



TOKYO, JAPAN

PEOPLE, PEACE, PLANET: PATHWAYS FORWARD

7 - 9 JUNE 2019



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BACKGROUND

G20 Summits, ministerial meetings, and engagement groups play important roles in setting global agendas and in spurring action to address critical issues. The “Group of 20” includes 19 individual countries and the European Union, which together account for two-thirds of the world’s population and more than 80 percent of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP). The annual leaders summit, formally the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy,” was initially convened to address problems precipitated by the 2008 global financial crisis. It has since expanded its focus beyond an initial agenda centered on economics to address far broader issues. In 2016, G20 Leaders endorsed the “G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” to align the G20’s work with the 2030 Agenda. The president and host country of the G20 Summit, which rotates annually, also define priorities for the G20 to address.

The organizing structure and process of the G20 has remained informal (e.g. there is no formal secretariat). However, given the significant global influence of the G20 countries, the G20 Summit and associated processes are a focal point for different groups with a stake in the overall agenda, including leaders of other nations and international organizations. As the G20 process has unfolded, a variety of “engagement groups” have emerged for business (B20), civil society (C20), labor (L20), science (S20), think tanks (T20), women (W20), and youth (Y20).

With over 80 percent of the world affiliated with a religious tradition, faith communities and actors in diverse sectors have important moral and practical insights to contribute. The G20 Interfaith Forum offers a platform where networks of religiously linked and faith-inspired actors engage on global agendas within the broad framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum’s agenda largely mirrors that of the G20 host each year, focusing also on the Sustainable Development Goals as a leading global agenda and on topics vital to religious and interreligious agendas. The aim is to draw out actionable wisdom from a growing network of religiously linked actors working on global agendas, and to present robust recommendations to the G20 as well as to the “network of networks” that the Forum brings together.

EVENT SUMMARY

The 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum was held in Tokyo, Japan, June 7-9, at the Hotel New Otani Makuhari. This year's G20 Interfaith Forum, "Peace, People, Planet: Pathways Forward," was the sixth in a series of annual events linked to successive G20 Summits.

Over the course of 22 working sessions and six plenaries sessions, religious leaders from different traditions, political leaders and former heads of state, civil society leaders, faith inspired actors and organizations, scholars, social activists, and young people reviewed leading issues in light of Japan's G20 agenda - with a particular focus on the SDGs, and other topics of importance to interreligious agendas.

The diversity of voices at the Forum was a notable feature this year, as was the large Japanese audience (2000+). The Forum benefitted from facets of Japanese and Asian culture (including drums, gymnasts, ikebana, bento, and a Ninja theme), and received considerable media attention in Japan. A compelling feature of the closing plenary was a [powerful speech](#) by a young leader, Kim Tran of Fridays for Future Tokyo.



Outcomes

Five core recommendations were presented to Prime Minister Abe and other G20 leaders as urgent priorities ahead of the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit, reflecting areas where extensive analysis and dialogue among Forum participants and associates supports specific recommendations:

1. Commit to working for peace in collaboration with faith actors, with a new framing of religious roles in conflict and polarization.
2. Focus sharply and explicitly on the needs of children and commit resources vital to address those needs.
3. Put resources behind promises to protect the planet, focusing in particular on rainforests in partnership with religious, indigenous, and local actors.

4. Bolster action to strengthen rule of law and protection of human rights, with particular emphasis on freedom of religion or belief and action to fight against corruption.
5. Initiate and commit to global and national measures to combat trafficking and modern slavery as part of a long-term G20 priority.

A fuller set of policy recommendations supported by eight analytic briefs is directed toward influencing G20 leaders and the ongoing G20 process as well as religious leaders and networks. These recommendations include, alongside the five topics listed above, action on refugees and displaced populations, disaster risk reduction and resilience, and challenges and opportunities presented by aging societies. Robust discussions on religious literacy, media, education, health, cultural heritage, food and water, inequality, and inclusion of women are highlighted in this document, together with recommendations to sharpen engagement in the months ahead.

Finally, a full report of the event is available with detailed accounts of each session.

All documents can be accessed [here](#).

Organization

Substantial support for the 2019 event was provided by Worldwide Support for Development (WSD), an organization whose Chairman, Dr. Haruhisa Handa, is a Japanese Shinto leader and philanthropist. Dr. Haruhisa Handa (WSD), Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr. (ICLRS) and Prof. Katherine Marshall (WFDD) constituted the 2019 G20 Interfaith Forum Executive Committee. The event was co-organized by Worldwide Support for Development, the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS) at Brigham Young University Law School, and the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), and the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University. Many other organizations continue to provide ongoing support for Forum initiatives. A full list is [here](#).

