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## G20 Interfaith Forum

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### Forum Concept Paper

The G20 Interfaith Forum offers an annual platform where a network of religiously linked institutions and initiatives engage on global agendas (primarily and including the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs). The annual G20 Summits are a critical time and place where priority global issues are considered. The G20 process has evolved since it was established in 2008, with various platforms (ministerial meetings, engagement groups) that allow different sectors and communities to present ideas and recommendations to global leaders. The G20 Interfaith Forum builds on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting their rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. These include interfaith and intercultural organizations, religious leaders, scholars, development and humanitarian entities, and business and civil society actors.

Beginning in Australia in 2014, the G20 Interfaith Forum has convened annually in the G20 host country. The Forums have considered wide-ranging agendas, including economic models and systems, the environment, women, families, children, work, humanitarian aid, health, education, freedom of religion or belief, global security, governance, human rights, and the rule of law. The agenda for each Forum is framed taking into account the annual G20 priorities (outlined each year by the host government), together with topics that the various networks of religious actors recommend that the G20 leaders address. The G20 Interfaith Forum has met in Australia in 2014, Turkey in 2015, China in 2016, Germany in 2017, and Argentina in 2018. The recommendations of the 2018 G20 Forum, held in Buenos Aires, are summarized [here](#).

The sixth G20 Interfaith Forum will take place in Tokyo, Japan from June 7-9, 2019, at the Hotel New Otani Makuhari. This year's theme is "Peace, People, Planet: Pathways Forward."

The Japanese government has announced that the agenda for the 2019 G20 Summit (which will take place in Osaka from June 28-29, 2019) will highlight inter alia issues for environmental action, aging societies, trade imbalances, disaster response, health, and world peace.

The 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum is organized by the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, working closely with Japanese and international partners. A broad range of collaborating institutions have joined in Forum efforts over time (see list [here](#)). Information about the G20 Interfaith Association and its Executive Committee are set out on the G20 Interfaith Forum website ([www.G20Interfaith.org](http://www.G20Interfaith.org)).

The Forum's goal is to contribute meaningful insights and recommendations that respond to and help shape the G20 and thus global policy agendas. The effort demands careful processes that draw both from analysis and experience and from the collective wisdom of widely diverse religious and cultural communities. These processes include continuing task forces and robust dialogue during the Forum.

The agenda for the 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum will build on the goals of equity and sustainability that have been a central underlying theme for the Forum from its inception. The agenda and prior preparatory work will address issues on the Japanese agenda as well as several issues of continuing concern to Forum participants. The 2019 Forum will reflect the central importance of building bridges around culture and the arts, looking to the core values that are so vital to addressing world affairs. More details on the agenda will be posted on the Forum website.

The 2019 Forum agenda will address three principal topic areas: (a) Peace and Security, including action to address the challenges posed by refugee movements and migration, corruption, violence, and efforts to cultivate social cohesion and respect for difference in societies; (b) People, meaning the vital issues for human welfare and well-being, with special emphasis on children, roles of women and men, health, education, and the phenomenon of aging societies; and (c) Planet: care for the earth, and actions needed to protect the environment and address the challenges posed by climate change.

In addition to the foregoing, four related topics will have special focus on the Forum agenda:

- (i) 2019 is the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and religious engagement on child protection will be a focus.
- (ii) Following discussions in Argentina on issues of human trafficking and modern slavery, a session will focus on religious action to address the challenge.
- (iii) The prominent roles of social media and of more traditional media as a force for truth and integrity and as a force that inflames lesser angels will be explored in a special session.
- (iv) Among G20 governments, approaches to engagement with religious institutions and actors.

Key organizers and funders of this year's Forum at the date of this writing include:

- International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS), Brigham Young University, USA
- Worldwide Support for Development
- The International Shinto Foundation
- The King Abdallah Bin Abdulaziz Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)
- World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD)
- Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia

The Forum brings together a growing list of different networks of faith-inspired actors. Participating networks include:

- International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development
- Joint Learning Initiative
- UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development

The 2019 G20 Forum will, as in the past, engage leaders from different sectors. That will include senior political leaders, religious leaders, scholars, business people, and those involved in humanitarian and development work on the ground. The Forum will explicitly bring in cultural dimensions, especially insofar as they contribute to understanding and to social cohesion. It will involve discussion of facets of Japanese values that might enrich discussions around the global agenda.