

"Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development: Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future"

2018 ARGENTINA SUMMARY REPORT



**CONSTRUYENDO CONSENSO PARA UN
DESARROLLO EQUITATIVO Y SOSTENIBLE**

LA CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LAS RELIGIONES PARA UN FUTURO DIGNO



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
INAUGURAL SESSION:	5
PLENARY SESSIONS.....	11
RELIGIONS AND EMERGING GLOBAL CHALLENGES	11
THE FUTURE OF WORK AND THE URGENT CHALLENGES OF INEQUALITY AND THE VULNERABLE.....	24
CARING FOR THE EARTH: CLIMATE CHANGE’S MULTIPLE CHALLENGES AND RELIGIOUS ROLES	31
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, RELIGIOUS VITALITY, AND RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE G20 AGENDA.....	36
ADVANCING THE WORK OF RELIGIOUSLY-AFFILIATED HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS	49
RELIGION, PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS, AND BUILDING SYNERGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	57
A SUSTAINABLE INTERFAITH FUTURE	65
PARALLEL SESSIONS.....	71
DIGNIFIED WORK	71
RELIGION, BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	74
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN FORMS OF SLAVERY	76
RELIGION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NORMS.....	83
INNOVATION AND WHY RELIGIOUS VOICES MATTER	87
ETHICAL FACETS AND ACTION IMPERATIVES FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRATION – MODERN EXODUS	89
CHILDREN: A COMMON IMPERATIVE FOR G20 ENGAGEMENT.....	97
RELIGIOUS APPROACHES TO CLIMATE CHANGE.....	100
TO END HUNGER: RELIGIOUS TEACHING, RELIGIOUS ACTION	106
THE IMPERATIVES OF BETTER GOVERNANCE - FIGHTING CORRUPTION	111
THE VALUE OF INTERRELIGIOUS WORK IN THE 21 ST CENTURY – FROM POMP TO POLICY	114
FAITH AND FINANCE: RELIGIOUS COMMITMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS	118
HUMAN RIGHTS, FAITH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL PRIORITIES	122
WOMEN AND RELIGION: DIGNITY, EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT	128

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF: CHALLENGES AND POLICIES	132
RELIGIOUS ACTERS ADDRESSING RELIGION AND VIOLENCE	136
IN THE LINE OF FIRE: FUNDING ESSENTIAL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF IN CONFLICT ZONES.....	144
DESPISE NOT MY YOUTH: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP	149
RELIGIOUS LITERACY ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION AND MEDIA INSTITUTIONS	152
ETHICS AND ECONOMY SESSIONS	156
HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ETHICS AND ECONOMICS	156
INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE	158
ECO-ECONOMY	161
STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES AND PARADIGMS OF DEVELOPMENT	162
CONCLUDING REMARKS OF ETHICS AND ECONOMY	170
ANNEX	180
POLICY BRIEFS AND PAPERS	180
RELIGIOUS ACTORS ADDRESSING EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE	180
G-20 - ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS	186
THE IMPERATIVES OF BETTER GOVERNANCE:.....	191
IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES - A FAITH PERSPECTIVE	195
JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE ON FAITH AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES	196
COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS	197
SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON’S PRESENTATIONS ..	198

SUMMARY

“No one left behind” was the central theme of the G20 Interfaith Forum. Special emphasis this year was placed on victims of human trafficking, child exploitation, the education and permanent relocation of displaced peoples, and the affirmation of human dignity. The 2018 theme was “Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development.” Plenary sessions were designed in accordance with four sub-themes: 1) Inequality, religion and the future of work, 2) Religion, environmental change, and a sustainable food future, 3) Urgent priorities for social cohesion, and 4) Religion, good governance and sustainable development. Parallel sessions addressed specific and diverse topics such as decent work, human trafficking, refugees and migration, vulnerable children, climate change, food insecurity, governance and corruption, religion and violence, discriminatory practices, and freedom of religion. Plans were developed to continue the focus on climate change, children and humanitarian issues at the 2019 Forum to be convened in Japan and the 2020 Forum to be convened in Saudi Arabia.

The Argentina government was significantly engaged with the 2018 Summit. Vice President Gabriela Michetti participated in the opening ceremony. Gabriela Agosti, Executive Secretary for the National Council of Social Policy of the Presidency, Sergio Bergman, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development for the Argentina Government, and Alfredo Abriani, the National Undersecretary for Worship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, and Gabriel Castelli, Secretary of Childhood and Family, participated in the dialogue. Some specific recommendations emerged from the dialogue process, but were not formally agreed upon, to offer to the G20 governments such as asking them to take *urgent* action on climate change, to *implement* action on SDG 8.7 pertaining to human trafficking, develop *new* action for the education of displaced children, and *adjust existing action* on bank de-risking procedures. Additional recommendations, detailed in the pages that follow, do not represent an official position of the G20 Interfaith Forum or of any of its participants.

More than 300 experts and leaders participated from fields ranging from economy, law, politics, religion, development to humanitarian aid. Delegates came from 70% of the G20 countries for the fifth consecutive G20 Interfaith Summit. This was the first summit to be convened in Latin America. Regional participation came from Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama, and Peru. Participants from countries such as the Maldives and New

Zealand helped ensure the incorporation of perspectives from countries not represented by the G20. Religious representation came from Bahá'í, Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Baptist and Evangelical Christian traditions, humanism, Jewish, Konko, Muslim, Shinto and Indigenous traditions. Interfaith organizations (e.g., Instituto para el Diálogo Interreligioso, KAICIID, ACWAY, United Religion Initiative – Africa,), intergovernmental agencies (e.g., UNHCR, UNDP), NGOs (e.g., ACT Alliance, Diversity Network of Argentina, Responsible Finance and Investment Foundation, Walk Free Foundation), FBOs (e.g., Caritas, Christian AID, International Shinto Foundation, Islamic Relief USA, World Vision) and human rights agencies (e.g., OSCE/ODIR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief) took part in the three days of dialogue.

The 2018 Interfaith Forum was convened in tandem with the 4th Dialogue of Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economy which is an ongoing dialogue on religiously and ethically informed dimensions of the economy, development, and society. Meetings were opened at the Auditorio Manuel Belgrano, in the historic Palacio San Martín of Argentina's Cancillería, in collaboration with The Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs. Meetings were also held at The Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel and Convention Center. The 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum partnered with meetings of the Argentinian project Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics, The 2018 Interfaith Forum was held in connection with, and just prior to, the thirteenth G20 Summit, which met in Buenos Aires on 30 November – 1 December 2018. The forum uses the 'Davos-style' format with each speaker making a ten minute introduction followed by discussions in the panel and audience participation. Formal speeches and power point presentations are seldom used to foster open debate and lively interaction.

I would like to offer special thanks to those who assisted with summarizing reports on the concurrent sessions in 2018: Darci Collison (Research Assistant, Anthropology and Sociology Department Purdue University Fort Wayne, USA), Sierra Marsh (Research Assistant, Anthropology and Sociology Department Purdue University Fort Wayne, USA), and Kaitlyn Pieper (Research Assistant, Brigham Young University).

Respectfully Submitted,



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Assistant Professor of Sociology, Purdue University Fort Wayne

INAUGURAL SESSION:

Description: The G20 Interfaith Forum Executive Committee partnered with Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics for the 2018 Argentina G20 Interfaith Forum. The inaugural session recognizes this partnership and sets the tone for the three day dialogue. Welcoming remarks were conveyed by Brian J. Adams (G20 Interfaith Forum Executive Committee; Director, Center for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia), Cristina Calvo (Co-Chair, Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics; Director of the International Program for Democracy, Society and New Economies, Argentina), Brendan Scannell (Ambassador, Ireland and Representative for Haruhisa Handa, Patron of G20 Interfaith Forum, International Shinto Foundation), Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar (Secretary General of KAICIID), and Gabriela Michetti (Vice President, Argentina). A welcome letter was read from His Holiness Pope Francis (Pope and Sovereign of the Vatican City State), and video greetings were conveyed from Patriarch Bartholomew (Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch, Eastern Orthodox Church, Turkey) and Elijah Brown (Secretary General, Baptist World Alliance).

Brian J. Adams welcomed guests to the Forum as a representative of the organizing committee. He spoke of the vision of a better world behind the Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity to demonstrate to the world how people, working together from a variety of perspectives, can help achieve the SDGs. The G20 Forum began in Brisbane, then Turkey, China, Germany and now beautiful Argentina. This is the 5th G20 Interfaith Forum and, like any five year old, we have stumbled but the future is unbounded. Our goal is to complete an entire cycle of G20 Interfaith Shadow Forums. What will happen after twenty years? Will we be facing the same problems, magnified by time and a sense of defeat, or will we be celebrating? If the latter, it will be in large part due to contributions from many of you. He then acknowledged many of the sponsors supporting this event. He particularly thanked the Shinto Foundation for their additional support in allowing the Forum to expand this year. He thanked the support of the Office of the Vice President and the Office of Foreign Affairs for their support.

Cristina Calvo also welcomed people and thanked foreign delegations with apologies for the way the strike affected travel plans. She described the history of the Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics/Ethics and Economy work. The ecumenical networks share ideas and work together on relief, promotion, and being close to those in poverty. There is a new challenge ahead of them with the requirement of churches to participate in international fora. Many times they have called on churches, ministers and priests to give blessings and the reasons for inequality was not thoroughly discussed. So they set up a think tank task force of experts who could train and raise awareness among religious leadership but also to make proposals for practice and policy for how to respond to this by faith. On Sept 15 ten years ago, the Lehman Marcus collapse and the explosion of greediness in the system impacted the economy. Corruption and structures in the economy have been taken seriously. Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics has convened three

seminars with respect and dialogue to get to know one another to discuss these topics. Pope Francis is very supportive of this process. She said that they want to have synergy where they can propose solutions into the future regarding structural inequalities. She said that they got to know about the G20 Interfaith Forum when some of the people involved participated in their Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics Council. Now, together, this meeting is convened. She talked about the groups needing to hear one another. We need your contribution but fundamentally, let's bet on hope. Argentina and the world is facing difficult times, therefore, we should double our efforts. When things go well, we trust one another, but in critical times, the other is our evil other. We must be able to rebuild relationships based on the foundation to find dialogue and consensus, and co-exist in our disagreement. The prevailing message besides enrichment and the quest for solutions must be that fear must not steal hope away.

Brendan Scannell conveyed warm greetings from Japan. He expressed gratitude to the government for their hospitality and the presence of the Vice President. The International Shinto Foundation is a proud sponsor of this event. The values of the foundation inspires action that synergizes with the Forum activities to which we all aspire. This Forum provides a space for candid and creative discussion on an agenda that initially centered on economic matters. The Forum offers a constant focus on inclusion, equity and sustainability across the global nations. This focus ensures that the vulnerable are not left aside in the discussions. He spoke about refugees and slaves and those who are hungry and displaced from their homes and how they are too often forgotten in meetings like the G20. This Interfaith Forum ensures that the vulnerable are not forgotten. The effort here does not expect unanimity, but respect for diversity is a pillar of this Forum. Bold ideas and serious efforts to press for practical action is key. Dissemination of these ideas widely is a third pillar. Japan, as the next host, is committed to advancing the agendas defined here in Argentina. Issues such as the welfare of children is likely to have a special focus. He said that the Japanese hosts look forward to hearing about recommendations for specific actions to create a vision of a more peaceful and equitable world.

Faisal bin Abdulrahman Muaamar also welcomed people and spoke about the importance of the initiative. The objective, he said, is to ensure that religious leaders' priorities and concerns are reflected in the G20 Summits. He gave some history of KAICIID. He spoke about the common belief that religious leaders have a key role to play in addressing today's global challenges. He spoke about how Argentina as host is an appropriate value match for this Forum with their hospitality background in welcoming immigrants and their celebration of diversity. He

then provided some background history to KAICIID. Almost two decades ago, three religious leaders representing Islam, Christianity and Jewish traditions organized to promote inter religious dialogue. Since then, interreligious dialogue has become a state priority. Two years ago, Buenos Aires was declared the city of interreligious dialogue. Argentina has developed international conferences on interreligious dialogue. Their initiatives have been noticed regionally and internationally. Claudio Epelman had the privilege of organizing a meeting in Buenos Aires on interreligious dialogue. Representatives from KAICIID saw this work first hand. This principle is what is behind KAICCID's work around the world. Why are inter religious bridges necessary around the world? First, religious communities are already at the forefront of many of the challenges facing us today whether it be global warming, human rights or refugee integration. Religious communities are voices of moral guidance reminding us of our shared heritage and obligation to the human race. He acknowledged a few colleagues on behalf of their work for the vulnerable and humanitarian response leadership. Second, religious leaders are powerful in their own right, so reaching them is important for the work they do. This makes them viable partners for government institutions. Third, religion is a powerful factor for good as well as violence. Ignoring its existence denies the many millions of people for whom religion is an important part of their life. Religion is often a factor in violent conflict. KAICIID's platforms in Nigeria, the Arab region, Myanmar are areas where KAICIID works for reconciliation. They work with religious communities to build a positive space for religious leaders to work together. On the global level, KAICIID is also committed to include the voice of religious leaders into the transnational organizations. We want to work with you, he said, to ensure that interfaith issues are part of the G20 discussion. We have shared goals to continue working side by side together.

Gabriela Michetti spoke about how Argentina has always been a multicultural and multi-religious country. Buenos Aires is sometimes chaotic and always fascinating. Argentina is a social universe in itself. Argentinians from all of Latin America and Africa have brought their desires and dreams for growth to achieve prosperity. If you visit and walk through the city, you will see faces of diversity and the architecture of different religious influences. Argentinians have many things to resolve. But the preamble of our constitution says our country would respect differences and be open to all. So, she thanked the efforts to bring together religious differences to discuss the best way to develop public policies that reflect the guiding principles of different traditions. It is important that the divine element that is part of each person be respected and that it inform policies. Our work is not just numbers and programs. We must not allow us to forget that those who are impacted are people who do more than struggle to survive. Policies should

provide tools for people to develop decently and fully, and to embrace the nobility of public service. She spoke about the importance of putting religious beliefs put into action, and how there is no mundane part of life that cannot be affected by religion or belief. She then quoted His Holiness Pope Francis' *Laudato si'* where he spoke about searching for sustainable development and the need for dialogue to bring it about. This Forum will discuss the future of work which cannot be separated from the future of education. The classical approach to development is no longer working. A new approach to education is needed that involves teams of educators and a new type of education is needed. She looks forward to receiving those recommendations that will come from this dialogue and hopes it will have an impact sooner rather than later, nationally and worldwide.

His Holiness Pope Francis sent the following letter to the participants in the G20 Interfaith Forum dated 26.09.2018 that was read:



I greet with affection the organizers and participants in the G20 Interfaith Forum, taking place this year in Buenos Aires. These interfaith conferences, within the framework of the G20 Summit meetings, aspire to offer the international community the contribution of their different religious and philosophical traditions and experiences, to illuminate those social issues that concern us today in a special way.

In these days of exchange and reflection, it is intended to explore more deeply the role of religions and their specific contribution in consensus-building, for a just and sustainable development that ensures a decent future for all. Certainly, the challenges that the world has to face at this time are many, and very complex. We are currently facing difficult situations that not only affect many of our neglected and forgotten brothers, but also threaten the future of all humanity. And men of faith cannot remain indifferent to these threats.

Thinking about religions, I believe that beyond differences and different points of view, a first fundamental contribution to the world today is to be able to show the fruitfulness of constructive dialogue to find together the best solutions to the problems that affect us all. A dialogue that does not mean renouncing one's identity (see Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 251), but being willing to go out to meet the other, to understand their reasons, to be able to construct respectful human relations, with the clear and firm conviction that listening to one who thinks differently is above all an opportunity for mutual enrichment and growth in fraternity. It is not possible to build a common home, casting aside people who think differently, or what they consider important and which belongs to their deepest identity. It is necessary to build a fraternity that is not a "laboratory", because "The future lies in the respectful coexistence of diversity, not in homologation to a single theoretically neutral way of thought" (*Address to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue*, 28 November 2013).

Faced with a world in which a technocratic development paradigm is affirmed and consolidated, with its logic of domination and control of reality in favour of economic and profit interests, I think that religions have a great role to play, especially due to that new outlook on the human being, which comes from faith in God, creator of man and the universe. Any attempt to seek authentic economic, social or technological development must take into account the dignity of the human being; the importance of looking at each person in the eyes and not as a number or a cold statistic. We are driven by the conviction that “man is the source, the centre, and the purpose of all economic and social life” (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 63). Let us therefore offer a new way of looking at men and reality, no longer with a manipulative and dominant intention, but with respect for their own nature and their vocation in the whole creation, because “called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect” (Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’*, 89).

Dear friends, I wish to renew once again, and before this very distinguished assembly, my call to protect our common home through concern for the whole human family. An urgent invitation to a new dialogue on how we are building our society, in the search for sustainable development in the conviction that things can change.

Please allow me to conclude by recalling once again that we are all necessary in this task, and that we can collaborate together as God’s instruments to protect and care for creation, each one contributing their culture and their experience, their talents and their faith.

And, please, I ask you to pray for me.

Patriarch Bartholomew sent greetings from Istanbul, Turkey. Since its start in Australia in 2014, the G20 Interfaith Forums have convened in Turkey, China, Germany, and now in Argentina in accordance with the theme of religious contributions for a dignified future. We particularly welcome this Forum with the goal of implementing the SDGs which is the shared responsibility of every nation on behalf of the entire planet. Religious communities are obliged to remind their respective governments of this mandate. For the last 30 years, the Eastern Orthodox Church has pioneered several initiatives to respect God’s creation. Our most recent symposium last June in Athens was about sustainability. We highlighted the spiritual roots of the ecological crisis while emphasizing that the transformation of human beings requires the collaboration of all social sectors. Our wholehearted prayer and wish is that the forum generate fruitful conversations and beneficial conclusions on behalf of the sustainability of the planet.

Elijah Brown welcomed the Forum on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance. They represent more than 45 million Baptists from 238 member bodies in 124 countries and territories. They offered their blessings and prayers since a dignified future is under threat from all sides. He said that we need to hold our respective leaders to the highest level of accountability. We need a spirit

of creative collaboration as we address the most pressing issues of our day. Character matters. It requires a new vision of human flourishing. In my tradition, he said, we emphasize that all people are created in the image of a loving God who desires flourishing and freedom for those whom God loves. The urgency could not be any greater today. There are as many refugees today as at any other point since WWII. More people suffer from hunger and persecution, and experience significant challenges for living out the dictates of their conscience than at any other point in human history. Food scarcity, refugee flows, the challenges associated with living out our consciences...the challenges are too complex for anything less than courage and love. So may God bless you and keep you. From all of us at the Baptist World Alliance, we join you in pursuing a dignified future.

PLENARY SESSIONS

RELIGIONS AND EMERGING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Description: The fundamental premise of the G20 Interfaith Forum Initiative is that the G20 process can be strengthened by providing a platform for religious voices to identify key policy initiatives for that process. This was the first of a two-part series where leading figures from major religious traditions around the world made constructive recommendations based on their experience and the capacity of religious communities. Chaired by Pastor Sonia Skupch (President, Ecumenical Commission of Christian Churches in Argentina), speakers included Rowan Williams (Chair, Christian Aid and Former Archbishop of Canterbury, UK), Cardinal Pedro Barreto (Latin American Episcopal Council, Peru), Kiran Bali (Global Chair, United Religions Initiative, India), Claudio Epelman (Executive Director, Latin American Jewish Congress, World Jewish Congress, Argentina), Abdullah Al Lheedan (Cultural Exchange Program, Saudi Arabia), Elder D. Todd Christofferson (Quorum of Twelve Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, USA), Metropolitan Emmanuel of France (Ecumenical Patriarchate, France), Rev. Gloria Ulloa (President, Latin America and Caribbean World Council of Churches, Colombia) and Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson (General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Canada).

Presentations Overview:

Sonia Skupch said that linkage to others, and the environment in which they live, is a core topic for all religions. The diversity of founding stories on origins and the relationship among things is important. Different traditions have different nuances about the link between how humans should live with nature. But reality is far from the vision and ideals we wish represent. We live in a ruptured and violent world not capable of solving power relations that risks not being a good place for future generations. Their own visions of religions are that they be promoters of peace and justice. They contribute by working to build a fairer and more peaceful society as an essential part in creating a world that longs for this. A Forum that provides for respectful dialogue is important, so that we can hear the free voices of religions to share their ideas of ethics to promote fair and sustainable development. She introduced nine speakers representing leadership from the major traditions of the world, and highlighted points made by each one. She referred to the concept of *Metanoia* to help with building community in relation to difficult issues such as gender and sexuality and the urgency of climate change. She also emphasized the need for structural changes that address systems, not just individual beliefs.

Rowan Williams expressed gratitude that the G20 governments are open to discussion with world religions and that religions are reflecting more intensely about how the current model of

development needs to change as we move toward our common future. He identified five areas where this dialogue needs to proceed. According to statistics, the overwhelming majority of the human race continues to draw wisdom and hope from diverse religious traditions. Firstly, any model of socioeconomic features that ignores this deep rootedness will be a future that only deals with a part of our humanity. Religious traditions have a unique reach across the world. They are found everywhere and at every level of society. If we wish to see people motivated to positive changes toward justice, then we need to connect development to religion. Secondly, all religious traditions claim they are more than talking shops. A religious tradition is not just a seminar with clever ideas about the future. Our religious communities seek to embody a way of living together with humans in the presence of God's holiness and mystery. That embodied reality of religious tradition is what is of significance here. But the feedback is two-way. Not only can the religious perspective bring something transformative to development, but also the challenges of development challenge religious communities themselves: The applied focus of development organizations for us to reflect upon the degree to which we are, in fact, embodying the way in which we stand before God. Thirdly, religious traditions do not operate on a time scale dictated by social fashion or political elections. They believe that what is due to human beings and what constitutes justice is not something that can be altered by the whim of this or that government. Religious traditions reflect upon human nature and continues to demand from us a serious response. All religious traditions begin from the assumption that humans are both precious and limited. All religious traditions believe it is important that we are going to die. The fact that we are going to die is not something which should cause us panic. We live as limited beings and our life is lived with limited resources. Our challenge is to share that resource with justice. The current public trend, however, is not a movement toward greater justice or equity, but toward greater fear and inequality as people who fear dying, pile up resources in greed and violence. To know we shall die and need not panic about this, and that our task as humans is to make sense of living in a limited world is something we all share. Fourthly, all of our human religious perspectives tell us that human dignity itself is never negotiable. There are no superfluous or unimportant human beings. There is no community in the human family that we are entitled to forget about. We are responsible for all human beings. At a time when our politics are more polarized, and the defense of national boundaries is what leaders prioritize, our religious traditions tell us that we are not permitted to forget about any portion of the human race. We are not permitted to think that this community can exist at the expense of others. Finally, religious traditions provide us with a position that can challenge and critique models of economic growth

which assume that the facts of human life are violent. These are lies about humanity. The problems are such that we need nothing less than the truth to confront them. All of us stand on the ground of different perceptions of truth. We will argue about that, and it is important that we do. But the truth is that we are answerable to the source of our being for how we live. We are always authorized to challenge forms of power that are exclusive and oppressive. So, for these five reasons, it is important that we continue to demand intelligent and consistent dialogue for the sake of maintaining the honor of our humanity. So much undermines the dignity of humanity whether it is poverty, displacement of humans, or slavery. In the face of all of this, we have both hope and questions to share. Hope for humanity- that we be more than so often it seems we can be. And questions - questions for all those systems that obscure the beauty of the human face, and therefore obscure the beauty of the God we love and serve.

Kiran Bali said that the onus is on people of religion to address the challenges facing the global community. First, she addressed technology. She spoke about how religion has benefited from technological developments and advances for education and sharing. But lives are also run by technologies. Kiran spoke about how social media is impacting everyday life, throwing people into distractions that fuel pride, complicate pastoral situations, and promote false information. She talked about how youth have shorter attention spans than in the past. She talked about the allure of celebrity and platforms where religious leaders are more interested in impressing their audience than serving them. She said that we are losing the next generation of the faithful, and losing thousands of years of storytelling because we are losing our youth. How will we convince parents to limit the time children spend on social media, and inspire people to move from the smart phone pilgrimage to real life pilgrimage? Even more importantly, how do we move from inspiring our youth to our youth leading the way? Her second topic was the focus on immediate gratification. Today's hurried and fast-paced life has contributed to a selfish culture that values immediate gratification. We get bored quickly and want to put our mind elsewhere. We declare ourselves unbelievers because we don't have the time to think it through. Religious belief is not a transaction that allows us to achieve our selfish desires. Our task is to lead people with wonder in a creative manner to service in service to the divine. She talked about the importance of valuing compassion and humility to overcome challenges and learn from each other. Third, she emphasized the Golden Rule as the spiritual foundation of a global ethic to promote the SDGs, economic justice and dignified work. She talked about the URI cooperation circles, and how they are made up of people from different backgrounds coming together for the common good. Through relationships, "otherness" dissolves and is replaced by love for the other. We need to

also work with the media so that these positive stories are told. Finally, she spoke about how the topics of gender and sexuality are creating fragmentation within religious organizations and communities in ways that raise major pastoral issues. We need to reflect on whether we have the authority to enforce rules on these matters, and how to prevent the isolation of people. We need to work harder on gender equity and we need to do more to empower our women. Each one of us here are leaders in our own right. Participating in conferences involves lots of listening, but what is most important are our actions that occur as a result of listening. She encouraged every person present to think of one or two points you hear from speakers and transform those ideas into action. In closing, she said that we must be careful to not interpret ‘theism’ as ‘meism.’ Rather, ‘meism’ should become ‘weism.’

Claudio Epelman focused on how the way interfaith dialogue is done today differs from how it was done in the past. Today, we sit in spirit of brotherhood and celebrate the difference of being together – comfortable with the singularity of our own identity, but this was not always so. In the past, religion expressed strife amongst us. The change in tone has greatly increased our ability to engage in dialogue. In the past, there were tragic relations between religions, followed by a period of silence. Each religion built its own community. The turning point in interfaith relations came with the Vatican II, which launched a new era. The Second Vatican Council was an invitation for religions to talk to each other and relate in a different way. This happened only 52 years ago. Many of us are witness to this anniversary. This idea of dialogue that arose, and that we benefit from today, is an invitation to establish relationships not only on the common values we have, but also an invitation to continue being different and relate including those things that we do not have in common. This invitation changed the relationship among religious communities. But every action also has a reaction. The second phenomena is the radicalization of those who reject this feeling of building a better world through linkages among us. The increase in fundamentalism leads to horrible crimes done in the name of God. We need to neutralize our own who are against interfaith dialogue. It is one of the great challenges we face as leaders that the construction of interfaith dialogue leads to prejudices that are our own. We need to help others to overcome their prejudices as part of building a better world. Our tradition teaches us that God created a world, and put humans here to complete and improve the creation that we might leave a better world to our children than the one we received from our parents. This is not a divine decision, but it is a decision made by religious leaders. He described an example drawing upon the Declaration of Córdoba which designated the area as a place of interfaith co-existence. Religious leaders there are working with KAICIID to make what is occurring in

Córdoba, Argentina more widely known. Secondly, he commented on His Holiness Pope Francis as a leader of all people of faith and good will, even for those who believe differently. We all live together in a common house. He ended with an allegory of a diverse group of people who bought seats on a boat and went sailing together. One person decided he owned his part of the boat, and made a hole in the boat. The consequences were drastic for everyone. In today's world, some things are ours, and some things are not. Some things belong to the group. We can think of the world as a home for all. We have a shared responsibility to look after it.

Abdullah Al Lheedan thanked the government of Argentina for hosting the Forum. He found the G20 meeting to be well organized. He said usually people don't think religion is important. Now, the attention of politicians has been captivated, thank God. He comes from the Middle East, Saudi Arabia – the birthplace of Islam. Listening to the other participants, he was not surprised to hear them emphasize the importance of common traditions. Rowan Williams talked about how a man is answerable on the day of reckoning; we are also responsible for nature. This resonates with his tradition. Our sister talked about technological development and her points, too, resonate with his tradition. The impact of technological developments makes our work all the more challenging. Technological advancements do not stop hate speech and misinformation about other religions. Since we are on our wish list, I want to ask the political leaders of the G20 to try to, with regard to education, include texts in the curricula in the G20 countries that preach tolerance, coexistence, acceptance, and responsibility towards others. Something else that affects relations between followers of religions is the media that tends to concentrate on negative things while ignoring positive events such as this Forum. With regards to Saudi Arabia, the religious institutions work with government hand-in-hand to achieve the SDGs including movement toward a more equal treatment of women, the inclusion of young people, etc. The rights of women begins with education. We began educating girls in the 1960s, but there was social opposition saying that this would make women abandon the customs of Saudi Arabia. So, they issued a *fatwah* telling people about the right of women to be educated to be a good mother, human being and citizen. In last 5 years, the government has worked on giving new fields of work for women. Women used to only work as teachers, medical doctors, and nurses. Women were recently allowed to drive. Some social forces in Saudi Arabia think this is against the norm and should be rejected, but the religious institutions worked with government to enlighten people about the true religiously moderate attitude toward these issues. With regard to hatred and incitement to violence, we have the Ministry of Islamic Affairs which supervises more than 15,000 mosques in the kingdom working to stop hate speech. Any Imam accused of such a thing

will be required to take classes in a special institute with the idea of accepting the other, and affirming coexistence. Saudi Arabia is working toward these important goals. I am proud to be part of this session.

Metropolitan Emmanuel presented an Orthodox perspective as a representative of Religions for Peace. He made reference to the interfaith G8 shadow summits that preceded the interfaith G20 forums. He expressed gratitude to the organizers and prior speakers for their contributions to this Forum. With regards to religions and emerging global challenges, what strikes me, he said, is the ambivalence of religion. Religion is both part of the problem and the solution. When we talk about emerging trends, we imply that the challenges have just begun; we overlook the way in which problems have been among us all along. He focused on four problems, in particular: 1) fundamentalism, 2) immigration, 3) climate change, and 4) combating human slavery. Firstly, he talked about how religion can become a deadly tool in the hands of extremists. They claim to know God, but they do not know wisdom or live virtuous lives. A crime in the name of religion is a crime *against* religion. Terrorism is a stranger to any religion. Religion does not justify violence, and the use of hate speech is an offense against religion. Secondly, the large displacement of peoples has resulted in an increase in discrimination against religious minorities. The faith of displaced people needs to be respected and they need to be provided with space where they can practice their religion or belief. We should stand together with minorities and help them when needed. We need to take responsibility for decreasing Islamophobia, and other forms of discrimination. With regards to climate change, he talked about a gathering in April of 2016 when religious leaders met on an island and declared jointly that the displacement of millions from rising waters is a crisis of humanity calling for a response of generosity and a practical commitment of resources. He considered this Forum as a positive step forward. Climate change is occurring at a time when world leaders have withdrawn, making our common interfaith commitment even more crucial. The protection of the environment is a spiritual question tied to the principle of conversion. How can the conversion of our inner life change our mindset toward society so that we promote communion rather than consumption? The transformation of our inner self is a starting point of an extended church. This calls for *metanoia*. Climate change will increasingly impact migration flows related to geopolitical conflicts. Finally, he discussed human slavery. Combating human slavery started with signing a declaration in Rome in December of 2014. Most of us don't think human slavery exists, but look around you, and you will see it is there. To take on this challenge, we must also take on the spiritual challenge of inner transformation. Political leaders will not succeed in their mission if

they are isolated. We have the moral duty through dialogue to promote at the national and international level, respect for human dignity. We are one family in the eyes of God.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made the following presentation (Spanish translation is provided in the Annex):

I am grateful for the invitation to speak to this distinguished and dedicated audience. It's an honor to be with you and to learn from you about how we can more effectively help those around us who struggle to escape poverty and have a better life.

And it's a pleasure to be back in Argentina! I lived here for two years as a missionary decades ago. I truly love this country and its wonderful people. A piece of my heart will always be here. I'm also impressed with Argentina's priorities for this conference and beyond. It is indeed vital that education address the realities of work in the future, that each country have an infrastructure that supports sustainable development, and that each nation have long-term food security. As I'll explain, a number of our efforts seek to address these priorities.

As a leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I travel throughout the world, meeting with Church members and many others, sharing the teachings of Jesus Christ. I have seen beautiful places and great wealth. But I have also met numerous people of great potential and goodness living in terrible poverty, struggling to provide the basic necessities of life for their families. It is often heartbreaking. I am reminded in these moments how often Jesus taught that we must care for the poor and needy. We believe that is one of our fundamental moral obligations as a people and a Church. With members in virtually every country in the world, we seek to help wherever and whenever we reasonably can.

As I fulfill my assignment to speak about what The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is doing to help the less fortunate, I want you to know that we don't seek recognition, only to share our experience and build understanding. We all have much to learn from each other, whatever our religious or ethical motivations for serving.

What The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Is Doing to Help the Less Fortunate

We've all heard the adage "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."¹ There's much truth in that. But it is also true that sometimes a person needs a fish to eat right now or he won't survive long enough to learn to fish for himself. The Church's efforts recognize that people have both short- and long-term needs, and that it is vital to distinguish between the two. Ignoring short-term needs can make it impossible for a person to make long-term progress. Someone who lacks sufficient food cannot pursue an education. But treating long-term problems as if they were short-term needs can produce dependency, indolence, and resentment. Therefore, while the Church of Jesus Christ has programs aimed at both types of needs, the ultimate goal is always to foster greater dignity, self-sufficiency, and independence.

Our humanitarian relief efforts supply basic necessities to those in acute need, whether the need is caused by natural disaster, political instability, or other forces. Over the past three decades, the Church and its members have given more than \$2 billion in assistance to people in 195 countries and territories. Our objective is to "relieve suffering, foster self-reliance and provide opportunities for service." The relief and development projects we sponsor "give assistance without regard to race, religious affiliation, or nationality."² And we work alongside other faith-based and secular partners to address gaps in current solutions. Last year alone, we worked with more than 1,800 partners in 139 countries and territories on more than 2,700 humanitarian projects that served millions of people.

All "aid is based on the core principles of personal responsibility, community support, self-reliance, and sustainability." Examples of aid include emergency responses to natural disasters, such as recent earthquakes in Mexico or hurricanes in the Caribbean or Philippines, where we rush hygiene kits, food, water, and volunteers to stricken areas. Consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Clean Water and Sanitation, we have numerous longer-term programs that "provide communities with clean water sources,

¹ Chinese proverb, *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*, ed. Rhoda Thomas Tripp, p. 76, no. 3 (1970).

² Quotes are taken from LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org>

improved sanitation facilities, and proper hygiene training.” Consistent with the UN goal of Good Health and Well-Being, we seek to help new mothers and reduce infant mortality by “providing lifesaving training and equipment for birth attendants to help resuscitate babies at birth, support the care of newborns, and improve maternal survival following birth.” Those trained in these skills then train others. We teach and encourage home food production and storage so people can be prepared for emergencies. For the growing population of refugees and displaced persons around the globe, we provide “immediate relief, long-term aid, and resettlement support.” And we have programs that provide wheelchairs and vision care to those who can’t afford it, immunizations in poverty-stricken nations, and many other community projects. All these efforts are largely staffed by volunteers, who contribute “more than one million workdays of labor . . . each year.”

In contrast with these humanitarian programs, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has programs that provide or facilitate practical education and skills that supply what some might call “human capital”—the knowledge and ability to be more productive and create lasting economic and personal improvements.

One such program is our self-reliance initiative, which started in 2015 and is now operating in 130 countries. The initiative offers four courses: (1) starting and growing a business, (2) finding a better job, (3) managing personal finances, and (4) gaining education to find better employment. Each 12-week course provides individualized instruction to groups of 8 to 10 people, who meet weekly. Each group becomes its own network of friendship, mutual support, and accountability, which provides a powerful source of encouragement to learn, build confidence, and adopt positive behaviors that lead to economic and personal success.

The Church’s self-reliance initiative focuses on the whole person. Participants do a guided self-assessment to evaluate their situation and plan for developing intellectual, physical, emotional, *and* spiritual development. Building faith in God is just as essential to the program’s success as its teachings about integrity, honesty, hard work, budgeting, service, teamwork, and other key life and work skills. Secular knowledge and faith combine to empower group members to achieve their goals.

Now you may wonder if this really works. I’m happy to report that the results have been marvelous! In just three-and-a-half years, over 700,000 participants have taken a course, including thousands from other faiths. In Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay alone, almost 7,000 businesses have been started or improved, over 4,200 individuals have found new or better jobs, about 1,500 participants have completed a personal financial course, and approximately 7,000 others have started an education with a career goal. From data we collected from participants in just these four South American countries, 40 percent reported increasing their income after attending a self-reliance group, 37 percent increased their savings, and 54 percent decreased their consumer debt.

These numbers represent real people—real lives:

- After taking a self-reliance course, Aguida Urbano de Bacas of Peru found the courage, knowledge, and skills to start her own business. She has always been a talented artisan, but she never had the courage to make her art into a business. With the self-reliance course, she began to trust herself and God’s help. “Ever since that simple poster in my window to advertise my business, like they taught us in class,” she says, “I’m completely backed up in orders. This week I need to make all these penguin and sea lion molds and weave another rug.”
- As a result of his participation in a self-reliance course, José Alberto Navas of Costa Rica, although unemployed, gained the confidence to improve his basic English skills with classes offered at Church. That led to a job in one of Costa Rica’s largest companies. Later José started his own construction business with several employees, including his wife, Carla. With her earnings, Carla is now going back to school to earn a college degree.

There are thousands more like Aguida and José.

Another program the Church developed is called the Perpetual Education Fund. The idea is simple: loan money to motivated but underprivileged individuals so they can obtain a formal education, allowing them to pay the loan back gradually as their education leads to greater income and a higher standard of living. Eventual repayment by most participants and generous charitable contributions from Church members ensure that the fund is replenished. Staffed by skilled volunteers and with no overhead, the fund can perpetually aid those seeking to obtain technical education or a university degree leading to better employment. And the results? Since its launch in 2001, the Perpetual Education Fund has issued more than 93,000 loans in over 70 countries, including over 2,500 loans in Argentina alone. One person helped by these loans was Carlos Salinas of Peru. In his early twenties and stuck in a 15-hour-a-day job as a bottling laborer, he despaired that his future could get

better. But with help from the Perpetual Education Fund, he received a student loan that enabled him to get a degree in administration and begin a successful career, which in turn gave him more resources that he has used to serve his community and help others.

A third Church initiative that is building long-term self-reliance is the Brigham Young University–Pathway Worldwide program. Launched a decade ago, this program seeks to make “higher education more accessible, without the need for students to come to a university campus.”³ By “mixing the flexibility of online academic courses, religious education, and the benefits of weekly face-to-face gatherings with other students,” the program “build[s] confidence and help[s] students shore up basic skills to benefit them in further education, at work, at home, and at church.” Tuition is set at a low rate, and students can pursue either an online certificate or a degree from BYU–Idaho, an accredited university established by the Church.

Through both the Perpetual Education Fund and the Pathway program, we seek to provide participants with the education and skills needed to succeed in the economy of the future.

As you will recognize, these educational and personal development programs are consistent with UN Sustainable Development Goals such as Quality Education, Decent Work, and Economic Growth. I would emphasize that the Church’s aim is to help not only individuals but their families. When breadwinners are able to escape poverty and become economically and personally self-reliant, they have more resources to raise their children to be self-sufficient, educated, productive, and good citizens. And people who are self-reliant can better serve in their communities and make valuable contributions to their societies and nations.

“There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified. The poor, released from the bondage and limitations of poverty, are enabled as free men [and women] to rise to their full potential, both temporally and spiritually. The rich, by imparting of their surplus, participate in the eternal principle of giving. Once a person has been made whole or self-reliant, he reaches out to aid others, and the cycle repeats itself.”⁴

In closing, I would like to share my own vision of success in our quest to alleviate poverty and elevate society. It is a vision that has always inspired me. It comes from my faith’s scriptures, which tell of a promised land, a holy city, established by the prophet Enoch thousands of years ago. All who sought to live in peace and walk with God were welcomed there. In time the city became great in the eyes of God, even heavenly, because, as our scriptures state, the people “were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.”⁵ That vision is beautiful and inspiring to me—a society of love, unity, and equality, where people care for one another with such concern for their physical and spiritual needs that in time no one among us is poor. That we may strive together, working side by side in our own ways according to our own faiths and values, to achieve this unity and equality is my hope and prayer for all who work to comfort, aid, and love God’s children.

Thank you.

Pedro Barreto spoke as one of the leading voices of caring for the environment in Peru. He highlighted three things: We have common experiences in faith with a lot more agreements than disagreements. He spoke about the UN Secretary General’s recent emphasis on the urgency associated with climate change. If we don’t do this courageously and in a brave manner, climate change will go over and above us. He responded to three questions that he was asked to address:

- 1) How to seek comprehensive human development as an alternative to what we currently have;
- 2) The main global challenges for religions and
- 3) how religions can contribute to the joint task of facing these global challenges.

In 2007, the 5th Latin American Conference developed a

³Information about the educational programs can be found at <https://byupathway.lds.org>

⁴ Marion G. Romney, “The Celestial Nature of Self-reliance,” *Ensign*, Nov 1982, 93.

⁵ Moses 7:18

document that says we must look for a new alternative to the development model. This assertion of looking for a new model was revisited by Pope Francis in his encyclical to Buenos Aires when he said that this current system excludes people and is killing us. We can't patch it up. We have to have the courage to go to what Paul VI said years ago when he defined development as a passage from less to more human conditions benefiting all people. In this regard, we will not conquer true development if we go against our common home as is happening currently. Therefore, we underline, just as *Laudato si'* states, our concern for bringing together the whole human family in a quest for sustainable development since we know things can change if we are all united. With regards to the second question, the main global challenges is to first differentiate what God wishes for each of us and for the whole of humanity. We must think about mankind. As Pope Francis says, you must think about the children growing up now and future generations. What kind of world do we want for them? This entails loyal dialogue that makes contributions towards solutions. We are all a part of the problem, so we must all be part of the solution, too. It was said over 50 years ago by the Vatican Council, that different timeframes must be distinguished. The main sign is not poverty, but the *cause* of poverty which is climate change, at present. From there, there are a series of consequences for us. But Pope Francis says something important we must bear in mind: the urgency of coming together. If religions do not come together, with what moral authority can we ask the states to change the situation causing deterioration of our quality of life? There are not two separate crisis - environmental and social. There is one single social-ecological matter. The voices of our earth and the voices of the poor need to be brought together. Everything is interrelated and interconnected. All human beings are together as brothers and sisters in the same home. From the religions, we have the responsibility of caring for the habitat that God has given us. In answer to the third question, it is not enough to be aware of the problem of climate change and see what God would like us to do and what benefits us. We must act together and act now – not leave it to tomorrow. Urgency is not stated by a member of a religious institutions; it was asserted by the UN Secretary General. We have two years. So what should we do to enter into a dialogue with all as to our common home? I would especially mention the scholars in this regard which are the girls and boys in households. A six year old said, “Daddy, why do you throw away this paper in the street? Why do you yell at Mom?” There is a comprehensive relationship between all living beings in nature. The church must promote dialogue targeted to the three dimensions: God, others, our brothers and sisters, and nature. Finally, he discussed his appointment by Pope Francis to a committee in 2014 on the Panamazonic Ecclesiastical Network which was set up to promote communion in establishing

closer cooperative bonds to favor those living in the Amazon region. We know that the 7.5 million square kilometers of this region contains 3 million Indigenous inhabitants. The first thing that The Pope did was to visit the Amazon and meet with Indigenous people there. He said that they live in a family environment and they are the custodians. This pastoral structure of the Network is open to other church structures. The group wants to jointly seek a solution to the problems we are facing today.

Gloria Ulloa spoke about how involvement in this type of dialogue is a must for people of faith. Churches cannot become isolated. We must work as a team with religions, governments, institutions, and the agencies that provide financial support for serving humanity. That ministry is what God has called upon us to do. The World Council of Churches recognizes that it is the duty of the communities and religious leaders to make efforts to achieve a better world. The churches' denominations may be manipulated, but there is also the opportunity to build a better world. She talked about being transformative deacons and provided an example from Columbia. A decade ago, the Reformed Churches understood that peace deserved our commitment and action, and we understood that the deacon's ministry is granted upon us by God in building an equitable and sustainable society to improve our future. They came together as churches together with ancestral religions – indigenous groups- who through their religions build their society, to get involved in our country's progress. Some of the lessons learned along the way were that people and communities provide us with what they have for building reconciliation. They urged the government to work in a more equitable manner to favor the Colombian people. They emphasized the inclusion of churches, victims, persons, and former soldiers as part of the country's reconciliation process. She then spoke about their struggle for gender justice within the World Council of Churches. That commitment includes public testimonies, awareness raising, and promotion of gender equality. In 2014, the World Council of Churches established an advisory group on gender and a reference group on human sexuality with representatives from member churches. Both groups drafted procedures and policies to help the World Council in achieving gender related justice in institutions and society at large. The main purpose is for a pilgrimage to include gender related justice. Other topics where it has been difficult to reach consensus within the World Council is sexual and reproductive health, advocating for the disabled, and inclusion of ethnic groups as part of building a dignified future. The World Council has made it clear that we are one single humanity and that love should serve life and peace on earth. After 70 years, we have come to a place where we are not ashamed to say we have learned a lot about how to reconcile work to favour justice and peace. This should be a shared legacy

among Christians. There is still a lot to be done. Our mission has not been completed. Although imperfect, our unity and commitment is promoted by love towards mankind and towards creation as a whole. All of our programs and activities will involve sustainable development as our commitment toward the hope of humanity.

Chris Ferguson, speaking on behalf of over a million people in over a hundred countries, indicated that he wanted to change the tone to emphasize “our common imperatives given the urgent challenges.” We live not just in a time of change, but in the change of an era. We have the obligation as a religious community, knowing we live in a world that is loved by God, to look at the whole. The whole story is that we are in the midst of fundamental civilizational change. The paradigm of modernity is worn out and is destroying us and itself. In my community, around the period when globalization took off in the late 90’s and the turn of the millennium, what became clear is that we were called to be attentive to the realities in which we live from the bottom up. Reformed Theology taught us to reflect upon how we contributed to maintaining a situation of injustice under Apartheid in South Africa. It led us to understand the faith implications of racism, exclusion and injustice. Out of that experience arose a confession where we put justice at the foreground of our understanding of faith. If we are complicit in injustice, we are far from God. If racial justice is a question of faith, how much more right now is the situation of economic globalization and its injustices? We have heard about gender justice and the superiorities that put men over women. We also have superiorities of race as a construct used to create situations of injustice that we defend by our theologies. We need to read the signs of the times and in the naming of the reality, we live, from a faith perspective, in a scandalous world. We live in a world where we are called to see the economic injustices and give them a name. We saw the horrors wrought by neoliberal capitalism and named it as such. The confession of 2004 says that we believe any economy to be a household of life that is accountable to God. It is supposed to serve the well-being of the community within the bounds of sustainability. We are to choose God over mammon, and confessing our faith is an act of obedience. We reject the accumulation of wealth and how it contributes to the destruction of creation. Given the sense of urgency, he talked about how the imperative of unity compels us to act together to confront the reality of massive threats to life, focusing together from all our traditions. We look at the gift of life and we see that these gifts are massively threatened. We know enough from reading the signs of the times to know that these threats to life are not just from greed, but they are maintained by an architecture that is supported by attitudes and spiritualities. We are called to resist spiritualities that maintain injustice in all its form. The cries of humanity and the cries of earth call for us to change the things in our

synagogues, churches and mosques that contribute to this. Those interests can be protected militarily and politically. If we are to rise to the imperative, we will talk about interests and power. It is not just about preaching values. Understand that the few will maintain their holds on power. We need to work politically for the well beings of community. We have heard the emphasis on climate change. Our faith tells us there will be no climate justice without change in the economic model that places power in the hands of very few. If that does not change, the world will continue to be destroyed in its human component and in creation itself. These are related and we cannot put aside a need for the change in the economic model. There will be no change unless we have the course in our religious traditions to speak truth to power. We believe our confessions speak to the poor, downtrodden, and the vulnerable to see God using them to raise up the imperatives for our own hope and health. The new model of economy is inclusive and sustainable. We feel called by God to help bring forth this possibility.

Discussion:

Discussion centered on emphasizing both structural forces and values. Love involves care and patience. Technology was discussed as a social mortgage that involves the economy of attention and caring. What do we pay attention to? What are we distracted from? Building relationships are key so that technology does not get used for purposes of objectification. People discussed how the pervasive disillusionment and disenchantment in society stems from the effects of the inequitable distribution of resources. Inequality also fuels distrust and violence, and violence creates lasting traumas. A positive aspect of this symposium is to go beyond the resentment and indignities that are the legacy of a history of conquest and a capitalism that has not delivered on its promises.

Key Points Made:

- Religions have a role to play in helping people face the urgency of global challenges by making sense of how to live with calm intentionality and dignity rather than panic
- A new economic model that is inclusive and sustainable needs to be adopted
- Technology should affirm community and serve, rather than objectify, humanity
- Despite tensions, challenges and differences, God calls us to commit to inclusion and loving dialogue to bring about a more just and sustainable way of life

Recommended Points of Dialogue with the G20:

- That the G20 countries include information reflecting values of tolerance, co-existence, acceptance, and responsibility toward others in their educational textbooks and materials.

THE FUTURE OF WORK AND THE URGENT CHALLENGES OF INEQUALITY AND THE VULNERABLE

Description: The core agenda for the G20 Interfaith Forum is the central quest for equity and equality, in keeping with the 2030 Global Agenda. This plenary laid out and explored the central themes. A leading priority set by Argentina for the 2018 G20 is to address the challenge presented by new technologies to fulfill Sustainable Development Goal #8: ‘Sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.’ Traditional work is rapidly changing and education systems must adapt to prepare and train people for life and work in the 21st Century. Religious perspectives can make contributions in a variety of ways: the nature of innovation, addressing overt and hidden discrimination, the changing demands of business ethics in a contemporary setting, how to achieve ‘decent work,’ education for ‘people on the move’ (especially refugees), and to ending different forms of modern slavery. This plenary brought together religious perspectives and others committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable are included in considerations about work and society with the emphasis that decent work be a core imperative. Chaired by Jorge Triaca (Argentine Secretary of Labor), the keynote addresses were given by Gustavo Béliz (Inter-American Development Bank, Argentina), Ganoune Diop (General Secretary, International Religious Liberty Association, USA), Kevin Hyland (Former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and former Head of London Metropolitan Police Service’s Human Trafficking Unit, UK), Silvia Mazzarelli (Programs and Network Coordinator for Latin America, Global Network of Religions for Children, Arigatou International, Panama), and Juan Somavía (Former Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Chile).

Presentations Overview:

Jorge Triaca thanked panelists and apologized for having to leave early, but indicated that his team was present to listen to whatever recommendations might be given to them at the end of November. He talked about how the Argentine presidency decided to focus on education, training, skill acquisition and technological change. Many times, educational training systems and skill development do not match the pace of technological changes. People are excluded from the workforce because they cannot access that knowledge. In the last few years, the Argentine government was unable to fill 7000 IT jobs because they had less capability to train programmers. There was an unmet need there. He also spoke about how a portion of the debate on education and training must be targeted to building values regarding life in a community. This is where the Argentine government is interested in hearing the points of view for building a fairer society for all that are shared at the Forum. For the first time in the history of the G20, they formed an employment working group with the Ministers of Education in the different countries that issued a joint declaration. When they discussed values of an inclusive and fairer society that provides opportunities for all, they saw differences between developing and developed countries.

A common thread and element was regarding the exclusion in the countries. In developing countries, it was related to the needs faced by developing countries with regards to knowledge and access to capital. Developing economies faced changes in platforms where participation is given to many, but they don't provide basic social coverage. There is a distortion. So, they talked about sustainability of the social security systems and portability of social security across different countries. Migrants acquire it in one country, only to lose it in another. They discussed making allowances so that migrants can have the possibility of social security at the end of their work life. In that debate, they also referred to the importance of discussing gender equity in the workplace. He said that we need to coordinate how we generate opportunities so that we are more inclusive. This relates to the values we want to highlight. We discussed inclusion of people with disabilities. It has been said that technological change favors inclusion of people with disabilities into the productive market and favors individual undertakings. Understanding that technological changes generate fear and opportunity at the same time, we need to engage in mature and open debate.

Gustavo Béliz discussed interreligious reflections on work. Firstly, actions must be taken to include the poorest of the poor. We need to think about the economic system with macro relationships that bring about structured inequalities. He quoted a French philosopher who said that love is more important than intelligence. When we talk about artificial intelligence, we can't link it to artificial love. We have to link it to an important ethical challenge. Technology is a means not an end. We can build a society with technology, but not a society of technology. This involves making strategic decisions where experts in education, justice, technology and state related areas reflect upon the social pact of technological development upon our common home. We should think of educational reform not from the viewpoint of the hard sciences of STEMs, but from the soft sciences that emphasize sensitivity, compassion, teamwork and emotional intelligence. If we discuss the distribution of technological dividends, we need an ethical governance scheme for the distribution of artificial intelligence; it can threaten opportunities or it can improve our communities. New technologies pose a risk for our common home. There is an ethical aspect that relates technology to social justice that should be reflected upon. This is an enriching dimension from the policy brief sessions on social justice and digital dividend distribution. A challenge that is different to the industrial revolution is to fight against the monopolies – this is not very different from the 4.0 revolution and the environmental revolution. Green jobs also present us with an opportunity to harness the new economy to bring about a social environmental impact; macro policies cannot be left out of this new environmental model.

A change in infrastructure could potentially produce 18 million green jobs, so there is hope. Pessimism is paralyzing, but hope that is nurtured by our human spirit on the deep values that bring us together as human beings is wise. He then quoted a poem from Pope Francis' *The Joy of Love*. Households have chandeliers that provide light. As persons of faith, we must not put that chandelier under the table, but put it up to light up the table. When thinking of the future of work, our common home can ultimately be built on sand or rock. As persons of faith, even with our limitations, we meet at Forums like this to reflect upon how to have a better home.

