



**Welcoming the African Union as a
G20 member and in commemoration of the
2025 World Interfaith Harmony Week
and the Golden Rule Day**

**A conference on Africa's Faith Communities:
Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals,
the African Union Agenda 2063
and G20 South Africa's 2025 Process**

May 12-14, 2025

Addis Ababa, Hilton Hotel

TUESDAY, May 13, 2025

9:00 - 11:00 OPENING SESSION

Anthems of Ethiopia and the African Union (AU)

Opening Prayer: Religious Leaders of the Ethiopia Interreligious Council

The Golden Rule: Recitation by Youth Representatives

WELCOMING ADDRESSES

Teguhan Tagay Tadele (Kesis), Secretary General of the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia

Ambassador Mussie Hailu, Regional Director of United Religions Initiative (URI) for Africa and Representative to the AU and UN Office in Africa; Ethiopia

Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr., President, G20 Interfaith Forum Association; United States

Ambassador from South Africa (TBC)

Chairperson of African Union (TBC)

Opening Remarks by Guest of Honor: H.E. Taye Atske Selassie, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (TBC)

10:30 GROUP PHOTO and Break

11:00 12:00 PLENARY SESSION 1. THE AFRICAN UNION AT THE G20 SUMMIT: The Role of Faith Communities in Africa to Advance G20 Purposes in Africa

Reflections on the vital roles of faith-inspired organizations in global, national, and local affairs.

12:00-13:00 Lunch Break

13:00 – 14:30 PLENARY SESSION 2: BUILDING A LIVING PEACE

No challenge is as sacred and as demanding as peace: peace with justice, equity, and opportunity, peace that honors elders, women, and youth, peace that builds on Africa's rich diversity, and peace that is in harmony with our planet's gifts. Peace is Africa's central challenge as it is for the African Union, as conflict and tension obstruct development and social harmony. Ancient teachings call us to bless the peacemakers and those who welcome strangers. This plenary highlights the mandate and work of religious peacebuilding, focusing on the critical roles of religious actors and of the African Union. It highlights the powerful links to the dynamics of changing climate, challenged democracies, and the promise of just and thriving societies where human rights and dignity drive policy and action.

14:30-15:00 BREAK

15:00-16:00: PLENARY SESSION 3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN A WORLD IN TURMOIL: AFRICA'S CONTRIBUTIONS, AFRICA'S NEEDS.

Africa's central role in the 2025 G20 and the focus on Jubilee 2025 as a stimulus to solidarity and concerted action opens new vistas: opportunities and demands for thought but still more action. The 2063 African Union agendas challenge G20 members as they reflect on critical demands and paths to implementation. The financial challenges facing African states including action to assure sustainable debt burdens but, still more, sustainable finance, call for action by all social sectors and prominently religious actors. Vast humanitarian needs call for new and creative responses. The legacies of the COVID-19 pandemic highlight needed action to redress raw inequities and to integrate thoughtful lessons in contemporary policy. Africa shows remarkable paths to women's leadership and needs. And the continent with the world's largest youth population highlights how vital it is to listen to and hear the voices and inspiration of young people.

16:00-16:30 BREAK

16:30-18:00 CONCURRENT SESSION 1: LEADING AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHALLENGES

Climate change affects African communities in countless, diverse ways, and projections point to

rising challenges: shifting rainfall patterns and catastrophic weather events. Beyond urgent and large humanitarian responses, creative rethinking about agricultural and other approaches are vital. AU and national leadership are vitally needed, but financial needs also loom large and must be integrated in broader, global financial structures.

16:30 – 18:00 CONCURRENT SESSION 2: HOW FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF, HUMAN DIGNITY, AND OPPOSING HATE SPEECH, XENOPHOBIA, AND DISCRIMINATION BOLSTER AU AND G20 AGENDAS

Human rights and the call to honor human dignity are essential prerequisites for sustainable development and the social justice that is at the core of Brazil's 2024 G20 agenda and the AU 2063 vision. This session will highlight challenges and progress in translating common shared principles into practice.