Since 2014, the G20 Interfaith Association has convened conferences each year in the country hosting that year's G20 Summit: Australia (2014), Turkey (2015), China (2016), Germany (2017), Argentina (2018), and Japan (2019). The originators and core organizers of the Forum have comprised an informal association for several years, and a legal entity has recently been incorporated to provide continuity and to facilitate ongoing activities. The Association's organizing committee will continue as an advisory council in the formalized structure.

Advisory Council Members

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

Participants

Japanese participants and a public audience of over 2000 joined over 200 international speakers and guests representing diverse geographic, religious, and professional backgrounds.

Among the networks that participated actively were Religions for Peace (RfP), the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI), the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), the Global Network of Religions for Children, the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy, the WASH Alliance, the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities (IFASC), the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, Sport at the Service of Humanity (SSH), and

leaders of large faith-inspired organizations and academic institutions focused on religious freedom, religious peacebuilding, human rights, and sustainable development.

The Forum was marked by its attention to political processes. Three former Prime Ministers, David Cameron (UK), Sir John Key (New Zealand), and Enda Kenny (Ireland), and H.E. Graça Machel, a notable stateswoman and international advocate for women and children, gave keynote speeches and participated actively in Forum discussions. Two senior Japanese political leaders, Kōichi Hagiuda and Katsuei Hirasawa, represented Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, who also wrote a greeting to Forum participants that was featured in the program.

Religious leaders who addressed the Forum included Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (via messages). Lord Carey of Clifton (103rd Archbishop of Canterbury), Sulak Sivaraksa, Bishop Gunnar Stålsett, Elder Gerrit W. Gong, Mufti Nedžad Grabus, Osama Al-Azhari, and many others participated actively, representing a broad spectrum of faith traditions and nationalities.

A full list of speakers and participants can be found [here](#).

Theme and Premise

The Forum was organized around the theme “Peace, People, Planet: Pathways Forward.” The SDGs were discussed often; few who were there could have come away without an awareness of their scope and significance. This reflects a deliberate focus on the SDGs as the leading global agenda, though it was reiterated on several occasions that the Forum’s goal is to bring a prophetic voice to global discussions. In other words, to support and advance partnerships on SDGs but also to challenge and enrich global discussions and agendas.

The core premise is that religious voices, both as a “moral compass” and reflecting vast networks and experience, belong at global policy tables like the G20, and can enrich the contributions of other communities and sectors. A Pew Forum data point suggesting that some 84 percent of the world’s population has some religious affiliation underscores the importance of religion in shaping and responding to global agendas.

MEETINGS

Launching the G20 Interfaith Forum

Mr. David Eades, moderator, and **Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr.**, Chairman of the G20 Interfaith Association, opened the Forum with welcome announcements, appreciation for **Dr. Haruhisa Handa**, patron of the G20 Interfaith Forum, and a brief history of the Forum and its evolving format and objectives. Participants were encouraged to review and contribute to credible, actionable policy documents centered around goals where religious and interfaith recommendations can have a direct impact on policy formation and implementation.

The conference theme “**Peace, People, Planet: Pathways Forward,**” was introduced and discussed. **Amb. Alvaro Albacete** spoke on the need for a more holistic approach to **Peace** and diplomacy, through respect and engagement between secular and religious realities. **Dr. Gunnar Stalsett** spoke about defining the moral challenges of our time, seeking not only interests but values, and moving from general affirmations of common values into practical cooperation. The highlight was on care for the **Planet** as an imperative across religious divides, with a focus on protecting forests as an area where recommendations are well established and have implications for broader impact across the SDGs. **Dr. Mustafa Ali** called for a “prophetic voice” on topics that if ignored today will be more disastrous in the future. A strong emphasis was placed on costly violence against children and other issues, including climate, that affect billions of **People** worldwide. **Prof. Katherine Marshall** spoke about the cross-cutting and complex topics of inequality, corruption, cultural heritage, human trafficking, and media that would be highlighted as a fourth track of **Urgent Issues** and introduced two important groups that would each offer a fifth parallel session, Sports at the Service of Humanity and the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy.

Prime Minister Enda Kenny, 13th Taoiseach of Ireland, offered concluding reflections from the perspective of having sat in G20 meetings. He spoke about having to make decisions that affect millions as the leader of a country, and the need for those decisions to feel fundamentally important. He called upon the G20 Interfaith Forum organizers to ensure that a short synopsis of their message be noted by Prime Minister Abe (view core recommendations [here](#)). “Politics gives you the opportunity to have an impact,” he emphasized, “but you have to give people the opportunity to understand what it is you are doing.”