Ganoune Diop talked about transforming work and jobs to focus on violence against children on the move. Migrant and displaced children are not allowed to become full members of the human family. The problem is extensive involving forced labor and child prostitution that is affecting some 50 million children. The UN Global Compact indicates that this is a human rights crisis, and the time is right to capitalize multi-stake holders to address the human rights violations against children. To work with migrants is to protect and save lives as a priority that supersedes talk about work and job opportunities. In this context, faith organizations who respond to the humanitarian crisis know that we are at our best when we are humane. What it means to be human is inseparably connected to limiting violence against humans which erodes the foundation of our humanness. The whole human family respects the integrity of all human beings – physically, emotionally, mentally and with social integrity. Violence disrupts the integrity of humans and it reaches its worst expression when directed against children. Violence against children in any form is inhumane. It should never occur. Responding to this crisis is the right thing to do - it is justice. One incentive that should inform the way we approach this crisis is to remember that human beings are sacred. It is difficult for humans to accept this. Cathedrals, mosques, churches and synagogues are worshiped more than human beings. That is perhaps what is wrong fundamentally. Human beings are called temples of the Holy Spirit. If they are temples, then they should be respected more than mere places. Sacred places should not be more important than sacred people. The theological foundation of solidarity with migrant children is based on God – the way God modeled the best behavior for the human family is in respect for the dignity of every person. The concrete actions called for are to alleviate the suffering of people on the move, and to change the way we respond to children on the move. We are called to love God with one's heart, mind and soul but to also love our neighbor as ourselves. This includes children. Justice is a model of action, but righteousness is a quality within a person for how we relate to one another and embrace the humanity of other people. Caring for jobs is

important, but caring for the humanity of those who are searching for jobs is who we owe dignified awareness of their being human beings.

Kevin Hyland focused on the eradication of human trafficking. It is a crime where men, women and children are exploited, bought and sold at the behest of others. The suffering from human trafficking causes other things to happen such as terrorism where women are bought and sold by terrorists to raise funds for others. It is a crime where people make a conscious decision to exploit others to sell organs, sell people for forced brides, etc. In the 21st century, the freedom of more than 40 million people has been taken at the behest of power. The international arena has developed mechanisms, so why does this crime exist and continue to multiply? It is a \$150 billion criminal enterprise per year. OECD countries invest very little. Doing nothing is simply not an option. Each of the SDGs emphasize the health of the world and the health of the world is not good and is in need of care. Many are displaced due to natural disasters and oppression making them vulnerable for exploitation. We need multilevel responses to eradicate human trafficking. 16 million of the 40 million are in the private industry providing services in the home. To think we are interacting with people caught up in it is upsetting. Where was the phone compiled? Where were the fish caught? Where did the shine for our cars come from? Was it at the hands of children in forced labor in Asia? We need to begin by accepting responsibility for how we in this generation have allowed this crime to reassert itself. We have to accept the shame that we, the privileged, have allowed this crime to affect every nation. In the drafting of the SDGs, I called for an additional one to eradicate human slavery. I called for Pope Francis' assistance. SDG 8.7 was born. So we have a target now, but we need to turn the tide. We need to move to prevention. If money keeps reaching the criminals, that is the petrol that keeps the inferno raging. To eradicate modern slavery by 2030, if you look at SDG 8.7, the eradication of trafficking in children as a target date of 2025 – that is only some seven years away. Supply chains throughout the world are tainted by human trafficking. Large profits are generated by dehumanizing our fellow human beings. We need to make sure that governments act to eradicate this crime. If we can get them to stop the crime by participating in its procurement and ensuring that the process is ethical, it will make a difference. Some legislation in some countries is looking at this, but the legislations do not yet go far enough (e.g., Great Britain, France, the US). Changing the way business is done requires changing how we procure things. I saw firsthand the results of this exploitation. I met a woman whose family had been exploited by traffickers. She invited me into her home and she thanked me for coming to see her. She also thanked me for the medicines that came to her home to heal her children. She said she would pray for me. She said,

you have now made us better, but your nations are back, taking our children to exploit them to meet the demands of the wealthy at whose hands we suffer. They are taking our children for sexual exploitation. By 2030, I want to go back and see her in that remote part of Nigeria, and give her an update on where the SDGs are. We, the people, have the duty to make the world a better place. I want to say two words to her: job done. But if we don't make this happen, then many people like her will continue to suffer while we prosper. We need to protect women like her in Nigeria.

Silvia Mazzarelli talked about the urgency of placing youth at the center of the discussion.

Technological change is changing the employment structure, but it is also changing the lives of youth. Adolescents are among those most vulnerable. My daughter, she said, can use a mobile better than either my husband or me. UNICEF pointed out that one of three users is under 18 years old. 15-25 is the age group most connected, and youth are accessing it at an increasingly younger age. We need to explore how these changes are both a threat and opportunity. She then focused on risks. Cyberspace violence transfers violence to the virtual world. Cyber harassment, grooming, sexting, sextortion affects their mental health. This causes depression and anxiety among children and youth. They see things that adults don't often understand. They don't know how to explain their experience to their parents. These are serious challenges. We need to respond in a multi-stakeholder manner. Together, we must seek solutions and answers. Last year in Panama, the Fifth forum on children's networks brought 500 religious leaders from 6 regions of the world to work together to prevent violence against children. Strategic partnerships were set up to follow up on the Panama Declaration on Ending Violence against Children.⁶ The true success of each Forum depends upon monitoring commitments made for each one. The inter-religious regional meeting was organized by UNICEF and others as part of preparation for the world forums to be held later. For example, parents were concerned about the excessive time spent by adolescents in front of screens and how it affects human relationships and affects food intake. Loneliness and grooming that entails adult strategies to gain trust of a child for purpose of sexually abusing the children. The main modus operandi is to listen and offer to the child what parents don't have the time to offer: to listen and share with them. The child seeks answers to his or her queries. The hierarchical relationships between parents and children are characterized by unidirectional queries. We need to promote a different way of communicating that is bidirectional so that true sharing and dialogue between parents and children occurs. A Bahá'í

⁶ For more information, see <https://gnrc.net/en/what-we-do/gnrc-forums/fifth-forum>

participant at the meeting recalled that children have physical, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Technological progress should go side-by-side with spiritual development to prevent the risks mentioned here. Faith communities have a role to play in promoting healthy interactions by promoting how to meet with others. Respect for human dignity cannot be substituted by technology. Religion and spiritual communities make unique communities promoting silence in societies with noise, respect and sacredness about human bodies where exploitation exists. Faith communities must not only teach, but also learn and listen to others. This was an important conclusion of the meeting. Faith communities play an important role in protecting children. Let's urgently find responses to protect them from violence, particularly among the most vulnerable including digital violence.

Juan Somavía addressed disconnections between people and institutions, political parties, governments, decision makers, and the elites. The election in the US has implications for democracy and in France, Macron came from nowhere and was elected president. People coming from nowhere get elected. People are tired with what they have. How does this affect churches, spiritual traditions and leaders? We are subject to neoliberal policies without a moral framework. So what should we say about that? People are disconnected.. I want to discuss labor as viewed as just another cost. An essential part of what we have been discussing, is that workers are more than production costs. They are people. Robots are cheaper than humans once the investment is over. Labor is an essential dimension of our identity and of our incorporation into society. Work is a source of dignity because we can test ourselves at work and it provides dignity to the family and is a source of peace in the community. So, what we discuss when working together on values is essential. I place this as a working topic. The 2030 agenda on SDG says it has to integrate social and environmental policies. Economic policies currently dominate over the environment. We will never get sustainable development until we have full integration. The challenge is that nobody knows how to do it. Historically we have lived in different sectors. If you say you have to integrate, no one knows how to do it. Yet it is a unique opportunity because for too long we have lived in spaces where someone knows what has to be done and it is transferred through IMF, etc. The truth is that today we are being frightened with what will happen with robotization. When you see how they calculate that, it is difficult because it is new. There is a lot of speculation. What worries me with this work on the green employment is that we start seeing that 75 million jobs will be lost but 58 million created. It is extremely dangerous that we might say that the only future is robotization. When you read these stories, this is the only message out there. This is a global challenge. If you see the set of labor laws they are all based on ILO

agreements. I think the practice of social dialogue can be useful. How will we move forward towards sustainable development to integrate the social and environmental dimensions? Each country will set their own priorities. There is a commitment but at the same time, the dialogue and spaces for that are different. Finally, I think people are considering this system of church and authorities as part of the establishment. They are not considered effective because we don't see any change. Lastly, churches are a refuge. So when we speak of local interfaith dialogue, it has to tell the people that we will be talking where you are about what is important to you in relation to your quality of life. We provide moral and spiritual support. What will happen in a neighborhood where the pastor, priest and rabbi, and imam and Buddhist monk are all working together? Can you imagine what image that would convey? We can get together and make declarations, but it is so far from the people. How do we get back to the local community? But the global level is also important. The combination of both is very important. This is why hope is so important because we need to combine activism with organization and ideas. Those three things have to work together.

Key Points Made:

- Education and skill development need to match the pace of technological change in the job market in a sensitive and compassionate manner that emphasizes teamwork and emotional intelligence
- Technology can help build a more inclusive society, but a technocratic society can also be dehumanizing
- The G20 is discussing making social security systems sustainable and portable across national borders
- Investment in a green infrastructure could have a positive socio-environmental impact in terms of job creation and environmental health
- Humans are temples of the Holy Spirit, and responding to the humanitarian crisis should be more important than investment in cathedrals, mosques, churches and synagogues

Recommended Points of Dialogue with the G20

- The G20 should adopt an ethical governance scheme for how technology is incorporated into society and for the distribution of artificial intelligence
- The G20 should prioritize addressing the human rights violations of the 50 million migrant and displaced children
- The G20 should prioritize enforcement of the international mechanisms that exist to eradicate human trafficking in fulfillment of SDG 8.7

CARING FOR THE EARTH: CLIMATE CHANGE'S MULTIPLE CHALLENGES AND RELIGIOUS ROLES

Description: This session explored practical ways in which religious voices can bolster flagging political and economic will to address climate change, highlighting bold initiatives like *Laudato si'* and the Rainforest Initiative. Earth's changing climate threatens to dominate all global agendas, including the imperatives of addressing inequality and ending hunger. The earth's 'lungs,' the rainforests, are at risk and the vulnerable suffer first and directly. The challenges facing global leaders and communities are ethical, demanding shifts in conscience and behavior. The capacity to translate ethical teachings into action is one area where religious communities share common approaches and hold vast potential for positive, global impact. Chaired by Rabbi Sergio Bergman, speakers were Cardinal Pedro Barreto (Vice President, Pan-Amazonic Ecclesial Network, Latin American Episcopal Council), Maria Eugenia di Paola (Coordinator of the Environment and Sustainable Development Program, United Nations Development Programme), and Gloria Ulloa (Ecumenical Water Network, President, Latin America and Caribbean World Council of Churches).

Presentations Overview:

Sergio Bergman talked about the challenge of responding to this issue so late when issues are so pressing. Taking climate change as an indicator, the problem is not global warming – it is a symptom that makes the problem apparent: The problem is how we produce things, how we consume, how we design the future and the indicators we use. The changing climate makes it evident that when the environment degrades, humans degrade and those who have the least lose everything. For this reason, government policies should put the ethical challenge at the center rather than engage in a technical discussion. The discussion should be logical rather than an ideological one so that the dialogue occurs regarding one family with one shared home on one planet. We should not wait for the rainfall to come before we build a boat to save us from the tragedy that we caused ourselves from having prioritized individual interests above our common good. He noted that the panel is gender balanced and he introduced the speakers.

Cardinal Pedro Barreto read a prayer from the Ecumenical Worldwide Church Council from September 1st to care for the earth, praising God who sees to our needs, but not our greed. What have we done and what shall we do to protect the creation from the menaces we ourselves created? It is the weakest that suffer. Those who did not bring about the climate change are affected, as all of us are, by these changes in the climate. May God help us to save the creation from the damages that we created ourselves. Ten years ago, there was a divide on this topic, but there is a divide no more. On September 24th, the Secretary General of the UN warned everyone that the world was at a crucial stage regarding climate change. In one way or another this draws

our attention because he said this to the heads of all states. On the other hand, he said that climate change is quicker than the human response to it. This is very serious. This doesn't mean pretending to pay attention without really thinking about our global motherland. These extreme climatic episodes are happening more frequently and with greater intensity which will impact the availability of water and will affect the quality of life for many. His Holiness Pope Francis expressed concern for the whole of humanity, thinking of the good will efforts to move forward to create a quality common home. Climate change is a serious issue with significant social consequences and is one of the key current challenges for humanity. This was said in *Laudato si'* three years ago. Latin American bishops gathered in 2007 in Brazil and created a document where they said that the preservation of nature is often not very important when development occurs. The violence at the heart of human beings that have been wounded by sin is seen on the land, water and air. Any negative effect on nature is a backlash affecting us as human beings. The crisis of the current model – this economy and technocratic system where money comes before the dignity of human beings – is exclusive. We need to find a new alternative model of development. We don't have a spare house or a holiday apartment: This is it where we live and die. We hope that the future generations have a better world than the one we inherited. To foster and strengthen the vision of an integral ecology for the full development of humanity, faiths have spiritual and moral wealth that they need to offer: ethics and clarification of the difference between technique and technology. Technique transforms things and natural resources. When we board a plane, we are amazed that it flies high. That is technology. Enormous progress has been made. But ethics, that is a transformation not of things, but of people and persons. So, a fundamental problem of today's world is the ethical issue of the transformation of the person. The responsible path with greater engagement by religious leaders is for our common house. We must promote dialogue oriented towards caring for nature. An action dialogue – not one of words or theories – but one for here and now. In many places of the world, actions are taking place. Here, we have things like the Panamanian Church Network. We need to be sure that our individualities are pursued for the common good. The consequences of climate change includes disappearing islands; an 80 year old man said to his 35 year old child, 'I want to show you where I was born,' and he showed him the sea. The island was gone. Another consequence of climate change is destructive storms. Hurricane Irma destroyed more than 30,000 acres just in Cuba! Climate change contributes to species extinction and the spread of new diseases affecting people because of ecological imbalances. The amazon is the breathing window of the world with a biomass containing one of the biggest worldwide areas for biodiversity. The waterways and

aquifers are affected by rainforest deforestation. We need to network with each other. The pastoral rationale of Pope Francis has surprised many people. The amazon produces 20% of the world's oxygen in the atmosphere. It is also an area where natural resources are attractive to investors. When Pope Francis called for care of the amazon, he was expressing concern for all humans.

Maria Eugenia Di Paola offered her perspective that has been shaped by her experience serving as coordinator of a UN sustainable development program. She connected their work with *Laudato si'*. The UN worked closely with His Holiness in 2015 when developing the *2030 Agenda*. Now, we have a big challenge to ensure that these commitments materialize into change. These shared commitments should now become concrete. *Laudato si'* was a turning point. These global steps in 2015 converged with the encyclical and the *2030 Agenda*. How should we go about this transition considering the need for a comprehensive vision? The ecumenical core of *Laudato si'* has to do with the indivisibility between humans and nature and that science and technology cannot be the only solutions for our problems. The document emphasizes the need to see the mystery of the multiple relations among things, cities, cultures, and systems. Environmental and human degradation are interrelated. That is why our ecological proposal is also a social proposal. There is a circular nature to things. The changes in digital culture imposes a different pace upon society, so it is also important to work on a comprehensive basis. Dialogue and education are substantial when it comes to adopting concrete measures for sustainability. The process of building on the encyclical is ecumenical and interdisciplinary. On the other hand, the global need in 2012 and 2015 gave rise to the 17 SDGs after a multi-year process of multidisciplinary and ecumenical dialogue. Sustainable cities, responsible consumption, taking action for climate, protecting species, peace, justice and partnerships are all part of the SDGs. Partnerships includes targets, indicators and issues. There is a long list that is pertinent to our job of addressing how we will go about this transition. *The Paris Agreement* established the end of blocked negotiations for climate policy. Up until then, climate negotiations had been blocked. The will of leaders to transform societies enabled us to take the steps forward in Paris. The trend now needs to be toward 1.5 degree change, and each country needs to work for its own contributions. How do we make these contributions when we see the gap in emissions reports? At the recent conference in San Francisco, the country commitments are not enough for the 1.5 degree change goal. What might be the response of religious based organizations? There is a roadmap presented in *Laudato si'*. One point emphasized by The Pope is that emissions reductions must be done in a sustainable way. Multi-faith dialogues are valuable for this in

societies that do not think much about dialogue. This Forum shows that it is possible to build upon diversity in pursuit of the common good. We need to think of inclusive multilateralism as very important taking place among religious organizations to establish a connection between territorial issues and globalism. The big challenge is how to scale them to translate into global decisions without losing the connection. This creates a triple impact. We need to have an integrated approach. It is very important to take into account the positive experiences generating more joint actions so that the influence we want to exercise is networked with other common platforms. The personal, local, collective, and global actions can be interconnected. Is it too ambitious to think of the regeneration of ecosystems? Is it too ambitious to think of carbon neutral societies? We need to think short, middle and long-term. In Genesis, quoted in *Laudato si'*, it says that our bodies are formed from the elements that allows us to breath and restore us.

Gloria Ulloa talked about four initiatives regarding the specific work associated with the World Communion of Churches and the interfaith commitments from organizations such as the UN and the World Council of Churches (WCC). The Ecumenical Water Network from the WCC seeks recognition of water as a right. In their work, they seek to demystify the notion of water as a commodity for sale as a step toward water protection. The initiative is part of the Blue Community's promotion of concrete practices for the right use of water, and promoting among youth and children practices that can reverse the damage we have caused that are associated with water.⁷ Their network organizes teaching practices for creating awareness about water focusing on concrete practices. South America has a wealth of water in this region, and they have understood that the water that reaches their homes comes from sacred locations. It is their commitment to protect these areas. The WCC has a second initiative: the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (involving the UN and religious communities).⁸ The Initiative will be developed in Nigeria, Colombia, Argentina and Peru. This involves water but also land and Indigenous peoples' rights. There are death threats against the people leading the way for protecting this organization. The third initiative from Communion of Reformed Churches is an initiative that works for the protection for human beings in relation to sexuality to promote dialogue in educational centers to provide for the possibility to reflect upon how we might protect one another and not allow attacks against persons who have sexual preferences other than

⁷ For more information, see <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-blue-community-implements-water-changes-in-the-ecumenical-centre>

⁸ For more information, see <http://fore.yale.edu/news/item/religious-leaders-join-interfaith-rainforest-initiative-in-oslo-today/>

heterosexuality. The fourth initiative is called Thursdays in Black.⁹ Ministers wear black clothes on Thursdays and a pin to explain how they want to protect God's creation and women because in many countries violence against women is a very serious problem. In Colombia, there will be a demonstration today for the protection of women. If we do not protect one another, we will not be creating an awareness that humans are nurtured by relationships in harmony with one another and the earth. This initiative involves Israeli and Palestine women and women from South Africa where violence against women has increased to promote protection for the dignity of women.

Discussion: People discussed the challenges of working together under conditions that undermine the legitimacy of their work. People also discussed how to respond to apocalyptic perspectives and the need to take concrete actions with concrete results. People discussed how best to engage with the G20 to influence them to give a voice for those who do not have a voice. For religious leaders to do this, they have to step away from their inspiration and auditor position and become a concerted player without the intermixing of church and state. How do we maintain the necessary separation so religion does not interfere or should we straightforwardly ask for a formal way to engage in dialogue? If *Laudato si'* begins with discussion of shared home, how might all religions work with the Vatican given that they are recognized at the UN as a state? In Japan, there will be a ministerial meeting and a minister for climate change. There will be a robust discussion of climate change in Japan. Rabbi Bergman suggested that the interfaith forum empower the Pope, just on the topic of climate change, to speak to the UN to include faith voices into the G20.

Key Points Made:

- Interfaith efforts should make climate change a top priority given the urgency of the situation
- Interfaith collaborations should take the approach of inclusive multilateralism to establish connections between territorial issues and globalism
- Efforts should be integrated, inclusive and holistic regarding protection of the earth and vulnerable peoples

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- The G20 should take into consideration the voices of non-G20 members when making decisions about climate change
- The G20 needs to make climate change decisions at a faster pace in preparation for the meeting in Poland
- The G20 should engage faith groups to integrate ethical concerns into the technical discussions that currently dominate their financial discussions at the G20

⁹ For more information, see <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence?searchterm=thursdays+in+black>

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, RELIGIOUS VITALITY, AND RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE G20 AGENDA

Description: This session explored the linkages, direct and indirect, between protecting freedom of religion or belief and achieving other global objectives, including strengthening of human rights protections. Argentina's priorities for this year's G20 summit recognized that the majority of objectives cannot be achieved without heavy lifting from religious communities around the world. Macro goals cannot succeed without micro-implementation, and it is religious communities that are often best placed to facilitate advances in the reduction of poverty, hunger, provision of health care and education, promotion of decent work and equal treatment, and other SDG goals. Religious communities cultivate the altruism, moral conscience, and practical organizational modalities that can be critical to achieving key global objectives. Yet without firm protections for freedom of religion or belief, much of the potential of religious communities will go unrealized. Religious leaders and institutions can be restricted in their ability to make a wide range of social contributions, from peacebuilding to providing health care and education to pioneering the achievement of countless other social goods. Chaired by Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini (T20 Co-Chair; President, Argentine Council for International Relations) speakers were Elder D. Todd Christofferson (Quorum of Twelve Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Lorena Rios (Coordinator for Religious Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Colombia), Elena Lopez Ruf, Coordinator for "Religion and Development," Centro Ecuménico de Asesoría y Servicio), Rabbi David Saperstein (Former United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom), and Ahmed Shaheed (United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief).

Presentations Overview:

Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini introduced the speakers. He spoke about how the G20 agenda has been expanded in the last years to incorporate social and political factors. Feedback was solicited from many engagement groups, but the issues discussed from these perspectives are not enough. The SDGs cannot be achieved without the support from groups like this Forum. Attention must also be paid to the religious and cultural dimensions of civilization with particular attention to building consensus around the SDGs, and Argentina's G20 priorities in relation to them. We all agree that religious communities are a key actor to achieve global objectives. Most of the SDGs are built on a foundation of human dignity that undergirds other values that are promoted in religious and secular societies. As religions are a fundamental factor of cohesion in contemporary societies, many development goals won't work unless diverse religious traditions are taken into consideration. Furthermore, they are essential if we want to build a world where people from different origins, beliefs and religions coexist peacefully in a plural identity. He asked presenters to end their presentations with specific recommendations to the G20 in support of closing gaps between religious freedom and the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue to put forth these issues at the presidential summit. Difference and tension is a natural part of the atmosphere of interfaith dialogue among diverse groups. Discussion to

legalize abortion, for example, divided the country into two so much so that the House of Representatives rejected the bill. But the solution is not always quantitative. Qualitative factors are also influential on how majority and minority groups interact. What we have to guarantee and protect is the rights of minorities so that we can have freedom of conscience. This is a valid attitude. One is worth the whole of humanity. We have to focus on that. It is a sign of the times and I believe it is an idea that is gaining ground. In a century that was oppressive against believers, where believers find a place, there is now reverse discrimination. It should not be one thing more than the other. In dictatorships, we lose the sense of pluralistic and democratic life. Common ground is growing when we protect creation but also the impact of *Laudato si'* and the Paris agreement. We have more common ground than we believe. The way in which we can be together in interreligious dialogue is through discussion and talking. Not arguing about theology, but coming together around religious freedom.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made the following presentation:

As I mentioned in the first plenary session, I feel truly privileged to be here. I've been enlightened, and often amazed, by what I've heard. Just knowing about the great good so many of you are doing inspires me and gives me hope that by working together toward common goals we can make a real difference in the lives of millions of people.

And it must indeed be *together* that we work and yet also in our own distinctive ways. That is sometimes a challenge because we often come from very different religious and philosophical perspectives. From what I've learned here, however, I am more convinced than ever that a pluralistic framework that welcomes many different approaches is the best way to serve those in need. And I of course include religious approaches in that pluralistic framework. Religious organizations and faith communities have a vital role to play in alleviating poverty and helping people live healthier, happier, and more productive lives. For that and many other reasons, religious freedom remains essential to our efforts.

I'd like to speak for a few minutes on religious freedom and how critical it is for preserving and encouraging all the good religion does. In so doing, I don't mean for a moment to detract from the enormous good that nonreligious persons and institutions provide to society. I mean only to emphasize that religion—and therefore religious freedom—remain essential to achieving our shared objectives.

Religious Freedom Protects the Good Religion Does

It may seem odd to us here, but it is becoming increasingly common for people to think that religion and religious freedom are some kind of burden on society. That is simply not true. Religion is fundamental to societal well-being, and freedom of religion benefits not only believers but all of society, whether they know it or not. Therefore, all have an interest in protecting this freedom, whether they are believers or not.

I'd like to touch on just two of the great benefits of religious freedom and offer some supporting statistics from studies that have been done around the world.

First, religious freedom protects other fundamental rights. The freedom to express beliefs about God, which took centuries of struggle to establish, also supports the right to express opinions about morality, society, politics, literature, art, science, or virtually any other subject. The hard-won religious rights to peacefully assemble for worship or to print religious literature also support the rights to assemble for political, social, cultural and familial reasons or to print books or newspapers addressing a host of subjects.

Requiring government to treat people equally despite their different religions has strengthened the imperative of treating people equally despite differences in race, color, national origin, sex, and so forth. There are many other examples.

The English historian Lord Acton observed that “religious liberty is the generating principle of civil [liberty].”¹⁰ Protecting and respecting religious freedom serves as a training ground for protecting and respecting other human rights and freedoms. It teaches us that government has limits—that there are aspects of life that are so sensitive and personal that the coercive jurisdiction of the state must yield to the jurisdiction of the sacred and individual conscience. Religious freedom teaches us to see the inherent dignity of each person. It teaches us first to tolerate, then to respect, and then to love our neighbor.

I fear that if our societies fail to vigorously protect and respect religious freedom, then we will lose not only religious freedom but many other freedoms too.

The *second* benefit I want to highlight is that religious freedom allows religion to perform the vital functions of promoting civic virtue, providing for the less fortunate, and nurturing strong families and communities. There is rich scholarship addressing the social benefits of religion freely exercised. Here are just a few of the benefits scholars have identified:

- Countries with strong religious freedom tend to be more stable and prosperous. A recent study found that *religious freedom is one of three factors significantly associated with global economic growth*.¹¹ It is associated with many positive social and economic effects, “ranging from better health care to higher incomes for women.”¹² By contrast, lack of religious freedom leads to increased violence,¹³ political corruption,¹⁴ strife, and national unrest.¹⁵
- Apart from a miniscule number of people who use religion to justify violence, the free exercise of religion also promotes a better society. Religious conscience encourages the virtues and habits of good citizenship that are necessary for a free society—honesty, duty, moral self-discipline, sacrifice for family and country, compassion and service toward others, and civic engagement. Religion inspires individuals to develop praiseworthy character traits, and such people become more engaged and responsible citizens and more effective contributors to the welfare of their own communities and the nation.
- For example, studies have shown that:

¹⁰ John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton, *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, ed. J. Rufus Fears (1985), 47.

¹¹ See Brian J. Grim, Greg Clark, and Robert Edward Snyder, “Is Religious Freedom Good for Business? A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, vol. 10 (2014), article 4, 1.

¹² Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza, and Luigi Zingales, “People’s Opium? Religion and Economic Attitudes,” *Journal of Monetary Economics* (2003), 227.

¹³ See Roger Finke and Jaime Dean Harris, “Wars and Rumors of Wars: Explaining Religiously Motivated Violence,” in *Religion, Politics, Society, and the State* (2011), 53.

¹⁴ See Seymour Martin Lipset and Gabriel Salman Lenz, “Corruption, Culture, and Markets,” in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (2000), 112.

¹⁵ See Brian J. Grim, Vegard Skirbekk, and Jesus C. Cuaresma, “Deregulation and Demographic Change: A Key to Understanding Whether Religious Plurality Leads to Strife,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, vol. 9 (2013), article 13, 1.

- Religiously involved people are less likely to be violent;¹⁶ when people in a community are more religious there tend to be fewer homicides and suicides.¹⁷
- Greater attendance at religious services seems to lower rates of both minor and major crimes better than government welfare programs;¹⁸
- Religious people are more likely to belong to community organizations, serve as leaders in an organization, and participate in local civic and political life.¹⁹ “Religiosity is, by far, the strongest and most consistent predictor of a wide range of measures of civic involvement.”²⁰
- As this conference underscores, religious people and institutions are tremendous sources of humanitarian aid; religious people volunteer in the community at much higher rates than those without religion. By one estimate, people of faith are 40 percent more likely than nonreligious people to give money to charities and more than twice as likely to volunteer their service to community organizations.²¹ Highly religious people are more likely to volunteer not only for religious causes but also for secular ones.²²
- Religious volunteers provide crucial services for the most vulnerable: food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, schools for the uneducated, and medical care for the sick. More than 90 percent of those who regularly attend worship services donate to charity, and nearly 70 percent of them volunteer for charitable causes.²³
- Numerous international studies have shown that regularly and sincerely practicing religion is “associated with greater marital stability, higher levels of marital satisfaction, and an increased likelihood that an individual will be inclined to marry.”²⁴ Attending religious services is the single most important predictor of marital stability.²⁵
- Children are safer and thrive better in the context of religious homes and regular religious practice. They are less likely to experience or engage in anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem,

¹⁶ See David Lester, “Religiosity and Personal Violence: A Regional Analysis of Suicide and Homicide Rates,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 127 (Dec. 1987), 685, 686.

¹⁷ See David Lester, “Religiosity and Personal Violence,” 685, 686.

¹⁸ See Byron R. Johnson, David B. Larson, Spencer De Li, and Sung Joon Jang, “Escaping from the Crime of Inner Cities: Church Attendance and Religious Salience among Disadvantaged Youth,” *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 2 (June 2000), 377.

¹⁹ See Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace*, 454–55; see also Pippa Norris, “Does Praying Together Mean Staying Together? Religion and Civic Engagement in Europe and the United States,” in Joep de Hart, Paul Dekker, and Loek Halman, eds., *Religion and Civil Society in Europe* (2013), 285 (demonstrating a positive correlation between religious observance and civic engagement in Western Europe).

²⁰ Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 454–55.

²¹ See Arthur C. Brooks, “Compassion, Religion, and Politics,” *The Public Interest*, Fall 2004, 61.

²² See Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapter 13; see also René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking, “Who Gives? A Literature Review of Predictors of Charitable Giving,” *Voluntary Sector Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Nov. 2011), http://pamala.nl/papers/BekkersWiepking_VSR_2011.pdf.

²³ See Arthur C. Brooks, “Religious Faith and Charitable Giving,” *Policy Review*, Oct–Nov. 2003, <http://www.hoover.org/research/religious-faith-and-charitable-giving>; see also Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*.

²⁴ Patrick Fagan, “Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability,” Dec. 18, 2006, <http://www.heritage.org/civil-society/report/why-religion-matters-even-more-the-impact-religious-practice-social-stability>.

²⁵ See David B. Larson, Susan S. Larson, and John Gartner, “Families, Relationships and Health,” *Behavior and Medicine* (1990), 135.

sadness,²⁶ delinquent or illegal behavior,²⁷ pornography,²⁸ drug and alcohol abuse,²⁹ and other addictive behaviors.³⁰ Religious youth have reduced rates of depression³¹ and suicide.³²

I am not for a moment suggesting that religion is the only source of virtue within society or that secular people cannot be highly moral. My point is simply that very often religion does the hard work of inculcating the habits and mores necessary for free and healthy societies to exist.

An experience of a Church colleague of mine illustrates the point I'm making. Recently, he visited a country that for many decades has had almost no religious freedom. In a meeting with one of the country's high-ranking government officials, he was told that the government has realized that on its own it can't build a sense of right and wrong in people or teach them how to live virtuous lives. They need religion.

Society benefits enormously from the good that faith in God can provide.

How Religious Freedom Protects the Good Religion Does

And that brings me to my final point: Without the freedom to practice our faith, including serving those in need in the way our faith directs, the Church and its members—and many other faith communities—could not effectively serve the poor and do the great work they do in society at large. Our faiths are central to what we do and how we do it.

Religious liberty enables each faith-based group to serve in a way that is consistent with its deepest beliefs and motivations. Each religious community has its own unique approach to serving, which reflects its unique doctrines, its unique religious practices, and its unique way of loving and caring for people. Each reaches the poor and needy in different ways. Without religious freedom, religious groups would face the terrible choice of serving in ways that violate their beliefs—which would rob their service of the faith that gives it life and power—or forsaking the divine mandate to care for the poor. Faith and freedom provide the fertile soil wherein the religious purposes of our programs can flourish. Without religious freedom, these programs could not exist, and far fewer people would be helped.

In saying all this, I do not discount the vast and critical contributions of numerous *nonreligious* groups. Poverty and suffering seem almost endless. There is room for as many individualized

²⁶ See Byron R. Johnson, Ralph Brett Tompkins, and Derek Webb, "Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations: A Review of the Literature," Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society (2002), http://www.manhattaninstitute.org/pdf/crucs_objective_hope.pdf.

²⁷ See Johnson, Larson, De Li, and Jang, "Escaping from the Crime of Inner Cities." (Disadvantaged black youths in the inner city who attend religious services regularly are 57 percent less likely to deal drugs and 39 percent less likely to commit crime generally.)

²⁸ See Patrick F. Fagan, "The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family, and Community," <https://www.movieguide.org/news-articles/the-effects-of-pornography-on-individuals-marriage-family-and-community.html>.

²⁹ See Marvin D. Free Jr., "Religiosity, Religious Conservatism, Bonds to School, and Juvenile Delinquency among Three Categories of Drug Users," *Deviant Behavior*, vol. 15 (1994), 151.

³⁰ See William J. Strawbridge, Sarah J. Shema, Richard D. Cohen, and George A. Kaplan, "Religious Attendance Increases Survival by Improving and Maintaining Good Health Behaviors, Mental Health, and Social Relationships," *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2001), 68; see also Johnson, Tompkins, and Webb, "Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations."

³¹ See Lloyd S. Wright, Christopher J. Frost, and Stephen J. Wisecarver, "Church Attendance, Meaningfulness of Religion, and Depressive Symptomatology among Adolescents," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 22, no. 5 (1993), 559.

³² See Johnson, Tompkins, and Webb, "Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations."

approaches to serving as there are groups and people willing to serve—whether religious or secular. No one has a monopoly on service or love. All of us have a critical role to play.

That reality should lead policy makers to embrace a pluralistic approach to poverty and aid programs rather than a one-size-fits-all model. To the greatest extent possible, policy makers should let faith groups be true to their religious mission, let nonreligious NGOs be true to their vision, and then let people choose the religious or secular approaches that best address their needs. Policy makers should resist the urge to force religious groups to conform to secular values.

Some argue that if government money is involved, then secular government values must control. While The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not take government money, it nevertheless strongly supports the religious freedom of all groups, regardless of whether they partner with government or serve entirely on their own. It is short-sighted to simply invoke the existence of government funding to justify suppressing a faith group's religious mission. That will only rob the group of its motivation and power to serve effectively.

For these and many other reasons, freedom to serve according to the tenets of our diverse faiths is simply vital and must be protected. Faith and freedom are the lifeblood of our many efforts to serve.

Conclusion

The two great commandments of Christianity are what motivate members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The first great commandment, Jesus taught, is to love God. The second is to love our neighbor as ourselves.³³ This is why we serve.

We love God as the spiritual Father of all mankind. We believe it is His work and His glory to lift and refine all His children and that we are called to assist in this great effort. We recognize that all blessings—all abundance, everything we have—come from Him. Whatever material things God blesses us with are a sacred stewardship. As the Bible teaches, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”³⁴ We believe that each of us will one day stand before God to give an accounting of what we have done with our time and resources on this earth. Our sincere desire is to follow the pattern of Jesus Christ, who, the scriptures say, “went about doing good.”³⁵ Doing good for others, serving them, sacrificing to care for their needs—these are all ways we demonstrate our love for God and our gratitude for His blessings. As the Book of Mormon explains, “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”³⁶

Love of God leads to love of neighbor. We embrace people of all backgrounds as fellow children of God. We see individuals and families that struggle to recover from war and natural disasters, or to overcome intergenerational poverty, not as strangers but as our friends, as our spiritual brothers and sisters, as family. We want to lift them and help them break the cycle of poverty and dependency, to become self-sufficient and free, and to lead lives of dignity and respect. Our efforts to encourage and build self-reliance in individuals, families, and communities arise from the profound spiritual truth that every person has eternal worth.

In short, our faith in Jesus Christ, who died, was resurrected, and lives today—who teaches us that everyone is worthy of our love and support—this is what inspires and guides all that the Church and its members do. It is the fire that burns within us and the light that guides our path as we love, lift, and help others. I am confident that every religious community here today would say much the same thing.

³³ See Matthew 22:36–40.

³⁴ Luke 12:48.

³⁵ Acts 10:38.

³⁶ Mosiah 2:17.

Even so, we need not agree on all the reasons *why* we serve. Let there be many reasons why we do good! And we need not always agree on *how* it is best to serve. Let there be many different approaches reaching people in all their wondrous diversity! But I trust that we can all agree on respecting freedom—*especially religious freedom*—that we all need to serve according to the dictates of our conscience. Thank you.

Lorena Rios shared the experience in Columbia with respect to the strategic participation of religious freedom and how it has been a determinative factor in developing policies and responding to the SDGs. The *2030 Agenda*³⁷ is a conceptual framework, so public policies have an impact on the developing programs. The strategic participation of the religious sector has been made visible in our country. In 1991, a constitutional change incorporated the right of religious freedom into the constitution. Prior to that, Catholicism was the official religion. Now it has been opened up to include other faiths. The development of religious freedom started in my country where the religious entities were formalized. Registration of the entities that had a religious purpose was required by the government. Four and a half years ago, public policy began to make visible the actual real contribution religious entities make in the community context that was not linked to government practices. When this started, there were 3 elements: recognition, strengthening and visibility of the contribution and transformation of community contexts that have been made by religious institutions in my country. We learned a few lessons about this relationship between organizations and the government to strengthen inter-religious dialogue. Religious pluralism is a key denominator. What made it possible for various groups to leave aside differences to engage in dialogue for the common good? The common good is what enabled them to choose to talk. Paradigms were broken when the state called them to jointly build guidelines and actions to help in the construction of the common good and to connect good practices and strategies for social transformation to support state social programs. Regarding the visibility of good practices and holistic approaches, it was important to see how exercises were made in achievement of the SDGs. There were spaces to make visible the ways in which entities promote the protection of children, women, humanitarian assistance, the environment, and peace building in the communities. This allowed us to engage in practical exercises that were sometimes coordinated and at other times, not well coordinated but following the same mission. This allowed us to understand that it is worthwhile to construct and develop policies where you can execute and connect actions on behalf of communities in a context where it is the state that promotes the values and principles that these organizations consolidate in the various scenarios. Six months ago, various faiths participated in the development of this public policy. Now some

³⁷ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

of the challenges are barriers that emerge from old paradigms. The social contributions transcend doctrines. Another challenge is to understand synergies between governments and programs. What are the good practices and statements where programs to support communities go beyond certain spaces where governments cannot reach? These organizations are helping communities to be recognized. Very often they are substituting for actions that are being taken by the state. Another challenge is achievement of the SDGs. The entities working on social programs should also follow up with attainment of indicators at the local levels. This will allow us to measure real impact of SDGs. But there are also weaknesses. In Argentina, we don't have an accountability culture in these organizations. Finally, understanding the dimension of sustainable development as part of the culture of these organizations. If our own agendas and strategies don't include them, then it is no use to have strategies at the transnational level. These collaborations all make for better communities and a better world.

Elena Lopez Ruf spoke about religious freedom and the SDGs. Brian Grim, she said, has maintained that religious freedom is one of the intrinsic needs for the development of communities and economic growth for sustainable development. Religious vitality is important to the G20 when considered as a dynamic phenomenon rather than as an abstract thing. Religions continue to change throughout history, they permeate culture, are fertile and profound. Pope Francis frequently emphasizes the dynamic nature of religiosity. He invites us to rediscover the happiness and joy of spirituality for individual and collective transformation. The relationship between religion and development should keep in mind this dynamic about religion even as different groups create different interpretations in their traditions. Very often people have a view of religion as having a closed core of beliefs, but religion within traditions is plural and varied, containing substantial differences within them. Religions can contribute to the G20 by developing a proposed action plan together with UNDP for the *2030 Agenda*. The action plan would emphasize respecting human dignity, and sustainable development that does not leave anybody out. Another theme would be the implementation of promises in accordance with an ethical dimension. Ethical components means values, and many of them are embedded in faith and religion fitting a significant place in the global community. This work is significant and plays a key role in religious communities, internationally, locally or regionally. Not only has there been an increase in studies, but there has been a multiplication of partnerships for implementation of the SDGs. How can we establish better links between faith-based works and SDGs? CREAS signed a cooperation agreement regarding how to measure contributions made

by FBOs to the SDGs. This year we have worked in collaboration and cooperation and created two projects. One is about FBO cooperation between Abrahamic, Jewish, Orthodox, Protestant, and Muslim faith traditions that could support the development process and the *2030 Agenda*. The survey was carried out thinking about how FBOs might adopt the *2030 Agenda* and development programs that they themselves have. Another project was conducted by UN scholars working on the methodology of creating indicators for measuring contributions to the SDGs.

Rabbi David Saperstein talked about the connection between religious freedom and the sustainable development agenda. Religious freedom promotes conditions that enhances the abilities of religious institutions to express values to the public, shape attitudes of followers, and influence policies of governments in ways that enhance the goals of the SDGs. Faith-based entities should play a role in governance reform, gender reform, poverty reduction, healthcare, education, etc. religious leaders play important roles touching all these aspects of the development agenda. The role of religious communities played a role in the debt reduction campaign, the AIDS crisis, the influence of the Pope and Orthodox Christian leaders in changing the conversations on the poor and sustainable environmental practices, and the contribution within national debates with the laws of our countries and in international accords regarding mitigation and adaptation in responding to climate change with attention to the vulnerable and those least equipped to adapt. Faith-based groups emphasized that their needs should be addressed. The broader ideas of protecting God's creation, of our responsibility to generations yet to come, the obligation of sharing wealth to the less fortunate, the passion for reconciliation, the passion that we are created in the image of God and endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights, and have the right to develop to his or her potential are all connected to SDGs. When these freedoms are shut down, these voices are stifled and our agenda is weakened. Freedom of religion ensures voices on things that are not shared and allows policies where tensions exist between religious communities on gender rights, population control, etc. All NGOs ought to have the ability to participate in development work on the same neutral terms as non-NGO groups do. Government funding for the social work activities of faith-based groups is appropriate, but the wall prohibiting funding of their religious work should be maintained. There are about 2000 religious sects in the US. With government money comes government rules and regulations. The funding for religious activities ought to come from those religions themselves. There is a need to create an environment where SDGs can flourish. The converse is also true.

Where restrictions exist and non-state actors are able to undercut – as with the growth of terrorism – it is almost impossible for religious groups to do what they need to do. You cannot stabilize democracy without freedom. People need to be able to live their lives in accordance with their religious conscience. Suppression of the religious life of communities done in the name of national security or protecting the ethnic character of a particular country leads to oppressed groups who cannot live freely and openly in society. This creates a fertile field for extremists to say ‘work with us’ with devastating consequences. There are quasi-failed states that are struggling where religious entities provide essential services with often positive and sometimes negative consequences. Weak states can also give religious radical groups space to flourish. The bottom line is that when government acts to restrict religious life, very often barring unregistered groups for example, this is a major challenge. Although religious groups are not immune to corruption or power abuse, in many areas, religious groups are the most trusted groups engaging those communities. Engaging religion is important for SDG work for several reasons. I don’t represent the US government any longer. I represent a segment of the theologically liberal sector in the Jewish community. I am often critical of this administration. In one area, however, they are doing a good job: the area of religious freedom. The State Department concluded its first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom last July.³⁸ This was a milestone on behalf of religious freedom. The close relation with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the connections with Capitol Hill and the focus on minorities has focused on building the Organization of American States’ commitment to religious freedom. Mark Green, the new head of USAID, understands the role of religious issues. The new director of the faith based office of USAID came here to meet with you on these issues. We have a minister in the Global Affairs Office. A lot is happening in this regard. At the UN, a very small staff does extraordinary work. The Secretary General understands this issue. A faith-based advisory council that looks at issues beyond the development area to embrace broader efforts at the UN has been recently established. What that council will look like, and what its agenda will be, remains to be seen, but sustainable development will be part of it, and we need to take advantage of that. How do we take what goes on here and have an impact on the G20? I propose having a task force from this forum to engage with finance ministries, environmental ministries, to have an impact. That requires more than just putting out good ideas on papers that no one in the G20 is going to read. We see the growth in authoritarianism and the crackdown on civil and human rights. If ever the

³⁸ For more information, see <https://religionnews.com/2018/07/27/state-department-religious-freedom-summit-ends-with-commitments-critiques/>

moral voices need to be heard, that time is now. We are the purveyors of a message. We are not the prisoners of a past, but we will be the shapers of a better and more hopeful future. Religious tensions between individuals to live freely and the rights of groups to not be infringed upon are in tension with each other at times. The Mormon “Fairness for All” campaign acknowledges that some of these issues will not be agreed upon such as gay marriage.³⁹ On the other hand, if you are discriminated against because of who you are and what you are – there is a problem there. When one person wants to discriminate against a protected category, there should be limits on the religious claims involved: that answer should be yes, but it should be done in such a way as to impose the least limitations on it.

Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion and Belief, spoke on how religious vitality connects to the priorities of the SDGs. The UN will be holding a forum next autumn to review the implementation of the SDGs.⁴⁰ It is important to look not just at the G20 Summit, but to provide input in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. There are several goals that are common to the political forum and to here: Inequality, education for all, Goal 6 employment, Goal 10, Goal 13, Goal 16, and Goal 17. Faith groups have a contribution to make. My work is focused on defining obstacles for protecting religious freedom around the world as well as advising governments how to better promote it. I am part of the Human Rights Council, but am an independent council with little budget. Freedom of belief is broader – this is a conceptual point about terminology. Freedom of thought, conscience, and belief, in an inclusive and expansive sense, is a universal human right. Each individual takes seriously questions about life and its meaning. They can be theistic, agnostic, or atheistic. There is an intrinsic value in linking freedom of religion and belief for its own sake regardless of what it can do for us. Now to speak of the value of it for the SDGs, I want to make it clear that it is intrinsically valuable. Regarding Goal 6 – education: Faith-based groups are important partners for education for all and leaving no one behind. This cannot be achieved without religion—parents have a right to raise children with the religious convictions they want them to be raised in. Around the world, indoctrination into religion is not uncommon. This can result in discrimination and the exclusion of children from education. We also see the curricula of school being used to foster hatred, exclusion and to promote discrimination. Consider the Bahá’í in Iran. Bahá’í are discriminated against. Anti-Semitic behavior is sometimes taught as part of the formal

³⁹ For more information, see <https://www.lds.org/religious-freedom/understand/religious-freedom-and-fairness-for-all-a-look-at-what-they-mean>

⁴⁰ For more information, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

curriculum. If we are not mindful, we can end up making it worse for everyone, especially the targets for exclusion. Regarding Goal 10 on reducing inequalities, Brian Grim has shown how respecting religion opens up markets from food to financing. He identifies nine pathways toward socioeconomic job creation in the workforce where the aim is to address inequality. Religious leaders are effective in fostering narratives of equality and eliminating child marriages and opening gateways for other human rights. Regarding Goal 16 on countering violence, how do you use religion to counter religious violence? How do we reverse this relationship? One means of doing this involves the peaceful enjoyment of allowing them to be who they are. Find ways to promote freedom, inclusion, and interfaith communication. Incitement to violence, however, is a challenge. Regarding Goal 17 on developing partnerships for goal implementation, key principles that can be followed include transparency, respect, and accountability to help reduce the risks of engaging with religion. In terms of a G20 recommendation, it is important that religious freedom rights not infringe on the freedoms of others. Everyone is equal including men and women.

Key Points Made:

- Religious freedom allows citizens to perform civic virtue – providing for the less fortunate and preserving strong families.
- The freedom to express particular beliefs about God also protects the freedom to speak about morality, society, politics, literature, art and science
- Religious freedom provides a basis for transforming societies
- Religious freedom enables faith-based programs to support communities with programs that beyond certain spaces where governments cannot reach
- Faith-based entities should play a role in governance reform, gender reform, poverty reduction, healthcare, education, etc.
- The role of religious communities played a role in the debt reduction campaign, the AIDS crisis, the influence of the Pope and Orthodox Christian leaders in changing the conversations on the poor and sustainable environmental practices, and the contribution within national debates and in international accords regarding mitigation and adaptation in responding to climate change with attention to the vulnerable and those least equipped to adapt
- All NGOs ought to have the ability to participate in development work on the same neutral terms as non-NGO groups do
- Government funding for the social work activities of faith-based groups is appropriate, but the wall prohibiting funding of their religious work should be maintained.
- Religions are a fundamental factor of social cohesion in contemporary societies, so many development goals won't work unless diverse religious traditions are taken into account
- Suppression of the religious life of communities (e.g., barring unregistered groups) done in the name of national security or protection of the ethnic character of a particular country leads to oppressed groups who cannot live freely and openly in society

- Recent growth in authoritarianism and crackdowns on civil and human rights increase the importance of hearing moral voices
- The G20 Interfaith Summit should consider providing input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in addition to the G20
- SDGs cannot be achieved without faith-based partnerships because, for example, ‘education for all’ cannot be achieved without faith-based groups since parents have a right to raise children with the religious convictions they want them to be raised in
- The challenge of incitement to violence notwithstanding, one way religion can be used to counter religious violence is to advocate for protections that allow for the peaceful enjoyment to be who they are

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That G20 Finance Ministers and Environmental Ministers engage with a task force from the G20 Interfaith Forum to have a greater impact on implementation of the SDGs
- That the G20 governments should support economic policies that respect human dignity, are sustainable and inclusive
- That the G20 governments support religious freedom rights in ways where that freedom cannot infringe on the freedoms of others

ADVANCING THE WORK OF RELIGIOUSLY-AFFILIATED HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Description: This panel explored questions pertinent to the work of faith-inspired organizations that operate in every world region, particularly with reference to peacemaking and human dignity. Speakers highlighted their perspectives on global efforts to respond to the demands of humanitarian crises. Chaired by Fr. Augusto Zampini (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Holy See), speakers were Jonathan Duffy (President, Adventist Development and Relief Association, Deputy Chair of UN Advisory Council), Sharon Eubank (LDS Charities; Presidency, Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Humberto Ortiz Roca (Latin American Council of Bishops; CELAM-Latin American Episcopal Council), Carlos Rauda (Regional Representative, ACT Alliance) and Christina Tobias-Nahi (Director of Public Affairs, Islamic Relief, USA).

Presentations Overview:

Fr. Augusto Zampini talked about the importance of meeting in the different locations as part of communicating to the G20. He made introductions and commented about the enriching diversity represented by the panelists. It is inspiring to know that FBOs are involved with migrants in all regions of the world. He connected this to the opening remarks of His Holiness at the Davos Forum regarding migrants. The challenges FBOs experience on the ground and funding issues regarding sustainability are also political challenges. Most FBOs are no longer dedicated to just their own spirituality, but they are also committed to doing work among the most needy. The emphasis on restoring hope and dignity is an important contribution FBOs bring. Also, the issue of urbanization is important to highlight. Argentina is 70% urbanized making it one of the most urbanized countries in the world. Few cities are developing proper urban planning. How can we strengthen our partnerships? Can we preach by example? Alliances need to be with believers, but also with nonbelievers for transforming communities within the framework of rights.

Humanitarian aid is not just giving things to the poor. The challenge of all humanitarian agencies is linking this aid with long term development - the immediate response with long term development within the framework of the SDGs. This is an international policy issue. This motivation that FBOs have – staying and being there - turns them into an indispensable participant. The reason people are suffering is not that they are lazy. They are the ones who did the least to cause climate change, but because of rising waters, the situation will get worse. Where do we get the resources for aid? Connecting it to climate change is helpful. How are the FBOs complicit in creating the problem?

Jonathan Duffy focused on social discourse beginning with the historical backdrop. The church has played an important part in society, promoting issues of justice and service to the poor.

Churches established hospitals to serve the sick, schools to give children the opportunity to achieve their potential and prisons in order to bring individual reform. In addition, they were significant voices on social reform, abolition of slavery and the rights of women just to name two. With the onset of World War I and the global atrocities of war, churches began to see themselves as incapable of changing society and switched more to the role of lifesaver rowing amongst the drowning mass of humanity saving one life at a time as they dragged a drowning soul into the safety of their boat. With World War II coming so close on the heels of WWI, much of Europe came to believe there must be no God or He would not have allowed this. We saw the rise of secularism. With the rise in secularism, there was a divide between religion and the private world of the supernatural and spiritual beliefs and the real world of things scientific, political and day-to-day living. Perhaps unconsciously, religious groups allowed themselves to be boxed into this religious category. Much of their focus centered on whose doctrines are correct and personal spiritual commitment and conversion. While there is an acknowledgement of their ideological commitment to assisting the poor, this is not seen as their main mission and is often relegated to a secondary factor or a means to introducing people to their central mission. As an FBO humanitarian organization, we are asked to straddle two camps. As an NGO, we need to demonstrate our commitment to best practices, global standards, and transparency and to prove that we do not proselytize. We also live within the world of our faith communities and battle the concept that we are not core to the main mission of the church; we are asked to demonstrate how we contribute to the fulfillment of our faith communities' mission. In order to prove our value as an NGO and be successful in winning grants (in the end it is still a business), we have tended to distance ourselves from the main stream church activities and see the church as an opportunity to rob from the rich to give to the poor. Now we come to the reality of the present and cast an eye toward the future. In the past few years, dialogue around the role of faith in development and humanitarian response has changed. There is a growing awareness that with around 80% of the world's population having some form of religious affiliation, religious communities are a strong part of civil society. Organizations such as the Joint Learning Initiative for Local Faith Communities (JLI) have established a knowledge platform of Interfaith FBO's that, through empirical research, demonstrates the effectiveness of faith communities in being agents of positive change within their societies. So now we see a changing role of FBO's to reconnect with their faith groups to help them understand their responsibility as social actors and resource them to be social agents for change. I see this as the future for FBO's. Now with that background let's look at the challenges facing FBO's in situations of humanitarian crisis. My

agency, ADRA, is present in most conflict areas. We have a strong presence in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, DRC and many other fragile states. In one country, we are only able to respond through using local faith communities to distribute food, but unfortunately the situation is so sensitive I cannot expand upon this potential case study. Working in conflict areas constantly challenges our values. When things go bad we immediately evacuate our expatriate staff, but the local staff (who make up the majority) are left to carry on under difficult circumstances. What is our responsibility to local staff and the imperative of serving those in need? Sometimes my staff brag that we have not been banned from the country like other NGO's, but where does the balance lie between speaking against a regime that is at the root cause, and the need to remain present in order to continue to provide the much needed humanitarian relief? Are we under resourced to meet the needs of those in humanitarian crisis? Yes, but let's understand that there is no free money. Private donors may give out of compassion for the poor with the expectation that every cent goes to the poor or in a few cases with the expectation that your presence creates a presence for the church in that region. Monies from national governments is sometimes politically driven and, rightfully so, has terms and expectations attached. In reality, in some way we are political actors, and are constantly challenged in 'what monies do we accept' and 'what monies can't we afford to take?' As a faith-affiliated humanitarian agency, we work with local faith communities in training them in disaster response so that in the event of a disaster, they can be first responders and be skilled in and understand the role they can play. These trainings often engage local government and faith communities so that there is an understanding of each other's role in the case of a disaster. If I had more time, I would like to share case studies of where religious institutions have provided safe havens in times of conflict, health care to the injured, distributed goods to the displaced and served as first responders, established informal language schools for refugees and supported them in seeking employment. In conclusion, I would like to say that FBO's, like the rest of the world, find themselves in a constantly changing environment. We are being asked to transition from being service deliverers to being agencies of influence and to focus on scalability. In order to achieve these ends, we must learn to engage, motivate and resource our faith communities to be social agents of change for good. Of course, no one FBO can do this alone in isolation. Faith leaders need to engage in interfaith discussions and come together through their common values and desire to agents of hope and healing. If we can accomplish this, then faith actors can be powerful agents in transitioning the SDG's from being aspirational toward being a reality.

