



**The G20 Interfaith Forum
Faith In Action:
Focus on Vulnerable Communities
Cape Town, South Africa**

August 10-14, 2025 (as of April 25+)

Sunday, August 10, 2025

17:00 - 20:30 Registration

18:30 - 20:30 Reception, hosted by IF20, for all registered attendees and invited guests from
South
Africa

Monday, 11 August 2025

8:00 - 9:00 Registration

9:00 - 11:00 Opening Plenary (i):

Welcome by Master of Ceremonies (MC)
National Anthem

Interfaith Opening

Welcome: IF20, International and Local Organizing Committees

Welcome: Government and religious leader/s

Call to action (an inspirational young leader)

G20 Interfaith history, context, and leading issues
South African and African Interfaith history

Keynote address/es

G20 leading issues and priority challenges: Religious leaders representing different religious traditions

Video message(s) from leading religious leader(s)

11:00-11:30 Break and Group Photo

11:30-13:00 *Plenary (ii): 2025 Imperatives and Interfaith Contributions*

The G20 Interfaith Forum's primary goal and priority is action to support the world's most vulnerable communities, an imperative shared by diverse religious communities around the world, in their teachings and practice. South Africa's G20 agenda, the global agendas for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Africa 2063 (African Union) echo this critical attention to action to address issues of poverty and hunger, inequalities that hinder the flourishing of women and families, and national development strategies. The session will highlight the need for action on Africa's most urgent priorities, including financial sustainability, debt action, and climate finance, as well as food security, migration and refugees, disaster preparedness, and education and health imperatives.

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:00 *Plenary (iii). Action on Hunger and Poverty*

Concrete actions to address poverty and hunger are priorities for the G20, building on the launch of the Global Alliance against Hunger in November 2024. This session will outline the shared and distinctive teachings of different religious traditions on hunger and its links to poverty, and the widely diverse programs that serve those in need. It will highlight the vital roles of religious leaders, communities, and actors within the Global Alliance. South Africa's engagement of religious communities illuminates the links between teachings, ethical commitment and practical action on the ground.

15:00-15:30 BREAK

15:30-17:00 *Concurrent Sessions A*

A1 Focus on Religious Freedom Challenges for Africa

The right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), central to human rights, is linked to peace and to social cohesion. This session will highlight progress and challenges, with a focus on the African context.

A2 Fighting Hunger as a Critical Element in Addressing Poverty

Global commitments to revitalize action to end hunger, both where famine looms and for broader threats to vulnerable communities (children especially) must include religious actors as integral, essential partners. This session will highlight national and faith commitments under the Global Alliance against Hunger, assessing the state of knowledge on how best to end hunger and link it to broader development and humanitarian strategies, with examples of best practice at national and community levels.

A3 2025 as a Jubilee Year: Principles of Equity in the Architecture of Finance

Action to address solidarity, equality, and sustainability (South Africa's G20 themes) demand political will, resources, and creative partnerships. The Catholic Church's urgent call to unity and action during the Jubilee year 2025 highlights the links among the three imperatives. The session will focus on alliances and action that the call has engaged, with a focus on how calls for resources relate to priorities for the G20. The discussion will draw on examples linked to disaster preparedness, action on just energy transitions, and humanitarian response.

A4 Health for All: Religious Communities and the Challenges of Rebuilding from COVID-19

Health for all, well linked to environmental challenges, is a leading global priority, and is a priority for urgent action for South Africa and the entire African continent. This session will review the continuing legacies of the COVID-19 and other pandemics, with special attention to the Pandemic Fund. The discussion will focus on the rebuilding of trust in public health systems and on the interlinkages among different sectors where the health of people and planet are concerned.

A5 Strategies for Action t Linking Religious Communities and Global Agendas: *Inter alia*, World Economic Forum, PaRD, KAICIID, Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities, World Bank, African Development Bank, Joint Learning Initiative.

This session will highlight strategic approaches and reviews of institutions that are engaged in support for the SDG framework, including finance for development and humanitarian action. What are the main priorities and how is religious engagement understood? What are prominent examples of experience? It offers an opportunity for organizations (intergovernmental, nongovernment, and philanthropic) that work with religious organizations to highlight their strategies and experiences.

17:00 - 17:30 Transition break

17:30-19:00 Concurrent Sessions B

B1 Positives and Negatives of Modern Communications: Addressing Disinformation and Related Social Tensions

Social media is revolutionizing community relations, including within and among religious communities. This session will explore its power for good, reinforcing knowledge and social cohesion, but also the challenges of disinformation and misinformation. How are religious communities most directly affected? What actions are being taken or could be taken to enhance media understanding and literacy and to counter the ill effects of other negative manifestations?

Where are there tensions on how the problem is defined, recognized, and responded to and how are they most specific to religious communities?

