



Ubuntu in Action: Focus on Vulnerable Communities

August 10-14, 2025

Westin Hotel

Cape Town, South Africa

(April 24, 2025)

The **G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20)** will hold its major 2025 Forum event from August 10-14 in Cape Town, South Africa. The gathering will bring together diverse stakeholders, from religious and spiritual traditions, other civil society organizations, government representatives, multilateral entities, and academia.

The Cape Town event is inspired by South Africa's G20 theme, "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability", and the overarching African philosophy of Ubuntu which are integral to South Africa's approach to its G20 Presidency. Like South Africa, the G20 Interfaith Forum recognizes that neither individuals nor nations can thrive in isolation and that global priorities should ensure that no one is left behind. Reversing the stalled progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential, and demands paradigm shifts in ways to address overlapping and mutually reinforcing crises. The IF20's key 2025 priorities align with the priority areas of the G20 Summit, that will be held on 22-23 November 2025 in Gauteng, South Africa.

OBJECTIVES

The IF20's mandate is to contribute to a more just world and a sustainable future by drawing on and enriching the multifaceted ideas, experiences, activities, and contributions of diverse actors inspired by faith across the world. The Cape Town Forum will foster practical approaches to challenges ranging from social polarization and economic and social inequality to the general challenges of finding sustainable solutions to proliferating operational problems facing communities.

The gathering offers the opportunity to harness the transformative potential of religious beliefs and the work of faith-inspired actors to advance global sustainable development agendas (and specifically the United Nations SDGs). It provides a platform where diverse religious and related communities can identify shared priorities and mobilize solutions with a reach from global to local levels. The hope is to serve as a catalyst for policy change amongst G20 countries, especially where there is openness to strategic cooperation among state and religious actors. By harnessing the collective wisdom, resources, and networks of diverse stakeholders, especially religious actors and

traditional communities, the Forum aims to inspire concrete actions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. We aim to foster a more just, equitable, and sustainable world by focusing on advocacy efforts and actions that build on the rich experience of countless communities at local, national, and international levels. The IF20 thus draws on the work of what it sees as a true global “network of networks” grounded in shared humanity and working for the common good.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE ANNUAL G20 INTERFAITH PROCESS:

Objective 1: Foster inclusive dialogues that can enhance solidarity by addressing flagging trust and countering polarization, hate speech, and violence, supporting collaborative partnerships and collective action focused on governments and faith actors from around Africa and the world.

Objective 2: Help build networks and share good practices that contribute to genuine progress in addressing key social problems, supporting those who are most vulnerable, through multi-stakeholder collaborations with faith actors.

Objective 3: Forge links to the work of G20 Engagement Groups (civil society, think tanks, women, youth, business, and others) and relevant Working Groups of the **G20 Sherpa Track** (notably Anti-Corruption, Health, and Climate and Environmental Sustainability), linking various G20 constituencies in preparation for the **G20 Social Summit** (November 18-20, 2025).

Objective 4: Communicate richer understandings of the concrete contributions of faith actors to solidarity, equality, and sustainability through humanitarian work, community building, and supporting sustainable progress that benefits the vulnerable.

Objective 5: Develop recommendations on actions that support the world’s most vulnerable groups, including children, women, minority groups, and others, amidst challenges such as poverty, violence, forced migration, and the changing climate.

G20 INTERFAITH’S PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS:

The context of South Africa’s priority themes of Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability guides the IF20’s 2025 work. The present crises facing global agendas (SDGs, humanitarian, conflict, environment) and critical financial challenges (debt, resource mobilization, poor resource use) provide context. For faith communities, the absolute priority is to give practical meaning to “Leaving No One Behind.” Concretely, legacies of the COVID-19 pandemic point to operational challenges that demand urgent attention. Priority areas of focus are as follows:

1. Food security and poverty. Food security, with its strong links to addressing poverty and inequality, is a leading issue, driving the Global Alliance launched by the G20 in Brazil and inspiring both South Africa and the African Union. The topic extends from the very local to the very global. IF20 supports this multisector program, aiming to show convincingly that religious institutions are major players, and how our (G20 Interfaith) commitments can enhance transnational and national efforts. IF20 builds on global faith inspired efforts to address hunger; examples include the World Council of

Churches, the Caritas organizations, PaRD (International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development), World Vision, Islamic Relief Worldwide, LDS Charities, and countless others.

2. Economic and Financial Action. Fiscal and debt crises confront many countries, concentrated in Africa, and they dampen poverty alleviation and climate action, as well as government capacities to provide basic services like education, health care, water supply, disaster response, and job creation. Religious communities link the economic and financial issues to equity and thriving, notably through their focus on 2025 as a Jubilee year. Action to mobilize public finance nationally and multilaterally can ensure debt sustainability and mobilize finance for sustainable and equitable development.

3. Addressing interreligious tensions through education and enhancing understanding of religious matters. The foundational Cross Cultural Religious Literacy (CCRL) program and Arigatou International's Ethics Education and Learning to Live Together programs offer potential to strengthen regional and global approaches and address issues of violence and conflict linked to religious actors. Priority efforts directed to reinforce social cohesion are integral to education policies and to broader issues of trust and information. Religious approaches to ethics and practice offer contributions to the fast-developing fields of Artificial Intelligence. Many religious groups work to address gender-based violence and action to support women, children, and families—for example, their physical and mental health, inequalities, and fair, equitable treatment.

4. Migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, and modern slavery present major challenges to leaders and to communities, with distinctive relevance for Africa. IF20's continuing work highlights extensive religious teaching and practices supporting policies and action to support those on the move, especially those who are most vulnerable. Fear of migrants and refugees affects politics in many settings and call to religious advocacy for compassion and care. IF20's longstanding focus on the urgent need for multinational action on human trafficking will underpin 2025 advocacy.

5. Disaster prevention, response, recovery. Active religious involvement, as first responders, at regional and global levels and through policy and programmatic analysis, play vital roles. With rethinking at different levels on optimal approaches, the contributions of religious actors deserve greater focus. Disaster relief is closely tied to widely varied environmental challenges, including rainforest destruction and climate movements/migration, underlining the needed focus on prevention, building resilience, and meaningful capacities to respond.

BACKGROUND ON THE ORGANIZER

The **G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20)** annual platform involves a network of religiously linked institutions and initiatives that engage on global agendas, including the SDGs. The G20 process has evolved since it was established in 2014, recognizing an expanding range of stakeholders and platforms that allow different sectors and communities to present ideas and recommendations to global leaders. The IF20 contributes insights and recommendations that respond to and help shape the G20 and thus global policy agendas, building on the vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs and reflecting their rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. Through its networks, the IF20 contributes not only to formulation but also to implementation of G20 policies, and to forging consensus on priorities shared by interfaith and intercultural organizations, religious leaders,

scholars, and development and humanitarian entities. IF20's work with business and civil society actors and other key stakeholders contributes to the agenda for each Annual IF20 Forum, inspired each year by successive host governments.