Sharon Eubank talked about being with friends having worked with the organizations for over twenty years. She presented a short video that shows the migration flows over the last several years. She then presented photos of the tent level of what happens to people and what makes their lives more bearable. An estimated 65.6 million people have been displaced, but it is hard to get a handle on what that actually means. Many of them come from middle class families, very much like those of us sitting in this room. They are thrust not only into poverty, but spiritual and emotional poverty as well. It is devastating to them at the family level. We work to make policies that work for them at the tent level. They are stressed in ways that they have a hard time articulating in the settings where they now live. An estimated 99% of them will never be resettled, although Argentina tends to resettle them, but that only represents about 1%. Most won't be. Besides sanitation, protection and food, there are things at that tent level that are not being given much attention. They are seen as amenities that are often let go. She identified seven items that faith-based organizations are good at offering: 1) Choice - almost all choice has been taken away from refugees. To have even the smallest choice is helpful. People can choose what they use for their aid and it is innovative. They offered 10,000 winter coats and boots with ADRA in places like Iraq. People can choose the coats they get, and it reduces waste. 2) Family – they conducted oral history interviews to process trauma in collaboration with IsraAID in Sodoku, Japan. 3) Dignity – giving people something to do that helps provide their livelihood by collaborating on projects with Convoy of Hope in Uganda 4) Friendship – they brought people together for a soccer tournament, established refugee and community football leagues with Caritas in Florence, Italy 5) Meaningful Work - to not have anything to do and the feeling of stagnation and rot is so difficult for people in camps. They have a program where Christian parents are building school furniture for their own children with Caritas in Mosul, Iraq. They made the furniture for the schools where their kids attended. Another project involves sustainable family gardening in collaboration with Muslim Aid in Bosnia 6) Culture and Sport - Community Centers with Christian Councils in Sinjar, India 7) Freedom of Faith - which is often an underlying reason why they are displaced- they work with a community in collaboration with Rahma Relief Foundation in Detroit, Michigan, USA. 8) Education – the work in Argentina contributes concrete progress on this topic. They bring classroom supplies into rural schools and sponsor programs for girls to attend. Finally, she make some recommendations for the G20 to consider in relation to SDG 4: Ensuring Inclusive and Lifelong Education. It is not funded at the UN level in the cities of displacement; most of the education that can be found among the displaced persons is funded by FBOs. If we don't want further strife, we must invest in their

education in the cities of displacement. If we don't, they will be marginalized and radicalized, not because they came that way, but because we made them that way. Invest in education for the flowering of human potential so that they reach their potential wherever they are. This is 65 million people that are displaced. If the G20 would invest in education in the cities of displacement, they would be meeting all of the following aspects of SDG 4: 1) ensure literacy and numeracy, 2) ensure educational access, 3) ensure affordable quality primary education, 4) substantially increase the number of youth and adults, 5) build and upgrade education, 6) substantially expand globally the number of scholarships, and 7) substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers. This is a large payoff for a concentrated focus area.

Humberto Ortiz Roca presented the union of two Latin American church organizations: Caritas Latin America and the SILEM – the justice group. We do social pastoral work. We have teams from both organizations that work together. The approach for the work plan is focused on civil and political rights, economic and environmental rights. Seeing the pastoral view, we have the pillar of human rights. The political violence in our countries continues to be an important issue. The humanitarian crisis in relation to migration and transitional justice in Columbia and Peru is significant. They now have 500,000 Venezuelans and by year end, due to migrants from Peru, they expect it to increase to a million. What does the gospel say? 'I came from the outside and you received me.' We also have the work in jails. We recognize the dignity of people. Despite their condition, they are still a child of God. We are concerned about the environment. There are conflicts in relation to the extraction industries. We also have conflict management work and risk management. Our region is greatly affected by earthquakes and hurricanes and environmental issues. In the area of the economy, we are working on human economy with solidarity, and cooperative civil economics. With the local work, we can rethink the economy at a macro level. We also encourage comprehensive healthcare including solidarity from the community side and what we call the political institutional approach. In the area of youth and childhood, we have a continental call of attention to care and practice nonviolence in the home. We have Panamazonic ecclesiastical network. We are working on a pillar we call the social environmental justice and good living pillar – a comprehensive view of development that emphasizes the full life model. As to the internal pillars, we have the issue of political incidents. With this perspective of rights and political advocacy working with the public sector, the social doctrine of the church is growing in importance. We also work with youth to promote social action and increase their representation among the leadership. Accountability, responsible action and institutional life is to be at the service of local parishes at the grassroots level. We also have the issue of identity, as

Pope Francis said. I am personally respectful of NGOs, but the Caritas is the evangelizing work of the church altogether. So we have to work on the joint pastoral approach. Caritas is a warm expression of the church with a political perspective. The way we work is linked to training and in technical areas as well. Professional services advocating for rights and the environmental issues are increasingly important. We need competent professionals who can talk about environmental assessments and standards. We also want to join forces with civil society – believers and non-believers - with whom we can bring about transformative change. We also need to see how we can work as a joint church, but also in alliance with civil society. Some time back, we saw the establishment of the Panamazonic Social Forum that was a social movement. Regarding recommendations, how do we emphasize policies related to transitional justice where there has been a post conflict period? How do we care for migrants? How do we care for the assets of creation? It is important to promote new grassroots initiatives that inspire new economies that affirm the common good and encourage citizen participation. He talked about advocacy for children and the issue of protecting the amazon forest and the aquifers. In conclusion, at Caritas, they emphasize a comprehensive human development framework. Development is for all people, and the approach is moving from less to more human conditions. They work from the grassroots, then move to the parish level, then to the regional and finally the global. Gender equality is an approach that cuts across all of their programs. That is how Caritas has been working with groups who share a similar vision.

Carlos Rauda represented ACT Alliance. He talked about the cooperation occurring at the Forum as what we are all about. He spoke of a vision for humanitarian affairs. Fulfillment of SDGs is not possible if we don't address humanitarian affairs. There are millions of vulnerable people in humanitarian crisis suffering from hunger. What do we mean about leaving no one behind with the SDGs? Here is where we have the ethical challenge as to the real implementation of the SDGs: undertaking responsibility for the humanitarian crisis. The disasters are from historical environmental disasters and political crisis. The ACT Alliance faces this challenge in a twofold manner: Compassion and our love for humans who suffer from nature, to take responsibility for it and try to transform it. We must talk about justice and put ourselves in the place of the most vulnerable. If we do not do so, we are not talking about true justice. In humanitarian affairs, we face drastic situations and have little time to work with scarce resources. As FBOs, we are well positioned to professionally respond to the needs not based on their beliefs. We go where we are needed. We have advantages as FBOs. Faith contributes to ensure that these people face a humanitarian vulnerability status within a framework of certain hope. We are the people who work on the expression of faith where there must be a future behind the suffering. We have a capability to be among the most vulnerable. We are not civil society that goes with an intervention. We support them, we

accompany them, ensuring that they don't feel lonely. We are part of the affected, in community, suffering with them. That allows us to reach out to certain sectors where others do not go. We are local actors who are part of the community. We are not first line actors. We are right there. We were already there. After a crisis, everyone leaves. Look at Haiti, after the disaster, we created another issue with the lack of coordination. Haiti has been abandoned, but FBOs have stayed there. Because we were already there, we are able to respond when things happened. We must understand risk and disaster. Being in the community allows us to do that. We don't work on all 7 sectors (water, food, etc.). That's ok, but we embrace a development perspective because development matters. In terms of recommendations to the G20, he made four suggestions. 1) Localization Commitments - he said that two years ago, we had a 'Grand Bargain' of localization commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. We talked about the great pact with an agenda of localization to enable us to reach out with greater resources to more affected areas. Include on the agenda this element of localization. There cannot be a safe world if there is not enough resources; 2) Global Involvement – we need a revolution in our participation. We can no longer think that the West and North has to support the humanitarian crisis; there needs to be global involvement and the ones affected need to participate in the decisions that affect their own lives; 3) Linking humanitarian work to the SDGs - what can we do to create better synergies and promote actions coordinated and framed within the SDGs focused on Food, water, and climate change? Look at the Caribbean now and the number of hurricanes. That increases vulnerability. Humanitarian work must be linked to the SDG agenda to be effective. Climate change mitigation needs to be part of the humanitarian agenda. We cannot deny that the hurricanes are also part of climate change. Humanitarian response is not enough; and 4) Gender Justice - we need to have a gender justice strategy with recognition of the roles of women, but also building new gender identities to act appropriately so there is recovery for a decent future. Finally, I want to recognize the value we have as FBOs. We need to be aware of the power we have, the capabilities and the faith people have in us. This will improve our humanitarian support.

Christina Tobias-Nahi reviewed the past discussion about SDGs. While faith and humanitarian NGOs can provide tents, food, and education in some cases - although that is becoming increasingly more difficult - we can't be a band aid. It takes all the actors here to restore dignity, but to also provide hope. Islamic Relief USA is an international relief and development organization present in 40 countries, and I am glad to be here in Pope Francis' home because his encyclical was inspiring. Islamic Relief took that mantle and held consultations in 2015 taking into consideration the national disasters that had recently occurred. We considered a declaration that came out that year, and we reflected on climate change.⁴¹ But those impacted the most are the least responsible for its cause. This was the first issue we took up. We recently took up

⁴¹ For more information, see <https://unfccc.int/news/islamic-declaration-on-climate-change>

another global consultation, this time with the topic of gender justice. The Islamic Declaration on Gender Justice⁴² addressed cultural practices and called on our network to affirm gender justice. Why is this important to look at these big issues using theology from an Islamic framework? *The Guardian* recently published an article on “Why Faith is Becoming More and More Popular”⁴³ talking about how the population as a whole is getting more adherents to faith. About 80% of global population subscribes to faith with Islam being the second and fastest growing faith at 24%. We need to frame these issues and mobilize them so that we have advocates. We hear there are conflicts between faiths in the media; what we hear less often is that faith can be a healer. He then provided some concrete examples. We work out of the office of Catholic Relief Services in partnership with World Vision. It is an economic partnership, not a faith partnership. We work closely with HIAS (a Jewish refugee resettlement agency) on refugee issues. In terms of concrete recommendations to the G20, it is important to consider urbanization. How are we preparing for mega cities when 2/3 of our population will be urbanized? Urbanization brings with it increased pollution, traffic, commuting, unsupervised children, lowered quality of life and there is a need to think more about green spaces as we urbanize and for women to be more involved in urban planning. There is also the need/right for education and the dignified right to work, particularly for the displaced. We want the G20 to find political solutions to protracted crisis such as in Syria. We also want them to create more access for FBOs in the financial system to transfer the funds to get into these conflict situations. It is becoming increasingly difficult to do the work on the ground because of financial holds on funds. It is not just about providing basic needs, it is about restoring the dignity of people and providing them with hope. She quoted ‘Let there be among you a community calling to the good, enjoining right, and forbidding wrong. It is they who shall prosper’ (AYAH al-Imran 3:104, The Study Quran). We partner, she said, and call on others to partner. We need all the stakeholders to find the solutions to these global problems. As Islamic Relief matures, they are increasingly engaging in advocacy. They are located near Washington DC and they advocate around the systemic and structural issues that create inequality. Our motto is ‘working together for a better world.’ We have a new program with funding from US AID looking at solar energy and working with local farmers with technology for economic development.

Key Points Made:

⁴² For more information, see <https://www.islamic-relief.org/islamic-declaration-gender-justice>

⁴³ See <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/27/religion-why-is-faith-growing-and-what-happens-next>

- The role of FBO's has changed where faith groups are expected to accept their responsibility as social actors and resource them to be social agents for change
- De-risking banking practices are making this work unnecessarily difficult
- Local empowerment of displaced peoples in cities of displacement is an effective strategy for preventing radicalization

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments put the 'Grand Bargain' localization commitments from the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on the November agenda
- That the G20 governments provide education in the cities of displacement in fulfillment of SDG 4
- That the G20 governments prioritize strategies that affirm gender justice and empowerment among peoples affected by the humanitarian crisis

RELIGION, PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS, AND BUILDING SYNERGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Description: This plenary focused on topics where bold action is called including a focus on religious roles in improving healthcare, education and the protection of children. The plenary helped to mark a pathway forward by identifying challenges and promising possibilities for enhancing potential synergies among public, private and religious initiatives. Better ways of building partnerships were explored to link the public sector with religious institutions and interreligious networks. Efforts were made to identify themes for ongoing study for future G20 Summits to contribute to optimizing ways that religion can have fruitful impacts on global policy agendas. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a scaffold for global action. They also demand a deeply ingrained appreciation for complex linkages among sectors and communities. The Interfaith Forum draws on rich array of networks that seek to engage and link religious communities to these global agendas to bring experts together from religion, civil society, government and academia to develop deeper understanding and recommendations of ways that religion can contribute to global G20 objectives. Chaired by Miguel Ángel Schiavone (Rector, Catholic University of Argentina), speakers were Gabriela Agosto (executive Secretary, National Council of Social Policy of the Presidency), Alvaro Albacete (Deputy Secretary General, KAICIID), Thomas Lawo (Senior Advisor, International Partnership for Religion and Development), Katherine Marshall (Senior Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University), and Silvia Morimoto (Country Director, United Nations Development Programme, Argentina).

Presentations Overview:

Miguel Ángel Schiavone said that the purpose of this panel is about building synergies for partnership to meet the needs of those who have had their rights breached. If the groups at risk are not included in the system, they will remain and increase in vulnerability. The wealth of the group is based on independence, but we can't build networks if we don't take the initial step of recognizing others which means working with others and interacting with others. Without health, development is not possible. Health provides the capacity to create muscles that contract to work.

Synergies are possible. Science breaks things apart to see why they are as they are, but religion brings things together.

Gabriela Agosto is a government official in Argentina that works with the development group of the G20. He reported that the day before, they had achieved consensus regarding adoption of *The 2030 Agenda* in a cross cutting manner across all working groups. He said that they addressed climate change, fair trade, and justice. Russia requested further commitment in the Buenos Aires update. We were able to agree on a document. It is good to have minimum basic agreements instead of just having discussions that take us nowhere. The purpose of my position, he said, is to look at the social policies in a cross cutting manner ensuring it is inclusive. This council was set up after the 2001 crisis to ensure we have a social outlook. We work on social taxes to better focus rates, social services and subsidies to social protection systems, evaluation of social policies, and then following up with the SDGs. Argentina participated at executive, provincial and municipal levels. We believe climate change is here to stay, and it requires ethical and political consensus, so it is very important for us to be here. There are numerous FBO activities in the Argentina region. We adopted the SDGs, targets and indicators. Clearly, the part of *The 2030 Agenda* that talks about putting an end to poverty while leaving no one behind says our policies need to be targeted at the poorest and involve care for the earth. When reading books, we write on the margins the most important ideas of that book. When he goes to the library, what is important is what is written on the margins. We must look on the margins, because that is where we find the most important parts. All who have a responsibility of implementing this agenda, must focus on the margins. Gandhi said that we have many religions to break us apart, and few to bring us together. Those of us who have faith as a value guiding our lives must do away with what divides us. The efforts to build a more fair society is difficult. Argentina's poverty rate has increased recently. SDG discussion places a new responsibility on us. There are increasing debates about decent work, inequality, etc. Latin America is not the poorest continent, but it is the most unequal one. We have had an unequal continent for many years, and we have been unable to overcome it. This connects to the value we apply to the people in the margins. All of you here have important things to say. Negotiations with the G20 are difficult regarding financing, and policies for childhood policies. This is not a UN agenda; this is an agenda of states and governments. We must commit ourselves to *The 2030 Agenda* as nations. We have looked at the urban/rural population, gender, life cycle, and a few other perspectives. There is an institutional aspect of a world development perspective. There needs to be discussion

of inclusion institutions. Let us pray for each other so that from each of our perspectives we leave no one behind.

Alvaro Albacete referred to a UN meeting held five days ago where it was decided to establish an advisory council on religion and development. It reports to an interagency ad hoc group that brings FBO people together with KACIID to address issues related to interfaith affairs. In the afternoon, we had Kofi Annan briefings who highlighted the importance of listening to religious communities and involve them in implementing some of the policies beginning in 2000. This is the first attempt for the UN to give a voice to FBOs. It shows the increased interest in hearing and listening to FBOs in policy making where there is agreement (peace and security, migration, development). This was analyzed by members of academia - Professor Casanova and Professor Marshall. They referred to secular contexts. We used to separate religions from politics, but now at this point in history, we are post-secular. There is a shared interest of common areas where we must work together with our resources, intelligence and means. The advisory committee is good news. They are leaving behind what we were doing and beginning with a post-secular movement. The dialogue between religion and political power is not completely peaceful because on both sides, there is a need to be very cautious. I remember at the meeting at the UN, at one point, somebody that represented an important FBO said, 'But when we come to the UN, we have to be sure that we can maintain our identity, and that collaboration with the UN will not require us to meet certain conditions that require us to lose our identities.' UN agencies said the same. We give as international organizations for the implementation of development policies. FBOs and political representatives had a civilized discussion, but both said there is a difference between what is strictly secular and what is religious. It is good to have that tension, because it obliges us to attend to what is needed to preserve our independence. But the trend is to bring FBOs in to policy making, and there is tension. The UN model is in the process of redefining itself. This working group is informal. It provides advice to the Inter-agency group that is also informal. There is another intergovernmental agency – the African Union – that includes religion in a more formal way. They want a structural thing called the Religious Forum. KACIID works with them. It is formal. The African Union decided they would be a forum that consults regularly with religious leaders around issues involving peace, development, etc. The African Union formalized it, but it is difficult to show diversity and represent minorities because the members of the interfaith forum are appointed by the state. The African Union, the UN and the European Union all have a secular nature that is strongly engrained into policy making. In Spain, we are not comfortable with the presence of the church. In no case will the European Union deal with

managing religious affairs. There is nothing on the side of the European Union regarding interfaith matters. They do sometimes consult with religious leaders. We need to indicate to the G20 what kind of policies we want to communicate that affect our life. The G20 is informal and there is no working group on faith. To what extent would it be good to have one? I think it is better not to have one. The informality of this group and the diversity represented is its wealth. We should preserve the autonomy and independence to maintain influence. Being recognized would limit our effectiveness. We should preserve the autonomy and independence to be much more effective. Yesterday, Rabbi Sergio Bergman recommended that the Holy See take leadership to speak to the G20 governments on climate change, but it should not be expanded to other issues. The independence of this group is the strength of the group.

Thomas Lawo spoke from the perspective of PaRD. He talked about the importance of partnerships and explained how, at PaRD, members of governmental and intergovernmental entities, as well as diverse civil society organizations and FBOs, work together to achieve *The 2030 Agenda*. They draw on existing networks and initiatives to contribute towards a more coherent approach. It was co-sponsored by the World Bank with support from US AID and the UN Interagency Task Force on Faith – it is not a German group. They bring together groups to engage the social capital and capacities of diverse faith communities to implement *The 2030 Agenda*. The emphasis on partnership for the goals is in fulfillment of Goal 17. PaRD members must be committed to the UN Declaration on Human Rights so that all humans' needs are considered equally important. Members are assembled in three work streams: Sustaining peace, gender equality and empowerment, and health. They create platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity building and joint advocacy to form better policies and better projects. The added value of PaRD provides direct access to a growing community of practice in a safe environment, exchange with leading experts, joint learning from success and failures, participation in PaRD events, and access to high level events of partner networks. Their governance structure is simple. Members from constituencies elect steering groups with 3 co-chairs. The Secretariat supports the work of the streams. The work streams focus on indicators, work plans and are co-led by organizational members. Christian, Islamic and others are part of the co-leads (diversity). Founded in 2016, 11 agencies gathered and formalized the cooperation. They had 14 by November of 2016. Today, they have 70 civil society organizations and FBOs and intergovernmental members and 7 observers. The website has resources sorted by country. They are a small team of eight persons. They look forward to forming new partnerships such as with the G20 Interfaith Forum.

Katherine Marshall spoke to aspirations, challenges and the path ahead. She spoke as a veteran trying to bridge the gulf between religions and agencies, but also from someone with a history of helping to plan these meetings. The SDG goals are enormously complex with thousands of indicators. Some of the leaders have tried to summarize it with: 1) People, 2) Planet, 3) Prosperity, 4) Peace, and 5) Partnerships. What they make clear is how interconnected all of these goals are. You cannot talk about peace without talking about education. There are islands, silos or even peninsulas with the differences, languages, disciplines, etc. and there is an enormous challenge of bringing all of this together. We bring the complexity of religion to this. The 80% adherence to religion is emphasized frequently. What is less noted is the enormous diversity so that discussion of a common view is unrealistic. We need to think of lenses of perspectives. Since I began, there has been a change in perspective of religion in foreign affairs. Too often it has been driven by conflict with the perspective that religions have direct responsibility for conflict. Part of our efforts has been to highlight the enormous good religions contribute. There has been enormous progress on the SDGs, but it may be more progress in words than actions. There are ancient divisions and narratives, and there is a lot of ignorance, which is why we speak a lot about religious literacy. Partnership is what we are about here, but partnership also has a lot of tension and baggage around it. What does partnership mean? SDGs involves trillions of dollars. How do these enormous resources play into the institutional networks? I have a list of 35 networks of networks that includes PaRD, URI, RfP, the Earth Charter network, and networks of religious and traditional peacemakers – not all of whom have been part of this conversation. One of the aspirations is to build on this ‘network of networks’ so they know more about each other. The Interfaith Forum is an important effort in that regard. The Interfaith Forum also has enormous challenges. But to me, interfaith and intrafaith is easy compared to bridging the secular divide. The language is different, etc., so where is dialogue with the G20 governments in this process? I pay tribute to Brian Adams at Griffith who had the vision to focus on the G20 as more powerful than the G8/G7, and as having more flexibility and room to maneuver than the UN or World Bank. This group has grown as becoming less academic than it was in the beginning, and more modest, and, as some describe it, as one of the most important interfaith activities occurring. We are focusing very much on process. We cannot aspire to have an impact on the G20 governments, or on peace or the planet, without having a disciplined process. We have looked to the T20 which has a very elaborate set of processes and policy briefs to show the kind of work necessary to aspire to have an impact. In some areas, we have come a long way. A few briefs exist such as on countering violent extremism, corruption,

food insecurity, and addressing issues related to refugee and work, but we need to continue that process in order to have credibility in making recommendations. We need to have these religious voices as a moral compass or as defining a moral perimeter. Not every issue in the SDGs have ethical issues, but the technocratic language can obscure the moral issues involved as well as the human face. This group wants to bring the values and ethics to the G20 governments with the focus on vulnerable groups. The Japanese chair of the G20 is fast approaching. We know healthcare will be very central. Focus on children, peace and vulnerable groups will also be vitally emphasized. Religious contributions to education also need to be very central. The Saudi approach is also fast approaching thereafter. As we look ahead, those are some of the issues that need to be continued as well as continuing to move ahead.

Silvia Morimoto asked “What will it take to create a sustainable future?” Diversity and new ideas is the only way to create sustainable development for the world. The common concern for the care of the poor and the wounded earth holds these projects together. The Pope’s document with the ecological perspective is also a social perspective that must integrate justice on the environmental debates so as to hear the earth screaming just as much as the poor are screaming. What I like most about the SDGs is that it was a bottom up approach. We heard voices of youth and civil society to define and achieve the SDGS. This was very different from the MDGS which was a top down approach. Governments decided what was to be prioritized. A bottom up approach is the most beautiful, but it is also much more difficult to achieve than the MDGS. SDG agenda principles cover not just the developing but also the developed countries – the entire world. It is universal and multidimensional. A diverse approach must be taken, policy integration means balancing all three sustainable development dimensions: social, economic growth, and environmental protection. The principles of ‘no one left behind’ advocates that countries to go beyond averages. The vulnerable and excluded must be prioritized. The SDGs should benefit all, eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities. These principles of SDGs resonates with the discussions I have heard over the past two days. How do we accelerate SDG implementation? We need to inspire cross-sectoral collaboration by breaking down silos. We must identify bottlenecks. Many countries have stopped implementing the SDGs because of bottlenecks. We must adapt, innovate, and accelerate solutions across countries and platforms, using risk-informed strategies to find new ways of financing development taking an integrated approach that mobilizes and maximizes the impact of public and private flows. Blended finance involves sustainable social financing models. The World Bank document says there is 46 trillion dollars of assets around the world not being used because many companies don’t have the

strategies that permit them to access these funds. Finally, people – every individual plays a role. This involves a mind-set change. We emphasizing government so much that we forget that this is the responsibility of all of us. For example, this pen. It costs \$4 to buy from a company that doesn't treat its people well or care about the environment, or this \$6 pen that cares about the environment and treats people well. Who will pay for which pen? If we don't change our consumer habits, we won't achieve the SDGs. The faith community can communicate this to their members. This is an *Agenda* for us all. *The 2030 Agenda* calls for friendship, respect, and a mutual fondness in relations between countries. To implement *The 2030 Agenda* in the framework of a sustainable development alliance, we need to center our spirits in sincere worldwide solidarity with special attention to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. A universal commitment to our common home.

Kirsten Evans shared two initiatives from US AID that are currently being launched. They answer so many of the concerns and questions and desires and hopes that have been discussed over the past three days. She expressed gratitude at hearing similar concerns that are being shared between US AID and the G20 Interfaith Forum. The first is the Journey to Self-reliance.⁴⁴ This looks to more deeply integrate the way they approach country partners. Every human being, country wants the self-dignity of providing for itself and being self-reliant. The self-dignity nations seek comes with the ability to be self-reliant and self-determining for our own futures. This is what we want to achieve in the communities we serve. This is broadly aligned with *The 2030 Agenda*. The focus on self-reliance is intended to help partners plan, finance and implement their own solutions with their own resources. This aligns with the fundamental principle of country ownership which is at the heart of *The 2030 Agenda*. The Journey to Self-reliance is dependent upon how each country has approached *The 2030 Agenda*. Both efforts appreciate the importance of evidence to guide action. A self-reliance metric is used to reflect how countries achieve self-reliance. They have created a country road map⁴⁵ as the primary analytical tool using 17 third party metrics to determine how self-reliant each country is. Every country they partner with has a road map for all low and middle income countries. The approach is driven by commitment and capacity where commitment refers to how well laws and culture supports self-reliance, and capacity measures how far it has come including the ability to work across these sectors. As a country's commitment and capacity is strengthened, the

⁴⁴ For more information, see <https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance>

⁴⁵ See <https://selfreliance.usaid.gov/>

partnership should evolve to enable and continue to renew that growth. The metrics helps us understand where each country is on its journey to tailor the partnership to fit where each country is on that journey. Metrics include civil liberties, gender gap, open and accountable governance, the effectiveness of governance, citizen capacity, and economic capacity. Country roadmaps are created as each country is assessed. The roadmaps will be made publicly available. The roadmaps are used in partnership with each country to plot the overall journey where the country would like to go together. The self-reliance metric informs strategic decisions in a holistic capacity of the country. They are there for assisting a continual development dialogue. Where are the moments along the journey where pause and re-evaluation are appropriate? The goal is to be able to provide better service that always has in sight the end game which is the dignity for them to be able to arrive at self-reliance and self-determination within their own national space. Each US AID program looks to the day when foreign assistance is no longer necessary. Each country should assist in providing solutions to its own future. Self-reliance is not turning away from development. US AID knows that we all rely on the interconnectedness of the global community. The approach is to help them foster stable self-reliant countries and respect the donors and make better use of funds. This will be useful in their advisory role to the UN. The second project is a study and broad reformatting and design of procurement mechanisms. We have found that throughout the years, US AID operates with the same big partners including the same faith based partners such as Islamic Relief, World Vision, etc. What we continually hear with feedback is that for large national and multinational agencies, we are often too big and bureaucratic for smaller groups to feel like they can work with them. They are looking for ways to restructure the procurement process so that smaller groups that operate on the ground have easier access to funding from US AID in order to make them more accessible to the kind of initiatives talked about all week here. Part of that model is stopping earlier in the process and asking the communities on the ground doing the work what their vision is, thoughts are and what they think the solution is to solving the problem. This facilitates partners on the ground to being co-creators in designing and implementing programs that take their experience into consideration and brings them in as partners for responding to problems.

Key Points Made:

- The UN has just established an informal advisory council on religion and development
- SDGs are more complex than the MDGs because they are bottom up, involve all countries, and emphasize environmental conditions along with vulnerable populations
- Partnerships are necessary for SDG implementation

- US Aid is creating a self-reliance analytic tool for working with countries where they partner for develop, as well as making itself more accessible to smaller NGOs/FBOs
- The G20 Interfaith Forum is still in the process of maturing

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments reflect on how technocratic language can obscure the human face and the moral issues involved in their policy making process
- That the G20 governments focus on attending to the needs of vulnerable groups.

A SUSTAINABLE INTERFAITH FUTURE

Description: This session drew together recommendations coming from the broad variety of sessions at the Forum, emphasizing concrete policy initiatives developed in a number of sessions, but also noting recommendations for areas needing further study in preparation for subsequent G20 Interfaith Forums. In particular, this session consolidated recommendations from both plenary and concurrent sessions organized under the auspices of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association and sessions organized this year by the Forums Argentinean partner institution this year – Ética y Economía. This session not only provided reflections on this year's Forum as a whole, but also helped to identify key recommendations for future G20 Interfaith Initiatives. Co-Chaired by W. Cole Durham, Jr (Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, USA) and Humberto Shikiya (Board of Directors, CREAS-ACT ALIANZA, Argentina), reflections, recommendations and commitments were discussed by Augusto Zampini (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Holy See), René Mauricio Valdes (Argentina Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme), and Juan G. Navarro Floria (Professor of Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica, Argentina). Ambassador Mussie Hailu (Global Envoy of United Religions Initiative, Continental Director for United Religions Initiative-Africa and URI Representative to the United Nations in Nairobi, Ethiopia) made a special presentation.

Presentations Overview:

W. Cole Durham, Jr expressed extensive thanks to participants, panelists, local hosts, particularly Juan Navarro Floria and Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics, and supporting organizers including Brian Adams and the team at Griffith, James Christie, Elizabeta, Peter Marshall, BYU Center staff, and the communication team. He thanked donors, particularly the International Shinto Foundation and chairman who made a large contribution which expanded the program, and KAICIID and Islamic Relief in the US. Few people were lost due to the strike. Cole provided a review of the past three days. Cole was impressed with the depth of study that Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics undertook by consulting with so many experts. Sometimes Argentina is shy about its role in the G20, he said, but it shouldn't be. A country that is focused on these issues can make a tremendous impact. You are to be congratulated on the work you are doing.

Mussie Hailu made a presentation that was supposed to be at the opening ceremony.

Distinguished participants, on behalf of members of URI, greetings and blessings. URI is an international grassroots organization with status at ECOSOC. It is also affiliated with the department of public information at the UN. The purpose of URI is to end religiously motivated violence and create a culture of people. They have more than 900 cooperation circles in over 100 countries. They work for peaceful coexistence by bridging religious and cultural differences to work together for the good of the community. They promote a culture of peace, intra- and inter-religious cooperation, and cooperation among stakeholders for peace. The shrinking global village is evolving into a multi religious and multicultural society. Promoting the Golden Rule is the pathway to building cooperation, to address hate speech, marginalization and open the world for better understanding. URI is promoting teaching of the Golden Rule throughout the world no matter where we live, and what culture we cultivate. At the heart of things, we are all humans seeking to live life to its fullest dignity without leaving anyone behind. Our difference should not be reason to promote hate and division. Each and everyone needs to practice and exert all efforts for peace. It is only possible when we start with ourselves and our community. It is my honor to announce that URI Africa will present its prestigious Africa Peace Award to the G20 Interfaith Forum in acknowledgement of its work for the last several years of bringing people together from around the world. Our work is also in recognition of the Forum's tireless effort in organizing over the past 5 years to strengthen human development as understood in the broadest sense. The G20 Interfaith Forum facilitates constructive dialogue between faith, government, media, education and other institutions to see how policies and programs can benefit the well-being of all. The Forum provides a place to share best practices and affirm common values. URI Africa established the award to recognize those who bring values such as this to strengthen peaceful coexistence. The Peace Award honors those who exhibit extraordinary leadership to promote values in declaration of human rights. Past recipients of the award are Bishop Taban from South Sudan, NRC Rwanda, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, UNESCO, UNDEP, African First Ladies Association against HIV/AIDS, and KAICIID Center. Let us be an instrument of peace and live according to the principles of the Golden Rule. May peace prevail in our hearts, family, community, and on earth.

Humberto Shikiya talked about the two branches of the G20 - the financial track and the Sherpa track. Only one of the G20 branches is linked to finance. CREAS-ACT ALIANZA has a regional center, but they also have the international program on democratic societies and new economies headed by Cristina Calvo under the National University of Buenos Aires. That means

that religious organizations are linked to the academic world. Another organization is an ethics related platform of a world library devoted to producing information on ethics that is regularly updated for the social pastoral movement here in Argentina. At the regional level, the Latin American Episcopal Council emphasizes justice. At a more global level, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the WCC promotes the development of a new financial economic architecture with other denominations. There is also the alliance with Christian AID for human development. This is the movement along with other universities and organizations that are also a part of these networks. Within the framework of the G20 Interfaith Forum, we have had the 4th high level dialogue of Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics. An economy that is separate from ethics that tends to move toward greater inequality and environmental damage is problematic. There is an urgency to solve the humanitarian problem but also to be able to face climate change and its negative effects that also brings about inequalities. Christina Calvo said this at the opening session. Ten years after the Lehman Brothers' crisis, progress in terms of the possibilities of solving the world's problems has not been successful enough. This has to do with our discussions here. Since then, many voices from disciplines and economic sectors warn about the compelling need to recreate a financial architecture at a human scale to rebuild an ethical dimension of economic practices to change the challenges brought about by the fourth industrial revolution – robotization, technological development, sustainable development, etc. He highlighted a few actions/proposals from the dialogue that began in Nov 2016. The proposals include diagnosis and proposals coming from deep analysis with three stakeholders: the National Council for Social Policy Coordination, the Secretariat for Worship, and UNDP. Parts of the proposal have to do with caring for our common home, being committed to social systems that take care of human life in all its expressions, an economy that does not exclude so we can recreate life, creation of a regulatory framework to reflect common global assets, and the recreation of an international financial architecture that creates global finance. He said that the financial system must be used as instruments to serve the system, and not own the system, of global governance. We need to create new indicators (progress was made here in partnership with UNDP), and develop financing for sustainable development. He noted that religions have 7 trillion dollars out of which 10 billion are challenged toward an invisible financial architecture – community banks, development project, sustainable agriculture, urban activities. All of this religious architecture is invisible. This invisible architecture must be coordinated to promote investments that impact sustainable development. Last November, twelve religions met with UN experts, development banks, etc. to achieve agreement on targeting investments to ensure a

sustainable impact. Our commitment is to figure out how to create that network starting with Argentina, and then taking it to all of Latin America. We seek to promote religious support of FBO investment, inclusive finance, and new indicators that will be recognized not only by the UN system and state, but also by national banks and development banks as players in a new financial architecture where ethics and inclusive finances are part of that architecture that we started to design. Innovation and change will also address development of a technological social contract to regulate automation in accordance with financial inclusion. We commit to getting these proposals to our leaders and commissioners.

Augusto Zampini talked about how, despite tension and disagreement, much can be gained by dialogue between religions and the G20. He then highlighted the points that were made by the dialogue at *Ética y Economía/Ethics and Economics*. It has been meeting for some time with Cristina Calvo's support. Rowan Williams talked about the irrational denial by economists. We must provide our view that is based on our faith, how conceive human beings, and what we see in our communities every day. There is an increase in social inequality and environmental deterioration. This faith view is supported by the best science. We appear to be talking about prayers and beliefs, but we see what is happening. At meetings like the G20, whilst we talk about inclusive growth, the poor and excluded and their difficulties and hopes are ignored. *Laudato si'* talks about how this is due, in part, to many of us participating in conferences and making decisions that are far from the reality of the poor. We don't come into direct contact with their problems. We live and act comfortably in an environment and quality of life that makes us ignore part of reality from which we are disconnected from. Without meaning to do so, we make decisions that do not benefit the excluded. Therefore, FBOs want to echo these voices that are not normally heard in international organizations, so that those who make decisions come closer to the true reality of most of the people in their communities. A GDP measure for development does not reflect what development is all about. We need a more holistic measure of development. All panelists agreed upon this, and many economists who were not clergy helped us rediscover the nature of economics. It is not just social. It is also about managing our common home. Economy cannot be uncoupled from ecology. The life of our common home is necessary to the home of human family. We need a comprehensive view so that the biological is connected to the social aspects. This allows a more holistic view to manage common assets and common home so that it is sustainable. In order to have this more holistic view, we must also include those voices that are very much excluded. We talked a lot about the inclusion of women and future generations. At today's panels, it was also addressed. Without youth and half of humanity in key

decision posts, we cannot build a future. We have to challenge ourselves in all of this. We also discussed each of our roles, particularly as it pertains to education and values, in implementing the SDGs. Most business courses worldwide are also linked to religions. We can help the role of national banks and development banks. Something mentioned by all panels, is that it is the role of FBOs to collaborate with nations in the implementation of the *2030 Agenda*. We have the possibility of collaborating with nations to implement the agenda with a triple impact. Everyone mentioned fair transition to invest in an economy that is no longer based on fossil fuels. This cannot be done overnight, and it needs to be a fair transition. The longer we take, the more expensive it will be, and the harder it will be upon the poor. Transition starts now. Lastly, we can contribute. We can't change the G20, but we can contribute. The theme emphasizes "Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development." We think Argentina can carry the voice of those who are most excluded. We are not the strongest country in the G20. But Argentina can be the voice for those that are most excluded, whether in the G20, or out of it. We can go for the economy of the future emphasizing employment inclusion and environment inclusion, but not as done before which increased the social inequality gap and ecological debt.

Alfredo Abriani talked about proposals that were offered to the community as contributions from different faiths to protect our common home. Religions have a great role to play with the common challenges. Any attempt to affect socio-technological development must take into account human dignity; people should not be seen as a figure in cold statistics. The G20 Interfaith Forum provides a necessary platform to favor sustainable development. The substantial exchanges show we reached consensus to innovate new models to provide on the planet we all share. But religions have their own challenges to face. We are experiencing deep changes. Urgency changes joint partnerships. We all are part of the problem, and we all need to be part of the solution. Huge gains affect future generations through exacerbated consumption and the throwaway culture. We need new lifestyles and the consolidated power structures that are necessary in the quest for sustainable development. This year, Argentina took on the responsibility for hosting the G20. At the end of the year, we will welcome the leaders of the G20 economies that account for 90% of the world's GDP. We can leave a legacy and imprint of who we are, and the world we wish for. We have taken the responsibility in a slogan of "Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development." Leaving no one behind is a key objective adopted by the *2030 Agenda* that recognizes eradicating inequality and poverty as one of the greatest challenges essential to sustainable development. Through the participation of representatives from different faith traditions, we have been able to notice a huge mobilization in

service to the common good. Joint efforts are key for facing the current challenges. These meetings have been enriching, not only to promote a holistic model, but for having humans at the center come together with care for the environment. We are urging a rational approach for common care, and that we must take action in this regard. Fruitful meetings are possible. Nothing would be possible without dialogue, and listening to one another. The interest shown by participants has shown that it is possible to agree on specific actions to meet the challenges we face nowadays. Each has been called upon to leave a better world for future generations. As the Argentine Vice President said in her opening words, I hope to receive your recommendations. I hope to send them to the Vice President.

Key Points Made:

- The humanitarian crisis and climate change are both urgent challenges
- An economy that is separated from ethics and the environment is problematic
- New macro-economic indicators must be adopted that provide the feedback we need to reduce the inequality gap and reinforce sustainability
- Sustainable lifestyles must be adopted
- The voices of the vulnerable, women, and future generations should be included in dialogue
- Socio-technological development should take into account human dignity
- Regulatory frameworks need to reflect common global assets
- The international financial architecture needs revision so that it serves the common good

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments adopt a new macro-economic indicator that is better suited for implementation of the SDGs
- That the G20 governments develop financing for implementation of the SDGs

PARALLEL SESSIONS

DIGNIFIED WORK

Description: Over a lifetime, a large percentage of an individual's time will be spent in a workplace. Division, argument, unhappiness and dissent can potentially compromise the effectiveness of any business or organization. This session will consider strategies which can be deployed to promote the concept of dignity in the workplace, with particular reference to religion and belief. Key issues include non-discriminatory hiring and firing, religious dress, dietary requirements, washing and praying, and holy days and days of rest. The future of work cannot be fully addressed without taking into account sensitivities of religious workers and religious employers. Employers need to be religiously literate and sensitive to those actually or potentially in their employ. Employees need to be sensitive to religious issues that sometimes affect their employers and often affect co-workers. Through it all, there is a growing need to develop appropriate principles for striking a fair balance among the interests of all concerned. Chaired by Carlos Custer (Former Secretary General, World Confederation of Labour), speakers were Richard Foltin (Senior Scholar for Religious Freedom, Religious Freedom Center, Freedom Forum Institute), Mark Hill (Honorary Professor of Law, Cardiff University; formerly Visiting Fellow at Emmanuel College, Cambridge; Extraordinary Professor, The University of Pretoria), and Juan Martin Vives (Director, Center for Studies on law and Religion, Universidad Adventista de La Plata).

Presentations Overview:

Carlos Custer stated that dignified work is both a right and duty. Since dignified work allows human beings to grow, it should have protection from the government. He posed the question of who produces work, and his answer was human beings, and that is why work is decent. He went on to say that all faiths agree in a core creator of human kind, but there are also significant dangers to human kind as well. Those dangers include: inequality, weakening of labour, and robotics due to their threat of destroying more jobs than what they are creating. However, technology is unavoidable. He stated that there is a need to take on a role of job promotion because the private initiative alone cannot meet the demands of work by itself.

Richard Foltin started with the question: What is the problem we are trying to solve?

Richard Foltin said that the problem is that there are individuals in communities that are bound to their religious faiths and the obligations that come with it. Some people may say: if there is an issue between their religion and their workplace, then why can they not just change their religion to find a compromise? Richard Foltin said that is not a good enough option. Religion is an intrinsic part of one's self-identity, even though the majority does not understand that.

Richard Foltin compared this to sexual orientations. Society used to think it was a choice by the person, but over time it has been accepted to be a part of one's identity. Religious beliefs being viewed this way could be due to a lack of understanding of the framework of the U.S.

Constitution. The changes of religion are a part of a larger picture. There is a 24/7 economy, where increasing diversity clashes with the workplace, animosity is rising towards faith groups, and an emphasis is being put on material over spiritual values. After the civil rights act was passed, religious discrimination in the U.S. was more than a sign saying what religions were not to be hired; it was also denying religious practices within the workplace unless there was undue hardship on the employer. However, what's reasonable accommodation and undue hardship? Reasonable accommodation must remove any conflict that is considered reasonable. However, that must happen within the bounds of undue hardship. Undue hardship is explained by the cost and pressure on other employees. A question is then presented: Who has the responsibility of covering the employee that is needing time for their religious duties, the employee or the employer? Richard Foltin suggests that if the employer takes the responsibility, it shows they are taking their employee's religious needs seriously. Additionally, the U.S. is contemplating an interactive process where an employee states requests for a reasonable accommodation for religious obligations and then, the employer should make an effort to meet those accommodations. Richard Foltin continued with saying that even though the United States is more favorable than other countries towards religious rights, there is still a need for public education to make it clear that religion is part of one's identity. There is also a need to strengthen the legal standards that currently exist to provide more protection to religious employees.

Mark Hill stated that, in terms of sustainable development, having a happy, healthy, productive workplace is important. Mark Hill considered, through a U.S. context, how a public or private employer can provide the maximum expression of religious adherence. He suggested that some of the issues that could arise are: questions on hiring and firing, religious dress, dietary needs, ritual washing, certain times for praying, resting from employment on holy days, performing job duties that conflict with religious beliefs. Mark Hill says that those issues need to be negotiated within the workplace. For negotiations to take place, employers must be religiously literate. This can happen through publicly available guidance and by engaging with local faith leaders. Employers must also be prepared to engage with their employees to find ways to provide reasonable accommodations that avoid undue hardship. However, employees also have a duty to explain their doctrines to their employer, and the world. An accommodation cannot be expected unless it has been made known. Mark Hill also suggested that there should be a legal requirement for employers to do their best on meeting accommodations. He also stated that these issues are best dealt with outside of the legal system. Mark Hill ended his part by reiterating that

employers need education. He also emphasized that religion is an aspect of a self-identity, it travels along with them and cannot just be limited to the home.

Juan Martin Vives began by discussing how the religious landscape in Latin America is changing at a very quick pace. The majority in Latin America are still Christians. However, over the last few years, the number of people with Christian beliefs is decreasing and other religions are increasing, including those who do not practice a religion. Fifty to sixty years ago, ninety percent of the population identified as Catholics. Now, they do not account for more than seventy percent of the population. A place that was originally homogeneous is now experiencing great diversity, and that change has happened within one to two generations. Latin America is also a region with high levels of religious commitment. Most people have beliefs and are committed to those beliefs. This is especially true for the minority religions that are increasing in the area. Due to this, there is serious conflict because the rules are created and are for the majority. However, since minorities are rising, it is reasonable that they also start to demand accommodations to their religions as well. The issue with that, though, is that in Latin America there is not a duty for the employer to provide reasonable accommodations. But again, religion is part of the identity, so how can there be a common shared home? The answer is to provide those reasonable accommodations. The pushback to providing those accommodations comes from employers who are afraid of giving exceptions to one person and having everyone expect something as well. The counter argument given is that these ‘exceptions’ are not privileges therefore, will not cause a wave of claims. The limits set on providing reasonable accommodations is undue hardships. If the accommodations do not solve the problem, then they are not reasonable. If the accommodations are harming equality, then they are not reasonable. The idea is to find substantive equality for all.

Key Points Made:

- Religion is an intrinsic part of one’s identity
- Reasonable accommodation should be the right of an employee and a duty of the employer
- Legal requirements involve the protection of religious freedom, the ability to request reasonable accommodation, and the requirement that an employer prove when they cannot provide reasonable accommodation
- A need for employers to be religiously literate and for public education to provide knowledge that religion is part of the essential identity.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments promote and facilitate an interactive process in which:

- An employee advises the employer of the need for the accommodation of a religious practice;
 - The employer engages in genuine and sympathetic discussion of whether and how such accommodation may be provided;
 - The employer is obligated to make an affirmative and bona fide effort to provide a reasonable accommodation;
 - An independent adjudicator/mediator system is established to give effect to the above.
- That the G20 governments refuse to enter into procurement and other contracts unless the contracting party has a policy in place that complies with the above.
 - That the G20 governments undertake a public education campaign directed at both employers and employees /job applicants, reinforcing the principle that religion is an aspect of a person's essential identity as much as race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, etc., and that religious identity encompasses religious practice as well as belief.
 - That religious organizations disseminate information concerning their doctrines and beliefs, and how those are manifested in particular practices

RELIGION, BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Description: Business is a powerful force for improving the lives of people around the world. And many business people are motivated by faith. They can view life holistically, where what they do from Monday to Friday flows from their religious convictions. Such holism can impact not only their ethics, but also their priorities and practice. This multi-faith panel of business leaders will discuss the practical challenges at the intersection of religion and business, the difficulties they face as people of faith who also have to make a profit, and ways business and religious leaders can work together to strengthen human rights, sustainable development and reach the most vulnerable in our communities. Chaired by Brian Grim (President, Religious Freedom and Business Foundation), speakers were Roberto Murchison (CEO, Grupo Murchison), and Federico Quintana (Vice President, Christian Business Association).

Presentations Overview:

Brian Grim began with a brief overview of business and its relation to faith. The relationship is often viewed negatively, but there are positive aspects that merit highlighting. Business is a provider of jobs, clothes, cell phones, lights, and water. He described religion as a powerful force for culture, creativity, and commerce.⁴⁶ He introduced the two panelists. They are both business owners and entrepreneurs. He asked the panelists to address the following questions: How does faith impact your everyday life at work and at home? How can we help these values have an impact on society? How can we pass these values onto others, beyond simply teaching people to obey? Notably, he was interested in the panelists' thoughts on doing more than just talk, but asking them to explain how they "walk the walk."

⁴⁶ Videos highlighting the relationship between religious freedom and business can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/rfbf>.

Roberto Murchison described his belief that God is the creator, and he views himself as a co-creator with God. He spoke of how this relates to caring for the environment and the companies that he manages. He argued that when operating a company, it is essential to do it according to God's will. As a Protestant, he laid out five areas in which his faith shines through in his business practice: 1) Love: Loving thy neighbor is helpful. Spiritually, this concept helps to understand human beings; 2) Accountability: God is a shareholder in all we do and knowing this increases the benchmark; 3) Enemies: In business, there are many enemies, competitors, or people who do things differently. Having faith helps you understand that this is also in God's plan. 4) Hierarchy: There are no hierarchies in God's world. God uses all people to develop God's plan without discrimination. This brings about a sense of humility. He stated that this is critical to understand, and we must try to allow all people to make contributions. 5) Control: God is in control at the end of the day. He described that changes are taking place rapidly in Argentina. Understanding that God has sovereignty, both good and bad, and we that cannot take the changes personally brings stability to the business enterprise. He spoke of business people attempting to change the world without first changing themselves. He argued that secularism and turning a back to God can be a significant problem. He asked, "Where do we anchor our values if not in faith?" For him, he has not found the answer. He stated that we must spend time presenting God to others, because if we change people, we can change society. He spoke of the bad reputation associated with business, and the importance of sanctifying business. Seeing the dignity of people, without marginalizing them, is a helpful approach for solving problems worldwide. Finally, he talked about leading by example. This requires full transparency. He noted the importance of experiencing values rather than just preaching about them. He also pointed out that both faith and values must be taught. If this is not done, he worries, we may not convey faith to future generations properly.

Federico Quintana explained that his faith allows him to share with God the daily happenings of his life. He asks God for strength, comfort, and guidance when faced with difficulties in both private and work life. He spoke of the importance of awareness in how we affect the lives of others. You work with many different types of people in business. Remembering that each is a child of God helps the business person to treat each with dignity, empower them, and treat them with love. He referred to sustainability, noting we are not here forever and we have temporary missions. Being aware that we have temporary missions becomes a testimony for others. He, too, spoke about the importance of leading by example. We cannot conceal ourselves and must show the younger generation that we are not vulnerable. We must behave properly. We must

work with enthusiasm, and coexist with our companies and families. We cannot let the stress of our companies impact our joy. If we complain too much, we convey to others that it is difficult to work. We must show the younger people how important work is.

Key Points Made:

- The complexities and struggles related to business can be better understood and managed with a strong link to faith and values.
- Faith can assist in ensuring we are good stewards in both our public and private lives, allowing for human dignity for all.
- Leading by example is the best way to instill good practices in our current society, as well as in future generations

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- None were made in this session.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN FORMS OF SLAVERY

Description: The scandal of modern slavery, often ‘hidden before our eyes,’ demands bold and determined action. With specific goals set out in the UN’s Global Agenda, G20 governments are all committed to its eradication. In summer of 2015, Argentina, the Holy See, and the UK worked together, insisting that SDG 8.7 be included prominently among the SDGs. Likewise, SDG 5.2 and 16.2 address violence, trafficking, and exploitation of women and girls. Calling modern slavery ‘a crime against humanity,’ Pope Francis plays a key role with other leaders including Patriarch Bartholomew, the Archbishop of Canterbury, religious sister orders, and faith-inspired organizations. These goals can only be achieved through actions designed to eradicate this form of exploitation once and for all, but three years on from when 193 countries unanimously endorsed the SDGs, progress is slow. Commitments need to move from words on the page to determined action and accountability. What is being done and what are the next steps? Chaired by Kevin Hyland (Former Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner UK, former Head of London Metropolitan Police Service’s Human Trafficking Unit), speakers were Kristina Arriaga (Vice Chair, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom), Santiago Baruh (Business Engagement Manager, Walk Free Foundation), and John McCarthy (Australian Ambassador to the Holy See (2012-2016), Chairman Sydney Archdiocese Anti-Slavery Task Force) and Nancy Mónzon (No a la Trata, Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace, Argentina).

Presentations Overview:

Kevin Hyland talked about how, until recently, he was the first UK anti-human slavery appointment to ensure that the government was doing all it could to stop human trafficking. Prior to that, he served as a police officer for 30 years. He saw first-hand the horrors it created and the luxury exploiters live in through the gains they get by trading in people’s lives. The time has come to find solutions to end this exploitation because too often we are dealing with the

consequences that accompany structures where profit is seen as more important than the value and dignity of human life. The panelists will impress upon the listeners, he said, the importance of this issue. When young women and girls have been exploited for several years, the trauma has a lasting impact. What does it mean to prevent this? At what point does the moral compass begin to point downwards? How do we make this unacceptable culturally, and make addressing this something that countries *have* to do? What can we do to stop and prevent it from happening? I am a big believer in hope. How do we end child soldiers? Who do we hold to account? One of the roles I had as commissioner, he said, was to address this ‘business as usual’ mindset. How do we get local authorities and health professionals to learn about this? Every member of the judiciary in the UK must have training on human trafficking. Once training was implemented, the number of police reports identifying victims increased by 600% as a consequence. But with any crime, how do we stop it? It is an almost impossible task, but one we must take up, nevertheless. In Nigeria, seeing women as second class citizens contributes to how they are treated. But, I believe, said Kevin, that trafficking is all about money. He talked about how religious leaders can build trust, and bring about change between law enforcement and the church. If you can bring that trust together, it is amazing what can be achieved. Kevin raised the issue of gender inequality, and asked speakers to talk about what survivors need to get their dignity back. Within law enforcement itself, women are not properly recognized. The number of law enforcement leaders that are women is low. Does the status of women contribute to their vulnerability? Does changing the status of women help empower them to control their own fates? Kevin said that pay equity, the valuing of women, and their empowerment produces a better environment. Working with the mother and the family provides people with a moral compass. But getting that delivered is difficult. Identifying what is needed on the front line is another equally important dimension. We can’t do one dimension without addressing the other. Child soldiers are also something we cannot tolerate, and we need to bring this to the attention of the international criminal court. He also talked about how goods and services are audited to ascertain if they are produced through the involvement of human trafficking or not. The private sector is capable of identifying audited products. What can the religious community do to scale-up the fight against slavery (e.g., providing help for victims, providing education/learning exchange, etc.)? In Ireland, the church is leading the charge in tandem with the Department of Justice in both countries to develop an understanding about the prevalence of this in Ireland. But what pressure can religious orders bring to the G20 if we unite to say, “We have got to do this and we must do this.” How do we bridge that gap? There are UN conventions about child soldiers. There

are still small groups of powerful leaders who are still doing this. We need to come up with an action that makes them pay for continuing to ignore it. Recently, the Italians pushed for sanctions against Libya for their involvement in organized crime. We need sanctions on countries, and we, as the public, should be calling it to account and asking them to show us how they are performing. He concluded with saying, ‘It takes a team.’ This fills me with hope and pride, he said, that I am associated with people who have a passion and desire to end this. At the heart of what we hear is that we have a duty to protect human life and offer people dignity. That is our duty. I suppose we also need to go for the big ticket items. There was an event in Ireland called “The World Meeting of Families.”⁴⁷ A woman spoke there of being trafficked for 9 years. She made a presentation that shocked members of the community that human beings could do that to a child. But she threw down the gauntlet. At the end of the presentation, she said, ‘As you leave this room, what will you do to ensure that the next child will not be traded like I was?’ If we look the other way, we all become complicit. We all contribute to this suffering through our silence.