Day 1 Parallel Working Sessions

Three working sessions on Day 1 focused on the topic of **Peace**. The first brought together a rich and varied set of panelists to discuss issues that address and affect **freedom of religion or belief** as an anchor for enabling religious engagement on the broader policy goals of the Forum, chiefly the prevention of violence. The second focused on **diplomacy** and recommendations for more positive and integrated engagement with the religious sector. The third focused on serving and integrating **refugees and forcibly displaced communities** with examples of sport and faith organizations that are demonstrating moral and practical leadership. A strong call was made for support of the Global Compact on Refugees and Global Refugee Forum, among other recommendations for religious and political leadership on this priority issue.



Three working sessions focused on the topic of **People**. The first focused on one of the core topics of the Forum – the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the imperative to prioritize ending violence against **children** and all other issues affecting the wellbeing of children globally. The second discussed inclusion, focusing on the challenges of **women's** equal rights and looking ahead to the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration next year. The third was on the topic of **Universal Health Coverage** and discussed models of religious engagement on the issue.

Three working sessions focused on the topic of **Planet**. The first was on protecting the **rainforests**, with a clear call to partner with indigenous communities on the issue. The second discussed climate **disasters** and religious engagement on disaster relief and resilience. The third was on sustainable **food and water** for all, with a focus on unequal access and the power of faith communities to promote environmentally conscientious campaigns.



Three working sessions were also held on **Urgent Issues** that underpin the themes and topics of the Forum – bringing ethical and religious perspectives to the challenge of **inequality**, combatting **corruption**, and religious **cultural heritage**.

Sport in Service of Humanity (SSH) youth leaders and their mentors led a special working session examining the role of **youth and sports** in promoting values for peace.



Dinner Reception Celebrating the Forum's 6th Year

A celebratory dinner was enjoyed, with special programming including a Japanese drumming demonstration by **Dr. Haruhisa Handa**, greetings and prayers for peace from religious leaders led by **Lord Carey of Clifton**, a speech from **Former British Prime Minister David Cameron**, and closing greetings from **H.E. Graça Machel**. It provided an excellent opportunity for the diverse networks of the Forum to connect and learn from one another.



Day 2 Parallel Dialogue Sessions

Day 2 opened with five parallel Dialogue Sessions. The first discussed **peacebuilding in practice**, with a focus on inclusion and cooperation at every level of peacebuilding. The second highlighted priorities for 21st century **education**, looking closely at the roles and responsibilities of religious education in particular. The third was a discussion of the pros and cons of **extractive industries**, with presenters examining the ways in which religious actors engage on the issue and influence the industry both from within and in opposition. A panel on **human trafficking and modern slavery** brought attention to this priority issue and highlighted steps that governments, religious communities, and both together can take to eradicate this crime. Finally, a session organized by the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy looked at the institutional challenges of **governments engaging with religious actors and issues**.



*Formal Inauguration of the Forum -
Working for Peace, People and Planet: Challenges to the G20*



The first session with a public audience was opened by WSD Chairman **Dr. Haruhisa Handa**, wearing Haori and Hakama, Japanese male formal attire. He stressed the need for religious context in deciding political and economic direction, and for

religious voices to be included in discussions about world peace and prosperity. WFDD Executive Director **Prof. Katherine Marshall** spoke next, with a compelling call to shed light on the vast interfaith work that touches global agendas, identify common values, shared goals, urgent needs, and zero in on topics where there is disagreement to learn and find new ways towards harmony rather than dissonance. The Secretary General of KAICIID **Mr. Faisal bin Muaammar** emphasized a commitment to dialogue and reiterated that religion and faith actors cannot be ignored if cohesive and peaceful societies are to be achieved. **Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr.**, Founding Director of ICLRS, closed the inaugural greetings with an emphasis on local leaders and context.

Dr. William F. Vendley offered welcome remarks and words of wisdom from his position as the Secretary General of Religions for Peace. He discussed coupling human rights with virtue, and emphasized the importance of shared well-being and solidarity. The direct and indirect roles of religious communities in serving people, planet, and peace was highlighted by citing examples in Myanmar and in protecting rainforests. He emphasized the need to find the will to do hard things, like decarbonize energy and end poverty, and how religion, as the spiritual foundation of freedom, can provide that push.



