have said on paper and publicly that they support just and rapid transitions to clean energy economies, but their actions in no way match that. From a scientific and public documentation perspective this is undeniable. What posture should religious groups be taking in relation to that? We coordinate religious action on divestment. We have equipped well over 150 religious groups on a global scale to make commitments themselves to divest from the fossil fuel sector and call on governments to adopt a climate policy strategy. This is not easy. In making commitments commensurate with the challenges we face, there are powerful religious actors that are deeply uncomfortable with the new traditions that need to be made. I can speak about the context in the U.S. where there are evangelical groups deeply allied with the fossil fuel industry and they fall in the camp of climate skeptics. It is also important to say that the situation is not limited to the U.S. The fossil fuel industry controls Brazil's politics, and tries to open up the Amazon for deforestation. They lobby against the rights of Indigenous people. The kinds of commitments we talk about here are not supported by the most powerful religious players in any given context which is why we partner not only with religious partners, but partners in civil society. We can't achieve our goals if we act on our own. Coalition building is not just on an interfaith level – it also involves labor unions, human rights groups, etc. We have to be good conversation partners and good partners in that regard. A second thing is when it comes to change, our theory of change is that the religious sector has the unique capacity to speak to the human family in terms of individual behavior, institutional behavior, and on the systemic policy level. [GreenFaith](#) works on all three of those levels. On the individual level, we coordinate an Initiative called [Living the Change](#) to adopt 1.5 degree compliant lifestyles, dramatic reduction in consuming animal products, reducing car travel and flying, and adopting 100% renewable energy use at the household level. We have a process to help individuals commit to and follow through on those behaviors. Religious institutions can foster open conversation about these uncomfortable topics. The social science research is clear that people won't make the changes if they don't have somewhere to have honest discussion about it. On the institutional level, we have models of the kind of future we want to see. We partner with several development organizations and philanthropic groups in a campaign called [Shine](#) to commit to SDG 7 where we get investors to invest in climate solutions that end energy poverty in the hardest to reach areas (Uganda). We bring partners together with renewable energy partners to understand how religious organizations can host installation of electrification on their properties, but also to serve as anchor grids to electrify their communities. This relies on collaboration between religious actors and civil society players. The final piece is the [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#) that includes Religions for Peace, WCC, etc. This initiative is focused where the rainforests are located to educate and equip religious leaders to speak to the policy initiatives and policy context in those countries. It is very complicated because of the state capture there by influential companies who make a lot of money, and populist inspired governments who are not interested in protecting Indigenous peoples who are the guardians of the forest. The challenge is how to raise religious voices in those contexts to challenge the status quo, enforce existing laws, and call for new laws where people are threatened and sometimes killed. We look for a [sanctuary program](#) where they offer protective sanctuary to Indigenous peoples when their lives are threatened. It requires entering

into constructive intentional tension with political actors. The executive director of Green Faith has a group working with a diverse range of spiritual and religious partners.

Mohammed Elsanoussi represents a network of Indigenous peacemakers that was created by the United Nations in 2012. The potential of religious actors is underutilized. We need to find a mechanism to engage traditional Indigenous actors. Our focus is to advocate for religious and traditional actors and their role. We are happy that the UN realizes that and is finding ways to further engage us to carry out [Agenda 2030](#). We celebrate our interest and engagement to bring the role of religious Indigenous leaders into this space to address our common problems that we face. We also celebrate policy makers who are more interested in engaging religion than in the past. The creation of the Faith-based Advisory Council from the Interagency Task Force where the UN consults is a result of ten years' work resulting from work of Azar Karam. This is a positive step, but since we are talking about people, peace and planet, I want to focus on people. If we address people's questions, we address the planet and peace issues. Investing in people with the right understanding will positively reflect on the others. From my own tradition of Islam, if we invest in people, it will result in stewardship of the earth, and peace. Second point, interfaith is of critical importance because we need to build that trust within our own various traditions so we can build the route and create a safe way for interreligious dialogue and understanding. We are experiencing this. We have critical examples. One example in the Central African Republic – we brought 55 Imams to KAICIID to engage with Muslim scholarship. The experience gave them confidence to engage in interreligious dialogue. That gave them confidence with the Holy Father when he visited. They welcomed Pope Francis in the most dangerous area because we had built the trust. The Chief Imam welcomed His Holiness the Pope and engaged in dialogue in spite of the danger. Many governments advised His Holiness not to go there, but he decided to go along with a slogan, "Faith over Fear." We want religious communities to work within their own communities to build the dialogue. The Muslim communities today created the [Marrakesh Declaration](#) which says religious numerical minorities living in the majority Muslim communities should practice their religion freely because they are essential components of this community. It is a great contribution for Muslim communities to advance peace. We need to encourage other communities to come up with their own documents, as well. Catholicism, for example, had [Vatican II](#). Two weeks ago, Muslim scholars came together to create a document focused on dialogue. When we talk about interfaith, we must ensure that our interfaith dialogue is based on contextualized theology. If we are living in Tokyo, there is a theology from here. We want them to look into the interpretation of the text based on the context they are living in. If we are not able to do that, then we allow outside theologies to come in and not fit in. A third point is inclusivity and SDG Goal 5. My call here today is that we are not implementing inclusivity. It is in words only. We see it here, too. We talk about it, but we are not engaging. We, as religious communities, need to build on the positive that we are able to create right now even as we acknowledge the past. Engagement between policy makers and religious actors is important. Another critical SDG is Goal 17 that calls for strengthening partnerships between civil society and governments. We work on this space with religious and traditional actors. My recommendation to the G20 is that they decide nothing about us, without us. A call to the global actors who are engaging religious and traditional leaders for all of us to make sure that when we talk about religious actors and leaders, have them at the table to bring to us the local context. A number of countries are now engaging religious actors. It is a positive thing. It is important to address these issues and the concerns coming from this kind of engagement. Yesterday needs to be highlighted. Policymakers discover religious leaders looking for right ones, and they have their own criteria. There may be a need to bring the governments with appointed ambassadors together in a meeting to identify how we can altogether come up with a mechanism to engage religious actors and leaders without political agendas. Finally, I

promise to give recommendation SDG Goal 5 - Gender Equality. It is time to agree upon guidelines for our conferences in terms of involvement of women and SDG 5 and stick to it if we want to be serious on this issue.

Key Points Made:

- National churches in western societies are coping with patterns of pluralization, secularization, and singularization.
- Diapraxis should be inclusive, diverse, and locally contextualized.
- Governments and our own faith groups are not yet acting in a way consistent with the crisis in relation to environmental concerns.
- Coalition building must be broader than the interfaith level, expanding to include civil society, labor unions, and human rights groups.
- The Interfaith Forum needs to use discerning imaginations to socially analyze why corporations are receiving bailouts while people are being rendered homeless, why people are being displaced in the name of development projects, why our public services are being systematically dismantled, and why there is this urge towards privatization of essential services.
- Based on this interdisciplinary analysis, the Interfaith Forum needs to draw on faith traditions to imagine another world.
- A structural entry point into imagining a possible future is by focusing on transaction taxes, wealth taxes and just taxation.
- The Interfaith Forum should begin preparations to explicitly address religious relationships to power in preparation for marking the 1700th year anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea.
- The Interfaith Forum should agree upon gender equality guidelines for our conferences in terms of involvement of women.

Recommended Points for the G20:

- That the G20 include care for social and cultural inclusion at the global level as part of peaceful and inclusive societies.
- That the G20 Leaders develop safe-spaces for multi-faith dialogue that provides opportunities to engage in explicit conversations about religious relationships to power amongst ourselves and with political authorities.
- That the G20 as a whole determine within the bureaucracies of individual countries, and within the G20, the establishment of a position within Sherpa staff to be a permanent liaison with religious communities for the purpose of providing opportunities to engage in explicit conversations about religious relationships to power among ourselves and with political authorities.
- That the G20 Leaders promote in their respective countries better mental and overall health in countries through introducing spirituality into clinical practice through partnerships with faith-based organizations.
- That the G20 Leaders declare a Climate Emergency in their respective countries followed up by action plans that includes faith communities.
- That the G20 Leaders partner with faith communities to integrate education into official curricula that discusses sustainable living that tackles poverty, climate change and violence.
- That the G20 Leaders decide nothing about religious and Indigenous communities without including their participation and collaboration in the policy making process.

PEOPLE WORKING SESSIONS

EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO A CHILDHOOD

Description: This year is the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This session explored progress made, and challenges still to overcome in ensuring that every child can truly develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy environment and in conditions of freedom and dignity. Religious communities have the moral authority to challenge violence against children when it is justified and condoned in the name of religion but also more generally. The session examined ways of protecting both the child and the nurturing environment of the family. It highlighted religious leadership and actions to protect children in the most vulnerable situations, and challenged the global community to continue the work of translating a commitment to end violence against children into action on critical issues facing children across the globe. Care for child victims of refugee and displacement situations, human trafficking, and poverty, are central to this challenge. The issue belongs centrally on G20 agendas. Without addressing these urgent issues for children, the 2030 Agenda is unlikely to be achieved. Thus, the 30th Anniversary of the CRC is an opportunity to take stock, celebrate, and renew the commitment to the realization of children's rights. Speakers were asked to identify actions worthy of the 30th Anniversary on the theme of protecting and nurturing children in today's challenging world. Chaired by Ganoune Diop (Director of Public Affairs & Religious Liberty, Seventh-day Adventist Church), speakers were Mustafa Ali (Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children; Director of Arigatou International), Jean Duff (President, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities), Nobuhiko Katayama (Executive Advisor, World Vision Japan), and Rabbi Diana Gerson (The Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities).

Presentations Overview:

Ganoune Diop The session moderator opened by outlining many of the key challenges faced by youth across the world, including that 262 million youth are out of school, ¼ of children will live in areas with limited water resources by 2040, that an estimated 2 million children could be killed by violence between now and 2030, that children are migrating across borders and being forcibly displaced, and children are being separated from their families and detained because of their migration status. We could call our time the age of uncertainty, with the uncertainty referring to the identity. Religions for Peace continues to work for peacemaking that counteracts the history of religious violence. Violence against children, and in particular children on the move, has reached epic proportions. A promise was made to children to protect and fulfill their rights by adopting an international legal framework called the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). We must reassess where we are on the journey of restoration of all to their full humanity, including children. During this conference, we will explore how much progress has been made and identify challenges still to overcome if we are to ensure that every child can truly develop physically, morally, and spiritually in an environment of freedom and dignity. It is imperative that we care for child refugees. The UN General Assembly 3rd committee concluded their discussion on children by discussing children vulnerable to violence during humanitarian crises. This should be a focus of the G20 as well as the work of faith communities.

Mustafa Ali began by highlighting that this year marks 30 years since the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was unanimously adopted. The CRC has been ratified by virtually every Member State of the United Nations, making it the most widely accepted human rights treaty. In 1959, the Rights of the Child was declared and so we are also celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Since 1989, many countries have

developed and legislated laws in line with the CRC. A lot more care, and attention for children and their needs have been achieved. A child born today is 50 times less likely to die of hunger or treatable disease than in 1989. Most children are today born in to families, communities and nations that understand the special place of that child, and therefore the care they need. Thanks to the CRC, we not only have healthier environment for our children, we are also developing them physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially, better than we did before 1989. And although we have made remarkable progress in the last 30 years, a lot still need be done to overcome old and new challenges facing children. Many children find themselves in environments where their rights, freedoms and dignity are violated, or threatened. Every year, 1 Billion Children still face different forms of physical, psychosocial and sexual violence; 120 Million children are still trafficked and sexually violated every year; children are recruited into gangs for violence and extremist groups; and the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, trafficking and forced labour, all constitute some serious challenges to millions of children world over. The Dignity of the child online is seriously breached, with millions robbed of their innocence. Religious leaders and faith communities have the moral authority to challenge all these forms of violence against children. Some of the violence is, unfortunately, condoned and justified in the name of religion. At the Global Network of Religions for Children GNRC 5th Forum in Panama in 2017, some 527 participants, mainly faith, grassroots, governmental and intergovernmental actors, committed to act. Religious leaders and faith communities made ten commitments to address violence against children. Today, Forum participants are individually and collectively working to address violence against children, and challenging the national and global communities to translate all laws and conventions in to action. For example, [Arigatou International](#), in partnership with [UN SRSG on Violence against Children](#), [UNICEF](#), [KAICIID](#), and others, are engaged in a study focusing on the CRC. The Study, *Interfaith Perspectives and the Implementation of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child*, will include a series of recommendations based on consultations with a diverse range of religious and legal scholars, children and youth. The Study's overall objectives are to: a) Highlight the common values inherent in all the major religions that are reflected in the CRC's principles and standards; b) Document and give visibility to the important role played by religious leaders and faith communities in advocating for the rights and well-being of all children; c) Provide an interreligious perspective derived from a diversity of religious traditions to the international discourse on the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the CRC; and d) Raise awareness among diverse religious communities about the importance of promoting the implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols to help ensure that all children everywhere enjoy all their rights and develop to their fullest potential. We hope that this will be an important addition to our understanding on how faith actors are grappling with the CRC and the issues raised. We also hope that the Study will trigger more positive action for children, and re-invigorate how faith communities engage in addressing violence against children.

Jean Duff talked about how ending violence against children is a key component of CP. The UN defines violence against children as all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. UNICEF's Annual Results Report 2017 underscores the scale of violence and vulnerability facing children today noting that every 7 minutes an adolescent is killed by an act of violence, 7 out of 10 children aged 2-4 years old worldwide face violent discipline in the home, 150 million adolescent girls marry before their 18th birthday, almost one in five homicide victims worldwide is a child (70% of whom are boys), 1 in 4 children under 18 are working in the poorest countries (estimated at 168 million), and almost a quarter of all children live in countries affected by humanitarian crises. Reports and

campaigns indicate that there is an absence of faith-based involvement in these issues.⁵⁰ The scale of violence and vulnerability requires coordinated response among stakeholders, but faith contribution is often overlooked. LFCs provide a wide range of informal social protection and safety nets in fragile resource-limited settings, but this is frequently still undocumented in a rigorous evidence-based way. Mechanisms of faith can be engaged to challenge violence against children drawing on their sacred texts. They can put forward ethics regarding the good family, parent and teacher. They can develop rituals that bless children, and acknowledge baptisms and coming of age rituals, and they can involve children in addressing the culture of violence. Faith leaders can play a potential ‘triage’ role as first responders to recognise, report and refer and cascade important information into congregations. They need to be connected to other community systems as part of a multi-agency response. But there are challenges because faith leaders are also active in direct abuse, indirect cover ups, offering underlying justifications. Faith traditions uniquely draw on and engage faith resources and authority through prayer, sermons, sacred texts and religious rituals. This can play a role in transforming beliefs and practices that underpin child maltreatment, reaffirming religious imperatives for protection and prevention and stand against moral normalisation or silencing of abuse. The faith influence is a mixed blessing. The faith community is also active in direct abuse, indirect cover ups offering underlying justifications with two predominant types of violence: Sexual abuse (see the [Murphy Report](#)) and corporal punishment (shaping relations between caregivers and children in ways that affect the whole lifecycle and the child’s legal status). The evil of clergy child sexual abuse in the Catholic churches was documented as involving widespread abuse of children by Catholic priests serving in the Dublin Archdiocese where there is “no doubt that such abuse was covered up by the church from 1975-2004.” Church priorities helped maintain evil by seeking to avoid scandal and protect the churches reputation and preservation of assets. The welfare of children was not a factor considered in the early stages. Trust in the church has been shattered. Irish people’s church attendance dropped to 36% despite the continued identification as Roman Catholic at 78%. Some of the research questions are: what is the unique role of faith communities in relation to ending, as well as contributing to, violence against children? What is the role of faith actors in influencing wider community and formal/informal child protection systems in relation to ending violence against children? Three cross-cutting issues to attend to are child participation, gender, and interfaith engagement. The Joint Learning Initiative has an Ending Violence against Children [learning hub](#) that was launched in Panama in 2017 and now has 100 members. The hub examines existing evidence, literature, programs and interviews key informants to analyze trends, identify key gaps and highlight particular examples of faith actors working to eliminate violence against children. In 2019, a three part [scoping study](#) was launched and they have 3 forthcoming policy briefs on positive contributions of faith communities, engaging the mechanisms of faith to eliminate violence against children, and navigating ambiguities-identifying critical issues facing faith communities. She presented four case studies. [Case Study 1 – Peace Love and Tolerance Project](#) in Egypt. This collaboration between Coptic Orthodox Church, Al-Azhar University, and UNICEF to develop faith specific tools that are used in a cascade training model by faith communities. They reached over 6,800 children and youth and nearly 20,000 parents through interfaith collaboration. [Case Study 2 – Learning to Live Together](#) in El Salvador. Arigatou International, Global Network of Religions for Children, and Centre Bartolomé de las Casas did capacity building training of facilitators that engaged 636 children in public schools to conduct ethics and rights intercultural interfaith education. The evaluation showed a positive impact on children’s relations with others and on the nurturing of children’s

⁵⁰*World Report on Violence against Children* (UN 2006) mentions faith or faith actors only briefly as a factor influencing culture; *Family for Every Child* (2013, 2015) and *ChildFund Alliance* (2014) make no mention of religious beliefs or faith-related groups.

spirituality. [Case Study 3 – Empowering Children as Peacebuilders](#) in Central African Republic. World Vision, local Muslim and Christian faith communities developed participatory community-based management of safe spaces (Peace Clubs) where 4900 children and adolescents (including 590 formerly associated with armed groups) are supported to become agents of peace and change for themselves, their family and their communities. The impact was an increased trust among children and their peers and a reduction in underlying social tensions within communities. [Case Study 4 – The Butterfly Project](#) in Cambodia. Christian and Buddhist groups work together to reintegrate child survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking into the community to avoid social isolation. Study findings reinforced the complex intersections between violence against children and faith because faith communities are both perpetrators and protectors. Parents and caregivers trust faith communities with their children around the world. Children primarily encounter violence within homes and schools, often delivered by trusted adults with a specific duty of care to them. Witnessing violence has long-term intergenerational effects. Child agency and participation is key. Promising models have a child-centred focus by faith-based organizations even within extreme humanitarian crises. Emerging forms of violence pose new challenges to which faith communities must respond (e.g., internet/online). In terms of lessons learned, local faith communities are important first responders at community and family levels. They need to be equipped to respond appropriately. Involve children directly as a focus of all work to hold together protection and participation. Address child protection through a socio-ecological model to understand the complex contextual drivers, including neglect, poverty and family breakdown. Religious and cultural beliefs are entangled and need to be addressed directly by local faith communities as a unique and cross-cutting role. More robust documentation is required of informal faith-based local models if they are to be credible in the wider sector. Academic research institutions can play a role in developing sustained documentation and robust evaluation of what works in local faith communities.

Nobuhiko Katayama described his work as part of [World Vision](#)'s development work that focuses on transforming communities through advocacy work and providing humanitarian relief activities. They focus on engaging interfaith communities to address challenges faced by children. Their faith and mission calls them to collaborate with people of different faith traditions towards the well-being of children. He discussed the [Asia Pacific Faith-Based Coalition](#)'s Forum in Tokyo about The Role of Faith and Faith-Based Organizations in Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Key lessons learned in that process were that leadership commitment and intentionality is essential, capacity building is needed, the process should be open and transparent, and they must be respectful of differences.

Diana Gerson spoke about [The Interfaith Alliance for Safe Communities](#). She began by reading a powerful poem by Khalil Gibran about children. Child dignity in a digital world is not something we were considering in 1989. The world is changing and our policies and actions should react to those changes. We can use our sacred texts either as a resource or a roadblock. She quoted Martin Luther King Jr. as saying that 'that there is no deficit of human resources in the world, there's only a deficit of human will.' She questioned whether religious leaders are discussing issues of child safety from the pulpit and indicated that we need to be working in partnership with one another because we are one human community.

Key Points Made:

- Religious leaders should acknowledge how religious traditions have condoned violence against children, and partner with governments to end violence against children.

- Religious leaders should develop a *theology of the child* and integrate it into the education of religious leaders to encourage religious leaders to see child abuse as a crime as well as a sin and facilitate increased reporting of abuse.
- Faith leaders should explore how mass immigrant care facilities, including refugee camps, make children vulnerable to predators.
- Racism and poverty are the biggest barriers interfering with efforts to protect children.
- Human beings are more important than temples because humans are sacred.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That the G20 Governments recognize that faith communities are key partners in child protection.
- That the G20 Governments hold faith leaders accountable for child sexual abuse to the fullest extent of the law.
- That the G20 Governments actively integrate faith communities into all levels of child protection.
- That the G20 Governments support child participation in the work of local faith communities.
- That the G20 Governments adopt a consultative co-creative way of working with faith communities to counter instrumentalization and assure sustainable partnerships that work for children.
- That the G20 Governments partner with faith communities to bridge gaps between high-level policies and grassroots practice, and between senior faith leaders and local faith communities.
- That the G20 Governments support capacity building of faith communities to achieve child protection aims.
- That the G20 Governments support robust documentation of effective mechanisms of partnership and engagement with faith communities for the elimination of violence against children.
- That the G20 Governments fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

INCLUSION, FOCUSING ON CHALLENGES OF WOMEN’S EQUAL RIGHTS

Description: The W20 has focused this year on women’s participation in economic life as vital to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Broader agendas look to obstacles to women’s welfare and social and political participation, raising issues that include discrimination, domestic violence, and early marriage. All these issues have direct relevance for religious institutions. Extremist narratives focus on women’s bodies, and violence against women is often embedded in traditional practices and narratives. This panel focused initially on obstacles and opportunities around economic and social participation and how differing traditions reflect and apply cultural and religious norms. Since leadership and dialogue needs to include women and men, religious leaders and religious communities, the aim was to highlight broad challenges. In looking to recommendations both to G20 Leaders and to religious bodies, the session aimed to highlight “best practices” that are most relevant to overcoming obstacles to gender parity. Speakers were asked to address why differing religious perspectives on women’s equality and empowerment matter. Chaired by Bani Dugal (Principal Representative of the Bahá’í International Community to the UN), speakers were Mari Miura (Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Sophia

University), Jasmina Bosto (Executive Officer for External Relations, KAICIID), and Hind Kabawat (President, Tastakel Women's Organization).

Presentations Overview:

Bani Dugal spoke about her past work with the women's legal aid society and the injustice witnessed in her work at the Supreme Court. She understands that many women's issues arise at the grassroots. She referred to Katherine Marshall who said that, 'it depends upon who you ask as to whether women's issues are getting better or not.' In terms of normative frameworks, there have been many advances. But many of the issues that were being discussed back at [UN meeting in Beijing](#) are only advances in normative standards and frameworks. But if you were ask a woman struggling in the fields or a factory, I don't think the normative standards have trickled down to her. It cannot be denied that religious institutions have often been an impediment to achieving gender equality. I often start by saying that we need to redefine the structures of patriarchy, power and privilege. These concepts are holding back our achievement of a more equal society. The interplay is in the personal relationships where hearts and minds need to change. She asked the panelists to discuss how different populations can be respected in the context of increasing pluralism while simultaneously building a commonly shared recognition of women's common humanity and equality, and identify how religious groups might be a part of this. Religious faith is one of the deepest sources of human commitments and motivations. What examples have we seen where motivation was successfully turned around in order to advance women's equality? She asked panelists to highlight best practices and draw out recommendations for the G20. Gender inequality is not just a women's issue. The well-being of men is warped as long as women are marginalized. What roles should men and boys play in advancing women's empowerment? How can we bridge diversity dialogues between feminist and religious perspectives to enhance an equal society? Eliminating gender inequality is a major principle embedded in the Baha'i Faith. But structural change is slow; it has to come from the ground up.

Mari Miura is on the G20 steering committee as well as on the W20. The Interfaith Forum is not officially recognized, but wants to be involved in the international process providing a common ground for dialogue. Women's economic independence and empowerment as well as gender equality is what we have been discussing: labor market, financial inclusion, and digital inclusion to close the gender gap. This year, they focused on governance to achieve those goals. Other gender equality values need to be integrated into economic independence. The W20 developed seven recommendations that were handed to Japan's prime minister. One of the recommendations was ending violence against women, promote lifelong learning on gender equality in workplaces and education to address the cultural norms that are obstacles to achieving gender equality. We need to make unconscious bias more visible. Regarding violence against women (#Metoo movement), we decided to recommend to end public and private violence against women (between married couples, partners and on social media). I do not analyze gender policies from the religious perspective, but what I can say, is that different religious groups present opportunities – religious values and human rights are often opposed. As a political scientist, many times extremist language can be used for political causes. Religious faith offer opportunities to achieve gender equality when you consider that most religions have a basic principle of valuing human dignity as the basis by which we can talk about ending violence against women and girls. Gender based violence also affects sexual minorities who feel vulnerable in different cultures. Another controversial issue is reproductive rights and abortion and religion. In Japan, reproductive rights is not 100% guaranteed; it is criminal to get an abortion in Japan. You have to have a lot of knowledge to have access to things like the morning

after pill, etc. She also said that men's active involvement is key. They should not be bystanders or having a backlash against women. A new movement has arisen in Japan to stop women's wearing of high-heeled shoes. There has been a bit of a backlash response. When women finally speak up, there is a backlash. Men play a role by actively supporting women who speak up for their rights. The other thing to think to consider is invention of new masculinities that are less than aggressive and control oriented. New masculinities talk about caring masculinities such as being a good father and caring partner. Inventing more peaceful and cooperative masculinities is important. She has written quite a bit about quotas. The ratios between men and women in political leadership – Japan is very behind. Some constitutions can be written from scratch and can include quotas in the writing. But it is harder to change existing constitutions like France having parity laws. In Japan, it is difficult to change constitutions, so why not introduce parity as a democratic principle? Quota as a tool can be unconstitutional, but gender parity can be compatible with existing constitutions which requires that all political parties have equal participation in the parties. It is not binding. So develop gender parity goals. Attitudes can change. There was an MP questionnaire asking them what would be an appropriate ratio of women in parliament. People's mindset has changed. Why not see if caring masculinities emphasizing men as good parents and fatherhood could change men's aggression in a patriarchal system? Women can be leaders, not just act as supports. Create a new campaign culture so that women outsiders can also win. In order to do this, we would have to constantly question the existing criteria of merit which is a crucial concept for outsiders to get in.

Jasmina Bosto identified advances (e.g., women who have won Nobel Prizes in all categories, women heads of state on all continents, etc.), and ongoing challenges to gender equality. The legislative frameworks exist and we are approaching several anniversaries celebrating these advances, but progress remains slow. Feminist scholars have challenged the perceptions or readings of faith traditions. We do have plans of actions that can lead individual states in the right direction. The buy-in of certain states and sectors of communities within the states is limited. There are 49 countries that still don't have legislation on domestic violence. To include women in solutions at a grassroots level is to provide safe spaces for their involvement to translate normative frameworks into reality. A KAICIID initiative in Vienna combines the 'no one left behind' program of social inclusion for people seeking refuge in Europe with the role of women in these communities who play key roles. Women are the connectors and bridge builders in the communities. Dialogues are facilitated by women Austrian citizens with a migration background addressing issues such as access to workplace, healthcare, etc. Women from the host communities welcome newcomers and share their experiences connecting with newcomers who also share their own perspective. This dialogue is promoted to engage women and refugees. We see how women bond and act as the glue of society connecting patchworks. Dialogue matters. Interreligious dialogue matters even more. The perspective of human rights is important as a framework for action with the newcomers to society. Civil society, government, and religious communities need to work together to implement these frameworks into daily life. Regarding men, very often women are treated as the target audience rather than as participants in political processes. Male representatives dominantly make the policies. Women need to be included from the beginning in the political process. Religious traditions mostly support male stakeholders and it is more difficult to involve women representatives. Give them a space for dialogue in interfaith dialogue. One of the first topics women put forward is gender equality and their rights. An important avenue to take is to advocate for women's rights with religious leaders. There are some very powerful male religious leaders who advocate for women's rights. This is a two-step process of advocating with more conservative religious leaders to open up to religious rights, and then the other to interact with those who are more supportive. Regarding structural changes in religion, we have several religious representatives. Pope Francis' quote is inspiring and

encouraging, but these structural changes must come from within, not from the outside. Working with them to sensitize religious leaders and challenge them with certain topics is important. We reach out to religious leaders and try to advance women's status with respect to their structures. Regarding success stories, she shared an antidote from African women working with KAICIID and the African Union. Each member state contributed a delegation to the African Union. When the steering committee of 10 representatives came together, they were all men. I have never witnessed such a strong reaction from the women that were present. They raised their voices and said, 'Enough!' A new break-out session was convened to include at least two representatives that were women. Quotas are necessary when in a situation of necessity to stress the importance of promoting inter-religious dialogues.

Hind Aboud Kabawat addressed practical issues about gender and religions in the Middle East and Syria. Women's equality is different in Middle East than in other places in the world. We need to think of the cultural aspect. Interfaith work highlights shared values, but you cannot deal in diversity in the Middle East without mentioning gender, because the gender issue is so important. Women's involvement in politics at the negotiation table is encouraged. We have so many stories. If we want to convince leaders about the important role of women, we need to be more involved. Religious people need to be our allies. Two weeks ago, we had a workshop in Geneva to put gender language into the constitution. People fought it. If we want to change the text in any religion, this is a problem. The important thing that the international community should pressure leaders to accept is that women should be more involved. We have three layers of involvement, Track 1, Track 2 and Grassroots. Women in the Middle East in Syria, after the conflict, have taken on important roles in reconciliation and transitional justice. Regarding recommendations, we sent a message to our women's groups (120 women's organizations), and they said 'Have leaders pay less money for arms and spend it on education' and 'support moderate religious leaders.' Secularism is not superior to religious perspectives. In the Middle East, there is a view that secularists are moderate, and religious people are not. But when we promote a moderate goal of 30% equality, who opposes us? Secularists. So, we went to religious partners for support. Finding the right partners from religious groups to support you is crucial. In the Middle East, it is an ongoing challenge. We would not have peace in our region without the work of the women. We cannot preserve our planet without the women. Initially, women in leadership may be more about optics, but eventually women actually lead. Knowledge is power. We need to support each other to get stronger in society. You have to also have a thick skin.

Key Points Made:

- The structures of patriarchy, power and privilege need to be redefined in religious structures as well as in societies, more broadly.
- The Interfaith Forum should encourage participating faith-based communities to support adoption of legislation that addresses domestic violence.
- The Interfaith Forum should adopt gender parity goals and continue to designate a space for women to dialogue about issues.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That G20 Leaders include women as participants early in the stages of the political process and avoid treating them as a target audience.

- That G20 Governments adopt competency-based gender parity laws, and quotas where necessary, as a democratic organizing principle.
- That G20 Governments adopt equal pay for equal work legislation for implementation by 2025.
- That G20 Governments provide affordable, available, quality childcare for working women.
- That G20 Governments increase the involvement of women in peacebuilding in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration.
- That G20 Governments reallocate military spending to finance education budgets.
- That G20 Leaders support moderate religious leaders in the Middle East.
- That all G20 Governments adopt domestic violence and sexual harassment legislation.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE: TRANSLATING GLOBAL GOALS INTO ACTION

Description: The 2015 Global Goals expanded earlier targets that pinpointed specific disease and public health challenges to the bold objective of universal health coverage (UHC). That means reaching all who fall outside current policies and services and expanding understandings of decent health care. In the G20's consideration of UHC, religious voices should be heard. Religious actors play vital roles in health service delivery in many places and thus can and should be central partners in translating the ideals of UHC into practice. They also offer vital links to communities that are an essential part of health care. This dialogue session highlighted why religious experience belongs at the tables where UHC plans are designed and those where progress is reviewed. Speakers were asked to identify practical and ethical lessons from religious experience regarding UHC provision. Chaired by Thomas Lawo (Senior Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development), speakers were Kevin O'Brien (Executive Director, The Handa Foundation), Somboon Chungprampree (Executive Secretary, International Network of Engaged Buddhists), Jonathan Duffy (President, Adventist Development and Relief Association), and Xin Hui Chan (Clinical Research Fellow, Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit).

Presentations Overview:

Thomas Lawo identified four basic facts related to provision of universal health coverage: 40% of the population lacks access to health care, 100 million people are being pushed into extreme poverty due to inadequate healthcare, 800 million people spend at least 10% of their budgets on healthcare, and all UN member states have agreed to achieve universal health coverage by 2020 as part of SDGs. If these goals are to be met, then more people need to be trained as healthcare workers.

Kevin O'Brien reflected on his experience as Executive Director of the Handa Foundation that opened a [hospital in Cambodia](#) in 1993. The hospital has provided free healthcare to 1.9 million people since that time. He emphasized that you can't do development work with mercenaries. Welcoming people from all different faiths creates a more inclusive environment. The Shinto faith is not particularly dogmatic. They have been involved in creating models of sustainable development in Cambodia for over 10 years, but what have they really accomplished? Their goal is to set up sustainable systems that are completely led by locally trained people. They want to have an exit strategy that allows hospitals to survive after their foundation leaves. The profits from medical centers that serve the rich completely fund the free hospital. Ten years ago, they

moved to the northwest corner of Cambodia and took over a trauma hospital for landmine victims; over the last 7 years, they have been able to make it 75% sustainable. Over 12,000 people per month are receiving free healthcare in Cambodia as a result of their work. Their healthcare network is only partially integrated into the mainstream government hospital system. This case illustration offers several reasons for hoping that universal healthcare could be achieved in SE Asia: 1) there is a passion across faith-based traditions that supports people putting values above self-interest; 2) Fledgling missionary hospitals have grown through effort; 3) People come from all over the world who share common values to volunteer. He encouraged people to allow volunteers to have a personal experience with the poor. What people are lacking is that they don't know anyone who is poor. By bringing them to Cambodia, people are able to engage with the poor, respond, and learn to think differently. He talked about how the experience has transformed him from an 'ugly American' into a more compassionate person. He said, 'If I can change, other people can change.' Fifteen years ago, he was a very capitalistic and arrogant person who never thought a second about the poor. But people and countries can change. People can look back at the various Handa Foundation enterprises, and how they've provided free healthcare to 20% of Cambodia's population.

Somboon Chungprampree described the history of healthcare provision in Thailand. The traditional approach is holistic attending to healthy food, medicinal herbs, massages, etc. Temples are the center of the community, offering knowledge of how to prevent seasonal diseases, as well as supporting mental healthcare. The Thai King founded the first central hospital 100 years ago. The government built it into a private sector type of healthcare provider. The medical hub is often very expensive (e.g., \$2000 for diarrhea treatment). Universal healthcare coverage started in 2002. A progressive policy was proposed by doctors who were members of the communist party 20 years before and it was actually implemented. He talked about linking Knowledge, social movements, and policy as the triangle that moves mountains. They have helped 69 million people between 2002 and 2017. Thailand's life expectancy has risen from 70 to 75 years old. The government's budget on healthcare only covers 17% of the total healthcare provision costs, and their operations provide healthcare to 99.5% of the population. Their model is being duplicated in India. Mental healthcare is becoming a larger issue, including end of life mental healthcare. Helping people deal with suffering, not just the sick person in question, but also their family and other social networks. About 200,000 Buddhist monks are helping to prevent suicide by engaging more with mental healthcare. Thailand is 90% Buddhist, and healthcare provision to religious minorities is a challenge. They are using YouTube to help address mental health issues among young people.

Jonathan Duffy worked in public health for 28 years as health director for the Seventh Adventist South Pacific. He talked about the role of faith-based organizations within healthcare service delivery as well as healthcare prevention work. He talked about how the healthcare costs from non-communicable diseases are expected to increase in the future. In Latin America, non-communicable diseases are projected to erode the GDP by 5% for the next 25 years. In Africa, non-communicable diseases have increased among middle-aged groups and infant mortality has declined. The situation aggravates poverty conditions. Development efforts can complicate healthcare provision. For example, providing 1 bag of rice per family contributes to an increase in diabetes. He offered a critical view of the role of faith organizations in healthcare delivery. Missionary zeal's passion for the poor resulted in a colonial, top-down approach to healthcare provision. If you plant a church, you always see a school and a hospital which were used as proselytizing models. But basing these development efforts on missionary zeal is not a sustainable business model. As supporters got old, they were not replaced. Many thousands of healthcare facilities around the globe are still tagged as faith-based orgs, but without a

sustainable model of finance, they struggle to get well-trained professionals. The missionary zeal model causes these faith-based healthcare organizations to operate on a private business model, where much of the population cannot afford access to services. Duffy went from island to island visiting Adventist facilities. They often lacked hygienic practices and access to clean water. In response, they created an “Adopt a Clinic” approach for local congregations. Duffy was able to rebuild every single clinic and modernize them, but he worries that if he went back now, he would see a deterioration. Sustainability is the key issue, especially where xenophobia is increasing and secularism is on the rise. Less people go to church now, reducing tithes and the old model of the rich giving to the poor is unsustainable. Faith communities need to realize that they can’t sustain this mode, and they need to look at NGOs and other networks for how they operate. Healthcare provision cannot be based on the proselytizing model. Many thousands of healthcare facilities lack access to basic things such as safe and potable water. Although faith-based communities still have a role to play, the situation is reaching a crisis point, and religious traditions cannot continue on the old model. Faith groups have to look at a more inclusive business model for future healthcare provision. When asked about the relationship between faith and mental health, he agreed that there are very strong links between participation in religious services and better mental health, but is it because of faith or because of having a community? As society becomes less “churched,” church communities and people become more isolated. We can’t ignore the role of mental health. Depression is the most commonly diagnosed disease in adolescents. He discussed his own son’s battle with depression, and how faith gives people the opportunity to come forward and discuss these issues. But we have to broaden our understanding of mental health without heaping guilt on people who are struggling with mental health issues. Faith-based healthcare is extremely geographically prevalent in ways that makes them a big player in development circles. What is needed is a broadening of networks across faith lines so that resources are not limited to their own faith traditions. The Interfaith Forum needs to create a place where these discussions can take place.

Xin Hui Chan focused on health *care* rather than health coverage. Instead of focusing on how to finance healthcare provision, she discussed what implementation of universal healthcare might look like in the field. People want care from people who care about them. Healthcare delivery to people by caring people is in short supply. The [World Health Organization](#) now considers burn-out to be an occupational phenomenon in their International Classification of Diseases. The Health System under Universal Health Care is multi-tiered. Quaternary care is provided at the national level and involves hospital referrals; it is a rarity and only occurs when people really need it. Tertiary care is provided at the state/provincial level and also involves hospital referrals. Secondary care is provided by the district health center. Primary care is provided by the rural health post. It might occur under a tree where someone sits and provides pills. Community health workers and volunteers are the most common point of interaction for people seeking health services. Some of the most commonly accessed disease areas for healthcare provision are infectious diseases (malaria, HIV, tuberculosis), trauma and accidents, maternal health, child health, mental health (which is not talked about enough), and non-communicable diseases. Community health care workers are generally expected to cover all of this in the field with minimal training. Faith-based actors can provide staff, training, providing incentives for people who are not paid but who engage motivated by knowing that they’re valued, providing equipment (e.g., it is difficult to get oxygen in many facilities), strengthening infrastructure, building trust in societies where there’s conflict, strengthening community, offering psychosocial support, offering holistic care, and strengthening resiliency. She identified several challenges and barriers to faith-based engagement in healthcare provision such as limited resources, meeting increasing expectations for utilization of services, providing evidence-based practices and current health information to community health workers who often work in environments

without electricity or the internet, accountability and governance in isolated stressful settings, competing priorities where designated funding gets reallocated based on community demand, and care for the healthcare workers who are often the only person working to provide healthcare in an isolated area.