Kristina Arriaga has worked in the human rights field for the past 25 years, having dealt with female genital mutilation and human trafficking. The bottom line is this: Until I went to a conference on human trafficking a few months ago, I was unaware that 88% of people who are in emergency treatment are released back to their traffickers, she said. A physician thought he was dealing with a psychiatric patient saying she thought she had been chipped. I did not know until three months ago, that there are individuals taking children whose price gets higher and higher if it gets more violent. We live our lives as if this doesn’t happen. So, the first answer is education. Second answer, is empathy. They are not the other; they are us. Training individuals who may come in contact with these people is vital. Last year, in the U.S., there were cases of trafficked people who were taken in by salons. Another example was at the Indiana University campus but no one bothered to ask what she was going through. Tebby Kaisara was forced to work without pay as a domestic servant in Bloomington, from 2004 to 2006. Now, as an employee of the Indiana Trafficking Victims Assistance Program, she helps train audiences in how to spot human trafficking. All of this is to say that if anyone has the answer to that question, please give it. Education, high visibility, and the training of personnel so that they can learn to recognize that people are trafficked. Kristina talked about addressing the participation, or lack thereof, of religious leaders engaging with addressing human trafficking. She talked about having tools that can be used to stop trafficking. Child rights and girls who are pushed into marriage as young as

⁴⁷ For more information, see <https://www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/>

nine years old (locked in homes and not very highly educated) – we have seen a renewed trend for religious leaders in communities to allow this to happen. This is compounded with 200 million women undergoing female genital mutilation. Women around the world are disproportionately affected. Engaging religious leaders who have moral authority in these communities can help to address the situation. Kristina talked about how the Quakers were about to be thrown out of the country when they started the abolitionist movement. And look what happened. It doesn't take a lot of money – it just takes the investment of people wanting to do this. Frankly, she said, I don't like government regulation, and yes, we should have transparent audit systems. Currently, people are asked, 'Do you have any slaves on the boat?' And they answer, "No." We have to educate the young. 70% of the young will have jobs that don't even exist right now. When I talk, people approach me, and say that they want to be in human rights work. Two areas where faith communities have failed is that 32% of those trafficked in the U.S. are in the LBGTQ community. They use sex to get things like soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes. We have to do a much better job to address this. Another example is the opioid crisis: Traffickers will stand outside of clinics so that they can lure men and women in exchange for drugs. We have to be aware of these issues. And in Turkey and Malaysia, we are seeing Imams sanctioning the marriage of girls as young as nine. This is an area where the government needs to intervene. A 41 year-old-man took as his third wife a girl from Thailand, and he was fined \$450 for doing that. And he told the press, five years from now, when she is 16, I will reapply to see if she can get married to me. Child brides should not exist in countries with whom we do business. The temptation at these events is to say, wow, this is huge and too much. I hope the panelists are working on it. But life is short and fragile. I hope each of you can come up with something you can do. You are the ones that know something about this. "He who saves a life, saves the world." I hope I can meet you here next year to celebrate the end of human trafficking.

John McCarthy said that we are honored to have in our presence the author of 8.7 SDG: Kevin Hyland. You are looking at someone who has had a serious effect on freedom in the world, and who has brought about a dialogue across the world in 2015 to address the scandal of human trafficking. We almost adopted the SDGs without reference to modern slavery. This is a real leader and is someone who is known to heads of state. If there is hope for the future, it is because there are real leaders in the world. I was serving at the Holy See when the SDGs were opened again at the Pope's insistence to add 8.7. This shows what can happen in our time. So, whatever you think or recollect of this conference, you were given the opportunity to meet Kevin Hyland who has had a real impact. SDG 8.7 was designed, and what the Holy Father had as a vision, for

was so that modern slavery would be eradicated in this generation, in our time. Not the next generation, but that it would be us who would take it out. The first step was that the world agree about this. Kevin produced a situation at the UN where 193 countries voted that we would eradicate modern slavery in our time. This is not about first and foremost victim support. He knew there was a lot of that already in the anti-slavery movement. He wanted the world to come together to eradicate this. We now have 8.7, and we have the Pope on our side, so what are we to do here? The G20 represents 2/3rds of the world's economy, and 23% of the economy is spent on government procurement such as the phones we are carrying, the gloves that are used in hospitals, etc. How can we address this? We can address our own purchasing to ensure it is ethical, and secondly, that governments spend their money in ethical ways on our behalf. What we have at the moment, governments buy goods and services with taxpayer money. They are tainted with slavery and forced labor. The first thing is, we can tell our governments that we don't want government money to be spent on goods produced using slavery. The first thing we can do is say that we ourselves will not buy goods that are trafficked. Secondly, we have the status to say to our governments: Stop it. We don't want you to buy goods of that nature. Now, that can take a number of forms, but the first thing is that this is a central government issue. All governments have the power to make contracts. All governments can say, 'We will not use suppliers tainted with slavery or forced labor.' We can demand that governments stop financing this evil. Think back in history. When the UK transported slaves historically, at least their taxes were not financing slaves on the plantations. So in 2018, people in the UK are in a worse position! He also spoke about contractual relations with suppliers setting out what they will certify as part of their contracts pertaining to how workers are treated where the parts come from. The audit is not paid for by the suppliers. It is something the procurers of the goods themselves bring about. If we start with the government ordered processes, they can be refined in relation to where the goods and services are; governments can check what the suppliers are doing. Currently, suppliers supply their own audit.⁴⁸ They have a conflict of interest to begin with. In Sydney, we are going to the area where we can be most effective – our purchases. In Rome, we were told that this is a model for the rest of the dioceses in the Catholic churches. Many churches have large supply chains, and you can focus on the supply chains. Taxpayer money should not be

⁴⁸ Section 54 of the UK Modern Slavery Act, the Transparency in Supply Chains clause (TISC) requires commercial organizations that operate in the UK and have an annual turnover above £36m to produce a statement setting out the steps they are taking to address and prevent the risk of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre has provided The Modern Slavery Registry to serve as a central registry that is independent, accountable to the public interest, robust, credible, free, open, accessible and sustainable in the long term. See https://www.modernslaveryregistry.org/pages/about_us .

used in this manner. 1) I suggest that this conference think seriously about going to the G20 governments and asking them to prioritize purchasing through supply chains free of human trafficking; Argentina could sponsor presentation of this at the G20. 2) That the G20 governments agree to audit their procurements to stop purchasing products from slave chains. 3) That people be told that their money is being used to purchase goods tainted with slavery and it should be stopped. Ask the leadership here to put human trafficking on the November G20 meeting in relation to government procurement supply chains and ask that they adopt a statement saying that governments will no longer purchase goods and services that they are not sure is slavery free. Secondly, that this forum make a declaration to that affect and take it to the G20. Thirdly, that all agree to take steps in your own communities to raise the issue of government procurements until this is gotten rid of. Fourthly, that all take interest in church supply lines as something you can take to your own leaders. If there is going to be a mass movement in relation to ethical purchasing, it will only come from faith communities. It won't come from someone else. It can be started now, tonight.

Nancy Monzon represented the Argentine Episcopal Commission to speak about the tens of millions of people who are victims of human trafficking all over the world. It is a crime that might affect any of us, but it is particularly suffered by the most vulnerable, particularly women and children. It is a severe drama of humankind that involves suffering as people cross borders, receive insufficient food and insufficient healthcare. They are forced to marry, organs are extracted and they are forced into sexual slavery. It turns human beings into simple use-value. In the perverse system of the network, people have lost their humanity. They are no longer subjects. They are turned into objects who have lost their freedom and dignity. This affects all countries to a greater, or lesser, degree. It is a cross border problem, so we insist on global action to face this crime. Those committed to fighting this want decent jobs and human rights to fight this. Gender violence and lack of access to jobs increase women's vulnerability to this crime. A woman who abandons her home to escape violence is prey to deceit, and is a potential victim to human trafficking networks. It does not affect a few; it is a social problem. Women have an unemployment rate that is higher than men's. Women and children are the main victims of human trafficking. In Argentina in 2017, more than 50% of those rescued were women and children submitted to labor and sexual exploitation. We must also focus on the migrant population. The legal status within the country receiving them is also a factor. The hopelessness of their situation is also an important factor. Technology information and communication is another factor. Social networks have contributed to deceit, fraud and prey on the vulnerability of

people. The ways of capturing victims has multiplied, so we must also multiply our message to educate people about the risks. The problem continues to grow, so it is necessary to be alert. In the last few years, the efforts to address this crime have grown in all countries, particularly in countries who already have rules that have been strengthened. Argentina has a biannual plan to fight this crime. Now it is about achieving growth in our efforts. In the last two decades, our work provides a framework for becoming more ambitious in our efforts. To fight money laundering and advancing ways to address those trafficked should be a priority. Improved prosecution mechanisms that assist states to advance how to articulate global action can help close the gap of the approach in those countries less advanced. Knowledge transfer mechanisms and resources for those who have more difficulty fighting trafficking is a challenge. Something invisible to public policy is the human aspect. Beyond the role we play today, the mission is to cross the wall of indifference. The suffering of those who suffer must be shown by putting ourselves in their place to make the problem visible. Working toward the restitution of rights of victims and survivors is an obligation of the state, but there is a spiritual dimension that is not always embraced to return dignity to those who suffer trafficking. To give back to them the idea that life carries on, and the ability to find love in oneself, and with others, can still be achieved. When we talk about prevention, we talk about aiding because prevention is very low. When we see a field where people are working, we are indifferent. We don't ask if they have a decent job and live in humane conditions. We need to stop and ask the questions. We need to learn to see what is right there before us, that we do not see. This includes improving the status of women and girls who will become adults. They can say no to slavery, and know what modern slavery is. We still have inequalities of opportunities, and salaries. It was the church that, for many years, gave comfort to victims of human trafficking while the state looked the other way. For a long time, we were highly prejudiced against security forces because they were accomplices to the state. When women were prostitutes, which is a complete humiliation for women, the police were part of that crime, collecting money in association with it. That situation has changed. Now women working in security forces are empowered, and can raise their voices to eradicate human trafficking, so women can say, 'Here we are. We are free. We can have the same pay.' Education is the door that opens the door toward inclusion. And we have to work with girls, too. When asked about auditing products, she indicated that governments do not have the money to work on fighting crime. The Episcopal Conference has been working with the anti-human trafficking team to make this crime visible. This year has been fruitful. We have been able to partner with churches to contain, support, or offer comfort to victims. The church gave comfort to victims and

survivors. If we are capable of recognizing in our neighbors someone who suffers, and put ourselves in their shoes, we will make the crime more visible. I invite all of you to put yourselves in the place of others.

Key Points Made:

- Education, high visibility of the social problem, and the training of personnel are key components to addressing human trafficking
- That religious groups audit their purchasing supply chains using resources such as the Modern Slavery Registry
- That religious groups agree to stop purchasing products from slave chains
- That religious groups agree to prioritize purchasing through supply chains free of human trafficking to ensure compliance with SDG 8.7
- That religious groups take steps in your own communities to raise the issue of government procurements
- That knowledge transfer mechanisms be improved to assist states that need to improve prosecution mechanisms for human trafficking

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments groups audit their purchasing supply chains using resources such as the Modern Slavery Registry
- That the G20 governments agree to stop purchasing products from slave chains
- That the G20 governments agree to prioritize purchasing through supply chains free of human trafficking to ensure compliance with SDG 8.7

RELIGION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NORMS

Description: In an increasingly pluralistic world, anti-discrimination norms take on a double character. On the one hand, preventing religious discrimination is deeply woven into the history of anti-discrimination standards. On the other hand, there is a growing tendency to ignore the importance of religious protections when anti-discrimination norms focused on other characteristics come into play. This session discussed balancing religious freedom rights against claims for protection of other non-discrimination claims. The challenge is to see whether underlying principles can be identified that can minimize the burdens of invidious discrimination for all. Chaired by W. Cole Durham, Jr. (Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, BYU), speakers were Carmen Asiaín Pereira (Senator, Republic of Uruguay), Ganoune Diop (Secretary General, international Religious Liberty Association), Joelle Fiss (Human Rights Analyst, Office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur of Freedom of Religion or Belief), H. Knox Thames (Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia, United States Department of State), and Rodrigo Vitorina Souza Alves (Professor, Law Faculty, Universidade Federal de Uberlândia; Director, Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion).

Presentations Overview:

Carmen Asiaín Pereira talked about how anti-discrimination laws are intended to prevent religious discrimination, but sometimes other rights (such as Freedom of Speech, LGBTI rights, etc.) can seem to weigh more than freedom of religion or belief. There is a tendency to ignore freedom of religion or belief when focused on other sensitive categories. She talked about how rights and freedoms are interrelated. Often with anti-discrimination norms, we import “pre-packed laws” whose content is already fixed. While the intent is to prevent discrimination, the anti-discrimination norms are nevertheless discriminatory due to underlying principles. It is important to find a balance between the tensions between religious freedom and freedom of expression for all. When rights are balanced, conflict can be reduced. She offered two examples to make her point. The first example has to do with implementation of the *Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance* (A-68)⁴⁹ has failed to reconcile fighting against unfair discrimination and freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, religion or belief because the framework has been interpreted in isolation from the broader UN system. The convention introduced two innovations: offering of a broad definition of intolerance that is vague and all encompassing, and description of a new human right- the protection against intolerance. If the convention is looked at as part of the larger human rights system, however, then A-68 can be understood more clearly. There are several regional conventions and declarations in Latin American human rights law (e.g., American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, May 1948; Protocol of San Salvador, 1988⁵⁰, etc.). She talked about how the new convention’s preamble calls upon democracy and refers to religion. Its text can be interpreted in multiple ways if we read it as being in favor of freedom of religion and belief. Interpretation of A-68 is set within the broader governing principles of the Inter-American HRR system that emphasizes human dignity, essential rights, democratic pluralism, freedom of religion, progressiveness, indivisibility, self-execution, implicit rights, and preferential interpretation. The second example referenced Uruguay’s legal framework to combat gender-based violence against women. In 2018, they passed a ‘second generation’ set of laws to widen the scope to the “different manifestations of violence in the private and public realm,” and to include integral institutional response. She critiqued the implementation of the law as a “pre-packed” law directed at mainstreaming a particular gender perspective. Again, by encouraging a

⁴⁹ The Organization of American States adopted A-68 in 2013. For more information, see http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_a-68_racism.asp

⁵⁰ For more information, see http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_a-68_racism.asp

holistic view, a “turn around” viewpoint, and a change of paradigm, it is possible to see laws as a mouldable system that can respect the rights of everyone.

Ganoune Diop identified five premises from which we infer the possibility of anti-discrimination law: 1) Overlapping consensus, regardless of our disagreements; 2) Endorsement of liberal institutions as a *modus vivendi*, rather than for ideological or philosophical principles; 3) A regime of human rights compatible with moral pluralism (not popular, but the alternative is violence); 4) The positioning of religious freedom; relates to freedom of conscience (conscience being internal and an intrinsic part of who I am); and 5) The human aspect – this freedom appears to be universal and central, specifically positioned to make other freedoms viable. These premises can help us understand who we are, what our place is in society, and how to understand that embracing difference is part of what makes us human – understanding the mystery of another person. Belief in God then implies that negative actions towards humans are a violation of the sacred; abusive not only of a human but also a divine right. Letting people be is part of respecting God and the unique, mysterious, and irreducible relationship between humans and the divine.

Joelle Fiss talked about how religious freedom should be balanced with other human rights, such as equality. Yet, this is difficult to do. Religious freedom is an “old right,” but it no longer embodies many aspects of social justice; it is like the “grandparent” of human rights. What is its role now, with “new kids on the block”? The debate currently implies that freeing oneself of religion could result in the disappearance of discrimination. This implication asks if the world must choose between freedom and equality. The famous “cake case” in the United States was cited. Courts must choose now between freedom or equality; it seems that what we must do is find a way to maximize both. The issue is that two minority groups in the United States are claiming a right; the state is regulating the rights of the citizens. If the role of the state is shifted from that of moderator to actor, things look different. In anti-blasphemy laws around the world, it is the states’ actions that lie at the crux of this issue. This is when states accuse citizens of blaspheming God or offending the sacred. Minority thinkers or believers become victims. Religion is invoked to safeguard national interests, not human rights. In this case, religious freedom is not the “grandparent,” rather it’s a law that does not exist and people crave to have it. A report written by Joelle for the UN compiled laws from around the world. Joelle found that many of them came primarily from Middle East and North Africa, but also from many other places, as well. Certain countries in the Americas also have blasphemy laws. Argentina is not one of them. The language of the law was

also studied. The most common punishment is imprisonment. Iran, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Qatar have the highest number of abuses. Ireland, Spain, the Philippines and others have the lowest number of abuses. The danger level of a law depends on the punishment (death penalty versus monetary fine, for example) and the question of whether the law discriminates based on different groups.

H. Knox Thames spoke about how freedom of religion is upheld in the United States and is seen as an “American value.” It appears evident that we share this value in both North and South America. A position has been created, “The Special Ambassador at Large” for religious freedom, in order to safeguard this. It is expressed as a universal right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, this document’s views are not always followed or enforced by the world. In this crisis of faith, it becomes more important to find ways to work together. A ministerial was held and a plan of action was outlined that is intended to have follow-up conferences at the regional level. Countries are also being encouraged to create special ambassadors whose role it is to focus on religious freedom. Numerous countries responded and created the post following the ministerial. Religion has an important role to play in development work. The Potomac Declaration highlights the role that religious groups play. Brian Grim has applied this to the work of religion in business. A new network in Canada has been formed. South American voices can play an important role. Iran continues to violate religious rights and because U.S. bilateral relations with that country are not good, there is very little they can do. South American countries, however, have been able to do much good.

Rodrigo Vitorina Souza Alves talked about how freedom and equality norms protect the autonomy of individuals, including members of minority groups. Individuals have the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of religion or belief. Religion, however, is not the only protected characteristic – several others are mentioned: sex, political opinion, property, birth, other status, etc. Therefore, normative conflicts arise between religion of belief and other human rights. Religious freedom is subject to restrictions, as it’s not an absolute right. The question is how to balance all of these things. There are five underlying principles that can guide efforts for balancing these rights: 1) Human dignity: recognizing that everyone ought to be treated as privileged persons; 2) Proportionality: what is the least onerous way of restricting freedom of religion or belief while accommodating another law, or vice versa; 3) Democratic and Constitutional scope: any law should be legally undergirded; 4) Essential content and reasonable accommodation: the essential content of each law should be respected and every

human right should be considered and accommodated, if possible; no human rights protected by international law should be ignored; and 5) Equality: this should be seen as a multi-dimensional concept; laws should not just discourage discrimination, but they should also promote protections.

Key Points Made:

- Sometimes laws whose content is already fixed, and whose intent is to prevent discrimination, end up discriminating against people in other categories
- Rights and freedoms can be balanced by taking into consideration human dignity, proportionality, the legal undergirding, reasonable accommodation, and equality
- Anti-discrimination law is built upon diverse sets of premises such as overlapping consensus, endorsement of liberal institutions as a *modus vivendi*, human rights regimes, the positioning of religious freedom, and the human aspect
- Courts can operate as mediators or as actors that operate in the interest of the state

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- None mentioned

INNOVATION AND WHY RELIGIOUS VOICES MATTER

Description: This session focused on how innovation is changing cultures, laws, and how religions' place could be providing values and moral boundaries within this rapidly changing technological world. Chaired by Gary Doxey (Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies), speakers were Katayoun Alidadi (Postdoctoral Researcher and assistant professor of legal studies at Bryant University), Peter Petkoff (Director of Religion, Law and International Relations Programme in Oxford), Marco Ventura (Professor of Law and Religion at the University of Siena), and Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves (Professor, Law Faculty, Universidade Federal de Uberlândia; Director, Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion).

Presentations Overview:

Gary Doxey directed the group discussion to focus around the ethical issues in relation to innovations in the workplace.

Peter Petkoff said that there is a long-standing tradition to protect religious doctrines with intellectual property from those who want to deviate and develop their own way. The other direction intellectual property is viewed is as some sort of cult. It is known that intellectual property exists, but it is not known exactly what it is. In the European Union, there is a data protection law that Argentina just recently adopted as well. This law has the ability to hammer out any business that does not stay compliant with the law. Innovation changes our culture and also changes our perspective of the meaning of law. Looking at the cyber sphere changes the perspective of cyber civility. What happens with information? This needs to be responded to

with philosophical and theological reflection. By integrating theology and science, moral paradigms can be considered when making critical decisions on artificial intelligence and technology. Unfortunately, theologians have not been integrated in every possible way. New normative boundaries need to be formed. To renew and reimagine these new boundaries of cyber civility and artificial intelligence is the most obvious way science and faith can come together.

Katayoun Alidadi raised the question of how relevant the issue of dignified work will be with artificial intelligence and an ‘uberfied’ workplace. Workers are being replaced by automation, but the Sustainable Development Goals are concerned with inclusive advances. The ambition is that technological advances are inclusive and not just for the elite. This is coming from a United States perspective. Although, it is believed that even though the U.S. is at the forefront now, other countries will also progress quickly. Katayoun Alidadi used a term called “uberization”. What this means are workers are called entrepreneurs. Now that they are referred to as entrepreneurs, the employer no longer has to provide accommodations since the entrepreneur can create their own work schedule. This eliminates any possible issues that interfere with religious practices. The gig economy is another aspect that decreases the relevance of reasonable accommodation.⁵¹ However, does this system really benefit everyone and is it inclusive? Sarah Kessler discusses the idea of perfect flexibility, no defined shifts, no boss, and no limits. People do not get fired, only deactivated. IT is becoming a model that is very profitable, which is what makes the idea so appealing to the companies that are using this model. However, it can be detrimental to the workers. On the other hand, this approach releases workers from drudgery, but the negative perspective is there are no ethical guidelines and the developments are not beneficial to the worker.

Marco Ventura has been conducting work in Trento, Italy for the past three years at the Center for Religious Studies at Fondazione Bruno Kessler. Their mission is to respond to the needs for an innovative response to global tensions correlated to religious diversity. The definition given to innovation has two sides. The conventional meaning deals with science and technology, social innovation and cultural innovation. The general meaning deals with politics, law institutions, philosophy, and theology. The Center engages with both content-based and process-based innovation with the understanding that innovation is tridimensional, or 3D. Their mission’s definition was presented at the G20 Interfaith Forum in Potsdam, 2017 and is as

⁵¹ For more information, see *Gigged: The End of the Job and the Future of Work* (2018) by Sarah Kessler. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

follows: “Our mission is the advancement of critical understanding of the multi-faceted relationship between religion and innovation in contemporary society in view of promoting a positive and fruitful encounter.” The three sections that make innovation and religion relationship tridimensional are: innovation in religion, religion in innovation, and the religion of innovation. Within these sections, there are four research focus areas: values, science and technology, texts doctrines, and traditions, spirituality and lifestyles, and finally, conflict. Currently, the Center is working on a paper that deals with fundamental questions surrounding the history of how the innovation discourse evolved and the religious elements involved, how and why innovation became a key-concept for contemporary narratives and political discourse concerning various areas, value assumptions and commitments. To make this paper happen, the scientific community needs to engage in conversation on how to generate a positive interaction between religion and innovation. When it comes to the role of religion, cultural and social innovation and innovation in science and technology cannot be separated. Solid research is needed. Having this encounter between religion and innovation is more than just going for it. Faith communities need to accept the challenge of innovation and innovation needs to accept the challenge of faith communities. When religion is engaged with, it means engaging with all aspects.

Key Points Made:

- Collaboration is a necessary component to innovation
- Religion can help create the morals and values for the rapid changes in innovation

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- None made.

ETHICAL FACETS AND ACTION IMPERATIVES FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRATION – MODERN EXODUS

Description: The forced movement of large populations in many world regions creates both pain and suffering for those on the move and for the societies that host them. The G20 offers the opportunity to look soberly and boldly at the refugee and migration challenge, underscoring both ethical and practical challenges ahead. The impact falls most heavily on vulnerable groups, notably children. The global community is on the cusp of formalizing two far-ranging compacts, one for refugees and one for migrants. Religious actors need to be seen as central to this agenda-setting process. Deeply held religious traditions focus on welcoming the stranger, and religious communities worldwide play large if often unseen roles in supporting refugees and migrants and the communities that host them. This session will explore how religious communities are

responding to the crisis, ways in which their actions could be stronger, and why the religious dimensions are significant. Chaired by Mons. Crisóstomos Ghassali (Archbishop, Syriac Orthodox Church), speakers were Jean Duff (Coordinator, Joint Learning Initiative), Cesar Jaramillo (Executive Director, Project Ploughshares), Alberto Quattrucci (Secretary General of Peoples and Religions, Sant'Egidio Community), Sturla Stålsett (Professor of Religion, Society and Diaconal Studies at the MF Norwegian School of theology, Religion and Society in Oslo, Norway), and Waldo Villalpando (Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa).

Presentations Overview:

Crisóstomos Ghassali witnessed the Syrian situation and offered a profound introduction to the section. He spoke about the importance of helping people live in their homeland without uprooting. Respecting human dignity and the affection of receiving refugees with hospitality is something to be grateful for. People receiving our victims of war with loving hearts should be appreciated. We should provide support to rebuild original villages of refugees because people lose their identity and culture when they flee war torn areas. People who receive them must have communities prepared to teach the language of the country of origin. Host country workers need to be trained to integrate them into the culture of the host country. Immigrants should be given resources so that they can stay, and not have to return. This includes providing moral and spiritual support for immigrant families to generate what they need for healthy development. He then introduced the speakers. Although there are always difficulties, he said we must always look through the eyes of hope. He highlighted the importance of the Canadian case study. He talked about the importance of addressing the violence that causes migration in the first place. Communities need to provide decent living conditions to prevent this immigration in the first place and for receiving countries, to do what needs to be done so that people can return in six months. Discussion occurred regarding how to use powers to influence and stop conflicts occurring in regions whether it be Syria, Iraq or Columbia.

Jean Duff provided evidence for the role FBOs play in refugee placement. The Henry Luce Foundation published the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI). The project provided evidence of faith contributions to development. They work through learning hubs. This work is an output from the Refugees and Forced Migration Hub and the project *Religion, Refugees, and Forced Migration: Making Research-informed Impact in Global Policy Processes*. The evidence for various roles in response to refugees are organized around burden sharing and responsibility. Three areas of support are: reception, meeting needs, and durable solutions. Jean provided some examples of the roles and a few recommendations. Faith actors are key players. They are multi-stakeholders. They enhance the response by tracking migration

routes through their own transnational networks. Baptists, for example, use their network to assist Myanmar refugees along their routes. Faith actors are often constrained by barriers to funding. Muslim charities operating in the Middle East. They have difficulty getting funding due to barriers against funding terrorists. Jean identified three areas that are in need of support within the global compact. Faith actors play critical roles in ensuring immediate and appropriate reception. They can be determinative in referrals. They are first responders and they take part in processing the actors. There are vulnerable populations in southern Mexico near the Guatemalan border, and the La 72 Franciscan shelter is the first for migrants and refugees that provide a discrimination-free place of safety for LBGBTI refugees fleeing violence and homophobia in Central America.⁵² Multicultural volunteers work in the reception center honoring deceased refugees, and assisting mourners with bereavement at the former burial ground in the refugee camp in Lebanon.⁵³ They also help to meet needs in supporting community areas. They use people-to-people approaches that support psycho-social support. They can promote co-existence, and sometimes not! In Sicily, Sant'Egidio Church facilitates reception among refugee youth and the elderly. In Rwanda, there were more than 2000 refugees with no connection who got to know one another through physical education.⁵⁴ A few efforts were made to connect them, and it made a difference. In terms of durable solutions, faith actors can provide the types of complimentary pathways that UNHCR consider important. Humanitarian Corridor Initiatives that use legislation to guarantee regular entries to avoid risk-laden 'journeys of hope' are almost entirely funded and implemented by faith actors.⁵⁵ In terms of resettlement, the American Conference of Catholic Bishops has mobilized more than 14,000 volunteers to provide services to more than 30,000 refugees. It is not all positive. There are concerns about partisanship and proselytization and those, too, are documented in the brief. But there is much that faith communities do to meet the needs of refugees. In their research, they have observed tremendous advocacy efforts offered by multi-religious actors working around the global compact to address specific needs of refugees. The global compact for children on the move is important. UNHCR has long been interested in the role of faith actors. They are demonstrating increased interest and demand for involvement by faith actors. They have commissioned a study in six countries looking at the role of how faith actors can complement the UNHCR.

⁵² For more information, see <http://www.unhcr.org/599e827e4.html>

⁵³ For example, see <http://catholicphilly.com/2015/03/news/local-news/relief-worker-sees-the-tragedy-and-gratitude-of-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon/>

⁵⁴ See <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/200658>

⁵⁵ See <https://kellogg.nd.edu/ford/humanitarian-corridor-initiative>

Cesar Jarmamillo pointed out that this was the only session addressing migration and forced migration. This is an important topic about a humanitarian crisis that involves faith communities very much. He talked about a Canadian case study involving Project Ploughshares that is addressing forced migration and refugees. If there is one takeaway, it is that we are witnessing a downward trend in terms of the international community's response to refugees. Call it 'race to the bottom' or 'relinquishing of responsibility' - whatever- the international community is not responding to the needs of people on the move. Some of the measures being taken will further complicate and make worse the plight of refugees around the world. Cesar then told his own story as an anecdote. In 2004, he left Columbia seeking asylum with Canada as his final destination. He was in a shelter in Buffalo, New York with about 1000 other refugees. When he got there, people were starting to panic, saying 'They will close the border for refugees.' What was actually happening was signage of the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America for Cooperation in the Examination of Refugee Status Claims from Nationals of Third Countries.⁵⁶ On Christmas Day, all of us decided to go *en masse* to the border, 1000 of us altogether. They call this the Christmas Refugees. People were underdressed in a harsh winter, and they did not know what was going to happen with the new agreement. We were successful in getting to Canada, but they made it clear that this was a one-time exception. We would be the last group to ever come through the United States. Each of these two countries was going to recognize the other as a safe country for refugees. From this day forward, any group setting foot first in the U.S. would be turned back to the U.S. from Canada telling the refugees that the U.S. is a safe country for them. We long had doubts about the U.S. as a safe country. Our concerns have been multiplied since Donald Trump has become president. More doubt has been cast on this third party agreement. Little did I know that as part of Project Ploughshares, I would be part of a legal action to cancel this third party agreement. In recent years, there has been expedited removal efforts in the U.S. The criminalization of refugees of those going into the U.S. has increased and the government has separated refugee children from their families. I should add that crossing irregularly is not a crime under the 1951 Refugee Convention⁵⁷ and under Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.⁵⁸ Crossing irregularly is a demonstration of the desperation affecting their lives. So recently, the Canadian Council of Churches and Project Ploughshares legally challenged the third party agreement

⁵⁶ See <http://www.treaty-accord.gc.ca/details.aspx?id=104943>

⁵⁷ See <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html>

⁵⁸ See <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/FullText.html>

saying that it is now unlawful and a breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter protects everyone who makes it to Canada. It just takes a cursory review of the Trump administration to realize why the third party agreement is no longer accurate. The Canadian government is violating national and intergovernmental laws by turning the refugees back to the U.S. It is the responsibility of states to ‘not send them back’ to places where they may face again the very persecution they are trying to escape from. Even though the U.S. is considered a safe place, the U.S. may return them to a situation of peril, so Canada may be a participant in violating this if they refuse to let people remain in Canada who made it across the U.S./Canadian border. The legal case is now before the federal court in Canada. In one scenario, the situation may even worsen. Right now, the third party agreement only applies to official places of border crossing. There is news that this third party agreement may be expanded to apply to the entire border, and Canada will again be in violation of the principle of non-reprimand. This is a concrete example of how faith communities can take a proactive role in changing the situation for asylum seekers.

Sturla Stålsett invited people to reflect upon ethics and principles. He spoke about Norway where last Sunday, a prayer was offered in the Cathedral in Trondheim regarding the traumatic events in the city that week. An Afghan had killed two other youth who had arrived as refugees.⁵⁹ We don’t know why this happened, but we can clearly understand the trauma they underwent. The reaction of people is two-fold. Some people say, ‘You see, they *are* dangerous; we have to be very careful about them.’ Others say something different, ‘We have to empathize, reflect and analyze our positions of how we receive the young, the children. It is a critical situation, and the Norwegian state is not treating them as they should. They are not considered children as they should be.’ In Sweden, there is political paralysis. The transition government is influenced by the conservative party that has 17% of the vote and others don’t want to have a pact with this party, so there is a paralysis. The refugee crisis in Europe is a crisis for refugees, but it has also become a risk for European countries. This should not be a crisis for such a rich world as Europe. We know very few of the refugees come there, and given the wealth, there should not be a crisis, but it is quite a difficult situation for those coming over, so we should consider what to do as faith believers. A wise principle to apply is to distinguish among three concepts. Distinguish between migration and the immigrant person. We have those who migrate, those who receive them, and those who are left behind. These are all three different situations

⁵⁹ See <https://www.newsenglish.no/2018/09/18/asylum-seeker-murders-shock-officials/>

that need to be debated separately. Frequently, the problem of migration becomes the stigma against migrants. The right and dignity of migrants is non-negotiable. Jürgen Moltmann has said that there is no such thing as migrants. There are only human beings in transition. Another thing to consider is religion and religiosity. Religions in Europe are mobilized as families for faith as strength against the other person. We see in Europe, a political theological approach which mobilizes Christianity to mobilize the European identity. Those coming from abroad are all Muslims. Many of us Europeans are Christians. So that confrontation against religions is something we should critique. Religiosity is the way in which we live our faiths. We can embody that, and practice it. Many of us live our faith as solidarity towards migrants and refugees. The last word to pose is something about precariousness or vulnerability. A lot has been said that life is precious and limited. This is what Dr. Rowan Williams emphasized. Life is also *sacred*. We speak about the vulnerable, but we are all vulnerable, so I am a little critical about saying they are vulnerable. We are all vulnerable. Vulnerability is a source of life. Vulnerability is also where we find love and human dignity. Thank God we are created vulnerable. I would like to learn from other faiths, to see how we can look for that resource to see how vulnerability is part of being human. What is sacred is shown through our vulnerability. When the world wants to do away with vulnerability, the situation worsens. If we want to protect a vulnerable life, this is something we might have in common. It might be the platform required to create a more sustainable, fairer life. We, who come from different traditions or faiths, might be able to rescue that deep insight into vulnerability as human dignity.

Wilton Perrera is a Methodist Pastor who works for World Vision in Brazil. He began with two Biblical illustrations pertaining to people on the move. The Hebrews lived in Egypt and all their children were sent to be killed by Pharaoh. The midwives disobeyed, and gave life to the children. During the birth of Jesus, the same thing happened. The emperor issued an order to kill all the children, so Joseph and Mary had to flee as refugees to prevent him from being killed. There are always powerful people wanting to kill children. This is not new. We look at governments and authorities who want to put an end to the lives of children. As religious leaders, we need to bear this in mind. We must look to see that there is no intentional policy that wishes to stop the promotion of life, but that, instead, wants to promote the death of children. Just as some people stood against that policy, I think we, as religious leaders, need to stand against that policy of death. For example, in Brazil, we have refugees from Venezuela. The border between the two countries receives many people. This is not common for us. We have seen that Brazil also has the policy of welcoming Syrian refugees and supporting them. But there are

governments that do not want to welcome refugees or immigrants. Many religious leaders are in favor of the lives of children and welcoming these people. We see Catholic, evangelical churches and other religions trying to welcome families with children or only adults in a nice way. He then showed a video story involving a Brazilian Judge who closed the border to stop people fleeing from the crisis that has hit Venezuela.⁶⁰ Some religious leaders stood in front of people to prevent government officials from pushing them back the Venezuela. This was a courageous attitude. We require civil disobedience against those who are trying to put an end to human life.

Waldo Villalpando offered UNHCR statistics about the extent of the refugee crisis. He talked about the use of mass shelters. He proposed four G20 recommendations: 1) Spiritual and moral help must be included in any aid operation - not as a mere act of tolerance, but as an indispensable part of the operation. It is important to remember that the refugee goes through an extreme crisis which requires moral and spiritual support which frequently can and must be provided by honest, selfless religious people. In turn, the moral and spiritual aid is essential for the operation of the aid process within refugee camps. Rather than exclude FBOs, aid can be distributed to refugees together with FBOs. This does not mean that international organizations abandon their supervision and control. This recommendation implies that FBOs accept the demanding responsibility they have toward honoring and serving refugees. The religious people working with refugees should not be tempted to critique other beliefs or lack of beliefs. They must appoint clergy or laymen of moral strength and people who can overcome the temptation of being bosses rather than servants. 2) International aid must be devoted to all conflicts and overcoming a certain media inertia to detect hidden conflicts. During the '90s, I served as UNHCR in several European countries. At that time, world attention was concentrated on former Yugoslavia. It was easier to get funds for conflicts that had international attention. However, other conflicts, which were equally as serious - but hidden - were hard to get aid for. It became far more difficult to collect funds because public opinion was not sensitive enough. Most people now know about Syria and conflict in the Middle East, but people ignore the situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar. This situation is causing 1.2 million people to seek shelter in Bangladesh. This persecution, which is typically rooted in religious conflict, is ignored by the media. My suggestion is that hidden conflicts must be treated in the same way. International, financial and public aid must be distributed fairly beyond what the press publishes on the front page. 3) Promote knowledge of the culture of the peoples, which includes their religion, to your workers

⁶⁰ See <http://time.com/5359503/brazil-venezuela-roraima-migrants/>

to avoid simplifying discriminations as an essential part of the success of the refugee operations. The reception of refugees, especially when done in large numbers, creates an atmosphere of restlessness toward rejecting what is alien. This is affected by biases and simplifications. This process is the result of ignorance. It is obvious that public education must mandatorily promote non-discrimination and tolerance. But to go further, I suggest that public education about the religious dimension of the event -without engaging in denominational teaching - be essential for the positive reception of a religious refugee. 3) Improve the so-called lasting solutions and assist local populations who welcome or offer a place to refugees. UNHCR proposes three lasting solutions: voluntary repatriation, resettlement in a third country, and local integration. The G20 governments should support more firmly these solutions. Besides, it is absolutely necessary to promote aid to local populations which will somehow make up for their efforts of welcoming and settling refugees. For example, we had serious conflicts because of the degree of aid provided to refugees when compared to the size of the local population. Usually, the international community must provide a minimum diet of 1,200 calories. Minimum classes are taught and there are medical clinics and milk ensured for pregnant women. This became a reason for the emergence of hostility toward the appearance of a black population among local populations who do not receive this precarious aid themselves. *But international rules forbid local aid.* I suggest that this technically correct measure does not accompany a good welcome in the country among local populations. An unintended consequence is that enforcement of this policy might actually *increase* the conflict. My suggestion goes toward an improvement of the service and the relations between the local population and the refugees. Given the increase in refugees, it is a job that requires high technical demands appearing in isolated locations and different geographic and cultural contexts. It demands urgent action, because the first hours are the most dangerous. Religious reasons should be understood in this tragic framework.

Key Points Made:

- There is evidence of FBO involvement in assisting people on the move
- FBOs can also challenge the current trend of relinquishing responsibility toward aiding people on the move using legal challenges and civil disobedience
- The lives of vulnerable people are also sacred, so human dignity is an important ethical emphasis
- FBOs should accept the responsibility of aiding refugees as a principle deeply rooted in their traditions

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That the G20 governments partner with FBOs to incorporate moral and spiritual help into their refugee aid operations
- That the G20 governments fairly distribute international financial and public aid with attention to hidden conflicts as well as those that have gained media attention
- That the G20 governments incorporate public education about the religious dimensions of migrations (as religious literacy not indoctrination) be incorporated into refugee programming and assessment
- That the G20 governments increase their support for the UNHCR recommended lasting solutions of voluntary repatriation, resettlement in a third country, and local integration for refugees
- That the G20 governments reconsider their policy of not offering international aid to local populations receiving refugees and, where appropriate, offer aid as part of the lasting solution local integration strategy

CHILDREN: A COMMON IMPERATIVE FOR G20 ENGAGEMENT

Description: In May 2017, religious actors from across the globe, assembled in Panama, affirmed a common commitment to end violence against children. Their determination to act should serve as an inspiration for G20 leaders to keep children at the center of their agenda. The year 2019 will mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The G20 Interfaith will highlight examples of religious action on critical issues facing children in refugee and displacement situations, trafficking, and the silent tragedy of child poverty in even the wealthiest communities. It will likewise highlight the roles of families and mothers, especially. How can the global community do better for its children? Chaired by Gabriel Castelli (Secretary of Childhood and Family, Argentine Government), speakers were Silvia Mazzealli (Programs and Network Coordinator for Latin America, Global Network of Religions for Children Arigatou International, Panama) and Rosalina Tuyuc Velasquez (CONAVIGUA, Indigenous Leader and Human Rights Activist, Guatemala).

Presentations Overview:

Gabriel Castelli identified four pillars in relation to children for engagement with the G20 leaders: 1) Prioritization of financial investment in early childhood education; 2) Monitoring of what is happening in the G20 countries; 3) Share information on best practices for human development; 4) Build partnerships that allocate a portion of their budgets to initiatives that enhance the rights of children. Argentina took out a loan from the World Bank in order to achieve this goal. The G20 addresses economic development, but sustainable development must address intergenerational poverty. Linking programs to early childhood is essential, and commitments need to be long-term so that they can be maintained despite changing governments. It is challenging to transform the state into one that provides resources for everybody. It was noted

that the state cannot do this alone and civil society, particularly in Argentina, must collaborate with the state to complement what it is trying to do.

Silvia Mazzealli presented from the perspective of the Arigatou International GNRC (Global Network of Religions for Children). This organization focuses on interfaith cooperation for children, the empowerment of ordinary people through grassroots efforts, and the rights of children to attain full physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, moral, and social development. She stressed the importance of keeping children at the center of the agenda for G20 engagement. There are moral, ethical, and legal obligations to do so. The GNRC promotes dignity and advocates for the rights of boys and girls worldwide. This organization operates at various levels, from grassroots to international. They are currently present in 55 countries worldwide, 13 of those in Latin American countries. Additionally, there are plans to launch in Nicaragua in the near future. She highlighted the outcomes of the GNRC Fifth Forum that took place in Panama in May of 2017. The Fifth Forum had more than 500 participants from 70 countries from all over the world, with a focus on violence against children. The outcomes of this forum included ten commitments made to end violence against children: 1) Listen to and work with children to address the violence against them; 2) Create safe spaces for religions and faith, especially for children who are victims of violence or abuse, or those with disabilities; 3) Increase personal and institutional commitments to take concrete actions to address the challenges voiced by children; 4) Educate faith leaders and communities about the forms of violence and ways to address it; 5) Develop partnerships with global programs to make the most of the existing tools, and to address the root causes of violence (especially countering violent extremism, gang violence, harm to children by organized crime, and sexual exploitation and abuse); 6) Strengthen families and communities by offering education in positive parenting and ethical values to help families and children develop empathy, become more resilient, and grow spiritually; 7) Identify and challenge patriarchal structures and practices that perpetuate violence against and sexual exploitation especially of girls; 8) Contribute to the SDGs by reaching targets in relation to ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, ending violence against women and girls, and ending economic exploitation of children; 9) Coordinate with partners across Arigatou International initiatives, the broader religious and spiritual communities and strategic players at local, national, regional and global levels; and 10) Generate political and social will to ban child violence, and develop public policy to work on violence-related manners. She also discussed the organization's efforts to protect children in the digital world. One of their

top priorities is the importance of listening and ensuring the active participation of children, stressing the importance of working with kids as protagonists of change.

Rosalina Tuyuc Velasquez greeted the audience in her native language of Kaqchikel. She referred to this day being a special day on the Mayan calendar in regards to our connection to our environment. We are 98% water, and without it we would die. She stressed that we must be grateful for our water and air because without them, we would die. She thanked the organizers for the opportunity to listen to and learn from each other. She is optimistic that through togetherness all things can be achieved. She spoke of the importance of teaching children the ways of life through observation. They must be led by good behavior. She argued that when we think about the rights of children, it is important to reflect on our own childhoods. She spoke of the technological advancements that are rapidly occurring, and how the adults of today are lagging behind, as they did not grow up with this magnitude of technological advancements. She argued that we live in an era where there is never enough time, and there is constant stress caused by adverse situations, including political and social violence. If we are to talk about peace, we have to address violence, inequalities and the things that deeply hurt us. Additionally, she stressed the importance of reflecting on the issues that unite us. She stated that sustainable development has to be based on social justice. There must be a focus on fullness of life rather than the acquisition of wealth. She described fullness of life as being achieved when human beings complement one another, living in community with unique life missions. She spoke about her motivations for forming the National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala (CONAVIGUA). She is a survivor of war. Her husband and father both disappeared during the war. She created the organization for herself, and others like her. She spoke of the atrocities of the war, which entailed kids being burned, sold, tortured, and thrown into water. These kids are the reason for her work. This project is designed to support the families and the children. The organization helps children of war to understand that they have a right to family and life without living under the threat of persecution. The war took this right from many children due to forced discriminatory displacement. The organization has grown and now works with girls and teens, teaching them that their communities have history. She said that some rights are never recognized, and will never be recognized by the state. These include inherent rights, such as the right to language, clothes, our land, and the right to be children of the earth. The work she does is challenging. She contended that the majority of people do not have development possibilities. We cannot dream about development and equality when budgets focus on urban areas and many of the problems we face are in rural areas. She noted that we have a huge responsibility, both

moral and historical, to help communities flourish and encourage transformations of the state to achieve equal opportunities for all. We cannot say we are truly living if there is poverty, war, and unequal treatment of indigenous and rural peoples. She finished by stating that we must listen to what the earth and our children are saying to us. We have to invest time and resources in children. We must extend to children both love and understanding. We must demand justice. We have a moral and political obligation to demand that public policies have a humanitarian-based focus for ALL children. Governments need to be held accountable for their violations of children's rights. She proclaimed that investing in, and training, our children should come before military affairs. She hopes that one day, laws will be enforced. If they are not, we have failed.

Key Points Made:

- Partnerships and the sharing of information are crucial elements of addressing issues surrounding children
- Early childhood programs and interventions will help ensure children attain full physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, moral, and social development.
- Violence against children has to be a primary of focus of religions, and other organizations both governmental and nongovernmental.
- Children's' voices must be heard in relation to addressing the issues they face.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That the G20 governments prioritize the needs of children in other sectors where they may not be a priority
- That the G20 governments build partnerships that allocate a portion of their budgets to initiatives that enhance the rights of children
- That the G20 governments prioritize financial investment in early childhood education
- That the G20 governments monitor conditions for children
- That the G20 governments share information on best practices for human development
- That public policies in G20 countries have a humanitarian-based focus that applies to all children

RELIGIOUS APPROACHES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Description: The looming threats posed by the changing climate demand both a new ethic of care and practical action. Religious actors bring powerful witness to the impact of climate change for poor communities and the resulting ethical imperatives to change course. Further, religious organizations are, in many instances, best equipped to implement climate change response programs, particularly in the poorest communities. This session will focus on practical experience, highlighting both moral and ethical perspectives, examples of specific action programs and important partners with which G20 leaders can work for practicable climate change response. Chaired by Mons. Jorge Lozano (Archbishop of San Juan and President of the Episcopal Commission of Social Pastoral of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina), speakers

were Elias Abramides (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), Lorena Echagüe (justicia y Paz), and Yoshinobu Miyake (Superior General, Konko Church of Izuo).

Presentations Overview:

Jorge Lozano introduced speakers and opened the floor for questions. A Mayan woman from Guatemala asked if they knew about the contribution from indigenous peoples as a result of climate change. She commented that her grandparents said humans would face the worst climate crisis in history. They said we have to prepare for the volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, but they also made recommendations about how we should influence government policies in response to the situation of inequality that markets cause and business causes. Agro-industrial, fuel industry, etc. Many of us didn't understand their messages at the time, but now we are experiencing them. How can churches bring indigenous voices to the table? At one of the summits, there was an alternative indigenous summit in Japan to make our voice heard because we could not directly participate. We do feel the effects of climate change. We are experiencing the effects caused by transnational companies. A Saudi Arabian participant said to Mr. Miyake that he illustrates how climate change is affecting our lives in noticeable ways. Can you clarify the relationship between the general strike and climate change? Someone from the US made apologies for our position, the religious players there don't support this for political reasons. There is a gap between politics and faith perspectives. To fracture the bonds of rejecting science regarding climate change and the political conservative politics. What is your perspective on the US and its impact? The Indigenous woman thanked the WCC for giving indigenous peoples a voice at the UN for denouncing the genocide in Guatemala. Big steps are being taken because faiths are getting together. How do we continue to work so that the militaristic approaches do not go against life?

Elias Abramides comes from the Orthodox Greek tradition from Constantinople. Their church was founded by one of Jesus' disciples. Their recently elected leader considers environmental issues, including those in the Amazon region, so important that he was referred to honorifically as the "Green Patriarch". On Sept 1, 1989, the Orthodox Church at the time of the ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius, invited churches on Sept. 1 to annually pray to thank God for the creation. That date was chosen because in the Roman Eastern Empire, the capital of which was Constantinople, they used to celebrate the New Year on Sept. 1. The calendars in the Orthodox Greek tradition begins on Sept. 1 (as well as Jan. 1). The World Council of Churches adopted this date to pray for God's creation. The Orthodox Greek tradition is a founding member of the WCC. This day of prayer recognizes that creation is where we come from. Sept. 1 through Oct. 1

in the Catholic Church is recognized as the time of creation. The Catholic Church adhered to the day of creation where we pray for the protection of the earth by God. The Holy See convened a gathering of 88 justice and peace FBOs where they began to recognize that climate change was created by human activities associated with the industrial revolution. Eight years later, the Vatican said to the chair of Justice and Peace and the Council that the Catholic Church should celebrate this day of thanking God for creation. Since 1992, when the Rio convention was signed, there were very few of us participating at the time. Since 2007, other churches and religions have started to join. Now, there are several that are accredited with the UN for climate change via the World Council of Churches as well as some from other faiths. The UN has a great interest in climate change. Faith communities and FBOs participate there because they realize that not everything can be solved from an economic or technical perspective. Faith is needed. The World Council of Churches was invited to make a statement at the end of the conference (1998 and 2004). In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was signed, and it lasted four or five years. In 2015, the Paris Declaration was signed to which all member countries adhered, including the U.S., to undertake to reduce emissions. Several interfaith groups have adopted the Paris Declaration. Climate change involves social and economic justice because those most affected are the poorer countries who are less responsible for creating the problem. Future generations are also disproportionately affected. We need to serve our neighbor to preserve our world with humbleness and generosity with frugality. It is not just me; it is our neighbor. At the level of the UN, 24 international conferences have been held since 1995 (including Poland), but if you had a business manager without good results after 24 years, you would no longer be a manager. This approach is not effective enough. Climate change is moving much faster than anticipated and is outpacing the measures we are taking to do something about it. Climate change is a topic for the Justice and Peace Council this year. Last year, the discussion was water. Climate change is linked to water issues, biodiversity, desertification and poverty. There are 6 delegates that have been participating. He closed with a prayer of thankfulness, confession, and praise in relation to climate change, its impacts, and our responsibility before God to do what we can with humility and love. In 1992, when the Conference met in Rio, the Episcopal Conference organized a parallel meeting where the keynote speaker was the Indigenous Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum. There were groups in the climate change convention that have the right to speak at the end to make a statement - one of them represented Indigenous peoples. Faith communities were not included because that system was created in the early 1990s, and they forgot the faith communities. In the statements that were made for many years, we always support Indigenous

peoples, in particular. This support will continue. The environmental protocols have been embraced as laws of the land as conventions, but if national governments do not ratify it, it does not get implemented. In the U.S., the Paris Protocol was not ratified by Congress. Then, when President Trump walked out on the agreement, states and major US cities took up the challenge to embrace reduction of greenhouse gases as a movement “from below.” The people can make a difference – where there is a will, there’s a way. Administrative changes can be setbacks, but there is nevertheless hope. In the U.S., the government of California may sue the federal government. We said religion has an important role to play for caring for the earth. Climate change poses an extreme danger, but we took up a phrase, “Act fast, act now.” Let us believe as a sign of hope to push forward. And we will get support.