A message from **Pope Francis** read by **The Most Reverend Joseph Chennoth** (Apostolic Nuncio to Japan), and a video message from **His All-Holiness Bartholomew I** (Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch), called the Forum to action.

Closing greetings were offered by **Dr. Vishwanath Karad**, UNESCO Chair Holder for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace and Indian religious leader, **H.E. Dr. Nedžad Grabus**, Grand Mufti of Ljubljana and Co-Chair of the Muslim Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC), and **Bishop Gunnar Stålsett**, Bishop Emeritus of Oslo and Honorary President of Religions for Peace. All three speakers emphasized the need to celebrate differences and to genuinely and actively respect diversity. **Bishop Stålsett** also called for commonalities, rooted in love and respect, to be found across religions and used as a basis for education, dialogue, and as a voice of compromise.

Why We Can Hope: Peace, People and Planet

This plenary session began with a keynote address by **Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron**. He argued that politics should address the segregation of economic and social matters. He stressed the importance of international cooperation, economic growth, and necessity of leadership by wealthy countries in tackling threats such as poverty.

His keynote was followed by a panel discussion between **Former Prime Ministers David Cameron, Enda Kenny**, and **Sir John Key**, joined by stateswoman and renowned global advocate for women and children **H.E. Graça Machel**. The panel was moderated by **Dr. Haruhisa Handa** and involved discussions of Brexit, SDGs, and the refugee crisis. The panelists were united in the view that refugees do not increase terrorism, and that countries need to develop proper programs to accept and integrate refugees. The importance of religious insight to discussions and decisions on human rights and security was emphasized.



Action Agendas: Testing Ideas with Experience from Field Realities

Mr. Koichi Hagiuda, Member of the House of Representatives and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, opened the session with a message from **Prime Minister Shinzō Abe** that included his congratulations and expectations for the positive influence of the G20 Interfaith Forum.

Elder Gerrit W. Gong, Member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reviewed positive and practical examples of faith community contributions to the advancement of peace, people, and plant. These included reforestation projects, providing humanitarian services and disaster relief, launching education funds, supporting vocational programs, and mobilizing hundreds of thousands of volunteers.



A discussion moderated by **Lord Carey of Clifton** followed, with panelists **Bishop Gunnar Stålsett**, who focused on examples of work being done in Myanmar, **Sister Denise Coghlan**, who spoke to the challenges of forced displacement, human trafficking and slave labor, **Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer**, who emphasized the need for authentic dialogue, **Dr. Ganoune Diop**, who spoke about protecting the world's vulnerable children, and **Mr. Jonathan Duffy**, who emphasized the power of collective action and using the resources of faith communities to claim a place on the global political stage.

The session was closed by **Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr.** Tying together the calls to action that had been proposed over the course of the day, Professor Durham called for re-energized conscience and social reinforcement of positive contributions to massive goals, with religious and interfaith groups providing an important platform for magnifying the power of people coming together to work for peace, people, and planet.



Day 3 Parallel Dialogue Sessions

Day 3 featured four opening dialogue sessions. The first stressed **interfaith and intercultural dialogue** for action and made compelling linkages across topics. The second confronted **aging societies**, a topic of importance to Japan's G20 agenda and area where the intersection between religion, health, and innovation can be examined. The third brought together an inter-generational panel to discuss way that elders and youth can learn from each other's experiences to better **care for the plant and mobilize for action**. A fourth dialogue session was convened around the topic of **media**, including religious literacy and coverage of events implicitly or explicitly linked to religion.



Ideas to Action

Prof. Katherine Marshall greeted the audience with a summary of the previous day's highlights and themes to focus on, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and compelling arguments for why it is important to have religious voices included in the discussion of agendas. **H.E. Graça Machel** gave the first Keynote address, with a focus on caring for refugee children, including steps needed to "close the gaps" so that all children can receive quality education and services. **Sir John Key** gave a second keynote, expressing his hopes for human nature and their capacity to help people following disasters and to forgive. He also outlined achievements, concerns and hopes for meeting the SDGs.



A panel moderated by **Dr. Azza Karam** of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development asked panelists what messages they want to take to members of the G20 from what they had heard and discussed at the G20 Interfaith Forum. **Sister Sharon Eubank**, President of the Latter-day Saints Charities, **Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko**, Founder and President of Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa, **Ms. Audrey Kitagawa**, Chair of the Parliament of the World's Religions, **Mr. David Moore**, General Counsel at USAID, and **Father Joshtrom Kureethadam** of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development each contributed their perspectives. A few clear threads were developed including a focus on children, the environment, and holistic and actionable connections between actors.



