

Objectives



G20 Interfaith Forum G20i Africa Consultation *Overview*



a. Identify immediate policy recommendations and initiatives triggered by the COVID-19 crisis, as well long-term policy recommendations suggesting ways that religious voices can contribute to strengthened African responses in general and in particular through G20 processes.

b. Frame and identify the strategic positioning of interfaith work in the region and the gaps that it can address, adding to social and political efforts in the context of the implementation of broader political agendas.

c. Explore ways that the existing structures that bring religious networks together with policy makers can be more effectively connected among each other and with the G20 platform.

Themes

a. Hunger/Locust

2020 has seen a sharp increase in hunger and scarcity of livelihoods particularly in the African Continent. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of hunger, with the rate increasing from 20.7 per cent in 2014 to 23.2 per cent in 2017. In light of the pandemic’s effects on the food and agricultural sector, prompt measures are needed to ensure that food supply chains are kept alive to mitigate the risk of large shocks that have a considerable impact on everybody, especially on the poor and the most vulnerable. Religious entities are directly involved in addressing both the famine emergency and the global challenge of Zero Hunger. Religious institutions and ecumenical and interreligious bodies build on core teachings about feeding the hungry and widely varied programs address needs. Religious actors are among the most effective and prominent advocates for policy and programmatic action, including empowerment of women for the security and sustainability of livelihoods.

b. COVID-19/Health

Public health authorities and religious leaders were actively working together on effective responses to the pandemic. As the need to enforce physical distancing became central to public health, adapting or limiting religious gatherings emerged as an obvious need. These public-faith partnerships also drew on lessons from earlier pandemics, notably HIV/AIDS and Ebola, where religious engagement was vital. Religious communities and actors provide guidance and leadership in light of health challenges and their social impact on communities.

c. Debt/Finance

COVID-19 has disrupted billions of lives and endangered the global economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects a global recession as bad as or worse than in 2009. As job losses escalate, the International Labour Organization estimates that nearly half of the global workforce is at risk of losing their livelihoods. Sub-Saharan Africa is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis and

IMF has hence approved immediate debt relief to the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Not only is debt relief necessary to enable Africa to fight COVID-19, but the future of health care may depend on it. How can a partnership with religious actors contribute to alleviating the economic situation of Africans?

d. Environment/Rainforest

Climate change is affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives. Weather patterns are changing, sea levels are rising, and weather events are becoming more extreme. Religious traditions have increasingly communicated a specific responsibility of faith actors to consider the environmental concerns as part of the care for creation. As countries move toward rebuilding their economies after COVID-19, recovery plans can shape the 21st century economy in ways that are clean, green, healthy, safe, and more resilient. The current crisis is an opportunity for a profound, systemic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet. In sub-Saharan Africa, religious communities have increasingly started to raise awareness, mobilize faith- inspired action, provide organizational support, and advocate for policies that fulfil and expand government commitments to protect rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples. What kind of partnerships between religious communities and policy actors could advance the work in this area?

Structure

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| Aug. 24 | Introductory Panel (Universal Time)  12:00 – 12:20 Welcome and Introduction to G20 Process | |
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| 12:20 – 13:20 | Thematic Panel Discussion |
| 13:20 – 13:30 | Break |
| 13.30 – 14.00 | Break out in working groups per themes |

Aug. 25 –

Sept.11

4 Working Group Session

Separate Working Group Discussions and Consolidation of Recommendations

(to be decided and agreed upon per working group)

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| Sept. 14 | Presentation of Recommendations (Universal Time)  12:00 – 12:15 Welcome | |
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| 12:15 – 12:25 | Working Group 1 Presentation |
| 12:25 – 12:35 | Working Group 2 Presentation |
| 12:35 – 12:45 | Working Group 3 Presentation |
| 12:45 – 12:55 | Working Group 4 Presentation |
| 13.00 – 13.30 | Consolidation of Recommendations and Closing |