Lorena Echagüe highlighted examples from her networks in Santiago, Chile. She talked about seeing, judging and acting in everyday life. Seeing means creating questions that trigger reflection on how to diagnose climate change and explain how to empower different faiths to move to engage the issue. With regards to making judgements, she drew upon Catholic values that are common to other faiths that can trigger action. She talked about seeing anthropogenic actions that jeopardize food security and stimulate human migration flows. Which of these climate change impacts are relevant to our specific roles? She talked about the concepts of inclusion, equity and inequality – climate belongs to us all. Solidarity is a concept that cuts across generations. Are we all willing to change our lifestyle? Often we are told about climate change scientifically and we run the risk of leaving it in words and not translating it into everyday action that involves personal transformation. The human root of personal accountability to transform our lives must be remembered. How do we separate economic growth from human development? The generated growth measured with the GDP translates into integral human development for all of humanity. How do we relinquish the habits of unsustainable ways of living that are generated from ways of living based upon the assumption that resources are unlimited? The quickening and speeding up of the rhythms of life with too much stimuli and information, and the distraction that comes from multitasking, made her understand that she was not as fully present as she should have been to say that ‘we are all people of faith.’ She said that we need to focus and be fully present to the urgency of this issue. How do we translate scientific notions into ethical notions? Scientists have done their job. We need to do ours. We have moral and ethical roles to play. What is at stake is the dignity of human beings. It is a principle of human rights that triggers all other human rights. We need to include poor people who have poor resources; we are here at a fancy hotel, but we have a responsibility

to take to the political leaders a voice that represents the vulnerable. All people have a spiritual dimension that brings forth noble feelings of love. We must make good use of our time and life. When we try to throw light on these issues and establish a support system, Pope Francis talks about positive tensions and that time is greater than space. Too often we favor short term decisions that coincide with management decisions. Today's challenge is to know that the efforts made today will affect generations to come. When it comes to climate change, time is greater than space. We need to speed up our actions today to mitigate climate change impacts on behalf of generations to come. She then highlighted attitudes highlighted by His Holiness such as thankfulness, justice, hope, love, humbleness, and to conceive that man is not the center of creation. She quoted someone as saying that real environmental conversion is built on four pillars: environmental equilibrium with contributions by scientists; social justice; spiritual responsibility that we all share; and immediate action. She then spoke about some local initiatives that focus on rescuing vulnerable young people to provide them with green jobs and training such as Jornada Mundial de Oración por las Vocaciones.⁶¹ She also spoke about including Indigenous voices in the scope of dialogue. They are sources of inspiration from the thousands of years of cultural experience they have. She would not dare to speak on their behalf which is why their voice is needed. Even in hostile environments, there are opportunities for change. If sustainability has to be profitable, then steps must be taken to dis-incentivize carbon industries. If decisions are not top down, taken by the leaders, then a mass of people that can exert bottom-up pressure becomes necessary. Citizens will play a historical fundamental role.

Yoshinobu Miyake offered a Shintoism perspective on this issue. He talked about three difficulties he encountered while traveling here: Late scheduling of the Forum schedule, high water levels at the Osaka international airport, and Argentina's General Strike which caused him to be delayed in Dubai. His travel to the conference took 48 hours, but he is only here for the conference for two nights! This connection of events may seem unrelated to one another and to climate change, but are they? Everyone must comply with a schedule, once it is deliberated and agreed upon. Japan has become tropical. This summer, there were 27 days where the temperature was higher than that of the human body, and 73 days where it was more than 30 degrees Celsius a day. There were 23 typhoons in the four months from June to September. The International Airport was submerged and the electric facilities of the terminal building were affected on September 4. Religious facilities in Osaka were severely damaged in the typhoon that was a

⁶¹ See <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/messages/vocations.index.html>

“once in a hundred years” classification. The main worship hall of his church in Izuo will require multimillion dollars to repair. In some cases, only one day’s precipitation can reach 1000 mm in Japan these days. The annual rainfall in Britain is 1200 mm, in France is 900 mm, and in Argentina it is only 600 mm. Japan has become like a rainfall archipelago. The high temperatures threaten human health. Argentina’s General Strike and climate change come from a shared route: The President strongly promoted review of Argentina’s financial relationship with the IMF, and now the labor union wants to improve their situation in ways that impact foreign travelers. We don’t need to cite the example of Aesop’s Fable of the grasshopper and the ants to prepare for the future and keep making good efforts toward the environment. He concluded by talking about the role religions have to promote adoption of sacrificial behavior in place of their convenient and comfortable lives. In Japan, the Emperor held beliefs that motivated him to plant rice himself. When citizens put up with the inconveniences of an unsettled lifestyle due to a power interruption caused by a tsunami, Japan’s leadership is voluntarily cutting the palace’s air conditioners and enduring the heat and cold to be in solidarity with the citizens. The top of a very rich industrialized country like Japan shows a sample of ascetic life to her citizens. He then talked about Japan’s role as host to the G20 Interfaith Forum in 2019. ‘We welcome all of you to come all the way to Osaka,’ he said. Many Japanese are still from Indigenous, rather than Abrahamic traditions. Many Japanese don’t believe that God created the world. Rather, humans and God work together for the maintenance of creation. The human is not independent of nature – we are part of nature. He communicated that he wanted the Japanese government to increase its concern for Indigenous people around the world. He began participating in the interfaith shadow summit process in 2007. Desmond Tutu was there talking about how climate change affects poor people. He said even then that we should pay greater attention to poor countries, and the Indigenous peoples within them. Japan is so sorry that the Kyoto Protocol was not kept. When a strong earthquake hit a nuclear power plant and it exploded, Japan worked to dismantle the 55 nuclear plants they had in operation after that. They turned to fossil fuels as a response to cutting back on nuclear energy, so they have not been able to reach their Paris Accord target. The interfaith community in Japan – Indigenous, Shinto, Buddhist and Muslim - pushed the government to attend to the environmental situation. Nature is first. It is a Japanese duty and responsibility to show to the world how the use of science, technology and resources can favor human beings. He then talked about how the Mesopotamians cut Lebanon cedars to kill animals and become a sacred king 4,500 years ago. In Japan, one person comes from heaven and he took

his hairs and put them on mountains to make trees. Can you imagine that Japan has two thousand islands surrounded by green? That is much larger than other countries. Culture matters.

Key Points Made:

- Climate change is moving much faster than anticipated and is outpacing the measures we are taking to do something about it
- People movements and local government structures can innovate ways to move forward in contexts where there is administrative push-back against climate change efforts
- Inclusion, equity, inequality, and solidarity are concepts that we can agree upon to work together on climate change
- Environmental conversion is built on the four pillars of environmental equilibrium with contributions by scientists, social justice, spiritual responsibility that we all share, and immediate action
- Religions have a role to play in motivating people to adopt sacrificial behavior in their everyday lives as a response to climate change

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- That the G20 governments ensure that climate change policies take into consideration the interests of those who are most impacted by, and vulnerable to, rising waters (e.g., low lying cities, islanders)

TO END HUNGER: RELIGIOUS TEACHING, RELIGIOUS ACTION

Description: When crises strike, religious communities are often first to provide essential aid, because transnational faith-inspired humanitarian organizations have deep experience in the opportunities and pitfalls of response. Religious communities serve those in need across the world with a sweeping variety of programs, often at a fraction of the cost of similar government-run programs. But their experience and networks are under appreciated. The experienced and moral voice of religious actors has much to contribute to “Ending Hunger by 2030” (UN SDG 2). This panel will reflect on where global advocacy and action stand on this critical goal, focusing on humanitarian emergencies (Venezuela, Yemen, Nigeria, for example), and the often hidden dimensions of hunger such as child malnutrition and rural hunger. Chaired by Stephanie Hochstetter (Director of Rome-based Agencies and Committee on Food Security, World Food Programme, Italy), speakers were Elizabeta Kitanovic (Executive Secretary for Human Rights and Communication, Council of European Churches, Belgium), Paul Morris (UNESCO Chair in Inter-Religious Understanding and Relations, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ), Imam Sayed Razawi (Director General, Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society, UK), Eduardo Serantes (Former Director of Caritas, Argentina), Metropolitan Emmanuel-France His Eminence (Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, G20 Interfaith Forum Organizing Committee, France).

Presentations Overview:

Stephanie Hochstetter spoke from the perspective of her position at the World Food Programme. The programme partners with more than 40 interfaith organizations across the world. She highlighted that adoption of the SDGs, particularly SDG 12: To end Hunger, compels us to work toward a common agenda. She contended that interfaith organizations are some of the

best-suited organizations for handling the issue of hunger and food shortage with an ability to act immediately.

Elizabeta Kitanovic submitted a statement that was read by the Metropolitan Emmanuel of France in her absence: She addressed the issue of food insecurity via food waste. It was noted that in the world today there are many individuals who suffer from food shortage, starvation, and malnutrition. She argued that wasting food plays a significant role in these issues. Food waste refers to the discarding of food that is still suitable for consumption. It happens at all levels of the supply chain, including in distribution and stock management. Additionally, food is lost due to expiration dates, sell-by dates, lack of portion control, and not using leftovers. With the global population expected to reach 9.3 billion people by the year 2050 addressing food waste and the impact it has on all resources is increasingly imperative. She discussed possible contributions by the religious sector. Much food waste comes in the form of meat and produce; fasting can help decrease meat production. All people have a right to a standard of living that includes, shelter, clothing, medical care, and access to food, and mothers and children are entitled to special care and assistance. The right to adequate food is realized when everyone has physical and economic access to food. She pointed out that people are starving in many countries such as Yemen and Nigeria. For her, there are three obligations when it comes to the right of food. 1) Respect: Government should not take measures that prevent people from accessing food. 2) Protect: enforce laws. 3) Fulfill: Governments need to be proactive in strengthening people's abilities to feed themselves. When a group is unable to get food, the state has an obligation to fulfill their right to food. She highlighted the importance of "loving thy neighbor" in this context. There is a need to ensure that food is properly distributed. We must try to share with those in need. Selfishness is a problem; we need not be greedy. As global populations rise, the pressure for global food supply will increase. Awareness must be raised in order to decrease food waste which will also reduce greenhouse gas production. She made several proposals for the G20 listed below.

Paul Morris spoke of food security in the Pacific Islands from the Jewish perspective. Food insecurity has increased in the Pacific Island area since 2015. One in 9 people are undernourished, and, according to The World Bank, one in 4 live in poverty. He offered three reasons to explain these trends: 1) Climate Change: Coastal regions no longer yield crops due to salt in the soil and erosion. Fishing and farming are impacted by extreme rainfall and reef acidification. There are concerns over climate shock recovery, there is not enough time to return

to stability after major climatic events. 2) Diet Transition: Due to increased urbanization, islanders are consuming more imported foods from developed nations that are not healthy for them. The majority of the protein the Islanders receive is from imported foods. The dietary transition to these foods has caused a Pacific epidemic in diabetes, heart disease, and childhood obesity. 3) Global Pressures: These include aid and trade agreements. There has been a significant loss of biodiversity due to the global economic pressure for cash cropping. In the Pacific, concerns for food security are communal, rather than individual. Dramatic action and intense interventions are required. He highlighted that the Pacific Islands are very Christian regions, and the churches play a considerable role educationally, socially, and politically. They are heavily involved in governance at local levels. He argued that adding food security to the Christian agenda is vital to impacting the issue, as food security is seldom on the governmental agenda outside of disaster relief. He contended that no movement towards the SDG's can take place without the churches in the Pacific, noting this is a huge area for potential that has not yet been tapped. Academics at Wellington Pacific Bible College have used the Bible to take the message regarding the production and serving of food to raise these issues in the community. From the Jewish Perspective, the Feast of the Tabernacles reminds Jews of the impermanence of our securities. For a week they take their meals and sleep in temporary shelters. This is a symbolic reliving of returning to the wilderness. His Jewish tradition is obsessed by food. He notes that all aspects of food are regulated in Leviticus (food production, crop production, about killing, about preparations, and so on). What Leviticus offers is a wonderfully comprehensive system that provides assurance against uncertainties. It covers a long list of what can be grown, eaten, prepared, placing food security in a broader moral framework. Leviticus regulates servitude of land, land use, crop growth and offers models for less developed nations that need to be taken much more seriously. Food security can only be effective if it operates within a larger moral economy. However, food security is a global concern that is best solved at the local level. The awareness of poverty must be present. He wishes for the G20 to highlight food security in their trade and aid policies. Additionally, the G20 could mobilize the religious voice on a grander scale. Religion is a vast untapped resource for furthering the agenda of the G20.

Imam Sayed Razawi presented a theological justification for responding to food insecurity to ensure that humanity continues and the planet is run in an ethical and moral fashion. He made two main points: 1) we must look after each other, and 2) we must look after the planet. There are approximately 800 million people who are not getting the nutrition they need. He noted that in the UK, 30.8% of food is wasted and in the US, 40% is wasted. Combine the food waste from

both the United States and the UK, and the world could be fed three times over. On average, humans are consuming 55 more calories per person per day today than they did in 1974. Additionally, ¼ of the fresh water in the western world is wasted. Why is there so much waste? Competitive markets push us to increase waste. Labeling and regulation contribute to the issue. Much of our food is wasted before the consumption stage during growth or production. We produce more food than is required for consumption. Furthermore, the prophetic tradition and the Quran states that God is the one who fertilizes the land, and that food is a gift to us. Eating meat is a privilege given to us by God. The very fact that we give blessing to God for our food tells us that we have a responsibility, by God, to this food and its distribution. Whoever has the capacity to eat, including animals, also has the responsibility to feed. In Islam, charity to others includes feeding people. He contended, that if you have the ability to feed people and you know someone is hungry and you do not feed them, then you are not a Muslim. Confucius says to adopt three things for the people, one of which was to feed them. Islam talks about understanding the sanctity of food. Pesticides and hoarding are sins. You can find these same ideas across religions. It is based on virtue, and unites us. Muslims, Jews, and Christians have worked together to feed, clothe, and house people regardless of the geopolitical situation. In times of crisis, it is important to remember the humanitarian level of faith. On the basis of the UK, religions have worked very well to solve the food crises. From an individual mechanism, we can pull together a covenant of a moral obligation to have guidelines. Lobbying is extremely important in relation to the labeling of food. Religion can work with governments on this. He noted the importance of leaving yourself slightly hungry to be able to understand other people. It is too easy to indulge too much. He concluded with the notion that Islamic ethics, as they relate to food, can highlight not only the legal parameters, but the ethics of the law. Great cooperation is required. Faiths need to use their faith as a mechanism to look at a wider covenant for working together, to lead in the way of selflessness.

Eduardo Serantes spoke about the food crisis in Argentina. He is concerned for a world that does not have strong organizations to help poor countries go forward and solve world hunger. FBO's must provide support to our institutions and correct the defects without attacking the institutions. He spoke about ethics in connection to technology. Technology impacts food production. A lot has changed and a lot will continue to change. We must address what our ethical obligation is and commit to achieving food security. There is enough food for everyone, he said, the problem is one of *access* for the 805 million people on the planet suffer from hunger. Food demand has increased with the growing population. Many developing countries will raise

their standard of living, and demand more food. By the year 2050, food production will have to double just to keep pace with population growth. Technology will be essential to this increased productivity. This will require effective policies and strong institutions from the local to the international levels. Technologies will have to address issues such as land availability, which is increasingly shrinking as more areas urbanize. Freshwater is a big issue that can be addressed by technologies. One form of technology that is assisting with these issues is the use of satellite photography for precision agriculture. Other areas include genetics and biotechnologies. He spoke of how GMO's, although subjected to ethical discussion, are also assisting with increasing food production. Hunger is concentrated in poor countries. Angola has the capability to produce more food than Argentina, who is a leader in food exportation, but Angola currently imports all of its food. They need technological assistance, aid, and education to empower the people to adapt technology to their reality. The environment is an important consideration. Although we need to double food production, climate change is working against us. Additionally, infrastructures particularly in third world countries, will need to be taken care of. What role should rich countries play? The G20 was created for financial development, and without financing education for food aid cannot be accomplished. FBOs should make ethical contributions in support of sustainable development. Often, claims of corruption and bureaucracy can cause aid to go to waste. These issues need to be worked on, but he noted the importance of creating a space for their contributions.

Key Points Made:

- Religious organizations, at the local levels are some of the best equipped organizations to address the immediate needs of hunger worldwide
- Increased regulation is necessary in regards to best before dates, sell by dates, and expiration dates. Additionally, a better public understanding of what these dates mean is essential.
- Our means of food production will have to adapt in order to meet the needs of a growing global population

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue

- Revise existing regulations to decrease food waste.
- Develop alternative ways of using food that does not meet international market standards.
- Clarify the differences between 'best before' and 'use by' dates to reduce waste
- Encourage the hospitality sector to not discard unused food that is still good
- The G20 should highlight food security in their trade and aid policies
- The G20 should develop more food security partnerships with religious organizations

THE IMPERATIVES OF BETTER GOVERNANCE - FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Description: No topic is more discussed today across the world than the scourge of corruption. It takes different forms in different settings, but everywhere it fuels anger and cynicism and undermines efforts to advance on virtually any front, including fighting poverty and supporting those left behind. Fighting corruption thus belongs at the center of the G20 Agenda. And in that fight, religious actors can be powerful allies, both to highlight the daily corrosive effects of corruption on poor communities, and to build on shared ethical teachings to bolster effective action. This is linked, of course, to imperatives for religious actors to address corruption problems within their own communities in addition to making important contributions to broader community, national, and global agendas. This session builds on the April 2018 Cumbre de las Americas where governance and corruption were a central focus, and points to core themes for the global International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) scheduled for Copenhagen in October 2018. Chaired by Álvaro Albacete (Deputy Secretary General, KAICIID, Spain), speakers were Séamus Finn (Chair of the Board, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)), Mussie Hailu (Global Envoy of United Religions Initiative (URI), Continental Director for United Religions Initiative- Africa and URI Representative to the United Nations in Nairobi, Ethiopia), Katherine Marshall (Senior Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University) and Elias Szczytnicki (Secretary General and Regional Director, Religions for Peace, Latin America, Peru).

Presentations Overview:

Álvaro Albacete began by talking about Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index⁶² which, since 1995, has been annually ranking countries "by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys." He believes that the public exposure of corruption is positive because it raises public awareness to a point that it causes political concern for countries to find where they fall on the corruption list. He said that the focus should not be exclusively on fighting corruption, but also on education to ensure respect. He then posed two questions to the panel: How do they view the enforcement of these measures and directives on behaviors? Can religions be credible in the moral sense, and if not, what can they do to be more credible?

Seamus Finn talked about individual corruption. Scripture talks about the upright, perfect person – the honest person is the person to be trusted. This remains a standard on how people evaluate those they do business with, relate to, and become family with. However, this becomes difficult to transfer to organizations and institutions. However, the standards do not really change. The erosion of trust is what influences the decisions about the individuals. The people are then engaged by religion to restore that trust and confidence. Seamus Finn's organization has been in the investment field for thirty years. They must engage with corruption on a variety of issues. They expect the companies they work with to not condone the practice of bribery, which creates

⁶² For more information, see <https://www.transparency.org/country>

a moral and ethical dilemma in the leadership of the company. Their organization has conversations about ethics and cultures with bankers who are quite receptive to the conversation. Seamus Finn also warned that people need to be cautious of generalizations because they may not be accountable.

Mussie Hailu highlighted the importance of good governance. Mussie Hailu believes that without good governance, no amount of funding and good intentions will allow sustainable development to be achieved. Corruption involves politics as well as economics. Religions and FBOs play a critical role in addressing corruption by adding a moral perspective to dealing with corruption. Africa addresses the issue of corruption by bringing in religious leaders to enhance the relationship between political and religious leaders. KAICIID provides a permanent platform where working relations can be enhanced to bring a spiritual and ethical dimension to the African Union. The church uses different places of worship to create awareness for the need to address these issues from a moral perspective. They continue advocacy work for transparency, promoting rule of law, and democratic governance. In all aspects, transparency is key for good governance. Religious leaders could play a critical role to create practical recommendations for the G20. Additionally, the United Nations engaged with FBOs especially in reaching one of the SDGs dealing with human dignity. An advisory role was created for FBOs to engage member states.

Katherine Marshall dealt with the credibility of religions to fight corruption. She looked at the link between religion and development of peace. The irony of this is that with corruption of good governance, religious voices are absent. There have been integrity and anti-corruption movements that focus on the non-moral perspective of corruption with technical strategies. Yet, there are still populist movements and attractions to fundamentalism which both have corruption issues. Corruption is the single most discussed issue in the public and is felt by every country in the world. So, why has it been difficult for religious voices to play a role? First, the answer is that there has been an erosion of social values, trust in governments, and public institutions. There is an implicit sense that if society would go back to the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, and to start teaching these elements of truth in kindergarten, then the problem would be solved. But, how can education be reformed to include civic values? This is the central challenge to bridge the world between faith and development. In this era, religious leaders are ranked above most things, generally holding the first position. A challenge for developing trust in religious leaders relates to the fact that accountability and transparency has not always been

applied to religious institutions. To restore trust in the religious institutions, standards of accountability and transparency for those institutions need to be established. This is a critical component for religions if they are to become a credible voice in fighting corruption. Katherine Marshall added, during the discussion, comments pertaining to women in public service; women are often thought to be more honest than men. Today, there is an intense focus in the United States in the news on the Kavanaugh hearings and the ethical relationship between men and women. This leads to questions of who is ethical, what is ethical, and what are the ethical standards. Not only the standards that guided people in the past, but the standards that play to the technology world. A critical dimension is achieving equality between men and women.

Elias Szczytnicki talked about social crimes, such as hunger and inadequate education, which do not have a criminal, *per se*. But, corruption is a crime that involves individuals that could do harm if they are gone against. In Latin America, police corruption has reached a high level. The government has invited religious leaders for commissions to clean the police. These religious leaders have received criminal attempts against their homes and families and some have moved to the United States because of it. These issues have consequences and deal with dirty issues. However, religious leaders do not always want to deal with the dirty issues. In Mexico, there are religious leaders dying because of drug trafficking, which is related to corruption. The role of religious leaders in Latin America has given way to reflection on the role of religious education. Many children coming from religious education cannot tell the difference between good and evil, which is critical when dealing with corruption. To find clear responses despite the differences, kids need help in receiving clear responses on the difference between good and evil. Parents need to be reinforced and strengthened because religious schools cannot achieve this on their own. At this time, this should be the response of the religious communities.

Key Points Made:

- Harmonization is important to faith traditions
- It is important to society that children be educated to develop discernment so that they can identify, and resist, corrupt behavior later in life

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments reverse the trend of profit taking priority over human dignity because current priorities are destroying democracies
- That the G20 governments broaden concerns about inequality to go beyond individual corruption to include fundamental questions involving ethics and philosophy
- That the G20 governments introduce ethics and peacemaking into educational materials

- That the G20 governments strengthen human rights legislation

THE VALUE OF INTERRELIGIOUS WORK IN THE 21ST CENTURY – FROM POMP TO POLICY

Description: Interfaith dialogue has been an increasingly frequent feature of religious public life around the world for at least 125 years. Over this period, interfaith dialogue has grown from the “pomp and circumstance” of symbolic gatherings of religious leaders to programs of action and intervention that strive to influence government policy and social norms. The G20 Interfaith Forum is one such effort, demonstrating the significant contributions religious actors can make in addressing global economic and development issues. This panel brings together leading interfaith practitioners from around the world to share practical examples of how interfaith dialogue has benefited communities and to answer the question, “How can interfaith dialogue strengthen G20 decision making and achievement of the UN SDGs?” Chaired by Alfredo Abriani (National Secretary of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religious Affairs, Argentina), speakers were James Christie (Professor of Whole World Ecumenism and Dialogue Theology, University of Winnipeg, Canada), Martha de Antueno (Confraternidad Argentina Judeo Cristiana-Diálogo Ciudadano, Argentina), Emilio Inzaurraga (President of the National Justice and Peace Commission, Argentina), Rabbi Marcelo Polakoff (Congreso Judío Latinoamericano, Argentina), and Raul Scialabba (President, Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa, Argentina).

Presentations Overview:

Alfredo Abriani asked panelists to highlight something particularly novel or interesting from their vast experience in interfaith dialogue. Having been brought up in a Catholic environment, Alfredo did not have much interreligious connections until a professional role brought him into contact with others. He started to know various organizations and institutions and began to believe that a healthy policy aimed at the common good would be ideal for all involved. He asked each speaker to talk about their first point of contact with other religions.

Marcelo Polakoff talked about how jealousy motivated his first point of contact with other traditions. All of his friends had Christmas trees and he did not. Later on in life, he was able to light a Christmas tree with the Archbishop. However it is true to recognize the role that jealousy and early experiences can play; they inspire and motivate us to do more and to get involved. It is often the experiences we have in small concentric circles that can have a large impact. Programs can have important impacts, whether at the local or regional level or the national level, such as the G20. We act within a context that is based on the Bible, and other religious texts. The histories contained in these texts are quite universal. One theme that can be understood within them is the birth of responsibility. The stories contained therein, starting with the myth of creation and continuing to Abraham and others, have important messages. Beginning with

Adam, we have stories that teach responsibility. In the creation story, there is a moment where Adam denies responsibility, blaming Eve for what he did. Next, Cain exhibits an example of claiming responsibility, but then saying that he does not care. We need to both claim responsibility and care. Noah saves both himself and his family while everything else sinks. These early stories present something of significance for our reality today, if we consider them self-critically today. In face of the problems that we all suffer from today, it is easy to say, “It wasn’t me!” In other occasions, we may say, like Cain, that we are not our brother’s keeper and work for our own groups only. It is important to recall that the only level that works is one in which all religious groups succeed and can flourish. We need to realize that the totality, the wholeness, is also our responsibility. We start within our own religious traditions, but we need to recall that the spiritual need is always more important than the physical needs. When we see needs around us, we need to work together, across faith traditions.

James Christie talked about how the religious landscape of Canada has changed during his lifetime in terms of its inclusivity and acceptance of religious ‘others.’ As a child, he had never met a peer of a different ethnicity, and had never known about the religious differences of his classmates. There is still much to do, however, and many ways in which his country needs to grow. Since 1972, James Christie has been involved in the practice of interreligious dialogue. Canadians are ideal candidates to be involved in this practice because they occupy the second largest land mass on earth, and have a relatively low population. In many instances, if they do not cooperate, they will freeze to death. He expressed interest in moving from policy to principled practice. He provided national and regional examples from the Canadian context. He talked about the 2010 G20 Interfaith Forum that was hosted by Canada. Resources and money was pooled in order to operate at the highest capacity. The 2010 Interfaith Forum was achieved by uniting 49 institutions. One of the colleagues involved asked him to write a letter in defense of their religion to the Ayatollah about their treatment of the Bahá’í community. Ultimately, the Ayatollah responded, and engaged in further conversation. He also talked about how people at University of Quebec are interested in fostering inter-religious dialogue between Muslim and Sikh community members. He talked about the Manitoba Multi-Faith Counsel that began holding a breakfast with community members in order to address the ill treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada. All of these are on-the-ground examples of progress that has been made. He directed people to the KAICIID mapping and tracking of interfaith efforts. Being in dialogue is good. How do we move from dialogue to engagement? James hopes to develop strategies for taking action and moving forward.

Raul Scialabba said that not all of us here are, or have been, engaged in interfaith dialogue. He encouraged everyone present to get engaged in interfaith dialogue because it will be personally beneficial. He then emphasized the importance of being patient. People in your communities will look at you suspiciously, because they themselves do not play this game. He talked about the importance of not becoming discouraged. It is a very long road, and it looks a lot like the race between the tortoise and the hare. Finally, he said to not hope to change the world. Rather, attempt to change your daily reality and enjoy every small victory. Be infectious and bring others on board to enjoy the game, and let them see how joyful it is to work towards a common goal with others from different faith traditions. While everyone desires to live in a peaceful world, it seems like a difficult aim to achieve given the inequality, poverty, and violence in this world. Men and women of faith understand that peace and justice is not just for ourselves, but for those around us as well. Peace requires that we unite with our neighbors. We need to work towards a society in which people can co-exist without resentment. We do not need to achieve a syncretism. Dialogue can combat violence and confrontation. Within various religious traditions, we find a contribution to achieving peace and justice in societies. Fundamentalism, in contrast, leads to violence and repression. Religion is, paradoxically, intended to lead to peace. Religious intolerance has always been a scourge, and those religions that do not accept religious pluralism can lead to oppression. Religious conflict is often felt in scientific developments, at the government, and in other areas. Religions should be committed to getting rid of material and spiritual poverty – encouraging compassion and love of neighbor. One of the social roles of religion is to foster values that bring compassion to the 2/3 of mankind who are currently excluded from welfare. At the extreme end, religious justifications can be used to achieve torture or other horrible acts. Religions must attempt to, despite their differences, leverage their religious practices to combat social issues. Interreligious prayer services can bear live witness that peace can be achieved. What better example to youth in war-torn zones could there be than examples of religious leaders coming together across political lines to work towards a common goal? Interfaith dialogue should help governments deal with global issues in a disinterested manner. We ought to overcome selfishness to arouse the spirit of solidarity. Working for peace also means ensuring the free exercise of freedom, which should be enjoyed by all people regardless of their religious background. Prejudice against religious minorities should be denounced. Society needs more leaders to make this come true. Are these mere dreams? Can the strength of our purpose allow us to see the realization of these goals? We need to engage in discussions and help this happen.

Martha de Antueno attended a religious school, but had friends who attended state school. Jewish girls would need to stand up and leave the classroom for certain courses on ethics; I always wondered if this was because Jewish homes had no ethics. Now I can say that Argentina has changed its policies in substantial ways. I also remember that near our cathedral I saw signs that were incredibly anti-Semitic; this makes me think we have made tremendous progress. I ask that in next year's G20 we remember to discuss the role of women: in the family, as strengtheners of the family, in communicating values. She said that interreligious dialogue has immense value in the 21st Century, and it should not be trivialized. The 20th century was characterized by crimes, violence, and horrible actions. The 21st century is starting with similar circumstances, and is characterized by a removal of God from our lives. This removal of God has led to additional issues. In these critical moments, interreligious dialogue takes on great importance. As long as there is no peace among religions, there will be no world peace; and religions will have no peace, until they can engage in dialogue between themselves. In the face of conflict, difference, or indifference, our first resource is dialogue. Last year, Pope Francis sent a letter to Angela Merkel, asking her to ensure that world leaders use peaceful means to resolve conflict. He also urged those responsible for the leading economies in the world to ensure that economic decisions favor those in the greatest need such as migrants and other impoverished people. The Pope referred to the many problems occurring in Africa as well as Latin America, and to the serious problems that need to be addressed. J. F. Kennedy founded a student group that would travel to Africa in order to attempt to communicate essential basic values. A student was afraid that anything he might say could be perceived as colonialism. So, he set up a group that would dedicate itself to material resolutions. For example, he set up a game wherein children ran from a given spot to a tree, with the winner being promised a box of sweets. All of them together listened to the starting mark, and ran hand-in-hand to reach the tree at exactly the same time. This is the approach that we, too, ought to take in order to achieve a more humane world that benefits all of us living in it.

Emilio Inzaurraga got involved in interfaith matters by attending the faith traditions of other friends, as one who observes without understanding the meaning of the ceremonies and ritualistic behaviors. Over time, his neighborhood friends improved his understanding. Our challenge is to bear witness to those values that we uphold. If we propose dialogue, we need to engage in dialogue. If we believe in human dignity, we need to treat others in dignified ways. These Forums for dialogue ought to build on those things told to us by others. I believe one fundamental point is to pick up on the line from the Bible where God asks Cain where his

brother is. In this moment, he is inviting Cain and the entire human family to take responsibility for others. Dialogue should not be unproductive. It should be dialogue that encourages us to take concrete steps – not just to love in words alone, but through our deeds. Pope Francis encouraged us to take three realities into account: 1) Identity; being clear as to our identities, our values and our principles; 2) Courage to learn from those who think differently; and 3) Clarity of intentions as we seek a common good together. The Catholic Church began a forum in Argentina in 2007 that is also supported by Evangelical churches and other religions. This forum now brings together 23 organizations from around the country that include both faith-based and civil society organizations. The goal is to build the common good. It was decided to focus on 5 topics on which all could agree: education, fighting addictions, social housing, senior adults, and employment. Teams were set up with other members of civil society. Dialogue led to consensus, and consensus turned into concrete resolutions to assist society. That is how it all began. There were other developments that I do not have time to discuss, but they produced very interesting results. Through the commission, we embraced the agenda of Pope Francis. It is bringing us all together in interreligious dialogue. We have become united against human slavery, addictions, trafficking in people, violence and war, and the exploitation of individuals. These are incredibly important matters that we should all work on. The dialogue should allow us to take concrete steps in order to answer the question the Lord asks of us: “Where is your brother?”

Key Points Made

- Dialogue is an antidote to fundamentalism and violent extremism as we work to fight poverty and achieve peace
- Diverse faith traditions share teachings of accepting responsibility for behavior, and caring for others
- Dialogue can produce common action on agreed upon issues (e.g., human trafficking, addiction, violence, discrimination) without becoming syncretistic
- Interreligious dialogue is inherently valuable to world peace and should not be trivialized
- The concept of human dignity is essential as we consider interreligious work
- Dialogue should take into account identity, courage, and clarity of intention when developing common commitments to shared actions

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- None were offered.

FAITH AND FINANCE: RELIGIOUS COMMITMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Description: The UN agreement on the SDGs in 2015 was preceded by urgent reminders that the goals cannot be achieved and poverty ended without large and wise mobilization of financial resources. Yet questions such as ‘From where will funds come?’ and ‘How can wise use be

assured?’ have murky answers. Unexpectedly to many, religious institutions can and do play significant roles in this area. Investments (e.g., through pension funds) and land and other properties can be managed in faith-consistent ways, communities can mobilize and deploy large resources, and faith leaders and communities can bring a clear ethical lens to the global dialogue about equity, profit, and ‘the preferential option for the poor.’ The financial decision-making processes that undergird sustainable and equitable development are strongest when they incorporate faith perspectives and religious systems into strategic planning and policy implementation. This panel brings together practices and tools that religious communities and faith-based organizations have to make long-term and strategic investments with a triple impact (social, economic and environmental) and engage faith communities in the work for achieving the UN SDGs. Chaired by Jorge Arturo Chaves (Director, Centro Dominicano de Investigación, Costa Rica), speakers were Gabriel Bottino (Program Area Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Argentina), Séamus Finn (Chair of the Board, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)), Blake Goud (CEO, Responsible Finance and Investment Foundation (RFI), UK), Raymond Van Ermen (Executive Director, European Partners for the Environment (EPE), Belgium) and Christoph Stückelberger (Founder and President, Globalethics.net, Executive Director, Geneva Agape Foundation, Switzerland).

Presentations Overview:

Gabriel Bottino said that there is a long history of working on impact investment at the local and national levels. In the private sector, ways to promote the environment and obtain an economic return are being analyzed through social impact assessments. However, impact investment is not a field that represents the entire globe. There is a clear difference between developing and developed countries. For example, in Latin America, impact investment is an underdeveloped market. From the government side, they regulate funds to be invested in different contexts. There is also a chance for entrepreneurs to provide services. They ask for loans and then are able to pay those loans back once the entrepreneur is in the market. There is also a need to profit for a purpose. Having a need for something is the key for success at the local and global level.

Séamus Finn discussed how the churches decided the regulations on financial reaction. There was a set of rules for dealing with people within the church and another set for those outside of the church. There have been debates, which have stayed consistent over the centuries, on who would cover the cost and the risk. However, as those debates became more complex, the Christian religion gave it up. The data no longer seemed to fit the lending with no charges for payment. Now the question has become, how can the churches align their investments with their beliefs. The answer is to not invest in companies that you do not support. For example, those that sell tobacco, alcohol, nuclear weapons, and assault weapons are not invested in. Churches divest from companies that invest in fossil fuels, etc. In the past twenty years, the focus has shifted to deploying assets into what they do support such as education,

hospitals, sustainable development culture, women entrepreneurs, etc. Before, the Catholics were fine with stepping back and pointing out the deficiencies with the system, and that used to be sufficient. Now though, it is not only financial impact, but also social and environmental impact. The current system has destroyed the planet and created inequalities in wealth. The conversation needs to be started on how to change it, so it becomes an economy that serves the environment and future generations.

Blake Goud described the three pillars of the Islamic finance system as being justice, the circulation of wealth, and the preservation of wealth. To begin, it has to be considered how money is interacted with in the industry. It was developed to stimulate and promote trade and commerce in the real economy. It comes from the idea that finance has transitioned to the real economy being in the service of the financial industry. In Islam, there is the idea of higher objectives, and these overlap with the SDGs. However, they do not get reflected in the tradition of financial practices. There is a connection between human kind and the environment, the belief that God gave humans permission to use the resources of Earth in a sustainable way, not to destroy it. The connection between finance and the real economy get transmitted to inequalities, which is then transmitted to disconnect the two. The idea is to go back to being a connected, integrated system between finance serving the economy and the economy serving humans. The incentive is to support at the micro levels, ways that are known to help real people. It is an informal process, but it helps promote a thoughtful way to move forward.

Raymond Van Ermen questioned how the financial industry can be made to be a game changer for humanity. The success stories are part of what keeps the financial industry moving forward. However, there is still a battle shaped by the 2015 agreed documents by the United Nations. The framework still defends the existing systems so the battle is to make changes within the financial industry so that industry behaviors align with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Another part is becoming more efficient. Once a successful methodology has been identified, there needs to be a move toward diverse investments. So far, there have been thirty platforms identified. The objective now is to bring them together to focus on how those initiatives contribute to finance with food security. The next goal is to setup a plan with the financial industry that asks all markets to be accountable for their commitments, pledges, and decisions. The lack of transparency is the reason for the lack of trust. The final initiative is that younger generations are voting with their money and are very concerned with the environment. This is where the industry needs to figure out where it can be more efficient.

Christoph Stückelberger said that faith and finance is a key topic for religious communities. It is not a new topic, but it has a new relevance for issues with the SDGs, the development of new systems for transferring money, and the ethical issues therein. However, the religious communities are not engaged with this. The block chain companies align the values of different religions with practical behavior and their own capital investments. The Holy Scriptures for every religion has many ideas on how to invest. Finance is just one form of trading goods. The investment movement is measured by the direct impact on people and the environment. Impact investing is an attitude, a value taste, not a value class, although, there is some debate with that. To see the importance of religious assets, it is not with individuals. If one focuses on the individual, most of them are somehow linked to a religion. Religious communities have many assets. In December 2017, twelve faith communities from around the world came together to discuss how they could cooperate with the United Nations. In September of 2018, in Switzerland, they announced the Faith Invest Alliance to cooperate with the United Nations. The goal of this alliance is to build a network, and be a source of education, consciousness raising, and a platform for investment ideas.

Discussion

Discussion focused on funding of the SDGs. The SDGs were adopted three years ago by the United Nations. One criticism focused on what would be financed over the next fifteen years. The amount of money needed would be in the range of three to four trillion dollars per year. The general impression is that after three years, the financing is still nonexistent. This speaker asked the panel to comment when that might happen. He went on to say that there is a split, which he further explained as ‘the West against the rest,’ that the impression is the American taxpayer will pay for the SDGs, money that will go from one section over to developing countries, but the political prospects of that happening are almost zero. He believes that the only alternative source for financing is through the private and corporate sectors. There is no indication of this being organized at the macro level as of yet. It is no longer a contested fact that the SDGs are necessary. At the city level, there are five million cities committed to cooperate with the SDGs, but religious organizations need technical assistance. There is a lot of policy level work to be done. There is a need for strong political debates to make this happen. Additionally, one panellist said that the debate is not what the churches will contribute, but they are being asked to invest in the achievement of the goals. However, the larger debate is from agencies that are concerned with inviting the private sector. They fear it might negatively impact what is trying to be achieved. Another panellist discussed inclusive finances. Kay Marshall Strom’s book, *In the Presence of the Poor* (2008) Authentic Publishing, documents how poor people can be actors of history that transform society for the better. This challenges others to see the poor not as weak, but as people with historic value with a right to access to finance. When looking through history, there are situations where micro credit or finance has worked. In Peru, a group of women have had relative success in savings group. This can bring a cultural mindset of saving. However, it was also discussed that micro finance needs to be improved. There is not a need of return of those resources, but the organizations need to be strong, so they can be sustainable regarding resource competencies. There are efforts to achieve an environment that aligns with

the United Nations' SDGs and have methodologies that empower that. Resources have been moved from the states to be directed toward the SDGs.

Key Points Made:

- The financial industry needs to find ways to become more efficient
- There is a need for churches to align their investments with their beliefs
- Impact investing is positive for the environment, but it does not represent the entire globe
- A plan needs to be developed for financing SDG implementation

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments change their financial industries to align with the objectives of the Paris Agreement

HUMAN RIGHTS, FAITH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL PRIORITIES

Description: Faith-inspired organizations are not tradition-bound, sclerotic entities slow to respond to global challenges. They are, in fact, dynamic organizations contributing to innovative work to meet the needs of those most in need around the world. This session will spotlight a number of major new initiatives that are focused on ways that religious communities can have major impact on global priorities. “Faith for Rights” has emerged in response to the Beirut Declaration and aims at strengthening connections between religions and human rights. It explores the many ways in which ‘Faith’ and ‘Rights’ can be more effective in supporting each other. “The contribution of FBOs to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda” is a project being undertaken by CREAS (Ecumenical “Regional Center”) and the UNDP from Argentina that is aimed at measuring the contributions FBOs make in achieving the SDGs. It will also analyze the relation between religion and development, the religious perspectives of development and how FBOs could help to consolidate the Agenda 2030. The Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) is finding more effective ways to develop cooperation with religious communities in designing and fostering development projects. Chaired by Héctor Shalom (Director, Centro Ana Frank, Argentina), speakers were Michael Wiener (Human Rights Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), Elena Lopez Ruf (Coordinator for *Religion and Development*, Centro Ecuménico de Asesoría y Servicio, Argentina), Paola Bohórquez (UNDP, Argentina), José Oscar Henao (Economist, Colombia), and Kirsten Evans (USAID Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives).

Presentations Overview:

Héctor Shalom carries on the legacy of Anne Frank. His work brings attention to those who are killed just for being who they are. The Reformed movement led the most important Nazi resistance movement generated an opposition current, hiding Jews, providing food in the name of Christian faith. A chaplain in the Catholic Church participated in clandestine detention centers. He talked about those, who in the name of faith, have saved others, and others who, in the name of faith, have without difficulty helped out with the cruelist forms of state terrorism.

There are those who have baptized babies knowing their mothers had been killed by state terrorism. We need to understand what happened to religious leadership in the most critical times of mankind, and of each one of our countries, when listening to a panel talking about the challenge of religious leadership connected to the vulnerability of human rights. To honor the Beirut Declaration, the G20 Interfaith Forum, and the challenges associated with implementation of *The 2030 Agenda*, we are forced to look to the future and ask how we might contribute to the development of specific experiences that improve the living standards of democratic societies where freedom of religion and the right to equality are the aim. This is not possible unless we understand and research ‘What happened with those religious leaders that did not take on the responsibility they should have taken on?’ To think of the future without looking to the past does not help us understand the prevailing conditions that made them not up to the circumstances. The construction of human rights forces us to seriously critically review how we approach the topic. There is great enthusiasm of the panelists that the projects they are designing will have an impact on reality. It is significant that human rights and faith do not follow different paths. As a human rights activist, I have to say that this is a complex process. It is wonderful that there is a belief in the capacity to impact reality, and enthusiasm that FBOs reach places where others don’t. In those places where freedom of religion may be more respected, there are other areas of violation where other aspects of the measures may be violated.

Kirsten Evans spoke about efforts to uphold religious freedom. In a place like Argentina, where a lot of harmony is enjoyed, what part of the Faith for Action plan can be applied? It is important to remember what you can offer from your own region of the world and make it part of your foreign policy to benefit those, in other parts of the world, who don’t have these same freedoms. There was an example of a pastor in Iran. The U.S. was not able to address this situation for political reasons, but they were able to reach out to another partner, who could. There is a global and regional leadership that countries can exert, the value of which should not be underestimated.

Michael Wiener said that the question of how human rights permeates development efforts is central to their approach. Over the last few days, we have had many religious leaders stressing the importance of justice, human dignity and human rights. Sometimes, the phrase human rights doesn’t explicitly appear, but there is synergy with the emphasis on human dignity. The Initiative Faith for Rights⁶³ is trying to encapsulate faith on the one side, and rights on the other. It is not

⁶³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx>

faith versus rights, but faith *for* rights. Why did the various experts who contributed to this framework, use terms like religion or belief (which are found in covenants and conventions)? The reason is that there were several diverse participants in the workshops, some of whom were theistic, nontheistic, and atheistic. The idea is to find a term that was inclusive enough to encompass anyone who would want to find him or herself identified. Faith was identified as the most inclusive one. So, “Faith for Rights” tries to support faith in its positive role in supporting human rights, and vice versa to see how human rights can strengthen or protect individual or groups of believers from infringements from state and non-state actors. Faith and human rights should be mutually reinforcing. It is not a question of white washing the role of religious leaders as actors. Faith-based actors can do good or bad. “Faith for Rights” offers guidance by providing a helpful framework. This is particularly important when it comes to incitement to hatred and violence or discrimination. Religious leaders have a specific role to play that was specifically described in the 2012 Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.⁶⁴ They are the nucleus of what the “Faith for Rights” initiative is trying to achieve. Religious leaders should refrain from using language that incites discrimination, hostility or violence. They have a crucial role to play in speaking out against this type of language when it is used. They have a third obligation. Religious leaders should never tolerate responding with violence even if they feel it is justified by a prior provocation. What the declaration broadens is: It covers all human rights and responsibilities, and targets every believer - not just religious leaders - indicating that every believer has a responsibility and role to play. There are 18 commitments in the Beirut Declaration, at the beginning of which, is the pledge to ensure gender equality and non-discrimination. The commitment is clear and reaffirms the right of women and children to not be subject to female genital mutilation, honor killing and child marriage. This uses human rights language with self-commitments, adding religious quotes to reinforce the principles. This illustrates that faith and human rights are not necessarily in opposition. It always involves interpretation. By putting various religious quotes from the Talmud, Bible, and Quran next to human rights declarations, a clear display is made to communicate how they go in the same direction. It demystifies the impression that faith is necessarily against human rights. Another commitment is to stand up for the rights of all minorities. If the two groups team up in a positive stance together, it shows how they can stand up for the rights of other minorities. By providing an umbrella framework to bring them together, they can advocate not only for their own flock.

⁶⁴ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/RabatPlanOfAction.aspx>

Another commitment targets and advocates for children and youth who are victims to incitement to violence in the name of religion. Another commitment is in the context of humanitarian aid. Here again it is important to abide by the principles of conduct of the Red Crescent and Red Cross when responding to crises. It can be detrimental if people perceive any bias associated with the delivery of faith-based aid. You may say this is all nice on paper, but is it being applied in practice? The Special Rapporteur has been using, in reports to the General Assembly and Human Rights Council, this approach as a ‘soft law.’ From civil society and faith-based actors, we have nine translations in use, including into unusual languages such as Albanian and Serbian, Turkish and Greek. We have been surprised by the interest shown by various groups. We have a project, which may sound a bit outside of the box, to engage with youth to ask them to translate one of the commitments into a tweet appropriate to their own language and discuss the substance of it. We are also making artistic use of these commitments. A visual artist based in Buenos Aires approached us, having learned about it on the internet, and he is portraying it through photos and videos to twelve leaders with this framework. Street artists will interpret it next month. We will have workshops in Sierra Leone doing a mural engraving religious freedom messages using the “Faith for Rights” framework. Using this with young people, religious minorities, judges, journalists – this will be the focus of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Dedicated funding will enable us to engage with various communities.

Elena Lopez Ruf talked about the indicators that the UNDP is developing for measuring contributions to SDG implementation. FBOs can cooperate together in developing processes. The study of development partnerships with FBOs explores how to link religion and development. The research is recent. The first mention of religion in development was in 1980 after the Iranian revolution. Then, 40 years went by without any mention of religion. This draws our attention because there has been an omission of considering religious communities in the development programs. Secularism has been understood as the privatization of religion. Secularism is now in crises with the resurgence of religion. There is also the increased recognition of FBOs as actors and promoters of development. The indicators would be a formal explicit recognition of religion that brings processes along with it. There is a change in development. It is no longer understood just as economic. The concept of development has become more comprehensive involving the building of bridges between, and among, religions. We used to believe that religions would disappear. Today, they are recognized as key actors who can cooperate with development. The project has been a participatory collaboration to ensure the legitimacy of their approach. This is a pilot process that adheres to the *2030 Agenda*. Different

traditions may not reference *The 2030 Agenda* the way that Catholicism does, but they may reference values that have a synergistic connection. FBOs have always been involved in social issues, so it is a challenge, looking ahead, to determine what value we can add to this process. There will be workshops and training about *The 2030 Agenda* for FBOs, and how to implement the metrics within communities and organizations. This will begin in October in Buenos Aires.

Paola Bohórquez made a presentation on behalf of UNDP along with Elena and Jose. Their work is associated with implementation of *The 2030 Agenda*. It is a challenging comprehensive vision of development that involves social inclusion and environmental protection. These are not only expressions. *The Agenda* imposes the obligation that economic development, social inclusion, and environmental protection be implemented for the enjoyment of all people – leaving no one behind- making all humans visible. This requires effective and transparent institutions that build alliances to foster ways to implement *The Agenda*. We hope it will be implemented to eliminate poverty and protect the planet. The UN was created from the ashes of war, and built on the basis of peace, dialogue and international cooperation. *The 2030 Agenda* encourages partnerships among stakeholders to finance it. Goal 17 says to promote the constitution of effective public/private and civil society partnerships to take advantage of resources and alliances. We need to reflect upon the hierarchy of values considering this new vision of development. How do we reflect upon our habits and ways of being to think about all people so that our common concern, care for the poor, and care for the earth are brought together as co-created creatures to protect our common home, as the Holy Father always mentions? This forces us to bring together the whole human family with the belief that things can change. We recognize the importance of working with FBOs and religious communities because they are relevant to the complex challenges imposed by sustainable development. Besides, these are leaders with grassroots and high level leadership with roles that are important. We are working with the National Council of Social Policies and carry out joint work with FBOs, in this case CREAS, with an inclusive partnership that represents all beliefs and builds on a shared vision. This shared vision is based on a shared vision of action based on faith and inspiration for the effective achievement of inclusive development for all, and the recognition of dignity and value of each human being. It is a set of values with unity and diversity. All share the ultimate goal which is the upholding of all human beings for sustainable development. We have to look at the multidimensional agenda to address the roots of poverty. It also expresses a commitment to advocacy and accountability. Not only is there visibility given to FBOs, but also to have guidelines to diagnose to help governments implement development policies. How can we

implement and strengthen through the design criteria we have? What are best practices to create synergies with those policies related to the subject matter that interact with our own initiatives and help to comply with the SDGs? So, we started with indicators given by the government, and then adapted to those given by FBOs.

José Oscar Henao spoke to the UNDP method design which has been validated by CREAS. They developed a technical instrument with indicators that summarizes in a document contributions to SDG implementation. The method measures direct and indirect contributions made by regional FBOs. For UNDP, we are able to identify how FBOs work with other FBOs, and with local authorities (public and private), that share common goals. The general nature of these values allows for concrete proposals, and guarantees a greater impact on communities at times when decisions about development need to be made. We identified linear indicators, and multiple indicators that allow us to make correlations about how they are intervening and whether it is done well. Impact measures can be used for policy recommendations. A lot of effort is involved in translating the indicators, including political indicators. One principle that is necessary, and part of the instrument's design, is the responsibility of FBOs to build an inclusive and transformative approach to human development.

Key Points Made:

- Critical review of the legacy of religious leadership that did not accept responsibility during times of crisis needs to be developed to inform future efforts
- There is a synergy between human rights and human dignity, but also cautious attention should be paid to where, and why, the two terms diverge
- It is important to understand your region's strengths and make it part of your foreign policy to benefit those, in other parts of the world, who don't have these same freedoms
- Human rights and faith-based efforts should follow the same path in the future
- Religious leaders have a responsibility to not use language, and speak out against those who do, that incites to discrimination, hostility or violence
- To break the cycle of violence, religious leaders have a responsibility to never respond to violence even if they feel it has been justified by a prior provocation

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- Support religious leaders and faith actors in fulfilling their human rights responsibilities in line with the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to hatred⁶⁵ as well as The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ For more information, see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/RabatPlanOfAction.aspx>

⁶⁶ For more information, see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx>.

WOMEN AND RELIGION: DIGNITY, EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Description: Traditional cultural norms perpetuate inequality, perhaps most dramatically between men and women. These norms echo still in many religious institutions and practices, and are too often wrongly extended to non-religious social patterns that raise further obstacles to achieving equitable gender roles. This panel explored areas where changing norms challenge religious communities (e.g., child marriage and domestic violence, for example) to look to deep moral understandings of human dignity to support girl's education, efforts to end harmful traditional practices, and shared visions of family and society. The session also highlighted ways in which religious communities make positive contributions to protecting vulnerable women, engaging women in furthering sustainable development goals, and contributing to the amelioration of women's vulnerable situation. Chaired by Jasmina Bosto (Executive Office to the Deputy Secretary General KAICIID, Austria), speakers were Kristina Arriaga (Vice Chair, United States Commission for International Religious Freedom-USCIRF, USA), Carmen Asiaín Pereira (Alternate Senator, Professor of Law and Religion, University of Montevideo, Uruguay), Sharon Eubank (Director of LDS Charities; Presidency, Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints, USA), Rosalina Tuyuc Velasquez (CONAVIGUA, Indigenous Leader and Human Rights Activist, Guatemala), and Daniel Parrell (Representative, Bahá'í International Community, United Nations, USA).

Presentations Overview:

Jasmina Bosto spoke about the importance of having conversations to establish frameworks that protect vulnerable women and aim to empower them and their equal rights. There are various international laws and frameworks already in place, but despite these we see that the woman's role in society is often not acknowledged. She noted that women of faith, specifically, are often overlooked. She highlighted the relevance of religious communities contributing to the empowerment of women. She asked three questions of the panelists. First, in your experience how can religious communities contribute to protecting and empowering vulnerable women? She urged the panelist to highlight specific experiences as examples. Second, how do you see the contribution of religious leaders towards the dignity of the human beings and having an equal seat as a woman? Lastly, she asked the panelist about challenges and recommendations that could be made based off the issues that were highlighted.

Kristina Arriaga referenced empirical work indicating that the status of women is the number one predictor to nations achieving peace.⁶⁷ When children witness the poor treatment of women in the household, this behavior continues throughout the child's lifetime as they integrate into society. The religious dimension to this is critical because we need to remember that freedom of religion or belief does not protect religion, it protects the people who practice it. The intersection of freedom of religion or belief and women's rights is full of productive potential. In countries

⁶⁷ See *Sex and World Peace* (2014) by Valier M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmitt. Columbia University Press.

where there are robust religious protections, there is also the empowerment of women. There are better family laws that apply to women. This means that if a woman needs a divorce or wishes to convert religions, she is able to do so without the fear of losing her home or children to the male in the house. She defined freedom of religion as the ability to live according to your deeply held convictions, whether this takes you to organized religion or no religion at all. It is the role of the state to protect the person who is exercising religious freedom, and it is the role of the religious leaders to facilitate that search for each human being. She then spoke of female genital mutilation. She noted that 200 million women have undergone this procedure globally. Every country is affected by it. She defined FGM as the altering of the clitoris to stop promiscuity, prevent the enjoyment of sex, and prevent the woman from ever becoming dignified. Religious leaders can have a considerable influence on stopping this practice. In the United States, the first FGM case will be heard next January; two doctors in Michigan has been charged with cutting over 100 girls.⁶⁸ If we have any goal for 2030, it should be to preserve the dignity for these girls. We all have a role to play. She concluded by describing her personal history and how it allowed her to understand that there is no such thing as losing a small amount of freedom. Additionally, she argued that we have grown too afraid to offend other people. She recommended that we be aware of our freedoms, and that we challenge our belief systems. She emphasized the importance of a constant exchange of ideas, even if the ideas exchanged make us uncomfortable.