B2 Learning from Brazil's G20 Interfaith Experience, Looking to 2026

The engagement of different religious approaches and actors during preparations for the 2024 G20 Interfaith Forum in Brazil suggested important lessons for interreligious cooperation at global, national, and local levels. This session will look to the experience of Brazil but extend the conversation in identifying lessons from the G20 Interfaith gatherings in India, Abu Dhabi, and Saudi Arabia and looking ahead to 2026 G20 agendas.

B3 Addressing Ethnic Tensions, Discrimination, and Racism: Positive Strategies and Challenges Ahead

Racism links to many dimensions of inequality and discrimination, including religious, ethnic, gender, and class. This session will explore specific challenges at these intersections, with a focus on action needed to propel commitments and promises into effective strategies and programs.

B4 Child Rights and Dignity: A Religious Imperative

Focusing on children, including their situation within families and communities, is a leading priority of religious communities. Children's rights are also a central priority for the United Nations. Looking to action to assure the welfare of children highlights the importance of child protection. Internet and social media present both new opportunities and new perils for children. This session will explore innovative religiously-inspired responses to the linked challenges of child protection and promotion of thriving in families and communities.

B5 Challenges of Inequality: How Inequality is Understood, Challenges of Colonial and Political legacies

Inequality is at the center of South Africa's G20 agenda: within communities and among nations. This session will explore religious approaches to inequalities as a global issue (within the SDG context, for example), academic debates, and policy approaches and examples. South Africa's journey up to and following the 1994 watershed events will provide a framework for the discussion.

TUESDAY August 12

9:00-11:00 Plenary (iv) Global Agendas, Global Imperatives for Human Development

This plenary session will focus on education and, more broadly, translating the oft-stated priority of youth into effective action. How do these challenges link to education's roles with regard to values and social cohesion? What are central religious roles in responding to global education challenges, including access, quality, and links to life skills? How do solidarity and equality goals relate to challenges to human development like human trafficking and modern slavery? The discussion aims to link the goals of quality education for all to the challenges of social cohesion and assuring diversity and equality among different communities. What are the roles of religious communities within education programs? The session will highlight examples of programs tailored to these objectives, such as Indonesia's Cross Cultural Religious Literacy (CCRL) program, Ethics

Education, as pioneered by Arigatou International, and South African examples. The challenges of intergroup tensions and efforts to address them, including youth perspectives, will be highlighted.

11:00-11:30 Break

11:30-13:00 **Concurrent Sessions C**

C1 Seeking Cross-cultural Religious Literacy, Addressing Religious Tensions, Violence, and Harmony

With evidence across many different societies of rising social tensions linked to religious as well as ethnic identities, action to address understanding among different religious communities and with more secular components of societies (sometimes termed religious literacy) has assumed increasing importance. This working session will center on specific examples from South Africa, South-East Asia, and other approaches, with a view to enrich IF20 action proposals to G20 leaders.

C2 The Fight Against Human Trafficking: looking to 2030

The G20 Interfaith Forum has focused on the tragedy of human trafficking and human slavery over several years and is developing specific proposals that build on action related to religious communities to strengthen global and local responses and to fight impunity. This session will highlight areas of progress and significant gaps where action is called for, setting global priorities within the context of religious and interreligious leadership,

C3 Religion and Civility: Lessons from Ubuntu

This session, developed and led by the G20 Interfaith Local Organizing Committee, will highlight both the underlying concepts and ways in which they translate into practice.

C4 Interreligious action in Africa: South Africa, AU Priorities and Action

Africa and South Africa offer extraordinary experience with interfaith cooperation in many fields, including working for peace, responding to health crises (HIV/AIDS, Ebola, COVID-19), and leading on empowerment of women. The African Union (AU), now a G20 member, aims to highlight the roles of religious communities in continental strategies. This session will highlight pertinent experience of religious and multireligious organizations as well as the challenges they confront.

C5 Addressing Youth and Mental Health

Africa's demography (notably its youth bulge) will shape global development in the coming decades, highlighting the critical importance of engaging young people in the design of policies and programs today. Among challenges cited often are employment, quality education, and attention to numerous challenges to mental health. This session will present and explore analytic work and policy proposals linked to these challenges.

13:00-14:00 Lunch

Afternoon: Service Project

The afternoon will be spent on a project or projects with a service focus in selected areas around Cape Town. In focusing on food delivery, the visits offer ways to learn about the challenges of hunger and poverty in the region.

Wednesday, August 13

9:00-11:00 **Plenary (v) Religious Action in Addressing the Priority of Sustainability**

Climate change is a leading issue for the G20, with sustainability a central priority for South Africa's G20 agenda. The priority issues of financing action to mitigate and alleviate climate change are a continuing G20 focus. Of immediate and priority importance for Africa are effective responses to natural disasters, notably those linked to climate change, and thus disaster prevention, response, and recovery. This plenary will focus on climate imperatives, with a focus on actual and potential roles of religious actors. The wisdom and issues facing traditional communities will be one focus. The challenges of sustainability also involve conflicts and population movements, thus refugees and migration (and associated social tensions) and the growing links of these developments to climate change. The session will link issues of disruption of societies to challenges for religious freedom.