Key Points Made:

- Development efforts financed by the missionary zeal of individuals is an unsustainable business model that inhibits the ability of healthcare facilities to get well-trained professionals as the founding individuals get older.
- The missionary zeal model turns to the private business model for financing which undermines the availability of healthcare for all.
- The missionary zeal model can be strengthened by creating a congregational “Adopt a Clinic” program within religious traditions, but times have changed, and the old model of the rich giving to the poor is unsustainable.
- Faith based development efforts should integrate exit strategies into their process.
- A sustainable model for healthcare provision can use the profits from medical centers that serve the rich to completely fund the free hospital.
- Faith-based healthcare provision can significantly contribute to national healthcare needs in ways that makes them a big player in development circles, but they need to broaden their networks across faith lines so that resources are not limited to people within their own faith traditions.
- The Interfaith Forum should facilitate dialogue about linking faith-based healthcare provision across religious traditions.
- An effective interfaith strategy for healthcare provision links knowledge, social movements, and policy.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That G20 Leaders incorporate gender parity in the leadership of healthcare initiatives.
- That G20 Governments collaborate with faith-based healthcare providers to ensure universal health care.
- That G20 Governments invest in providing universal healthcare as the basis for long term economic development.

HIGHLIGHTING PRIORITIES FOR 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION: VALUES, CHANGE, AND PRACTICE

Description: The connection between educational attainment and development is well understood. Access to schooling has improved dramatically throughout the world. But the content of schooling varies dramatically. The quality of some schooling is so low that it hardly classifies as education. Elsewhere, school content is technically adequate but without an effective purpose. In many parts of the world, youth are drifting, attracted by superficial escapes and tending to develop an intolerance of their neighbors. A key issue today concerns appropriate roles that religion can play in education going forward. Are there ways, for example, that teaching about religion can encourage student motivation and engagement in education? Another has to do with exploring the extent to which teaching about religion (as opposed to teaching religion) can make a positive contribution both to secular and to religious educational institutions. What is the experience of religious delivery of education? To what extent can

schooling that takes into account faith assets and faith challenges help provide purpose? To what extent can such schooling offer an appreciation and tolerance of neighboring perspectives and faiths? To what extent can religious schooling support values of social cohesion, in particular diversity and inclusion? This session explored G20 and related approaches to core education challenges, offered specific ideas about how religious actors can contribute to addressing them, and identified neglected challenges that belong on G20 agendas. Speakers were asked to address neglected religious dimensions of education. Chaired by Michael Young (President, Texas A&M University; Former Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom), speakers were Dicky Sofjan (Core Doctoral Faculty, Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, Universitas Gadjadara), Ishmael Noko (Founder and President, Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa), Rahul Karad (Executive President, MAEER's MIT World Peace University), and Sir Timothy O'Shea (Honorary Professor, University of Edinburgh and Open University).

Presentations Overview:

Michael Young indicated that many of the things we're talking about today are more likely to be addressed at the level of higher education than at the level of the population. Consider environmental degradation, for example. A UN study found that the higher the level of education, the less environmental degradation that we see. This topic is both foundational and critical to what we're discussing today. Education is less equitably available around the world than it should be. Displaced children are getting no education at all. Faith-based organizations have histories around the world of providing education. This raises the issue of the tremendous possibility of using the relationships of faith-based entities and education to respond to these challenges. A complication arises, however. What is the relationship between government and faith-based institutions as governments try to create guidelines about what should, and should not, be contained in education? Can religious institutions and people really help with the educational challenge? What about physical structures and personnel? What is the role of institutions, government, and any collaborations between the two?

Dicker Sofjan spoke from the context of Indonesia which is the largest Muslim nation on earth. Indonesians are 87% Muslim. One of the major programs they're conducting is on religious literacy targeted to religious counselors or extension officers (115,000 across the country). They have programs to engage them about more sensitive issues related to inter-religious interaction. Currently, Muslims from primary school onward are only told about Islam going through the education system. Similarly, other religions only educate their students in their own religious tradition. This creates a silo effect. There is no way provided for students to go beyond their own religious traditions. This is one of the key problems found in many countries. Only those studying comparative religion are exposed to other religions.

The homogeneous approach to religious education is justified by the fear that if we get students and youth to study other religions, they'll get mixed up, and confuse their religion with other religions. The educational content provided to Indonesians is more akin to religious indoctrination than actual religious education. This approach is outmoded. In the 21st Century, we're dealing with youth who are very connected through the internet and social media. They have a different conception of reality and religion. They are often too distracted by social media. They experience information overload with so much content, that they can't categorize it. Studies indicate that values among students and youth are quickly changing, and they are affected by the influence of transnational religious movements. Because of the rise of the internet, there's a fragmentation of religious authority, and a push toward religious extremism which has caused social polarization. He recommended that governments review the content of religious education, especially in public schools. If leaders want to grow a more tolerant society,

they must support an inter-religious approach instead of the more normative indoctrination of how religion is taught in schools. This would mean that governments invest in expanding religious literacy programs. While there are not examples of mixing of prayers, there are examples of mixing of supplications (e.g., Christians guarding Muslims during prayers and vice versa).

Ishmael Noko spoke from his experience as Founder and President of [Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa](#). He travelled from East Africa to West Africa in installments during a time when Africa was engaged in lethal wars. He invited leaders representing seven different religions in Africa to meet together in Johannesburg to address the conflicts. The subsequent dialogue revealed that Africa was a mess because religious leaders were a mess. They created a declaration and a plan of action that resulted in a number of consultations and conferences beginning in 2002. By 2012, they had learned enough to act. They met in South Africa because they were refused in other countries. There was so much tension that they couldn't start with prayer. Their solution was to all pray in one place but not altogether. In regards to ecumenism, Christian communities have been coming together since 1962, and now they have reached a high level of collaboration. Religious communities and governments have always been custodians of education. We must admit that 20 years into the 21st Century, this century is going to be complex in its appearance and demands. How do we position educational institutions to bring up citizens in this global village who can live with skills and cope with the requirements of this global village? Learners must be knowledgeable thinkers, communicators, open-minded, caring and compassionate, risk-takers, balanced, reflective, and inquisitive. A slogan in South Africa under Apartheid was, 'There is no point in teaching an African child mathematics because he won't need it.' Math was reduced to mathematical literacy which can't be used to become an engineer or go beyond simple tasks. That short-sightedness has had long-term consequences. The take home challenge for us to consider how we can collaborate in the 21st Century. Collaboration between government and religion is essential. Artificial Intelligence is an area where religious leaders and members of parliament can work together.

Rahul Karad helped train a large number of future politicians out of [MIT World Peace University](#). Society injects education into all disciplines, but rarely do we promote peace. Universities are the true custodians of this though. How do we promote peace? Religion comes first, and science comes later. There's science in all religions. All religions have communicated to societies how to live and how not to live. MIT World Peace University is the only university that has unified all the religions in all degree programs. The curriculum unites science and spirituality. Many universities are promoting one single religion. Very few promote all of the religions. Education is meant to improve the life of human beings.

Sir Timothy O'Shea discussed [Open University](#) whose mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. They now have 12 additional distance-teaching universities that are bigger than Open University. These universities provide [Massive Online Open Courses](#) (MOOC) with an enrollment of more than 100k. The Glasgow course works supportively with refugees. Harvard provides comparative religion online courses dealing with Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, etc. [The University of the People](#) is a non-profit, tuition-free, online university. Courses are taught in English and Arabic. The target population is refugees and asylum-seekers. Online programs offer universal access to the blessings of knowledge.

Key Points Made:

- That faith-based organizations bring technology into their educational structures to make online resources available as a development strategy.
- Information poverty is interconnected with absolute poverty.
- Financial resources are as much a barrier to education as access to technology.
- Companies (e.g., Mastercard) make good collaborators for financing access to education.
- The only way to make education and research more relevant to today's problems is by collaborating across countries and religions.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That G20 Governments review the content of religious education, especially in public schools, to remove indoctrination and ensure that religious education builds peace rather than division and intolerance
- That G20 Governments take a more inter-religious approach to the teaching of religion in schools instead of the more normative approach of indoctrination.
- That G20 Governments expand religious literacy programs.
- That the G20 Governments collaborate across countries and religions on matters pertaining to education and research.
- That the G20 Leaders consider the question of whether the UN should set minimal educational standards for the world.
- That the G20 Governments support further development of national accreditation frameworks with curricular standards for primary school education in developing countries.
- That G20 Governments reduce the mortality rate of collaborative agreements on education policies to strengthen their sustainability.

AGING SOCIETIES

Description: This session addressed the central G20 challenge of seeking action that responds to the realities of aging societies, present and future. It reviewed the state of knowledge and specific national experiences, including Japan, as it copes with changing demographics. An explored theme was how to build on the strengths of traditions that call for honor to elders. Speakers were asked to explore how mobilizing positive traditions of respect could contribute to the needs of aging societies. Chaired by Juan Navarro Floria (Professor of Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica), speakers were Miguel Angel Schiavone (Rector, Catholic University of Argentina), and Marco Ventura (Director, Centre for Religious Studies, Fondazione Bruno Kessler; Professor of Law and Religion, University of Siena).

Presentations Overview:

Juan Navarro Floria explained that aging societies is a priority of the Japanese government for the G20 Summit. *The Japan Times* has documented that in the past year, Japan has had the lowest number of births yet. Their fertility rate is 1.42. If the rate is lower than 2, the population is decreasing. If society has less children, aging is inevitable. This variously impacts the social structure in countries. There are some consistent implications of changing demands on the health care system, and effects on employment patterns. This topic has received limited attention, but religion plays a significant role in regards to these issues. Religion offers answers to the end of life for each of us. New technology has effects on life expectancy, replacing parts of the body and improving health. Pope Francis wrote a letter to young people: Even for young people, it's

necessary to pay attention to elders. The Bible tells us to listen to your father who begot you and your mother. The two speakers/panelists have very different approaches to this issue. Dr. Miguel is in medicine specializing in public health. Martin Ventura is a lawyer working in the field of innovation.

Miguel Angel Schiavone said that since the second half of the last century, humanity has been racing against its biological clock. Life expectancy has significantly risen from when the main causes of death were malnutrition, wars and epidemics. The first factor that contributed to this progress was the access to food when humans established themselves in communities where they could cultivate food and domesticate animals to provide reliable food supplies and access to better nutrients. Then the new leap was given thanks to the contribution of hygienists: potable water, sanitation, and control of vectors and rodents. Then came the epidemiological revolution where the discovery of bacteria, development of antibiotics and vaccines made it possible to reach the age of 60, something that seemed like a utopia at the time. But science did it again with the technological advances applied to medical practice, new methods of diagnosis and treatment, early detection of diseases, and new treatments for cancer. Today, the average global life expectancy has expanded by 20 years, but the proportion of people who cross the new limits and reach 80 years or more does not stop growing. The battle to win years of life from death has transformed old age into an overpopulated and heterogeneous universe, plagued with questions that will challenge societies throughout this century. Meanwhile, advances in science and health continue to push the limits. It is reasonable to think that those who are being born today will have a horizon of life that will undoubtedly exceed 80, perhaps 90, and even 100 years, especially in the most developed countries. At the same time, the proportion of people in the world who cross the limits of 60 years in an excellent state of health continues to increase. This achievement is changing the composition of societies in the world. According to recent UN estimates, by next year, one in ten people in the world will be over 60. By the middle of this century, this proportion is expected to double. Men could reasonably live about 18 years longer, while, for women, the expectation is 21 years longer. The health improvements of the last decades combine with a progressive decline in the birth rate in much of the world. Migration of youth from the countryside to the cities, the delay of marriage and reduction of pregnancies add further complications. How are governments responding to these demographic shifts? What are the demographic policies of our countries? Are we aware that demographic policies require analyzing not only aging but also birth rates and migration patterns? The result of this demographic pattern is aging societies, where the classic triangular image of the standard population pyramid is giving rise to figures with narrower bases that widen as age progresses. The increase in the proportion of people over 60 is an inexorable fate for most of the world's societies, but that is already being felt most strongly in the more developed nations. They are encountering a need to adapt benefits in terms of healthcare, educational provision, and even the design of new environments. But not everything is negative. In recent years, the most constructive approaches have become more consistent. The trajectory and intellectual capital of these people are increasingly weighted by companies and organizations that even begin to influence to reverse another false belief, the one that says that workers become "obsolete" from the 50's. On the contrary, today is increasingly advocated for changes in labor laws that provide for the delay of retirement age. Great changes are needed. Aging societies impose great challenges on States, companies, families and spirituality. How can we ensure that this bonus taken from death has a real reason for being? Malcolm Johnson, Director of the International Institute on Healthy Aging, defined old age as a station in search of its purpose. There is a concern or interest in achieving a life expectancy that reaches the maximum human life span of 120 years. Paradoxically, when it focuses on the meaning of old age, social integration and the

projects of older people, most do not know what their place is or would be in society; they do not have projects and visualize the lack of social recognition in the community in which they live. We could reflect, then, on societies that are evolving in their aging process but have not yet found what is the place and meaning of old age in them. Societies with a demographic structure that is undergoing an advanced process of ageing must take into account the changes to be made in social, health and economic policies and we must think how religion can collaborate in these fields. We must think about housing and cities adapted to this new population, health systems aimed at the prevention and treatment of diseases prevalent in this group, in education it would be necessary to think about new trainings and training for late careers, for the use of free time, universities of the third age, or to set objectives for the training of specialists in the care of a greater number of elderly people, among other possibilities. Older adults are a broad, heterogeneous group, in which the living conditions they had during youth and adulthood are decisive. The advantages or disadvantages that have been had throughout life are usually accentuated at this point in the journey. Many older people find new opportunities to remain active, integrated into society, contribute to their families, travel, make new relationships and enjoy the deserved rest. A second opportunity is to specify pending subjects: a vocation, a new job, or new social roles. In general, these people have had access to a medium or high level of education, have managed to receive a good retirement and have access to health and social support networks. They continue to practice some sport or engage in some type of physical or recreational activity. They do not participate in retirement centres, but live in other intergenerational social and cultural spaces. And most of them live in uni-generational homes. Adulthood becomes a single age that is maintained until the loss of functional ability. Many people go through their entire life course without loss of self-reliance. There are worlds of difference in the experience of old age; chronological age is not in itself a good indicator. For that reason, other more appropriate forms of measurement are being developed and tested. The bad news is that an increasingly significant group of the older population is in the opposite situation. Their retirement income is not enough, they don't have access to quality health services, they don't engage in physical or recreational activities, and it is more frequent for them to live in extended families, sharing housing with children and grandchildren. We therefore have a topic of great interest for this forum, which was discussed yesterday. Inequalities, which are expressed as premature deaths, in some cases avoiding, and in general injustice. While in some communities life expectancy is higher than 80 years, in others, it hardly reaches 50. Grouping everyone in the same category prevents us from knowing the diversities necessary to establish accurate policies. That is why the social sciences are searching for new categories to help unravel the logics and needs of each social group. In Argentina, between the 2001 and 2010, life expectancy increased by three years in all Argentine provinces. However, the question must be asked: is the three-year increase associated with a similar improvement in health conditions in all provinces? The Healthy Life Expectancy indicator elaborated with data from the 2010 census showed that the city of Buenos Aires had the longest living population in the country, with the highest number of years of healthy life expectancy and the lowest number of years expected with permanent limitations, at the opposite pole. The province of Chaco had the fewest years of Healthy Life Expectancy, and the province of La Rioja had the most years expected with permanent limitations. The indicator allowed us to answer the question: the three years that were added in all the provinces did not mean similar health conditions. According to the statistics, almost 90% of older people have a retirement or pension, but almost half of them say that they cannot live. On the other hand, according to various reports, the average income of retirees and pensioners covered only 60% of the value of the basic basket for an older adult. Likewise, a report from my University (UCA) and the Navarro Viola Foundation indicates that more than 60% showed inadequate housing conditions, with poor sanitary conditions, overcrowding or

irregular tenancy regime. Inequities are not only between countries, but inequities exist within each of our nations. Concepts that think of older people as burdens, as not useful and linked to decadence are noted. Even people who are not yet old think of their old age with misgivings. Sometimes the contribution of older people in caring for children or other older people is invisible, or simply their contribution are in dimensions that some do not recognize as useful. The legacy that older people have left behind is also often overlooked, as is the debt that new generations owe them. We need to change. We need to recover the elder as a source of wisdom. Information can be found in books or on the Internet, but wisdom is knowledge plus values. We need the old man sharing the family table, telling his stories and traditions. We need to recover the elder as a center of spirituality, sharing the family prayer. We need changes in health systems. We need to focus on geriatric physicians, disease prevention, improving the first level of care, improving accessibility to the health system and quality of health care. We need to make changes to pension systems by raising the retirement age rather than reducing pension allowances and expanding pension resources with other funding sources. These reforms could bring our systems closer to the rights of old age that are beginning to be recognized internationally, no longer subordinated to the exclusive figure of the worker, but aimed at older people as rights holders.⁵¹

Marco Ventura discussed how serving an aging population creates particular challenges for health and well-being that can be anticipated. An aging population has broad implications for national and global priorities. Health systems need to be transformed in order to maximize the health and well-being of an aging population. There are significant gaps in knowledge and assessment and the traditional distinctions are deeply challenged (therapy vs enhancement; silver economy vs. silver health, etc.). The role of religions are at stake. From an innovation perspective, we launched a response from religion in 2016 at the [Centre for Religious Studies of Fondazione Bruno Kessler](#). The Centre has been in existence for 42 years in the city where the Council of Trent (1545-1563 CE) was convened. [The Council of Trent](#) was a controversial ecumenical Roman Catholic example of reconciling religious tradition and innovation. At the Centre, a small gathering of 15 researchers (65% women) gathered at this interdisciplinary Center in dialogue with international partnerships. They work closely with artificial intelligence (science and technology). They recently produced a position paper. Little has been done to reflect on how religion and innovation can be combined. Understanding of religion and innovation based on a triangular 3-dimensional model that asks: 1) How do religions understand innovation, 2) How do faith communities contribute to various ways and modes of innovation in society at large, and 3) Innovation practices and culture, ideology and culture. It is necessary in their approach that they not separate social and cultural innovation and innovation in science and technology. The two dimensions should need to be integrated. In research and action, we constantly try to bring the two together. For example, the integration of religion, culture and art; the integration of religion, social agency and inclusion; the integration of Inter-religious dialogue and co-creation. Four of their 11 policy recommendations are pertinent to the topic of aging societies: 1) Avoid a friend or foe approach; 2) Take the context into account; 3) Listen carefully to opponents of innovation and opponents of religion; and 4) Engage

⁵¹ For more information, see Oliva, Lorena. (2018). Gracias a la ciencias vivimos más in *Diario La Nación*; Mundial, Banco. (2014). *Envejecimiento poblacional y desafíos económicos para la Argentina en el mediano y corto plazo*; Schiavone, Miguel Angel. (2015). *Políticas que promueven la vida*. Universidad Católica Argentina; Schiavone, Miguel Angel. (2018). *Envejecimiento poblacional y su impacto socioeconómico*. Universidad Católica Argentina.

with innovation in politics and the law. The challenge is mobilizing resources within communities of religion or belief is how to engage religious traditions. A place to start is to experiment with desirable innovation (e.g., faith-based health systems). With regards to religion in innovation, people can explore new forms to contribute to the health and well-being of an aging population (e.g., [Mysurable](#)). With regards to the innovation of religion, individual believers and communities can engage in a conversation with philosophies, policies, and technologies based on post-human like approaches. A model would be for believers to engage in a critical conversation and not be absent from that debate. The biggest surprise in my work on innovation in religion is how much people from different religious communities have been valuable contributors to work. I have been working a lot with Islamic scholars and other religious scholars. Religions have a lot to contribute to the framing of business innovation as fundamental for the sustainable development goals. As we move from discussion into action, we understand how the passing of time is crucial in its multiple dimensions. Why do we isolate mobility in space from mobility in time? We can challenge the idea of success and successful aging. We can learn a lesson for how to approach controversial issues like end of life. Conscientious objection should be seen as an experiment in the area of end of life.

Key Points Made:

- Societies with a demographic structure that is undergoing an advanced process of ageing must take into account the changes to be made in social, health and economic policies.
- Religious traditions must innovate ways of creating meaningful engagement for aging populations to positively contribute to society.
- Religious traditions can help societies recover elders as a source of wisdom along the lines of ‘active aging.’
- The inequitable distribution of resources is more of a problem than the availability of resources.
- Religious actors who facilitate access to health services and resources for healthy lifestyles should engage in public discussions about global policy agreements that address the challenges of advancing and limiting technologies.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That the G20 Governments improve access to health systems and health care.
- That the G20 Governments revise demographic policies to promote human life from conception to death rather than reduce pension or change retirement age.
- That the G20 Governments engage with innovation in politics and the law.
- That the G20 Governments highlight commitments to the development of evidence-based legislation, policies and plans that pay explicit attention to meeting the health and well-being needs of older people, with a sharp focus on dignity and human rights.
- That the G20 Governments adhere to the political mandate and framework provided in World Health Organization (2016). *The Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health*.
- That G20 Governments include a focus on the health benefits of religion and spirituality as an integral part of global and national frameworks for action on healthy aging.
- That G20 Governments dialogue with faith communities when developing silver economy strategies that address health and well-being for aging populations.

PLANET WORKING SESSIONS

RELIGIOUS CALLS TO PROTECT RAINFORESTS

Description: This session explored how to expand the robust partnerships involving religious communities to protect rainforests and other ecosystems threatened by climate change, and relate approaches and ethical challenges to action agendas for the G20 Leader Summit. Approaches need to build on awareness and appreciation for the positive economic impact of promoting sustainable development, realistically aligned with global financial systems and policy agendas, but also clearly reflecting critical ethical and environmental considerations. The session drew specifically on the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, launched in June 2017 at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway in a summit of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, and Taoist religious leaders, climate scientists, rainforest experts, and Indigenous peoples' representatives from Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Meso-America and Peru. "The climate crisis – like the nuclear threat – is today uniting science and religion, common sense and faith. Moreover, no other global issue has so genuinely unified religious leaders and faith communities on a shared platform. No other issue has so convincingly demonstrated a shared scientific and spiritual vision and a compelling ethical conviction. Within the response to the climate challenge, tropical forests – the rain forests – hold a unique and critical place." (Bishop Stålsett, Vatican City, March 2019). Speakers were asked to address how rainforest protection is a compelling call to action. Chaired by Juan G. Navarro Floria (Professor of Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica), speakers were Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace), and Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam (Director of the Ecology Department, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development).

Presentations Overview:

Juan G. Navarro Floria said that people from Indigenous traditions take a different approach to issues such as rainforest destruction than traditional western religions. In Argentina, for example, the Indigenous people have a different relationship to nature. Whereas Western traditions stress that we are the owners of the land, the Indigenous approach emphasizes that we belong to the earth. The earth is something like God itself. Earth is Pachamama, our mother. We are committed to taking care of the earth because it is our mother. Even Western religions are aware of the responsibility to take care of the earth. The rainforests are crucial to taking care of the environment. Argentina has two provinces that are under water in ways that impacts people's lives, the economy, and the animals. The loss of tropical forests is occurring at accelerating rates. This is a large problem for many communities where it impacts everyone who lives there. Poor and Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable. Climate change is linked to rainforests destruction. We have a duty to deal with this issue. The aim of this session is to explore how religions can address these issues.

Gunnar Stålsett discussed realities on the ground and the roles of religious groups in contributing spirituality and ethics that are relevant to rainforest protection. World religions are in agreement about supporting the dignity of people. There is great potential in the horizontal level of religion (and also vertically in leadership) to participate in equal levels in the values we have. Social structures and values bring us to the understanding of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative. This dialogue session presents an opportunity to go deeper into practicalities. All religions are invited to participate in the [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#). The contributions of all religions are what make this Initiative so important. There are many environmental issues that merit attention (oceans, plastics, etc.), but we focus on one issue: rainforest destruction (sometimes called tropical forests, but the Initiative can refer to forests not in the specific area of

rainforests that has particular significance). The Initiative must continue to evolve and move forward to incorporate new and younger visions. The Initiative was born out of the minister from Norway who travelled to the Democratic Republic of Congo and found that this focus was not present on the governmental level in an actionable and deliverable way. They lacked structures that deliver. He returned to Norway and asked, ‘What can we do?’ –Religion is present everywhere in that context. We saw it in how religion had partnered with government to address the Ebola crisis. We can say that religion is already there and their Initiative is working off of, and supporting already existing structures, in that context; it is the best that can be done as an international community to address the situation there. He talked about an Oslo meeting of international experts on religion and climate that was held almost exactly 2 years ago in the Nobel Peace Center. The King was present and deeply engaged with the topic. The structure of the Initiative emerged from a two day working conference. Today, the Initiative is one of the most dynamic programs in the [UN program of environment](#). The funding for the Initiative is still through the Norwegian government. We hope other governments will join because more funding is needed to achieve goals. They have intentionally sought out other collaborators to bring in additional faith traditions, academic partners, political collaborators, advocacy groups, and Indigenous peoples. (e.g., Green Faith, Yale’s Department of Ecology, etc.). Community faith leaders are working to strengthen into an international force. They have expanded to develop a program for the Amazon in Colombia and Peru. There are issues in Brazil because of a new president and the political situation. The new president has no understanding of climate issues and the concerns of Indigenous peoples. He speaks the same way about the environment as President Trump. There is an alliance of people in power that do not understand or acknowledge the scientific view that climate change is one of the main issues of today. In the Congo Basin, they brought groups like [Rainforest Foundation Norway](#) and [Religions for Peace](#) and UN representatives to meet with the government - the president’s special advisor on climate. Muslims and Christians were represented, but, most importantly, they met with Indigenous communities who brought important contributions about spirituality and the importance of connecting with nature. They tried to establish a small secretariat of one executive secretary and two support staff. It is important that the religious structures on the ground take responsibility. Once they have a focus they must seek funds to run programs. The Initiative is not a financing program; they provide commitment, organization, and support. When you speak about the rainforest, it is a central piece, but also it is important for protecting biodiversity and the homes of Indigenous people. Their rainforest strategy is holistic where one issue depends upon the other. Care of creation includes created nature, biodiversity protection, and the human person. They have drawn inspiration from Pope Francis who is recognized in all faith communities. [His Encyclical](#) is the most read in the history of the Vatican. There has also been a shift in Muslim communities who have issued statements on this issue. Earlier statements have limited themselves to quotes from the *Holy Qur’an*, but statements on climate issues are integrating scientific findings. We should end on note of optimism and hope. The Indonesians are farther ahead of us on this issue; Buddhists, Hindus, and other faith groups are engaged there. We are not bringing in something new; we are trying to support and help them organize better. We are travelling again soon to Indonesia, and will start a broad alliance there focusing on education. Education on the issue is necessary in order to understand the issues. The science is crucial, and our message is that religion takes the science seriously. President Trump denied the science and the impact of his approach has affect climate activism around the world. The Nobel peace community has seen that climate has become an integral part of peacemaking. It is with that perspective that we have started the Initiative as a contribution to peace, justice and reconciliation and the calling of people of faith. Rainforest countries among the G20 Leaders must develop land use plans that protect standing forests and protect land rights for Indigenous

communities and the environment. International collaboration for rainforest programs are at a major crossroads, and the leaders should commit themselves to an alliance on rainforest actions. In Ethiopia, there is a project in the Orthodox communities to protect sacred forests. The Indigenous people often raise the question, how do we live in this forest if we cannot take down trees for charcoal and so forth? So there is a point where you must respond to the traditions and livelihoods of these people living in, and off of, the forest. The Indigenous people's use of the land (slash and burn) is minimal when compared to the industrial impact on the forest, but it must also be considered. We who come from the outside cannot dictate the solutions in each place. There are dilemmas and compromises. The main objective must be to safeguard the forests for future generations and for eternity. This is why education emphasizing their values as keepers of the forest and of Indigenous human rights and dignity are so important. The local communities are sometimes evicted not for the protection of the forest but for its development, and we must stand up against that. Without an international alliance of rainforest protection and Indigenous people's rights, this will worsen. We are connected to a worldwide movement. There are people acting in the local communities.

Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam made a presentation entitled “Protecting our Forests and Caring for Their Caretakers” as a representative from the Vatican. When we think of forests, we must think of the people that live in them and take care of them. Earth is unique as the only planet in the known universe that can sustain life. Earth is a garden planet. The Creation narrative in the Book of Genesis talks about preparing a garden. We were intended to live in a garden. A similar idea can be found in other religions. In the *Holy Qur'an*, the earth is called the Mosque. A similar idea is found in Buddhism. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that caring for this garden planet was our original vocation. We must go beyond stewardship to caring. The first commandment given to humanity was to care for the earth and the creation of the world, not only for other humans, but all of nature. In Hebrew, the earth is called *adama*. Scripture says, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till and keep it.”⁵² The bad news is that we have not done it. Instead, we are exceeding many of the planetary boundaries. In the Vatican, we speak now not of climate change, but of climate crisis or climate catastrophe. We are exceeding planetary boundaries in relation to the Nitrogen cycle due to agriculture, and biodiversity loss as evidenced by the most recent report on extinctions – 1/8 million known species face extinction. Human consumption of earth's resources is at a rate so high that we will soon require another planet – except that there isn't one available. We are living unsustainably, and in ways that exacerbate inequality. Temperatures are rising. Countries have agreed to a goal of staying below 1.5 Celsius. Beyond that threshold, several countries will be under water. The rise in greenhouse gas emissions is already affecting mortality rates. We need to take a holistic approach. Human life is grounded in three fundamental, and closely intertwined, relations: human relationships with God, with our neighbors, and with the earth itself. It is an ecological sin to rupture these fundamental relationships. How do we overcome this sin? We can learn from Indigenous communities how to care for our common home, other creates and the human family. Next year, we must include the Indigenous communities and religions in the Interfaith Forums. We must sit at their feet, and allow them to teach us about how to care for the earth. Indigenous communities care for nearly 80% of biodiversity on earth. How can we learn from them? Indigenous peoples find their very identity in being connected to the land. Indigenous spirituality invites humans to perceive and relate to other creatures and elements of nature, not as aliens, but as relatives. The Indigenous peoples share about their dependence on everything and everyone around them. Indigenous peoples casually refer to all our relations, be it air, water, rocks, trees, animals, insects, humans, and so forth. Indigenous knowledge is collectively owned and

⁵² Genesis chapter 2, Verses 5, 15, *Holy Bible*.

transmitted. He made references the last supper as it relates to egalitarianism and mentioned the theme of children. In Christian teachings, God has possession of the earth, but in the Incarnation, God also became part of the natural world.⁵³ For Aboriginal peoples, the earth itself is everywhere and in all parts sacred. In many religions there is an emphasis on specific holy places (Mecca, Jerusalem, etc.), but everywhere is sacred for Indigenous peoples. Pope Francis emphasizes that land and is not a commodity, but is a gift from God. To protect our forests, we need to keep our Indigenous brothers and sisters at the center. This is urgent. Scientists tell us we have 10-12 years until thresholds for temperature rise. What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us? It is more than a religious question, it is a moral question. Everything is interconnected. Part of the solution of climate change is to stop deforestation and the killing of forest people.

Key Points Made:

- The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative is working off of, and supporting, already existing religious structures that are strong in the local context where they work.
- It is an ecological sin to rupture the fundamental relationships of humans with God, humans with their neighbors, and humans with the earth.
- Indigenous communities care for nearly 80% of biodiversity on earth, so they are uniquely positioned to teach other faith traditions about how to care for the Earth.
- If we are going to succeed in protecting our forests, then we need to keep our Indigenous brothers and sisters at the center.
- The Interfaith Forum should prioritize inclusion of, and learning from, Indigenous traditions in 2020 in recognition of the climate crisis and the 50th Anniversary of Earth day.
- The climate crisis is urgent, so we should react with an urgent response.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 Leaders support development of land use plans in the rainforest countries (including Brazil and Indonesia) that protect standing forests, land rights for Indigenous communities, and the environment.
- That G20 Governments collaborate with other governments to create an alliance on rainforest programs and actions.
- That the G20 Governments make rainforest alliances and actions in 2020 in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day.

CALLING FOR ACTION ON CLIMATE – DISASTERS: PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

Description: Unexpected disasters test the moral fiber of communities, including core premises of faith. The Southern Africa cyclone crisis is a test in point – millions are affected by what many see as a harbinger of crises to come. Religious communities are responding to calls for action directly, and by raising the moral challenges at global and local levels. Elsewhere, the manmade crises we witness in Venezuela and its neighbors and Myanmar and Bangladesh, highlight the scale and gravity of practical and moral challenges. This session drew on the working sessions on June 7, focusing on these global challenges and on the major themes from Rainforest Initiatives, challenges of extractive industries (e.g., mining, timber) and energy, and

⁵³ John, Chapter 1, Verse 14, *Holy Bible*.

food and water that the G20 Leaders should act upon. Speakers were asked how to prepare for, and meet, the realities of disasters and the roles of religious communities. Chaired by Paul Morris (Professor of Religious Studies, Victoria University; UNESCO Chair in Interreligious Understanding and Relations in New Zealand and the Pacific), speakers were Jonathan Duffy (President, Adventist Development and Relief Association), Atallah FitzGibbon (Policy & Strategy Manager, Islamic Relief Worldwide), and Sir John Key (Former Prime Minister of New Zealand; Patron of WSD).

Presentations Overview:

Paul Morris began by quoting David Wells comments on climate change, who emphasizes that “It’s worse, much worse than you think”.⁵⁴ The [2018 IPCC Climate Change Report](#) reviewed 6000 peer-reviewed studies and concluded that, if we don’t keep warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, even .5 degrees Celsius beyond that limit will worsen droughts, floods, and poverty conditions. Increased forest fires and droughts already confirm the existence of climate change – it’s already happening. We are risking that warming will be even higher. Keeping warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will have massive benefits compared to 2 degrees Celsius. Increases of air and water temperature lead to supercharged storms, higher wind speeds, heavier precipitation, increased droughts, and rising sea levels. Poverty exacerbates the effects of climate change, especially for the most vulnerable. The economic impact is estimated to be at \$85 billion. The human cost just last year was estimated at 5,000 people who died directly as a result of climate change. Last week, nearly 40 million people in the U.S. were under severe weather warnings. The role of religious communities in responding to climate disasters is important. Researchers of religious NGOs and FBOs (faith-based orgs) have developed an enhanced awareness of the importance of these groups to post-disaster recovery. This relates to the IPCC’s recent report and the wealth of scientific literature that points to the severity of climate issues. The world is currently 1 degree warmer than pre-industrial levels. It is clear that climate change is currently underway. At 1.5 degrees – when compared to 2 degrees- the portion of the population exposed to water stress could be 50% lower, food stress would be less, and impoverished countries would be less effected. Climate change brings increased intensity of storms, more intense and frequent droughts, and increased tropical storms. Rising sea levels expose new territories to vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities are higher for poor countries and communities. Beyond the financial costs are the human costs. The frequency and intensity of climate disaster is expected to increase. Many faith-based organizations have been on the cutting edge of climate-risk reduction. Increasingly, they play a crucial role in post-disaster recoveries. It is important to recognize that there are unique features about religious traditions that are not founded in government values. Faith traditions introduce a spiritual dimension which is not reducible to the political realm. There is a distinction between strategic engagement and transition in relation to climate change. What can we put in place now to slow down climate change? What kind of lifestyles can religious leaders promote that will lead to a more disciplined approach to life? The way we look at the future shapes our present responses. Our planet is important to future generations. We must educate and challenge everyone to have a concern for the planet now. In terms of recommendations, he emphasized the importance of asking them for a commitment to acknowledge the contribution of religious communities to climate disasters and secure meaningful partnerships with them to engage in risk reduction strategies and invest in capacity building to address climate change. He asked panelists to address the emotional as well as psychological effects of climate change on people and disaster management. He asked panelists to consider if we might organize former world leaders to push the agenda of climate change

⁵⁴ David Wallace Wells, (2019). *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life after Warming*. NY: Tim Duggan Books.

response to the G20 and G7. Might former President Obama be influenced to lead the former world leaders on climate change? The current President of China is a current key leader on climate change.

Jonathan Duffy said that the reality is that faith-based communities are more ready to talk about responding to climate change rather than working to actually mitigate its effects. Evangelicals see climate change as a sign of the end times, and many of them welcome it. The reality is complex, and faith communities in support of responding to climate change need to be strengthened. Engagement involves stewardship of the world, from a Christian perspective. In terms of a humanitarian response, the role of churches needs to be accepted and promoted in responding to disasters. Faith-based communities live in affected areas, and will live in them after the crisis passes; they have local knowledge and investments. How do we work with local faith actors? They're present, but there needs to be plans and accepted roles already in place if our actions are to be proactive instead of reactive. The acknowledged role of faith based actors within the government needs to be paramount. Local organizations often already have schools and healthcare facilities and local meeting spaces, but they need to combine those local assets with a broader disaster effect reduction plan. Local faith based organizations can provide the "scaling up" contribution to disaster response. For example, in the Haiti disaster, his organization responded to the ad hoc nature of collaboration on the ground. One response is to emphasize a clearer defining of roles, a running of simulations, and a using of global resources of FBOs and networks of FBOs to respond to crises. There is a church agency network in Australia that went to the government, noted that the government hadn't actually reached the needs they were attempting to, and they suggested building the capacity of local communities. Their network asked the government to empower them to be first responders. During the Ebola outbreak in Liberia and Sierra Leon, government public health messaging had no effect. Once faith leaders started to spread the health message, then people started changing their behavior. There is a need to use the faith community's social capital as part of a timely response mechanism. Another example from Africa involved getting knowledge about rotating herds adopted by local actors to reduce destruction of grasslands. In order to bring that about, there was a need to work with local leaders. The role for FBOs needs to be intentional. The way that we look at the future in relation to climate change shapes our present responses. Our planet is important to future generations. We must educate and challenge everyone to have a concern for the planet *now*. Faith communities are often too silent, focusing on theology rather than accountability. We need to recognize the role that local faith communities can play as first responders, but also, once the media leaves after a disaster, remember that faith actors remain in communities. Peacebuilding: active dialogue in finding common voices. Instead of finding individuality of theology, find what values bring them together. Resilience is much stronger when we all have a sense of community.