Carmen Asiaín Pereira spoke of building bridges from the perspective of the Jewish tradition. She described that woman was created out of the rib of the man because it is close to the heart. While the man was created, the woman was constructed by God. She described how various religions have similar stories in relation to this. The role of the religious doctrine is sometimes overlooked. Women can build a home with intelligence and provide spaces for human dignity. She then concentrated on child marriage, and how this can be a means for abuse. She expressed concern for girls being raised in a society with a double standard. She finished by addressing the conflict that can exist between religion and the promotion of women.

Sharon Eubank noted that the Relief Society, which consists of 7 million women, was founded in 1842, and has been trying to how religious communities can contribute to protecting and empowering vulnerable women for 176 years. She highlighted three things: 1) To protect and promote freedom of faith, or lack of faith, for all; 2) To protect and strengthen families because

⁶⁸ See Cuevas, Mayra (2017). "Michigan Doctors charged in First Federal Genital Mutilation Case in US," CNN <https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/22/health/detroit-genital-mutilation-charges/index.html>

when the woman is protected, it makes all of society better. 3) To provide relief from suffering, poverty, and violence. This can be done by reaching out and building bridges to other communities. She went on to describe how Relief Society pairs women with peer mentors to build caring and problem-solving relationships. When peer mentors assist each other, interesting things begin to happen. She provided an example: Nora, a woman from the Dominican Republic, was raising her granddaughter while her two older children were incarcerated. She lacked a formal education, and had no resources or capital to start a business. However, through a community service program, she learned how to upsell, and earned five dollars. She bought candles and began selling candles in her home. She has since moved on to sell pharmaceuticals from a glass case. She provides for her children, and has sent her granddaughter to school. This education will keep this little girl off the street. You help a mother, and you help a little girl. This is a way women can help each other toward an education. She then reflected upon why women are not participating in some of these programs. The threat of violence against women is underlying so many things and cultures in various ways. Women suffer too much risk if they participate. This can only be mitigated in families and religious communities. Too often, the government does not protect women. She stated that every time a woman emerges from her fear and participates, we must honor her courage. This is the true role of religions and families, to bring the richness of their human spirit forward. Any action we can do to reduce violence against women will increase their participation. She spoke of her disdain to the idea that religion having nothing to offer due to the fact that it is patriarchal or oppressing. That idea is often tossed around in policy circles. This is not a nuanced view of what religion can offer. She feels as though getting down to the grassroots level to effect change can only be motivated when you have change in cultural practices or long-time traditions. Only religion can change grassroots cultural practices because it has the power to encourage people at its most intensely felt level. She referenced the collaboration of religious actors and government in Uganda to address HIV/AIDS and the positive effect that had. We can find common ground to go forward. We need to walk out of here and say we will do what we can do in our faiths and traditions.

Rosalina Tuyuc Velasquez said that, Mayans do not see religion—they see spirituality based on respecting life. Matter and spirit go together hand-in-hand. In the end, we are all equal to and supplement each other. Women play the role of trainers, educators, and protectors. In the worldview of her people, the women have the function of protecting and caring for all. This is morally binding. Their position is used to promote all things human. Women act with their hearts. Even when women do not know each other's language, they can understand each other's

hearts. She noted that, as a people, they understand that life needs to be lived in regards to the life on the planet. There is a connection with the earth. She noted that all species matter, no matter how small. Empowering women, and making them understand their central role in their communities, places them at an equal level with men. She said that all religious manifestations must meet social responsibilities to make sure goals are met. She pointed out that the SDG's fail to mention Aboriginal peoples. She argued that Indigenous people must have a level playing field. They have claims in respect to their territories and languages. Their spiritual practice is based on harmonizing the common good and human beings. She wondered why we see so many mothers that are young, noting that it is often powerful politicians with influence that are behind the business of child prostitution. She argued that military budgets should be redefined and redirected to address the basic needs of the population. Additionally, she added that corruption must be addressed. She stated that all governments are affected by corruption. In regards to challenges and recommendations she noted that we all have to guarantee rights of equality and this includes women. She argued that men may have to give up some of their opportunities in order to level the playing field for women. She pointed out that political and military powers are often responsible for inequality. In order to achieve respect for families, territories, and reality, we must have respect for different worldviews and different ways of life. Furthermore, she noted that the Indigenous have their own religion and spirituality and have often been condemned because they have different beliefs. She finished by stating that when we see inequalities we need to give God our hands, and then equality can be achieved.

Daniel Perell said that speaking of gender equality in a religious environment makes us uncomfortable, but being uncomfortable promotes growth. The Bahá'í community is learning that contribution to gender equality starts at the level of culture with certain fundamental beliefs about humanity. When it comes to being human, sex does not matter. The man and woman are both equal in the eyes of God. Until this is recognized, political and social progress is not possible. In communist countries, where this is happening, we are seeing change in cultures that are more than thousands of years old. Religion can produce more profound change than any other sector of society. The first challenge is to be coherent with the needs of the day. All must be lovers of the light, not lovers of the lamp. We have systems that are meant to be lights to illuminate the paths of humanity. However, sometimes the lamps of the systems themselves obscure the light that can come from them. When we see this happening, we have to be the first to abandon that lamp. This is a challenge for religious leaders that are attached to a historical context. He assumed, that gender equality is one of the most brilliant forms of light. Women

need to be woven into the fabric of all of our actions. He made four recommendations: 1) Center on changing culture and language. This is not only about women, it is about gender equality. The advancement of women is also the advancement of men; 2) Methodology - we must be careful not to take on the characteristics of the oppressor. We must find new ways and new patterns that promote gender equality and social sustainability; 3) Men - men need to be included in the conversation. Men are the ones that are responsible for changing the language of the oppressor. These are gender equality panels. Men and women work in harmony with each other; they are both powerful and necessary; 4) We all must be gender equality advocates, but we do not all need to be experts.

Key Points Made:

- Indigenous peoples are not mentioned in the SDGs, and their worldview should be respected
- Religion can promote the dignity of women to transform community cultures at the grassroots
- Gender equality involves all people, not just women

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- The G20 should consider using a portion of their military budgets for development purposes

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF: CHALLENGES AND POLICIES

Description: For most of human history, different religious communities have co-existed in peace. Where co-existence has broken down, examples of successful efforts to repair these fissures abound. Contemporary trends that show rising threats to religious freedom worldwide are, however, challenging peaceful co-existence, with implications for achievement of universal human rights and for peace and prosperity. This session will explore issues of religious freedom in relation to the G20 agenda and provide recommendations on how G20 leaders can strengthen peace and prosperity by strengthening religious freedom around the globe. Chaired by Norberto Padilla (President, Consorcio Latinoamericano de Libertad Religiosa, Argentina), speakers were Ana María Celis Brunet (President, International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, Chile), Thiago Garcia (Special Advisor on Religious Diversity and Human Rights, Brazil), Jorge Gentile (Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa, Argentina), and Peter Petkoff (Director of Religion, Law and International Relations Programme, Regent's Park College, Oxford, UK).

Presentations Overview:

Norberto Padilla indicated that the plenary session highlighted different perspectives from a variety of sources: governmental, human rights, and others. I would now like to give the floor to

these panelists who can continue to discuss how rights without humanity do not achieve their goal.

Ana María Celis Brunet indicated that there are two sustainable development goals that are very important in Latin America: ending poverty, and achieving peace and justice. We always work from a framework of human development and attempt to contribute to human dignity. From the perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Catholic pre-eminence might make some people feel overwhelmed, or that they may not be able to fully express their alternative religious views. Changes in religious identity in recent years have been produced in a peaceful manner. The number of self-identifying Catholics has dropped from 84% to 69%. This is related to a rise in evangelical religions. According to the Pew Research Center, Panama is one of the regions in the world that remains Christian in the face of the growing Muslim majority in many countries. When we discuss policies, we don't always see the need for policies to present freedom of religion as a fundamental right. Safety and security measures take place in other parts of the world and relate to religion; pluralism, however, is not viewed as being a fundamental right. The biggest need for public policy is in relation to freedom of religion or belief from a social perspective. In the census in Chile, a question about religious affiliation was included. The most important policies now relate to religious institutions, not the state. For instance, there have been allegations of sexual assault within the Catholic Church. It is important for the religious organizations themselves to be accountable and hold themselves to certain requirements, rather than simply expecting action from the State. Just because the Catholic Church is going through a crisis does not mean that it is the only church that will be affected. One liable party can make everyone else liable. In this sense, there should be no competition between religious organizations but only a common commitment to the higher good for all human society.

Thiago Garcia provided context regarding Brazil's history of violent colonization that shaped people and their beliefs. Indigenous peoples were particularly affected. Brazil has been influenced by African culture and the millions of people who were transported from Africa in a criminal way. Brazil originally did not include the slave population in their civil society. This exclusion needs to be remembered. The Brazilian project was based on a country with one language (Portuguese) and one religion (Catholicism) and one citizen model (a white man). Anything that did not conform to these models was eliminated. There is a long path ahead for the problems that resulted from this model that have yet to be resolved. There are continued instances of violence and intolerance in Brazil. Most of the victims are not looking for redress in

the right organizations. We need to promote the creation of policies that will combat intolerance. We find violations of religious freedom. There are also acts of aggression and physical violence. The questions of race, gender, and poverty are all bound up in this. Women of African descent who are impoverished have a much higher likelihood of being victims of such aggressive acts than white men. Pentecostal Christians are also discriminated against and frequently depicted as being poor and ignorant. Indigenous people are the victims of special regulations that prohibit freedom of religion. Society ought to respect the participation and self-determination of its people, so that they may practice their religions in freedom. The state plays key roles in relation to education – helping its citizens understand their rights. Furthermore, they ought to promote a pluralist model and listen to the many voices of religious diversity. Finally, the state has a key role to play as pertains to social inequality. If vulnerable populations are not assisted, there will never be social equality. Interfaith dialogue is more difficult in an asymmetrical context such as the one that exists in Brazil, but we need to continue trying. There is a lot of work to do to work towards *The 2030 Agenda*.

Jorge Gentile presented three ideas relating to the past, present, and future. Perhaps because of mere coincidence, we have an event taking place during the 173rd UN assembly in the U.S. while we are discussing our own issues at the G20. This annual meeting is related to interfaith issues. Globalization, which was very much criticized by President Trump, has left out the protection of the rights of individuals. Today, we see people of various faiths, or of none at all, being persecuted for their beliefs. Similarly, we need to challenge something that has happened in the past. What role does religion play in all this? Jesus Christ talked about giving to Caesar what belong to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God (Matthew 22:15-21). We typically interpret this to mean the separation of church and state. Yet, at the time, there were many political conflicts raging in the region. The context for this statement is more complex than we typically understand as we interpret it. Religious freedom is infringed not only when a religious space is defaced, but also through things like terrorisms that have religious objectives or that encourage young people to act on their religion through acts of terror. These groups and their actions also perpetuate violations of religious freedom. It is important to understand that freedom of religion includes freedom of conscience and freedom of thought. Perhaps the best mode is not to attempt to defeat others, but to attempt together to ensure the rights of religious freedom. There are some countries who profess a specific national religion, and others who ignore religion altogether, situated at either end of the spectrum. It is important to come up with legal regulations that safeguard religious freedoms. We ought to come up with an international treaty of religious

freedom. With such a treaty, we would include everything relative to the rights we are interested in protecting. These rights would include protection of the right to change religion, the right to not be prevented from practicing your religion, freedom of association and gathering, and respect of religious symbols. If we were to establish an international committee, they could have the power to enforce human rights, recommend government measures, produce studies and reports, and analyze information on terrorist attacks. This may be considered as a proposal, not just a desire, to be presented to the presidents who are meeting later this year. The International Convention for Religious Freedom for the Americas is being convened. Perhaps this convention could move to become more international in the future. We could then celebrate the arrival of a day when all people of various religious groups, ages, gender, and race could come together and say in the words quoted by Dr. Martin Luther King: “Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

Peter Petkoff reflected on the challenges and opportunities of relating problems of freedom of religion or belief to policies. He focused on foreign policy, specifically, and looked at the patterns that are currently emerging, and what they tell us about the role of freedom of religion or belief. People may wonder what freedom of religion or belief has to do with international law. This is a legitimate question. For a number of years, international law and international rights have become a central paradigm by which we deal with social issues. Religious freedom was not always central to the way we perceived human rights protection, although it has been there from the beginning. The understanding of freedom of religion or belief is moving away from being seen as a personal right towards being understood as a corporate one. Furthermore, discussions are now focusing on why religious organizations matter, and why they should have a voice. What kind of a paradigm shift does this represent in regards to foreign policy? The most obvious paradigm shift involves moving from a place where international law only protects nations (and does not protect human beings) to one where it focuses on humans. The sovereignty dimension of international law was always there, but since the end of the World Wars, there has been a greater emphasis on individuals and human beings. It is not incidental that in several consecutive national security doctrine issues, one of the main priorities has been traditional (vis-à-vis foreign) religions. Another big dimension that seems to emerge, in terms of international discourse wherein religion makes a difference, is understanding the religion deficit in international diplomacy. Finally, one very central and overarching theme which seems to emerge as a policy priority is linking religion and security, particularly in the right to protect in international law but also domestic security. A tension between universality and subsidiarity exists here: Our interest

in universal law and our ability to apply them in specific contexts. There is interest in this at academic legal levels. Freedom of religion or belief and religious discourses appear to be the grammar that helps shape these discussions. How this translates into corporate policy is as yet unknown, but it is clear that freedom of religion is here to stay.

Key Points Made:

- Human rights, without the emphasis on humanity that dignity affords, are unable to achieve their goal
- It is important for the religious organizations themselves to be transparent and accountable, rather than simply expecting action from the State
- Society ought to respect the participation and self-determination of its people so that they may practice their religions in freedom; Brazil is an example of a state that sees systematic discrimination against its minority, indigenous, and under-privileged populations
- The understanding of freedom of religion or belief is moving away from being seen as a personal right towards being understood as a corporate one
- International law is shifting away from only protects nations to focusing on humans
- International relations is becoming aware of the religion deficit in international diplomacy
- International and domestic policies are beginning to prioritize the right to protect religious minorities as a security issue

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments consider establishing an international treaty or committee that would have the power to enforce human rights that include, among them, freedom of religion or belief

RELIGIOUS ACTERS ADDRESSING RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

Description: Contemporary social forces, including new technologies and rapid social and economic change, multiply both opportunities and conflicts. After decades where ancient hopes for peace seemed within grasp, conflict is on the rise. Extremism, often couched as religious ideology, reflects deep social anxieties and dreams. It defies simple solutions as it disrupts lives. Understanding and framing responses to violent movement's demands a deep understanding of how religious forces are involved with modern politics and society and an active, creative involvement of religious actors. This session will explore why the concept of Countering Violent Extremism is contentious and how G20 leaders and communities can best respond. Chaired by Katherine Marshall (Senior Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University, U.S.), speakers were Patrice Brodeur (Senior Advisor, KAICIID, Canada), Nancy Falcón (Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa, Argentina), Cynthia Hotton (Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa, Argentina), James Patton (President/CEO, International Center for Religion & Diplomacy, U.S.), and Brendan Scannell (Board of Directors, International Shinto Foundation, Ireland).

Presentations Overview:

Katherine Marshall leads the World Faiths Development Dialogue which tries to bridge development and religious worlds. They focus on conflict, but also on fragile states. In fragile state contexts, religious contributions are salient. Issues of violence and peace building are the focus here. She asked panelists to address a series of questions and engage in informal discussion. A challenge that has come to her from many discussions on Nigeria, Myanmar or the Balkans, is the influence of one particular person. For example, the acting president of Nigeria made a fervent comment saying ‘The conflict in our country has nothing to do with religion’ – even as another person says ‘The conflict is fundamentally about religious institutions.’ What is happening with the links between conflict and religion? The restrictions on religion are tightly linked to violence against religious groups. The concept of CVE (countering violent extremism) communicates concerns about securitization with an explicit religious focus. One reason why there is revulsion against the idea is that this is a religious conflict. That idea runs so counter to what we consider religious beliefs to be about, and it does run counter to the complexity of grievances and the anger that is so present in too many societies. After discussing this, let’s turn to another question addressing religious peace building. This is a popular topic and there is a lot of interesting work on it. I am sad that the community of Sant’Egidio was unable to be here. How do your institutions see the patterns and potential for religious peace building? One of the sources of hesitation is that so often the religious figures involved are older men in the peace processes. The women are often quite invisible. How does one define, support, and bolster religious peace building? How do we overcome some of the challenges? Humanitarian aid and what is involved with peacemaking is an important factor. Context is so important to understand. Tolstoy is famously quoted for saying “Happy families tend to all be happy in their context, but unhappy families tend to all be unhappy in their own ways.” It is important that we understand the individual context, but try to identify some of the patterns that cut across the different contexts. The silos and separation between the world of development and peacemaking are frustrating. So often violence is part of failed development. The central mission of Religions for Peace, KAICIID, and the OAS is to find solutions to these problems, but also bring the religious dimension in with recognition of the negative side, but also with an appreciation for the strengths, as well. So you have the UN, but you also have the G20, which in some ways has more flexibility. What are some fresh ideas that might be put to the G20? The securitization approach is dominated by CVE. As we look toward Japan next year, try to reflect upon the G20 and their implied diagnosis about what is causing turbulence in the different countries. Democracy and religious freedom are certainly interrelated. What can we do to help sensitive

issues such as humanitarian relief get delivered without involving ourselves in politics or being used by politics? Do we give people an opportunity to air grievances? What if doing justice to that grievance does injustice to someone else? How do you deal with a situation where the only way to address the grievance is to do harm to someone else? This narrative that identifies Islam with violence is problematic. At OAS, do you have proof about political mediation by religious leaders in Venezuela or Nicaragua? In principle, what panelists have said is that Yemen and Central Africa are the bloodiest visions, but hunting down religion since the advent of secularization is not considered religious persecution. People may not have died, but a unique line of thought where certain religious ministers are bad or are not welcomed in universities occurs. All countries suffer from that. Is secularization one of the greatest threats to religion? Clearly there are some grievances that are not compatible with human rights such as the opposition to girls going to school or forcing the Rohingya out of their state in Myanmar. The latter case is driven by fear and ignorance. Most of the grievances I hear, having worked in 20 countries, has left me thinking about these issues of violence and development. Many of the issues are solvable and related to failures of governance. There are answers to them in the interests of the community. Let's continue this discussion.

Patrice Brodeur focused more on majority Muslim countries and the challenges they have been facing since 9/11. The whole world has gone through a process of securitization. That mode of thinking, on the part of so many governments, though not all to the same degree, takes an approach where the primary culprit in preventing violent extremism primarily has been in relation to Islam. It still comes back to the same with regard to many Muslims worldwide. I have come to understand that, as many Muslims say, 'Our religion has become hijacked by someone we don't recognize as Muslim at all because of their radical actions.' CVE policies amalgamate Islamicism with Islam so that the political and religious are so mixed that they cannot juxtapose Islam as a religion from Islamicism as a contemporary ideology. There are different times and periods where the closeness of these ties have different characteristics. While many Muslims have been apologetic, saying the radical forms are not like theirs, others have said that the radicals have nothing to do with Islam. But that does not recognize that they use religious language. So what does Islam mean, and what is the Islamicism interpretation of what it means? There is a wealth of information about Islamic dialogue. Some people have described that it is the equivalent of the Protestant Reformation in Islam right now, given the changes shaping leaders. The challenges posed by Daiish have forced them to face how things are getting misused. Arab world governments like Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia have developed their own

centers. How effective have they been is a question mark. A lot of this has to do with problem solving. Given the roots and fears pertaining to who becomes extremist, many of the challenges are linked to SDG implementation. FBOs work together for their implementation, but getting the state to recognize them is a challenge. Here is an example from Nigeria, Myanmar and the Arab Region – areas focused on by KAICIID in Vienna to illustrate how building the capacity of inter-religious platforms can be helpful. Myanmar is Christian and Muslim. The Arab Region is primarily Muslims. A principle of developing a stable interreligious platform is that it takes 3-4 years to develop and, even then, remains a work in progress. In each area, religion is part of the problem, not just part of the solution. There is some maturation that takes place among the leaders. Dialogue is nice, but given the crisis, they need to develop the trust to work together on the issues. If there is not good representation of religious diversity, how will policy makers take them seriously? Developing strong interfaith platforms in the long-term is a solution, because it provides a way for policy makers to work with the faith community. When that begins to happen, in Central Africa, stability begins to happen, while the rest remains chaos. The ones who managed to come to the capital risked their lives to get there for the training. Ultimately, when they return, they are the only credible voices given the vacuum of leadership. Religious actors have a crucial role to play where there is serious conflict. Where there is sporadic conflict, like in Nigeria, it is different because there is a perception among Christians, that Muslims are the problem. They have to develop the basic skills of Christian-Muslim dialogue to recognize that this ‘Islam’ is not Islam at all. We have been able to convene a truly diverse and inclusive community to begin to work with government to get mechanisms to address issues. The double instrumentalization by politics and religion on both sides is an issue. Expressing grievances through dialogue is the only way to let people feel they are understood. That is a process. There are lots of voices in the Islamic community, but not enough spaces of interfacing. When it comes to secularism, it can become intolerant and exclusivist when it is interpreted in an anti-religious way, but that need not be the case.

Nancy Falcón has worked in the office of genocide prevention in the UN context where these issues are most extreme. She talked about experiences from 2016 and 2017. The UN Department of Genocide decided to work on violence prevention in connection with religion. What role does religion play, and how can religion prevent future atrocious crimes or violence? Religious leaders from several regions were called into meetings. We were trained in the Americas at the UN, and learned about issues regarding violence. When actors were there with NGOs, we realized there was a difference in connection with violence between Latin America, North

America and Central America. When we talked about violence, we mentioned issues related to drug trafficking, land management, indigenous peoples, trafficking in persons, and gender violence. We realized that the religious factor cuts across all these issues which is why we would not say it was religion, as such, that caused the violence. When we talked about violence in North America, however, we talked about terrorism associated with Islam, and all that entailed. As a Muslim, I identified with Islamophobia, but my Latin American colleagues would say, ‘What is this?’ They were discussing entirely different issues. Issues are not the same for all the regions. Different regions have different issues related to levels of development. Although religion is implicated, it may not be the protagonist. In the religious environment, in principle, women are not overly present in interfaith peace building contexts. In my case, I am the head of an institution coordinating a youth program with three friends from different religious traditions working for interfaith dialogue. The role women play is still not properly valued. It is difficult within the community to legitimate the words of women. If I say Muslim or Islam, it is difficult to accept because I am a woman. I don’t have an Arab name or wear a head covering. The legitimacy of women’s words lack enough authority to create interfaith dialogue as a way of preventing future violent deeds. Maybe interfaith dialogue is easy in Argentina, but intra-faith dialogue is difficult. In my community, we can’t tolerate people thinking differently within our own religion. This needs to be addressed.

Cynthia Hotton is with OAS and focuses on Latin America. Cuba is more complex than Mexico where there are isolated cases at the community level in small villages. Deeply rooted religious practices oppress minorities that don’t want to invest in certain celebrations. They are vandalized or their churches or households attacked. It comes not from the state, but from the community. In the case of OAS, this has not been an issue included in the human rights agenda. One of the most important pillars is the Inter-American Human Commission on Human Rights.⁶⁹ The agenda does not include religious freedom. It is not incorporated as a human right to be protected at this point, because they have not seen the need for that. But there are two cases that have raised our concern: Venezuela and Nicaragua. In those cases, religious actors had recognition from governments about their importance because of a scaling up of conflict in both contexts. Religious actors are valid interlocutors. Churches were needed as evangelical pastors and Catholics. There is house burning, the putting of priests in jail, and there is an alert in the region which the Special Rapporteur for Religion recently spoke about in the Permanent Council of the

⁶⁹ See <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/>

OAS for the first time. There is an increasing awareness of the importance of this issue. In the Americas, representatives were present from Canada, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, the U.S., and Argentina. We expect there will be increasing recognition of the importance of religious freedom in the future. The issues in Latin America are rather different, but what is important is to pay attention to what religious leaders have done, and keep doing, to build bridges. We know the Colombian peace process where the guerrillas had to talk to the government. We need a counterpart in these other regions where those who were recognized were the religious representatives and the people knew them. They have worked so well together there. Santos was awarded the Nobel Prize for the peace he achieved. Going back to Venezuela, there is a new humanitarian crisis new to the region because of migration. No humanitarian relief has been admitted unless sent by organizations that already have shops set up there. CARITAS was already there, so they are allowed by government to provide humanitarian relief. The situation is completely different from what is happening elsewhere in other regions. There have been accusations of being a religious community trying to contain a captive population by a political group that does not respect people's freedoms, but this is a context where all humanitarian relief must go through the government. We see many NGOs in Washington say, 'We are there, and we want to help the needy who are needy because of the political crisis.' The religious leaders understand that what is fundamental is to reach out to the people; their role is not to find a political solution. At the border, remember there was a 2.3 million people outmigration of people leaving Venezuela. The borders have health issues and who is there? Religious organizations trying to help because there is an opening to receive migrants all over the world. Nobody asked for money and nobody complained. Colombia offered free of charge public health. On the other hand, what we are missing is recognition by the states of what religion is and the freedom for full enjoyment for religious communities. There are churches being vandalized; religious leaders are being incarcerated and the OAS does not intervene. So, we need to include religious freedom in this list of human rights. Right now, it is not taken as a problem to be addressed by the international agencies. On the other hand, these organizations are not being used politically in Venezuela where NGOs don't care if they are being used or not, because it is just about saving lives. They just focus on the humanitarian issue. They don't care about the politics. In Nicaragua, at the beginning, FBOs sided with the political opposition party, but as governments recognized them as valid counterparts and the authoritarian governments did not recognize the church as a counterpart and then they were moved out and pushed away, they no longer serve as a bridge. But at one point they had been players. I believe one of the solutions is political participation.

You need to speak loud and clear when there is religious persecution. When fighting for a guarantee of religious freedom and rights, that needs to be practiced.

James Patton is with the International Center for Religious Diplomacy. Why is CVE so controversial, and what are some ways around this? The question of countering violent extremism is broader than religious extremism. You are dealing with people who are mobilized to violence, people mobilizing others, and a holding/permissive community who allows them to function in their space. Most of the responses to preventing and countering violent extremism are through security measures or counter-narrative efforts. The latter has shortcomings in that the mobilized are less ideologues; they feel isolated and excluded from the society, as it is. The kind of violence they are mobilized toward is antisocial attempts at breaking down social structures that are leaving them out. We see this with gangs, etc. They don't have the opportunities to thrive with the way the structure is set up, so they reject it. The ideologues are the mobilizers. They are committed to violence. They wrap the ideas around that to mobilize others to engage in violent behavior. It can be driven by ideology or motivated by personal gain. The groups who feel isolated and excluded, when they join these identity groups, create new rules. We see kids without income join the terrorist group to make money, have a family, or gain rewards in the afterlife because they don't see in this world any hope for a future. To think it is their religious ideology misses the mark. Reconstruction of a different narrative doesn't resonate or change their situation. The other place where it falls short is with the mobilizers. They have their own school. Introduction of a counter-narrative may have good content, but the delivery may be problematic if the conveyance strategy lacks legitimacy. Consider the Marrakesh Declaration. If you are working with kids in peripheral areas who are following an Imam, they will not hear of the declaration, nor will they be convinced by it, because it is coming from moderate voices who are already discredited in their minds. So, we focus on communities that operate as 'holding spaces.' The holding idea provides a space out of which people can function. We don't know the holding spaces well, and we don't concentrate on them well, but they create a buffer. If we can connect with them via strategies, that might help. The current tools we are using for CVE are not working. Why not, and what does? Violence works with people who have been counter-socialized. The structures need to be transformed so that their grievances are heard. Those changes require that governments and other institutional actors are involved. Mobilizers should be responded to by security measures, but if it is not done well, then there is so much collateral damage that it is not worthwhile. Dissolving the holding community is a place where the counter narratives can work. Isolate the ideologues by dissolving the holding community. In Yemen, law

and order services were being offered where the government was absent. So we offered Western style conflict resolution models that were implemented over water conflicts. At-risk youth were gathered to install water in communities that did not have any. We gave the youth a role in the social structure. Before that, the only group they saw doing that was Al-Qaeda. Now, they have sworn to not let them into their community again. Now, we work in other regions to understand the local grievances among nonviolent communities who do not have a voice. What are their interests and grievances? How can they be brought into things? There are tangible, tactical ways to be going about these things. When one grievance can only be resolved at the cost of another, I don't know if that functions in many areas, but it does in terms of identity. If the only way for my identity to exist is to eliminate you, most of that is false and based on issues about basic needs associated with territory, power and identity crises. Winston Churchill once said that you can always get half of the poor to kill the other half. There are people making horrible decisions for survival; they are fighting over scraps. We should look at the waste of how we live. We need to be seriously intentional about changing our own style of living if we are going to solve the environmental crisis. The same thing applies here when it comes to grievances and identity crisis where groups are not being allowed to survive because of our power, resources and how we consume them.

Key Points Made:

- Many of the cases where religion relates to violence stem from failures of development and governance that present solvable problems
- The securitization emphasis of CVE policies (countering violent extremism) is problematic, particularly for religious minorities
- CVE conflates Islamicism with Islam intermixing the political and religious so that they cannot juxtapose Islam as a religion from Islamicism as a contemporary ideology
- Since 9/11, many Muslims have said that their faith tradition has been hijacked by someone they don't recognize as Muslim at all because of their radical actions
- Islam may be undergoing its own Islamic Reformation
- Stable interreligious platforms take time so that they can move beyond dialogue to develop trust
- Instrumentalization is a two-way problem, on the part of both politics and religion
- The dynamics of interreligious leadership is different for crisis situations than it is for contexts where violence is intermittent and sporadic
- Linkages between religion and violence are regionally specific and should be contextualized
- Although religion may be implicated in violence, it may not be the protagonist
- In some contexts, intra-faith dialogue is as challenging, if not more, than interfaith dialogue
- Investment in counter narratives is an ineffective strategy toward people who have been counter-socialized to embrace radical behavior; the structure does not present them with

opportunities to thrive, so they reject it; Reconstruction of a different narrative neither resonates nor changes their situation

- Introduction of counter-narratives may have good content, but the delivery may be problematic if the conveyance strategy is perceived to lack legitimacy
- Counter narratives are useful for dissolving the holding community in order to isolate the ideologues; do this by understanding local grievances, and giving the youth a role in the social structure among nonviolent communities who do not have a voice

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments should not lean on security responses for things that are not CDE focused
- That the G20 governments work with religious actors to understanding how linkages between religion and violence are regionally specific and contextualized
- That the G20 leaders should not use hate discourse toward people like refugees
- That the G20 governments include social hostilities against religious minorities into their human rights agenda

IN THE LINE OF FIRE: FUNDING ESSENTIAL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF IN CONFLICT ZONES

Description: Faith-based organizations are often the last bastion of humanitarian service delivery in conflict and volatile contexts and therefore need reliable access to financial services. However, often these same organizations are considered to be funding risks because they are operating in the vicinity of the terrorist groups/violent extremists driving the conflict. This panel brings together a number of faith-based organizations from around the world to provide recommendations on: ‘How can G20 leaders work to assure that essential funding reaches the most vulnerable and needy in conflict zones? What financial instruments and legislation are needed to ensure transparency and responsible use of funds for these humanitarian operations?’ Chaired by Stephanie Hochstetter (Director for the Rome-based Agencies and Committee on World Food Security, World Food Programme, Italy), speakers were Sharif Aly (CEO, Islamic Relief USA-IRUSA), Ton Groeneweg (Programme Officer for Asia, Mensen met een Missie, Netherlands), Rawaad Mahyub (Executive Director, The Humanitarian Forum, UK), and Lia van Broekhoven (Co-founder and Executive Director Human Security Collective-HSC, Netherlands).

Presentations Overview:

Stephanie Hochstetter mentioned that World Food Programme (WFP) is heavily involved in humanitarian aid. Additionally, she noted that the speakers on this panel would highlight various complexities associated with humanitarian assistance and the funding it requires. She argued that FBO’s are on the front lines of humanitarian service delivery and are often adversely affected by funding complications. When these organizations experience issues with their funding and finances, they are not able to help the people who need it most. She noted that WFP depends heavily on FBO’s and NGO’s in the most extreme contexts. These organizations are the only ones with access at ground level and it is vital that we come to an understanding in relation to this issue.

Sharif Aly spoke about the consequences of de-risking and impacts this would have on humanitarian relief efforts. He noted that the challenges associated with funding and relief in conflict zones is at the core of Islamic Relief (IR). This organization exists to be on the ground at disaster sites. IR started in 1993 in response to the conflict and crisis in Bosnia. Although through the years the organization has expanded into other areas, at their core, they are there to assist people on the ground in the most vulnerable situations across the world. He told a story from 2009. Islamic Relief was operating in Afghanistan. One of the operations was related to winterization. IR was the only group that had access to provide aid. We waited for funds to transfer, in order for this community to protect themselves over the harsh winter. Due to delays, we were unable to respond in time. People on the ground suffered, and many died due to this. They learned that finding alternative ways to assist was necessary. Now, ten years later, at the beginning of 2018, IR is part of larger network of Islamic Relief partners. Islamic Relief operates in over 40 countries across the world, with partnerships in 14 of those countries. They have been the primary funder for programs in Syria. Unfortunately, since the beginning of 2018, they have not been able to transfer funds inside Syria. They have had to divert their funding from directly helping those in Syria, to other countries to assist with refugee support. He described that policymakers discuss the importance of rebuilding infrastructures and supporting refugees in order for them to return home. However, with 65 million people worldwide that are either internally displaced or refugees, the current policies in place are in direct contradiction to this goal. When financial policies limit the goals of these organizations to work within these countries, they are actually encouraging people to leave their home countries. The people in the vulnerable communities are the ones facing the harm in these de-risking efforts. He asked us to ponder, “Are our financial systems failing the most vulnerable people in the world?” The financial systems are not able to keep up with the times of our current existence. This is an issue facing many charitable organizations, all of whom have gone through the key internal controls honoring the required expectations. He argued that these are the organizations that we should be trying to support the most, and that simply is not happening. He continued by describing an experience that IR had after a 23-year banking relationship. The organization was given one month to move over 48 million dollars’ worth of funds to another service. This was a profitable relationship for the bank (bearing in mind that Muslims do not take interest); all interest accumulation for the 23 years had been pocketed by the bank. This equates to approximately 2 million dollars a year. Additionally, IR had undergone all of the required processes to ensure transparency and legitimacy as an institution. It was stated that banks have never been punished for de-risking, but they have been penalized for not de-risking. Banks are not concerned with faiths; they are concerned with money. However, when regulators put an emphasis on, and create high-risk profiles for, NGO’s, they make it so banks do not see a profit when they engage in these international humanitarian efforts. In this scenario, policy is working against the best interests of most of our society. Now, he argued, the humanitarian sector is forced to change the approach when engaging with financial institutions. This diverts funding from humanitarian efforts to fighting this additional challenge. He finished with a question: What are the long-term consequences when mainstream NGO’s are being delayed in their transfers, or their accounts are being closed? He argued that donors want to give and should be encouraged to give, where we know we can trace their contributions across the world. However, what we are encouraging is

alternative ways of giving - methods that are not as transparent. Policy will eventually have the counter-effect and make money less clear to the public eye. He concluded by stating that we need to find solutions now to avoid the unintended consequences that are emerging. The humanitarian community is now trying to find solutions to this, rather than focusing on the most vulnerable people in our societies.

Rick van der Woud represented the organization *Mensen met een Missie/People on a Mission*. The organization was established 95 years ago by Catholic religious orders and obligations. They have evolved into doing work in conflict-prone areas. They work in 13 countries including South Sudan, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Congo. They are faith sensitive, and work patiently and listen carefully to navigate areas that are a “touchy” territory. Touchy regions where extremism, violence, and exclusion are at their roots, faith, and belief. They provide locally led and small-scale relief with boots on the ground. To do this, they rely on trust that is easily broken. He described false paternalism, or the notions that governments and banks need to protect us from something. This, he argued, confronts us with substantial waiting times. This often caused the halting of operations for up to 3 or 4 months. When their partners on the ground do not receive their funds, the work does not get done. He described a situation in Indonesia where many documents were required to release needed funds. Additionally, he explained that for their organization, this began after a terror attack on Catholic churches. They experienced trouble with their own bank that they had banked with for 25 years. They were wanting to transfer some assets to a new account. However, they were required to go through, and pay for, an extensive vetting process for the new account, as if they had not already built a trusting relationship with the bank. He concluded with saying that the most pressing matter is the sharing of information between governments and banks. The in-depth inquiries the organization faces places undue strain on them. The probes often are profoundly personal and political. A collapse of trust occurs. Tense working relationships with partners in the field form, as banks nag them with questions they cannot answer. If we lose out on trust, maybe we will lose out on all of the good in between.

Rawaad Mahyub spoke of the impact of de-risking on NGO’s and civil society. He related his discussion to the theme of the forum, a fair and dignified future. Equitable access for all NGO’s is the reason for being here. His organization, the Humanitarian Forum, is tasked with consulting and collaborating with NGOs in the Middle East and North Africa region. A key issue faced is delayed money transfers and access to financial services. These organizations are the ones that have access and trust in these areas and are best suited to provide effective response to help the vulnerable. He noted, that policymakers want statistics and facts, and are not concerned with stories or anecdotal data. Therefore, his organization and partners conducted research. They published four case studies from Yemen, Somalia, Syria, and Palestine.⁷⁰ They found that there was a decrease in the number of NGO’s. Another key finding was the delay of funds for typically a few weeks to a few months. However, funds were delayed for three years in an extreme case in Somalia. He noted that when the money arrives too late, it is no longer relevant.

⁷⁰ For more information, see <https://www.odi.org/publications/111177-impact-bank-de-risking-humanitarian-response-syrian-crisis>

In one project, money was needed for winter relief and the funds didn't arrive until summer. Geography plays a role. Organizations are choosing not to operate in areas that are perceived to be high risk even if there is a major need there. This creates a vacuum that is filled by terrorism. He noted that these groups take advantage of vulnerable communities at the expense of reputable organizations not being able to work in those locations. He spoke about cash programming. In some places they are finding that cash is too risky, and prefer to supply commodities. The idea of money is to give people the means to get whatever it is they need. Sometimes they do not need food packs or clothes. However, in some areas, cash is too risky and the people in these locations suffer from it. He noted that de-risking affects all charities, but he placed his focus on FBO's, given the theme of the forum. In the research conducted, organizations with the word Muslim in the name were the most affected by the financial de-risking issues. However, these are the charities that deliver the last mile of aid to the most vulnerable conflict areas. He mentioned a Somalian donor who felt that giving to charity was his religious duty. This man thought he could no longer do so because of this issue. He has forgotten how to do that, and this is a common theme in many of these communities. The whole idea of financial institutions attempting to keep funds from terrorists is essentially having the opposite effect because of how the de-risking process is affecting the lives of those who do not receive the necessary assistance in time. We need to ensure that change happens, and it happens quickly.

Lia van Broekhoven spoke about the complex issues that arise, particularly in the transfer of money to partners, due to de-risking. She described de-risking, it is about risk that financial institutions want to avoid in regards to terrorism or money laundering. It is a decision made by a bank or a financial institution to refuse to open a bank account, to delay transactions from senders to receivers, or to close the account of the civil society organization. She asked, why are banks de-risking? There are international rules and regulations from the Financial Action Task Force, UN Security Council sanctions, and US-designated terrorist organization lists which banks are obliged to comply with. Banks are gatekeepers for preventing money laundering and terrorist finance. However, she noted, that banks are often the lifeline for many NPO's around the world. There are an estimated 10 million NPO's worldwide and if they made up a country they would be the 5th largest economy in the world. In the UK, up to 80% of the charities face some degree of difficulty using banks for financing. She described that this causes them to use alternative, often less safe, methods of transferring money. When a bank closes the account of a civil society organization, and that organization still wishes to operate, it has to resort to higher risk means of transferring money. She referenced a report by the Charity and Security Network in the US indicating that US non-profits that are channeling money to partners in humanitarian crisis are facing problems. Almost 70% faced systemic difficulties in transferring money. These include delayed transfers and fee increases. This increases operating costs for the non-profits. She described that this increases the workload for NPOs, as they have to scrutinize their partners carefully. This has an adverse effect mostly on small NPO's who do not have the resources to go through this scrutinization process. She explained the impact of de-risking, which include timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. It has effects on the SDG's, financial institutions agenda, and civic space in general. Civic space is shrinking, as support for civil society is decreasing. If NPO's are not able to transfer money to partners in conflict areas, there will be a withdrawal

from their activities. She argued, that this will leave open space for violent extremists' groups to step in and provide services which would otherwise be given by legitimate non-profit organizations. It is counterproductive to mitigating financing to terrorists. She argued that organizing together in coalitions, including banks and regulators and policymakers, to talk about solutions together is of vital importance. It is not easy because no one wants to take responsibility for money falling into the wrong hands. She concluded, this is a problem across civil society, and it affects mostly the organizations active in conflict areas. There are some solutions underway.

Key Points Made:

- De-risking is adversely affecting the ability of reputable institutions, including NGO's, FBO's, and NPO's, to adequately deliver critical humanitarian aid
- The absence of reputable organizations providing aid, leaves space for extremist and terrorists to step in
- Regulations are inconsistent, bankers are fearful of the regulators, and this interferes with the ability of humanitarian groups to deliver services – which the people suffering do not understand
- Rather than de-risking the entire sector, de-risking should focus on those genuinely funding terrorist organizations

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments recognize NPOs as a sector that is negatively affected by bank de-risking and that deserves the same protections given to other private sector groups⁷¹
- That the G20 governments adopt a communique at the November G20 summit to address bank de-risking
- That the G20 governments discuss the effects and possible concrete actions together with the civil society affinity group, the C20, and NPOs working on the issue
- That the G20 governments include a review - done together with the NPOs - of the impact on NPOs and consider possible response strategies
- That the GPFi set up a sub-group on financial access for NPOs (similar to the group on SMEs) which would also include various NPOs to develop specific action items regarding NPOs under the Action Plan on Financial Inclusion to address the matter
- That the G20 governments promote institutional-level good practices, including specific policy and reporting reforms, to ensure financial access, transfers and operations for NPOs
- That the G20 governments clarify regulatory expectations for financial institutions on the risk-based approach⁷²
- That the FATF produce more comprehensive guidance on the risk-based approach for NPOs as a specific-type of banking customer based on revised Recommendation 8

⁷¹ A complete policy brief on this can be found in the annex

⁷² See also FATF report to G-20 finance ministers and central bank: <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/FATF-G20-FM-CBG-March-2018.pdf>

DESPISE NOT MY YOUTH: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP

Description: Achievement of the UN SDGs is a monumental task, requiring contributions and collaborations from a wide spectrum of sectorial partners around the world. However, often lost in the discussions is the need for intergenerational collaborators. Instead of passive recipients of care, in reality youth are active and essential agents in leading local and global efforts to build peace, strengthen development and reach the most vulnerable in our communities. They are crucial collaborators, because their communications models, specific theme, and unique approaches to dialogue are novel resources for this global task. This panel brings together some of the most practiced, connected and visionary young interfaith leaders from across the globe to share their experiences, insights and recommendations. This panel discussed how to engage youth, and how involving youth can encourage and impact interfaith dialogue. Chaired by Maria Eugenia Crespo (Director of Cooperation Circle Support, United Religions Initiative/URI, Argentina), speakers were Uriel Aiskovich (Diversity Network Argentina), Raquel Bennett (Representative, A Common Word Among the Youth/ACWAY, USA), Sara Rahim (Representative, A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY), USA), Carolina Yagas (Representative, A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY), USA), and Abbas Panakkal (Director International Relations, Ma'din Academy, India).

Presentations Overview:

Maria Eugenia Crespo would like for many religious leaders and youth to be involved with interreligious dialogue now rather than waiting for the future. Youth are the ones that move their religious communities. So, unless there is a partnership with the youth, there will be less of an impact on the country. In 2008, three different religions were called upon, which might have been the first youth project. After that, it grew, and more projects involving youth began. It was not only at the level of wanting the youth to join, but empowering them and giving them a voice. The cooperation involves people from eight different religions, working on the grassroots level where they are all the same and have an important voice. This collective thought makes them stronger. Because they are strong, they can be creative.

Uriel Aiskovich is with the Diversity Network Argentina. They work on peace building through conflict methodologies. They demonstrated an exercise they use with their youth. A picture of an older gentleman and what appears to be a soldier standing next to each other. The audience was then asked what they saw in the picture. Answers varied from a soldier helping another person to a soldier arresting the older gentleman. What is gained from this exercise is a realization that from the same picture, there are opposing views. Those involved in Diversity Network Argentina go through the same training they use on the youth. So, when working with the youth, they can use their own experience to say that even though they have different opinions, they can still work together. The idea is that even though what is seen can be very evident to one person, another can be seeing something completely different, and each person believes they are right. There is a need to listen to each of those people. People believe they are open to others' opinions

and religions, but when they start experiencing it, it is through their own beliefs. The second element is to understand others more deeply. Combine experience and methods to move from conversations to actions. Through their own experience, they have helped guide youth through the process the way they want to. They have built working teams to facilitate dialogue.

Raquel Bennett states that Brazil has the largest Catholic population in the world. However, they also have religious diversity that includes African religions. In Brazil, the African religions are the ones that suffer the most with tolerance. There is a major interfaith problem in Brazil. The Ministry of Human Rights registered one complaint every fifteen hours during 2015-17, with 39% of the victims belonging to African based religions. To bring context to the attacks, some of them include fire being set to temples belonging to the African religions. The projects deal with Brazilian youth at universities to promote intercultural understanding. The first part of the project deals with interfaith in Brazil and in the world. The second part deals with the collaboration needed to elaborate the projects to increase interfaith harmony in Brazil. The second project is a campaign in Brazil that involved some people in universities. Each person was asked to write a stereotype they face in present society. This caused people to quickly reflect on the situations and stereotypes.

Sara Rahim described how A Common Word among the Youth was founded. Founded in 2007, A Common Word Initiative promoted dialogue between Christians and Muslims and gained global recognition. It also created the United Nations' Interfaith Harmony Week. However, it lacked voices of the youth so, A Common Word among the Youth (ACWAY) was started. ACWAY has over one hundred people from seventy-five countries with more than one hundred activities around the globe. It works to develop peace amidst as a global youth movement. The organization program launched in 2015, and after the first forum took place, they launched the International Network. During the second forum, they produced the ACWAY Charter for Peace, which includes twelve pledges for interfaith work in their communities. In the third forum, they brought in fifty ACWAY members and one hundred Sudan youth committed to interfaith work and cross-cultural collaboration in their community. From this forum, they produced the Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs). These goals are meant to supplement the areas that are missing from the SDGs. The IDGs could impact interfaith work and give a way to measure that impact. From January 2016-September 2018, ACWAY has conducted over 145 activities in over sixty countries and have impacted 21,315 beneficiaries. Over 50% of their activities occur in education, 33% in social benefits. 50% of the youth involved are ages 20-35 and the rest are ages

below 20. Overall, ACWAY is a volunteer youth movement to promote peace and understanding through local action.

Carolina Yagas believes ACWAY is a driver to promote interfaith dialogue. Her activities include educating grades 9-12 at a local church. The main goal is to go against the flow of marginalization and the exclusion of children, which in the house of God, they will always be received. The second project was to take advantage of a celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah to open dialogue to face the challenges of having multi-faith neighbors. There is a need to go beyond tolerance because tolerance is only letting each other live their own religions. That is not enough to enter interfaith dialogue. There are many religions and everybody needs to recognize they are all valid, and to recognize the equality of rights for all religions. Carolina Yagas started a project working with Venezuelan refugees in Argentina in 2018. Due to a serious economic crisis, people started fleeing Venezuela by hundreds per day, and coming to Argentina. The refugees travel for seven days and arrive with only what they have on their backs. However, that clothing is not sufficient for the Argentina winter. To help them, Carolina Yagas started an Instagram account so there is a way for the refugees to contact her for the items they need. She also offers job information and explains how they can obtain their national identity or residence card.

Abbas Panakkal talked about how the Jewish community teaches that you can learn from teachers and students. Often, it is believed that ‘big talks’ are given by people with impressive titles in a place of authority. It is forgotten that religion is also part of the identity of those people that do not have a voice. The premise of their program, the ID team, is to promote training programs for different ‘voiceless’ people so that they can have the courage to talk about their personal stories. This has a big impact on the population they work with. The ID team has worked on the premise that normal people can put themselves in other people’s shoes to understand what their life is like. The idea proposed now is that many short talks have a bigger impact. The goal is to allow people to discover what they can tell or what they have to say, and that they can inspire others. In mid-October 2018, ID will be present in a large youth event in Mexico. Those that are there apply to learn how they could take what they learn to implement in their own cities. From ID, people can be empowered. People learn to work with different groups and break down prejudices, which encourages interfaith dialogue.

Key Points Made:

- Engaging with the youth will allow for a greater impact on the SDGs
- Interfaith dialogue amongst the youth allows them to understand diversity and how to work with them

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments begin training young people with a special focus on college campuses to engage in interfaith dialogue
- That the G20 governments prioritize human rights protections for refugees
- That the G20 governments provide health care as benefit to refugees
- That the G20 governments solicit input from people that are not represented by G20 members when they gather for dialogue

RELIGIOUS LITERACY ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION AND MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

Description: One objective of the G20 Interfaith Forum is to underscore the need and value of partnerships among governments and secular institutions with religious communities and faith-inspired organizations to achieve UN SDGs and G20 economic objectives. Underpinning successful partnerships are mutual respect and understanding generated by high levels of religious literacy and intercultural understanding. This panel brings together eminent journalists and educators from around the world who critically examine the role Education and Media play, for better or worse, in creating religiously literate citizens and building peaceful, cohesive societies in their respective countries. Their experiences may inspire or be adapted for other G20 contexts. Chaired by Andrew West (Presenter, The Religion & Ethics Report, ABC Radio National, Australia), speakers were Rabbi Silvina Chemen (Kehilat Bet El, Argentina), Zahra Jamal (Associate Director, Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance, USA), Gustavo Magdalena (Executive Director, Federación de Asociaciones Educativas Religiosas de Argentina, Argentina), Venus Khalessi (Director of Media Relations Australian Bahá'í Community, Australia), Ivan Petrella (Director of Programa Argentina 2030, Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros de la Nación, Argentina), and Bhavaya Srivastava (Founding Member, International Association for Religion Journalists, India).

Presentations Overview:

Andrew West asked the panelists to define religious literacy and explain why they find it to be important. He also referenced the monumental debates in the U.S. about the role of religion in public education. He asked panelists to comment on the prospect of religious education in the general school system. How do we have a necessary discussion about religion and its excesses, criticisms, and issues without crossing a line?

Rabbi Silvina Chemen said that religious literacy involves teaching people how to read different faith traditions. There are many questions about terminology: Do we use the term

“Israeli,” “Hebrew,” or “Jew”? “Muslim,” “Islamist,” or “Islamic”? Are these terms and their connotations being deliberately employed, or simply used in ignorance? From their particular place, each religion keeps its own values of holiness, and often the global world ignores them, and the media is unable to correctly represent them. I hope that we can help turn around the cruelty we so often witness. Spirituality is a non-transferrable value. Hope ought also to be part of the media agenda, and all policies of the world’s countries. This hope is built on a strong understanding of the other, and the other’s understanding of spirituality and belief. Today, the media is not only a channel for entertainment; it also builds trends and shapes opinions. This is where religion can make a significant contribution and help others understand reality from a faith perspective. We ought also to consider that the majority of religious shows on the media are often aired on TV or the radio only at unpopular hours or inconvenient times of day. Media representatives ought to be trained in religious diversity and tolerance so that pluralism is present; religions have much to contribute and say beyond the walls of their sanctuaries. I hope that the lack of hope in the world can bring about a change of paradigm and allow religions to overcome their current marginalized place in the world’s agenda. I hope that the media can allow religions to contribute to global peace and harmony. Argentina is a diverse country, although Catholicism has been the majority religion for some time. Different religions have the ability to develop their own curricula. Public education, however, remains a big issue. Some children conceal their faith to avoid being bullied. Occasionally, the media stigmatizes certain terms or words and children then relate negatively to these religions. Teachers also need to be trained before children come to school, so that they can understand religious needs and accommodations for students. If a child does not eat for a month, for example, he or she is not anorexic, but Muslim. Education starts with the educators.

Zahra Jamal referenced data indicating that 80% of the global population belongs to a religious tradition. Religious literacy, and the ability to engage with the people around us, is therefore critical. An inclusive, fact-based, academic study of religions is important. Local narratives are also vital. Social science teaches us that the study of religion is important for promoting civil engagement with other people. Who is teaching and the cultural competence and sensitivity of the faculty also makes a difference in the education. Enhancing mutually inspiring relationships is very important – it can help in combatting stereotypes and allows various groups to work together for the common good on issues like poverty alleviation and social problems. With regards to incorporating religious literacy into public education, there are a variety of issues in this sphere, including fake news, the rise of hate crimes, and other things. While curricula exist,

they typically do not include faith-based perspectives. The institution where she works has developed an academic curriculum that encourages students and teachers to think more critically about the study of religion. A study of other religions can also help to welcome immigrants and refugees and decrease the occurrence of hate crimes. Various service projects can also provide that type of exposure and allow participants to see faith in action. It is important to not only understand difference, but to also engage with it. Critical moments arise when emotions are high. There will always be diversity in humanity, but it should not mean that we can't get along. We need to draw on our common values and find ways to mobilize them for the common good.

Gustavo Magdalena said that literacy implies schools, as it is their task to teach this. Religious literacy feels increasingly necessary. If education ought to be accessible to all and of high quality, then we should not ignore that religious education ought to be included. In the Catholic Church, we believe in a "healthy laïcité." We ought to learn to live together, discover new truths, and ask ourselves new questions. Minds can be opened as we share questions and new ideas. In Argentina, the study of religions in state schools is essentially closed. History has different hues and developments, and it is possible to say that now in Catholic schools, there is also diversity regarding what a Catholic school means: Whether it should enforce its own identity, insist on a faith-based education, or whether each person decides what he or she believes. A school in Cordoba hosts a visit to a cathedral, a mosque, an Evangelical church, and so on. It is an interreligious and interfaith educational endeavor that allows for understanding various backgrounds.

