



## 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: the G20 Interfaith Forum's Appeal to the 2025 G20 Summit**

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An appeal for priority attention and action on the global promise to “leave no one behind” is the central theme of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20)’s call to the G20 leaders and the institutions engaged in the G20 process: All must focus sharply on those who are in the most vulnerable situations. Among too many vulnerable groups today, none call more urgently to us all than the millions of people who live in conflict situations or who are forcibly displaced, and the many children who lose the opportunity to grow and thrive.

Since its establishment in 2014, the IF20 has served a diverse and dynamic set of religiously inspired and supported networks that address global policy and practice agendas. It thus draws on a remarkable “network of networks,” bringing priority and actionable ideas and experience involving religious communities to the G20 process. Each year the international G20 alliance works with a local organizing committee. This year’s South African Local Organizing Committee is chaired by Professor David Mosoma.

The priority recommendations in the Action Call draw on continuing dialogue with the IF20 leadership, its Advisory Council, and Working Groups. They reflect analytic work and a refining of ideas over several years and the IF20’s eleven-year history of forums linked to G20 Presidency hosts and regional consultations. IF20 networks focus on a wide range of issues with continuing debate and exchange. The five pillars of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda (Peace, People, Planet, Prosperity, and Partnership), and the African Union’s 2063 Vision reflect the many areas where IF20 networks are involved. More specifically, the IF20 has focused sharply on both religious impact and religious responses to the COVID-19 emergencies and returned frequently to challenges of food insecurity. With both religious engagement and religious freedom central themes for several networks, assuring meaningful religious contributions to G20 and other global governance is a continuing theme.

The IF20 engages actively with the 2025 South African G20 presidency. Continuing dialogue with officials has included conferences in February and May 2025 in Pretoria and in Cape Town in June. South African leaders participated in events that IF20 organized during Brazil’s G20 Presidency. The central IF20 Forum will take place in Cape Town, August 10-14, 2025.

No topic on the global agenda, and thus that of the G20, does **not** involve religious communities, hence the lengthy list of topics the IF20 reviews. Any relevant goals would benefit from support by the faith community. Selecting the five priority topics in the Call to Action was guided primarily by the IF20’s response to the South African government’s priorities for its G20 Presidency (solidarity, equality, sustainability) and our sense of the deep urgency of action in several areas. Food security thus emerged as an overarching and central priority. The IF20 grounds its proposals on its deep concern for the most vulnerable and appeals to global leaders to make the oft repeated promise to “leave no one behind” a continuing and meaningful priority.

Expanded analysis and action recommendations related to these five focus areas and other important tissues are available at <https://www.g20interfaith.org/if20-policy-briefs/>."