Atallah FitzGibbon discussed the role of faith communities in building disaster preparedness and resilience. He talked about the importance of tapping into the spiritual wealth of people and their beliefs in order to accelerate people's engagement and develop the organisational drive to contribute to disaster preparedness. The networks of faith-based organisations and faith leaders cross continents and political boundaries make them a viable and practical means to achieve sustainable development. In Pacific Island communities, and in Papua New Guinea, the churches have a very prominent role in civil society. Churches are often the only functioning part of civil society. Churches have an historic role in providing social and educational infrastructure. Churches are geographically dispersed and are found in very remote locations. Churches are an authoritative voice within Pacific society. And Churches have some highly trained personnel, and are often the first responders in disaster. For example, [Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations](#) (CAN DO) is a network of networks collaborating to enhance community resilience

to disaster and conflict. He discussed their organizational structure (externally and internally) and governance structure for programs. Their network coordinated 6 churches to catalyse coordination of the Churches' responses to El Nino in 2015. They leveraged over \$16 million in other funding sources. Their Australian network alone involves 26 universities, more than 2000 schools, 73 hospitals, over 29,000 care facilities and over 7,500 churches across the country. The mobilized their Fiji partners to respond to Category Five Tropical Cyclone Winston in 2016. They provided psychosocial and trauma support to communities, evacuation centres through use of church schools and buildings, distribution of food and non-food items including hygiene kits and educational materials, repair and rebuilding of houses and communities facilities, provision of tools, seeds and other agricultural equipment, provision of debris removal equipment, and training for communities in engineering and agricultural activities. Another example is [International Care Ministries](#) and [Tearfund](#). They trained pastors over three days for disaster preparedness in the Philippines. Pastors then delivered the training program at the community level. Of the 3,295 pastors that were trained under the program, 2,592 were able to train 108,758 families helping 544,320 Filipinos prepare for the next disaster. Benefits include the large scale outreach possible once pastors are trained because they have connections to the broader community through their congregations. Pastors set up community committees and conducted training to ensure disaster preparedness knowledge was spread throughout the community. Training was also important for linking local faith actors to community officials on disaster preparedness. However, this occurred with varying success in different areas and a key takeaway is that efforts to link churches and communities to local government units for disaster preparedness is critical. The success of disaster committees varied from church to church depending on local variations in funding and commitment levels for such initiatives. A third example, [Islamic Relief Worldwide](#) and [CORDAID](#) developed disaster preparedness through places of worship in Indonesia. This project focused on capacity enhancement of diverse religious places in emergency preparedness and response, and implementation of disaster risk reduction interventions through religious places. Faith groups included Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus. Islamic Relief Indonesia worked with 6 religious places on formation, capacity building, and equipping of disaster management teams in each location, establishment of an inter-faith coordination mechanism, and mitigation activities as part of disaster risk management. Benefits of FBO engagement were reach, influence, acceptance, sustainability, resource mobilisation and multiplier, cross border engagement and networks, and empowerment of faith actors as humanitarian actors (localisation). Challenges associated with local faith community engagement include alienation from humanitarian sector, simplistic charity model, lack of compliance, proselytization, clash with human rights values, factionalism, politicisation, lack of capacity, misinterpretations of faith, and poor governance accountability. Positives include ethical reference points, strengthen resilience, leads to local capacity being built, leads to integration and development of discourse, connects to local civil society, provides support base for sustainability, more genuinely locally owned than NGOs, reach and influence, has the trust of communities, and contains cross-border networks. Religious ethics can be a substantial motivator for change. When climate change became an issue in the early 80s, the global community produced two huge research projects. One about how not to proceed with climate change, the other related to accommodation in case climate change proceeds. For the past 30 years, the accommodation part has been forgotten. Only in the past 2-3 years has it come back. We must look at grassroots organizations, so if we put together all these aspects, including accommodation, preparedness, and relief, a new approach may emerge.

Sir John Key said that participation in the year leading up to the G20 Summit is important for getting on the G20 agenda. He spoke about his past involvement in the G20 talks. These talks are an important lead up to the summit. The Interfaith Forum should consider participating in

them. Anthropogenic climate change is real and happening. This may be obvious, but unfortunately, in today's environment, it needs to be stated. There will always be people on the extreme margins, but the scientific community agrees that climate change is real. Every country is a little different when it comes to climate change. New Zealand is categorized as developing since the majority of the emissions there come from the agricultural sector. Dealing with climate change is complicated because you cannot apply the same formula everywhere you go. In New Zealand, it is about balancing food production and meeting the needs of a growing population. It would make no sense for New Zealand to stop producing food only for it to be produced in another country. We live in a global world. Former President Obama got the world to hold hands and take steps together. What's on the world agenda now? A huge volatility in weather patterns with large implications. New Zealand has a paternalistic attitude towards taking care of Pacific nations in partnership with Australia. There is discussion as to whether or not New Zealand should be a refuge for climate refugees. What a country like New Zealand and Australia can do is acknowledge that these countries are vulnerable to climate change, and we can take steps to help them become sustainable and self-sufficient by helping them build wind farms. Religious groups can be very powerful. New Zealand has taken refugees under the auspices of UNHCR. There was a debate whether or not New Zealand and Australia could take more refugees. We saw the important role religious communities play when the earthquakes hit Christchurch. The disaster caused dislocation of communities. The situation was complex. People live in community where they have all their lives. The most vulnerable people are older people and those with mental health issues. The church and religious communities can play a large role with humanitarian assistance in this context. They can also help providing insurance for homes. Complex implications of displacement, especially for older individuals. Mental health becomes an issue as people feel disconnected. In New Zealand, we see farmers having to battle storms and droughts in order to produce food. Much of the developing world expects that the first world will pay the to implement the SDGs, but neither political party in the last 3 elections in the U.S. have gone anywhere near proposals that were written to make that a reality. Why is SDG funding not one of the hot button issues? If it's the case that financing won't be found, what's going to happen? Likely what will occur is selective funding of goals that are more doable. For example, SDG 8.7 for the eradication of slavery is far cheaper to implement than climate change, so some will argue that it would be a wiser financial investment to fund it instead of climate change. It's difficult for governments. Most countries around the world are running deficits. There is no plan from any political party in the U.S. that will get rid of the structural deficits. Another issue is that on one hand we say we need to reduce to 1.5 degrees Celsius change, then on the other, we say we have to do it by 2050, but political cycles are anywhere between 3-5 years. Everyone believes someone else can resolve climate change. New Zealand asks airline consumers to offset their carbon footprint when they buy their ticket. 20% say they do it, but only 4.9% actually do it. Where does the money go? Should the money go into an emissions trading scheme? Should the money be spent in emerging countries to mitigate their footprint? Most people won't change their behavior solely based on climate change in the short term. But technology is driving fantastic outcomes. Key is on BP's advisory board, and they think that soon there will be 400 million electric cars, but at that time there will be 2 billion more cars on the road, more generally. Technology delivers outcomes, but if people's standard of living doesn't go down (degrowth), they will still not be able to do right by the planet. It is a problem of scale.

Key Points Made:

- In some contexts, faith-based organizations are important collaborators with government to elicit a *timely response* for behavioral change in the community (e.g., Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone).

- To be effective, the role for faith-based organizations in relation to government needs to be intentional and made explicit.
- The cross-continent and international networks of faith-based organizations that are networked to a presence in remote areas and vulnerable communities, and their prominent participation in civil society make faith communities a viable and practical means to provide humanitarian assistance and achieve sustainable development.
- Government benefits of FBO engagement include reach, influence, local acceptance, trust, resource multiplier, cross border engagement and networks, localisation, ethical reference points, strengthened resilience, local capacity building, development of discourse, strengthening of civil society, and a stronger support base for sustainability.
- Government challenges associated with FBO engagement include alienation from the humanitarian sector, a simplistic charity model, lack of compliance, proselytization, clash with human rights values, factionalism, politicisation, lack of capacity, misinterpretations of faith, and poor governance accountability.
- Religious communities should participate in finding ways to fund implementation of the SDGs.
- The Interfaith Forum should participate in the meetings during the year that occur prior to the G20 Summit if they want their concerns to be on the G20 Agenda.
- Technological fixes will not address the problem of scale associated with development, overconsumption, and pollution accumulation.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Governments include local FBOs in disaster preparedness and planning at the national level.
- That G20 Governments direct resources towards capacity building of local faith networks for disaster preparedness and mitigation.
- That G20 Governments ensure through their grand bargain commitments that at least 25% of ODA goes directly to local aid actors including local faith actors.
- That G20 Leaders fully acknowledge the role of religious communities in responding to climate disasters, and secure meaningful partnerships with NGOs.
- That G20 Leaders establish a funding mechanism for the SDGs.

ENDING HUNGER, WATER AS LIFE

Description: Many of the deepest and most ancient religious teachings surround food and water, and contemporary religious communities are often optimally placed to understand scarcities and inequities for both. Over 820 million people suffer from hunger, 780 million have no access to an improved water source, and sanitation is poor for some 2.5 billion people. Food and water have especially critical importance to survival in times of crisis. Large, if largely unmapped networks, of faith-inspired organizations work to address these problems but integration with broader strategies and financing systems is often poor. This session built on prior G20 Interfaith explorations of faith in famine emergencies, looking to broader food security insights and highlighting the crucial issues around water and sanitation. Chaired by Elizabeta Kitanović (Executive Secretary for Human Rights & Communications, Conference of European Churches), speakers were Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati (Secretary-General, The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance), Dinesh Suna (Coordinator of the Ecumenical Water Network, World Council of Churches), and Bernard Timothy Appau (Staff Member, Asian Rural Institute; Pastor, All African Baptist Fellowship).

Presentations Overview:

Elizabeta Kitanović introduced the topic by emphasizing issues of accessibility, equality of distribution, development of utilities, and emphasis on agriculture's impact on water consumption. Diversion of water is an issue that contributes to international tensions. Water is life, water is sacred, and water is God given. So, how do religious traditions address water issues?

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati said that whatever aspect of global problems that we speak about, water itself is life. Without water, we cannot have life. So, when we are here, or in any of the different environments we find ourselves in, discussing aspects of development that serve the world – whether we are working on violence or with refugees - what we have found, coming from the perspective of a spiritual religious organization who has been involved in humanitarian programs for decades, is that water underscores everything. Without water, our work for children, healthcare, etc. does not matter because without water, nothing could exist or thrive. Tragically, the situation of water on earth is getting direr by the day. We are now in a situation where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the world is becoming desertified. By 2025, half of the world will be living in water stressed areas. By 2040, the world will have half the water it needs. India is on course for that to occur by 2030. When we talk about having half the water we need, that does not mean that everyone will get a glass of water 50% of the time they need it; what it means is that many people will have full access to water and a terrifying percentage of people will have no access to water at all. Care about the environment, without water, none of it can happen. By 2050, the world, including many G20 nations, may have up to 700 million water refugees. With regard to rights, health, education, safety and security, rather than addressing the situations that have already arisen, here is one we know about in advance. Rather than saying let's work with the refugees we already have, we can actually work today to prevent having so many refugees due to water. A major cause of our water situation is agriculture. Water is pulled out of rivers for agriculture. These are sacred rivers. Consider the Ganges River in India. Long before the river flows through a holy city where people go for sacred baths, there is no river left. It has been diverted before getting to Delhi and the river bed is filled with Delhi's sewage. So, where the world's Hindus are going to have a bath to pray and sip, they are sipping Delhi sewage. Obviously, we have to feed people so agriculture has to occur. But, how is the way we are doing agriculture creating a situation where we do not have potable water in our rivers? A key reason is unsustainable agriculture. In our government ministries, our Water Minister is separate from our

Agriculture Minister. So, when the Agriculture Minister is growing food by water diversion, they are not in communication with the Water Ministers who are trying to address the pollution. The result is perilous to people's health. If the water volume were higher, even if we continued to dump sewage in the rivers, with waste management, the situation would still be better because of the dilution factor. Our world population is also increasing which adds to the problem. We speak about faith moving mountains. Where we stand today is that so few people realize the direness of our situation with regards to water. Faith holds an answer. We are using it effectively to move the minds and thoughts and values and behaviors of the people on earth. That is what is required to address our water and food situations. With almost 5 billion people belong to faith traditions, this is a powerful resource. Our [Global Interfaith WASH Alliance](#) with its Secretariat in India was launched in collaboration with UNICEF. The Alliance is the world's first initiative that is engaging the planet's many faiths as well as partnering across multiple social sectors as allies to create a world where everyone has access to water, sanitation and hygiene. GIWA brings different faiths together to unite for change on water, sanitation and hygiene issues from the grand level to the ground level. The grand level is this massive stages, massive impact, massive behavioral change that involves reaching out to impact enormous number of people (e.g., through television, stage productions, high level political or celebrity engagement) to induce cultural change. The ground level involves the work of implementation. It is easy to talk-the-talk, but we need to walk-the-talk. We don't have the power of the UN or World Bank, but as a religious organization, it is essential that we use our resources to walk-the-talk, as well. Part of our women for wash program involves training them to become masons who build toilets. We are working to make toilets our friends to work for sanitation and caste system inequality. In a program on water, the Prime Minister had tweeted about it six times that day offering praise and appreciation for work on bringing faith leaders together to address issues related to water. This shows the level of advocacy work we are doing with the governments. We use massive events already taking place where hundreds of millions of people already gather to harness the power of the masses where they already are coming expecting to be transformed by faith leaders. We talk not just about attaining liberation to remove the chains of karma, but also about creating heaven right here, right now not just for ourselves, but for our global family. We have a program called Wash on Wheels which is a moving education entertainment center that has gone through many states in India that influenced one of our states to become Open Defecation Free (ODF). We have a [World Toilet College](#); [Freshwater Project School](#), [Women for WASH](#); [Ganga Action Parivar](#), and an [Interfaith Humanitarian Network](#). We inspire children to cultivate leadership. GIWA has impacted tens of millions of people by our large scale events. Over 1,747,800 people have been exposed to messages. The majority remembered our messages, and felt them to be relevant to their lives. GIWA's recommendations for future food and water. When religion is true to itself, it is a source that can better our world. For policymakers to reach out to religious leaders and FBOs to get people to do better for the world. Harvesting the rain properly can have miraculous impact. If we keep our land covered with greenery, when it rains, the land itself absorbs the water. Land covered in cement and asphalt wastes water. Promote farm ponds, check dams, and other techniques can significantly increase farm income, enable farmers to reap additional harvests, increase cultivatable land, enable restoration of ground water by eliminating the need for bore wells, and enable the return of wildlife. For example, in Maharashtra, India, we recently worked with 350 drought stricken villages to come together over a 6 week period. The result was that we developed a water storage capacity of 86,210,000,000 litres in just 45 days. They gave themselves the capacity to store this water. It is now green. The amount of water they have circled is enough to circle the earth 1.24 times with 1,000 litre water tankers. Techniques such as drip and sprinkler irrigation, when properly incorporated, can significantly increase farm income while saving precious water resources. We are strict and ardent vegetarians. When I

share statistics with people, they are surprised. At least educate people so they understand the impact of how living higher on the food chain impacts the earth. For example, 1 kg of beef requires 15,415 litres of water, compared to 322 litres for a kg of vegetables; 16 pounds of grain go into 1 pound of beef. One t-shirt and pair of jeans requires 10,000 litres of water. One computer requires 31,500 litres of water. Consider taxing meat like countries have taxed cigarettes and alcohol. Why not help people understand how eating meat is harmful for our planet? Spirituality reminds us to live simply so others can simply live. Religions of the world emphasize purity and simplicity of the heart. We can take that into action to recognize that all of us sharing this planet are our sisters and brothers. Trees exhale a significant amount of water into the air from their leaves. When we cut down trees, we create deserts. One oak tree emits 40,000 gallons of water into the air every year. This also provides a cooling effect separate even from shade. Ground should also be covered with vegetation wherever possible to enable groundwater recharge, prevent erosion and capture carbon – Green Development. Animals live for many years before harvesting them, and that approach uses corn and water before they are harvested and there is a lot of water involved in killing of the animal. The amount of water used to separate meat from blood and urine/feces involves much water. Separating water from governmental responsibility raises the question of tomorrow: What is next? Will we privatize air or soil? In Delhi, we are here to say that we will not privatize the air. In terms of policy, it is a human rights violation if you have to pay more for food that is not laden with toxins.

Dinesh Suna spoke as a representative of the [World Council of Churches](#) which is headquartered in Geneva and is the global fellowship of churches having a membership of over 500 million Protestant and Orthodox Christians around the world from 120 countries, including India. The [ecological justice work](#) of the WCC focuses on the three areas of climate justice, water justice and food justice. Today, the talk focuses on water justice. In the ecumenical water network we believe water is a gift from god and a public good. It must not be privatized and is a fundamental human right. Only in 2010 did water and sanitation become recognized as a human right. It is not a reality in many countries. We try to raise awareness among our constituencies bringing in the prophetic voice to challenge government where necessary to promote the just distribution of ecological resources. Only 3% of the water is freshwater, and only .3% is found in rivers and lakes. 30% is groundwater. Glaciers and icecaps is 65%. Today, over 1/3 of the world's population does not have access to safely accessed drinking water. 2/3 people do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities. Here in Japan, you have high-tech toilets. I am pleased to see this pride. Goal 6 is about drinking water and sanitation for all. The world is off the track and cannot achieve SDG 6 by the deadline at this point. We engage with churches by raising awareness and capacity. During Lent we have Seven Weeks for Water which is 40 days in the English calendar. This offers a way to talk to churches and bring to them knowledge about water. World Water Day always falls during Lent. Religious bodies are drivers of change. More than 80% of the world population identifies with a faith tradition. Therefore, religious leaders have unique influence over followers. What they say and do can make an impact. Government must take religious leader into confidence so that what they plan can be successful. Water is mentioned more than the word Jesus in the *Holy Bible*. More than 600 times. But it has been difficult to talk about sanitation. We had to introduce a [Church sanitation hymn](#) to be sung on the topic of toilets because World Toilet Day is November 19th. At World Water Week last year, the Mufti of Amman mentioned about the [Blue Mosque](#) Fatwa issued on reuse of treated water in mosque. Three initiatives by WCC are Blue Communities, Ten Commandments of Food, and The Churches' Road Map of Equal Justice. [Blue Communities](#) respect water as a human rights, promote public control over water, and say no to bottled water. Every minute we produce 1 million plastic bottles. Soon there will be more plastic than fish floating in the ocean. WCC became a Blue Community on 25 October 2016. We do not entertain any plastic bottles for

water. They have reusable bottles (glass). Blue Community is spreading to the Anglicans. The Archbishop of Canterbury received a reusable bottle. The Ecumenical Patriarch received a Blue Community bottle from WCC. Pope Francis visited and was given a bottle. Cities and countries are also becoming Blue Communities. Regarding the nexus between food, water, health and climate change, water impacts the health of children. 525,000 children die every year due to diarrhea (that is about 1500 children/day). Children miss school because they have to fetch water – walking miles. 70% of freshwater is used in agriculture for food production. 20% for energy and industry. 10% are drinking and sanitation purposes. One third of food produced around the world gets wasted every year. That's 1.3 billion tonnes of food. Reducing food waste can save water. If we save 1/3rd of food production, then agriculture may only require about 50% of fresh water and not 70%. Virtual water – 1 egg involves 200 litres of water. 1 cup of coffee involves 140 litres of water. Today, more than 800 million people do not have adequate food and suffer hunger. How can people of faith help overcome hunger and its root causes? We created the *Ten Commandments of Food*: 1. Give thanks for the food you eat. 2. Eat food grown as close as possible to where you live. 3. Strive for all people to have knowledge about and access to affordable, nutritious food. 4. Eat mindfully and in moderation. 5. Do not waste food. 6. Be grateful to those who grow and prepare food for your table. 7. Support fair wages for farmworkers, farmers and food workers. 8. Reduce the environmental damage of land, water, and air from food production and the food system. 9. Protect biodiversity of seeds, soils, ecosystems and the cultures of food production. 10. Rejoice and share the sacred gift of food with all. *Roadmap for a Just and Sustainable Community* builds on five principles: 1. Living in Accordance with the Covenant of God in Creation. 2. Renewable Energy and Climate Protection. 3. Just and Sustainable Consumption. 4. Economies of Life. 5. Networking. Our work contributes to SDG fulfillment. SDG 2 deals with hunger and SDG 6 deals with water. The WCC reaffirms water justice concerns at UN talks on SDGs. The Special Rapporteur of the UN was challenged, and will include interfaith efforts in the next report. Faith communities are changing lives. If water is a human right, then governments would be responsible to provide this as a basic necessity of life. But private companies, like Nestle, oppose it because they make money from it. Companies that privatize utilities in developed countries are being debated (e.g. London). Many cities are reversing the privatization of water. Accessibility, sufficiency, safety, affordability, and acceptability by the community are all aspects that contribute to why water is a human right. There is money in the government sector and that money needs to be tapped. It is our ethical and moral standpoint that governments should do this.

Bernard Timothy Appau spoke about how water and life cannot be separated and how water is indispensable for life. We are all aware of SDG 6 -Water for all by 2030. However, can the goal be achieved? Over a billion people are living without clean and potable water. And even those who have water, how can we guarantee that the water is clean? These issues are happening because of our human behavior towards nature. Water is a special gift from God. The goal can be achieved when each of us here today, particularly religious people, decide to step up and support the noble idea and goal of “Water for all”. This idea has to be preached in our churches, mosques, etc. Good and quality water is very essential to human health, and we should not forget water for livestock and other animals (including water holes for wild animals). It is essential when it comes to our environment to attend to the ecosystem and food security. We are often talking about sustainable agriculture, but without enough water, we cannot achieve the concept of sustainable agriculture. [The Asian Rural Institute](#) has a Leader's Training Center whose major emphasis is on servant leadership and sustainable agriculture (organic way of farming). We need to start to turn our focus on water for life and develop a new concept - WaterLife. Without available water, we cannot achieve sustainable agriculture. In Nishinasuno, farmers lack adequate water for their paddy fields. Many of them dug wells for their paddies this year. We are

not doing any particular water saving activities except the regular habit of saying, “Save water!”, but I think we should start some concrete actions, such as collecting rain water for washing agricultural tools and vehicles. Nishinasuno in 400 km² of Nasunogahara region was once a vast uncultivated plain because of lack of water; it developed into a rich farm land due to the ancestors’ painstaking efforts to dig and create Nasu Canal about 150 years ago. One of the most important gifts from God is water, and we have to be good stewards towards maintaining the water bodies. There are some sources which indicated that over 2.1 billion people are living without water at their homes. More than 700 children under five years of age die every day globally from diarrhea which is linked to unsafe drinking water. An estimated 80% of the people who have no access to safe and unprotected water sources are living in the rural areas. About 1500 million people globally could be displaced by intense water scarcity by 2030. Those who are living in the cities in the developed world may have difficulty understanding the situation of water because you just wake up in the morning and walk to your water tap for water. However, we from the developing countries are facing the reality of water shortages. It also says that around 159 million people collect their drinking water from surface water, such as streams. There are some countries that are struggling with livestock from the same streams. Water is life and I think before we can end hunger and have food security, food sufficiency, we need to think about how we can protect our water bodies, use water wisely and remember water is life and it is a great gift from God to us humankind. So we have responsibility to take care of water.

Key Points Made:

- Water is crucial to sustain life, but desertification is rapidly progressing and by 2040, many countries will not have access to any water with water supplies meeting only half of the global water demand.
- Current estimates are that desertification will be creating an estimated 700 million water refugees by 2050, many of whom will come from G20 nations.
- Government siloes that separate different ministers contributes to how agriculture is undermining potable water supplies; government ministers need to be working together.
- Case example of how faith partners are strategic partners for urgent grassroots change – WASH worked with 350 drought stricken villages in Maharashtra, India over a 6 week period and they developed a water storage capacity of 86,210,000,000 litres in 45 days.
- Faith communities have created several resources useful for creating water awareness and behavioral change at the community level.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 Governments promote [Blue Communities](#) that respect and implement human rights to water and sanitation.
- That G20 Governments re-municipalise water distribution utilities and promote public-public partnerships to ensure clean and safe drinking water for all.
- That G20 Governments ban for-profit bottled water industries.
- That G20 Governments provide the infrastructure to support Reduce, Reuse and Recycle programs and create stricter rules of enforcement.
- That G20 Governments educate the public about how to reduce their virtual water footprint.
- That G20 Governments penalize high water intensive practices.

- That G20 Governments incentivise low water intensive agriculture and food production methods such as drip and sprinkler irrigation and cover cropping to significantly increase farm income while saving precious water resources.
- That G20 Governments support local food consumption and reduce food wastage.
- That G20 Leaders take faith communities into confidence as important stakeholders in the planning and implementation of national and international policies related to water and food.
- That G20 Leaders support leaders in their countries who are fighting against illegal mining to protect their water bodies.
- That G20 Governments reallocate military funds to provide clean water and nutritious food in support of SDG 2 and SDG 6.
- That G20 Governments promote profitable rainwater harvesting for farms to develop farm ponds & check dams.
- That G20 Governments support green development by planting trees and promoting green covering.
- That G20 Leaders promote inter-ministerial collaborations between the ministries that deal with food, agriculture and water.

TORN BY CONTROVERSY: CONS AND PROS OF EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Description: Extractive industries play vital roles in economic systems. Mineral, oil, and gas resources provide significant opportunities and fuel economies. However, many ventures face mounting controversies including from religious communities. Pitfalls include environmental degradation, corruption, encroachment on Indigenous lands, and human rights violations. Religious voices contribute both to awareness and to dialogue in many settings, identifying problems and risks and working for just and sustainable solutions that are in line with international standards and local development priorities. This session featured leading interfaith and international development leaders who are actively involved in dialogue, negotiations, and protests, with a view to tracing constructive paths forward. Speakers were asked to identify religious responses to tensions around extractive industries. Chaired by Brian Adams (Director, Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University), speakers were Séamus Finn (Chair of the Board, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility), Sulak Sivaraksa (Founder, International Network of Engaged Buddhists), and Raymond Ambray (Catholic Priest, Diocese of Tandag, Philippines).

Presentations Overview:

Brian Adams considers extractivism to be one of the two most important topics for interfaith communities to be discussing along with human trafficking. It involves grassroots actions in a global context. Extractive industries (EI) refers to the extraction of non-renewable resources including oil, gas, timber, and minerals. EI are often linked to religious, political, intra-state and inter-state conflicts surrounding the control and distribution of resources, land, and the revenues resources produce.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ For additional information, see https://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/GN_Extractive.pdf; <https://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/UN->

Séamus Finn made some general observations about interfaith work around extractives and corporate responsibility. By extractivism, we understand an unbridled tendency of the economic system to convert the goods of nature into capital. The [OIP Investment Trust](#) established by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate have invested in the capital markets to fund a lot of the development and support work around the world in many countries. As owners of shares of companies, the capital comes from somewhere. The money that is used is not their own, it is the shareholders. With ownership usually comes both rights and responsibilities. You do not give them in perpetuity your money, you invest it. This is an exercise in responsibility. How in the system, as it exists, with 7 billion people in the world – and the scale is important, are villages still viable? How does urban life function with things like food, water, access to education, and health? It is a question of development. What does development mean? In conversations on the topics of peace, people, and planet, what does prosperity look like? He then discussed some of the events that have been taking place: [The Third Vatican Conference on Mining](#)- Mining for the Common Good and [the Canadian sustainable mining industry](#). Can you put those words together responsibly (sustainable and mining)? That is a real challenge. It is important that these discussions are happening at an Interfaith Forum. Whatever period you discuss in the industrial revolution and the colonial era, what is the responsibility of those who have taken resources (mostly from the developing world)? Do they have a responsibility to restore and pay it back (if you want to use that terminology) – restorative justice? He talked about the importance of convening multi-stakeholder dialogue (*e.g.*, mining communities, faith leaders, investors, etc.). This is important and difficult. These groups often do not sit in the same places. The [International Conference on Religious and Sustainable Development Goals](#) was convened this year. Major faith religions are working to find a common language regarding how they can work together to help society to face the pivotal issues they face, many of which we've discussed here. Another example is [Ecología Integral – Laudato Sí – una respuesta sinodal para el cuidado de nuestra casa comun \(a synodal response for the care of our common home\)](#) - recognizing the importance of the Amazon and the Indigenous people in the region. Dialogue involves listening to testimonies of Indigenous leaders from the area explain how they have been impacted, how their language, culture, and land have been destroyed. What are the responses of the religious communities to the extractive industries? Religious communities are on the forefront for providing pastoral and development care to communities impacted by mining and oil and gas operations. Religious leaders have served on advisory committees alongside other representatives from government and business sectors that have been created by local extractives industries. Religious leaders have both participated in and convened forums, roundtables, and conferences on the role of mining and where it fits within the teaching of traditions, how it can operate more responsibly and caring for creating and respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples. Some religious traditions have also employed their positions as shareholders in extractive industries to address social and environmental issues with specific companies and joined with other investors to pressure the industry to respond responsibly to serious disasters, like the [2019 tailings dam collapse in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais Brazil](#). Usually the federal government owns subsurface resources. Mining should be at the service of the human person and not vice versa. We need to encourage the implementation of a circular economy, especially in relation to mining activities. How this looks and works at a local level and how this looks at the scale of 7 billion people must be addressed. There is not a single easy answer. We need to challenge modern tools and technology and break the question down into smaller pieces. He then discussed some

WB%20Value%20Chain,%20extractive%20and%20conflict%20prevention%20discussion%20paper.pdf;
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/IP/2016/IU/Mapping_Mining_SDGs_An_Atlas.pdf;
<http://www.insidemindanao.com/february2010/Mining%20Caraga.pdf>.

examples of forward-looking CEOs. Faith communities can respond to the pastoral needs of communities with spirituality. We do not invest in industries that support the abortion industry. In the professional world, it is called impact investing or sustainable development investing. Slowly but surely, we are debating every day about the role of companies in the global financial system, which is fully integrated today.

Sulak Sivaraksa said that the situation in Thailand is very similar to that of the Philippines with a history of long-standing dictatorship and foreign rule. Most of us in the so-called ‘third world’ have been brain-washed that the industrial revolution was a great thing. But we did not realize that the industrial revolution only helped the rich and the powerful and not the poor, even in England itself. In 1937, the British laborer died daily- we need to learn the negative side of the industrial revolution. Gandhi realized that to take down the British Empire, you must rebel against the British Empire. He started a movement.

He then talked about Buddhist economics. Technology is embedded with values both good and bad; it is not just a tool. Tools we can control, but machines control us. Look at Japan. People think it is the most advanced country in Asia, but people don’t realize that Fukushima recently destroyed much of the industry. He mentioned Indian companies as well. It is important to use self-sustaining technology as a way of limiting greed. In the third world, we have been concerned with GDP – the more you produce the more you earn. But the rich get more with that approach. We should look for alternatives. The Kingdom of Bhutan proposed a [gross national happiness indicator](#). He thinks this is an important model to consider. Another principle to consider is ‘slow is beautiful.’ We need to radically and non-violently challenge the mainstream. Develop a Buddhist principle of rebirth. With a positive attitude and love and kindness, people are more likely to live quality lives while living simply. But at the same time, we are seeing this idea of doing things slower, especially with technology demanding us to do things instantly. We are living in an age of endless consumption and waste and it is affecting us in a detrimental age. We must look for alternatives. Religion should not only be personal, it should be social and environmental. Interfaith conversation can strengthen this. Look for a modern prophet. We are working against an oppressive system and we can change this system.

Raymond Ambray made the presentation “Continuing Plunder of Natural Resources - Sustained Attacks Against the People – 2019 Environment and Human Rights Challenges in Caraga.” He specializes in the work of Indigenous people and environmental protection. In the Philippines, extraction industries focus on metallic minerals. The Philippines had been occupied by Japan and the economy plundered after 20 years of Marxist dictatorship. The Philippines is the 5th most mineral rich country in the world – gold, copper, and nickel. Caraga is in the southern-most part of the Philippines. It is the country’s mining capital. Caraga has the largest iron-ore deposit in the world along with gold, copper, and chromite and coal. The plunder of natural resources is ongoing. There are 48 metallic mines and 68 non-metallic mines. 30.2% of the land area is covered in mining. Greed for coal directly affects Indigenous tribes and communities. If not for the people’s resistance, specifically Indigenous peoples, along with churches, companies may have proceeded with full-swing operations. Areas of ancestral land have been procured and cleared for coal mining without the prior and informed consent of the Indigenous people who live and come from the land. Despite the economic activities, the people in the area remain poor. This raises the question of *development for whom?* Caraga is the 12th region with the most number of people living in poverty in 2015 (39.1% in poverty). The top job sector in Caraga remains agriculture. There are high casualties associated with mining and large-scale environmental degradation including flooding, such as the 2018 typhoon. The Catholic Church and faith communities have spear-headed opposition against mining industries along with

Indigenous peoples. A number of groups are taking local action and forming partnerships with local farmers. Efforts are focused on: Education/formation; organizing efforts at the grassroots level; and mobilization – creating alliances, celebration, legal actions, media exposures and investigations. In the region there are four infantry brigades. Wherever there is mining, there are military conflicts who are also recruiting civilians into the military. This results in brutal human rights violations, displacement of Indigenous people from their land, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonments, and more. Indigenous peoples and churches stood up in opposition to the human rights violations. A challenge is to lobby for the resumption of the Peace Negotiation between the GPH and CPP-NPA-NDFP in order to access the root causes of the problems. He recommended that the Interfaith Forum ask the G20 Summit to monitor their local partners in relation to the Multinational Mining Companies in developed nations on their ethical and social responsibilities. In the Philippines, some leftist groups push on mining to only mine according to what is needed. In the past year, all the extractive industries are for the needs of other countries. If the goal of mining is to serve humanity, it should first serve the people.

Key Points Made:

- Faith communities and leaders can work with local organizations and peoples to support resistance movements and challenge the mining industry to protect the rights and livelihoods of the people most impacted.
- Faith communities can provide spirituality to help reduce the amount of greed in the world and assist people to live more self-sufficiently.
- Interfaith groups can use strategic international investment to influence large companies and actors to shift how they are developing to increase corporate responsibility.
- Create multi stakeholder dialogues that bring together citizens, investors, and CEO's to have frank exchanges.
- We can work within existing systems for the time while looking to change them in the future. This is not a zero sum game.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Governments monitor their local partners in relation to the Multinational Mining Companies on their ethical and social responsibilities.
- That G20 Leaders recognize Indigenous people's right to their land and resources.
- That G20 Governments shift from a linear economy towards a more circular economy.
- That G20 Governments create economies that are not driven by a goal of improving people's lives rather than greed.
- That G20 Governments replace the GDP as an indicator of progress with an indicator that is more ecologically sound.

MOBILIZING FOR ACTION

Description: This session focused on actions in the area of planet, with a special focus on youth voices. The voices of young people are shaping contemporary ideas and politics especially around the challenges of climate change. The session featured dialogue between youth leaders and “elders,” looking to constructive and bold paths forward. Chaired by Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace), speakers were Kim Tran (Core Member, Fridays for Future Japan), John Paul Masubay (SSH Mentee, Tacloban, Philippines), Denise Coghlan (Lead, Jesuit Relief Services Cambodia; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), and Sulak Sivaraksa (Founder, International Network of Engaged Buddhists).

Presentations Overview:

Gunnar Stålsett framed the panel by explaining that climate action is focused on a notion of peace that is more than the absence of shooting. Peace is built on a broad understanding of what life is about in a diverse world. This session is focused on the voices of youth and their ideas for things to come. We will explore questions spanning from how new technologies and social media impact elections and promote misinformation to the role of science in climate action. Youth were asked to comment on how they take climate action in our increasingly polarized world.

Kim Tran spoke as a climate activist who helps to organizer the [Fridays for Futures](#) movement in Japan. She wanted to know why adults have not responded to [Greta Thunberg's activism](#) and the [school strike movement](#). She said, "We all have this burning flame inside, but we don't know what to do." She called on leaders to listen to scientists and uphold the Paris Agreement. Children are very important for creating change because we influence each other. We influence our families, and our teachers when we skip school. The biggest challenge young people face is that people look at us with doubt. They think, 'What do they know? If they know anything, they should be in school, not in the streets.' But we are in the streets to be heard and seen. Another challenge is with your parents. They want us to be good, and stay in school. But to be good is not only to care about ourselves, but to also care about others. We cannot vote. But we can, and have, influenced the votes, like the [Green Party in Germany](#). When asked about the influence of social media, she noted that if it wasn't for media, the Friday for Futures movement wouldn't be as widespread as it is. They use social media to collaborate with one another. They have used it to write letters to leaders. They have a huge network of people and supporters through media. They use it to provide each other with facts and knowledge. They use it to tell each other to learn from science and base their actions on science. And the most important part of the movement is that they can rely on each other. She also spoke about the role of [Parents for Future](#). Not all youth are climate aware, and Japanese culture teaches young people to obey and respond to normative standards including a culture that continues to support nuclear power. While this is challenging, Children are inherently connected to nature. She said that we are born from nature and have the connection inside us. Fridays for Future is trying to do this meditation and look inside us and around us to be thankful for what we have. We are just one species here, and nature is more than just us. She tries to talk to fellow teenagers about why they don't care about the environment. The right approach, she said, is to find common ground. For example, she points out that the sushi served in Japan has micro-plastics in it. The heat wave that is killing your grandparents is related to climate change. This is how she engages them. Yes, young people are comfortable living their normal lives in Japan and they are taught not to question, but we must engage them, not blame them.

John Paul Masubay said that in the Philippines, the most important things they are facing from climate change are typhoons and natural disasters. Human intelligence makes this experience very challenging because if we are so smart - we have the technology to go into space and learn about other planets – then why do we not care for our own planet? We have access to knowledge about the many ways the earth is changing, unlike in some places. We see about the whales and the turtles and the ocean. In this regard, social media can be valuable as an important way to influence others. But not everything on social media is true. For this reason, we must also look to religious and governmental leaders. The government and religious people are those with the power that can be used to influence more people. Nature is not moving away from us, we are the ones pushing the natural world away. We must not save the planet, we must save the people. The

planet can live without people, but people cannot live without the planet. We need a type of education that will break boundaries for those who do not listen. Education must continue not only for young people, but all the time for everyone. For the elders and the young people. You must also talk in a way that will keep children interested – finding the right language to educate children.

Denise Coghlan emphasized the importance of being grateful to God for what we have and the beauty that is around us. Nature is sacred, and “Hatred never ceases by hatred, but by love alone is hatred healed.” There is too much hate toward the natural world. Throwing garbage into the sea, and carbon into the air is a type of hatred. There is a need for conversion away from how we’ve hated the planet. She reflected back on the [Cambodian Landmine Campaign](#) that happened when email was just getting started. She talked about the importance of encouraging survivors’ voices to be heard, particularly those who have experienced disasters (that may or may not be caused by climate change). And she said we need to recruit parents to be involved in the campaigns. Education and communication across generations need to be linked in ways that take people outside their comfort zones to encourage those who do not know about the issue to care. Education can even influence those who do not want to have their opinions challenged, such as right-wing fundamentalists or climate deniers (although it is much harder), to listen and maybe they can experience a kind of religious conversion on the issue.