11:00-11:30 Break

11:30-13:00 **Concurrent sessions D**

D1 Lessons from Religious Advocacy on Environment: The Examples of Laudato Si', Al Mizan

Religious leaders and actors have mobilized to address climate change through each UN COP meeting and in innumerable other contexts. The leadership of Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomeo, and the Sheikh of Al Azar, Ahmed Al-Tayeb, as well as Buddhist and traditional leaders, offers hope for forging solidarity and commitment to global action on climate. This session will focus both on ongoing advocacy and on future prospects for religious and interfaith mobilization that look towards action at both global and local levels.

D2 Roles of Cultural Heritage and Protection of Sacred Sites

Cultural identities take material form in different locations. Many actions reflecting alliances among religious and interfaith organizations to protect sacred sites offer inspiring examples. This session will address emerging issues involving security, strategies for more effective protections of both tangible and intangible heritage, and the significance of these issues for peacekeeping.

D3 Interactive Session: Elders and Youth

This interactive session will pair young and older leaders in a series of lightening debates that challenge each others' approaches and look to future interactions and inspiration

D4. Crossing Bridges Among Sectors and Institutions

Partnerships and intersections among different siloed approaches demand creative new approaches. The integrated thinking and cooperative action that characterize many religious communities and especially interreligious approaches offer inspiration extending far beyond purely religious approaches. This session will elaborate challenges and look to concrete examples in the effort to facilitate and promote innovative cross boundary work on priority G20 challenges. It will also focus on the specific approaches and contributions of leading religiously linked non-government organizations, both international and Africa-based.

D5. Women's Roles in Building Peace and Sustainable Communities: Religious Dimensions

Women's absence from formal peace processes across the world is notorious and widely bemoaned, and the creative and important work of women working from and within religious communities tends to be still more invisible. This session will explore the nature of the challenge and highlight exemplary peacebuilding work at community and global levels that involve women's distinctive peacebuilding approaches

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 **Concurrent sessions E**

E1 Focus on Refugees, Faith, Rights, and Protection

Critical challenges of human displacement, especially linked to conflicts but increasingly to the effects of changing climate conditions, present policy and humanitarian demands that from many perspectives demand new global, national, and local responses. Generosity in welcoming refugees, displaced people, and voluntary migrants can sadly give way to xenophobia and social tensions. The rich religious traditions of welcoming the stranger support both urgent responses and mechanisms to build on narratives and policies that are responsive to contemporary challenges but also prepare the way for what are widely understood as rising future levels of human movement and intersocietal engagement. Plural societies are an inevitability, and religious communities need to lead in the underlying societal understanding and response to current and future needs.

E2 Religious Action on Corruption

The G20 focuses sharply on issues of resources and, at this pivotal moment, the need to mobilize and promote careful use of resources is of paramount importance. Ethical dimensions point to significant actual and potential roles of religious actors. This session will draw on the experience of religious communities in different world regions in contributing to national and global efforts to address corruption and nepotism.

E3 Learning from Different Examples of Traditional, Cultural, and Indigenous Practice

This session will include ideas and examples of leadership from traditional and indigenous communities, with particular focus on the Southern African experience.

E4 A Historical Reflection: A New Book on the G20 Interfaith Experience

The G20 Interfaith Journey since 2014 has been shaped by the dynamics of each host country and by the evolving network of networks, as well as by global events and crises. This session will focus on the newly published book that provides a critical examination of the evolving role of the G20 Interfaith Forum.

E5 Ethical issues for Artificial Intelligence

Challenges linked to technology and especially the fast-developing systems of Artificial Intelligence (AI) present distinctive challenges for religious communities. These communities can also, with practical experience and pertinent ethical teachings, contribute to the active global and local debates on the topic. This session will build in ongoing work and dialogue with a view to highlighting the links between AI's potential and its dangers and the G20 and IF20 priorities, especially for the most vulnerable communities.

Thursday, August 14

9:00-11:00 **Plenary (vi) Leaving No One Behind: Vulnerable Communities at the Center**

This plenary will draw together the recommended strategies that the IF20 is developing, with a focus on action proposals addressed both to the G20 and to religious and interreligious communities. It will draw on the discussions during the concurrent sessions and IF20 preparatory work. The approach will be interactive, seeking input from participants that highlight priorities and work to make proposed recommendations more relevant and concrete.

11:00-11:30 Break

11:30-13:00 **Plenary (vii) Conclusions and Paths Forward**

This session will highlight contributions to the 2025 G20 Interfaith process and summarize next steps, notably leading to the November G20 Social Summit. Updates from different sessions will be distilled and plans going forward presented. South Africa's G20 leaders will highlight the plans for the Social Summit and Leader Summit in November and their reflections on the Cape Town Forum. The session will look forward to the 2026 G20.

13:00 Lunch

Departures