Ivan Petrella said that religious literacy should emphasize understanding the points of view of other people that are different to our own. This is difficult because when this happens, sometimes it erodes the idea that our own beliefs are special or that they are unique. The implications of this for education in Argentina include the re-evaluation of public education here. It is possible to graduate from higher education without ever having read a few pages of the Quran, and no one will think this is strange. It is important to rethink the role of religions in education. Of course, religious education does not mean training students to be faithful or to become a believer. Rather, religious education is incorporating the academic critique of religion into the dialogue. There is a course in world religions in a public school in California that is viewed as being highly successful. One question that arises is how much faith-based perspectives versus academic opinions ought to be included. My point of view is that academic perspectives should be

prioritized, but others believe the opposite. Religion should not be dealt with in a softer or less critical manner than other disciplines if we elevate it to the level of a studied discipline.

Bhavaya Srivastava said that his 5-year old daughter once asked why there was no prayer room in her friend's home. He explained that they pray in a different manner in her family. Religious literacy starts at this level: with basic questions when young. Literacy means that you can understand what others are saying. While education implies curriculum, literacy implies awareness. Power, peace, and conflict are mentioned as pertaining to religion. Frequently, these three words appear in relation to religion being portrayed in connection with violence, patriarchy, and other things. Children ages 5-10 all responded to questions about the definition of religion with positive responses of love, peace, etc. It was defined by them as being purely good. Religious literacy will educate the population more broadly on the question. When asked how he would engage Indian students in religious education, given the diversity of religions that exist in the country, he said that there is a difference between education and religious literacy. In the case of India, there is a diversity of religions and many of the minorities practice these faiths in peace. Newcomers to India both changed, and learned from, the local culture. There is one Sanskrit line in the Vedas that means: "There is only one thought and many ways to reach it." Perhaps there was not many intercultural interactions at the time that this was written, yet it was believed that God could be found in many ways. Geographically and demographically, all religions are living together; caste barriers may exist, but religious barriers do not exist. Every city in India will have representatives from every religion. We are proud of our religious awareness and literacy. A child receiving a religious education and becoming literate early on will allow them to be more accepting throughout their lives. Within the media, the decision of how to shape a story is driven by underlying social norms. Sometimes, when religious reporters report, they are getting their content from a particular person located within a particular religious tradition. The source is therefore inherently biased.

Venus Khalessi said that religion awakens in the population, a desire to love, discipline ourselves, and make sacrifices for the common good. Religion inspires us to act for the greater good in a way that few other things can. Religion inspires us to do pure and goodly deeds, and enables us to move beyond comfortable acts to widening our scope to see the benefit of the collective. While there are differences between major world religions, the task of the soul is always to investigate reality. Bahá'ísm believes that there are multiple systems and our diversity ought to be celebrated, for we are blessed by it. When we see how we can coexist, like the

systems in the human body, we can celebrate diversity. Prosperity is about both material and spiritual development - drawing away from competitive to cooperative values in education, engaging in service (as is taught by all religions). Moving away from self to the collective will help us all pivot away from individualism to celebrate our oneness. In our religious education we ought to have a framework that is free from prejudice, can simultaneously hold up multiple truths, and that allows for us to work together.

Key Points Made:

- Media representatives ought to be trained in religious diversity and tolerance so that pluralism is present; religions have much to contribute and say beyond the walls of their sanctuaries.
- Social science teaches us that the study of religion is important for promoting civil engagement with other people. Who is teaching and the cultural competence and sensitivity of the faculty also makes a difference in the education.
- It is possible to graduate from higher education without ever having read a few pages of the Quran and no one will think this is strange; it is important to rethink the role of religions in education. Of course, religious education does not mean training students to be faithful or to become a believer; rather, religious education is incorporating the academic critique of religion in the dialogue.
- A child receiving a religious education and becoming literate early on will allow them to be more accepting throughout their lives.
- In our religious education we ought to have a framework that is free from prejudice, can simultaneously hold up multiple truths, and that allows for us to work together.

Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:

- That the G20 governments not privatize religious knowledge. The privatization of religious knowledge makes the religious concept invisible. Removing religion from the public agenda is dangerous because it provides an opportunity for the agenda of fundamentalists
- That the G20 governments incorporate religious literacy into educational systems (public and private) as an aspect of global citizenship
- That the G20 governments involve interfaith leaders in decision-making
- The substance of religion, and not its form, ought to be the focus as the G20 seeks to achieve peace and prosperity; certain capacities like generosity, truth-seeking, and having a service-centered focus will allow society to achieve peace.
- That G20 governments recognize that religious literacy is an important component of labor force development (work ethic, innovation, team-building, and an ability to work across differences)

ETHICS AND ECONOMY SESSIONS

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

Description: This session focused on the relationship between ethics and economic development. Chaired by Mons. Jorge Lozano (Archbishop of San Juan, Episcopal Commission of Social Pastoral of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina, Argentina), speakers were Cristina

Calvo (Co-chair, Ethics and Economics and Director of the International Program for Democracy, Society and New Economies, Argentina), and Humberto Shikiya (Board of Directors, CREAS-ACT ALIANZA, Argentina).

Presentations Overview:

Cristina Calvo spoke about the need for new architectures on international finance. Pope Francis' agenda has pointed to the style of development that is needed. His agenda does not just address individual issues, but also addresses systemic issues. Capitalism is in a crisis of scarce resources that serves to strengthen inequality gaps. Decision makers are not involved enough to change that. We need to add value from our roles to build capacity and commitments that are different from what our faith communities have. We point fingers at others, but we are not keen on where we are allocating our own wealth. In addition, we have an internal debate about the role of ethical investment with a triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental). A new commitment is necessary to develop new notions of how we use goods, assets, wealth and how we manage the resources and money. Let's build a new path together.

Humberto Shikiya spoke about how this is the fourth high level dialogue on ethics and economics. There are many challenges for visualizing the invisible architecture. We are part of the new economies and the substantial debates over inclusion. This is a starting point. We can press and influence the possibilities for a new financial architecture (e.g., community banks, credit organizations, and solidarity economics). The challenge is how to articulate the potential capacity. We can have influence, but we also articulate issues for development of the new financial architecture. These forums started as a dream, as a possibility, and now the dream has come true. We are developing capacity and articulating the work we're doing. Christian Aid has been supporting this. We emphasize hope – and we should associate hope with dignity. Dignity that we should not abandon the most vulnerable, the possibility of hope becoming bigger and not something we negotiate. We need to grow in that sense. Bringing a Shintoist and other relevant and key religious leaders to the event highlights interfaith cooperation. These discussions can't be only at the international level; the dialogue also has to have a local dimension. We need to bring to the table different kinds of financial and economic models. Self-criticism is important. We must invest in methodologies and metrics to prove the level of impact on equity and sustainable development from contributions of our faith based organizations and religious communities to show the positive transformations that they do to the service of the common good.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Description: This session explored how to promote the inclusion of the most disadvantaged people into the international financial architecture in contexts of multifaceted inequalities in ways that favor conditions in the real economy and not in the speculative financial market. The United Nations Environmental Programme reaffirmed in their Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System⁷³ that the global financial system needs reshaping to finance an inclusive, prosperous and environmentally sound future. This panel explored different contributions religion might make to transform the international financial architecture to affirm an economy of life and sustainable development. Chaired Elena López Ruf (Coordinator for *Religion and Development*, Centro Ecueménico de Asesoría y Servicio, Argentina), speakers were Armando Di Filippo (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, UN ECLAC, Argentine economist, University of Rosario, University of Chile, Argentina), Ignacio Carballo (Professor on Financial Inclusion, Microfinance and Development, Pontificia Universidad Católica, Professor, University of Buenos Aires; Argentina), and Amanda Mukwashi (President, Christian Aid).

Presentations Overview:

Armando Di Filippo spoke about how the transnational, private sector is oriented to the market. The financial structure has mutated; structural change is impairing peripheral countries, especially in LAC. Speculation, corruption and political power are being coopted in democratic nations by private financial institutions that control the main reserve currencies accumulated by central banks. All currencies are performed in the reserve currency (e.g. USD). Futures modify and distort (CME/LME) fundamentals of supply and demand. The futures exchange is a battlefield between Shanghai and New York. Like US/UK at the start of the 20th century, China wants money power. Oil futures exchange opening in Shanghai, energy in non-USD currency (into the CNY). In the 1970s, the US became a deficit economy with lots of debt. Reserve currency was not convertible. With the onset of the Asian productive powers - Japan, Asian tigers, China – Asia became the main industrial power. The US made the most of that, losing its industrial nature, and making the most of the paramount condition of the USD. The US paid off in their own currency, and printed the money they used to pay the transactions – showing their power and privilege. The China-US struggle on commodities has dominated the reserve currencies. GBP, USD, CNY are trying to become reserve currencies. Interest rates, exchange rates, money and power affects the real economy affecting the dynamics of markets and income distribution. Democratic states don't control central banks anymore. Central banks depend on the regulation of reserve currencies. BPI – 30s to control Germany – not supervised by international organizations (BPI = BIS). Who controls whom? Not cross-border financial

⁷³ For copies of the detailed reports, see <http://unepinquiry.org/making-waves/>

institutions, but they control states through ratings agencies. Offshore banks are havens for corrupt private capital. They launder their corruption and facilitate human traffickers, drugs and gangs. The IMF is the last to give financing and they make conditions when they offer funding. The scarcity of dollars creates increases in cost of living and inflation. The economy is controlled by high interest rates and cyclical crisis.

Ignacio Carballo highlighted the importance of context. There is no single financial inclusion process. Not all processes will create social inclusion, and not all processes will be sustainable. If we get to US consumption levels across the world, it will not work. Moreover, there is not a single financial inclusion policy. This concept is extended to credit, insurance, pay, and savings. We can't prove a positive impact because there is mixed evidence. What are the barriers to fostering financial inclusion so as not to make people and societies indebted? There is a formal and informal financial system. The informal financial system sometimes does a better job of satisfying people's needs. Some of the numbers from Argentina are: 51% have an account in 2011, 62% in 2014. Integration, inclusion, and consumer protection became in vogue after the financial crisis of 2008. Data started being collected in 2011 from Findex. 69% people banked and 1.7 billion were without. Although these actions may be concentrated in the poorest regions, resources don't always lead to more inclusion. There are drastic differences even within regions. National levels on financial inclusion are far from representing the reality in Neighbourhood 31 (where the studies took place). There are also drastic differences in macro and micro contexts. Most of the poorest use cash in their transactions; there is interest in accessing finance. 18% in Neighbourhood 31 accessed the financial system, 51% wanted to, but couldn't. In terms of the digitalized world - many people don't have the technology yet. Adoption of technologies is faster, but not ubiquitous. Angry birds took 35 days to reach 50 million users. A huge amount of data is being created. FinTech⁷⁴ developed first in 2004, but became very common a few years ago, threatening the banking system. Digitization of finance is not new. Does it seem like a paradise in finance? Is a lack of trust in the financial system driving growth in FinTech? There is definitely a changing generation that would prefer to go to the dentist than to the bank branch. We have new tools that may apply it to social inclusion. Blockchain was discussed as an example of cryptocurrencies. Don't just adjust financial sectors like Bitcoin. Blockchain is a new tool. However there are some alerts that are not being analyzed in a way. One is the energy

⁷⁴ FinTech is a new industry that uses technology to improve activities in finance (e.g., smartphones for mobile banking, investing services and cryptocurrency).

and also the volatility of the investment. More challenges emerge from the need for financial literacy. We don't know if we are stigmatizing poor people on their financial literacy because we don't have data to compare it with. 31% could calculate simple financial calculations, 15% can calculate interest costs. We need to face the risks coming up. Popular TV promoting a fraudulent currency, stores pushing bitcoin use, etc. UNICEF is accepting donations in 9 cryptocurrencies. Challenges are becoming more complex. We failed on other policies, now barriers are becoming more complex. The perception of financial exclusion indicates that most say they don't have enough money; many say they don't need an account, many others say it is too expensive. Many countries have overcome these issues (e.g. free accounts), but perceptions remain.

Amanda Mukwashi talked about how we cannot turn on and off the development paradigm; the only way you can change it is with love and commitment. There are three groups of communities to take into consideration: 1) The uprooted, overlooked and ignored – Bangladesh / Cox's Bazaar. They are uprooted by people who don't want them in their country; 2) The exploited through faith – Zimbabwe, women's group. An increasing number of young girls married with children are sexually exploited. The doctrine says they should not access healthcare and suicide rates are increasing. This is part of a faith movement; 3) The homeless, excluded and dismissed – Brazil is a very strong faith country. They have a rich culture and foundation in faith. In Sao Paulo, there are people sleeping on the streets, jobs that do not offer enough to eat and be housed. They are dismissed and overlooked. As a woman of faith, religious groups are at the forefront of challenging the injustice. There are 2.2 billion Christians, over 1.6 billion Muslims, 1 billion Hindus, etc. Of the 1% wealthiest, are they people of faith? We run 50% of the schools that create people who are losing tolerance. Has the goodness of faith been hijacked? At the forefront of conflicts and some economic models, millions of people are being displaced. The system is meant to benefit the few at the expense of those who are ignored, exploited and displaced. If we remain silent, God will rise up the storms to do the work. We should challenge the discussion of resource generation. Believers are contributing to our institutions. Can we stand and say we are using these resources to share a positive vision of faith built around dignity? When we invest our resources to generate the incomes that we need, are we being of the beast and feeding it? Stopping would be very painful. Sometimes you have to cut what is causing problems. In terms of climate justice – pension investments are in companies that are investing in fossil fuels that are getting resources to sustain us. But we believe that system is wrong. There is an intersection of gender, race and religion. She then spoke about the biblical

model of Deborah, a woman at the center of leadership, who led in battle and judged. We are here speaking for the voiceless. There is a need to challenge the status quo, even in the smallest way. To have authority and legitimacy, our own actions have to show that moral leadership. Don't say one thing and do another. We need to keep discussing about the gap between ethics and economics. We are at a crisis point and it's necessary to add the "religious system" to part of the challenges. Who watches the watchman?

ECO-ECONOMY

Description: Chaired by Humberto Ortiz, speakers were Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson (General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches), Cardinal Pedro Barretto (Pan-Amazonian Church Network), and Sofia Heinone (The Conservation Land Trust Case Study: Future Iberia National Park).

Presentations Overview:

Chris Ferguson spoke about coming to grips with globalization in order to understand the impact the global financial system has on the environment. The World Communion of Reformed Churches and others convened the "Global Ecumenical Conference on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture" 29 September – 5 October 2012 in São Paulo, Brazil. They emphasized basic principles such as life is at risk and the economy needs to bend to center on life and the economy of life. We need to focus on the care for people. The new economic architecture must never talk about economic injustice without ecological injustice. The change we are looking for has a strict relationship between gender, social, economic and ecological justice (militarization of the economy, war and violence and arms sales play a big part in the economy of the US). The power of, and truth about, the economy can only be seen from below. We have to change the way we relate ourselves as FBOs to limit greed. The fundamental values of accumulation, growth and greed need to be addressed. God lifts up good ideas from the poor that are suppressed because they don't meet the needs of those with power. We have to mobilize our communities around key points and ecumenical action plans: Issues with debt, ecological debt, and climate debt. There is a debt from the North that is owed to the South on ecological damage. Institutions controlling the financial architecture should be democratized or eliminated. If we do not develop a compelling "yes," we will not succeed.

Pedro Barretto talked about how the word 'economy' comes from Greek – *oikos nomos* (law of the house). Economy isn't money, it is caring for our common house. If we admit this etymological idea, it would be a fantastic principle. Economics should have a human face. We hear references to markets as faceless. The technocratic system has failed. Different dimensions

must be integrated: Family life - people need to be able to make ends meet. There are economic issues, but also cultural issues. Culture is a great wealth of humanity, that also includes our faith. Brazilian bishops pushed on Amazonian issues in 2007, and Pope Francis learned about the potential of the Amazon for the church and for humanity. This conference created a message that was incorporated into *Laudato si'*. The ecological and economic problem would be solved by protecting the Amazon (7m sq km in Amazon basin). The Amazonian Church Network is being created, and it is not just for church leaders. The dream is that the Pan-Amazonian network will mainly be led by indigenous people.

Sofia Heinon spoke from her experience with The Conservation Land Trust Case Study: Future Iberia National Park and from her work with the Fauna Agency. She comes from a wetland basin of 1.5m hectares in Corrientes (Argentina Province). They aim to leave a lasting legacy to provide a new economic alternative that stops the crisis, and understands that there is inequality. Markets are controlling the economy and globalization. There is no room in the current model for local community independence. Climate change will affect us all. Communities won't be able to make independent decisions. We should mitigate the impact of climate change, but also face the next 50 years with an action that can make us have a local economy of eco-localization. Soil, water, diversity recovery will be a planetary need. There is a global extinction crisis. People were hunters, but due to the demand for leather and feathers in the 1960s, people and animals in the area became extinct. The last people living there were in the 1980s. They moved into the cities and no one has returned. These spaces were colonized by land owners who brought cattle to a marginal area with few economic patterns, and few people per 1000 ha. This private NGO is working to create vast public territories, covering complete ecosystems to restore them. They are helping to create cultural value for people living there, helping people to stay and providing services instead of going to cities, creating local employment opportunity (ecosystem). They aim to keep people so that they are proud of their past and their land, in the place, to provide different services. They help them to define themselves, create their own identity, self-regulate, and become more transparent in their management. As they add rural populations into their operation, they integrate small communities. Foreign donors funded acquiring 157,000 of private land. In Argentina, the national park system is a strong piece of legislation. One does not need to be publicly owned to make it useful for the people.

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES AND PARADIGMS OF DEVELOPMENT

Description: This session analyzed the contribution of religions in the creation of new paradigms of development. The experiences promoted and accompanied by Faith Based

Organizations and religious communities account for new development narratives that contribute to overcoming inequalities and contributing to significant transformations at the level of community life. “Leaving no one behind” is the core goal of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015. On that occasion, it was recognized that eradicating inequalities, inequity, and poverty in all of its forms and dimensions -including extreme poverty- is a great global challenge that is indispensable for sustainable development. Chaired by Mara Luz (Director of Latin America and Caribbean, Christian Aid), presenters were Darío Barolin (Executive Secretary, Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Latin America, Uruguay), Jorge Arturo Chaves (Director, Centro Dominicano de Investigación, Costa Rica), Dr. Rowan Williams (Chair of Christian Aid, Former Archbishop of Canterbury, UK), Gabriela Catterberg (Director of the National Human Development Program-United Nations Development Program, Argentina), Fr. Augusto Zampini (Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development), Raymond Van Ermen (Executive Director, European Partners for the Environment, Belgium), Christoph Stückelberger (Founder and President, Globalethics.net, Executive Director, Geneva Agape Foundation, Switzerland), and Gary Doxey (Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University, USA).

Presentations Overview:

Darío Barolin offered reflections from the Bible that connected theology, sustainable practices and the international financial architecture. There is an increasing trend of the world economy toward an increasing concentration of wealth, greater inequality and poverty, and exploitation of resources that directly affects climate change. It affects all of humanity and, as a consequence, the less privileged suffer the most. They are very much interrelated. The Lehman Bros. was not a common crisis, but it had to do with big egos taking place in the system. The system funds itself on an engine that survives on big egos and selfishness. It led to poverty of the majority. The second instance he reflected on was the financial architecture of loans and interest that we see in the Bible. Interest was initially prohibited, but John Calvin reinterpreted it in the context of capitalism. The story of John Calvin is a history of divine conversation where over the course of 14 years, 7 were rich and 7 were in scarcity. He designed a strategy for the scarce years. He talked about the story of how Egypt had information, but they also had the techniques to store, and the power to reorganize 20% of what was produced. The combination of knowledge, technology and power allowed them to be prepared for the crisis after the prosperity. The initial plan, in verse 36, had some scandalous edges. People did not die of hunger; Pharaoh stored the wealth of the people for himself. After 7 years of wealth, the 7 year crisis had concentrated enough resources (money) that hunger continued and bread was exchanged for cattle and the next year they surrendered land, then people surrendered themselves to slavery. Then people became in the service of the Pharaoh. Technology and wealth can mitigate crisis, but wealth is used as a means of power, not just to survive but to acquire more in exchange for the life of

others. Humanity can produce wealth, but the scandalous concentration of wealth, shows how little we have evolved. Wealth is used to create a higher concentration of wealth. The circle of debt indicates how vulnerable parties become when left in the exchange of the others. A very small percentage of people become richer while the rest becomes poor. A triple impact is possible. The Bible is unanimous on criticizing using money to obtain more money. Money cannot be used for lending and accruing interest. The Bible instructs us to lend money without interest - without establishing interests. Interest accruing was a common practice for creating debt slavery. That is why the Bible prohibits it. Max Weber connected Calvin to Capitalism based on the Puritanism of the 17th and 18th centuries. It was not impacted by 16th century Geneva where interest loans were not allowed. Thinking there focused on subsistence, not on the production of wealth. This restriction is in line with biblical thought. Allow limited interest. Wealth cannot be used as a tool to go against the vulnerable. Restriction #2: Christians are to be in solidarity with those in need to pay tribute to God. Calvin believes some loans, for the generation of wealth, are allowed in order to have a share in that profit, but it should not turn into a boomerang. He stressed a sixth restriction: Private transactions should work for the common good rather than private advantage. What serves the common good? Interest paid by the merchant is a public good; if I make a loan to a business, it will impact society. The product will go up in price. Production will have an impact on society through the price. He connected this to the 60% interest rates that we have today. There was an important restriction here because of the social impact of how usage of resources and wealth have a triple impact. Resources are not to be used to increase wealth. Need to focus on common good and creation by God to make the common good. Solidarity is the basis of society for strengthening the community bond. We are never to forget our common nature. If we want to have a future, we must stress this so that we avoid suffering, and avoid climate change. I don't believe in human kind too much, he said. We need legislation promoting and restricting the financial system. It is unleashed now, and it would drag us into avarice. Humanity has more than enough technology, and more than enough wealth and knowledge. However, it's being used at the service of an economy that targets the concentration of wealth. It may bring poverty for most of us. There is an evangelical message teaching and helping us to live in an economy that allows the common good to be my own good. My own good is not to be developed upon the suffering of the majority.

Jorge Arturo Chaves talked about how the dialogue at the upcoming Bishops Conference of Argentina must be at the service of the less privileged. From Adam Smith to Pope Francis, the teaching moves in the same direction. Argentina & Costa Rica have found it difficult to align

and modify their development paradigms. They progressed on diagnosing and theorizing on the ecologic economy, progressing on proposals and decisions. But in spite of these enriched approaches, in the last 15-20 years, inequality has worsened and Latin American Countries now have the highest inequalities rates of anywhere on the planet. He referenced the works of Thomas Piketty, Anthony B. Atkinson, and Joseph Stiglitz on inequality. Denialism of the environmental crisis has also grown, as epitomized by Donald Trump. The resistance towards progress on gender equality has also increased. Under the Novena for the Legal Protection of Human life, they learned that analysis and theory are not enough. We haven't done enough yet, so what do we need? Adam Smith gave us a clue in his work on economics: Who will go along the path of creation and redirect the development paradigm? Economic & ecological analysis are not enough; the good will of all parties are needed to solve this. When Adam Smith talked about economics, there was an external dimension (historical) and an internal dimension (result of feelings). Economic actors, he said, don't change hats between one and the other. We should think about a good will platform to build a human project for the future and do a self-examination and avoid blaming others. In churches and religions, we should prioritize good will. If we fail here, "we either humanize our political ideas, or we will end up being politicized in our humanity." The same thing applies to the corporate idea. We either humanize corporations, or we will be corporatized. Pope Francis talks about humans. He offers simple concepts: Get closer to nature and the environment, go against inequality, and be environmentalist. But we need a fraternal approach if we are to succeed in this. We need to adopt positive attitudes and not be contrarian if we are to have success in changing the paradigm to what is needed. It's my recommendation to bet on a new lifestyle – there is some kind of salvation in beauty, and among those who contemplate beauty. We need to create the enjoyment of beauty, and contemplation in our faith and have passion for helping others.

Rowan Williams said that conferences don't change the world, but agents do. That said, the definition we offer for development is important for the development of human well-being. If we define well-being badly, we define development poorly. The current development model is dominated by GDP. It's a model of well-being that ignores health, employment satisfaction, literacy, access to education, and gender equality. The current model of development creates a picture that keeps us imprisoned. Growth becomes poisoned. Religions contribute resources to challenge ideas about growth that are defined entirely as GDP. Others are also raising these questions. There is a UK initiative in Surrey called the Centre for Understanding Sustainable

Prosperity (Tim Jackson – prosperity without growth).⁷⁵ If we begin as communities of faith, we can contribute to human well-being that does not accumulate to certain individuals, but is a well-being that is shared by the community. Humanity's well-being is tied up in the well-being of the planet. If I promise that you will be safe, you can promise me that I will be safe. Our nature is relational, and we are responsible together. What constitutes security? Land ownership is an important part of it. Together we need to move away from the idea that land, water, and the common goods of creation are individually owned to be weaponized against others. There are large questions to be asked in the philosophy of development. There were questions raised yesterday about the Amazon, and the forces of capitalist development undermining Aboriginal rights. There is a significant contribution to be made from small cooperative businesses that affirm dignity and freedom without conscripting themselves into the service of the global economy. Access to economic activity and flourishing is not just achieved by joining a homogenized global economy. We should not take people's possibilities away from them and we need to take into account their culture. We should let people negotiate on their own terms, starting at the cooperative level. In terms of the role of government in development – In Wales, the Government Assembly passed the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015⁷⁶ that insists that every policy executed by local government should factor into consideration the impact it has on the next generation. There is a movement in economics that assumes that models recognize environmental and social questions as externalities. Economists should take seriously the wider impacts and costs of economic activity. We also need to have curricula in schools that define 'normal'. He then offered remarks pertaining to the pressure we can exert on government, the role of government in looking to the future, and the global democratic deficit. A globalized economy erodes the power of national government. National governments react to this by becoming protectionist and exclusionist. We are seeing a worldwide pathology in government and society. A sustainable future needs sustainable democratic institutions. One of the roles of religious communities should be to develop sustainable institutions that are trustworthy and durable. The rule of law is hugely important. A commitment to educational institutions is a key factor. We should work for the long-term environment where genuine political debates can occur. The current political and economic models are irrational. The world scenario today is deeply irrational, insanely ignorant and dismissive of its own future. But in religious traditions,

⁷⁵ For more information, see <https://www.cusp.ac.uk/>

⁷⁶ For more information, see <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

our reasons are an exhilarating gift from our Creator. Pope Francis in *Laudato si'* said, that we need to “recover a rationality that allows us to understand how we belong together.” What is reasonable? Something we share is our reasonableness in the face of political unreason. Pope Francis also emphasized in *Laudato si'* the importance of “small gestures of mutual care” that affirm our responsibility for one another.

Gabriela Catterberg talked about the SDG addressing gender inequality. The objective, among others, involves measuring development from a gender perspective. How do we measure the non-remunerated work of women in the home, their participation in political dimensions, their involvement in health and education and their income given the gender gap in pay? In terms of the health dimension, it is more favorable for women these years with more women taking health care jobs. Registration in education has also been favorable in terms of the share of women getting educated. The increasing ‘feminization’ of some particular industries shows an increased share of women in professional positions. How was this supported so that it positively affected the working conditions of women? There is still a gap of income between men and women of between 24-25%. It is higher in some places of Argentina, but generally static over time. Also, there is a gap in the non-remunerated work (number of hours devoted to household): Men 3.4 hrs and Women 6.4 hrs. Use of time is unequal and this directly impacts labor participation. We see some improvement in women’s access to decision-making positions (from c. 20% to 30%), but it’s still far from parity. Although more women have advanced degrees, men are over-represented in management, and have more access to better working conditions (e.g., 90 days of maternity leave, less paternity leave). More formal and informal strategies are required in the employment system, to build an equal culture in the workplace.

Augusto Zampini related structural inequalities to faith asking what faith communities might contribute to lessen the inequalities. Building religious consensus is not easy, and we have to be careful to “change paradigms.” Changing how society is organized is very difficult, and we need a starting point where we agree on methodology: seeing, acting, celebrating and judging. There should be an interaction among different religious communities. We should take a look together. What reality are we living in? Doing it jointly, we will get a clearer picture. If we compare our faithful observations every day, we will realize that they coincide with scientific observations. There is a hint of rationality to this world. We deny even what is evident, paying attention to fake news and even denying climate change. We have to contribute with a clear understanding based on our Christian, Jewish and Muslim conceptions about living without combating one

another. We are called to not just accumulate more and more, living in abundance; but we are called to develop ourselves in a more integral way. We should stop saying that humans are the center of all Creation. The anthropocentrism is a deviation that may create inequality and destroy the environment. One of the current problems which contributes to the denaturalization of development is a lack of recognition of facts. Faith must make a contribution to see if that coincides with observations of poor communities and the effect imposed on them. They contribute the least to climate change, for example, and suffer the most. For the third year in a row there is increased hunger (804m in 2016/821m in 2017), despite the increase in GDP growth. Doesn't that touch your heart? Isn't that an inequality? The International Labor Organization informs us that there is a systematic increase in unemployment: 200m unemployed, 38m in developing countries, 163m in emerging countries & developing, 40m in high vulnerability jobs. Economic growth has disappointed us. In our parishes we see more and more people in soup kitchens. Recognizing and acknowledging this reality is important. Economic growth is not helping to reduce inequality. What can we do in religious communities? There should be a dialogue to change the model of development that brings about social inequality and environmental damage. Religions can make an integral contribution at the human level. No one can be fully developed without a full environment, development of the environment must be integral. If environmental costs are included in the business plan, it may seem expensive, but someone has to pay for it. Who pays now? The poorest. We can work to reduce both problems, if we find links with good living, and well-being. What supports nature and ecosystems? We need to change attitudes at the level of family and the personal level. This will help, but we need a structural change. If we bring radical change, it is a big change. I invite you to stop screaming and to start making proposals. What can we do to bring that structural change? Spirituality should include ideas that integrate ecology. There should be a conversion towards compassion. We need a spirituality that rediscovers the beauty of creation and loves it. We currently lose touch with nature. Human resources and natural resources should be erased as terms. Liturgically, there is an imperative of individualism there, but we are called to live jointly. The community dimension should be stronger than individualism. We should not only celebrate something from the past, but focus on hopes for the future, and break with short-term visions. A good celebration gives a break in vision that is accelerated away from a short-term mindset. We can't ask governments to change, if we don't change our communities. There is an Ascetic dimension that discovers that things are means, not ends. The same occurs with finance. We need to restrict means towards an end. From SDGs, so many have agreed on something

involving finance where the economy is at the service of these ends. We need to halt means that don't help towards ends. There is a culture of discarding that is not really satisfying our hunger or our health. There is a need to refocus on these goods to be at the service of humanity.

Raymond Van Ermen said that the current structure of globalization goes back to the 1980s when it was designed to favor the shareholder against the workers. The structure of globalization automatically increases inequality. We need to be rid of it, and find a new, bright globalization. We don't need to invent or design a new program. We already have it with the SDGs and the Paris Accord. The two encyclical letters refer to the agenda we need. First by Pope Benedict, then *Laudato si'* by Pope Francis. Using UN words, we need to "build a new social compact." If we were to implement SDG 10, which talks about having less inequality and having the financial world take it seriously, that would be revolutionary in itself. The second pillar is providing a "safe operating space for humanity." We only have a few more years left to face the uncomfortable situation. He talked about three levers: 1) developing a system that respects the rule of law; 2) empowering women; 3) and designing an inclusive and sustainable finance system. To contribute to this, we've been hosting events in Rome on value-based investors and the SDGs. The third event on the SDGs was convened here last week. In light of *Laudato si'*, the top value is to bring to the forefront the Care Agenda. The second priority is Sustainable Finance & Care. The next frontier we tried to do last week, thanks to Banco Nacion. In terms of ways to transform the financial sector: There are four main approaches being addressed in Latin America: 1) Divest/Invest - Some companies are investing for 30-40 years in a way that will create 3-4 degree Centigrade rise in temperature. This is a crime against humanity. Where are our pension funds investing our money? 2) To address sustainable and inclusive finance and the care agenda, we need to take a very practical approach – the food security nexus includes ag/ocean/fisheries/etc. that mostly affects the poor. 35 initiatives have been identified so far that bring bring these dimensions together; 3) Empowerment - using use blockchain to monitor and trace commitments made by the financial sector, OECD is tracing implementation for the SDGs; 4) Youth – Millennials represent 1 billion people who are voting with their wallets. We need to make a global movement of the millennials to change finance. Public and private sectors need to work together including faith representatives, civil society, and the youth. We need to have conversations on what is the situation, country by country, and what we can we do in the coming two years addressing national and regional actions. Latam is mobilizing millennials. Inclusive finance is powerful and can change the world. Trust comes step-by-step and leaves in a Ferrari.

Christoph Stückelberger said that bankers and investors from faith organizations don't make a decision about being involved from the point of view of faith. Investment managers and bankers give up on approaching them. Religions have been always been involved in economics. Faith and finance is related to justice in the Abrahamic faiths. Traditions allow for the gradual use of interest in the Christian tradition, with restrictions that have historically been gradually loosened over time. There has been an ethical investment movement over the past 50 years. The movement is beginning to impact investment.⁷⁷ Today, religious organizations own 8% of habitable land, 5% of commercial forests, and run 50% of schools worldwide. We have a network, education, platform and voice. Have to align our investments to the SDGs and align religious investments and religious development programs together.

Gary Doxey said that, although he is a lawyer and a professor of history, his approach to the topics are shared in these sessions because he is also a person of faith. We have to discuss about structural things like capitalism, addressing issues that have to do with politics and finance, and institutions and societies. We should make our best efforts to improve these institutions from a collective point of view. Why? Probably all of us wish to improve people's ideas. However, from an Abrahamic faith perspective, we know that women and men were created in God's likeness, as part of the universal creation. All are equal and with equal potential. There is something innate as humans, and it's related to having our own values. In a perfect world, we talk about economies of goodness, justice, and honesty, where there is no corruption and no abuse and where drug abuse doesn't exist. Can we imagine this? Is it unrealistic to do so? Optimism is not good enough. But optimism helps to motivate us and is represented in our faith traditions. I wish and envision that there will be something more important than what we are doing right now. As faith institutions, we should make the best efforts that we can. Since the Age of the Enlightenment, great authors have had an optimism that life would change for the better and that society would be free. Through belief, people can do good. Religion can add a lot to these ideas, where values are born to overcome poverty and corruption.

CONCLUDING REMARKS OF ETHICS AND ECONOMY

Faced with the "irrational negationism " of many politicians and economists of today, religions and OBF can (and must) provide our perspective, a view based on our vision of the human being and what we witness every day in our communities. Such a look tells us that there is an increase

⁷⁷ For more information, see <https://www.ubs.com/microsites/together/en/nobel-perspectives.html>

in social inequality and environmental deterioration. This "rationality of faith" is supported by scientific evidence. The contribution of religions and FBOs is vital today more than ever, especially in meetings like the G-20, because while they talk about the poor and excluded in international congresses, their lives, desires, and difficulties are ignored. As Pope Francis says in his encyclical *Laudato si'*, such indifference "is due in part to the fact that many of those who participate in these congresses and can make decisions, are in reality" away from [the poor, without taking] direct contact with your problems. We live and reflect from the comfort of a development and a quality of life that are not available to most of the world's population. This lack of physical contact and encounter ... helps to cauterize the conscience and to ignore part of reality in biased analyzes"(LS 49). Thus, even without wanting to, we make decisions that do not really benefit them. Hence, religions and FBOs want to echo the voices that are not heard, and so they want to bring those who make decisions in the global economy to the true reality of most people and their communities. As Pope Francis has said, "there is usually no clear awareness of the problems that particularly affect the excluded. They are the largest part of the planet, billions of people. Today they are presented in international political and economic debates, but it often seems that their problems are posed as an appendix, as an issue that is added almost by obligation or peripherally, if they are not considered mere collateral damage. In fact, at the time of the concrete action, they are frequently in the last place. This is partly due to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, media and power centers are located far away from them, in isolated urban areas, without taking direct contact with their problems. They live and reflect from the comfort of a development and quality of life that are not available to the majority of the world's population. This lack of physical contact and encounter, sometimes favored by the disintegration of our cities, helps to cauterize the conscience and ignore part of reality in biased analyzes. This sometimes coexists with a "green" speech. But today we cannot fail to recognize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach, which must integrate justice in the discussions about the environment, to listen to both the clamor of the earth and the clamor of the poor. "(*Laudato si'*, 49) An economy distanced from ethics, and a financial system that tends to distance itself from the real economy, generates social inequalities and environmental damage. From the financial crisis of 2008, which was generated by the collapse of the US real estate speculative bubble and whose impact was extended to the entire international system, the damaged relationship between ethics and economics became even more evident. Given the need to generate new consensus among high-level officials, the G20 was consolidated as an extension of the G7 and became the most significant forum to discuss global economic growth, the

international financial architecture and the regulation of the post-crisis financial system.

Although the G20 does not have executive powers nor its decisions are binding, those agreed by the heads of state and government in the framework of the G20 have been significantly implemented by its members. Since then, there are many voices that, from different disciplines and economic theory, warn about the imperative need to recreate an international financial architecture on a human scale, at the service of sustainable development; and to reconstruct an ethical dimension of economic practice to answer the questions and challenges posed by the 4th industrial revolution: robotization and technological change, inclusive globalization, the future of work, universal integration, among others. Consequently, a program view that includes but goes beyond the monetary metric (more holistic), as a notion of integral ecology, can help us to rediscover the very nature of the economy, which was designed to better organize the coexistence of human beings. They can also help us to assume the connection between our personal-family lifestyles with our culture, between the common dignities of each individual with the common good, between the justices of today with that of tomorrow, and between the social world and the ecosystems that make our life possible. All these aspects are key if we are to respond with creativity and precision to the groans of the poor and the earth, the moans that come together in a single cry for having the same roots, many of them related to economic activity, such as: unbridled production that does not care for the environment, individualism and greed to trade and accumulate, unrestrained consumerism and discarding culture, technocratic paradigm and indifference with the creation of jobs, short-termism and limited measures of progress or development (cf *Laudato si'*, 115-121). Women and young people are key to cultivate and care for creation, and thus to be able to generate an economy (common household management) that is sustainable for future generations. There is a new narrative (with the contribution of religions), for a new financial and economic architecture, that is more inclusive not only locally but also globally. The term "Economy" comes from the Greek "oikonomy"; "Oikos" refers to the home, the house and the property and "nomos" to its rules and / or "némein" to the act of administering / adjudicating; hence, the economy has been etymologically defined as the "administration of the house / home". Then, with the development of societies and the modern means of production, this term designated the discipline dedicated to the study of the administration of certain scarce resources of a certain political society. The main modern economic currents affirmed that the economy is an independent science of the moral field. Economics books stress that economics only describes and explains, among other issues, how markets work but does not prescribe how they should be. In this way, young students are

taught that economics is a neutral science, free of ethical / moral valuations. This conception strengthened the vision of man as "homo economicus", of which his "utilitarian" spirit is presumed, which acts according to his own interest, maximizing his benefits. However, economists did not always understand their subject in this way; just think of the classical theory, eg. Adam Smith, who conceived it as a branch of moral and political philosophy. As Artkinson (2009) points out, "the economy is a moral science", because it not only wants the welfare and / or the common good, but reflects on criteria of distributive justice. On the other hand, as the philosopher Sandel affirms, in certain cases "the market reasoning presupposes a moral reasoning". The more technological science advances and the markets increasingly extend in aspects of life, and not strictly economic fields, the economy is increasingly faced with moral dilemmas: What goods and services may or may not be in the market? Is it necessary to modify the extractive production model? Can the economy be regulated by algorithms and robots? Is artificial intelligence ethical conscience? To answer these questions, a comprehensive and systemic view of the challenges that reality proposes is necessary and an ethical dimension must be recovered both in prudential discernment and in the taking and execution of decisions. Currently, what is under discussion is the way in which we organize our economic life. The economy based on the production of goods and services is being displaced by a speculative economy, which generates money in risk management. And this is worrisome, because it generates less fair societies, promoting, as Sandel affirms, "an ethic of speculation that corrodes morals and civic norms that are worth caring for". Hence the importance, as pointed out by Montoya Vargas and Morales de Setién Ravin, of training economics students in the "development of the necessary skills to recognize an ethical dilemma in a daily situation, identify the values, principles and interests faced, generate alternative solutions, reason about the ethical justification of the alternatives, make reasoned decisions (Kholberg, 1981), argue and evaluate ethical decisions ". Day by day, men and women are faced with the need to make multiple decisions of different complexity and face innumerable options and motivations to make such decisions. It is imperative that, as citizens, consumers, producers, educators, companies, legislators, politicians, mothers and fathers, merchants, businessmen, governments, public and private institutions, family groups, be aware of the transforming capacity they have with their daily decisions to shape a more equitable and sustainable system. In terms of the role of development banks, public and private banks (including village banks), employers and unions, investors and consumers: In 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which proposes a multidimensional concept of

development focused on sustainability, as a new transformative paradigm of development policies. In this way, development is no longer understood only as economic growth; and sustainability, consisting of the harmonious relationship between economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, becomes a *sine qua non* condition for genuine development. Since then, different research has been developed regarding the ethical dimension of development and religious perspectives around the methodological foundations of how to build a new development model to "leave no one behind", caring for the future of the planet. In the same year, the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change* was adopted by COP 21, the *Addis Abeba Action Agenda* on financing for development and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, which together with the *2030 Agenda* propose a turn to the style of development and a holistic and integral vision. The cost of its implementation requires a great mobilization of resources from both the public and private sectors, accompanied by changes in its financing, organization and allocation. This process must be accompanied by good cooperation and global governance practices. However, it is pertinent to ask how to make the economy contribute to the 17 Development Goals proposed in the *2030 Agenda*, and in that way, rectify the trends that threaten human well-being and the life of the planet? The financial system plays an important role in this process and it is necessary to take advantage of all its instrumental potential in the transition of the global economy. It is necessary that the financial system is aligned with the Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some efforts began to be made in that regard; for ex. In January 2014, the United Nations Environment Program initiated a "Research on the Design of a Sustainable Financial System" to advance policies that produce a radical change in the efficiency of the financial system to mobilize capital towards a sustainable and inclusive economy. In recent years, various international studies and practices have recognized the significant role that religious communities and faith-based organizations have in addressing complex global challenges because of their work on sustainable development, in situations of extreme poverty, in natural disasters and disasters, in peace building processes, in zones of violence and conflict and even where the State is absent. Thus, they become necessary actors who exert their influence and leadership both in their work at the grassroots level and at high political levels. In this way, it is noticed that religion is no longer a forgotten dimension in development studies. Not only has the literature on religion and development flourished over the past decade, but partnerships between international development institutions, governments, international cooperation agencies and religious communities have also multiplied, especially to achieve development goals. Civil society and religious groups play a fundamental role in

developing proposals, monitoring progress and ensuring that the opinion of all interested parties is included in the process. For this reason, the High Level Dialogues on Ethics and Economics, due to their interdisciplinary and ecumenical character, have collected the different contributions and reflections on economics and finance elaborated from religious perspectives.

1. Challenges:

a) An economic practice that degrades the "common house"

- i. A myth of the nineteenth century, lifestyles and production of that time is maintained, but advancing with technologies of the 21st century, and this planet in this line, is coming to the exhaustion, both of its species and of the sustainability of the modes of production.
- ii. The degradation of the environment, climate change, loss of biodiversity, among others, call for a substantial change in the way of managing the global commons.

b) An international financial architecture without limits or regulation

One of the reasons that is at the base of some crises that we have experienced is explained by the separation of finances from the real economy, from production and labor. "Finances, if left alone, dislocate, drive you crazy and drag you into your madness". The market deregulation, the indiscriminate growth of profits over integral welfare, the speculative purpose, as well as the practice of certain financial instruments such as the "credit default swap" (CDS); parallel banking systems (shadow banking system); offshore finance; sovereign public debt of the states, generate great instability, distort functionality and affect the health of the economic and social system, damaging the effective realization of the common good.

c) Structural inequalities, work and automation

- i. Inequality in the distribution of wealth and social goods evidences the presumption that not all societies have a place in societies. "A good part is considered disposable: they do not count. Technology can deepen the concentration, abuse of power and inequality on the planet."
- ii. Work and Automation: Technology platforms can improve lives, narrow gaps, or can become a way to deepen abysses. It is estimated that no less than 50% of current jobs run the risk of being replaced by robots in the next decade. While there are dissimilar estimates of the possible impact on the use of automation, there is a consensus that automation implies a structural transformation from which winners and losers will emerge. As a consequence, certain social tensions will be present.

d) Corruption and organized crime

- i. In Latin America there is an increase in the lack of confidence in the democratic quality of the region due to the high levels of public and private corruption at different levels of society, whose practice alters the system of incentives of organizations and corrodes social civility.

- ii. At the same time, organized crime networks flourish in spaces of informality and institutional precariousness. In various reports it is stated that in Latin America the high rates of violent crime and insecurity are related to the inequality in the access to opportunities of some people. Organized crime has become a complex phenomenon, with porous limits between the formal, the informal and the criminal, with associations between groups and people that transcend the borders of the State. These networks have a negative effect on the institutions of the countries and the rule of law.
- 2. We commit ourselves as Churches, Religious Communities and Faith Based Organizations to the following proposals:
 - a) Towards the Care of the Common House
 - i. Commit to the promotion and consolidation of economic systems that care for and guard human life and the planet in all its manifestations; a non-exclusive economy of life, like the vegetable one, that takes enough to live and recreate life. This approach translates into the effective transformation of modes of production towards sustainable and sustainable forms; in the management of companies whose main purpose is to commit to integral human development over the maximization of profits; in public policies that promote renewable energy, sustainable agriculture as well as measures that regulate and sanction activities that degrade the eco-system.
 - ii. Create a regulatory framework for the protection of the global commons
 - b) Recreate an international financial architecture
 - i. Strengthen global governance - The globalization of finance must be accompanied by the globalization of international cooperation. The financial system and the market must be reinserted as instruments at the service, and not the owner, of the global governance system;
 - ii. Create new qualitative and quantitative indicators of integral well-being;
 - iii. Need to regulate the financial sector and renew the purpose of the banks;
 - iv. Financing for Sustainable Development:
 - 1. Promote investments of Impact for Sustainable Development (Triple impact investment agenda: social, ecological, economic).
 - 2. Create eco-sustainable financial instruments, such as ex. "Green bonds".
 - 3. Foster the religious commitment of the FBOs and religious communities in investments to sustainable development. It is estimated that funds from faith-based institutions represent around 10 trillion dollars of funds invested in the world, becoming leaders in institutional investment trends and, as a block, at least in the fourth largest investment group.
 - c) Equity, Innovation and inclusive finance

- i. Generate relational dynamics of economic and inter-generational justice in such a way that no one is discarded and everyone finds their place in the community (koinonia), in the enjoyment of a full and full life.
- ii. Innovation: Propose a new Social Technology Contract (CST) that turns technology into a fundamental means for social inclusion. A contract with an ethic that puts the human being at the center of the concept of innovation, because otherwise it runs the risk of falling into technocratic societies and governments. It must be taken into account that the data is the new oil that is why it is necessary to join public and private wills in order to achieve said CST. "Rebuilding the ethical dimension means building bridges between technological change, the work of human beings and universal integration. It is the key to transcend the current situation that exceeds the concept of time and space. Where the pre-industrial era coexists for hungry crowds, the industrial one for thousands of workers and the post-industrial one for brilliant minds exploring new technical frontiers "(Béliz)
- iii. The future of work and Automation:
 1. Train workers according to the knowledge, "soft" skills and competencies needed to face the transformation in progress.
 2. Adopt income distribution policies: several proposals are being discussed: Universal basic income; Salary supplement; Tax on robots.

d) Financial inclusion

1. Financial education is a vital and necessary skill to make adequate decisions regarding the administration of savings, responsible access to credits, investments, achieving real financial inclusion and, consequently, a sustainable economic development with greater equality of opportunities. It is essential to facilitate access to education and financial services, especially for the most vulnerable sectors, women and youth.
2. Need to regulate FinTech (Finance and technology) - Financial digitization involves disruptive processes of finance that pose new opportunities and challenges. It is necessary to pay attention to the development of these processes (the phenomenon of the Fintech revolution, the blockchain and the cryptocurrency, bitcoins) that advance with great speed, so that they are instruments of financial inclusion and sustainable development.
3. Work with millennials towards inclusive and sustainable finance so they become the policy makers of the present and future.

e) Promote good governance practices -

- i. Create transparency standards, mechanisms for accessing public information and generate accountability practices on management results by those who exercise authority, both in public and private spheres, to achieve greater institutional strengthening and institutional capacity building in countries to fight corruption and organized crime.
- ii. Promote from the State comprehensive public policies, coordinated and adaptable at different levels and in a multi-sectoral manner, to work on the prevention of the

involvement of people at socio-criminal risk and interrupt criminal trajectories. For ex. transparent the processes of selection of public officials; improve the control of sworn statements of public officials and taxpayers; create research and control departments in the State; approve a domain extinction law; repeal undeclared asset laundering regimes; control in the financing of electoral campaigns; witness protection plan; promote the creation of a specialized and supranational criminal court against organized extreme crime, rethink the role of intelligence services.

- iii. Connect the leaders and communities of faith to carry out an advocacy action with specialists and technicians who adhere to a sustainable human development and are in decision-making places: meetings with Finance Ministers, with Presidents of Central Banks, entities regulators, tax collectors, international fossil fuel prices traders, actions of disinvestment in pollutants, food security and indebtedness, etc.
- iv. Social capital and networks of trust and cooperation
 - 1. Consolidate the social fabric through networks of trust, reciprocity and cooperation. In Latin America there is a large associative and solidary capital: seven out of ten Latin Americans are in favor of regional integration.
 - 2. Be resilient communities, able to adapt to disasters and financial crises.
 - 3. Make use of narrative capital: recover and update narrative capital as part of the symbolic capital of communities and organizations to renew the purpose of their mission, the sense of identity, belonging and community of destiny.

In conclusion, ten years after the financial - economic crisis that destabilized the international system and generated great gaps of inequality and unemployment in our global societies, unfortunately and despite the many voices that have risen, little has changed. Politics is confined to the force of the market, transforming "cost / benefit" into the logic of social life. The speculative spirit continues to be rooted in the market that idolizes the maximization of profits. More innovative, sophisticated and attractive financial products have emerged. Although the regulation of the financial sector has begun to be discussed, its rules remain the same as before the crisis, with some minor modifications. Especially, the behavior of consumers and savers has changed little, without realizing the power and scope of their daily decisions to shape a new form of economy. "To recreate the international financial architecture means, first of all, to rebuild a global institutional urbanism." To inhabit the house, the city, the eco-system to transform it into the "common home" in which everyone has a place to shelter, feel safe, nurture, grow and develop fully. Biodiversity, miscegenation, heterogeneity are fertile lands to fertilize better ways of life, and cure social diseases, such as the ambition for power and corruption. In order to mitigate the transit, at times painful but inevitable, towards a new era with the characteristics of the 4th revolution, resilient people and communities are needed, who can

inhabit the borders, assume that existential risk, and transcend them to be communicating bridges between the present and those realities still misunderstood, unexplored and / or excluded. An economy of life invites us and drives us to an economy of "manna", which is not denied to anyone, an economy of gift and gratuity. The gift is a sign of interest for the other and is the basis for reciprocity. All life is given to us so that we can give it again, free and free, recreating the conditions for new life to be generated, new bread that nourishes the generations. In times of crisis and devastation, "prophetic gestures" of people who, as witnesses do not deny imminent devastation, resist even more creatively and remain where all people close and withdraw, sowing where no one sows; making memory of the past that re-signifies history, weaving in the present threads of life and hope, forging the true promise of a good future for all, building consensus for a fair, equitable and sustainable development.

ANNEX

POLICY BRIEFS AND PAPERS

RELIGIOUS ACTORS ADDRESSING EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE

SHARPENING THE FOCUS

Katherine Marshall⁷⁸ (Georgetown University), Peter Mandeville (George Mason University), Cole Durham (Brigham Young University), Mohamed Abu-Nimer (KAICIID), Ann Wainscott (Miami University-Ohio), and Kishan Manocha (ODIHR)

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 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 tradeoffs that undermine development efforts. Understandings and approaches involving religious factors need to be revamped. The G20 Summit should highlight CVE debates as a priority topic; alongside UN and other efforts, 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 2019 G20 summit with action recommendations.

“Current CVE approaches are flat out dumb and misbegotten”

Former US government official

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:

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- Policies and programs responding to non-state violence show mixed results; damage associated with such violence (including in lives lost) is on the rise.
- Divisive debates 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 Muslim, 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.

In short, large strategic gaps impede efforts to engage religious actors intelligently in responding to extremist violence.

Background

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, and Boko Haram. Extensive military and internal security responses to the threats of non-state violence consume vast resources. They also 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 focused on 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 (prominently ISIS, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram) 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.

The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism convened by President Obama in February 2015 highlighted CVE in the administration's foreign policy agenda, spurring a deluge of related conferences, conversations, and considerations globally. Besides institutionalizing strategy and standardizing the lexicon, the summit identified gaps and opportunities in domestic and international approaches. Subsequent regional summits around the globe were inspired by or directly connected with the White House initiative. They responded at least in part to President Obama's call for global partners to join the CVE effort in his September 2015 speech to the UN General Assembly. A May 2016 Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism defined CVE as "proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence." Parallel efforts within the United Nations and in Europe and Australia have followed similar CVE/PVE approaches. Understandings of CVE highlight ambiguities that 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 serve to 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 sought 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.

Relationships within and among religious communities are critical factors in social cohesion, albeit with different manifestations that are linked to history, welfare (inequalities, for example), political organization, leadership stance, and other factors. The specific roles that religious beliefs and mobilization play in contemporary extremist movements is the subject of intense analysis and debate.

Both 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. The implications of how religious dimensions affect violent extremism extend far beyond security, involving economics, politics, and social welfare. Politicians' and policy-makers' language and assumptions around fighting terrorism need to be stripped of false religious language.

The focus needs to shift instead 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 grievances driving extremism—such as politics, socioeconomics, and localized conflicts—and highlight the positive potential to build peaceful, pluralistic societies.

In recent years, a number of governments—including numerous G20 members—have begun to explore the importance of enhancing their capacity to engage with religious actors across a wide range of foreign policy and national security concerns. The George W. Bush administration established a White House team focused on faith sector engagement in 2001. An analogous office at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) focused on the role of religious actors in international development. 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, particularly through the creation at the U.S. State Department of the Office of Religion and Global Affairs. But this interest and capacity is not confined to the United States. 2015 saw the establishment of the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy, 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.