Sulak Sivaraksa spoke from a Buddhist perspective. Human beings must have good friends, and good friends are those who tell you what you don’t want to hear. Children are our good friends, and we must listen to them. Economic inequality is also an issue. We must go to the poorer classes, not to help them, but to listen to them. We can change the world by changing the social and class structure in ways that change the oppressive system. The way forward is not by hating the oppressor, but by learning from each other. To move to action, you must learn from the poor, side with the poor, and share with the poor. We must love ourselves. The media now is controlled by capitalism and controlled by greed. It will brain-wash you to worship the state. Media gives you delusion. We must have alternative media. Even China, with so much control, has alternative media. We must have alternative media through love and kindness. Encourage children not to watch mainstream television and look for something more alternative. Even Japan has an oppressive culture based on conformity. We must teach people to question and challenge what they hear.

Key Points Made:

- Social media is a double edged sword that must be used with discernment
- The world is polarized, but love rather than hate is the way forward
- Activism must be based on peer-reviewed, sound science
- Social conformity is a powerful force that must be countered by engaging education that teaches people how to question
- People who are disengaged must be engaged, not blamed, for their attitude

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 Governments engage with young people as serious dialogue partners on climate change issues.

ADDITIONAL WORKING SESSIONS

BRINGING ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES TO THE CHALLENGE OF INEQUALITY

Description: Challenges around inequality color theological reflections that result in tense disciplinary debates about means and consequences, and common perceptions of what is fair and what is not. This panel framed the issues with the goal of linking the G20 Interfaith threads that address human dignity and notions of fairness to broader global debates, including at the G7 August meetings in France. Speakers were asked to identify next steps to translate talk about equity into practice. Chaired by Lord Carey of Clifton (103rd Archbishop of Canterbury), speakers were Daniela Muhaj (Research Fellow, Center for International Development), Rik Torfs (Former Senator, Belgian Federal Parliament), and Mokhtar Omar Ibrahim (Senior Advisor to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Secretary General).

Presentations Overview:

Lord Carey of Clifton highlighted how inequality is a grievous wrong that is incredibly complicated. For example, if we want every person to own a car or have a refrigerator, what happens to the planet? He framed his introductory remarks with the statement, “The consumerism of our day clashes with the rights of individuals.” He also quoted Orwell who said “some people are more equal than others.” That said, he emphasized that we should not lose heart because things are changing. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the fall of the Berlin Wall all remind us of the power of religious ideas to change societies. What gets media attention is action. Anger plays a role in this. Jesus overturned the tables in the temple. William Wilberforce identified with the pain of others. We should allow self-interest to dictate what justice demands. He asked the speakers if we would be able to defeat inequality if all the people in the world had one religion, and all respondents said no.

Daniela Muhaj also emphasized that inequality is not something that can be captured with just one simple term; a variety of interrelated concepts must be used to capture what is involved. Definitions of inequality matter. Income inequality is one dimension, but there is also gender inequality and inequality of opportunity. Regardless of the complications, some of the facts are straightforward: The poorest half of world has recently seen wealth decrease by 11%, and the top half increase by 12%. Former President Obama and Pope Francis have both spoken against it. Examining inequality through a lens of fairness also creates an environment of finger pointing. Fairness is built on the spirit of understanding that you must take from one to give to another. There is a misconception that a spike in inequality picked up after the financial crisis. In truth, inequality has been rising since the 1990s. The financial crisis of 2008 was a symptom, but not the root cause. Geography matters a lot more than we expect, especially within countries. People are less willing to move to areas of opportunity. Risk is very high to leave your community, especially if you live in a rural area, to leave for an uncertain reward. For example, in Detroit, MI, the auto industry moved out, but the calculus of moving out for people is, ‘Where do you go?’ The likelihood of people actually moving out is very slim. People do not really move to opportunity. Income inequality is not necessarily new, so why do we care? Because we’re seeing disturbing effects on the social fabric, and desultory effects on the social contract. The increased tension is contributing to an increasing distrust of experts and governments. There is also the inequality of access to opportunity. If kids are born to poor families, it becomes more difficult by the day to move up the social and economic ladders. Technological disruption moves incredibly quickly, but bureaucracies move slowly. Companies are not paying their fair share of taxes. Many rural economies lack internet access. Governments alone are not enough, though they have

redistribution tools. Inequality can best be understood at the local level. No universal tool can work equally well on the local level. We need to translate global visions to local stakeholders. She uses growth diagnostics to work with developing economies working on compressed timescales due to political pressure and mandates.

Rik Torfs explored definitions of inequality. How can we properly deal with it? The opposite of inequality is not uniformity; some types of inequality are good. He discussed three types of “equality:” 1) Equality in the law. Transgender issues, women athletes not complying with standards of international sports. Complete equal treatment is not good because it doesn’t consider relevant differences. 2) Equality before the law. People are treated equally, but the law can make relevant distinctions. E.g., people who are handicapped or young. But how can we make a correct distinctions? Tax on breweries is good nationally, but not in one village that is supported by one brewery. 3) Equality through the law. The law creates equality through incentives and punishments. But how far can we go with that? Anthropological drive of people: they want to be different, to perform better. Essential notions of truth (esp. in religion) – should not be seen just anthropologically and metaphysically, but, as Habermas puts it, through justice. Once we define justice though, we begin to miss things – perhaps it’s the starting point of becoming unjust. For example, in Finland, combatting homelessness takes precedence over free movie tickets. Ranking basic necessities that should be provided as a policy matter. He made two points regarding mercy: 1) Mercy can never be an argument for maintaining structural injustices; and 2) Mercy is not limitless – people are not saints. He talked about the story of the Good Samaritan who helps a person lying wounded on the road, but then continues on his way after depositing him at an inn. Inequality is not just a legal or economic matter, but also a cultural and psychological matter. For example, people in cities tend to feel more cultivated than those in rural areas. Let’s not overestimate or humiliate people. We need to prioritize basic needs like housing and then consider education.

Mokhtar Omar Ibrahim talked about what the [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) is doing on the ground with people to address inequality. The IPU is the first political multilateral organization in history. It was founded in 1889, and has grown to where now, 180 parliaments are members of this organization. IPU has adopted many resolutions, but then they started a program on how to tackle inequality. What other missing links are there beyond governmental agencies for combatting extremism? Terrorism has religious elements that make collaborating with religious communities vital. The IPU will have its first ever summit between leaders, religious leaders, etc. in 2022. Inequality makes a huge contribution to extremism. One of the push factors toward extremism is socioeconomic inequality. Pull factors include individual, psychological factors of belonging to a group. In Africa, its inequality that drives people to Boko Haram. In Paris, individual and group belonging factors are more important for those who join ISIS – but the majority of extremist recruitment is based on inequality. Equality should come through the law, so we need stakeholders to all come together. Governments need to be open to other stakeholders. Religious literacy is very important in diplomacy, but it can also lead to things like Boko haram because of competition between sects. The social contract is broken, so policy promises seem to be broken as well. In order to tackle inequality, systemic change will take a long time to be implemented. We can’t wait that long, so a new push is to think about reducing inequality proactively.

Key Points Made:

- The importance of defining terms like inequality and fairness.

- The need for local, practical, and pragmatic solutions from “stakeholders” in communities, especially religious organizations.
- The importance of a multidimensional approach to inequality that includes the personal and psychological dimensions in addition to socioeconomic and structural dimensions.
- The importance of justice to mechanisms like wealth redistribution.
- Prioritization of basic human needs and ranking issues.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- None were made.

COMBATTING CORRUPTION

Description: Actual and perceived corruption undermines understandings of justice and faith in governments and other institutions worldwide. Corruption erodes public confidence, fueling tendencies towards violence, and impeding delivery of basic services. Combatting corruption is thus vital to the global agenda. This session explored how religious communities can engage more actively in efforts towards honest governance and to deter corrupt conduct, offering insights into patterns and effects of poor governance and paths towards solutions. The goal was specific action ideas to build partnerships involving religious communities and their non-religious counterparts. Chaired by Wayne Eagleson (Former Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister of New Zealand), speakers were Katherine Marshall (Executive Director, World Faiths Development Dialogue), Jónatas Machado (Professor of International Public Law and European Union Law, University of Coimbra), David Cohen (Director, WSD Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice, Stanford University), and Amer Bani Amer (Founder and Director, Hayat Center – RASED).

Presentations Overview:

Wayne Eagleson emphasized that the problem of corruption is not a new. For example, addressing corruption was a major concern for Prime Minister Cameron. Corruption diverts financial resources away from the delivery of basic services. This dialogue session explores how religious leaders and actors can play more of an active role. They are too often silent.

Katherine Marshall said that there is a divide between how religious and secular institutions explore the topic of corruption. But this is changing and the corruption is becoming more important on the interfaith agenda. Corruption is seen by the public and analysts as fundamentally undermining trust in governmental processes. Corruption is part of the grievances on fundamentalist and populist sides against government. It is on the agenda. The C20 is putting forward a lot of recommendations on the topic. Some of the civil society processes that are committed to addressing corruption are [Transparency International](#) and the [International Anti-Corruption Conference](#) series. Transparency International made a deliberate choice not to work with religious actors. They are heavily influenced by northern European culture which is distinctively secular. Why is it so hard to bring religious actors into the discussion? Religions are not comfortable with bringing transparent accountability within their own houses, and so they avoid the topic. It is also a north-south issue. There’s been a lot of progress, and yet we are seeing widening of systemic and company corruption. It is not easy to find the resources available for fighting corruption. There is room for training and the provision of more accessible materials. There are very few religious actors participating in the International Anti-corruption Conferences. We have developed a brief that explores questions about how one could broaden tools and coalitions. Where do you see best practices regarding the effective use of transparency?

Uganda posted how much money would reach each school, and a 90% increase followed. She talked about a usable form of country budgets, development of new technology tools and the use of social media to report abuses. Best practices emphasize the importance of rule of law. There is a high percentage of people who have no access to a justice system. We want positive case studies. It is a national more than an international issue. She talked a bit about Latvia, Georgia, and Rwanda. Anti-corruption campaigns change governmental processes. The principle is to change the rules of the game for fighting corruptions and “fry a big fish” to show that the rules have changed. But some efforts seem to fizzle (e.g., the Philippines). There needs to be a sustained willingness that includes religious actions. This is difficult. People everywhere hate corruption, but the problem is they don’t know what to do about it. The toleration of certain cultural processes is a slippery slope. Transparency International made a conscious decision not to think of corruption as an ethical issue. They focus on systems rather than individuals. But changing how societies operate is a vital part of any change. There are many different answers to this question. Very few have thought it through systematically. We could bring some smaller countries together and agree on basic, national strategies to achieve a broader objective.

Jónatas Machado said that all areas are affected by corruption, including religion. Several religions and philosophers have addressed the topic (e.g., Isaiah 1:23, Amos 5:12, Confucius, Aristotle, etc.). Corruption dresses for the occasion. It shows up in many forms. There is a relationship between culture and religion and the level of corruption. Some studies show that religion can impact economic growth. Strong hierarchical religions may be more likely to suffer from corruption. The relationship between religion and corruption is complex and it involves the interplay between economic, governmental and social factors. Religion can be part of the problem, and can also be part of the solution. Regarding best practices, he pointed to tobacco control. In the first years, nothing happened, but little-by-little, there was progress. Our goal is not to eradicate corruption or tobacco because that is impossible. But we can lower corruption to minimize the negative effects on society. There is a difference between high versus low rates of crime. When asked why religious actors should get involved, he mentioned the problem of scale. Corrupt businesses from the West are included. Corruption shows up everywhere. There is sophisticated corruption and street corruption. Religious groups and other organizations should recognize their own history of corruption. It’s like a chess game.

David Cohen addressed the relationship between corruption and the rule of law as two issues that cut across the SDGs. The implementation of all SDG goals depends upon the accountability of the judiciary. An effective method has been in [Asia’s National Anti-Corruption Commission and courts](#). There is some confusion about the difference between a whistleblower, a cooperating witness, and a protected witness, etc. Corruption exists at all different levels: from getting a license to the highest level of government. Combatting corruption means providing protection for whistleblowers and incentives, including cultural incentives, for whistleblowers. Rarely is there an effective scheme for people on the inside. We also do monitoring. We monitor regional anti-corruption courts in SE Asia. We collect qualitative and quantitative data from monitoring that is reported to Supreme Courts. We offer trainings for judges and prosecutors. Sometimes they don’t know what they are doing. There is an important role for civil society. In SE Asia, the police and Attorney General gets the lowest rating. Accountability and the rule of law is important. When asked about best practices, he indicated that what is considered a best practice in the U.S. may not be a best practice elsewhere. In SE Asia, Singapore consistently is evaluated as low in corruption. But one reason is the lowest salary of a district court judge there is a \$1 million per year. In Cambodia they get only \$2000 per year; district court salaries are sometimes as low as \$600 per year salary. The same strategies will not work under such differential pay scales. Almost every country has a commission. The existence of a commission doesn’t mean

that they do anything. Cambodia is ranked in the bottom quarter of the index. Political will to effectively prosecute and hold criminals accountable is a best practice, but there is a strong interest in not doing that when foreign direct investment is driven by corruption. Risk assessments tell companies that it's not risky to do business, which is why they are there. There is no cookie cutter approach. Deep contextual knowledge of each country is important. It's not that people don't know corruption is happening. It's offering a solution to the problems that face them. Given the situation in so many places, there is no solution if people want to feed their children. We need to work slowly with governmental institutions, work for a generational change, and recognize that combatting corruption is more than getting new laws written on the books. It's about political will from the top.

Amer Bani Amer described his association, [RASED](#). They fight corruption by empowering women and imams (male and female). Their organization trains imams and connects them with civil society leaders to get the imams outside of their comfort zone and train them about messaging using social media. They conduct local initiatives with civil society activists. They convene activities with youth, etc. If you want to make religious leaders more effective, take them out of their comfort zone and merge them with local civic leaders. Hold politicians accountable through social media. They utilized the power of social media to develop and publicize a scorecard for all members of Parliament in Jordan.

Key Points Made:

- Corruption highlights that sins and crimes have different meanings a crime – some issues are legal but immoral and some are moral but illegal.
- There was a healthy consensus around certain kinds of practices that focus on changing the rules of the game.
- Collaboration on education and training is important because some corruption stems from poor management practices conducted by honest people.
- Faith based actors can combat corruption by addressing the loss of trust and confidence in the system.
- Religious communities should be more transparent about authority, ownership, and financial transactions within their own traditions.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Governments increase investment in national and regional anti-money laundering efforts.
- That G20 Governments strengthen capacity building in national financial tracking agencies for following complex flows of money.
- That G20 Leaders prioritize the topic of corruption and engage in dialogue with religious leaders as they develop emerging instruments that address corruption.

RELIGIOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Description: Cultural heritage is a new frontier of sustainable development, even as it remains a setting in which religious conflict and reconciliation can be encountered. Freedom of Religion and Belief can be an important framework for work to protect religious sites, including through its links to protecting religious identities for many traditions. Cultural heritage shapes investment, national security, and development agendas and includes increasingly both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. With growing focus on tensions around cultural heritage of

religious significance and through the process of recalibration of post-colonial cultural heritage agendas, policy makers and religious stakeholders face new challenges involving the interplay between cultural heritage, power, education, and development. The session explored the important interdependence between cultural heritage, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and education in the process of developing innovative approaches to the protection of shared and contested cultural heritage, developing heritage-focused civic cultures and cohesive societies. Chaired by Peter Petkoff (Director of Religion, Law and International Relations Programme, Regent's Park College, Oxford and Brunel Law School), speakers were Naoto Yoshikawa (Former President, Hawaii Tokai International College; Professor, Department of International Studies, Tokai University, Japan), Katsuhiko Sasuga (Assistant Professor, Department of International Studies, Tokai University), Christian Morimoto Hermansen (Professor, School of Law and Politics, Kwansei Gakuin University), Paul Morris (Professor of Religious Studies, Victoria University; UNESCO Chair in Interreligious Understanding and Relations in New Zealand and the Pacific), and Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Senior Advisor, KAICIID).

Presentations Overview:

Peter Petkoff talked about how cultural heritage moves beyond the state center. The idea of bridges between civilizations and cultures are promoted by culture. Religion and money are a very delicate conversation, but it merits mentioning that we tend to underestimate the fact that financial stability has historically always played a very central part of every major religious site. Churches don't always want their sites to be considered cultural heritage sites, because they want them to remain as a piece of private property reserved for religious worship.

Naoto Yoshikawa spoke from his experience having worked many years in the UN as a development economist. If you don't have trust in the economic community, there are not going to be any transactions made. The economy doesn't grow. The same concepts will apply in the religious cultural communities. We need to get back to a culture where we don't cheat other people in order to get ahead.

Katsuhiko Sasuga said that if we look at religious institutions, we see how they are very social institutions, all of the doctrines and messages aside. Most have peaceful messages that they want to share to contribute to a peaceful society. Chinese policy categorizes their religious policies by whether or not they are friendly towards the Chinese government. We need to appeal to these standards, because we want China to become a more peaceful country.

Christian Morimoto Hermansen spoke from his experience being a missionary at a Christian school that has very few Christian students. His approach is that he wants his students not to become Christians, but to understand what Christianity is. He focuses on exchanging ideas and values to find common ground, rather than looking to compete with one another. In Denmark, the Protestants painted over all of their Catholic paintings, covering up their own cultural heritage at the time. New religions and authorities build on top of the others in these Christian nations, getting rid of the existing cultural identities. However, here in Japan, different religious groups peacefully coexist without worrying about whether what you possess is enough. Rather, in Japan, they are happy to share what they already have. Competing with one another will result in many political, cultural, and economic disasters. Very often, the governments decide what religions receive more favorable outcomes, leading to persecution of minority cultures or religions.

Paul Morris spoke about the relationship between culture and power. Power is an opposite of culture and cultural heritage. Power suppresses cultural difference; it obscures culture. He

reflected on the time he spent at Boston University where students tried to tell him they didn't have culture. If you don't engage with culture, you end up with pseudo-culture (see white supremacy). He talked about his experience going to India as a Jewish person. He found that they divided people based on different skin colors to go to the synagogues, when the small number of Jews in the area probably didn't justify three synagogues in the area. Real cultural interactions are much more interesting than the displays of power. The aim is to think critically about cultural interactions, but do so in a meaningful way. The issue is that the complex cultural dialogues of the past allow us to a full recognition of culture and religious diversity today. The UNESCO Heritage site demarcation is a political process all the way, because there are barriers. Coexistence is a very low bar. Historically, the models of coexistence have always been limited. We need to be creative and engage with our specific realities. The securitization of not only sacred locations, but sacred religions and sacred ideologies.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer talked about the preservation of disputed sacred sites. We see many attacks concerning these sacred sites. He said that it is important to give sacred sites symbolic value and deem it undisputable. Separating it as a sacred site is to separate it from everyday life. We are living now in the technology of healing. We try to transform the memory landscapes and make them into places for healing and reconciliation. He talked about the importance of shifting from the relativist view into a collective memory. In the end, it is really a theology. Sacred sites are an ideal location for politicians to manipulate. We contribute to ignorance in coexistence by not teaching children about other religions. How can we expect them to be tolerant of a culture or religion that they have never heard of before? Visiting sacred sites provides parents with an opportunity to teach their children about religious diversity.

Key Points Made:

- Cultural sites can bring people together or divide them.
- Cultural sites are often spontaneously shared without people thinking about it too much.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- None made.

YOUTH PROMOTING VALUES FOR PEACE

Description: Sport at the Service of Humanity links the principles of sport – respect, balance, joy in excellence – with core values such as compassion, love and enlightenment, shared by faith traditions and the framework of human rights. A team of young athletes, Handa Fellows and their mentors, will share ideas that answer the challenges facing planet, people, and peace. Specifically, the panel will discuss how the power of sport-based play can serve as an effective platform to help communities overcome deep-seated prejudices, break down barriers and encourage conflict resolution. “Youth are not only a pivotal component of building peace, they are essential in passing it on – in making it lasting, sustainable, and meaningful in their communities.” These words from SSH Global mentor and Generations for Peace Founder/Chairman, HRH Prince Feisal Al Hussein of Jordan serve as inspiration for this SSH-led panel discussion. Chaired by Jon Tibbs (OBE, Chairman and Founder of JTA), speakers were Carlos Tapiero (Deputy-Director and Director of Education, Maccabi World Union), Renata Simril (President and CEO, LA84 Foundation), Shahid Bishara (SSH Young Leader from Arab town, Israel), Martin Rojkes (SSH Young Leader from Argentina), and Mpai Rampou (SSH Young Leader from South Africa).

Presentations Overview:

Jon Tibbs said that Sport is a powerful peace building platform. Peace is the opposite of conflict, not just the opposite of war. Sport can help heal conflict. Major sporting events such as the Olympics have demonstrated its power and influence over the years to help with conflict resolution. For example, Olympic history was made in 2018 when North and South Korea participated and entered the Olympic Stadium as a unified Korean team. Now, there are discussions about South and North Korea jointly hosting the Olympic Games in 2032. Another example is how the Sochi Paralympic Games spurred a new sets of laws and changed treatment of people with disabilities. He also gave the example of [Cathy Freeman](#), an Indigenous Australian Olympic sprinter who lit the cauldron in the Olympic Stadium during the Sydney Olympics. The Opening Ceremony celebrated both a century of women's participation and the heritage of indigenous Australians. The Sydney Games forced the world to look at Australia's "dirty laundry" and forced it to improve the treatment and rights of indigenous people. Finally, he spoke about Sport at the Service of Humanity – a global initiative that promotes the importance of VALUES in sport and in life. Sport at the Service of Humanity's Six Principles - compassion, respect, love, enlightenment, balance, and joy – are universal values that are common to all, regardless of faith or culture. He spoke of being inspired by Pope Francis who said to, "Challenge yourselves in the game of life as you do in the game in sport." Sport at the Service of Humanity launched a Young Leaders Mentoring Program to nurture and shape the character of young people in sport today, in the hopes that they will become future values-driven sport role models and sport leaders who will use the power of sport as a platform for good – who will not only win in sport but more importantly, will win in life.

Carlos Tapiero (Mentor) – Honoring the main subject of the G20 Interfaith Gathering, "Peace", a quotation from the Midrash: "Great is peace, because all blessings are included in it." To achieve peace, it is indispensable the conjunction of dialogue, knowledge, acceptance of differences, solidarity, love for all creatures. Take sports seriously as a vehicle for love, respect, and peace. Sports can be a vehicle to change society. Sports has intrinsic values - cooperation, team work, respect, making the best of every challenge, personal and team growth, individual, family and community transformation. In order for those values to be understood, informal education is needed to elaborate on those values. Sports values are not necessarily understood just by playing sports - they need to be spoken out, in activities between rival teams, in shared field trips, in open conversations, in significant non-sports activities where rivals get to know each other. When this happens, rivals are able to understand and enjoy all the issues in common with their rivals - all what unites us as human beings. When asked if faith can play a role in the negative side of sport, he said that his whole experience has been that when you bring basic values of religion, you enhance values of the sports and you really discover that the human being in front of you has value - as important as yourself.

Renata Simril (Mentor) – Sport is an indispensable tool to help young people become leaders in their communities. She cited the example of Caylin Louis Moore whose life was chronicled in the book - *A Dream Too Big: The Story of an Improbable Journey from Compton to Oxford* – and talked about how three things saved his life: 1) faith in God, 2) his mother, and 3) sports. He was able to overcome insurmountable obstacles. Sports "gave him a pass" from gangsters. LA84 believes in giving young people equal opportunity and access to sport, regardless of income level. The term "play equity" derived from a lack of access to sport and physical education in schools. In high crime areas, kids are not able to play outside. Sport has the ability to bring hope and love back to children.

Shahid Bishara (Mentee) – She emphasized the transformational powers of sport. She spoke about her personal experience as a young Arab Israeli whose experience playing the sport of squash with Jewish kids made her realize that she had more in common with them, than differences. She spoke about the SquashBond program that is helping Arab and Jewish children understand each other’s cultures and is helping forge the bond of friendship.

Martin Rojkes (Mentee) – He talked about the importance of promoting RESPECT on and off the field of play. In his experience as a football player, coach and informal educator, he recognized how passionate people can get about their sport and their team – which could sometimes lead to over-fanaticism and over-competitiveness. This inspired him and his friends to launch a campaign called “Ninguna camiseta es mas importante que un companero” which means “No sport shirt is more important than a person/friend.” He noted that Sport needs to teach young people not only the skills to win and excel in the game, it is also important for sport to teach empathy and compassion.

Mpai Rampou (Mentee) – from Cape Town, South Africa spoke about her volunteer work with primary school aged children from different faith backgrounds in lower-resourced communities, where they experience challenges with racism and gangsterism. She talked about how they use sport and play-based games as an important educational tool that teaches life skills such as personal responsibility, honesty, discipline. Importantly, she talked about how these programs help shelter the kids from violence and keeps them away from trouble. Her recommendation to government leaders is that they allocate significant resources towards education for all.

Key Points Made:

- Sport is a powerful peace and conflict resolution platform.
- Sport has an obligation to “get it right”. Right now, too much emphasis is focused on winning. The role of sport in Character Development must be prioritized. Parents and Coaches must take this seriously.
- Sport has a responsibility to teach young people not only the skills to win the game, it has a more important responsibility to teach young people to “win in life”.
- Sport has a responsibility to teach positive values such as Respect on an off the field of play; empathy and compassion.
- Take Youth seriously. Youth movements have revolutionized the world. Give youth a voice.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 Governments include youth participation in the G20 Summit.
- That the G20 Governments ensure that leaders realize the power of Sport as a platform for peace and conflict resolution.
- That the G20 Governments take sports seriously because it transforms society. Think of sports as a natural tool to bring societies together.
- That the G20 Governments invest in productive activities (e.g. sports, arts, etc.) that will keep youth safe, healthy, and happy
- That the G20 Leaders understand that youth are very powerful. Youth movements have changed and revolutionized the world.
- That the G20 Governments invest in young people academically by providing access to education for all.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN FORMS OF SLAVERY: TOWARDS NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN A G20 CONTEXT

Description: There is wide international consensus on the evils of human trafficking and different forms of modern slavery, but far less on what is needed to address these issues. International law, police action, and national efforts yield results but they fall well short of hopes and expectations. Many religious initiatives address the issues. They include compelling calls at senior leadership level and more local, people-centered programs. However, coordination among them and with secular actors is patchy. This panel looked to strengthening both moral leadership and practical means to bring these scourges to an end, with calls for action to the G20 Leaders. Speakers were asked to identify religious contributions to global campaigns to combat human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. Chaired by David Cohen (Director, WSD Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice, Stanford University), speakers were Kevin Hyland (Ireland's Member, Council of Europe Independent Group of Experts for Trafficking; Former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, UK), Denise Coghlan (Lead, Jesuit Relief Services Cambodia; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), and Purnaka L. de Silva (Director, Institute for Strategic Studies and Democracy), and John McCarthy (Former Ambassador to the Holy See from Australia; Chairman, Sydney Archdiocese Antislavery Task Force).

Presentations Overview:

Kevin Hyland noted that it is an honour to be with this panel speaking on the topic, but the fact that he is here to talk about the issue of human trafficking reflects the poor stewardship in our world and our need for change. The shame is on our generation for allowing this most evil of crimes to reach levels that have never been seen before. Our climate is fragile and 65.6 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide. Human trafficking is estimated at over 40,000,000. Trafficked people are used for sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, organ removal, or forced services. In our interest-orientated, disposable culture, there is little hope for these people. [The UNODC Global Report on Human Trafficking](#) estimates that financial profits from human trafficking generates a profit of approximately \$150 billion per year. There are wider negative ripple effects of human trafficking on our world, so this is an issue that concerns everyone. Human trafficking contributes to gender issues, exacerbates health issues such as HIV, impacts the economy via criminal remittances given to families, and it impacts development inasmuch as those with power are the architects of the system that allows this to happen. Human trafficking is a governance issue. The cross-border trafficking in humans also makes it an international security issue. Terrorists use these activities to fund their crimes. Despite the fact that these issues affect society writ large, only 0.4% of the victims are identified. The conviction rate is even lower at 0.3 %. UN legislation and domestic legislation denounce this, but it continues to prevail. What should we do about this situation? Governments and business should play a much larger role. The G20 governments each govern altogether 65% of the world's population; their activities account for 79% of world trade, make up 84% of the world economy, and contribute 79% of world carbon omissions. As such, each G20 country has a duty to act on this issue. Furthermore, both governments and their citizens are complicit in this system. For example, the Cobalt in an iPhone battery is mined by children as young as 8 years old in the DRC. The NHS in the UK has been found to use rubber gloves manufactured by exploited Malaysian workers. There are many acts in place across the world such as the EU's [Conflict Minerals Regulation](#) that will go into effect in 2021, the [French Corporate Duty of Vigilance Law](#), and the UK's [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#). This shows that passing legislation is possible, but much more needs to be done. However, the political will and the leadership needs to be there. When asked about how to identify this underground criminal industry, he said that

the Council of Europe gives [guidance and directives](#) that have yet to be incorporated into procedures. We've marginalized it by not putting it into systems. In the UK, companies have to declare what they're doing to combat slavery, but non-compliance is still a huge issue. Why should a person at the bottom of the income bracket have to change their behaviors when major companies and governments are dragging their feet? New York City hasn't had an issue with fires because they built their buildings to be up to code. We need to have a human slavery free code for business. There are groups helping with this such as [The Clewer Initiative](#) and the [Santa Marta Group](#), but there are also governing bodies like the EU and the Council for Europe. However, the problem we see is that in countries such as the UK where the issue of human trafficking has been legally adopted, it has not yet been culturally integrated but is instead marginalized and mixed in with immigration policies. This is why can we still have governments that say companies have to declare what they're doing to eradicate slavery, but despite this legislation, 40 companies in the top 100 did not submit their statement last year, and of those who did, a third hadn't done it properly. He has worked with the London police by partnering with religious organizations during the Olympics to catch criminals. Criminals do, however, infiltrate all sorts of organizations, even religious ones – but you need to reiterate that religion is about faith. When asked how communities can work with governments in a way that doesn't isolate religious groups, but also makes them aware that they need to be responsible, he said that priests, imams, and nuns all have unique access to communities that the state and police can't replicate. It is about conversation. We don't want people to be used as a commodity. Why is the punishment for trafficking so low in so many countries? Many prosecutions on trafficking have been mounted, and the legislation is increasingly there. In the UK and Nigeria, it is life imprisonment. We need to use the international law, strip the assets, and when we go after murders and racists, we need to be professional about it. We also need to put our money where our mouth is. When he mounted a prosecution in India, everyone called him a fool, but when they got 14 years in prison, people thought he was great.

Denise Coghlan attended the Vatican conference in April on [Releasing Those Unjustly Bound](#). It was an amazing conference because the first section was named “enlightenment,” and the second part involved diverse groups of people at individual tables bringing forward proposals on this issue. She discussed human trafficking in terms of mixed migration flows. There are different levels of security that migrants have. For example, many of the people here have been migrants as people of faith in different countries and are pretty well off on one level, but there are many people who have to escape poverty as a motivation for moving across borders. Labour migrants can easily become slave labour. At the other end of the spectrum, we have refugees, some of whom are quite well off, given status and provided with documents. But, before they become refugees, they're first asylum seekers. Some of these asylum seekers are in danger of being trafficked. The trafficked migrant, or stateless person, is the most vulnerable of all. International conventions can address this with international laws. [The Global Compact for Migration](#) in 2016 has been followed up by [The Global Compact on Refugees](#) in 2018. Each country is called upon to implement a national plan. We, in the Catholic tradition, use the four words of Pope Francis: Welcome, Protect, Promote, and Integrate. How can this be done? We can engage with governments at various meetings that they convene such as bilateral and regional meetings, participate in review conferences and country reviews, contribute to monitoring hubs that provide government with information, and contribute toward raising national awareness. The moral compass of the G20 Interfaith Forum is an important component to consider. To what extent do governmental officials collude in human trafficking? Have you ever talked with a trafficked person? The dialogue of encounter can be transformative. At the Vatican's session, trafficked people reiterated that we should remember their phrase, “Nothing about us, without us.” This means that they don't want prayers of sympathy. They want jobs,

especially with governments. Governments should involve former victims on their advisory commissions and their national research hubs. We should target the demand side of factory owners, big firms, and employers of maids. Her first contact with trafficked individuals came through two children who were sent to Thailand from Cambodia to beg for money, and were incarcerated for 3 years. She emphasized that education and awareness should be provided to children so that they become aware of this danger from the age of 10 and 11. If people trust the church or mosque, people in the community will report those cases to the local congregation. The congregation needs to know how to recognize this, take reports seriously, and educated about how to respond. When asked why prosecution against trafficking is so low in so many countries, she said that responded by saying that faith traditions need to engage with governments more broadly so that loopholes in transnational laws can be closed.

Purnaka L. de Silva talked about the origins and circumstances of human trafficking in Libya and Sub-Saharan Africa. There is a lot of white noise and media attention to migration out of Africa. Few are taking a nuanced approach to the origins and circumstances that facilitate human trafficking and other forms of modern day slavery. A particularly urgent issue is organ harvesting. It is hard to examine because the mafia is involved, but there is an investigation going on of a transplant hospital in Sicily that has expanded since 2011. EURPOL and INTERPOL estimate that the Sicilian mafia and their African gang affiliates made \$5-6 billion in Europe just this year. We don't have all the answers, but it is important to learn from the spaces that people come from, and there are comparative lessons to be learned. No one has done serious data mapping looking at the different African countries. If we don't look at people on the ground, how can we come up with viable solutions? There is currently a rising climate of xenophobia in Europe that is fueling far-right extremism in Europe. Despite the media related to Europe's migration crisis, the majority of migrants are not in Europe; 86% of the world's refugees are housed in low to mid income countries like Pakistan, Turkey, and Libya. Transnational security concerns aside, the migration crisis is out of control, so the argument employed is that governments need to use draconian measures. In Libya, there are slave auctions where slaves are sold for \$200. People come in convoys, loaded on trucks and escorted by soldiers from neighboring countries. In terms of organ harvesting, people get pre-selected via blood tests upon arrival in Libya, then handed over to the Sicilian mafia via the Italian coast guard when they attempt to cross the Mediterranean. Organized crime is involved. The G20 leaders should talk to Cardinal Vincent Nichols in London so that something concrete can be done about organized crime. The G20 governments should adopt something like Germany's Marshall Plan with Africa as a long-term solution. Human trafficking is the crime of our generation. That it is underground, contributes to its social invisibility. NGOs can't work on their own, but they need closer linkages with police and intelligence networks. It's part of the terrain. Low punishment for convictions is part of the problem. When it's so lucrative to traffic people, the incentive is high to continue when compared to the relatively low punishment compared to if they get caught. In some ways, trafficking is not particularly hidden, in the sense that it's quite easy to find women and other people who are trafficked. We have spoken to the Chief Prosecutor at the ICC, but no one wants to go to sub-Saharan Africa to take the gangs to trial. Under the prevention of genocide, we could really throw the book at them, but you have to apprehend them, and there haven't been any takers.

John McCarthy said that the only way to address such a lucrative underground \$150 billion industry is to go after the supply chains. It is a profitable industry with supply chains in food and clothing being the greatest contributing for-profit sector. The largest procurers are the public sector governments in each country. In the G20, some of the governments are accountable to the people for how they spend their money. This presents us with an opportunity to do something

about this issue. Nearly 1/3 of the goods and services in this world are bought by governments. If we want to do something about this, then we should insist that governments cease purchasing goods from human slavery supply chains. People make a decision to trade people as a commodity. Businesses and governments need to introduce measures that prevent human trafficking. Australian polls indicate that when the issue is framed in terms of supply chains that are financing criminals, individuals are hugely supportive of ending slavery purchases. Every government is complicit in this. We can have a direct influence of governments by going to the heart of the issue which is taxation and financial spending. Moreover, addressing this issue contributes to SDG 8.7 where countries have committed to end trafficking by 2030. We must demand that all nations deliver things free of human trafficking. No country has it in its manifesto to use human tracking, and yet it continues to grow. Progress on the 17 SDGs has been limited, but ethical spending by governments could be one of the most significant ways to have these targets implemented. The right to freedom is a right for all. Is this generation up to it? Last year, this issue was discussed at the G20 Interfaith Forum and included into a statement called “The Time Must Be Now,” which was distributed to G20 Leaders. The G20 Leaders will not come to us. We must go to them. Last year, we worked on going to national leaders. All the leaders saw and heard the statements last year. There are two things this Forum can do: 1) Reaffirm that slavery should be prioritized. We will only get the attention of leaders if we go for finances – taxation. We need to remind them that they’re spending money on criminals. Human trafficking victims are the poorest of the poor, and we can do something about it. The Interfaith Forum needs a permanent committee that engages with G20. What we found last year is that you need to go to *all* countries. We need to adopt a real strategy for going to the governments. We have yet to produce a popular movement against slavery like previous generations, but in Sydney, progress is being made. They have produced an ethical purchasing guide that has been distributed to parishes with the slogan “Slavery-proof our supply chains.” The greatest of workers in the anti-slavery cause in our history was William Wilberforce. He said to the House of Commons. “You may not do anything about it, but never again can you say that you did not know.” The fact of the matter is that, in 2019, the number of people being identified and rescued from slavery is slipping, and the number of people being trafficked is increasing. We are not winning this fight. We need to phrase this as criminal behavior. The G20 Interfaith Forum should also promote prayer on the issue where individuals pray either on a single day or throughout the year to end slavery. Here is what people on the ground are saying. In Nigeria, there is some real leadership. A woman in a Leper colony invited me to her house, and she said “I’m really grateful you came, and I’ll pray for you. Your world came years ago, cured the people, and made them feel better. But now, you’re back and taking our children to be exploited in your sex markets, and factories. Get your wealthy nations to stop it.” What should the G20 Interfaith Forum do? As the G20 interfaith group, we can call leaders to account. Our money and their procurements should be directed away from the structures that support human trafficking. The G20 Interfaith Forum can serve as a moral compass. If we, as people of faith and good will, get this right, perhaps a response will emerge where our legacy becomes a world with more human dignity than when we began. This Interfaith Forum should support the establishment of ethical purchasing schemes throughout faith-based organizations so that ordinary people can be engaged in the anti-slavery causes. Finally, it is to be recommended that every faith-based community move to eradicate slavery and forced labour from their supply chains. As the Archbishop of Sydney says, if you don’t demonstrate that you are doing everything that you can, your credibility is shot. You can’t demand things that other people see that you can’t do yourself. Perhaps by 2030, we can return to Nigeria and tell that woman that the job is done, so that her family, and the 40 million people across the world, are protected from this abuse.