Towards 2020

This session featured a keynote address by **Former Prime Minister Enda Kenny**, who spoke from his experience as Ireland's leader from 2011-2017. Linking the Forum's agenda with global news stories, the challenges ahead were clear, including the challenge of getting these priorities onto the agendas of political leaders. He emphasized that solidarity, conviction, belief, and resilience are required to make things happen, and the importance of recognizing the humanity of others. The speech ended on a note of hope, encouraging the audience to have faith that the decisions we make today can benefit the next generation.



Moderator **Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer**, Senior Advisor at KAICIID, was then joined by panelists Prof. **Juan Navarro Floria**, Professor of Law at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, **Amb. Alvaro Albacete**, Deputy Secretary General of KAICIID, **Mr. Rahul Karad**, Executive President of MAEER's MIT World Peace University, and **Ms. Jean Duff**, President of the Joint Learning Initiative for Faith and Local Communities, to examine urgent challenges, actions needed to address these priorities, and

strategies to introduce and communicate these messages to policy makers. It was noted that there is work to build on from previous Forums, particularly on the topics of interreligious dialogue, refugees, children, education, and aging societies. Suggestions for strategy included providing space for religious leaders and political leaders to exchange views, and utilizing media to reach policy makers not present at the conference.



Ms. Kim Tran of Fridays for Future Tokyo gave a compelling closing speech imploring the G20 to pay attention to youth movements taking to the streets to protect their future in the face of climate destruction. It can be viewed [here](#).



Closing Plenary

The Closing Plenary began with a series of speakers including **Mr. Katsuei Hirasawa**, a Member of the House of Representatives of Japan and Former State Minister of the Cabinet Office, **Mr. Faisal bin Muaammar**, Secretary General of KAICIID, **Sheikh Osama Al-Azhari** of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and **Dr. Ján Figel**, Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief for the European Commission. Topics relevant to the Japanese context, the humanitarian aspects of religion, and equality in dignity and in citizenship were discussed.



In concluding remarks, **Dr. Haruhisa Handa** highlighted the role of Shintoism in developing a respect for mutual understanding and co-existence. **Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr.** gave special thanks to the many participants of the Forum. **Prof. Katherine Marshall** highlighted five key topics identified as priorities throughout the Forum (peacebuilding, children, rainforest protection, rule of law, and human trafficking), around which a set of [urgent policy recommendations](#) would be developed and delivered to Prime Minister Abe.

PARALLEL MEETING – G20 INTERFAITH FORUM IN KYOTO

A separate event was organized as the “[G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 - Kyoto](#).” **Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake** initiated the Kyoto event, held on June 11-12 at the Kyoto Prefectural Congress Hall. The event involved participation by Japanese religious communities, politicians, academics, and civil society leaders. Several G20 Interfaith Forum Advisory Council members attended and contributed.

The G20 Interfaith Forum Kyoto 2019 was co-organized by Kyoto Prefecture and the City of Kyoto. Meetings were supported by The United Nations Association of Japan Kansai Capital, Osaka UNESCO Association, Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Kyoto Convention & Visitors Bureau. The hosting body included a wide range of Japanese religious leaders, and the welcome address was given by **Most Venerable Taishu Segawa**, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum 2019 - Kyoto and Patriarch of Shingon Buddhism Omuro Sect.



The meetings were organized around four themes: (1) achieving economic growth; (2) reaffirmation of international treaties; (3) questions surrounding the vision of highly developed scientific and technological societies; (4) religious perspectives on aging societies. The [program](#) featured opening and closing ceremonies, two plenary sessions, eight working sessions on specific topics, and visits to local temples. Descriptions of each working session can be found [here](#). Holding the parallel meeting enabled broader participation of Japanese religious and cultural leaders, and further underscored the considerable alignment of recommendations and the shared sense of the importance and merits of religious engagement in G20 processes shared by the Tokyo and Kyoto meetings.

LOOKING AHEAD

The G20 Interfaith Association reflects a remarkable and continuing partnership, crossing continents, cultures, disciplines, ideologies, and religious traditions. There is ample opportunity to learn and contribute to differing approaches and priorities, while maintaining a focus on leading morally and practically on critical issues. The intention is to continue annual Forums, building on ongoing themes and work, while also adapting to the agendas and focus of the G20 host country that assumes presidency of the G20 each year.

Upcoming host countries will be Saudi Arabia in 2020, Italy in 2021, and India in 2022.