The challenge of religious engagement demands wise interventions that start with strategic knowledge of both institutions and the politics of leadership. G20 governments are starting to develop that capacity, but challenges still remain. Differing views on human rights often need to be addressed, especially with respect to roles of women and youth. In many settings, the direct

influence of formal religious leaders—even in matters of religion—is questionable. 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. Diverse voices must be at negotiating tables.

Understanding better how religious factors affect violent extremism can help inform the design and implementation of solutions to violence. These must vary by country and region according to government/religious relationships and practical assessments of effective potential roles. 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 key contributors to public and political discourse, can engage in many fields, if done with care and sensitivity to power asymmetries and potential risks. Religious actors can be partners. Success factors include engaging them at the right time, designing effective training, and ensuring effective and inclusive partnerships across sectors. Above all, it is vital to understand religious institutions and communities as broad, deep, and complex. The concept of lived religion is important, to go beyond official religious authorities and formal institutions.

Negative consequences of broad CVE policies include restrictions on civic space and alienation of large communities. Distorted understandings undermine the effectiveness of response in practice and can have high human rights, financial, social, and economic costs.

Proposals:

The G20 Members and Engagement Groups:

- Should work to ensure better alignment between counter-ideology or counter-narrative efforts focused on drivers of violent extremism. The goal is to foster an informed, nuanced, and constructive approach to religion 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. That means thinking beyond theology 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.
- It is important that CVE 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.
- The G20 Summit should highlight CVE debates as a priority topic; alongside UN and other efforts, 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 2019 G20 summit with action recommendations.

Religious Coordinating Networks:

- Should focus on developing proposals that reflect inclusive involvement of their communities. They can ensure that understandings of the religious sector reflects 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 and 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.

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G-20 - ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Authored by a Global NPO Coalition on the FATF product⁷⁹

There is an increased tendency on the part of financial institutions to restrict or terminate relationships with categories of customers such as corresponding banks, money remittance agencies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – a practice known as de-risking. The G-20 has recognized the impact of de-risking on financial inclusion and is working with different bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the World Bank to address it and find solutions. However, the G-20 effort does not consider the negative effect of de-risking on the financial inclusion of non-profit organizations (NPOs)⁸⁰ and the people who benefit from or depend on the work of NPOs. To our understanding, there is also a lack of G-20 action and measures to help avoid the negative impact on NPO financial inclusion and operations caused by de-risking.

There is now a growing body of evidence showing that NPOs (including both large, international organizations and smaller poverty alleviating and advocacy organizations) have been heavily impacted by de-risking. Manifestations include: inability to open bank accounts, arbitrary closure of accounts, inordinate delays or termination of transactions, onerous due diligence and reporting obligations that can inhibit engagement with communities.⁸¹ De-risking has had devastating consequences for many organizations as interrupted access to resources is forcing charitable and humanitarian programs to close. Furthermore, it affects people directly, including refugees and victims of conflict who cannot receive resources and may therefore be subject to starvation, exposure, and disease.⁸² The FATF President concluded that de-risking significantly impacts NPOs, preventing the provision of “vital services to society, often in dangerous regions and for vulnerable communities”.⁸³

We ask the G-20 and its members to take global leadership on reducing bank de-risking, ensuring that all entities, including NPOs, have equal access to financial services. Through a communique at the November summit, the G-20 can recognize the problem for NPOs and commit its bodies, Member States and the FATF to take specific actions to address the impact of bank de-risking on NPOs. We further ask the G-20, its platforms, its Member States and its partners to align their policies and monitoring tools in order to enforce effective implementation at the national level to help improve the financial access of NPOs. Specific actions could include:

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⁸⁰ See <https://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/miga/de-risking-impedes-access-finance-non-profit-organizations>

⁸¹ <http://www.cfg.org.uk/resources/Publications/~media/Files/Resources/Briefings/Impact%20of%20money%20laundering%20and%20counter-terrorism%20regulations%20on%20charities.pdf>;

<https://www.charityandsecurity.org/FinAccessReport>; <http://www.hscollective.org/uncategorized/new-research-report-understanding-drivers-de-risking-impact-civil-society-organizations/>;

<https://www.demos.co.uk/files/DEMOSuncharitablebehaviourREPORT.pdf>;

<https://law.duke.edu/humanrights/tighteningthepursestrings/>;

<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/04/24/banks-derisking-hinders-humanitarian-aid-work-needed/>

⁸² See <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/financialsector/brief/de-risking-in-the-financial-sector>

⁸³ See <https://aplusmag.goodbarber.com/home-order/c/0/i/20307420/keeping-it-clean>

- i) Preparatory discussions in groups within the G-20 structure (e.g., at the meetings of finance ministers, within the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion[GPMI]) on how to address the issue;
- ii) Tasking the GPMI to set up a sub-group on financial access for NPOs (or amend the mandate of an existing group) and monitor the impact on NPOs;
- iii) Tasking FATF to address the issues specific to FATF-related processes, in terms of the risk assessment and evaluation of compliance, in line with the risk-based approach.

We present below a more detailed analysis and elaboration of proposed next steps for the G-20. We remain available to enter into dialogue and provide support to the G-20 to address this problem.

Background

“There are an estimated 10 million NPOs worldwide.
If NPOs were a country, it would be the 5th largest economy in the world.”⁸⁴

Banks' approach to de-risking emanates from the FATF standards, which require financial institutions to identify, assess and understand their money laundering and terrorist financing risks, and implement measures that are commensurate with the risks identified. However, in practice, banks are reassessing their risk appetite in light of anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) enforcement actions (which often result in high penalties for banks). Therefore, banks weigh the possible breach of legal or regulatory regimes against the profit margin from those customers or transactions perceived to be risky. In the case of non-profit customers, the profit margins are typically so small relative to others that the cost–benefit calculation results in decisions to turn away or sever ties with non-profit clients.

Financial institutions have not developed effective methodologies to identify AML/CFT risk; they have used broad categories (such as geographical location or legal status) in order to manage risk. As NPOs often work in the most challenging environments, this has compounded the impact of the rules. Furthermore, in such cases, non-profits are denied a chance to seek redress or challenge the risk assessments conducted by banks that led to the denial of services in the first instance. This, in turn, has the opposite effect of the aim of global AML/CFT standards: risk is actually increased by de-risking, as money continues to flow outside of official, regulated channels and under the radar of state bodies.⁸⁵ Mission-driven NPOs that are shut off from formal financial institutions are forced to use other methods, including cash couriers and *hawala*, all of which are riskier than formal banking channels. While much of this empirical research relates to moneys being sent from foreign sources, there is evidence emerging of domestic money flows also being impacted.

⁸⁴ Johns Hopkins University, Center for Civil Society Studies

⁸⁵ Also detected by the UK National Risk Assessment, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-assessment-of-money-laundering-and-terrorist-financing-2017>

Research has shown that the impact of bank de-risking is disproportionately borne by smaller organizations, often working in difficult contexts – these community-based grassroots organizations are crucial when it comes to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in preventing radicalization that might lead to violent extremism, or supporting the enforcement of rights for women or the marginalized worldwide.

Analysts have put forward various explanations for de-risking but almost all agree that international rules designed to combat money laundering and terrorist financing are the most significant.⁸⁶ Several UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteurs have called for civil-society-friendly reform of the stringent AML/CFT regime, contending that arbitrary decision-making by banks breaches non-discrimination laws.⁸⁷

In several countries, there are ongoing attempts to resolve the de-risking issue at the national level (e.g. UK, US, The Netherlands). However, the issue is systemic and cannot be solved just by addressing it at the national level. **There is a need for a global approach, especially considering the global goal of advancing financial inclusion. The global response mechanisms on de-risking and financial inclusion towards NPOs are not aligned.**

Proposed Actions for the G-20

Given the global and interconnected nature of world financial systems, it is important that the G-20 engage at this stage in the different cross-country efforts to tackle the problem of de-risking facing non-profits. Such engagement between FATF, G-20, the GPFI, Member States, and NPOs would contribute to enhanced policy coordination, with clearer evidence of the problem and more refined potential solutions.

A key consideration should be policy coherence as part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17,⁸⁸ which calls for governments, the private sector and NPOs to work together in pursuit of shared objectives at all levels. The GPFI⁸⁹ has already been tasked by the G-20 to increase its efforts to reach the hard-to-bank and to accelerate the advancement of financial inclusion for underserved and vulnerable groups with the aim to “leave no one behind.” The GPFI Action Plan on Financial Inclusion proposes measures to analyse and address the problem of de-risking and explore options to address the drivers of de-risking. The GPFI calls for sharing that understanding with the public and private sectors through publications and activities, and in line with the SDG goals which call for increased public participation in financial institution decision-making.⁹⁰ Such efforts should also include NPOs, as they are a vital and essential partner in SGD implementation; without the successful engagement of non-profits, which requires an enabling legal and financial environment for their operations, the SDGs cannot be achieved.

⁸⁶ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ben-hayes-lia-van-broekhoven-vanja-skoric/de-risking-and-non-profits-how-do-you-solve-problem-that-n>

⁸⁷ For example, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19854&LangID=E>

⁸⁸ Revitalising partnership for global development, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

⁸⁹ See <https://www.gpfi.org>

⁹⁰ The G20 2017 Financial Inclusion Action Plan (p 10, 21), <https://www.gpfi.org/publications/g20-financial-inclusion-action-plan-fiap-2017>

The following steps outline how the financial access of NPOs could be improved. We welcome further discussion on what would constitute the best mechanism to promote financial access for NPOs and guidance as to what is feasible at this G-20.

- **The G-20, its bodies and Member States should recognize NPOs as a sector that is negatively affected by bank de-risking and that deserves protection as other private sector groups receive.** This can be done in several ways:
 - The G-20 could adopt a communique at the November G-20 summit that recognizes the problem and commits its members, the FATF, and the GPFII to take specific actions to address bank de-risking.
 - In advance of this meeting, and to support discussions on the communique and actions, the G-20 could encourage groups within its structure (e.g., the meetings of finance ministers, the GPFII) to address the issue at their upcoming meetings and convene an event at the November G-20 summit to discuss the effects and possible concrete actions together with the civil society affinity group, the C-20, and NPOs working on the issue.
- When dealing with the impact of de-risking on different legal entities, the G-20, the FATF and Member States should also include **a review of the impact on NPOs and consider possible response strategies.** This effort, which should be done together with the NPOs, should explicitly call on countries to gather and assess data on the impact of bank de-risking on the entire sector (including NPOs that fall outside of the FATF definition – e.g., human rights and campaign groups, and both NPOs that are evaluated as high risk and those that are not). Such **impact assessment** should focus not only on financial transfers and inclusion but also on the overall effect on the operating environment of the sector.
- **The GPFII should set up a sub-group on financial access for NPOs** (similar to the group on SMEs) which should also include various NPOs. The sub-group could develop specific action items regarding NPOs under the Action Plan on Financial Inclusion to address the matter. Possible actions could include: a review of existing evidence of the negative impact of de-risking on NPOs, financial transfers and the broader operating environment for NPOs, proposed global guidance or principles to ensure NPO access to financial services, and inclusion of an indicator on monitoring NPO access in the [G20 Financial inclusion Indicators](#).
- **G-20 and its bodies should identify and promote institutional-level good practices, including specific policy and reporting reforms to ensure financial access, transfers and operations for NPOs.** This can be facilitated through collaboration and dialogue between institutions. For example, the G-20 could facilitate exchanges around the impact of de-risking, mitigating efforts, policies and national-level measures in coordination with the GPFII or other bodies it cooperates with on the de-risking issues such as the Financial Stability Board or the FATF. Such exchanges could help stakeholders (financial institutions, governments, NPOs) identify experiences and existing good practices and consider their applicability for the participants' respective national contexts. Evidence-based dialogue which considers successful responses will be more likely to increase global awareness on the negative consequences of the de-risking and engender confidence and consensus on preventive actions to address the problem.

- **Regulatory expectations for financial institutions on the risk-based approach should be clarified:** G-20 members should further clarify regulatory expectations for financial institutions on the risk-based approach through outreach and guidance at the national level, and adjust supervisory approaches and regulations to stimulate an appropriate, risk-based review of customers by banks, where needed.⁹¹
- **The FATF should produce more comprehensive guidance on the risk-based approach for NPOs** as a specific-type of banking customer based on the revised Recommendation 8. The FATF should also train its evaluators to look into the potential de-risking attitudes of banks as part of the FATF's effectiveness methodology during peer evaluations, enabling evaluators to raise concerns about NPO-wide de-risking in their country assessment reports. The FATF leadership should reinforce the need for national governments to continue working on these issues.



The Global NPO Coalition on FATF is a loose network of diverse non-profit organizations (NPOs) that engage with the FATF process with the aim of eliminating the unintended consequences of FATF standards on civil society. A core group of NPOs representing a wide range of interests across countries and regions helps develop strategies, and facilitates and coordinates the coalition.

Coalition achievements so far include:

- Revision of Recommendation 8 and its Interpretive Note: the June 2016 revision retracted the claim that the NPO sector is 'particularly vulnerable' to terrorist abuse.
- In-depth revision of the Best Practices Paper (June 2015), a policy guidance document that countries use to help them implement the standards.
- Formalization of a risk-based approach, which means more proportionate and context-specific implementation of FATF standards.
- Establishment of regular engagement between the FATF Secretariat and NPOs, including seats at the FATF Private Sector Consultative Forum, which allows for more effective NPO participation.
- Awareness-raising and coalition-building among multiple stakeholders (NPOs, governments, regulators, financial institutions) at the global, regional and national levels.

⁹¹ See also FATF report to G-20 finance ministers and central bank: <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/FATF-G20-FM-CBG-March-2018.pdf>

THE IMPERATIVES OF BETTER GOVERNANCE:
FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS A SINE QUA NON FOR GLOBAL AGENDAS (Draft 10/2/18)
Kathryn Marshall (Georgetown University), Elias Szczytnick (Religions for Peace),
Fr. Seamus Finn (Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility), Amb. Alvaro Albacete
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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 document the daily corrosive effects of corruption on poor communities and, building on shared ethical teachings, bolster effective action. Religious actors must address corrupt practices within their own communities so that they can contribute effectively and with trust to broader 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 global International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in Copenhagen in October 2018 offers opportunities to focus on both ethical and material contributions that religious communities can make to fight corruption. The G20 Interfaith Forum in September 2018 urges G20 leaders 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.

Pope Francis points out that corruption is a greater ill than sin, for it undermines both the natural environment and human society. It hangs like a dark cloud over progress in many countries. 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. We need a strong moral compass to navigate the modern complexities of corruption. We should do so with the knowledge that fighting corruption is possible, with will, good ideas, and persistence. “Corruption can be avoided and it demands the commitment of one and all.”

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,

⁹² Corresponding author is Katherine Marshall at km398@georgetown.edu. The following people were additionally consulted: Huguette Labelle, Rebecca Blackly (Episcopalian Church), Roberto Perez-Rocha (IACC), Peter Eigen (Transparency International), Robert Klitgaard (Claremont Graduate University), Ronald MacLean, Bishop Gunnar Stålsett (Religions for Peace), Mohammed Abu-Nimer (KAICIID), Cole Durham (BYU Law School), Nicole Bibbins Sedaca (Georgetown University), and Erwin Tiongson (Georgetown University).

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 mass communications; social media, for example, works both for good and evil; interrupting patterns that permit elites to capture power or sowing misunderstanding, misinformation, and strife. Four 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 say they have discussed corruption recently and many rank 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.
- 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 culture. Such arguments are rarely heard today, and corruption is 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 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.
- 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.

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

Religious Leaders need to be Concerned and Involved

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 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 an international and national integrity movement. 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. Close relationships between 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.

What Measures can Religious Actors Take to Advance Anti-corruption Efforts?

Courageous and determined religious leadership can make a difference in turning societies around. The following suggest promising areas for action.

1. Highlight pertinent scripture and religious teaching, both for individual traditions and in interfaith contexts, that can build commitment and address common misperceptions, for example that cultural differences explain or even justify corrupt practices.
2. Speak powerfully to critical ethical values that bolster honest government, for example, core ethical principles and practices that build trust and social cohesion. This can be a focus of religious education at all levels.
3. Focus on tangible topics like extractive industries, to identify and promote action on human rights violations, failures to assure protection of indigenous communities, and vigilant monitoring of environmental impact.
4. Commit to robust action to stop trafficking of women and children and patterns of abuse
5. Pay close attention to grievances of vulnerable communities, seeking redress and communicating with families and authorities where individuals appear to be open to extremist ideologies
6. Cooperate actively with promising integrity programs, 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
7. Focus on anti-poverty programs (Bolsa Familiar, for example) with a view to assuring that objectives are met and pointing to possible areas for improvement.
8. 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.
9. Interreligious bodies working together can focus on understanding patterns of corruption, defining meaningful tools to combat them, and agree on specific priority areas for action.
10. Support efforts to define common, meaningful objectives and indicators of progress, that allow religious communities to contribute to broader community and national strategies.

What Action Should We Seek at the G20 Argentina Summit in November 2018?

- 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: <https://www.g20.org/en/g20-argentina/work-streams/anti-corruption>
- The issues of land reform and extractive industries, including 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.

IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES - A FAITH PERSPECTIVE

Alison Kelly, Christina Tobias-Nahi, Emily Wei and Giulia McPherson

An unprecedented 68.5 million people are currently displaced globally, including 25.4 million refugees. Recognizing the need for new approaches amid the changing landscape of humanitarian assistance, the global community gathered in 2016 for a UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants which resulted in adoption of the New York Declaration. Signed by 193 countries, the Declaration set in motion a two-year consultative process to develop Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration aimed at enhancing protection for millions of people who have been forcibly displaced and are otherwise on the move around the world.

Set to be endorsed by the UN General Assembly in September 2018, the primary objective of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is to facilitate access to 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.

The GCR is comprised of two primary components, a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which was piloted by UNHCR in 12 refugee-hosting countries, and a Program of Action that outlines actions that can be taken – by UN member states or other stakeholders – to support refugees and countries particularly affected by large-scale refugee movement or protracted refugee situations.

As faith-based organizations working with refugee communities across the globe, ACT Alliance, Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA and Islamic Relief recognize the important role that the GCR can play in building the political will to address the needs of refugees and improving current response mechanisms that can no longer support these needs. We are particularly interested in ensuring that the GCR is fully implemented, funded and monitored as it has the potential to mobilize greater action and transform the lives of refugees and host communities. The full policy brief can be viewed at:

<https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://jliflc.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Interfaith-GCR-Policy-Note-with-edits-9.19.pdf>

JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE ON FAITH AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Founded in 2012, the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) Leadership came together by a single shared conviction: there is an urgent need to build our collective understanding of the potential of local faith communities for improving community health, development and well-being. This international collaboration on evidence for faith groups' activities, contribution and challenges to community health and wellbeing has a resource directory that lists ongoing policy briefs by interfaith groups. There are learning hubs on HIV and Maternal Health, Immunization, Peace and Conflict, Resilience, and Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery. To view the complete policy briefs, go to <https://jliflc.com>.

COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

- A Common Word Among Youth (ACWAY), UK
- African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies
- Alliance of Civilizations Institute at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Turkey
- Amity Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, New Delhi, India
- Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University, USA
- Brunel Law and Religion Research Group, UK
- Canadian Council of Churches
- Center on Religion, Law & Economy - Mediterranean Area, Insubria University, Como, Italy
- Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia
- Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa (CALIR), Argentina
- Consorcio Latinoamericano de Libertad Religiosa
- CREAS – ACT Alianza, Argentina
- Department of Law and Religion, Complutense University, Spain
- Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance, Bangladesh
- Instituto para el Diálogo Interreligioso, Argentina
- International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, Milan, Italy
- International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, USA
- International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)
- International Religious Liberty Association
- International Shinto Foundation
- Islamic Relief USA
- KAICIID Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- Ma'din Academy, India
- Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany
- NALSAR – National Academy of Legal Studies and Research, University of Law, Hyderabad, India
- Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
- Oxford Society of Law and Religion, UK
- Purdue University Fort Wayne
- Regents College, Oxford University, UK
- Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy, University of Winnipeg, Canada
- Royal Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation-Section on Law and Religion and Canon Law, Spain
- Sant'Edigio Community, Italy
- United Religions Initiative
- World Faiths Development Dialogue
- World Jewish Congress

SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON'S PRESENTATIONS

Ayudar y Elevar: Cómo ayuda La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días a los pobres y necesitados a ser autosuficientes

Elder D. Todd Christofferson del Cuórum de los Doce Apóstoles
Foro Interreligioso del G20 – Primera Sesión Plenaria
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Miércoles, 26 de Septiembre de 2018

I. Introducción

Estoy agradecido por la invitación de hablar ante tan distinguida y dedicada audiencia. Es un honor estar aquí y aprender de ustedes en cuanto a la forma en que podemos ayudar de una manera más efectiva a aquellas personas a nuestro alrededor que luchan para escapar de la pobreza y tener una vida mejor.

¡Y es un placer estar otra vez en Argentina! Viví aquí dos años como misionero hace unas décadas. Realmente amo a este país y a su gente maravillosa. Una parte de mi corazón siempre estará aquí. También estoy impresionado con las prioridades que tiene la Argentina para esta conferencia y para el futuro. Es verdaderamente vital que la educación tenga en cuenta las realidades del trabajo futuro, que cada país cuente con la infraestructura que permita el desarrollo sustentable y que cada nación garantice el alimento a largo plazo. Como explicaré a continuación, muchos de nuestros esfuerzos procuran atender estas prioridades.

Como líder de La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días, viajo por todo el mundo, y me reúno con miembros de la Iglesia y muchas otras personas para compartir las enseñanzas de Jesucristo. He visto lugares hermosos y grandes riquezas. Pero también he conocido a muchas personas de gran potencial y bondad que viven en una pobreza terrible y luchan por proveer para las necesidades básicas de sus familias; es muy doloroso. En esos momentos, recuerdo que Jesús enseñaba con frecuencia que debemos cuidar al pobre y al necesitado. Creemos que esa es una de nuestras obligaciones morales fundamentales como pueblo y como Iglesia. Teniendo miembros en casi todos los países del mundo, procuramos ayudar en todo lugar y ocasión que nos sea razonablemente posible.

Al cumplir con la asignación de hablar de lo que La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días está haciendo para ayudar a los menos afortunados, deseo que sepan que no buscamos reconocimiento, solo compartir nuestra experiencia y trabajar por

el entendimiento. Todos tenemos mucho que aprender los unos de los otros, más allá de cuáles sean nuestras motivaciones religiosas o éticas para prestar servicio.

II. Lo que La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días está haciendo para ayudar a los menos afortunados

Todos hemos escuchado el dicho: “Denle a un hombre un pescado y lo habrán alimentado por un día. Enséñenle a pescar y lo habrán alimentado para toda la vida”ⁱ. Hay una gran verdad en eso. Pero también es cierto que a veces una persona necesita un pescado para comer ahora mismo o no sobrevivirá el tiempo necesario para aprender a pescar por sí mismo. Las labores de la Iglesia reconocen que las personas tienen tanto necesidades de corto plazo como necesidades de largo plazo, y que es vital distinguir la diferencia entre ambas. Ignorar las necesidades de corto plazo puede hacer que sea imposible que una persona logre progreso a largo plazo. Alguien que no tiene suficientes alimentos no puede lograr una educación. Pero atender problemas de largo plazo como si fueran necesidades de corto plazo puede producir dependencia, indolencia y resentimiento. Por lo tanto, si bien la Iglesia de Jesucristo cuenta con programas para ambos tipos de necesidades, el objetivo final siempre es fomentar mayor dignidad, autosuficiencia e independencia.

Nuestros esfuerzos de Ayuda Humanitaria proveen para las necesidades básicas de personas que tienen una necesidad urgente, ya sea por desastres naturales, inestabilidad política u otras fuerzas. En las últimas tres décadas, la Iglesia y sus miembros han proporcionado más de dos mil millones de dólares en ayudas a personas de 195 países y territorios. Nuestro objetivo es “aliviar el sufrimiento, fomentar la autosuficiencia y proporcionar oportunidades de prestar servicio”ⁱⁱ. La ayuda y los proyectos de desarrollo que patrocinamos “proporcionan asistencia sin distinción de raza, afiliación religiosa o nacionalidad”ⁱⁱⁱ. Y trabajamos con asociados seculares y de otras religiones para cubrir carencias en las soluciones actuales. Solo el año pasado trabajamos con más de 1.800 asociados en 139 países y territorios en más de 2.700 proyectos humanitarios que ayudaron a millones de personas.

Toda “ayuda se basa en los principios fundamentales de la responsabilidad personal, el apoyo de la comunidad, la autosuficiencia y la sustentabilidad”^{iv}. Algunos ejemplos de ayuda incluyen la respuesta de emergencia ante desastres naturales, como los terremotos recientes en México, o los huracanes en el Caribe o las Filipinas, a donde enviamos rápidamente artículos de higiene, alimentos, agua y voluntarios a las áreas afectadas^v. En consonancia con el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible de las Naciones Unidas de Agua Limpia y Saneamiento, contamos con muchos programas de largo plazo que “proveen a las comunidades fuentes de agua limpia, instalaciones de saneamiento mejoradas y capacitación sobre higiene apropiada”^{vi}. En consonancia con el objetivo de las Naciones Unidas de Salud y Bienestar, procuramos ayudar a las mujeres que dan a luz y reducir la mortalidad infantil “proporcionando capacitación y equipamiento para ayudar a los parteros a reanimar a los bebés al nacer, dar apoyo para el cuidado de los recién nacidos y aumentar la supervivencia materna luego del parto”^{vii}. Los que se capacitan en

estas destrezas, luego capacitan a otros. Enseñamos y fomentamos la producción y el almacenamiento en el hogar para que las personas puedan estar preparadas para las emergencias. Para la creciente población de personas refugiadas y desplazadas en todo el mundo, proporcionamos “asistencia inmediata, ayuda a largo plazo y apoyo para la reubicación”^{viii}. También contamos con programas que proveen sillas de ruedas y atención oftalmológica para personas que no lo pueden pagar, vacunación en países afectados por la pobreza y muchos otros proyectos comunitarios. Todos estos esfuerzos se llevan a cabo en gran parte con voluntarios, que contribuyen “más de un millón de días de trabajo... cada año”^{ix}.

En contraste con estos programas humanitarios, La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días cuenta con programas que proveen o facilitan la instrucción práctica y las habilidades que proporcionan lo que podría llamarse “capital humano”: el conocimiento y la capacidad de ser más productivo y crear crecimiento económico y personal duraderos.

Uno de esos programas es nuestra Iniciativa de Autosuficiencia, que comenzó en 2015 y actualmente está en funcionamiento en 130 países. La iniciativa ofrece cuatro cursos: (1) Cómo iniciar y hacer crecer mi negocio; (2) Cómo buscar un mejor empleo; (3) La administración de finanzas personales; y (4) Cómo obtener educación para tener un mejor empleo. Cada curso dura doce semanas y proporciona instrucción individualizada a grupos de 8 a 10 personas que se reúnen una vez por semana. Cada grupo se convierte en su propia red de amistad, apoyo mutuo y rendimiento de cuentas, lo que proporciona una poderosa fuente de entusiasmo para aprender, aumentar la confianza y adoptar conductas positivas que conducen al éxito económico y personal.

La Iniciativa de Autosuficiencia de la Iglesia se centra en la persona en su totalidad. Los participantes realizan una autoevaluación guiada de su situación y preparan un plan para desarrollar sus habilidades intelectuales, físicas, emocionales y espirituales. Desarrollar la fe en Dios es tan esencial para el éxito del programa como las enseñanzas sobre la integridad, la honestidad, el esfuerzo, la preparación de un presupuesto, el servicio, el trabajo en equipo y otras habilidades claves para la vida y el trabajo. El conocimiento secular y la fe se combinan para aumentar la capacidad de los integrantes de los grupos para lograr sus metas.

Ahora, tal vez se pregunten si esto realmente funciona. ¡Me complace informarles que los resultados han sido maravillosos! En sólo tres años y medio, más de 700.000 participantes han tomado alguno de los cursos, incluyendo a miles de personas de otras religiones. Solo en Argentina, Chile, Uruguay y Paraguay, se han comenzado o mejorado casi 7.000 negocios, más de 4.200 personas han encontrado un trabajo nuevo o mejor, cerca de 1.500 participantes finalizaron el curso de finanzas personales y aproximadamente otros 7.000 comenzaron a estudiar para una carrera. De los datos recogidos de los participantes en estos cuatro países suramericanos, el 40 por ciento informa que sus ingresos han aumentado tras asistir a un grupo de autosuficiencia, 37 por ciento aumentaron sus ahorros y 54 por ciento disminuyeron sus deudas por consumo.

Esos números representan a personas reales, vidas reales:

- Luego de tomar un curso de Autosuficiencia, Aguida Urbano de Bacas, de Perú, halló el valor, el conocimiento y las destrezas para comenzar su propio negocio. Siempre ha sido una artesana talentosa, pero nunca tuvo el valor para convertir su arte en una empresa. Con el curso de autosuficiencia, comenzó a confiar en sí misma y en la ayuda de Dios. “Desde que puse ese simple cartel en la ventana para publicitar mi negocio, como nos enseñaron en clase —dice ella—, tengo un montón de pedidos. Esta semana tengo que hacer todos estos moldes de pingüinos y lobos de mar y tejer otra alfombra”.
- Como resultado de su participación en un curso de Autosuficiencia, José Alberto Navas, de Costa Rica, quien estaba desempleado, obtuvo la confianza para mejorar sus conocimientos de inglés básico con clases que se ofrecían en la Iglesia. Eso condujo a un trabajo en una de las empresas más grandes de Costa Rica. Luego, José comenzó su propia empresa de construcción con varios empleados, incluyendo a su esposa, Carla. Con sus ingresos, ahora Carla está retomando los estudios para obtener su título universitario.

Hay miles más como Aguida y José.

Otro programa que la Iglesia desarrolló es el Fondo Perpetuo para la Educación. La idea es simple: prestar dinero a personas motivadas, pero de bajos recursos para que puedan obtener educación formal, permitiéndoles devolver el préstamo en forma gradual, a medida que su educación les permite obtener mayores ingresos y un mejor nivel de vida. Gracias al pago posterior de sus deudas por parte de la mayoría de los participantes y a las donaciones generosas de los miembros de la Iglesia se asegura el reabastecimiento del fondo. Con el trabajo de voluntarios calificados y sin el peso de costos fijos, el fondo puede ayudar perpetuamente a quienes procuran obtener educación técnica o universitaria que conduzca a un mejor empleo. ¿Y los resultados? Desde su lanzamiento en 2001, el Fondo Perpetuo para la Educación ha otorgado más de 93.000 préstamos en más de 70 países, incluyendo 2.500 préstamos solo en Argentina. Una de las personas asistidas por esos préstamos fue Carlos Salinas, de Perú; un joven de unos 20 años atascado en un trabajo de embotellador de 15 horas por día. Él había perdido la esperanza de un futuro mejor. Pero con la ayuda del Fondo Perpetuo para la Educación, recibió un préstamo de estudios que le permitió obtener un título en administración y comenzar una carrera exitosa, lo que a su vez le dio más recursos que los utilizó para servir a la comunidad y ayudar a los demás.

Una tercera iniciativa de la Iglesia que está aumentando la autosuficiencia a largo plazo es el Programa Mundial Pathway de la Universidad Brigham Young. Este programa, que se lanzó hace una década, busca “hacer más accesible la educación superior, sin la necesidad de que los estudiantes vayan a un campus universitario”^x. Al “combinar la flexibilidad de los cursos académicos en línea, la educación religiosa y los beneficios de las reuniones presenciales semanales con otros estudiantes”, el programa

“aument[a] la confianza y ayud[a] a los estudiantes a fortalecer las habilidades básicas que los beneficiarán en la educación superior, el trabajo, el hogar y la iglesia”^{xi}. Se establece un costo bajo para la matrícula, y los estudiantes pueden obtener un certificado en línea o un título universitario de BYU-Idaho, que es una universidad acreditada, establecida por la Iglesia.

Tanto a través del Fondo Perpetuo para la Educación como del programa Pathway buscamos proporcionar a los participantes la educación y las habilidades necesarias para tener éxito en la economía del futuro.

Como reconocerán, estos programas educativos y de desarrollo personal son consistentes con los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de las Naciones Unidas, tales como Educación de Calidad, Trabajo Decente y Crecimiento Económico. Deseo enfatizar que el objetivo de la Iglesia es ayudar no solo a las personas sino también a sus familias. Cuando las personas que son el sostén de la familia pueden escapar de la pobreza y lograr la autosuficiencia económica y personal, tienen más recursos para criar a sus hijos para que sean autosuficientes, educados, productivos y buenos ciudadanos. Y las personas que son autosuficientes pueden servir mejor en sus comunidades y realizar contribuciones valiosas a sus sociedades y naciones.

“Existe una interdependencia entre los que tienen y los que no tienen: el proceso de dar exalta al pobre y hace humilde al rico, y ambos son santificados. El pobre, liberado de la esclavitud y las limitaciones de la pobreza, queda habilitado como hombre o mujer libre para elevarse a su máximo potencial, tanto temporal como espiritualmente; el rico, al compartir su riqueza, participa del principio eterno de dar. Una vez que una persona ha mejorado su situación y es autosuficiente, se esfuerza por ayudar a los demás, y el ciclo se repite”^{xii}.

III. Conclusión

Para finalizar, deseo compartir mi propia visión de éxito en nuestro esfuerzo de aliviar la pobreza y elevar a la sociedad. Es una visión que siempre me ha inspirado. Proviene de las Escrituras de mi religión, que hablan de una tierra prometida, una ciudad santa, establecida por el profeta Enoc hace miles de años. Todos los que deseaban vivir en paz y caminar con Dios eran bienvenidos allí. Con el tiempo, la ciudad llegó a ser grande a la vista de Dios, aún celestial, debido a que, como declaran nuestras Escrituras, los habitantes del pueblo “eran uno en corazón y voluntad, y vivían en rectitud; y no había pobres entre ellos”^{xiii}. ¡Para mí esa visión es hermosa e inspiradora! Una sociedad de amor, unidad e igualdad en donde se cuidan los unos a los otros con tanto interés por sus necesidades físicas y espirituales que con el tiempo ninguno de nosotros es pobre. Que podamos esforzarnos juntos, trabajando junto a los demás, a nuestra propia manera, y de acuerdo con nuestras creencias y valores, para lograr esta unidad e igualdad, es mi esperanza y oración para todos los que trabajan para aliviar, ayudar y amar a los hijos de Dios.

Muchas gracias.

La libertad religiosa: Proteger lo bueno que hace la religión

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IV. Introducción

Como mencioné en la primera sesión plenaria, me siento realmente privilegiado de estar aquí. Me he sentido iluminado, y con frecuencia asombrado, por lo que he escuchado. El solo hecho de saber de los grandes actos de bien que tantos de ustedes realizan me inspira y me da la esperanza de que, trabajando juntos hacia metas comunes, podamos hacer una diferencia real en la vida de millones de personas.

Así es como debemos trabajar: *Juntos*, si bien cada uno de acuerdo con su enfoque particular. Esto es a veces un desafío, porque provenimos de religiones y perspectivas filosóficas muy distintas. No obstante, por lo que he aprendido aquí, estoy más convencido que nunca de que un entorno pluralista, que da la bienvenida a muchos enfoques diferentes, es la mejor opción para ayudar a quienes están necesitados. Y por supuesto que incluyo los enfoques religiosos en este entorno pluralista. Las organizaciones religiosas y las comunidades de fe desempeñan una función esencial en la tarea de aliviar la pobreza y ayudar a las personas a vivir vidas más saludables, felices y productivas. Por estas y muchas otras razones, la libertad religiosa sigue siendo esencial para nuestros esfuerzos.

Me gustaría hablar por unos minutos de la libertad religiosa y lo esencial que es para preservar y motivar todo lo bueno que hace la religión. Al hacerlo, no intento en modo alguno desmerecer el enorme bien que las organizaciones e instituciones laicas hacen por la sociedad. Solo quiero enfatizar que la religión y, por ende, la libertad religiosa sigue siendo esencial para alcanzar nuestros objetivos comunes.

V. La libertad religiosa protege lo bueno que hace la religión

Es posible que a los presentes nos resulte extraño, pero es cada vez más común que la gente crea que la religión y la libertad religiosa representan una especie de carga para la sociedad. Esto simplemente no es cierto. La religión es fundamental para el bienestar de la sociedad, y la libertad religiosa beneficia no solo a los creyentes, sino a toda la sociedad, sean conscientes de ello o no. Por lo tanto, proteger esta libertad es de interés para todos, sean personas creyentes o no.

Me gustaría abordar solamente dos de los grandes beneficios de la libertad religiosa y ofrecer algunos datos estadísticos ilustrativos provenientes de estudios de todo el mundo.

Primero, la libertad religiosa protege otros derechos fundamentales. La libertad de expresar la creencia en Dios, algo que llevó siglos de lucha para establecerse, también respalda el derecho de expresar opiniones sobre la moralidad, la sociedad, la política, la literatura, el arte, la ciencia o, virtualmente, cualquier otro tema. Los derechos religiosos de reunirse pacíficamente para adorar o de imprimir literatura religiosa, derechos estos cuya conquista fue ardua, también respaldan el derecho de reunirse por razones políticas, sociales, culturales y familiares, o de imprimir libros o periódicos que aborden diversos temas.

El requerir que los gobiernos traten a sus ciudadanos equitativamente, sin importar su religión, ha fortalecido el imperativo de tratar a las personas de igual forma a pesar de sus diferencias en términos de raza, color, origen, orientación sexual y otras características. Hay muchos otros ejemplos.

El historiador inglés Lord Acton observó que “la libertad religiosa es el principio generador de la [libertad] civil”¹. Proteger y respetar la libertad religiosa sirve para fomentar la protección y el respeto de otros derechos y libertades de los seres humanos. Nos enseña que los gobiernos tienen límites: que hay aspectos de la vida que son tan sensibles y personales que la jurisdicción coercitiva del estado debe ceder ante la jurisdicción de la conciencia sagrada e individual. La libertad religiosa nos enseña a ver la dignidad inherente de cada persona. Nos enseña primero a tolerar, luego a respetar y, finalmente, a amar a nuestro prójimo.

Mucho me temo que, si nuestras sociedades fallan en proteger y respetar vigorosamente la libertad religiosa, perderemos no solo esta libertad, sino también muchas otras.

El *segundo* beneficio que quiero destacar es que la libertad religiosa les permite a las religiones llevar adelante la función vital de promover la virtud en la sociedad, brindar ayuda a los menos afortunados y nutrir y fortalecer a las familias y comunidades. Existe una abundante cantidad de investigaciones que estudian los beneficios sociales de la religión libremente ejercida. Estos son solo algunos de los beneficios que los investigadores han identificado:

- Los países con una sólida libertad religiosa tienden a ser más estables y prósperos. Un estudio reciente halló que *la libertad religiosa es uno de los tres factores asociados significativamente al crecimiento económico global*². Está asociada a muchos efectos sociales y económicos positivos “que van desde mejor atención en salud hasta ingresos más elevados para las mujeres”³. En contraste, la falta de libertad religiosa lleva a un

incremento de la violencia⁴, la corrupción política⁵, los conflictos y los disturbios nacionales⁶.

- Dejando de lado al minúsculo número de personas que utilizan la religión para justificar actos violentos, el libre ejercicio de la religión también promueve una mejor sociedad. La conciencia religiosa alienta las virtudes y hábitos del buen ciudadano que son necesarios para una sociedad libre: la honestidad, el deber, la autodisciplina moral, el sacrificio por la familia y el país, la compasión, el servicio a los demás y el compromiso cívico. La religión inspira a los individuos a desarrollar atributos de carácter dignos de alabanza, y tales personas son ciudadanos más comprometidos y responsables, que contribuyen más eficazmente al bienestar de sus comunidades y de su nación.
- Por ejemplo, los estudios han mostrado que...
 - Las personas que viven su religión son menos propensas a ser violentas⁷; cuanto más religiosas son las personas de una comunidad, menos homicidios y suicidios tiende a haber en ellas⁸.
 - Una mayor asistencia a los servicios religiosos parece disminuir las tasas de criminalidad, tanto de crímenes mayores como menores⁹, más que lo que hacen los programas gubernamentales de bienestar.
 - Las personas religiosas tienen más probabilidades de pertenecer a organizaciones sociales, servir como líderes de una organización y participar en actividades cívicas locales y en la vida política¹⁰. “La práctica religiosa es, por mucho, el predictor más fuerte y sólido de una amplia gama de medidas de participación cívica”¹¹.
 - Como subraya esta conferencia, las personas y las instituciones religiosas son excelentes fuentes de ayuda humanitaria; se ofrecen como voluntarios en la comunidad a tasas mucho más altas que quienes no tienen religión. Un cálculo estimativo indica que las personas de fe tienen un 40 por ciento más de probabilidades que las personas no religiosas de dar dinero a obras de caridad y más del doble de probabilidades de ofrecer voluntariamente su servicio a organizaciones sociales¹². Las personas muy religiosas son más propensas a ofrecerse como voluntarios, no solo para causas religiosas, sino también para causas seculares¹³.
 - Los voluntarios religiosos brindan un servicio crucial a los más vulnerables: comida para el hambriento, refugio para las personas sin hogar, escuelas para las personas sin educación y cuidados médicos para los enfermos. Más del 90 por ciento de quienes asisten regularmente a servicios de adoración donan a instituciones benéficas, y casi el 70 por ciento de ellos se ofrecen como voluntarios para causas benéficas¹⁴.
 - Numerosos estudios internacionales han mostrado que la práctica regular y sincera de la religión está “asociada con mayor estabilidad

matrimonial, mayores niveles de satisfacción matrimonial, y una mayor probabilidad de que un individuo se incline a casarse”¹⁵. La asistencia a los servicios religiosos es el indicador más importante de estabilidad matrimonial¹⁶.

- Los niños están más seguros y prosperan mejor en el contexto de un hogar religioso y prácticas religiosas regulares. Tienen menos probabilidades de experimentar ansiedad, soledad, baja autoestima o tristeza¹⁷, o participar de actividades delictivas o ilegales¹⁸, pornografía¹⁹, abuso de alcohol y drogas²⁰, y otros comportamientos adictivos²¹. Las tasas de depresión²² y suicidio²³ entre los jóvenes religiosos son reducidas.

No estoy sugiriendo en modo alguno que la religión sea la única fuente de virtud en la sociedad ni que las personas seculares no puedan ser altamente morales. Mi punto es simplemente que, muy a menudo, la religión hace el trabajo difícil de inculcar los hábitos y la moral necesarios para que existan sociedades sanas y libres.

Una experiencia de uno de mis colegas de la Iglesia ilustra mi punto. Recientemente visitó un país que durante muchas décadas prácticamente no ha tenido libertad religiosa. En una reunión con uno de los altos oficiales del gobierno, le dijeron que el gobierno se había dado cuenta de que, por sí solo, no puede crear un sentido de lo correcto y lo incorrecto en las personas, ni enseñarles cómo vivir vidas virtuosas. Necesitan la religión.

La sociedad se beneficia enormemente de lo bueno que la fe en Dios puede proveer.

VI. *Cómo la libertad religiosa protege lo bueno que hace la religión*

Esto me trae a mi punto final: sin la libertad de practicar nuestra fe, lo cual incluye el servir a los necesitados de la manera que nuestra fe indica, la Iglesia y sus miembros —y muchas otras comunidades de fe— no podrían servir de forma efectiva a los pobres ni realizar el gran trabajo que hacen por la sociedad en general. Nuestra fe es fundamental para lo que hacemos y para cómo lo hacemos.

La libertad religiosa le permite a cada grupo basado en la fe servir de una manera que es coherente con sus creencias y motivaciones más profundas. Cada comunidad religiosa tiene un enfoque único del servicio, que refleja sus doctrinas únicas, sus prácticas religiosas únicas, y su forma única de amar y servir al prójimo. Cada una ayuda al pobre y al necesitado de forma diferente. Sin la libertad religiosa, cada grupo religioso se vería forzado a escoger entre servir de formas que violan sus creencias, lo que despojaría a su servicio de la fe que le da vida y poder, o abandonar el mandato divino de cuidar de los pobres. La fe y la libertad proveen el terreno fértil en el que los propósitos religiosos de nuestros programas pueden florecer. Sin libertad religiosa, estos programas no podrían existir, y mucha menos gente recibiría ayuda.

Con mis comentarios no descarto las vastas e importantes contribuciones que realizan numerosos grupos no religiosos. La pobreza y el sufrimiento parecen casi infinitos. Hay espacio para tantos enfoques individualizados como grupos y personas dispuestas a servir, ya sean religiosas o seculares. Nadie tiene el monopolio del servicio o del amor. Todos nosotros desempeñamos una función esencial.

Esa realidad debería llevar a los encargados de formular leyes a adoptar un enfoque pluralista para los programas de reducción de la pobreza y ayuda al necesitado, en lugar de un modelo único para todos. En la mayor medida posible, los encargados de formular leyes deberían permitir que los grupos de fe sean fieles a su misión religiosa; permitir que las ONG no religiosas sean fieles a su visión; y luego dejar que las personas elijan los enfoques religiosos o seculares que mejor respondan a sus necesidades. Los legisladores deberían resistir el impulso de obligar a los grupos religiosos a ajustarse a los valores seculares.

Algunos argumentan que, si la iniciativa involucra dinero del gobierno, entonces deben regir los valores seculares de este. Si bien La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días no recibe dinero de los gobiernos, esta apoya firmemente la libertad religiosa de todos los grupos, independientemente de si se asocian al gobierno o si sirven por su cuenta. Invocar la existencia de fondos del gobierno para justificar la supresión de la misión religiosa de un grupo de fe es, simplemente, tener una visión muy limitada que solo despojará al grupo en cuestión de su motivación y poder para servir eficazmente.

Por estas y muchas otras razones, la libertad de servir según los principios de nuestras diversas creencias es simplemente vital y debe protegerse. La fe y la libertad son la sangre que da vida a nuestros muchos esfuerzos por servir.

VII. Conclusión

Los dos grandes mandamientos de la cristiandad son lo que motivan a los miembros de La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días: el primer gran mandamiento, Jesús enseñó, es amar a Dios. El segundo es amar a nuestro prójimo como a nosotros mismos²⁴. Esta es la razón por la que servimos.

Amamos a Dios como el Padre espiritual de toda la humanidad. Creemos que Su obra y Su gloria es elevar y refinar a todos Sus hijos, y que hemos sido llamados a asistirlo en este gran esfuerzo. Reconocemos que todas las bendiciones —toda la abundancia, todo lo que tenemos— proviene de Él. Cualquier cosa material con la que Dios nos bendiga es una mayordomía sagrada. Como enseña la Biblia: “Porque a todo aquel a quien se le haya dado mucho, mucho se demandará de él”²⁵. Creemos que cada uno de nosotros un día se presentará ante Dios para rendir cuentas de lo que hayamos hecho con nuestro tiempo y recursos mientras estemos en la tierra. Nuestro sincero deseo es seguir el ejemplo de Jesucristo, de quien las Escrituras dicen: “anduvo haciendo

bienes”²⁶. Como enseña el Libro de Mormón, “cuando os halláis al servicio de vuestros semejantes, solo estáis al servicio de vuestro Dios”²⁷.

El amor a Dios nos lleva a amar a nuestro prójimo. Abrazamos a personas de todos los orígenes como hijos de Dios. Vemos a los individuos y las familias que luchan por recuperarse de la guerra y los desastres naturales, o por superar la pobreza intergeneracional, no como a extraños, sino como a nuestros amigos, como nuestros hermanos y hermanas espirituales, como nuestra familia. Queremos levantarlos y ayudarlos a romper el ciclo de la pobreza y la dependencia, a ser autosuficientes y libres, y a llevar una vida digna y respetuosa. Nuestros esfuerzos por alentar y desarrollar la autosuficiencia en individuos, familias y comunidades surgen de la profunda verdad espiritual de que cada persona tiene un valor eterno.

En resumen, nuestra fe en Jesucristo, quien murió, resucitó, y que vive hoy — quien nos enseña que cada persona es digna de nuestro amor y apoyo— es la fe que inspira y guía todo lo que la Iglesia y sus miembros hacen. Es el fuego que arde en nuestro interior y la luz que nos guía en nuestro camino a medida que amamos, elevamos y ayudamos a los demás. Estoy seguro de que cada comunidad religiosa aquí presente diría casi lo mismo.

Aun así, no necesitamos estar de acuerdo con todas las razones por las que servimos. ¡Dejemos que haya muchas razones por las que hacemos el bien! Y no siempre debemos estar de acuerdo *en cómo* se sirve mejor. ¡Dejemos que haya muchos enfoques diferentes para llegar a las personas en toda su maravillosa diversidad! Pero confío en que todos podamos estar de acuerdo en respetar la libertad —*especialmente la libertad religiosa*— y en que todos debemos servir de acuerdo con los dictados de nuestra conciencia.

Gracias.

¹ John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton, *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, editor J. Rufus Fears, 1985, pág. 47.

² Véase Brian J. Grim, Greg Clark y Robert Edward Snyder, “Is Religious Freedom Good for Business? A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis”, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, tomo X, 2014, artículo 4, pág. 1.

³ Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza y Luigi Zingales, “People’s Opium? Religion and Economic Attitudes”, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 2003, pág. 227.

⁴ Véase Roger Finke y Jaime Dean Harris, “Wars and Rumors of Wars: Explaining Religiously Motivated Violence”, en *Religion, Politics, Society, and the State*, 2011, pág. 53.

⁵ Véase Seymour Martin Lipset y Gabriel Salman Lenz, “Corruption, Culture, and Markets”, en *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, 2000, pág. 112.

⁶ Véase Brian J. Grim, Vegard Skirbekk y Jesus C. Cuaresma, “Deregulation and Demographic Change: A Key to Understanding Whether Religious Plurality Leads to Strife”, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, tomo IX, 2013, artículo 13, pág. 1.

⁷ Véase David Lester, “Religiosity and Personal Violence: A Regional Analysis of Suicide and Homicide Rates”, *Journal of Social Psychology*, tomo CXXVII, diciembre de 1987, págs. 685, 686.

⁸ Véase David Lester, “Religiosity and Personal Violence”, págs. 685, 686.

⁹ Véase Byron R. Johnson, David B. Larson, Spencer De Li y Sung Joon Jang, “Escaping from the Crime of Inner Cities: Church Attendance and Religious Salience among Disadvantaged Youth”, *Justice Quarterly*, tomo XVII, nro. 2, junio de 2000, pág. 377.

¹⁰ Véase Robert D. Putnam y David E. Campbell, *American Grace*, págs. 454–455; véase también Pippa Norris, “Does Praying Together Mean Staying Together? Religion and Civic Engagement in Europe and the United States”, en Joep de Hart, Paul Dekker y Loek Halman, editores, *Religion and Civil Society in Europe*, 2013, pág. 285 (lo que demuestra la existencia de una correlación positiva entre la observancia religiosa y la participación cívica en Europa occidental).

¹¹ Putnam y Campbell, *American Grace*, págs. 454–455.

¹² Véase Arthur C. Brooks, “Compassion, Religion, and Politics”, *The Public Interest*, otoño de 2004, pág. 61.

¹³ Véase Putnam y Campbell, *American Grace*, capítulo 13; véase también, René Bekkers y Pamala Wiepking, “Who Gives? A Literature Review of Predictors of Charitable Giving”, *Voluntary Sector Review*, tomo II, nro. 3, noviembre de 2011, http://pamala.nl/papers/BekkersWiepking_VSR_2011.pdf.

¹⁴ Véase Arthur C. Brooks, “Religious Faith and Charitable Giving”, *Policy Review*, Oct–Nov. 2003, <http://www.hoover.org/research/religious-faith-and-charitable-giving>; véase también Putnam y Campbell, *American Grace*.

¹⁵ Patrick Fagan, “Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability”, 18 de diciembre de 2006, www.heritagefoundation.org.

¹⁶ Véase David B. Larson, Susan S. Larson y John Gartner, “Families, Relationships and Health”, *Behavior and Medicine*, 1990, pág. 135.

¹⁷ Véase Byron R. Johnson, Ralph Brett Tompkins y Derek Webb, “Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations: A Review of the Literature”, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society, 2002, http://www.manhattaninstitute.org/pdf/crrucs_objective_hope.pdf.

¹⁸ Véase Johnson, Larson, De Li y Jang, “Escaping from the Crime of Inner Cities”. (Los jóvenes negros menos favorecidos en las ciudades que asisten a los servicios religiosos con regularidad muestran 57 por ciento menos probabilidad de consumir drogas y 39 por ciento menos probabilidad de cometer crímenes en general).

¹⁹ Véase Patrick F. Fagan, “The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family, and Community,” <https://www.movieguide.org/news-articles/the-effects-of-pornography-on-individuals-marriage-family-and-community.html>.

²⁰ Véase Marvin D. Free Jr., “Religiosity, Religious Conservatism, Bonds to School, and Juvenile Delinquency Among Three Categories of Drug Users”, *Deviant Behavior*, tomo XV, 1994, pág. 151.

²¹ Véase William J. Strawbridge, Sarah J. Shema, Richard D. Cohen y George A. Kaplan, “Religious Attendance Increases Survival by Improving and Maintaining Good Health Behaviors, Mental Health, and Social Relationships”, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, tomo XXIII, nro. 1, 2001, pág. 68; Johnson, Tompkins y Webb, “Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations”.

²² Véase Loyd S. Wright, Christopher J. Frost y Stephen J. Wisecarver, “Church Attendance, Meaningfulness of Religion, and Depressive Symptomatology Among Adolescents”, *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, tomo XII, nro. 5, 1993, pág. 559.

²³ Véase Johnson, Tompkins y Webb, “Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations”.

²⁴ Mateo 22:36–40.

²⁵ Lucas 12:48.

²⁶ Hechos 10:38.

²⁷ Mosías 2:17.

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- ⁱ Proverbio chino, *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*, ed. Rhoda Thomas Tripp, pág. 76, nro. 3, 1970.
- ⁱⁱ “About Us”, LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org/pages/about-us>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Id.*
- ^{iv} *Id.*
- ^v “Emergency Response”, LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org/what-we-do/emergency-response>.
- ^{vi} “Clean Water”, LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org/what-we-do/clean-water>.
- ^{vii} “Maternal and Newborn Care”, LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org/what-we-do/neonatal-resuscitation>.
- ^{viii} “Refugee Response”, LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org/what-we-do/refugee-help>.
- ^{ix} “About Us”, LDS Charities, <https://www.ldscharities.org/pages/about-us>.
- ^x “About BYU-Pathway Worldwide”, <https://byupathway.lds.org/Main/AboutUs>.
- ^{xi} *Id.*
- ^{xii} Véase Marion G. Romney, “The Celestial Nature of Self-reliance”, *Liahona*, marzo de 2009, pág. 19.
- ^{xiii} La Perla de Gran Precio, Moisés 7:18.