Key Points Made:

- Promotion of slavery free government purchasing offers an opportunity for faith groups to advocate government to stop financing criminal behavior.
- There is a need to data map human trafficking in Africa.
- Faith communities should advocate that companies profiting from human slavery should reallocate their profits to support efforts that fight human trafficking.
- Faith traditions need to engage more broadly with governments about human trafficking (e.g., address legal loopholes in transnational crossing, providing lawyers of faith to victims, etc.) and engage with leaders at various meetings that they convene such as bilateral and regional meetings, review conferences, country reviews, monitoring hubs that provide government with information, and national awareness raising.
- That the G20 Interfaith Forum establish a permanent liaison committee for engaging with all G20 Governments.
- The G20 Interfaith Forum designate an *Interfaith Day of Prayer against Human Trafficking* for adoption by participating traditions such as February 8th in recognition of the former Sudanese slave [Josephine Margaret Bakhita](#) who was designated a saint in 2000 by the Catholic Church for her 45 years of ministry in Italy.
- That G20 Interfaith Forum establish an ethical purchasing network so that participating faith based networks and ordinary citizens can have a supply chain free of human slavery.
- That G20 Interfaith Forum participants commit to removing slavery from their faith based supply chains.
- That the G20 Interfaith Forum maintain human slavery and forced labor as a priority issue.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Governments make their supply chains free of human slavery in fulfillment of SDG 8.7 by 2030.
- That G20 Leaders earmark and allocate significant resources to make the structural changes needed to reduce human trafficking in developing contexts similar to how the German have done with their [Marshall Plan for Africa](#).
- That G20 Leaders prioritize being informed as to the origins of human trafficking and how their countries connect to the regions that are most heavily involved in human trafficking.
- That G20 Leaders involve faith-based organizations and former victims in their advisor commissions, national research hubs, and appropriate actions that address human trafficking.
- That G20 Governments data map human trafficking in Africa.

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES: GOVERNMENTS ENGAGING RELIGION

Description: Governments and religious communities interact in very different ways in different countries as well as in transnational institutions. And with dynamic political and religious realities today, these relationships are questioned and tested from many directions. Several G20 Governments have explicit arrangements to engage religious communities in the areas of foreign policy and global development. This dialogue session will highlight evolving approaches and questions that surround them, both from the perspectives of governments and religious institutions. Chaired by Judd Birdsall (Executive Director, Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy; Managing Director, Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies), speakers were James Alexander (Lead Program Analyst, U.S. Department

of State), and Azza Karam (Senior Advisor, United Nations Population Fund; UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development).

Presentations Overview:

Judd Birdsall talked about how various groups and the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy (TPNRD) works with the UN. The TPNRD in Rome met with the Sovereign of Rome in Malta a few years ago. It was established in 2015 and co-chaired by the UN and funded by the Henry Luce Foundation in NYC. It is hosted at Cambridge College. It recognizes the growing influence of religion and noted the religious deficit disorder that had to be addressed across a broad range of issues. Many foreign ministries made religious engagement task forces. Policy planners are attending more to religion in their analysis. There has been some European and transatlantic coordination among officials and academics who brought together scholars and officials for transatlantic conversation on this issue. It grew out of these initiatives funded by the Henry Luce Foundation. We have a flat horizontal organizational structure that works under a steering committee, a secretariat, academic co-chairs, and government co-chairs. Currently, 17 countries, the UN, and the EU are members. We do not have official members, but we are a network where people collaborate and coordinate where possible. Some of the common institutional challenges we face are: 1) The lack of religious literacy within the participating foreign ministries, the core tenets and realities of lived religion, and how religious ideas intersect with social and political life; 2) A culture of discomfort and suspicion of religion within foreign ministries where religion is considered too risky and complicated for engagement; 3) A limited capacity – there are some who are religiously literate and comfortable but have limited capacity for engagement. Many of participants are the one person designated to engage, but they have to cover the entire world of religious actors so they have to be very selective by necessity with where and how they engage; 4) Fear of instrumentalizing religion and/or government; 5) Privileging religion or certain religious communities - a ministry may be so keen that they privilege religion or a particular tradition in their analysis; 6) A mindset that sees religion + diplomacy = FoRB and CVE - most participants recognize how religion speaks to the whole gamut of human concerns, but when one hears of religious diplomacy, one thinks of protecting religious freedom and protecting violent extremism together; 7) The need to ‘right size’ religion to develop a more nuanced perspective of the role religion plays in a conflict or development initiative so that counteracting a history of ignoring religion does not result in overemphasizing religion and overpromising what religious communities can deliver. To help us right size religion, we established an academic advisory council with two co-chairs that mirrors the structure of the diplomatic approach. Katherine Marshall is one of the advisors among others. Some of the activities are conferences, a website, networking and information sharing, publications (policy reports, strategic note, handbook, meeting summary reports). This year, we published a strategic note that looked at the role religion is playing in diplomatic settings. One was the G20 Forum. A handbook was printed as well. Twice a year, we host conferences trying to alternate both sides of the Atlantic (Florence, Brussels, Washington, Rome, Helsinki, Paris, Vienna, New York, and Berne). We have a curated library that provides the most accessible and actionable items for religion and diplomacy.⁵⁶ They maintain a blog to translate the work of scholars into bite-size material. They seek to package it for busy diplomats. They have a report and interview on right-sizing religious freedom. Another interview addresses the relationship between religion and innovation. If you have one to be translated scholarship into a blog, let

⁵⁶ See <https://religionanddiplomacy.org.uk/> which has built on the legacy of Doug Johnson (1994) *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. Oxford.

them know.⁵⁷ We have categories and look at religion across the categories. So often religious leaders claim to represent the size of their constituency, but a more modest approach that recognizes a limited ability to mobilize that constituency is appreciated. When the busy diplomat latches onto the term of religious identity, they may think that this represents a devoted religious constituency which is not the case. We have to be careful about not overpromising what can be done through religious engagement. Suspicion at the governmental level is often directed toward minority communities. Within foreign ministries there can be a suspicion even of the majority of religious communities. The TPNRD published policy reports and recommendations each year, and this year for the first time they published a strategic note. TPNRD provides a place where diplomats can access curated materials that address particular issues and topics.

James Alexander said that TPNRD is more than a social network; they work hard on religious engagement for diplomats. In the U.S. State Department's Office of Religion and Global Affairs, they are striving to relate to religion in the broader world. Many of the issues relate to the topics at the G20 Interfaith Forum. His presentation focused on the activities they are doing in the U.S. State Department office. One of the key Department of State religion-oriented missions is the promotion of international religious freedom as outlined by the 1998 Religious Freedom Act. A second key focus is on religious engagement to work with religious actors and FBOs on issues of mutual concern. My office (RGA) was established in 2013. We are quite heavily engaged in many of the G20 issues. Some of it is not what we are specifically involved in; our office is not necessarily focused on HIV Aids, for example, which is done in the U.S. government. Trafficking in persons and cultural heritage are addressed in other places in the State Department. Our office works with partners and a big part of what the Department of State does is convening meetings to bring groups into discussions even if we are not ourselves carrying specific things out. A major institutional challenge is working with religious actors at all. The first amendment of our constitution says that Congress will make no law with respect to the establishment of religion. We cannot create a state religion. But the reality is that when we get into specific situations, it becomes far from straightforward. The Supreme Court helps with the 'lemon test' – law which says that engagement must have a secular legislative purpose where no primary effect is to advance or inhibit any religion, nor should it result with excessive government entanglement with religion. What does this mean? It has a huge impact on the way we do our business. This is one of the reasons why my colleague ran away from working for bureaucracy because the bureaucracy can make it quite difficult to do many of things you might be inspired to carry out. Consider education. We could help an organization build a public school overseas, but we could not be involved in building a faith-based school. We could provide math texts to a religious school because the content of the book is nonreligious, but if we wanted to give a religious aspect to it - even the content of religious literacy - it has to be evaluated. The way our system works contributes to risk-averse diplomats and personnel working in the field. Historical practices of diplomacy pushes people away from projects that have a religious aspect to it. The reality is that there is a lot of space within the Establishment Clause for projects to be carried out. It just takes thinking about it, talking to our legal advisors, and some legal knowledge as to the background of it. In many ways, this issue that we have in the U.S. also affects many of the partners in the TPNRD. This is a problem for many of the member states even if they don't have some of the constitutional limits that we have. We should not be working in the realm of religious actors. A key role in our office is around training because we are trying to convince our colleagues that it is worthwhile to work with religious actors overseas. We convince them that religion is relevant and not to be avoided in civil society. Don't look past

⁵⁷ Contact Info@CIRIS.org.uk

them; it doesn't mean you work with them on everything, but they might be important players and you should not look away. We also need to ensure a right-sized approach to religion. Even discussions of female genital mutilation are not easily defined as one narrow group. There are so many nuances, and we need to talk about them to understand them more deeply than to just say, 'Oh, that is Islam.' It is not so obvious, and it is not so clear. We must account for religion as it is lived. My colleague says that we need to be providing all of our diplomats with a solid foundation in religious literacy. I don't think that is necessarily the case. Functional learning is maybe more appropriate. Diplomats don't need to be religious scholars, but they do need to have some understanding - but not a full understanding - in order to talk to a community about something like a water system. The U.S. does have a unique relationship with religion, and we do present our politics in very religious terms. At the same time, when we engage the world, we often pull back from that. We understand that religious communities shape and drive social change. We do not necessarily need to have a bunch of book learning. We need to be agile and able to work with groups by learning about the context of the situation. We are working in sensitive places. The U.S. represents something in the world which may be positive, or negative for others. We have to recognize that it will not always work for us to engage with religious groups in some communities. It may be too risky. Getting our diplomats interested in this area is often one of our priorities - people don't see the training as necessary. The internal culture does not call for working with religious actors. They have other projects that they could be working on. Just yesterday, an embassy declined to host a fully funded religious training program. One of the issues that makes our diplomats particularly uncomfortable, and does call for a certain level of education to raise their level of comfort, is the 'last three feet'⁵⁸ which involves knowing how to engage in conversation to make them comfortable. We are working to create a white board video that can be accessed from afar. Three projects we are working on: 1) Health foreign policy to promote international health and biodefense and working with the WHO to combat the global growth of drug resistant diseases; 2) Provision of civic engagement skills to marginalized communities such as refugee communities who don't know how to interact with the local political system (e.g., training in Brussels, Belgium, a few cities in France, and something similar in northern Italy in Milan); 3) Engagement in Zimbabwe to help encourage national dialogue in collaboration with TPNRD affiliates to play a role in encouraging national dialogue. The ambassador has shown interest in working with religious communities for us to be doing this. Even in talking about specific projects, the reality comes back to getting our diplomats to be more active in this realm. We are a team of 4 people. Among our TPNRD countries, sometimes people represent both the engagement and the FoRB side of things. We are working to get our diplomats trained. We have a class in partnership with the Religious Freedom Office and the Foreign Service Institute. We provide training for U.S. diplomats in Harare as well as to representatives from TPNRD affiliates. There is a lot of work to be done to expand the process of religious engagement. If nothing else, it is a growth industry. There are many opportunities. As a former academic, I could lay out what I wanted to say, but now I must be aware of the institution I represent. The point is well made that perhaps the focus of discussion within one's own country is not representative of what is actually occurring. At times, it would be better to address what is really occurring in our society, such as Islamophobia. At the same time, I am working within this bureaucracy and aware of some of the larger forces we are contending with such as economic inequality. We still need to be thinking how we can do good work within the environs where we are working. As someone working within the trenches in the State Department, this absence of attention to certain issues that are fundamental to how our society functions means that we have to find ways of better engaging those issues without our own countries. We have to be trying to

⁵⁸ See William Kiehl. (2014). *The Last Three Feet: Case Studies in Public Diplomacy*. Washington, D.C.: The Public Diplomacy Council.

pull people in. I believe in the power of mutual understanding at micro levels. A diplomat's approach to diplomacy – a diplomat has to have the interest of their country above all. You would prefer mutual benefit – some higher sense of justice. I think there are ways of functioning in engaging our diplomats that focuses on win-win solutions. We worry about instrumentalization. And yet, there are many ways of achieving these win-win scenarios. This is what we are trying to develop with our diplomats. Because we are in this bureaucracy, we are free because we are not watched over that closely. It gives us opportunities to do things that advance this process even with countervailing forces going on in the world.

Azza Karam provoked our thinking by sharing some new ideas. She works with the UN Population Fund and chairs an Interagency Task Force with 20 UN members. They have compiled a data base directory of 554 faith inspired NGOs from different parts of the world. This is a little different from the State Department's work in that her work has an international and intergovernmental dynamic to it. This began in 2000 with the Millennium Peace Summit that was hosted by Kofi Anan to affirm and launch the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs were originally intended to be the standard used to hold governments accountable to the world. MDG goals operated in silos. The SDGs bring all these aspects together in the context of 17 global goals. They are often mistakenly referred to as the UN's goals. They are 193 governments' agreed-upon goals. What the UN system has done is to convene the governments to facilitate the process; the UN is obligated to work with the governments to realize them. We are obliged to support the governmental efforts toward achieving these goals. We have normalized the discussion of engaging with religious actors. In the time period of 2000-2019, we have shifted 180 degrees away from suspicion, reticence, and discomfort to a point where our challenge now is opportunism, syncretism, and a neocolonial approach. Opportunism because many governmental actors and NGOs are riding the bandwagon of religion. Many claim knowledge and familiarity, but none have been involved for more than the last 4 or 5 years. And yet, the amount of those claiming expertise and knowledge, and wanting to be conveners and gatekeepers is amazing. Opportunism also because governments have become more heavily engaged to position resources in this domain. I happen to come from a position that when my governments get over excited, I worry. Especially, when that something pre-existed my government and has been serving the world long before the government ever existed. Why? When I start seeing certain governments become interested in funding their own organizations engaging religion because it is such an opportunity, especially globally, all I have to do is just read history. It is often not a good idea to go do religion elsewhere. You are getting involved between the onion and its peel, and it tends to sting a little bit. So, when you get involved in people's faith, it can sting, and yet here are governments suddenly deciding out of benevolence that they will go work with religion elsewhere. It started with some peace and security projects, and now it has become a business. Very few cases involve an actual request by another country to please come intervene and help us sort things out, because you will know how to get us on the right path where we have not done a good job ourselves. Syncretism because it is repetitive. The same people are going to the same projects all over the world. But to question the added-value they bring, is to appear problematic or incompetent. Yet, questioning the value-added has to be a pre-requisite of any engagement with religious actors - not because it is the angelic or right thing to do, but because when you decide to get involved with someone else's faith, the lessons can be cruel. There is a reason why the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The way that people with good intentions have gone to meddle with others beliefs has been historically tragic. Many religious actors want to be part of this process, too. Faith-based NGOs want to be part of this process because it is empowering to come together. On the other hand, there is money to be made and reputations to be built the more these particular entities want to host all of these

religions to build a broad tent. But when we, as the UN, convene and when other singular government actors convene and want to bring people under the one tent, something has to give because they don't all agree on all aspects at all times. So, when trying to build a broad base, you are going to let something go. By definition, you are *not* leaving *no one* behind. Per definition, you are leaving someone behind because you are building the common ground on the least common denominator. Religious leaders are emerging as bastions of political authority as they develop political alliances between religious and secular actors. We must realize that compromises are being made. My question then is: What compromise are you making? And invariably the compromises are related to gender. Gender - not women – male, female, and others. I come from a particular approach which means that God created people with different genders. So, if and when we start to lay on that particular definition of gender, we are being exclusive. How can you claim to uphold morality and be so exclusive? And what gives who the right to that exclusivity? The common ground is conservative ground in the age of populism. We think we may be compromising on some critical aspects of God's own creation. Gender is not something we can claim does not exist. It is neocolonial because it is peppered by good intentions but funded with organizations that have empires and legacies; it occupies the same method that traditional colonialism has operated by; it is intensively colored by the 'white man's burden' civilizing method except that it has incorporated a little diversity. Colonialism has taken on new forms. If we decide we would like to look at the neocolonial impact, we are obviously going to hit a raw nerve. If we truly believe neocolonialism is over, then why can't we discuss it? We have this growing need for training. The UN has been providing training since 2010. We have trained about 550 UN staff and about the same amount of FBOs. Some of them are in positions of power, authority and strength and are in positions to train others themselves. This is a sign of success when those, whose capacities we have built, are building others. Freedom of religion and belief is an item of instrumentalization. I don't know why we have suddenly discovered it since it was part of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The focus reflects political will and political power and the power of the time and of certain entities. The shift has only been since 2016. I speak on behalf of the work I do at the UN, but not on behalf of the UN itself. I speak as a scholar of religion and politics. Some of the insights I have offered are based on that. Secondly, how do I deal with these things at the UN and what are the roles? One of the reasons I agreed to join TPNRD is that it is a space to have these honest conversations to build capacities, knowledge, and strengthen engagement. It is important for me to be part of this community so I can learn from their respective vantage points. Their strategy is to learn from the academics, too. There is a certain humility to appreciate that academics have something to share through this engagement and that learning can try to happen. That is why it is an important space to have given so many of the issues I shared. It is one thing to criticize from the outside; it is quite another to work from within. It is important to be able to name, discuss, and differ. That is something TPNRD provides. We have that space in the UN and with the faith-based partners that we engage with. When we began to notice some of these trends, we convened our faith-based partners to plan together. One of the things we were told is that we needed to empower our faith-based actors to advise us. It is another thing to enable them to advise and inform us as a UN system of actors. That is how we created the Multi-Faith Advisory Council. We created that Council to advise the UN system on what we need to be more aware of given these dynamics happening around us. There is a certain humility in opening the UN up to any constituency that is not governmental. Those who opened the doors were women. Now, men have emerged as experts to dominate the space. Why not talk about Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism? That is what the multilateral space can offer people. Multilateral space allows us to put difficult issues on the table. It was because of the UN work since 2000 that this issue had to be put on the consciousness of the governments at the UN. Had we stayed silent, nothing would have changed.

And it was conditioned and made an emergency because of the ISIS of the world. The entire discussion of religion is tinged with security fears. Not just by the West or South. They are fears on every continent. These fears stoke the interest; but the fears that the governments have are not informing the UN system. The fears are making the governments go rogue with religion; they are not comfortable with commissioning the UN to carry out research about that fear. When we talk about the need for the multilateral space – which TPNRD facilitates – precisely because government are fearful about religion. The fearful ones are pulling out and giving the money to their own entities. Governments are now doing their own work with it. After we pushed, we saw a change in the language, but we are still not comfortable with that change. To assume that it is only ISIS that led to this, is also unwise. The UN’s interest in engagement has always been precisely around what is common. It is a reality check from the experts working in those different governmental entities. It is important to emphasize that people have diverse identities. The 84% of actors repeatedly quoted here are not only religious – they are involved in a lot of things and engaged in a lot of different sectors. We don’t only live in a religious realm. It doesn’t mean that that is all we do and all we will invest in. People engage in human rights initiatives, politics, and gender issues. People are not only religious. To assume that this prism of faith, only in and of itself, is a particular perspective limits the prevue of authority we have. The issue requires humility and self-reflexivity.⁵⁹

Key Points Made:

- Some of the common challenges are lack of religious literacy within foreign ministries, a culture of discomfort or suspicion regarding religion, a limited capacity for analyzing/engaging religion, a fear of ‘instrumentalizing’ religion, a privileging of religion or particular religious traditions, a tendency to equate religious freedom concerns with violent extremism in diplomatic circles, and the need to ‘right-size’ religion.
- Interagency governmental engagement with religion is challenged by some trends in opportunism, syncretism, regressive gender dynamics, and a threatening neocolonialism.
- Development of common ground is conservative ground in the age of populism, particularly along the dimension of gender.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- None were given.

⁵⁹ Some fruitful discussion ensued with a religious leader’s challenge from the Reformed Tradition. He began by saying that he represents 100 million believers who do not know he exists although there may be a few people whose religious identities are their primary identity. That said, we don’t know of very many circumstances where people can separate their identities. The challenge is how to deal with religious institutions with political power and speak about religion in a general way of motivation and belief. All of those social institutions that are religious are embedded in contexts. If we start with the premise that the governments reaching out to us are part of an unjust order and in bad shape and that our faith perspective tells us that humans are meant to be free and flourish, and that is not the situation, will you support our project? The provocation is helpful, but the approach is functionless. If we start with being embedded in social structures that are not good for us and religious groups will try to right this knowing that there will be conflict because we have different interests, then perhaps we can move forward and get beyond our embeddedness. We don’t feel that the rules of the game are fair. Our starting point is a great deal of brokenness. What do you do with your analysis on Monday?

MEDIA IN THE SPOTLIGHT: PEACE, PEOPLE, AND PLANET DEMAND A ROBUST RELIGIOUS LITERACY

Description: Widely varied journalist and writers inform policymakers, global citizens, and communities on vital issues across the G20 agendas. Or they misinform them. As first-hand witnesses and first-line interpreters of narratives about life, including the complex ways of religion and faith, media professionals have distinctive responsibilities and opportunities to provide valid information and thoughtful analysis. Their decisions about what stories to cover and how, matter more now than ever in today's troubled world. This panel reviewed the contemporary media terrain as to its influences, positive and negative, on understandings of religious matters, looking to practical ideas on what might help enhance religious literacy at different levels. Chaired by Paul Raushenbush (Senior Vice President, Auburn Seminary), speakers were Desi Anwar (Senior Journalist/Anchor, CNN Indonesia), Federico Ruozzi (Deputy Secretary General, Foundation for Religious Studies), Francesca Cadeddu (Secretary General, European Academy of Religion), Hajime Ozaki (Senior Editor, Management & Planning Office, Kyodo News), and Rabbi Diana Gerson (The Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities).

Presentations Overview:

Paul Raushenbush said that religion interacting with media builds robust religious literacy in society. Religion and media are both interested in telling stories about what matters and what's true. The stakes are extremely high. Both can tell stories that inspire and illuminate, or that can create deep divisions. Religious literacy does not imply that there's only one "thing" you need to learn; religion is just as vibrant as each individual person. 'Who speaks for religion' has a lot to do with power and access to power and the microphone. Media outlets need to be savvier about understanding who they're talking to. There are different kinds of media: state-run media, corporate media, and faith-based media. All have different affordances and dangers. The authority of religious figures has been undermined with social media: If you have a million YouTube followers and start talking about religion, you're a religious authority. Journalism has also changed – FB can make things go worldwide in seconds. This presents a dilemma for us: freedom of speech vs. protecting communities. The mission statement for the *Huffington Posts'* religious section is to be as charitable as possible in their coverage. It makes a difference what we do with this information. Religious literacy can become part of the problem if what is promoted are mere sound-bites rather than robust academic literacy. Does learning about religion actually make violence less likely? Depending upon how information is presented, the more basic facts you know about religion, the more likely you may be to develop negative opinions of other religions. Rarely does the media simply disseminate facts. It's about stories and deciding how and what to cover. Media professionals want to get as much eyeballs as possible on each story. This entails dramatization. Choosing the focus is where the importance of religious literacy becomes important. For example, if media coverage reports a suicide bombing as religiously motivated, is it the religion or extremists within the religion who are the culprits? Is anyone in media actually studying faith traditions? Violence is embedded within almost any tradition. Religions *do* advocate violence, just look at history. What's important is to not single out an incident in a way that paints an entire tradition as violent.

Desi Anwar spoke from the context of Indonesia which is the third largest democracy in the world and the largest Muslim population in the world (over 260 million). The country rests on five principles; the first is the belief in god. Their motto is 'unity in diversity.' She started her career in the 90s working for Indonesia's first private TV network under the old dictatorship which allowed no freedom of religion or political expression. Indonesia became independent in

1945, and a lot of civil strife followed. Overnight, after an old regime ended, Indonesia became a democracy. The culture went “democracy” - everyone was into politics. Elections were suddenly free and direct. Religious freedom became an identity point. Communism also became suppressed, as well as things related to China. Indonesia is full of holidays. Things are changing: More and more Indonesians are becoming conservative. The preoccupation with religion has started to enter the political sphere in accordance with a tyranny of the majority. Religious identity becomes a political talking point to get the vote/elected. As the country became decentralized, sectarian conflicts rose. The media is vibrant, commercialized, and independent. The year 2014 was the most polarizing election in Indonesia. There was lots of distrust in the media. One lesson learned is that lack of trust in the media in democratic institutions in combination with a rise of Islamic conservatism raises questions in how the media portrays the news. Let’s go back to the vision of Indonesia and the principles of unity in diversity and the values of multiculturalism. Media professionals need to make sure that their coverage doesn’t add fuel to the fire. Regarding investigative journalism, the competition among media in Indonesia is very strong. Competing with each other and the internet pressures of losing viewers to social media in terms of speed and where people get their news has resulted in a loss of investigative journalism. Something more for print media. People don’t go to the mainstream media to get the truth. Increasing distrust of media. Most Indonesians go to WhatsApp or Instagram because they think it’s where the real news lies. Instead of following the social media narrative, CNN Indonesia attempts to do its due diligence. Have to be reactive to correct the narrative that practices responsible, peacemaking journalism. They have to be the voice of reason. Rather than conduct investigative journalism, they are often simply trying to counter fake news and hoaxes. In some contexts, there can be too much religion in news coverage. In Indonesia, it has been a main preoccupation in the media. Media put in a strange position: opposition candidate to the president is supported by religious leaders. Once the results started coming out showing that the incumbent was actually winning, there’s the assumption that the media is not objective and poisoning democracy. For a country that’s unified by diversity, they have to be very careful not to go into that narrative. Where can democracy and religion go together? What sort of future do people want for Indonesia?

Federico Ruozzi talked about how media outlets have created the false perception in Italy that the country is being overrun by immigrants. People are asked to “Take your bible and take your newspaper and read both.” Media coverage goes beyond mere correctness, but it engages in narrative that changes people’s understanding of how groups are treated. There is a long history here in the relationship between religion and the media including questions about the kinds of stories that were used to propagate the spread of early Christianity (e.g., martyrdom). Media in the west is different from media in the east: sociopolitical differences. Problems must be seen both diachronically and synchronically. We need to problematize the relationship between media and religion. Media studies is a vast field that involves a range of different areas of expertise. He talked about issues of syntax and semantics. Religion is a part of culture and history, but students of mass communication are often scared to explore it from a scholarly perspective. In the 80s, the relationship between media and religion was more pressing, and lots of studies were produced, but what impact do both those and modern studies have? Now, the focus is more on images rather than text. People limit themselves to viewing images. Students don’t have tools for a critical reading of religion. There is a tendency to separate religion from other fields as though it were a film genre, rather than exploring how religion is inextricably intertwined with all sorts of other things. For example, how can we talk about the conflict in Ukraine without talking about the religious aspects? A new paradigm is needed that focuses not just on correct information, but also seeks to understand the collective imagination that surrounds

religion in the media (especially as regards to popular culture). Film and TV have an enormous power to influence beliefs - much more than TV news.

Francesca Cadeddu said that most of the analysis that she conducted on religious literacy is in the West. Religious education is more of an issue in the Middle East and in places such as Myanmar. Religious literacy is connected to a process of secularization in the North Atlantic area. The media sector is not more illiterate than others, nor does it contribute more to religious illiteracy, but media professionals do echo much misinformation from other sectors. It is important to consider relations from a perspective of power: political and religious power, media and audience power, etc. Journalists cannot be blamed. Many others, besides journalists, share the same responsibility. Faith communities and scholars studying religion need to recognize the responsibility that faith groups have to communicate to the public. Religious communities don't do public relations like other groups. They tend not to offer interesting stories on a local level, but instead they have their own channels that only reflect one modality. Faith based groups are scared that journalists convey what they say in bad faith. The news is dressed and presented in a way that gets views. It is hard to convey what religious groups do in media terms. The point is not to cut out nuance, but to convey research in a proper way. Religious leaders stress the outcomes of what they do rather than their faith-based motivations. The audience is sometimes more likely to be religiously fluent than those providing the coverage. Faith based groups are scared of being misunderstood as proselytizing for specific religions. If the producers and managers aren't interested in informing the audience, we won't go anywhere. Media professionals need to provide good content in a short amount of time. They need a new toolkit to allow journalists to tell the stories they need to. Media is not just journalism. Media is movies, social media, etc. Journalism reacts slowly to religious diversity and other forms of religion. There is a need to intervene with a variety of media. Scholars should act on the proper way and the right language to convey outcomes of our research. The terrorist attacks on September 11th was huge for bringing religion back into the forefront. In order for journalists to do investigative journalism, they need governments to provide legal protections of their freedom to say what they find out; religious literacy is part of the problem if what is provided is sound-bites rather than robust academic literacy. Does learning about religion actually make violence less likely? The more basic facts you know about religion, the more likely you are to have negative opinions of other religions. Religious literacy is about learning how to talk about religion. When journalists talk about a suicide bombing, they should take it as a religious fact and take it very seriously. It is about the way you report on religious facts, not necessarily the facts themselves. It's about the context that makes for correct/incorrect reportage.

Hajime Ozaki said that Japan is a secular society that is relatively homogenous. The majority of the population is native Japanese who speak the same language. Religious affairs don't tend to make media headlines. Media reporting tends to not cover religion, per se, but instead covers religion in the context of festivals and scandals within religious institutions. He doesn't think the Kyoto press promotes religious literacy. In 1995, a new religious group that made a sarin [nerve gas attack](#) on the subway received more specifically religious coverage. Another time when media report on religion is in August, when they commemorate those who died in WW II at the Chinreisha Shinto Shrine. Japan is not an isolated society. Sometimes, they are exposed to religious conflict. For example, a [Japanese national was killed](#) in the church attacks in Sri Lanka this past April. Initial reports said that the bombing was in retaliation for the New Zealand attacks as [ISIS claimed responsibility](#). There are always conflicting information and reports. The press struggles to confirm the accuracy of the information in the immediate aftermath. Japan hasn't been involved much in religious conflicts outside of Japan, but people know the conflict exists. Although they think they're very remote, as if it were happening on another planet. The

media can play a vital role in providing accurate information about religions in the world and the relationships between them. Journalists have to remind the public that these aren't just things happening in remote places. We have a shared planetary responsibility to build the global community. Trust in the media is very low globally (47% trust the media). We have to restore the trust to the media. Lack of religious coverage in the BBC is due to dangers to journalists. Their response is to stay away from religious coverage. Many countries have laws against blasphemy. The world is not a safe place for the expression of religion.

Rabbi Diana Gerson works with [Interfaith Alliance](#). Last October, she was leading services when she heard a buzzing in her handbag. When she glanced at her phone, she saw 50 messages from friends around the world of people asking her, 'What is going on in America?' This was the day of the [Pittsburgh shooting](#). By the next morning, she had assembled over a 100 religious leaders to stand together in solidarity against hate. As they gathered, they realized that they were all friends – part of one community that didn't wait for tragedy to strike before building interfaith literacy. Hate knows no boundaries and has no time limit. We see each other more often as "other" than as friends and family. Hate crimes occur in many different areas, whether it be prejudice against religion, belief, or lack thereof. After the New York September 11th attack, there was an increase in attacks against Sikhs because people thought Sikhs were Muslim. People often act on hatred without taking the time to understand. Religious literacy comes from both the media and from talking to others. There are many types of hate crimes: Individual attacks, attacks on property, and incitement that calls for violence against a specific person or group. News is more often what we see when we open our phone and read twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. It is important to understand where we get information, and misinformation. A recent study by researchers at New York and Princeton Universities that was published in *Science Advances* found that, of those who use social media, older Americans are more likely to share fake news than any other age bracket. The finding that older people are more likely to share fake news could help social media users and platforms design more effective interventions to stop them from being misled.⁶⁰ In the 1980s, attacks on Hindus in New York City were connected to incidents all over the world. Hate crimes also have an intrareligious component when people seek retribution within religions. Faith leaders are failing to stand together across faith communities in these conversations. We need to do this together. There are several triggers for hate crimes across the globe. Not a week goes by in Brooklyn without a hate crime occurring. There has been a growth in hate crimes from 2013-2017.⁶¹ What do we do? We need to look at prevention. Create legislative approaches that empower enforcement, create partnerships, and implement effective responses. We need to promote a religious perspective on hate crimes. We can't combat anti-Semitism as rabbis alone, nor can we combat Islamophobia. Everyone must stand together. We need to educate communities about hate crimes and the risks that they pose. We need to sit down and break bread together. We need to publicly condemn hate crimes when they occur, and offer support for victims after they come forward. We need each other and we should partner with schools, lawmakers, and law enforcement. It is important that we understand diversity. The First Amendment protects hate speech, and journalists often have too narrow of a coverage of religion, if they cover it at all. But thoughts often lead to action, and journalists need to keep in mind that they are not allowed to desecrate a church or mosque. We need to be responsible, speak out when we hear hate speech, and counter the co-opting of

⁶⁰ For more information, see <https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/9/18174631/old-people-fake-news-facebook-share-nyu-princeton>.

⁶¹ For more information, see the Southern Poverty law Center at <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/02/19/hate-groups-reach-record-high>.

religious belief by bad actors. We have to get the message that this isn't what they're about. We have a responsibility to reframe the conversation.

Key Points Made:

- The rise of fake news, social media and increased competition is reducing investigative journalism.
- Media coverage of religion has shifted away from text to focus more on images.
- Media coverage of religion has a tendency to separate religion from other fields as though it were a film genre, rather than exploring how religion is inextricably intertwined with all sorts of other things.
- A new paradigm is needed that focuses not just on correct information, but also seeks to understand the collective imagination that surrounds religion in the media (especially as regards to popular culture).
- Faith groups have a responsibility to address their distrust of communicating to media professionals, and accept responsibility for strengthening trust in the media, and communicating beyond their own silos to connect to the general public.
- Lack of religious coverage by media professionals is influenced by the danger that type of reporting poses to journalists; the world is not a safe place for either the expression or reporting of religion.
- Religious leaders have a responsibility to reframe the conversation to build community in the context of hate crimes.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Governments involve themselves in the Interfaith Forum to learn from the dialogue because discussing religion only in relationship to conflict does not work.
- That G20 leaders reject religion as identity politics and adopt a more nuanced and complex understanding of how religion engages with politics.
- That G20 Governments strengthen protections for freedom of the press and freedom of religious expression.

G20 INTERFAITH FORUM KYOTO 2019

MEETING OVERVIEW

Prior to the Osaka G20 Summit, about 150 Japanese government officials, ambassadors of various countries in Tokyo, representatives of international organizations, researchers and religious leaders held a meeting for policy recommendations in the name of the G20 Interfaith Forum June 11th to June 12th where the politicians and experts joined the religious leaders both within and outside Japan to make policy recommendations from the religious point of view.

The G20 Interfaith Forum Kyoto 2019 was co-organized by Kyoto Prefecture and the City of Kyoto. Meetings were supported by The United Nations Association of Japan Kansai Capital, Osaka UNESCO Association, Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Kyoto Convention & Visitors Bureau. Participants delivered their message to the G20 Summit in Osaka through the Japanese government. Participants stayed at the Kyoto Century Hotel in front of Kyoto Station. The opening ceremony was convened in the Kyoto Prefectural Parliament House, Campus Plaza Kyoto and Mielparque Kyoto. To connect with society and mass media, public action was taken in the Imperial Palace, notable Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples in Kyoto City.

At the G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 in Kyoto, participants focused on four items:

1. *How to achieve economic growth.* The religious circle presented a different approach for thinking about the problems of the enriched poverty due to economic disparity, deterioration of climate change, and human rights infringement caused by intense business competition.
2. *Reaffirmation of international treaties showing international cooperation.* At the 2018 G20 Summit in Argentina, the nationalism gained an advantage over the principle of international cooperation. This trend is expected to continue, so, in accordance with the stance of the Japanese government, this forum reaffirmed, and religious circles agreed to emphasize, the significance of international treaties showing international cooperation such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, SDGs, measures against global warming, the global compact for refugees, etc.
3. *Questioning the vision of a highly developed scientific and technological society.* The G20 envisions a society that embraces highly developed scientific technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, use of electronic currency, robotic weapons and the accumulation of enormous personal information. The religious circle developed messages for the G20 derived from questions such as ‘What is human nature?’ and ‘How should humans face science and technology?’
4. *Religious circle perspectives on the aging society.* The Japanese government selected the aging society as a theme to discuss issues surrounding pensions, nursing care, medical care and other systems. In response, this conference developed a unique message regarding aging society derived from religious values.

OPENING PLENARY

The Welcome Address was given by Taishu Segawa (President, G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 Kyoto, Patriarch of Shingon Buddhism Omuro Sect):

Since the turn of the 21st century, the international situation surrounding Japan is has been changing rapidly. This includes that the European countries, which have been acting as monoliths, asserted their own direction and have begun to overshadow the EU's ideals, the US-China trade and information war that put on the hegemony of the century intensified, and obviously the ethnic and religious problems have emerged in various parts of the world. Under these circumstances, the political leaders of G20 countries will gather in Osaka where G20 Summit will be held at the end of June. The main theme of the G20 Summit is focused on how the world achieves economic growth. However, the religious community will emphasize the issues such as the entrenched poverty due to economic disparity, deterioration of climate change, human rights infringement caused by intense business competition, and the dangers due to rapidly developing life sciences and artificial intelligence technologies that have not been fully considered before. While we Japanese religious leaders are also asked by society how we should respond responsibly to various issues raised by the modern society, the G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 will be held in Kyoto on June 11th and 12th, ahead of the G20 Summit. In the G20 Interfaith Forum 2019, Japanese religious leaders will think with the religious leaders from all over the world and experts of international organizations, and make recommendations to the G20 Summit through the Japanese government. And we will actively disseminate the achievements to the society and act towards a better world. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation, and I pray the forum will go successfully with the fruitful outcomes.

The Opening Ceremony was given by Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaamar (Secretary General of KAICIID Dialogue Centre), H.E. Thomas Aq. Man'yo Cardinal Maeda (Archbishop of Osaka Archdiocese, Privy Council, G20 Interfaith Forum 2019), Most. Rev. Masanori Yoshimura (Patriarch of Shinshu-kyo Shinto; Chair of the Organizing Committee, G20 Interfaith Forum 2019), Hon. Takatoshi Nishiwaki (Governor of Kyoto Prefecture), and Hon. Daisaku Kadokawa (Mayor of the City of Kyoto).

Plenary I Keynote Address was given by Dr. William F. Vendley (Secretary General, Religions for Peace).

Plenary II Adoption of the Statement was facilitated by Dr. Oussouby Sacko (President of Kyoto Seika University).