16:30 – 18:00 CONCURRENT SESSION 3. HOW CAN INTERRELIGIOUS AND RELIGIOUS ACTORS LEAD AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOAL OF LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND?

Enormous and urgent humanitarian needs, including famine and large scale forced migration demand urgent action. Fragility cuts across many communities and demands parallel attention to both short term and longer-term needs. The session will highlight religious diagnoses of priority challenges and positive experiences that offer promise both to address needs of the most vulnerable and integrate humanitarian, development and climate action.

WEDNESDAY, May 14, 2025

Start 8:30 – 10:00 PLENARY SESSION 4: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ON THE G20 AGENDA 2025 AND PRIORITIES FOR THE AFRICAN UNION

The African Union, interfaith alliances and networks, and G20 actors share a deep common commitment to action on women's empowerment. This demands consistent focus on women's voices and priorities. It is linked to action to assure the welfare and development of children and youth. Protection from harm demands attention to the stubborn issues of violence against women, in times of war and conflict and peace. Women's roles in peacebuilding calls also for active engagement with women from religious communities. The incessant demands that Africa faces in 2025 must address in tandem the urgent calls of hunger, climate shocks, violence, displacement, and xenophobia, and in every case engaging women can enrich understanding and point to creative and effective action.

10:00 – 10:30 BREAK

10:30-12:00. CONCURRENT SESSION 4: TRAFFICKING AND REFUGEES, DISPLACED PERSONS

Trafficking of people is linked both to disrupted communities and to prevailing poverty and demands coordinated attention. Common challenges facing African communities include large movements of people, with urgent needs to respond especially to the urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced people, and vulnerable groups (children and women most urgently). Coordination of humanitarian action and finance present critical issues.

10:30-12:00 CONCURRENT SESSION 5: FOCUS ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND EDUCATION

Education is the leading issue looking to unlock Africa's potential and its dynamic youth and women's population. It also speaks to the urgent needs to address quality of education and inequalities and disparities, including enrollments of boys and girls. Africa's "Youthquake"—the creative and disruptive potential of large and growing child and youth populations—demands global attention. Practical implications include growing demands on education and health systems and active job markets. Religious communities carry special responsibilities for child protection and development. Engaging and listening to children and youth is a priority that must cut across all sectors of activity and communities.

10:30-12:00 CONCURRENT SESSION 6: ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND SOCIAL TENSIONS

Survey after survey and lived experience highlight the brutality and persistence of violence and impunity, especially involving women and children. Rule of law and social action can be mobilized, with effective support from religious actors, men and women. The need to interrupt dangerous trends and implement bold programs to rebuild trust and social harmony presents urgent priorities to both the G20 and the AU, and interreligious approaches offer a rich potential that both the AU and G20 nations can build upon.

12:00 - 13:00 LUNCH

13:00 – 14:00 SEEKING VIEWS ON PRIORITIES AND ON TRANSLATING IDEALS INTO ACTION

During this hour, participants will be divided into three feedback sessions with open discussion that will seek ideas and experience from conference participants on issues related to peace, sustainability, and women's issues.

14:00-14:30 BREAK

14:30-15:00 PLENARY SESSION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND PATHS FORWARD

The concluding plenary will hear brief summaries from three feedback sessions and look ahead both to the AU's 2063 Agenda and to Africa's priority counsel to the G20. The session will draw on experience from Brazil's 2024 G20 Presidency, focus sharply on the 2025 agendas set out by South Africa, and look forward towards future G20 agendas. What insights and ideas does the conference offer for the G20 Interfaith Forum, as a distinctive religious and interreligious voice, as the 2025 G20 Summit approaches?

Representatives from Feedback Sessions.

Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr., President, G20 Interfaith Forum Association; United States

Ambassador Mussie Hailu, Regional Director of URI for Africa and Representative to the African Union and UN Office in Africa; Ethiopia

Hazel Dixon, Desk Officer, AU Commission Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate (CIDO) (TBC)

15:30 Bus visit for City Tour of Addis Ababa, including International Museum and other Sites. The tour will conclude with a dinner and cultural evening.

Closing Dinner

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