Letter from Dr. Abdullah Al Lheedan (Adviser to the Minister and Supervisor of Knowledge Exchange Program, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Saudi Arabia):

The truth of man is an intangible essence common to all humans. This essence is called different names. It is the soul, the spirit, the heart. We have become human beings, because of a conscious essence and the knowledgeable mind. God created all people of the same origin, says Almighty God in the *Quran*: “We have created man from a strain of clay” [believers:12]. Hence, all human beings are brothers in humanity. God Almighty called the Prophets and Messengers – peace be upon them – to call, to adhere to this firm principle – brotherhood in humanity – The Creator Almighty is the master in the creation

of human beings – male or female- and sponsored by their livelihood, so there is no difference between them. Islam encourages human brotherhood, prohibits discrimination among people based on weak assets, and makes piety, good work, and best work a criterion and a test of preference among people. The *Quran* says (interpretation of the meaning): “O ye people, fear your Lord, who created you from the same soul, and created her mate from it, and cast forth many men and women among them.” No complete man without his sense of harmony in himself, and no harmony in himself without the recognition of familiarity in his mind, and no familiarity in his mind without his understanding that this world is based on acquaintance between peoples and tribes and not based on dissonance and denial: the *Quran* said “O people, we created you male and female and made you People and tribes to know each other” [rooms: 13]. Dear Friends, our world today witnesses disorders and many problems where many of the concepts of humanity have disrupted. Peace and coexistence have been replaced with conflicts and wars between nations and humans commit injustice to his fellow man. This imbalance is due to the extremism in all its forms, whether physical, ethnic, nationalist, or religious. Without doubt, we can say that the followers of religions are eligible more than others to study the real reasons that foment violence, and then we can develop proposals and recommendations to address and eliminate it and spread peace, coexistence and cooperation. Muslims with their religion and their history can contribute once again to world stability, security and peace. The prophet Muhammad (PHUH) was sent with universal humanity message, and this message is not for one color or specific race, but it is for guidance of all mankind. God says, “And We have sent you (O Muhammad): not but as a mercy for the worlds” and to teach people how to worship God alone and spread the peace and peaceful coexistence message to all mankind. God says in the *Quran* “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with God is that (believer) who has At-Taqwâ (i.e., the pious). Verily, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” [Alhojrat: 13]. Dear Friends, over the past two decades, Saudi Arabia has worked hard and constructively in the field of extremism and to call for dialogue and coexistence. In 2008, King Abdullah opened the World Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Madrid, Spain. In his opening speech, King Abdullah said: “The suffering of humanity cannot be caused by religion.” He called upon all religions to constructive dialogue between followers of religions. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, under the guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman and His Crown Prince, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and under the leadership of His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif Al-Sheikh, Minister of Islamic Affairs, Advocacy and Guidance, worked on three levels to spread the culture of coexistence at the first level: combating the rhetoric of extremism and hatred. Centralized committee has been set in the headquarter to monitor the preachers of the mosques of more than fifteen thousand mosques and the referral of the rhetoric of incitement and extremism to be discussed in the Shari’ah committees and the appropriate penalty for violating the correct Islamic legal approach, which calls for compassion. The second level is to training and re-training of Imams and preachers on the correct methods to call for wisdom and good advice. The third level is the establishment of a program of exchange knowledge, which aims to communicate with universities and academic and religious centers and other religions to clarify the call of Islam for peace and coexistence. The Supreme Council of Islamic Scholars has issued numerous statements on extremism, in which the Islamic approach has been shown to call for wisdom and good advice. Finally, I would like to thank the organizing committee of

this Forum for their hard work and I wish you all success to make good recommendations for world leaders.

SESSIONS

The conference was organized into the following eight sessions:

Session 1: *Global Compact*. Panelists in this session addressed the growing nationalism and whether priority should be given to ‘own country first’ principles or international cooperation in economic policy. Moderated by James Christie (Professor of Whole World Ecumenism and Dialogue Theology, University of Winnipeg), panelists were Liviu Olteanu (Secretary General, International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty), Satoru Kiyosawa (2008 Chief-Advisor, Ceremonial Dept. Kyoto Higashi-Honganji), and Ganoune Diop (Director of Public Affairs & Religious Liberty, Seventh-day Adventist Church).

Session 2: *Climate Change*. In this session, panelists discussed global warming which has not been improved for 22 years since the Kyoto Protocol was established for the purpose of preventing climate change. Moderated by Yoshinori Shinohara (Director of General Coordination Department, Religions for Peace Japan), panelists were Takeshi Shimotsuma (Supervising Director of Global Environment and Energy Policy, Kyoto City Government), Katsuya Yamaguchi (Director, Yamaguchi General Policy Research Institute, UN Association of Japan Kansai Capital), and Kushelevich Hadas (Ph.D. Candidate, Osaka University, Graduate School of Law and Politics).

Session 3: *AI's Threats and Human Responsibilities*. The development of artificial intelligence has become a real issue, from the centralized management of personal information by the state to the actual deployment of autonomous robot weapons. Panelists in this session discussed how to deal with this issue. Moderated by Naoki Saiwaki (Professor of Graduate School of Human Centered Engineering, Nara Women's University; Director, Academy of Human Informatics, Human Interface Society and the Textile Machinery Society of Japan), panelists were Nakamura Juho (System Engineer, Mitsubishi Electric Business Systems; Ex-Director, Department of Theology, Daikakuji School of Shingon Buddhism; Master of Kotakuji Temple in Okayama Prefecture), Toshifumi Takisawa (Superintendent, Mutsumi-Kai; Researcher, Mitsubishi Chemical), and Yoshinobu Miyake (Chair of the Steering Committee, G20 Interfaith Forum Kyoto; Vice President, UN Association Japan Kansai Capital; Superior General, Konko Church of Izu).

Session 4: *Resilient Society*. Panelists in this session discussed approaches for realizing attractive, vibrant and resilient cities in the face of natural disasters and population declines. Moderated by Takuji Okuno (Director General, Yamashina Institute for Ornithology; Professor and Dean, Kwansai Gakuin University; Executive Director, Information-Media Education Center), panelists were Hiroyuki Fujita (General Manager of Resilient City, Kyoto), Joseph Runzo-Inada (Chief Resilience Officer and Head, Office of Strategic Planning and Resilience for Toyama), and Naoki Kakeno (Chief Priest, Nonomiya Shrine; Executive Director, Kinki Religious Federation; Executive Director, Arashiyama Environmental Conservation Association).

Session 5: *Life Science and Religion*. Panelists in this session discussed the rising ethical issues associated with rapid development in the life sciences. On one hand, life sciences offer hope to those suffering from incurable diseases, but on the other hand, new occurrences such as ‘selection of life’ have become possible by prenatal diagnosis. Moderated by Hans Ucko (Former Secretary for East Asian Relations and Interreligious Dialogue; Former Secretary for Church and Judaism, Church of Sweden; Former Program Executive, Interreligious Relations and Dialogue of the World Council of Churches; Former President, Religions for Peace Europe), panelists were Ryushin Onishi (Shinto Buddhist priest), Hiroaki Kawanishi (Ph.D. Candidate, Center for Islamic Theology, University of Tübingen, Germany), Yujiro Tsukigase (President, Citizens’ Conference for Creative City Himeji; Stage Director and Graphic/Editorial Designer), and Yoshinobu Miyake (Chair of the Steering Committee, G20 Interfaith Forum Kyoto; Vice President, UN Association Japan Kansai Capital; Superior General, Konko Church of Izu).

Session 6: *Living with Oppressed People*. Panelists in this session discussed how the international community should work given that many remain politically, ethnically, religiously and sexually oppressed all over the world. Moderated by Brian Adams (Director, Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University), panelists were Shawuti Mohemaiti (International Politics Major, Tokushima University Graduate School), Shuei Kobayashi (Founder, Juzen’in Temple in Tokyo), and Kishichiro Amae (Former Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Director, Kyoto International Conference Hall).

Session 7: *Low Birthrate and Aging Society*. Panelists in this session discussed the problem of declining birth rates and aging populations in developed countries. Moderated by Tesshu Shaku (19th Master, Nyoraiji Temple of Jodo-Shin-Shu Hongwanji School of the Pure Land Buddhism; Professor, Soai University), panelists were Ahmad Naoki Maeno (Director and Imam, Japan Muslim Association; Representative of Japanese Wing, Islamic Circle of Japan), Keiji Kunitomi (Secretary General, Religions for Peace Japan; Minister, Suginami Dharma Center), and Heather Fumiko Heimbach (Undergraduate Student, Columbia University).

Session 8: *Disparate Society and Poverty*. Panelists in this session discussed how to deal with how neoliberal economic policies impede equal educational opportunities, undermine fair working conditions, and promote entrenched poverty and disparity among people. Moderated by Keishin Inaba (Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University), panelists were Eri Ishikawa (Chair of the Board, Japan Association for Refugees; Lecturer, Sophia University and School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University), Masatoshi Murakami (Lecturer, Doshisha University Law School; Career Diplomat, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Asher Maoz (Founding Dean, Peres Academic Center Law School, Tel Aviv University).

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing address was given by James T. Christie (Professor of Whole World Ecumenism and Dialogue Theology, University of Winnipeg). Participants stood gathered at the Western Gate of Kiyomizu Temple at sunset:

Albert Windsor, “Bertie” to his family, was not meant to be King of England. He was a modest man of modest talents; certainly, he was not an orator. He had a terrible stammer. He was terrified of public appearances. But his elder brother, Edward VIII, had fallen in love with a scandalous American divorcée. At the time, this was not conceivable, let alone acceptable.

Edward abdicated the throne. Bertie was crowned George VI – just in time for WWII. In the opening days of that most terrible of wars, which left 50 million dead; millions more broken in body and soul; tens of millions displaced; and which culminated in the obscenity of the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; George was required to speak to his nation, and to the world. Through faith, determination, and superhuman effort, George VI prevailed. In that Christmas of 1939 speech, he quoted the 1908 poem *God Knows* by Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957):⁶²

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be better to you than light and safer than a known way.”

Here, together we stand, 80 years later, at the Gate of Kiyomizu Temple. It is the *Gate of the Future*. And the path ahead is dark. Storm clouds gather. Our vision is dim. Our hearts are heavy. The nuclear cloud still hovers over us. Our planet is gasping for clean air and clean water. All nature cries out in travail. Civil strife abounds. Tens of millions are homeless. Violence is the common currency of the desperate and hopeless. Slavery creeps back into human affairs. “The rich get richer; the poor get poorer.” All humanity yearns for a light that we might tread safely into the darkness.

Whence shall light dawn? This is the third day of the Christian festive season of Pentecost. In my tradition, on Pentecost, God redeemed the confusion, established in the mists of history, and gave a gift of understanding to people gathered in Jerusalem. The gift allowed people of all nations, races, tongues to hear each other in their own languages. The gift gave those long-ago women and men the courage to put their hands into the Hand of God – and it was better than light.

Eleven years after religious representatives of the rich and varied religious traditions of the then G8 nations first gathered in Kyoto and subsequently Sapporo, we have returned. This time we represent the G20 community of nations.

If possible, as we gather again, our world has become even more dangerous. The numbers of desperate and angry within the human family have increased. Leaders have arisen and are arising, who would fan the flames of populism and hatred to gain and hold power. A great lethargy descends upon the world’s peoples. The terrible vision of the Irish poet, William Butler Yeates seems inevitable. In 1919, 100 years ago, in the aftermath of the First World War, Yeates wrote in his nightmare vision, *The Second Coming*:⁶³

⁶² For the full poem, see <https://alongthebeam.com/2017/12/31/god-knows-by-minnie-louise-haskins/>

⁶³ For the full poem, see <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43290/the-second-coming>

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely we might be forgiven, we religious leaders and faithful of our many great traditions, if we gave up. We might be forgiven if we strike our tents and step into the darkness to await the end in silence and the peace which comes with death.

I know the temptation. Mere weeks ago, our second son, Stuart, died of the modern plague of opioid addiction. Loss and despair are the fabric of the temptation to give up.

But we, who gather here, will not give in; we will not give up. The divine spark within each of us forbids that we should. We are not helpless innocents. We are servant leaders. We gather in a kind of Pentecost. We can see each other. We can hear each other. We can listen to each other. We can speak to each other. We can act with each other in the 99 names of God, which Islam offers to us. We can engage in what our Jewish sisters and brothers call *Tikkun Olam* - the mending of God's world. We will put our hands into the Hand of God,

And we will step into the darkness - a darkness of our own human making. It is a thin darkness. It but veils the wonderful and terrible beauty of life. We will go together - through *The Gate of the Future*. We will not be afraid. For we are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God.

The G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 issued a [Kyoto Declaration](#) for delivery to governmental officials. Japanese media coverage of the [G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 in Kyoto](#) can be viewed at this [link](#).

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G20 INTERFAITH FORUM POLICY BRIEFS

SERVING AGING POPULATIONS: RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Policy Area: People

June 19, 2019

Abstract: Population aging and longer life spans are occurring worldwide. The impact on social structures varies significantly by country and community but the trends are global and they transform societies. Among the many practical implications are changing demands on health care systems, upheavals to employment patterns, and altered political participation. Ethical questions arise regarding late life policies. New thinking about human enhancement approaches comes into play. This includes a range of ways that technological developments, artificial intelligence, and medical advances can contribute to improved quality and length of life for the elderly.

Changing demographic patterns affect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in various ways, for example SDG 3: “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” *The Global Strategy and Action Plan on Aging and Health*, adopted by WHO Member States in 2016, provides a policy framework for concerted global action on Healthy Aging.

Specific roles of religiosity and spirituality in meeting these challenges have received limited specific attention. They are pertinent for the five strategic objectives identified in the WHO framework. Evidence suggests that religiosity and spirituality is linked with health benefits, particularly among the elderly. Beyond linkages on an individual level, many faith traditions place special emphasis on honoring elders and in transmission of wisdom across generations. Many faith actors are deeply involved in attending to the health and comfort of the elderly.

This brief recommends that G20 engagement on the ongoing demographic transition include a focus on the positive ways that faith communities and actors can ensure that health and well-being needs of aging populations are appropriately met, taking explicit account of their ethical dimensions, and including faith actors in dialogue and exploration of innovative approaches in meaningful ways.

The Challenge

Population aging has broad implications for national and global priorities.

By 2050, trends indicate that one in five people will be 60 years or older, totaling over two billion people worldwide.⁶⁴ The time when there are more elderly persons than youth is fast approaching. This historic demographic shift is likely to continue at an accelerating pace for the foreseeable future. The number of people over 80, often categorized as the “oldest-old”, is growing fastest. More than half of these “oldest-old” currently live in six countries (China, the

⁶⁴ “World Population Aging,” UN Report, 2015, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2015_Report.pdf.

United States, India, Japan, Germany, and Russia)⁶⁵, all of them G20 members. These countries already feel the effects of population aging; Japan has the world's most aged population, with 33 percent of their population 60 years or over.⁶⁶ The number of older people in poorer countries is projected to increase at an even faster pace in the coming decades⁶⁷, requiring those nations to adapt more quickly and with lower levels of national income.

Population aging is due to declines in fertility and increases in longevity that are in turn driven by progress on many sustainable development goals including declining child mortality, improving access to education and employment, changing gender norms, better reproductive health, and advances in medical technologies. Significant challenges accompany the successes. Population aging creates strains on social insurance, pension, and other social support systems. It can affect economic growth, trade and demand for particular goods and services, labor and financial markets, as well as family structures and fundamental societal assumptions about aging. Nations need to adapt to wide-reaching implications of demographic shifts and adjust or implement policies specifically targeted to the needs of an older population.

A key area of focus is transforming health systems to maximize the health and well-being of an aging population.

An aging population tends to increase demands for health care, particularly long-term and palliative care, requiring societies to invest in healthy aging policies that enable individuals to live both longer and healthier lives. The loss of health and life worldwide is predicted to soon be greater from non-communicable or chronic diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, dementia and Alzheimer's disease, cancer, arthritis, and diabetes) than from infectious diseases, childhood diseases, and accidents.⁶⁸ Most health systems today give greater priority to individual and acute health needs than to the complex health needs that arise in older age. Health systems and long-term care systems often operate in separate spheres, leading to inefficiencies and cost shifting. Transformations are needed in almost every country towards older person-centered and integrated clinical and long-term care. The needs for adaptation of health systems to serve the health and well-being of aging populations need not require exorbitant increases in national health budgets. Many health problems of older age are linked to conditions that can be prevented or delayed by healthy behaviors, and supportive environments.

Religious actors, in terms of institutional support and the power of beliefs, can play significant roles in adapting to demographic changes associated with aging populations.

For much of the world's population, behaviors and environments that shape health care and lifestyles are closely linked with religiosity or spirituality. This connection and its potential for positive contribution to healthy aging policies and campaigns has received limited explicit attention in reflections on the implications of changing demographic structures.

There are significant gaps in knowledge.

⁶⁵ "Why Population Aging Matters: A Global Perspective," U.S. Department of State, 2007, <https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/WPAM.pdf>.

⁶⁶ "World Population Aging," UN Report, 2015, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2015_Report.pdf.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Why Population Aging Matters: A Global Perspective," U.S. Department of State, 2007, <https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/WPAM.pdf>.

Questions that arise linked to shifting demographics include whether added years of life expectancy are generally spent in good health, or living with disabilities and increased health needs. Research on the health status of older persons points to differing conclusions. Cross-national efforts to monitor trends and understand causes would enrich reflection about the issues. Ensuring increases in healthy life expectancy, as opposed to increases in years of healthy life lost to disability, has paramount importance for confronting the various challenges of population aging, particularly related to health and well-being. The association between religious or spiritual involvement and better health outcomes is a research topic where there are significant gaps in knowledge.⁶⁹

Pathways Forward

Planning for Healthy Aging should consider associations between religiosity/spirituality and health benefits.

Healthy Aging is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age.”⁷⁰ Promoting active, socially engaged lifestyles and cultivating environments that foster autonomy and engagement are critical.⁷¹ For many people, particularly among the elderly, a key component of Healthy Aging may be religious involvement or religious/spiritual thoughts and practices. This reality could be better integrated into global strategies for aging and health, particularly considering that religious involvement and spirituality has been found to exert overall positive impacts on disability and depressive outcomes.⁷² Research evidence across various disciplines establishes associations between religiosity and both physical and mental health.⁷³ For example, regular attendance of religious services has been shown to slow the rate of cognitive decline⁷⁴ and is associated with lower mortality rates.⁷⁵ Many individuals who are religious report greater use of preventative healthcare services, lower levels of smoking, drinking, and other negative health behaviors, and greater physical activity.⁷⁶

Possible negatives include patients who associate medical problems with a Higher Power’s punishment or abandonment, leading to increased stress and linked with depression and

⁶⁹ These gaps include difficulties in establishing standardized definitions for religiosity and spirituality, limits in abilities to make causal inferences, and sampling issues.

⁷⁰ “World Report on Ageing and Health,” World Health Organization, 2015, <https://www.who.int/ageing/events/world-report-2015-launch/en/>.

⁷¹ “Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health,” World Health Organization, 2016, <https://www.who.int/ageing/WHO-GSAP-2017.pdf?ua=1>.

⁷² Zachary Zimmer et al., “Spirituality, religiosity, aging and health in global perspective: A review,” *SSM – Population Health*, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2016.04.009>.

⁷³ Harold Koenig, “Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications,” *ISRN Psychiatry*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>.

⁷⁴ Terrence D. Hill, “Religious Involvement and Healthy Cognitive Aging: Patterns, Explanations and Future Directions,” *The Journals of Gerontology*, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerona/63.5.478>.

⁷⁵ Yonat Shimron, “A healthy mystery over attending houses of worship,” *Washington Post*, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/a-healthy-mystery-over-attending-houses-of-worship/2017/07/07/c0c4e2d0-628f-11e7-a4f7-af34fc1d9d39_story.html?utm_term=.656d7e6d8ca4.

⁷⁶ Terrence D. Hill, “Religious Involvement and Healthy Cognitive Aging: Patterns, Explanations and Future Directions,” *The Journals of Gerontology*, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerona/63.5.478>.

lower quality of life.⁷⁷ Some patients refuse care, medication, or vaccines due to religious beliefs (often intentionally distorted by bad actors and propaganda), or who self-inflict harm.

A worthwhile goal is to frame policies that support positive contributions of religiosity and spirituality to healthy life expectancy as well as total life expectancy, with those contributions integrated with global policy, innovations in human enhancement capabilities, and strategies for Healthy Aging.

Religious actors can be active partners in identifying innovative approaches to improving health care for the elderly.

A critical component of transforming health systems to give priority to the complex, chronic health needs of older populations is person-centered, integrated care and supportive environments that include teams of different specialists. Chaplains and other religious or spiritual support systems, including for those requiring long-term care, add value.

Religion and healthcare have been historically linked. Although studies have shown that there is a desire among patients for physicians to be more involved in attending to spiritual needs, most physicians do not discuss these issues with their patients.⁷⁸ Unmet religious or spiritual needs can have negative impacts on medical outcomes, and increase health care costs.⁷⁹

Looking to spiritual history as part of patient care, identifying beliefs that may influence or conflict with decisions about medical care, can enrich patient care by health professionals. Topics include the patient's level of participation in a spiritual community, whether the community is supportive, and specific spiritual needs. The role that the patient's religious or spiritual beliefs or practices play in coping with illness (or causing distress) can then be appropriately addressed. Religious or spiritual care providers, both during and after medical treatment, can be important members of an integrated care team.

Many faith-based health systems offer examples of a high standard of care for aging populations. These systems have strategic importance for global health and well-being, and can bridge public health and private health systems. Believers and communities have specific roles to play as they operate both within the public system and through faith-based private systems.

Religion is best viewed not as a constraint on innovation, but rather as a constructive source of agency that can contribute to shaping innovation processes.

Action to foster healthy aging worldwide can affect inequalities, and harness positive contributions that aging populations can make towards sustainable development goals.

Major inequalities in healthy life expectancy persist both across and within countries. The examples of countries that have addressed inequalities effectively or that reap the benefits of longer lives are rare. Religion and spirituality offer possibilities for bold new thinking and action to improve ageing-related health and wellbeing issues. Purposeful cooperation among countries (with a special focus on the transfer of technologies) offers important benefits. Poorer countries

⁷⁷ Yonat Shimron, "A healthy mystery over attending houses of worship," Washington Post, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/a-healthy-mystery-over-attending-houses-of-worship/2017/07/07/c0c4e2d0-628f-11e7-a4f7-af34fc1d9d39_story.html?utm_term=.656d7e6d8ca4.

⁷⁸ Harold Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *ISRN Psychiatry*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

face critical issues in resource allocation for non-communicable diseases prevalent among aging populations, while continuing to combat a high prevalence of communicable diseases.

Negative consequences of aging will be felt most severely, in all countries, by those with the least access to resources. Faith actors often serve the most vulnerable in society; partnerships to build and implement strategies for health and well-being are feasible and important. This applies even in situations where access to medical resources is limited (in conjunction with making every effort to provide accessible, affordable medical care to all). Equitable distribution of advancements and other ethical questions need to be addressed to foster Healthy Aging for all.

Bringing Human Enhancement (HE) into the discussion

Human Enhancement, including through innovations in artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, and bioethics, is a major field of exploration and expansion. Theologians and scientists alike are considering how these innovations could address aging through AI and biotechnology. They highlight the ethical challenges of human enhancement.

Questions and ideas for consideration include:

- Do conceptions of naturalness provide resources to set limits to HE?
- Does the therapy/enhancement distinction provide resources for setting such limits?
- Does the concept of disease offer sources to limit HE?
- Does the concept of HE itself contain means for setting limits?

Some argue for limiting human enhancement. Arguments include:

- Resources and justice: HE has significant opportunity costs and would drain resources from more pressing needs. There are not enough resources available for human enhancement for all, and to focus on human enhancement under such conditions can enhance disparity and injustice.
- Humanity: Enhancement will change not only the human condition, but humanity as such. Something could be lost without knowing what will follow.
- Uncertainty about benefits and harms: HE may have unknown and potentially devastating consequences.

Plural voices, including religious voices, need to be part of the conversation, offering comprehensive engagement with the emerging scientific challenges, beyond palliative care. Positive practices of such cooperation include genetics research, such as the Canadian Council of Churches' Biotechnological Reference Group (BRG).⁸⁰

Faith communities can be seen as vital and creative contributors to meaningful research and development for HE driven policies for aging populations. The French policy on AI, based on a national effort 'for a meaningful AI' provides a model.⁸¹ Specifically, faith communities can help

⁸⁰ "When Christian Faith and Genetics Meet: A Practical Group Resource," The Canadian Council of Churches, 2012. https://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/BRG_Curriculum_Complete_EN.pdf.

⁸¹ "AI Policy –France," Future of Life Institute, 2019. <https://futureoflife.org/ai-policy-france/?cn-reloaded=1>.

in distinguishing between and reconciling treatment/therapy and enhancement, working to reconcile various kinds of HE, and highlighting moral and psychological HE (particularly in connection with neuroscience and brain studies). Beyond the specific contribution of faith communities, in research and action on HE, its impact on beliefs and religion should be taken into account.

Recommendations

The Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health adopted by the World Health Assembly provides a political mandate and framework for ensuring the health and well-being of aging populations worldwide. G20 Leaders can highlight commitments to the development of evidence-based legislation, policies and plans that pay explicit attention to meeting the health and well-being needs of older people, with a sharp focus on dignity and human rights.

A G20 commitment to focus on the health benefits of religion and spirituality as an integral part of global and national frameworks for action on Healthy Aging would be beneficial. This could involve integrating recognition of those benefits into policies and plans for health system interventions. In developing age-friendly environments, and in particular health systems and long-term care systems that meet the needs of older populations, faith communities have significant resources to bring generations together within the same spatial context. Religious actors who facilitate access to health services and resources for healthy lifestyles locally and globally, and engage on the challenges of both advancing and limiting HE, should be involved in discussions surrounding global policy agreements. Faith communities are powerful actors in linking various SDGs and in fostering synergy between silver economy strategies and health and well-being for aging populations.

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FOCUS ON CHILDREN: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RELIGIOUS ACTORS

Policy Area: People

June 19, 2019

Abstract: Protecting children has long featured on many global agendas, perhaps best exemplified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified international UN treaty, that marks its 30th anniversary in 2019. However, many challenges stand in the way of full acceptance and implementation of basic principles involved and some topics loom large in contemporary realities. These include trafficking of children, the large presence and special perils facing children in refugee and migrant situations, stubbornly persisting child labor, child marriage, and threats linked to digital media, as well as many other forms of violence. Tragically, abuses and violence occur within places that are supposed to be the safest for children, and violence is most often perpetrated by those adults that children trust the most and that are closest to them. Emotional, physical and/or sexual violence affect more than one billion children around the world. The global direct and indirect costs of violence against children represents 8 percent of global GDP, equivalent to US\$7 trillion⁸². With conflict or displacement causing such harm, immediate and comprehensive interventions are needed, matching the gravity of the challenge.

Children and young people's voices are amplified today and their sense of urgency is a cogent challenge to world leaders, religious and non-religious alike. Children, often portrayed as helpless victims, are actively involved in their communities as agents in their own right and despite significant barriers to increased participation are engaged in issues directly affecting them.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) point the way to specific areas for priority attention, including SDG 16.2 on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. Beyond protection from harm, fostering safe and dignified development of the child is key to the future of the global economy. Children grapple with the ethical questions of technological advancement, and meeting the world's greatest challenges including climate change.

A sharp focus on children is enshrined in the teachings of widely diverse religious and spiritual teachings. All religious traditions affirm the dignity of each child and the sacred principle of care of the most vulnerable. Religious and interreligious networks and communities have long worked to provide shelter and education for children, and find ways to provide social and emotional support and protection to many of those hardest to reach. Religious actors and experts can, with well-tuned capacity, provide wisdom and help foster partnerships between children's rights activists and local communities. The Arigatou International Global Network of Religious for Children exemplifies the potential power of a global religious alliance that focuses on the wellbeing of children.

There are too many gaps in knowledge and partnership in what should surely be a priority common effort. Children belong centrally on the G20 agenda, which cannot be achieved without priority attention and action to address children's issues.

⁸² Perezniето, Paola et al., "The costs and economic impact of violence against children," Child Fund Alliance, 2014, <http://childfundalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ODI-Policy-Brief.-The-cost-and-economic-impact-of-violence-against-children.pdf>.

This brief highlights recommendations to integrate Children’s Rights with the key themes and central topics of the 2019 G20 Summit, from the perspective of religious actors deeply imbedded in the field.

The Challenge

Violence against children takes many forms, undermining the rights of over 1 billion children worldwide. One billion children around the world are exposed to various forms of physical and sexual violence; close to 300 million (3 in 4) children aged 2 to 4 worldwide experience violent discipline by their caregivers on a regular basis; 250 million (around 6 in 10) are punished by physical means; and every 7 minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent is killed by an act of violence. In 2015 alone, violence took the lives of around 82,000 adolescents worldwide.⁸³

The root causes of violence against children are complex and varied. They include socio-economic causes such as poverty and social exclusion, injustice and exploitation, and other deeply rooted political, cultural, and familial factors. Protecting the freedom, dignity, and rights of all children is a challenge that requires integrated strategies of poverty relief, protection of refugees, anti-trafficking efforts, and a sharp focus on education.

Violence perpetuated against children often differs significantly for boys and girls. The global homicide rate is four times higher among adolescent boys than girls and they are more likely to become child soldiers. However, evidence suggests that girls are generally more vulnerable to certain forms of sexual victimization. Worldwide, around 15 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex in their lifetime.⁸⁴ Child marriage is also a widespread form of abuse, and religion often plays a complex role.⁸⁵

Digital abuse, including cyber bullying, online child sexual abuse, dark web transactions and currencies that make it easier to conceal trafficking, and other illegal activities that harm children, must be confronted as a perversion of technological advancement. One in eight children have been bullied online via social media. Whether perpetrated by a family/community member or a stranger, online or in person, all forms of abuse of children undermine their self-worth and ability to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy environment.

No society is without some level of violence against children, and overall legal protections remain weak. Adolescent homicides occur most frequently in Latin America and the Caribbean, while conflicts or civil insurrections kill more adolescents in the Middle East and North Africa than in all other regions combined. The United States faces the highest rate of school shootings. Only 54 countries have adopted legislation that fully prohibits corporal punishment in all settings,

⁸³“A Familiar Face – Violence against Children and Adolescents.” UNICEF. November 2017. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-familiar-face/>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ For more on the challenges and opportunities for working with religious leaders on ending child marriage see Elisabet Le Roux and Selina Palm, “What lies beneath? Tackling the roots of religious resistance to ending child marriage,” Girls Not Brides, 2018, <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FINAL-Religious-leaders-report-High-Res.pdf>; Katherine Marshall, “Religious Challenges and Child Marriage, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 2018, <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/religious-challenges-and-child-marriage>; “Working with Religious Leaders to Address Child Marriage,” Girls Not Brides, 2019, <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/working-with-religious-leaders-to-address-child-marriage/>.

including the home⁸⁶, 732 million (1 in 2) school-age children between 6 and 17 years live in countries where corporal punishment at school is not fully prohibited; and in 33 States, child offenders may be sentenced to corporal punishment under criminal, religious and/or traditional law. Children are also vulnerable to trafficking, forced labor, recruitment as soldiers, and abuses of refugees that occur most often where corruption is rampant and legislation is weak.

The common gap between important rhetorical commitments and the lived experiences of many children demands political will for action. Global commitments to address violence against children are at an all-time high, particularly with the integration of relevant targets into the SDGs. Implementation, monitoring, and improving the policies and programs that result from these commitments should engage partnerships with all relevant actors including children and their families, schools, and religious communities/actors.

Religious Dimensions

The shared imperative to protect children links religious traditions in significant ways. There is wide variety in how this principle translates practically, with implications for educational decisions and authority structures. Religion at times has and is still misused to legitimize, justify, and even perpetuate violence against children. Nevertheless, there also exists an intra- and inter-religious will towards action on protecting children against various forms of abuse, hardship, and violence. In recent years, momentum has built to capitalize on the social capital vested in religious communities to advocate and take action to end violence against children. Local faith groups are often at the forefront of providing shelter and education for children facing various forms of hardships. Partnerships that provide models of success are also well established and UNICEF, for example, works with religious communities across the globe.⁸⁷ However, many initiatives at local community level are informal and lack robust documentation and evidence, which results in lessons learned often being lost.

The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), an interfaith network of organizations and individuals specifically dedicated to securing the rights and well-being of children worldwide, exemplifies both commitment and potential for common action. In 2016-2017, grassroots efforts in more than 43 countries around the world were inspired by diverse faith practices and a strong belief that “every child is priceless in dignity and deserves to grow up safe and sound.”⁸⁸ The focus on ethics education to foster interfaith and intercultural learning translates broad principles of living together into practical instruments and have helped to create safe learning spaces for children, where they are empowered and free to express their religious beliefs, and capacities to learn from and respect other children from different cultures and beliefs.

Many additional religious and interfaith organizations work collectively and respectively to prevent violence against children and protect their wellbeing. Among other examples, the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities⁸⁹ has convened global faith leaders specifically to focus on the dignity of children online, a concern that was not present when the CRC was first ratified,

⁸⁶ “Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children,” Global Report, 2018, <http://endcorporalpunishment.org/wp-content/uploads/global/Global-report-2018-spreads.pdf> .

⁸⁷ “Sharing common goals: UNICEF, faith-based organizations and children,” UNICEF, 2019 https://www.unicef.org/media/media_4537.html.

⁸⁸ “GNRC Annual Report 2016/2017: Securing a Better Future for Children,” 2017, <https://gnrc.net/images/zdocs/GNRC-Annual-Report-16-17-Singles-25-04-17.pdf>.

⁸⁹ <https://iafsc.org/>.

but that is now paramount; and World Vision, a Christian faith organization, global in scope, places child protection and wellbeing at the center of their agenda.⁹⁰

Translating the Rights of the Child into on-the-ground realities demands collaborative work by global leaders in partnership with communities, including religious actors that shape the context in which children are raised. Religious communities have a special obligation to work to ensure that religious spaces are safe for all children, welcoming them with empathy and respect, and working to address violence against them. This means supporting the elimination of harmful practices inflicted on children, including publicly identifying and challenging problematic religious justifications for such practices whenever they occur, and educating leaders and communities about the different forms of violence against children. The rights of parents to freedom of religion or belief, including their rights to educate their children according to their own conviction, should be respected, respecting the child as a rights holder from early on. The infringement on a child's right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) poses challenges, particularly when linked with other abuses, such as forced marriage. Religious actors can provide guidance on how education and advocacy for the rights of children can be undertaken in ways that are culturally and religiously sensitive.

Religious communities play a critical role in morally, spiritually, and practically supporting and shaping families and other caregivers in child upbringing. Their assets can be harnessed. Liabilities need to be recognized and addressed, for example patterns that can silence children. Religious leaders are well positioned to advocate for violence-free and healthy child rearing practices in their communities. Their focus on the ethical aspects of child upbringing, including non-violent approaches to parenting and promoting the spiritual development of children, can make crucial contributions to creating peaceful and harmonious families and communities, helping to break vicious cycles whereby violence is transmitted between generations, and challenging and reinterpreting religious justifications often given in multiple faiths to justify forms of violent parenting or adult/child interactions. Education (and parenting) policies that create learning and disciplinary environments free from violence and interfaith learning in schools and/or local communities to promote social coexistence and peaceful and inclusive societies offer particular promise.

Recommendations

G20 Leaders should focus explicit attention on children's rights and protection, with a robust commitment to translating promises and principles into practice. This applies with special force to implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and optional protocols. New and emerging challenges facing children, including the impact of new information and communication technology, impacts of extremism on children, and refugee and migrant situations, deserve special attention.

Interfaith initiatives involving common work by religious communities and child protection experts to address violence against children in all its dimensions deserve G20 attention and support. Such initiatives can challenge identified social and cultural norms and beliefs that condone and justify violence against children.

Development actors should recognize and treat faith communities as key partners in child protection and actively integrate faith communities into all levels of child protection. Religious

⁹⁰ <https://www.wvi.org/publication/our-progress-child-well-being>.

leaders can play key roles in breaking the silence on ending violence against children, recognizing and referring cases of child abuse and educating their communities around prevention. Faith assets are often overlooked or excluded, but many faith communities contribute positively to ending child violence at multiple levels. Faith communities creatively harness religious mandates around care and protection of children in faith traditions to mobilize faith communities spiritually. Capacity building of faith communities is a critical step in achieving child protection aims, with consultative co-creative way of working with faith communities to counter instrumentalization and assure sustainable multi-sectoral partnerships that work for children. Partnering with faith communities can bridge gaps between high level policies and grassroots practice, and between senior faith leaders and local faith communities as well as across different faiths. Robust documentation of effective mechanisms of partnership and engagement with faith communities for ending violence against children should be supported in order to share evidence generated.

Religious communities and leaders should commit themselves to strengthening their advocacy and action for children. A positive step would be a common commitment to ending child marriage. Communities need to take a contextual approach to understanding child violence realities in their own community so that the agendas are not perceived to have been identified and imposed from outside. Faith leaders should be held accountable for child abuse to the fullest extent of the law and congregations should be enabled to hold those leaders accountable. Faith communities can be better equipped overall to reflect critically on indirect ways in which their beliefs and traditions will need to be reinterpreted in the light of child protection.

Child participation in the work of local faith communities and in policy implementation can enrich approaches at many levels. Child centered approaches are essential. Linking child participation and protection improves child social status, enables the voices of children to be part of the changes needed, and avoids a passive victim lens. Heeding the cry of youth voices and movements is essential to achieving every SDG and item on G20 agendas, including but not limited to those centered specifically on ending violence against children. Without addressing issues for children, 2030 goals are unlikely to be achieved.

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THE IMPERATIVES OF BETTER GOVERNANCE: FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS A SINE QUA NON FOR GLOBAL AGENDAS

Policy Area: Urgent Issues

June 19, 2019

Abstract: No public policy topic is more discussed across world regions than the scourge of corruption. Corruption takes different forms in different settings but it fuels anger and cynicism everywhere. It undermines efforts to advance on virtually any front, including fighting poverty, addressing climate change, and supporting those who are most vulnerable. Fighting corruption thus belongs at the center of global policy agendas.

Religious actors can be powerful allies in the effort but are insufficiently involved. They can pinpoint and document the daily corrosive effects of corruption on poor communities and, individually and collectively, build on shared ethical teachings to bolster effective action. In contrast, their silence and acquiescence can abet corrupt actors, public and private. Religious actors need to be an integral part of addressing corrupt practices within their own communities. They can contribute to efforts to address corruption at community, national, and global agendas. Among priority areas for action are reinforcing values of integrity through religious and religiously provided education and forming strong partnerships with various integrity alliances.

The G20 Interfaith Forum in June 2019 will highlight the importance of governance issues across the full agenda affecting prospects for peace, human development, and protection of the planet. G20 Leaders need to heed the insights of religious communities and commit to continuing engagement with broad civil society and private networks that include religious actors, as they act decisively to rebuild trust and integrity in governance and public services. A forthright focus on meaningful partnerships to fight corruption is an essential part of the goal.

The Challenge

Perceptions of widespread corruption in national governments feed the citizen disengagement and anger that help to explain the appeal of both populism and extremism. Bribery is shameful in all cultures and it violates divine paradigms. Fighting corruption demands the engagement of all sectors of society, but perhaps of religious communities more than any other, as a strong moral compass is needed to navigate the modern complexities of corruption. Fighting corruption is possible, with will, good ideas, and persistence.

Pope Francis highlights the ills of corruption as undermining both the natural environment and human society, hanging like a dark cloud over progress in many countries. “Corruption can be avoided and it demands the commitment of one and all.” Such calls are echoed by religious leaders from many traditions, but action falls short of the rhetoric.

Facets of modern governance challenges

Corruption is as old as human societies. Widely held ideals and expectations that rule of law and notions of justice and fairness will govern societies speak to aspirations, shared across cultures, for honest government. Surveys underscore the widespread expectation that leaders will serve as stewards of the people, with their direction inspired and guided by notions of human rights and

democratic principles, which include integrity and honest use of resources for the benefit of the governed.

Global movements like Transparency International and the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) address the complex forces at international, national, and community and municipal levels that undermine good governance. They focus on traditional issues like bribery and political corruption as well as more modern topics like distortions through mass communications; social media, for example, works both for good and evil; interrupting patterns that permit elites to capture power but also sowing misunderstanding, misinformation, and strife. Six elements drive global and national drives towards accountability and integrity:

- *Corruption is a widespread, shared concern across the world.* A 2011 survey covering 23 countries, carried out for the BBC, found that corruption was the topic most frequently discussed by the public, ahead of poverty, unemployment, and rising costs. Nearly a quarter of those surveyed said they had discussed corruption recently and many ranked it the most serious problem facing their society. When people speak of ethics and politics, corruption is often the leading edge. The myth that many societies accept corruption as a norm is patently false: people everywhere hate corruption.
- *An essential, foundational element of good governance, sorely lacking in many countries, is the rule of law.* This must be a foundation for combatting corruption. Corruption corrodes the rule of law, which promotes impunity and undermines accountability. Specialized, independent mechanisms in the law enforcement/judicial area with the mandate, training, and authority to be effective in tackling corruption in government and the private sector are urgently needed. This requires on the one hand adequate legislation and cross border cooperation (missing in many countries) and effective implementation mechanisms. Combatting corruption in the private sector requires strong compliance regimes, backed by criminal sanctions, strong whistleblower protection, and incentives and protection for justice collaborators.
- *Democratic systems are threatened at their core by corrupt practices.* When young people see their societies as irremediably corrupt, the temptations of extremist promises have wide appeal. Likewise, populist and autocratic leaders feed on anger against corruption and the promise of strong, often authoritarian measures to right the society.
- *National strategies to fight corruption systematically are relatively new.* Managing public procurement and finance and punishing theft have long roots but seeking a national approach that looks professionally and systematically at how to change both public management systems and the culture that permits corruption has taken hold quite recently. Not long ago, mainstream economists and politicians often argued that corruption served as “grease for the motor”, acceptable within a given culture. Such arguments are rarely heard today, and corruption is widely seen as an evil, a cancer that eats away at social cohesion. It is “sand in the engine”. Governments and nations are judged by their levels of integrity and quality of administration.
- *We appreciate ever more clearly that meaningful efforts to fight poverty and assure prosperous and equitable societies depend on public integrity.* Efficient use of resources is vital for delivering services like education and health. The damage to pension programs, social protection, quality education, and decent health care from corrupt systems go far beyond the direct damage inflicted because they erode trust. Businesses increasingly avoid investments in corrupt environments where governance is poor.
- *Corruption thrives in environments of religious and ethnic intolerance that marginalize groups.* Discrimination makes groups and individuals vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of criminal mistreatment. Corruption of various kinds protects those who promote

intolerance, incite violence against marginalized religious groups, or profit politically and/or economically from such conduct. Corruption undermines the protections that constitutions, laws, and international obligations provide for freedom of religion, belief, and conscience, freedom of expression, and protection from discrimination on legal grounds. Most countries have both national and regional legal frameworks providing such guarantees but lack effective implementation and accountability (i.e. rule of law), in significant part due to corruption and inadequate education on tolerance and ethical values.

Action by religious as well as other communities is complicated by the vicious circles involved. For ordinary citizens (who for example hold low or mid-level jobs in government or the private sector) refusing to participate in corrupt practices carries a very high cost that they can ill afford to pay. Where corruption permeates every level of economic activity and interaction with governmental agencies, refusal to pay a teacher means your child is ignored in school and receives bad grades. Refusal to provide gifts to police at the neighborhood station means your home does not receive protection. Refusal to provide a small bribe when submitting an application for services to a government agency can mean that your application languishes at the bottom of the pile. Refusal to pay a bribe or a portion of one's salary to the boss who hires you can mean not getting a job. This pattern goes from the bottom to the top of the social, political, and economic pyramid. For religious and ethical teaching to be effective, this dilemma must be addressed. How can, for example, Hindu, Buddhist, or Islamic religious values and communities help teachers and communities work together to stop this cycle within their community and beyond?

Corruption, in short, is the enemy of democratic values and systems and of equitable, sustainable, thriving societies.

Religious Dimensions

Religious communities have a large potential to enhance global and local action against corruption but face significant challenges in translating this potential into reality.

The moral responsibilities and authorities of religious leaders and communities point to central roles in fighting against corruption. This applies at different levels, from contending with personal responsibilities to the tenor and core values of a society and nation. Each religious tradition has teachings that speak to the core values of trust and honesty. These teachings have much in common, as reflected, for example, in the principles set out in the *Global Ethic*⁹¹ and in many common calls of interreligious bodies and gatherings. Courageous religious leaders in exemplary situations speak truth to power about ethical challenges to governance that include corruption.

That said, religious leaders have yet to take on leading roles in the modern efforts to address corruption as international and national integrity movements. This is partly because the leadership of anti-corruption movements has become quite secular and technocratic in language and ethos. Moral issues tend to take second place, for reasons that include, for example, a desire to focus more on the systems that make embedded corruption possible than on personal failings and to avoid the political taint sometimes associated with religious involvement in public affairs. The focus on environmental factors rather than moral failings has also reflected the multicultural nature of global anti-corruption movements. As a practical matter, close relationships between

⁹¹ Hans Kung, John Bowden. *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*. 1998, Oxford University Press.

governments and religious authorities can discourage criticism as can the precarious situation of religious actors in many settings.

The pendulum has swung too far in a technocratic direction. There is a growing recognition that corruption will not be defeated by technical means alone. Ethics, values, and morality must be part of the equation in strategic plans. Religious leaders should have clear roles to play, in speaking truth to those in power and in guiding individuals as they navigate complex choices, for example in how to combat corrupt practices they see or to avoid temptation to fudge rules or seek quick fixes. Religious leaders have central roles in articulating values and norms, including through religious education at many levels. This speaks to the power of inter and intra faith alliances that look to the common good across society.

One explanation why some religious leaders are reticent to engage in anti-corruption efforts is awareness that their own organizations may not meet the highest standards of accountability. A tendency to view accounting and reporting as secondary matters is not uncommon. This obviously can and should change: there is no justification for tolerating careless oversight and use of funds and unethical management of personnel. With houses in order, religious institutions are well placed to demand high standards of their governments and leaders.

A further challenge is that many corruption issues are complex, with causes and consequences interlinked. Corrupt practices are linked to inequality among nations and within them, to the abuses of the powerful, to the underworld of trafficking and crime, and to concerns that social values overall are dominated by greed and uncontrollable market forces. Conflict and corruption go hand in hand. None of these problems have easy solutions. Debates rage fiercely as to which matters most: mega-corruption—large-scale bribes and theft—or the widespread corruption that saps the trust and time of poor people when they try to obtain health care, succeed in school, or register their child's birth. Anti-corruption strategies are complex as is judging performance fairly. Measuring progress is difficult; perceptions do not always fit well with objective reality. Even so, it is feasible and desirable to assure that anti-corruption measures are communicated in understandable terms and that accountability issues are intelligently addressed. The challenge speaks to the vital importance of partnerships and clear communication.

Measures religious actors can take to advance anti-corruption efforts

Courageous and determined religious leadership can make a difference in turning societies around. Examples of approaches and actions include the following:

1. Ethical and moral teachings are a critical part of successful reform and religious teachings can provide strong positive elements in broader anti-corruption strategies. Effective use of pertinent scripture and religious teachings, both for individual traditions and in interfaith contexts, can build commitment and address common misperceptions, for example that cultural differences explain or even justify corrupt practices.
2. Women working from religious frameworks are often ignored but can be a powerful force for change.
3. “Speaking truth to power” with courage and knowledge can give robust meaning to critical ethical values that bolster honest government, for example, core ethical principles and practices that build trust and social cohesion. Religious education can build religious literacy at all levels and promote civic values consonant with core religious beliefs.
4. Tangible topics like extractive industries offer good entry points. Identifying and promoting action on human rights violations and failures to assure protection of indigenous communities can bolster vigilant monitoring of environmental impact.

5. Robust action to stop trafficking of women and children and patterns of abuse are intimately linked to corruption and its underlying drivers
6. Close attention to grievances of vulnerable communities is essential as is seeking redress and communicating with families and authorities. This has special relevance in addressing the temptations of extremist ideologies
7. Active cooperation with promising integrity programs is feasible, for example at the municipal or community level; youth prizes and support for women's initiatives are examples. Such efforts highlight what works and encourage promising efforts
8. Anti-poverty programs (Bolsa Familiar, for example) can help assure that social and political objectives are met with integrity.
9. Information and communication are powerful tools in fighting corruption, and religious communities through communication channels they manage and influence can have an impact. That means educational programs, radio, television, print, and social media.
10. Interreligious bodies working together can focus on understanding patterns of corruption, defining meaningful tools to combat them, and agreeing on specific priority areas for action. With common, meaningful objectives and indicators of progress, religious communities can contribute more to broader community and national strategies.
- 11.

Recommendations

How can G20 Leaders and engagement groups advance religious roles in fighting corruption?

- Good governance should be a central theme of G20 Summits, with specific commitments to action and continuing monitoring.
- The framework of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group should be addressed with specific reference to religious actors and voices
- The issues of land reform and extractive industries, including fisheries and rainforests, which are of special concern to religious communities, should be a focus of the G20 Communique with commitments to active consultation with pertinent religious groups.

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RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF REDUCING RISK, STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE, AND RESPONDING TO DISASTERS

Policy Area: Planet

June 19, 2019

Abstract: Increased extreme weather disasters are an expected long-term effect of climate change. Already, changes occurring globally have increased the intensity and duration of heat waves, drought incidents, flooding frequency and severity, and the power of storms. *The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (Sendai Framework) adopted by UN member States in 2015 offers a framework for reducing disaster risk and losses. Action to reduce disaster risk and increase resiliency as outlined in this Framework, and by experts in the field, is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As local civil society actors in some of the world's most vulnerable areas, religious and faith-inspired organizations are consistently at the forefront of attending to the physical and spiritual needs of communities affected by disasters. At transnational levels many religious actors are leading advocates for action to address both response and mitigation.

This brief calls upon G20 Leaders to promote robust partnerships across disciplines and sectors to mitigate the hazards of climate change, and specifically to reduce risk, build long-term resilience, and limit future costs of increasingly severe disasters. A specific focus on religious roles in assessing, communicating, and meeting local needs can increase the reach and impact of government and development planning, policies, and programs for disaster risk reduction (DRR).

The Challenge

Various forms of disaster are increasing in severity, with large costs to life, natural environments, businesses, and nations.

Between 1998 and 2017 climate-related disasters killed 1.3 million people and an additional 4.4 billion were injured, displaced, or required emergency assistance.⁹² Over the same period, countries affected by disasters experienced direct losses valued at US\$2,908 billion. Climate-related disasters comprised 77 per cent of the total reported losses.⁹³ Large coastal cities could face combined annual losses of US\$1 trillion from severe floods and storms by mid-century.⁹⁴ Better mitigation and preparedness strategies can help prevent natural hazards and other risks from becoming costly disasters that destroy communities and require years or decades for them to achieve full economic recovery. Climate change and environmental degradation combined with poverty and poorly planned development drive the increasing magnitude of disasters and their effects on health, livelihood, and inequality in every country.

Disasters pose a particularly severe risk to those who lack the resources to prepare or respond.

⁹² <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/61119>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/762871468148506173/pdf/826480WP0v10Bu0130Box37986200OUO090.pdf>.

Low- and middle-income countries bear the greatest burden in terms of mortality and yearly average economic loss relative to GDP. Future disasters represent an existential threat to many small island developing countries, particularly given rising sea levels predicted as a result of global warming within the next century. If current trends continue, there could be as many as 325 million people trapped in poverty and vulnerable to weather-related events in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia within the next decade.⁹⁵ Planning and risk-informed investment needs to be translated into action. Mobilizing or diverting funds for recovery and reconstruction post-disaster should not overshadow the need for greater understanding and investment in reducing vulnerabilities related to risk reduction, but preparedness and rapid, effective response are nonetheless essential and can reduce loss and suffering.

Examples of costly devastation caused by disasters highlight the need for systemic action at global and local levels.

Hazards identified by the *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* (GAR) include earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, flooding, wildfires, technological and biological risks, and environmental risks including climate change and air pollution. Many of these risks are linked. Increasing global temperatures lead to wildfires, which threaten local populations and the biodiversity of affected areas. Tree cover loss means the loss of safe, natural capture and storage of GHG emissions, exacerbating the rate of global warming. In 2018, fires burned 766,439 ha in California alone, causing more than US\$3.5 billion in damages.⁹⁶ Higher temperatures are also correlated with prolonged droughts. In 2010-2011 a drought in the Horn of Africa caused up to a quarter million deaths, and left over 13 million people dependent on humanitarian aid.⁹⁷ In 2013-2015 droughts affected eastern Brazil and the Midwestern regions of the United States. Reported losses were US\$5 billion and US\$3.6 billion respectively, primarily reflecting direct agricultural damage.⁹⁸

A recent example of the costly impact of disasters is Cyclone Idai, the strongest cyclone on record in the Southern Hemisphere.⁹⁹ Idai made landfall in March 2019 and caused severe flooding in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Immediate impacts include the deaths of more than 840 people, 3 million people (including 1.5 million children) affected, nearly one million acres of crops damaged, and an estimated US\$1 billion in infrastructure damages.¹⁰⁰ In addition to immediate assistance for those who have lost their homes or been displaced, long-term impacts such as food insecurity and the spread of disease should be central to disaster response efforts. Developing more robust long-term infrastructure is needed, particularly in coastal hubs with widespread poverty. Global action is needed to achieve the vision of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and DRR is central to these Goals. Risk mitigation and resilience programs should consult and work closely with local actors in planning and implementation.

Unexpected disasters test the moral fiber of communities, including core premises of faith.

⁹⁵<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/762871468148506173/pdf/826480WP0v10Bu0130Box37986200OUO090.pdf>.

⁹⁶ https://gar.unisdr.org/sites/default/files/reports/2019-05/full_gar_report.pdf.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2019-cyclone-idai-facts>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.; <https://www.cfr.org/article/cyclone-idai-reveals-africas-vulnerabilities>.

Disasters (and the disruption and destruction of their aftermaths) challenge world-views. In addition to physical re-building, individuals and communities face the difficult task of reconstructing meaning and purpose. Religion and faith influence vulnerability and resilience, and how people perceive disaster risk, respond to disaster, and recover from their impacts. These mobilizations and response are widespread and complex but poorly mapped. Religious communities and organizations raise and confront moral challenges, and are often at the frontlines of providing disaster relief. Consistent, reliable information flows are needed between governments and religious/faith groups that respond to disasters globally and very locally.

A wide range of institutions and programs whose inspiration and/or organizational links are religious have disaster response as a primary mission or respond to unexpected crises out of compassion.

Religious networks are both global, with the ability to mass mobilize resources and aid in the wake of a disaster, and deeply embedded in local communities. Far-reaching religious networks and large faith-inspired organizations have substantial capacities to mobilize aid, services, and volunteers. When disasters occur, religious infrastructure is often used to shelter those who have been displaced. As examples, on the night of March 15th, as the sea level in Beira, Mozambique, rose by 4 meters due to Cyclone Idai and destroyed 90 per cent of the town, The Community of Sant’Egidio provided refuge to 400 people in their health center and started handing out life-saving drugs the following morning. They are now engaged, alongside WHO, UNICEF and the Mozambican Ministry of Health in a vaccination campaign to prevent the spread of cholera.¹⁰¹ Following Hurricane Katrina in the United States, the CRCC found that over 500,000 volunteers from faith-based organizations were mobilized to rebuild or repair destroyed homes.¹⁰² In 2017 alone, World Vision served over 13.8 million disaster survivors,¹⁰³ Islamic Relief provided emergency aid to over 3 million affected by natural disasters,¹⁰⁴ and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) assisted over 1.3 million with emergency preparedness and response.¹⁰⁵ These organizations are examples (among thousands) of faith-inspired organizations, both global and local, that are veterans in mobilizing their networks for disaster response.

Pathways Forward

Devise, implement, and improve national and local DRR strategies in G20 countries.

The Sendai Framework serves as a global guide, outlining the priorities for prevention and mitigation of natural and man-made hazards and risks. Target (e), “substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020,” is a pressing task and serves as the foundation for six global targets to be achieved by 2030.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ <https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/34064/langID/en/Cyclone-Idai--Mozambique--Malawi.html>.

¹⁰² <https://psmag.com/news/the-complicated-role-churches-play-in-disaster-relief>.

¹⁰³ <https://www.worldvision.org/our-work>.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.islamic-relief.org/annual-reports/>.

¹⁰⁵ <https://adra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ADRA-2017-Annual-Report.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf.

G20 Governments can take immediate action to establish or improve national platforms for DRR, and to ensure that those platforms are effectively building resilient communities that leave no one behind. Comprehensive, integrated, and inclusive national DRR strategies require engagement and partnership at every level of society, particularly with those disproportionately vulnerable to disasters. Religious networks can provide a crucial link to these communities and individuals and deserve explicit attention.

To reduce costly destruction in the wake of disasters, G20 Governments can lead on investing in strategies and greater resiliency where risks are highest globally. The greatest vulnerabilities are often where sufficient financial, technical, and institutional implementation capacities are lacking. Early warning systems and pilot climate and disaster resiliency measures have proven in many countries to be cost effective, save human lives, and protect public and private investments.¹⁰⁷ These measures ensure effective recovery and rehabilitation post-disaster, and simultaneously drive innovation, growth and job creation in areas where such development is critical.

A robust response to disaster risk requires addressing root causes such as climate change, poor development action, and governance, through a sharp focus on meeting the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and commitments of the Paris Agreement. Bold actions are needed in the next decade to make progress on the interrelated challenges of DRR, Sustainable Development, and environmental degradation.

Better knowledge of the faith disaster response network and deliberate efforts to strengthen partnerships with religious actors should be part of disaster response strategies and action. Pertinent faith actors bring knowledge, links to vast communities, and often robust response capacity; notable examples are the large faith-inspired organizations like Caritas, Tzu Chi, Islamic Relief, ADRA, LDS Charities, and World Vision. Organizations operate at global, regional, national, and local levels. Religious networks are deeply embedded locally, often with access to those living in remote or particularly vulnerable situations. With local knowledge key in identifying vulnerabilities and risks, religious actors are positioned to communicate to communities both hope and determination, and to monitor, gather, and share the knowledge necessary to plan for resilience. This opportunity to reach at-risk communities and involve them in DRR activities and decision-making is vital for ensuring relevant measures are included in national strategies. Establishing and implementing a robust framework for coordination and sharing of best practices with religious networks, organizations, and actors would increase the efficacy of DRR strategies and mitigate impending risks and development losses.

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RELIGIOUS ACTORS ADDRESSING EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE: SHARPENING THE FOCUS

Policy Area: Peace

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Abstract: Governments worldwide seek effective policies to address the ravages caused by non-state social and political movements that deliberately use violence to achieve their ends. However, experts disagree sharply about why such movements persist and on the most appropriate response. How religious factors contribute to extremism and violence is a central and sensitive topic. The common framing as “Countering Violent Extremism” (CVE), or “Preventing Violent Extremism” (PVE), mask underlying complexities that demand sensitive understandings of religious roles and engagement with religious actors.

Explicit or implicit assumptions that religious factors and especially beliefs and institutions linked to Islam are centrally involved in both extremism and violence exacerbate intergroup tensions and impede efforts to engage leaders in meaningful response. Negative consequences include dominance of security perspectives, threats to human rights, and trade-offs that undermine development efforts.

Understandings and approaches involving religious factors need to be revamped. G20 Summits, alongside UN and other efforts, should address these CVE debates as a priority topic. The G20 platform with its sharply focused agenda can generate fresh insights and shift counterproductive debates. A multi-stakeholder task force that includes economic and religious actors should report to the 2020 G20 summit with action recommendations.

The Challenge

Few topics challenge conventional thinking about social cohesion more forcibly than the violence linked to extremist movements. Views differ widely as to why extremist ideologies are attractive to certain groups and what those involved aim to achieve through violent acts. Are there common causes or is each situation sui generis? Are religious ideologies central or marginal as explanatory factors? If grievances are linked (in varying ways) to economic inequalities, poor governance, lack of education and opportunities, and failures of development, what action does that imply? How far and under what circumstances do security dominated approaches aggravate the situation?

Several observations frame the topic as a global challenge that deserves priority focus by the G20:

- Divisive debates about non-state violence especially with religious connotations at international and national levels undermine effective and coordinated response.
- Security centered responses color institutional accountability, deployment of financial resources, and development and diplomatic efforts. They too often override human rights concerns.
- The focus on extremist religious movements, especially those claiming a basis in Islam, oversimplifies their complex and diverse part in violence and contributes to polarization within and among communities.

- CVE approaches can obscure grievances that underlie specific local conflicts, and can aggravate rather than mitigate underlying tensions.
- Inadequate information, much largely anecdotal, on patterns of violence complicate both analysis and policy debates.
- Sound guidance for policymakers and practitioners on responding to religious aspects of extremist movements is often not available.
- C/PVE practitioners tend to rely on religious actors exclusively as purveyors of “moderate” religious messages, neglecting the broader salience of religion across the full range of factors that drive violent extremism—including governance, socioeconomic issues, and local conflicts.
- Negative consequences of broad CVE policies include restrictions on civic space and alienation of large communities.

Widely varied non-state violent acts, often characterized as terrorism and perpetrated by movements and individuals using violent tactics, are disrupting societies in many regions. They include ISIS (Daesh), Al Qaeda, anti-Rohingya, white supremacism, ultra-nationalist Hindu organizations, and Boko Haram. Extensive military and internal security responses to the threats of non-state violence consume vast resources. They are transforming civic space and contribute to curtailing human rights including religious freedom. They exacerbate social polarization and impede development efforts including education, health care, and business development.

A central policy question for governments and policy makers is why movements characterized as extremist attract followers and tacit support among large communities. A key related issue is how to respond to extremist violence in ways that win support from the larger community of co-religionists who are not prone to violence, rather than stirring resentment and further radicalization of others. Clearer answers are needed to reshape optimal policy responses that prevent violent actors from undermining democratic societies and values and that assure the human security that is a priority national and international objective.

These challenges affect different world regions but have especially dominated policy debates in the United Nations, the United States, and Europe since terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. Past counterterrorism efforts have primarily focused on security and intelligence methods in combatting organized terrorist groups directly or degrading their capacity. The contemporary paradigm labelled as preventing or countering violent extremism (CVE and PVE) focuses more on the various societal factors and drivers that lead individuals and small groups to embrace or otherwise support militant ideologies (though many violent non-state actors seem driven by objectives that are not ideological). Responses have focused on security, with a marked shift towards preventing radicalization and extremist violence through better knowledge and information campaigns. CVE is not an entirely new approach, but the current focus is more expansive and systematic and has involved significant research on understanding root causes and the proper response to them. Responding to non-state violence has focused significantly on religious ideas, actors, and institutions. Some movements frame ideologies in religious terms and use them as motivation. Religion has thus figured into multiple waves of CVE approaches, at times more directly and intentionally than others.

Ambiguities in CVE debates contribute both to tensions and problematic tactics. The terms *countering*, *violent*, and *extremism* are all ambiguous. Like terrorism, the notion of extremism can be highly subjective, as is violence. Most problematic is the common association of extremism with political, religious or social ideology and especially Islam. It makes eminent sense to work to understand the intersections of violent behavior and the ideas that inspire,

justify, or give meaning to that violence—identifying the contextual factors that support both ideologies and recourse to violence. However, Governmental adoption and validation of such categories can feed unhelpfully into sectarian dynamics and cycles of conflict in settings characterized by complex and often longstanding tensions within and between religious groups. By defining “violent extremism” as a distinct issue or problem and addressing it via various policy and programmatic mechanisms, the CVE paradigm can mask and distract from more fundamental political and geopolitical drivers of violence.

Thus CVE approaches can have negative effects. They tend to give priority to approaches that blur the boundaries between security responses and the tools of diplomacy and development. This in turn complicates or impedes efforts to address root grievances and to focus on improving welfare, including social cohesion, for the community at large. Further, because CVE approaches often link both extremism and violence to religious and especially Muslim teachings and communities, they can exacerbate bias against Muslims in non-Muslim societies and accentuate counter-productive divides within and among communities. Shifting the focus from CVE to PVE responds to some but not all concerns.

Current CVE/PVE approaches commonly overstate and oversimplify religious dimensions; actual and perceived religious links color policy responses. Various countries have established counter-ideology messaging centers, imam training programs, or otherwise seek to propagate “moderate Islam” as part of their contribution to broader counterterrorism efforts. Some such efforts can be valuable but there are deep flaws both in highlighting “moderate Islam” and in governments engaging in government-sanctioned religious propaganda. The risks associated with governments directly using religious language or concepts in official statements and messaging are substantial; governments rarely have standing to make pronouncements in matters of religion, or at the very least are not seen as credible religious messengers. Governmental adoption and validation can feed unhelpfully into sectarian dynamics and cycles of conflict in settings characterized by existing tensions between religious groups. CVE and PVE debates and policies need to be delinked from their over-simplified religious association as significant research shows that religious beliefs are rarely the primary cause of extremism. Politicians’ and policy-makers’ language and assumptions around fighting terrorism need to be stripped of false religious language.

The focus needs to shift to constructive engagement of religious actors in efforts to understand better the motivations behind extremist views and to find solutions. Religious actors are best placed to challenge problematic religious interpretations of extremist groups. They can help reframe religious narratives to address deep rooted causes which generate grievances driving extremism—such as politics, socioeconomics, and localized conflicts—and highlight the positive potential to build peaceful, pluralistic societies.

Various governments—including several G20 members—have explored building capacity to engage with religious actors across a wide range of foreign policy and national security concerns. For example, US government engagement with religious actors in foreign policy, including in peacebuilding, development, and human rights, became more formalized, strategic, and institutionalized during the Obama administration. A Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy established in 2015 as a coordinating mechanism for governmental engagement with religion in foreign policy whose membership includes fifteen foreign ministries from across the Euro-Atlantic region, the European Union, and the United Nations. OSCE in 2018 completed its first step in exploring more effective ways to engage with religious actors. In sum, G20 Governments are starting to develop related capacity, but challenges still remain.

The challenge of religious engagement demands wise interventions that start with strategic knowledge of institutions and the politics of leadership. Differing views on human rights often need to be addressed, especially with respect to roles of women and youth. Careful assessment of leadership patterns is needed: religious leaders who actively put themselves forward as CVE partners—particularly those active on transnational interfaith circuits and in global “peace summits”—do not necessarily have the greatest following within their communities. Religious leaders at the local and provincial level are likely to be more trusted and to have a more granular understanding of the specific issues facing their communities. Creative efforts to address approaches to equity and equality are often needed as diverse voices are a must at negotiating tables. Religious factors affecting violent extremism vary by country and region according to government religious relationships. Approaches that focus on roles or functions that religious teachings and beliefs play in violent extremism—facilitating mobilization, shaping narratives, providing a justification, and sanctifying violent acts—shows promise. Religious actors, as integral members of civil society and contributors to public and political discourse, can engage as partners in many fields, when engaged with care and sensitivity to power asymmetries and potential risks. Religious institutions and communities need to be understood as broad, deep, and complex, looking to “lived religion”, beyond official religious authorities and formal institutions.

Recommendations

Better alignment between counter-ideology or counter-narrative efforts is needed, focused on drivers of violent extremism. The goal is an informed, nuanced, and constructive approach to religious matters in relation to non-state violence. That means recognizing that ideological drivers of extremism always occur and gain traction within settings defined by a wide range of other factors.

The G20 members in setting and implementing agendas:

- Should take religious factors more systematically into account, looking beyond theology or counter-messaging when assessing potential roles for religious actors in addressing social violence and extremist views. As part of civil society, religious actors are relevant to a much broader range of sectors and activities associated with CVE—for example, combating corruption, alleviating socioeconomic inequalities, resolving conflict, and peacebuilding.
- Take care that CVE is not be used as a pretense for proscribing religious freedom and human rights. Some governments use CVE policy discourse as top cover for violations of religious freedom and other human rights, or to crack down on religious groups or forms of religious expression they perceive as political opposition.
- Avoid interpretations of religion or use of religious language and symbols in official government statements that can accentuate problems, especially when state actors claim to speak for religious actors by favoring some views over others.
- Make CVE debates a priority topic in G20 processes. The G20 platform with its sharply focused agenda offers a chance for fresh insights. A multi-stakeholder task force that includes economic and religious actors should report to the 2020 G20 summit with action recommendations.

Religious coordinating networks can and should:

- Focus on developing proposals that reflect inclusive involvement of their communities. Understandings of religious actors should reflect the relevance of actors beyond formal religious authorities and official institutions. Women, younger religious leaders, and traditionalist faith practices are key players in the religious landscape, often more influential than their formal and titled religious counterparts.
- Develop a strategic analysis of track records of religious engagement on non-state violence with a view to highlighting best and worst practice and practical guidelines for action.
- Emphasize the need for specific attention and resources to formal and informal institutional engagement of religious agencies in responding to CVE and PVE.
- Build intra and inter religious community intervention programs to insure that CVE and PVE efforts are done jointly and contribute to building sustainable relationships.¹⁰⁸

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¹⁰⁸ This brief was reviewed and commented inter alia by *Katherine Marshall*, World Faiths Development Dialogue; *Peter Mandaville*, Georgetown University; *Cole Durham*, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University Law School; *Mohamed Abu-Nimer*. KAICIID; and *Kishan Manocha*, Senior Adviser on FoRB, Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

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COMBATING DEFORESTATION AND PROTECTING RAINFORESTS: RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS

Policy Area: Planet

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Abstract: Protecting rainforests is a critical component of global efforts to halt climate change, prevent environmental destruction, including mass-extinction of species, and protect human rights. Deforestation and degradation of the tropical rainforest undermine one of the Earth's most vital life-support systems; the rainforests play a major role in climate regulation by moving warm and humid air from the tropics towards the Poles, producing rainfall, and distributing it to agricultural regions way beyond the forest areas. Emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the tropics add up to billions of tons of carbon dioxide each year, and seriously impair the functioning of the only¹⁰⁹ safe and natural carbon capture and storage system ever tested. Standing forests are a cost-effective strategy for combatting climate change. As a major source of protection, food, clean water, and income for communities that live in and around forests, the potential protective roles of indigenous communities deserve special attention.

The moral authority of religious voices can spur global leaders and wide networks of communities and individuals to action in this critical area. Of particular note is the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI), a multi-faith alliance launched in 2017. A platform for robust partnerships between faith-inspired actors, indigenous peoples, and other sectors including governments, businesses, climate scientists, and civil society, it offers pathways for common efforts amounting to a worldwide campaign – grounded in ethics and values – around ending deforestation and strengthening the efforts to protect the world's remaining, and increasingly endangered, rainforests.

This brief highlights responses and recommendations of major religious communities, and calls for an explicit focus on protection of rainforests by G20 Leaders at the 2019 Osaka Summit.

The Challenge

Tropical forest loss is occurring at an accelerating annual rate. Tree cover loss is increasing despite global and national commitments and actions. Forests – and tropical rainforests with their particularly rich biodiversity – have special importance for global ecosystems. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment has established that around 1 million species face extinction, the highest rate in human history, with significant repercussions for human welfare.¹¹⁰ Deforestation contributes directly to the extinction of many species and threatens the welfare and survival of indigenous communities. In 2017 a recorded 15.8 million hectares (39.0 million acres) of tree cover was lost

¹⁰⁹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). *Global Warming of 1.5 degrees C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5 degrees C above pre-Industrial levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gases Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development, and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty.* 2018.
https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/10/SR15_SPM_version_stand_alone_LR.pdf.

¹¹⁰ “IPBES Global Assessment Summary for Policymakers,” 2019,
https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/spm_unedited_advance_for_posting_htn.pdf.

(an area the size of Bangladesh).¹¹¹ Large-scale deforestation is linked above all to production of globally traded commodities such as beef, soy, palm oil, and pulp and paper; the problem thus should be viewed in conjunction with trade and business patterns and trends. Causes of deforestation vary by region and country but include notably poor governance (and especially corruption), inefficient land use, industrial logging and expansion of large-scale agriculture, and unsustainable consumption patterns.

Deforestation presents human rights challenges. Environmental degradation and a less predictable climate hit poor communities and those excluded from social protection systems particularly hard, limiting their ability to achieve food, energy, and water security. Forest destruction causes income loss, resource scarcity, and health risks for communities that live in and around forests. Indigenous communities are vulnerable to abuse of their basic rights when extractive industries or other economic interest groups want access to their lands or resources. Defending forests and rights have become increasingly dangerous. An average of close to four environmental defenders are killed every week, and indigenous activists make up a disproportionately high percentage of these victims.¹¹² Protecting the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged is a critical part of an ethically responsible ecological approach.

Forest destruction is closely linked to climate change, in terms of effects and causation. Protecting forests thus has central importance in efforts to address climate change. Mitigating climate change globally is of paramount importance for the protection of tropical rainforests. Current GHG emission trends will change climate patterns and weaken rainforest ecosystems; after 2050 there will be accelerated savannization of current rainforests, with positive feedback on climate change. In addition to its major role as a climate regulator, forest loss diminishes the earth's natural capacity to absorb carbon emissions. The clearing of forests produces more annual greenhouse (GHG) emissions than all transportation use globally.¹¹³ Rainforest deforestation induces regional climate changes that affect major food production regions. For example, changes in temperature and to a lesser extent in rainfall in the humid pampas region of Southern South America driven by Chaco and Amazon deforestation have already been observed.

Three critical rainforest areas need priority focus: the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and South-East Asia, particularly the island of New Guinea and Indonesia. Brazil, which contains nearly two-thirds of the world's largest tropical rainforests, lost the most tropical primary rainforest in 2018 of any country, and has seen a prominent spike in tree cover loss over the past four years, primarily due to political instability, rollbacks of environmental protections, illegal loggers, and other factors (including droughts exacerbated by climate change) that leave forests vulnerable to fires. In Colombia, another country with a high density of Amazon rainforests, the Peace Agreement with FARC in 2016 led to an increase in deforestation activities, illustrating the importance of integrating forest protection into post-conflict development strategies. In the

¹¹¹ Mikaela Wisse and Elizabeth Dow Goldman, "2017 was the Second-Worst Year on Record for Tropical Tree Cover Loss," World Resources Institute, 2018, <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/06/2017-was-second-worst-year-record-tropical-tree-cover-loss>.

¹¹² "At What Cost? Irresponsible business and the murder of land and environmental defenders in 2017." *Global Witness*, 2018. https://www.globalwitness.org/documents/19392/Defenders_report_layout_AW2_lowres.pdf.

¹¹³ "Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report" *Contribution of Working Groups I, II, and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, IPCC, 2007 https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar4_syr_full_report.pdf.

Democratic Republic of the Congo, which contains more than half of the remaining Congo Basin rainforest, forests are threatened by slash-and-burn agricultural and industrial logging. Indonesia has made progress on reversing their tree cover loss rates due to effective policies, religious edicts, educational campaigns, and increased law enforcement, but only the island of New Guinea – shared between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia – still has the majority of its contiguous areas of primary rainforest intact. And continued market demand for biofuels threatens to undermine these precious forests.

Pathways Forward

Protecting existing forests and reducing emissions from tropical deforestation and forest degradation are crucial for broad strategies to achieve climate stability and sustainable development. Protecting rainforests is an important part of international efforts to achieve sustainable development and, rooted in respect for human rights, cultivate long-term progress and growth. Natural climate solutions such as forest conservation offer a powerful and cost-efficient way for countries to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its effects” and achieve Goal 13 and Goal 15, among others, of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ending deforestation and allowing degraded forests to recover could provide over one-third of the climate mitigation needed to limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius by 2030, a central target of the Paris Agreement.¹¹⁴ A sharp focus on mangrove conservation offers a particularly affordable and effective approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation.¹¹⁵ Conservation investments overall improve soil productivity, maintain biodiversity, and protect life support systems that provide billions of people with food, clean water, shelter, medicine and livelihoods.

A wealth of data and experience support hope: protection is possible and there are effective tools to support action. Satellite imagery measures forest cover change, and new technologies to assess carbon density make it possible to map and analyze carbon emissions from deforestation with a high degree of accuracy, bolstering the efficacy of planning for protection. The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change was among the first to recommend reducing deforestation as one of the most cost-effective strategies for reducing emissions. More recent studies affirm that stopping deforestation would be a low-cost and effective solution for climate change mitigation.¹¹⁶

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), the international framework negotiated under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was endorsed in the Paris Agreement. REDD+ offers results-based financial incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and invest in sustainable development. Brazil and Indonesia, which together contribute more than 50 percent of carbon emissions from tree cover loss, offer the greatest mitigation opportunity. Some progress has been made, for example in Indonesia, where a national forest moratorium (in effect since 2011 as part of a US\$1 billion Indonesia-Norway REDD+ partnership) and peat drainage

¹¹⁴ Bronson W. Griscom, et al., “Natural Climate Solutions,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 114 (44): 11645-11650, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1710465114>.

¹¹⁵ Chandra Silori, “Mangroves more Carbon Rich and Important for Climate Change,” RECOFTC, https://archive.recoftc.org/project/grassroots-capacity-building-redd/news-and-features/mangroves-more-carbon-rich-and-important-climate-change?fbclid=IwAR2yIo_b0C02K-maENM7N9uGKcOeya1kCeyLiHJM8rFa2EFfcETpgwSpyEQ.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

moratorium (in effect since 2016) helped contribute to a 60 percent decline in primary forest loss in 2017.¹¹⁷

*Indigenous communities can be partners in forest protection efforts, especially on projects that affect their lands. In many parts of the world, indigenous communities face increasing pressures to abandon their homelands to make room for industrial agricultural or mining projects. Indigenous and other forest communities outperform other managers of tropical forests with regards to compliance with forest protection laws, and as advocates for increased protections. Investments in securing land rights for indigenous communities can generate significant returns, economically and environmentally, for local communities and the world's climate. Estimates suggest that by giving indigenous groups legal rights to the lands they occupy, Bolivia could [avoid 8-12 megatonnes](#) of greenhouse gas emissions each year, equivalent to taking more than 1.7 million vehicles off the road.*¹¹⁸

Changes in lifestyles and greater social will towards education and action need to be part of the solution. A sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers is necessary. Consumer boycotts could force businesses to consider their environmental footprint. Education efforts aimed not only at providing information, but also instilling good habits and cultivating sound virtues can lead to long-term shifts in societal attitudes towards forest protection. Religious leaders and teachings can have a powerful effect on changing attitudes and cultures. Governments can introduce measures to support deforestation-free public procurement and restrict importation of biofuels from palm oil and soy.

Integrated approaches need to link the rainforest challenges to broader efforts to combat poverty, assure dignity to the excluded, and protect nature. Comprehensive solutions that harness the power of community networks, including vast religious networks, to confront the interlinked environmental and societal crises of deforestation have the best chance of success.

Religious Responses

Religious groups are actively involved in leadership to protect rainforests and advocate for indigenous rights. The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI), with Religions for Peace as the global interfaith lead, is a major effort of religious leaders to engage actively on rainforest protection. Launched in 2017 at an Oslo meeting of international experts on religion and climate, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, and Taoist religious leaders together with indigenous peoples and government, business, and civil society representatives formed a coalition dedicated to making rainforest protection a priority. Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Columbia, and Peru are all members of IRI. Religious leaders in each of these tropical countries aim to use IRI as a platform to raise awareness, mobilize faith-inspired action, provide organizational support, and advocate for policies that fulfill and expand government commitments to protect rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples. Other networks of religious communities that focus on forest protection and indigenous rights include GreenFaith, the United Religions Initiative (URI's) Environmental Network, the Red Eclesial Pan-

¹¹⁷ Frances Seymour, "Indonesia Reduces Deforestation, Norway to Pay Up," World Resources Institute, 2019. <https://www.wri.org/blog/2019/02/indonesia-reduces-deforestation-norway-pay>.

¹¹⁸ Katie Reytar and Peter Veit, "5 Maps Show How Important Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Are to the Environment," World Resources Institute, 2017. <https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/12/5-maps-show-how-important-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-are-environment>.

Amazónica (REPAM), and the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI). These organizations, among many others,¹¹⁹ focus on increasing awareness and action on forest protection within and across faith communities.

Secular/religious partnerships also have significant potential. The Faith for Earth Initiative launched by UN Environment is a primary example of strategic engagement with faith-inspired organizations.¹²⁰ The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Sacred Earth: Faiths for Conservation Program works with religious and faith-inspired actors around the world to cultivate values and lifestyles that are ecologically sustainable and spiritually principled.¹²¹ The Alliance of Religions and Conservation offers models for positive partnerships between faith groups, conservation organizations, and governments.

Religious wisdom and the language particular to it can inspire people to action. Some of the most important conservation sites are often also sacred sites. Faith-inspired appeals to protect the earth can help build an ethical, values-based case for urgent and concerted action to end deforestation on both a local, communal level and internationally. Practical, large-scale applications of faith-based language to mobilize action on forest protection include a Fatwa issued in 2014 by The Indonesian Council of Ulama requiring the country's majority Muslim population to protect endangered species and maintain balanced ecosystems. Islamic Relief, which has a vast international reach, explicitly includes halting deforestation as part of their Climate Change Policy. *Laudato Si! (Praise Be)*, issued in 2015 by Pope Francis, has special importance. This encyclical focuses sharply on the impact of human activities on the environment, climate, and rainforests and has sparked numerous conferences and action ideas, including a Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, to take place in October 2019 to highlight "New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology." In March 2019, religious leaders of faith communities worldwide joined the United Nations Environment Assembly for the first time, and called for a stronger representation of values, combined with science, in international conversations related to environmental challenges.

Recommendations

The leadership, vast networks, moral authority, and unparalleled influence of religious leaders offer an important path towards the moral, social, and political consciousness that is essential to assure action on rainforests. There is a solid foundation on which to build.

1. G20 Leaders should take global leadership and commit to reform their economic and fiscal policies in order to stop subsidies and other incentives leading to deforestation, and implement economic incentives to protect forests and their ecosystem services. This would be in line with the Aichi target 3 under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and would be a major achievement in the preparations for the global summit at the COP15 in China 2020.

¹¹⁹ "List of Environmental Faith Based Organizations and Resources," United Nations Environment Programme, 2018, https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25987/Faith_Based_Organizations.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹²⁰ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/faith-earth-initiative>.

¹²¹ <https://www.worldwildlife.org/initiatives/sacred-earth-faiths-for-conservation>.

2. The IPBES report released in May 2019 warns that a million species could be extinct if we continue to destroy natural ecosystems as today. Rainforests are the most biodiverse ecosystems on earth, and deforestation is one of the main drivers behind the loss of species. The G20 countries should show global leadership by launching a common commitment to protect intact forest landscapes with the aim of simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protect biodiversity.
3. Current deforestation and forest degradation rates undermine the efforts to achieve most of the SDGs, including SDG 2 “Zero hunger”. The G20 Leaders should recognize that protecting forests in order to reduce emissions and safeguard biodiversity must be at the core of all the countries’ development strategies.
4. Current Nationally Determined Contributions represent only 20 percent of the emission reduction needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement¹²². G20 Leaders hold the key to unleash higher ambitions for climate action. The UN Climate Action Summit in September and COP25 in December 2019 represent important opportunities for raising global ambitions. The commitment of G20 will be essential. G20 countries should announce significantly higher ambitions to face the threat of climate change at these meetings, including through enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions.
5. G20 Leaders should commit to expanding forest climate finance as a cost-effective strategy for meeting climate change mitigation commitments. The ongoing replenishment of the Green Climate Fund represents a key process for the mobilization of climate finance. To be successful, the fund should receive significantly more than a doubling of its current funds. This requires the committed engagement of G20 countries in the replenishment process and a substantial increase in contributions.
6. G20 Leaders should take action against companies that do not implement zero deforestation in their supply chains. This can be achieved through public procurement regulations, import regulations, and taxes on products that contribute to forest destruction. Sovereign Wealth Funds and other institutional investors in the G20 area should be told to use their shareholder influence to induce companies to avoid deforestation in their operations and supply chains, and banks should be expected to stop giving loans to activities that destroy rainforests, and use beneficial interest rates to reward companies that contribute to protection and restoration of forests.
7. Rainforest countries among the G20 Leaders should develop land-use plans that protect standing forests and prioritize securing land rights for indigenous and other forest communities. Existing and new moratoriums and anti-deforestation policies need the support of G20 Leaders.
8. International cooperation to reduce deforestation and protect rainforests is at a major crossroads. 2019 G20 Summit leaders should explicitly commit themselves to an alliance with religious communities towards rainforest action.

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RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES AND FORCED MIGRANTS: RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS

Policy Area: Peace

June 19, 2019

Abstract: Challenges faced by refugees and migrants, as well as by the societies that host them, are pressing issues on the global agenda. The G20 Osaka Summit offers an opportunity to look boldly at these challenges and consider pathways forward. Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, negotiated and introduced as a framework for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to achieve more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, changes parts of the policy landscape, for example heightening the focus on active involvement of local communities. The various religious dimensions (both positive and less positive) involved in the resettlement and integration of forcibly displaced persons are significant, but often misunderstood or underappreciated. Ethical and practical leadership by religious entities can contribute in many ways, drawing on their wide and varied experience in working with affected populations. Of note is the religious experience of refugees and migrants themselves and the role of faith and religious entities in meeting their physical and spiritual needs. Religious actors are also at the forefront of advocacy for refugees and migrants, direct action in refugee camps and communities that host affected populations, and support for refugee and migrant integration where they settle or during return.

This brief urges the G20 Leaders to engage more directly with religious actors as central partners in finding new and expanded ways to serve and integrate refugees and forcibly displaced persons. On issues like criteria for resettlement, engagement with host communities to assure welcome, protection of unaccompanied or separated children, special measures to counter risky transit, and post-arrival reintegration including education and trauma healing, the expertise of religious actors can substantively strengthen policy and humanitarian efforts. Overall, recognition and closer cooperation with religious actors can help to counter negative responses to resettlement and ensure smooth integration processes.

The Challenge

A record-high number of people are displaced, and that number is expected to grow.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports 68.5 million people forcibly displaced as of the end of 2017.¹²³ Nearly two-thirds are internally displaced persons (IDPs),¹²⁴ often unprotected by policies and actions that address refugees and forced migrants. Among nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half are children,¹²⁵ representing an especially vulnerable population that demands high priority action. Some 85 percent of refugees under UNHCR's mandate are in low and middle-income countries, with the least developed countries currently hosting one-third of the global total.¹²⁶ Lebanon has the largest number of

¹²³ “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017,” UNHCR, 2017, <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

refugees relative to its national population, Turkey the largest total number of refugees.¹²⁷ The numbers of people who have been forced to flee their homes to date represent the highest levels of displacement on record, and current trends suggest the number will continue to grow. The multiple causes of forced migration include complex and protracted conflicts, poor governance, economic shocks, and natural disasters including those caused by climate change. Existing response strategies are inadequate to address the magnitude of the crisis.

Implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees presents challenges.

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2018. Its primary objective is to facilitate durable solutions for refugees with a focus on 1) easing pressures on host countries; 2) enhancing refugee self-reliance; 3) expanding access to third country solutions; and 4) supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.¹²⁸ The GCR highlights several refugee needs that require particular support: access to education, jobs and livelihoods, health, food security and the special needs of vulnerable groups including children. To ensure success the GCR must be supported by adequate resources and strong partnerships among a diverse group of actors. Religious actors can be key partners in this effort, not only in the areas of conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding as noted in the GCR, but also in larger efforts to plan and deliver assistance to refugees and host communities, shape public opinion and galvanize action. The GCR does not fully acknowledge these efforts, and thus misses activities across its areas of interest for which there is substantial evidence of local faith actor involvement.¹²⁹

Poor coordination between key stakeholders and limited engagement on issues of religion and humanitarianism means missed opportunities to leverage existing coping mechanisms and systems of support.

Religious beliefs and institutions play central roles in the everyday lives of people across the world, leading both to forces that generate conflict and to rich potential sources of motivation, strength, and resilience. Trends of religious fortification have been noted among many displaced populations.¹³⁰ There are many practical and psycho-social benefits that a religious or faith-based connection may provide for forced migrants and refugees, including access to services, information, advocacy on their behalf, a social support network, a sense of stability, and to rely on as a coping mechanism in responding to traumatic experiences. For many forced migrants, faith is central to a sense of agency and resilience in situations of protracted displacement, and is thus crucial to refugees' and IDPs' wellbeing. Religious actors are involved in providing practical support to migrants to ease integration into new societies (e.g. financial support by host congregations, legal or housing assistance, befriending or accompaniment

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>.

¹²⁹ This policy brief demonstrates areas of local faith actor engagement in refugee response as aligned with each section of the GCR:

“Faith Actors and the Implementation of The Global Compact on Refugees,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, 2018, <https://jliflc.com/resources/policy-brief-faith-actors-and-the-implementation-of-the-global-compact-on-refugees/>

¹³⁰ J. B. Saunders, et al., *Intersections of Religion and Migration: Issues at the Global Crossroads* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

services, language training, educational or employment support). More systematic engagement with religious actors and cooperation with religious organizations, which are doing important if sometimes disarticulated and unrecognized work on the ground, would increase the efficacy and impact of actions taken by G20 countries.

Actual or distorted perceptions of religious tensions can impede successful integration.

Perceived and actual links to religion of aspects of the forced migration crisis are complex. Religious beliefs and actors can play important roles in easing the integration process of migrants and refugees by establishing a common connection across nationalities and ethnicities. Religiosity, particularly among second-generation youth, has been linked with higher educational achievements, better mastery of language, as well as reduced risk behaviors,¹³¹ which can help ease integration into a new society. Conversely, religious links can impede the resettlement process by emphasizing in-group mentalities and highlighting qualities of difference from host societies. They can involve both distorted narratives (for example associating refugees with specific religious beliefs, and perceived versus actual threats to security) and practical issues (addressing cultural/religious differences pertinent for successful integration, such as gender roles and application of human rights principles). Tensions around perceived religious dimensions can hinder successful integration and contribute to political tensions in countries of resettlement. The negative impact of distorted narratives involving religious beliefs and complex linkages among the multiple pressures that force migration and insecurity are therefore central topics of concern for religious leaders and communities and for G20 Leaders.

Resettlement and integration processes are an immediate topic of concern for G20 members and for religious actors.

The dimensions of the current refugee and migrant crisis are largely well known and documented. Issues are necessarily particular to each displaced population and host state, but chief among global challenges is establishing a more equitable system of responsible burden sharing. Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan are overburdened. Only a small percentage of forced migrants are currently resettled in G20 countries. As the number of refugees continues to increase, equitable acceptance and integration processes are an immediate concern, as are longer-term issues related to the overall humanitarian system.

The disruptions involved in the forced migration crises deflect energy, attention, and financial resources from the broader global goals of the 2030 agenda. The G20 can play a crucial role by devoting explicit attention to the topic and recognizing religious actors as central partners. Religious communities with their long-standing and resilient local presence as well as their rich transnational networks are well positioned to identify linkages with broader goals and to appreciate the challenges involved.

Pathways Forward

Substantial groundwork on religious roles and recommended action provide a foundation for continued dialogue and action.

Religious communities including the Catholic and Anglican churches and major faith-inspired organizations including World Vision, Caritas, and Islamic Relief Worldwide have engaged on refugee issues notably during the Istanbul Global Assembly and throughout

¹³¹ Ibid.

negotiations for the Global Compacts.¹³² Implementing the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 presents crucial opportunities for leadership and partnership. Action is needed to build capacities to mitigate real and perceived lack of compliance of faith actors with international humanitarian standards

G20 agendas should give high priority to actions to meet the needs of global refugee and migrant populations, taking well into account the practical experience and ethical leadership of leading religious communities.

Many religious institutions, including interreligious and intra-faith bodies and faith-inspired organizations (inter alia the Catholic Church, World Council of Churches, Caritas Internationalis, Jesuit Refugee Service, Islamic Relief Worldwide, HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), Lutheran World Relief, and World Vision) have active and longstanding programs that involve direct action to support forced migrants and global advocacy, calling notably for compassionate and actionable responses to refugees. Faith motivates many volunteers taking part in visitations and other activities within immigrant detention and deportation centers. Religious beliefs and practices often play an important role in migrants' experiences of displacement and integration into a new environment. Spiritual and psychological support is often needed and welcome.

Priority, urgent attention is needed to refugee and displaced children and alliances with religious institutions offer a practical way forward.

A global coalition of faith focused on the particular challenges experienced by Children on the Move¹³³ had committed collectively to a call to action¹³⁴ to provide spiritual support, address child protection issues, and counter xenophobia.

Build on the dynamism of involvement of religious bodies in refugee resettlement issues, in responding both to formal religious leadership and to local community initiatives involving religious actors.

Some responses (for example actions of the International Catholic Migration Commission – ICMC) are formal and transnational while others are more local and informal. In the United States, six of nine long established refugee resettlement agencies that support the US government refugee program have religious ties. In Europe, individual religious communities and leaders as well as interreligious groups (both established institutions and spontaneous local responses) support widely varied initiatives to support refugees and to facilitate their integration into the communities of resettlement. As a model of success, more than 2,500 refugees have arrived

¹³² See “Joint Recommendations on the Role of Local Faith Communities in Refugee Response,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, 2018, <https://jliflc.com/resources/joint-recommendation-on-draft-of-the-global-compact-on-refugees-programme-of-action/>.

¹³³ See three Children on the Move briefs on: Spiritual Support (<https://jliflc.com/resources/learning-brief-spiritual-support/>), Child Protection (<https://jliflc.com/resources/learning-brief-continuum-of-protection-for-children/>), and Countering Xenophobia (<https://jliflc.com/resources/learning-brief-the-role-of-faith-in-building-peaceful-societies-and-combating-xenophobia/>).

¹³⁴ “Faith Action for Children on the Move Action Plan,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, 2018, <https://evac.jliflc.com/resources/faith-action-for-children-on-the-move-action-plan/>

safely in Europe via the Humanitarian Corridors for Refugees, an initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio with the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy and the Tavola Valdese.¹³⁵

Draw on action by faith communities and actors that is inspired and shaped by important religious ethical teachings.

Many teachings – welcoming the stranger, hospitality, and compassion for the most vulnerable – are shared among religious communities. Thus, interreligious and ecumenical approaches are some of the most inspirational and effective among practical efforts and responses. The influential leadership of religious actors can promote tolerance and peace, defend humanitarian values, and offer alternative narratives to radicalization. Recognizing the negative impacts of some religious voices, they can also have a distinctive positive impact on advocacy for the agency and self-sufficiency of migrants, and can be engaged and positive partners in combating distorted narratives and addressing rising xenophobia and nationalism.

Enhance systematic mechanisms to assure cooperation and joint advocacy among religiously active communities and public authorities.

Systematic support for programs of religious organizations and actors that strengthen the resilience of displaced communities is critical to ensuring intervention success. Facilitated dialogical exchanges and increased cooperation between people of different religious and social groups, including between religious actors and governments, between religious actors and secular humanitarian actors, and between migrants and host communities, could help identify innovative approaches and solutions. Specific actions and engagements with religious actors can focus both on the broad forced migration crisis and specific resettlement programs.

A G20 refugee and religion research fund could explore ways to enhance partnerships for action on the global refugee crisis.

Better data and evidence are critically needed to inform interventions; it must be collected and used in meaningful ways. Learning from resettlement experience and particularly its religious dimensions could provide pertinent knowledge to guide future policy on refugee and migrant resettlement and integration. Research topics could include, inter alia religion as a driver of refugee displacement, treatment of religious minorities in refugee camps, best practices in treatment of diverse religious communities in host countries and by host governments, religion as a source of resentment of refugees, religion as a resource in the treatment of refugee trauma, and the dissemination of lessons learned across all governments involved in refugee resettlement.

A standing interreligious advisory group could advise the G20 Leaders and advisors on religious dimensions of the forced migration crisis and specifically resettlement issues and approaches.

The response and organization of religious support for resettlement of forced migrants varies considerably among G20 member countries and so do the issues involved. There is an urgent need for a rigorous mapping of ongoing efforts and robust communications strategies.

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ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN FORMS OF SLAVERY: FAITH-INSPIRED ACTORS/COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING GLOBAL EFFORTS

Policy Area: Urgent Issues

June 19, 2019

Abstract: The Leaders of the G20 are called upon to stand up and be counted in addressing one of the most significant humanitarian crises of our generation - human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. The corrosive and detrimental effects of this scourge are felt far and wide, including in the domestic politics of G20 member states, shaking the very roots of liberal democratic norms and practices. What is required is concerted and focused action from the G20, with millions of human lives at stake. G20 Leaders can be part of the solution, and faith-inspired actors/communities should stand shoulder-to-shoulder.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7: “take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor” - reflects strong multilateral commitment to end human trafficking and modern forms of slavery.

G20 Leaders can advance progress towards this goal in various tangible ways, highlighting its priority and committing themselves to action on specific initiatives that address and prevent distinct abuses. Faith-inspired actors and communities play critical roles in articulating, promoting, and directly contributing to global frameworks to combat human trafficking and modern forms of slavery, at levels from the most global to the most local. Closer cooperation and coordination between religious communities/faith-inspired actors and policy makers could better align efforts and ensure that respective knowledge, and resources, best contribute towards common goals. G20 recognition of this cooperation and explicit focus on the topic of combating human trafficking and modern forms of slavery could advance integration and effectiveness.

This brief urges a concerted focus by G20 Leaders on human trafficking and modern forms of slavery during the 2019 Osaka G20 Summit. It highlights efforts by religious and interfaith actors to support global strategies to combat human trafficking, forced labor, and modern forms of slavery, and points to actions that could strengthen integration of religious, moral, and values-based strategies. The brief reflects deliberations of faith-linked groups actively involved globally, regionally, and locally on the topic, and underlines specific steps to multiply impact, and strengthen global efforts to end human trafficking and modern forms of slavery by 2030.

The Challenge

Vast numbers of people are trafficked. No matter how poor and flawed the data involved, the scale of suffering is enormous.

Between 2012 and 2016, an estimated 89 million people experienced some form of modern slavery, defined as forced labor, sexual exploitation, and forced marriage.¹³⁶ Forced labor victims

¹³⁶ Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: *Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*. Geneva: ILO, 2017. ISBN: 978-92-2-130131-8 (Print), 978-92-2-130132-5 (Web PDF).

in 2016 included an estimated 16 million people working in the private economy and 4.1 million forced to work by their state authorities.¹³⁷ Also in 2016, 4.8 million persons, the vast majority women and girls, were victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Victims of commercial sexual exploitation, including over one million children, were typically trapped in such situations for an average of two years. In addition, over 15 million people were enduring forced marriage, more than a third married under the age of 18, and often made to provide labor under the guise of marriage. Poor country-level reporting and other data limitations suggest that numbers of victims of human trafficking and modern forms of slavery are probably higher than the available data suggests.

According to Europol-Interpol, members of criminal networks (predominantly) facilitate travel by 90 percent of irregular migrants to the European Union (EU). Key migratory routes identified as main corridors for human trafficking are fluid and influenced by factors such as border controls. Human traffickers are organized in loosely connected networks in a multinational business linked to the Sicilian mafia that earned between US\$5 and US\$6 billion in 2015 - negatively affecting transnational security, with suspects originating from more than 100 countries.¹³⁸

Trafficking is linked to priority global security issues including genocide. Under-Secretary-General Adama Dieng, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Genocide, stresses that human trafficking is an “atrocious crime” that comes under the purview of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide that entered into force on January 12, 1951, and is reflected in General Assembly Resolution 260.

Action to address the issues is mixed and in many countries human trafficking networks continue to operate with high degrees of impunity.

This applies especially for different forms of labor, which begin as voluntary but become traps with coercion involved. Trafficked humans are expected to work as slaves (sold publicly at ‘auctions’ in Libya), indentured labor, sex workers, and even sell their organs (e.g. Sicily) to pay off the ‘costs’ of trafficking to criminal gangs.¹³⁹

Women and children are particularly vulnerable in many societies with practices tied to gender norms that make victims vulnerable and little seen (household labor is a prime example).

Women and girls account for fully 71 percent of modern slavery victims, and are disproportionately subject to forced labor in the commercial sex industry and forced marriages.¹⁴⁰

Challenges of trafficking and slavery practices are particularly pernicious for refugees and migrants.

Forcibly displaced populations become targets of traffickers. On May 12, 2019 it was reported that 23 teenage refugee Rohingya girls were rescued from Dhaka airport and 4 traffickers arrested.¹⁴¹ Trafficking is a known evil in refugee camps where people are especially vulnerable.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ de Silva, Purnaka L. “Regional Impact of Human Trafficking and Forced Migration: Looking for Solutions in Libya” in Robin Anderson and Purnaka L. de Silva (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Media and Humanitarian Action* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

¹³⁹ ISSD Malta field research.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ “Rohingya girls rescued from traffickers in Bangladesh” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/rohingya-girls-rescued-traffickers-bangladesh-190512101949513.html?ref=hvper.com>.

Illicit and prohibitive recruitment fees for migration allow new migrants to be sold to human traffickers or trapped in debt bondage. In the Gulf States, abuse of worker sponsorship systems is well documented¹⁴² and an example of how labor migration can lead to exploitative situations.

These practices persist because they are profitable and because demand remains strong. However, costs to society are high and practices fly against basic human rights principles and democratic freedoms.

Forced labor practices and human trafficking are a low-risk, high-gain enterprise. Modern forms of slavery generate an estimated annual profit of over US\$150 billion for traffickers, with sexual exploitation accounting for two-thirds of global profits - an estimated US\$99 billion.¹⁴³ Debt bondage and other forms of forced labor entrap many in exploitative situations that can last years or generations, as debts are transferred to family members. Law-abiding businesses and employers are disadvantaged by forced labor, as it creates an environment of unfair competition and risks tarnishing the reputation of entire industries. Governments and societies are harmed because profits generated by forced labor bypass national tax collection systems. Prison labor is abused, with prisoners used to undercut competitors in overseas, largely construction-related, projects for economic benefit.¹⁴⁴

No country or region is exempt from the challenge of ending trafficking and modern slavery, but many citizens have little awareness that it occurs.

The majority of victims of modern slavery are located in the Asia and Pacific region, including 70 percent of all victims of sexual exploitation.¹⁴⁵ However, every economy benefits from forced labor, and forced marriages, sexual exploitation, and other internal trafficking cases occur in every country. Stories of police, military, and other government officials growing wealthy from trafficking come from many countries. The challenge also often crosses borders. Countries can be sending countries, receiving countries or both. Almost one in four victims of forced labor were exploited outside their country of residence.¹⁴⁶

Notwithstanding global commitments and action plans, effective measures to address abuses are limited.

The 2017 State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report indicates that there were only 14,894 prosecutions and 9,071 convictions for trafficking globally in 2016 pro rata representing 0.03 per cent of trafficked victims.¹⁴⁷ Prevention and protection measures are feasible

¹⁴² “Will Migrant Domestic Workers in the Gulf Ever Be Safe From Abuse?”

<https://www.newsdeeply.com/womensadvancement/articles/2018/08/29/will-migrant-domestic-workers-in-the-gulf-ever-be-safe-from-abuse>.

“#Me Too, say domestic workers in the Middle East”

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/Comment/2017/12/8/MeToo-say-domestic-workers-in-the-Middle-East>

“Gulf States Fail to Protect Domestic Workers from Serious Violence” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/10/16/gulf-states-fail-protect-domestic-workers-serious-violence>.

¹⁴³ Profits and Poverty: *The economics of forced labour*. Geneva: ILO, 2014. ISBN: 978-92-2-128781-0.

¹⁴⁴ “China’s newest export: convicts” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/jul/29/china-export-convict-labour>.

¹⁴⁵ Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: *Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*. Geneva: ILO, 2017. ISBN: 978-92-2-130131-8 (Print), 978-92-2-130132-5 (Web PDF).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Trafficking in Persons Report 2017. U.S. Department of State, 2017.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271339.pdf>.

and have impact in some places but meaningful action falls far short of what is promised and what is feasible, and falls well short of what is needed.

Last but foremost, trafficking and modern forms of slavery involve violations of human rights, democratic freedoms, and shared religious principles focused on human dignity.

Prominent religious leaders including His Holiness Pope Francis, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Skorka, and Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi, are among prominent religious leaders who call modern forms of slavery and human trafficking a crime against humanity. These leaders are committed “to do all within their power in their own faith communities and beyond to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future might be restored.”¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, coordination and alignment of common purpose both among faith groups and between faith-inspired actors and secular actors is a challenge that has to be overcome.

With the moral, legal, law enforcement, and other practical challenges abundantly clear, action to eradicate human trafficking and modern slavery by 2030 should have a prominent place on global agendas, such as that of the G20, the European Union, and multilateral actors like the United Nations.

Pathways Forward

Dismantling complex systems that contribute to human trafficking and modern forms of slavery calls for transnational, regional, national, and very local action. Policy and legal reforms, monitoring, policing and law enforcement need to go hand in hand with actions that address social and behavioral patterns that contribute to abuses. Effective support to victims is vital but prevention is even more pressing. Effective measures must involve public and private actors. Religious leaders and broad networks of faith-inspired actors currently play significant roles in focusing political and media attention on the issue and in practical responses that nevertheless could be far better integrated.

Enforcement “with teeth” and adequate resources to implement existing legislation that are further strengthened by swift legal reforms is central to ending human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. International legal instruments provide the framework for concerted action: they include the United Nations 1956 Convention on slavery and slavery-like practices, the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (‘Palermo Protocol,’ 2000), supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Crime, the ILO Forced Labor Conventions No. 29 and 105, the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labor Convention, 1930 and the Forced Labor (Supplementary Measures) Recommendation, 2014 (No. 203). Refinements and expansions could enhance the regulatory framework (an example is ratification and implementation of fundamental ILO labor standards and compliance in law and practice¹⁴⁹). Legal reforms at a national level and reinforced inspection in sectors where risks are highest are imperative in order to curtail forced labor and debt bondage. Cross-border law enforcement cooperation is vital, but must be made less cumbersome and time consuming. The courts systems

¹⁴⁸ Signed Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery. Vatican City: Global Freedom Network, 2014. <http://www.endslavery.va/content/endslavery/en/events/declaration/signed.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Recommended by Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

to try criminals engaged in human trafficking must be fast-tracked and stringent measures taken to stop the corruption and perversion of justice systems, including interference from politicians.

Improving the evidence base on human trafficking and modern forms of slavery by strengthening and extending national research and data collection efforts will help improve policies and programs. Increasing the capacity of countries to detect, systematically collect data, and report on trafficking cases is vital. Information sharing efforts need to consider all victims, and segmented by groups in operationally effective ways and focus on priority issues (e.g. documenting gendered patterns of abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls, illegal organ harvesting, etc.).

Children, who are victims of every form of modern slavery, including sexual exploitation, deserve priority in all efforts to identify victims and focus efforts at protection and rehabilitation. This must include a focus on children who are displaced and unaccompanied across the world including in Asia, Africa and Europe.

Anti-trafficking efforts in conflict and crisis situations (where trafficking is rampant) deserve priority. Prevention and protection measures are an integral part of improved humanitarian action and migration governance. The introduction of the EU Conflict Mineral Regulations in 2021 provides a blueprint for change, but essential to implementation will be properly resourced monitoring. Better cooperation and sharper focus on trafficking patterns within global initiatives could help. Initiatives that reduce vulnerabilities faced by indigenous people and internal migrants are also critical.

Development programs must focus more explicitly on human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. Decent work and ethical economic growth are crucial to sustainable development. Microcredit and microfinance initiatives, land tenure reforms, and stronger social protection systems (including cash transfer schemes, public employment programs, health protection, maternity protection, disability benefits, unemployment protection, income security in old age and Forecast-based Financing¹⁵⁰) can reduce vulnerabilities to poverty, natural disasters, economic crises, and other shocks that leave people vulnerable to exploitation.

More forceful and coordinated global responses are needed to address the different but interlinked abuses involved. The central need is greater political will among legislators in order to implement stronger partnerships and demonstrate a more forceful common will to combat human trafficking and modern forms of slavery by 2030.

Religious Responses

Global efforts led by prominent religious leaders and institutions aim to solidify commitment, raise public consciousness, and point to specific actions. International gatherings and widely disseminated resources highlight the issues and needed action. The Forum on Modern Slavery, co-sponsored Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, has been held annually since 2017, with a joint task force for modern slavery.¹⁵¹ His Holiness Pope Francis has called human trafficking a crime against humanity, including at an international conference held in April 2019, where the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for

¹⁵⁰ R  th, Alexandra et al., "Forecast-based Financing, Early Warning and Early Action: A Cutting-Edge Strategy for the International Humanitarian Community" in Robin Anderson and Purnaka L. de Silva (eds.). *The Routledge Companion to Media and Humanitarian Action* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

¹⁵¹ <https://www.patriarchate.org/-/awareness-action-and-impact-a-forum-on-modern-slavery>.

Promoting Integral Human Development launched a handbook, “Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking,” to guide Catholics worldwide.¹⁵² The Lutheran World Federation published “Human Being- Not For Sale,” a guide to the subject from a Lutheran perspective, as a subtheme to the 500th Reformation anniversary in 2017.¹⁵³ The Central Conference of American Rabbis resolved to fight against human trafficking since 2004.¹⁵⁴ Prominent global faith leaders who have signed the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery include Pope Francis, Rabbi David Rosen, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi, The Most Ven. Datuk K. Sri Dhammaratana, and other leaders representing major religious and faith groups across the globe.¹⁵⁵

Religious and interfaith networks work alongside other civil society and private sector actors. The Santa Marta Group, endorsed by Pope Francis, has built an alliance of police chiefs, law enforcement agencies, international organizations, and bishops working together in over 35 countries.¹⁵⁶ Resulting partnerships between governments and local religious actors – women’s religious orders in particular – facilitate law enforcement being promptly alerted so that they are better able to investigate and respond to trafficking cases, and work to develop improved legislation or policy implementation. The Global Sustainability Network, co-chaired by an Anglican Bishop, includes a multi-faith group focusing on developing decent work and ethical economic growth to achieve SDG 8.7. T’ruah trains Rabbis to engage their communities in addressing slavery and trafficking locally, co-leading the Jewish Coalition against Trafficking together with the National Council of Jewish Women. They also work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to help expand fair food programs and eliminate slavery practices in U.S. agriculture.¹⁵⁷ The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) focuses on raising the awareness of corporations about global supply chain abuses, and advocates for policies that would require businesses to disclose steps taken to identify and address modern slavery practices in their supply chains.¹⁵⁸

Many faith humanitarian aid organizations and community initiatives focus specifically on anti-trafficking efforts. The Salvation Army has been a long-standing leader in efforts to abolish human trafficking, and along with various other Christian organizations is a member of the Faith Alliance against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST).¹⁵⁹ Another global network of over 45 Christian organizations working to combat human trafficking is COATNET, coordinated by Caritas Internationalis.¹⁶⁰ Christian organizations can have a large global reach, such as the International Justice Mission,¹⁶¹ or the International Network of Consecrated Life against Trafficking in Persons

¹⁵² <https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/en/email/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf> .

¹⁵³ https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/human_beings_1_1.pdf.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.ccarnet.org/ccar-resolutions/human-trafficking-resolution-on/>.

¹⁵⁵ Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery, Religions for Peace Australia, 2014. http://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Joint_Declaration_of_Religious_Leaders_against_modern_slavery_December_2014.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ <http://santamartagroup.com/>.

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.truah.org/campaign/slavery-and-trafficking/>.

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.iccr.org/our-issues/human-rights/human-trafficking-and-modern-day-slavery>.

¹⁵⁹ <https://faastinternational.org/about-us/faast-members>.

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.coatnet.org/about-us/>.

¹⁶¹ <https://www.ijm.org/>.

(Talitha Kum).¹⁶² Chab Dai Coalition began as a grassroots Cambodian anti-trafficking organization and has grown to a membership of 51 local and international NGOs working on projects that include prevention and community engagement, client care and legal support, and advocacy.¹⁶³ The Anglican Alliance, particularly through their Freedom Year campaign,¹⁶⁴ and The Clewer Initiative, enable dioceses and wider church networks to develop strategies for detecting modern forms of slavery in their communities, and help provide victim support and care.¹⁶⁵ A specific initiative with impact was ‘End Trafficking in Persons’ (ETIP) a five-year anti-trafficking program run by World Vision across the six countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region, reaching an estimated 240,000 community members.¹⁶⁶

Religious groups have historically been at the forefront of providing safe shelter and resources, helping to reduce the likelihood that migrants and refugees will become victims of human trafficking schemes. This is witnessed presently in the Northern Triangle/Mexico migration route, in Venezuela and its neighboring countries, in the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Horn of Africa, and European recipient countries involving Mediterranean refugee and irregular migration routes, and in Myanmar/Bangladesh. Best practices include Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) work in Cambodia to protect irregular migrants,¹⁶⁷ HIAS’s work with global refugees,¹⁶⁸ and Islamic Relief programs to protect life and dignity in crisis situations.¹⁶⁹

Religious groups indirectly assist human trafficking victims and contribute to preventative measures by confronting poverty and other social ills. Given that poverty and illiteracy are directly correlated with increased risk of becoming a victim of modern forms of slavery, charitable and humanitarian aid, education, and social work, are critical parts of overall solutions. Religious institutions provide the largest non-governmental education system in the world, often serving the world’s poorest and most vulnerable communities. Using that reach to raise awareness, prevent, and provide support for child victims of human trafficking and modern slavery could increase positive impact.

Advocacy and social support for migrants is an area where religious groups are especially well positioned to help move society in the direction of not only condemning human trafficking, but also condemning and stigmatizing its root causes. In this context the provision of psychosocial services to human trafficking victims and sexual abuse survivors is vital.

Faith-inspired actors, including international alliances of interfaith networks, organized religions, local faith-based organizations and religious groups, and individuals motivated by religious beliefs and values, as well as those with no belief, are all invaluable partners in every aspect of eradicating human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. Religious organizations are often both international in scope and very local, with deep knowledge of victims and perpetrators.

¹⁶² <https://www.talithakum.info/>.

¹⁶³ <https://chabdai.org/about>.

¹⁶⁴ <https://anglicanalliance.org/development/ending-human-trafficking/>.

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/>.

¹⁶⁶ End Trafficking in Persons Programme: *Summary Report*. World Vision International, 2017. <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/ETIP%20Summary%20Report-FINAL-28%20Sep.pdf>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.jrs.org.au/2532-2/>.

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.hias.org/protection-most-vulnerable>.

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.islamic-relief.org/category/what-we-do/protecting-life-and-dignity/>.

Their efforts are difficult to map because such diverse entities are involved. Nevertheless these networks are vast and have tremendous potential for significant positive impact.

Effective engagement between religious and non-religious actors falls short of the potential to advance common objectives. Tensions among faith actors around differences in approach (for example balancing law enforcement and support for victims against prevention and focusing on “root causes”) and/or poor coordination can lead to suboptimal resource allocation and service delivery. Better knowledge, understanding, and cooperation could multiply impact, and the courage to take on criminal organizations like the Sicilian mafia.

Recommendations

The 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum presented robust recommendations to the G20 Governments, urging specific commitment to the eradication of modern forms of slavery, human trafficking, and forced labor.¹⁷⁰ Specific recommendations focused on reviews of each government’s procurement of goods and services to eliminate suppliers who cannot prove that their supply chains are free of modern forms of slavery. This recommendation recognized that, as procurement involves taxpayer funds, citizens deserve to know that their money will not be spent on these criminal enterprises. The recommendation urged G20 Governments to call for and strongly support an independent international agency mandated to promote, in all nations, public procurement from supply lines free from modern forms of slavery and forced labor. Such an international agency’s mandate would include assisting governments with programs and materials to educate their citizens and businesses about the topic.¹⁷¹

The 2019 G20 Osaka Summit should consider further and more concrete action along these lines, affirming their moral obligation and commitment to bold action. This should be set within a broader context that highlights the priority for action that affirms fundamental ILO labor standards and compliance in law and practice, protection against human trafficking as a prominent feature in refugee and migration governance, support for aggressive data mapping and collation efforts, and action to protect children and stop illegal organ harvesting as an explicit focus. They should affirm their engagement to take action to prevent Government monies or assets from even unwittingly funding or endorsing illicit activities of human trafficking, including forced labor, and establish a global agreement that ‘monies or profit’ tainted by human trafficking is seized and utilized in the fight against this crime. By making this crime financially non-viable eradication can be achieved.

We invite the G20 Leaders to reaffirm their moral obligation, political will, and commitment to undertake bold and immediate action to combat human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. We invite them to work together with the G20 Interfaith Forum to identify areas where religious and non-religious leaders and institutions can address overlaps and enhance communication at global, regional, national, and local levels. The 2019 and 2020 G20 agendas

¹⁷⁰ The Time Must Be Now: An Urgent Message to G20 Leaders and Governments – Action to Eradicate Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Our Generation, G20 Interfaith Forum, 2018. <https://www.g20interfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/App-Item-2.pdf>.

¹⁷¹ Included in item 7 of the 2018 G20 Leaders Declaration is ‘We will take actions to eradicate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery in the world of work, including through fostering sustainable supply chains. We will endeavor to further create enabling conditions for resource mobilization from public, private and multilateral resources, including innovative financial mechanisms and partnerships, such as impact investment for inclusive and sustainable growth, in line with the G20 Call on Financing for Inclusive Business.’

should address specific action areas, including protection of refugees and irregular migrants and supply chain action.¹⁷²

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COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

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- International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, Milan, Italy
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- International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)
- International Religious Liberty Association
- International Shinto Foundation founded by Dr. Haruhisa Handa in support of multi-faith dialogue
- Islamic Relief USA
- KAICIID Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- Ma'din Academy, India
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- World Jewish Congress
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