

The UAE G20 Interfaith Forum on Engaging Faith Communities: G20 Agendas and Beyond

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Final Statement

The participants in the UAE G20 Interfaith Forum thank His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, for his patronage of this Forum. The participants also thank the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities and the G20 Interfaith Forum Association for their respective roles in organizing, coordinating and hosting of the Forum. The participants express gratitude for the warm hospitality and spirit of partnership that made the Forum distinctive and successful.

The G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) was founded to bring together religious leaders, faith-based organizations, public officials, academics, and cultural organizations from all sectors to advance humanitarian values and understanding worldwide. The IF20 has operated since 2014 and has provided a continuing international platform to explore ways in which religious communities can make meaningful contributions to global policy formation.

The UAE Forum marked the transition from the Indonesia to the India G20 presidency, and focused on planning for the IF20 agenda for 2023 and beyond. The UAE Forum built on prior G20 Interfaith events, analysis, and continuing dialogue. We note and gratefully acknowledge that since the G20 in Australia in 2014, and in the years since, the United Arab Emirates has contributed and provided support to the process and outcomes to date.

The IF20 is committed to an active process that allows a voice for all at the policy formation table, including but not limited to, historically underrepresented populations including minorities, women, children, and youth, and relevant networks, as well as faith-based and interfaith organizations at local, national and international levels. The aim is to encourage dialogue, understanding, joint action and progress. This takes place through continuing exchanges including IF20's traditional regional and global forums. The IF20's focus is on analysis and proposals that are prepared and presented to G20 and other leaders.

The IF20 works actively not only in G20 host countries each year. For example, IF20 organized a hemisphere-wide event held in conjunction with the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles in June, 2022, and further events held in cooperation with other organizations in June and July of 2022 in Italy and the United Kingdom. The IF20 looks forward to continuing and expanding its efforts to work both with host countries and other G20 member states during the hosting years of India (2023), Brazil (2024), South Africa (2025), and at all future G20 Summits to come.

Participants in the UAE Forum focused on priority issues for current and ongoing G20 concerns, including climate change and energy transition, refugees, child dignity, the food crisis, trafficking, anti-racism initiatives, protecting cultural heritage, conflict resolution, tolerance, education, COVID recovery and more general health care reforms, social protection and humanitarian reforms, and the economic and financial considerations necessary to assure that none of the vulnerable are left behind. The aim was to set the working agenda for ongoing activities in 2023 and thus to develop well-researched, substantive, and concrete policy recommendations for this year's G20 process.

The emerging themes focused on the four C's: Co-existence, Climate, COVID and Children. A central focus of the UAE Forum was children. Participants argued that both G20

leaders and religious communities should see the well-being of children across the world as a central unifying theme that looks to the future in pragmatic and visionary ways. That means specifically action to address violence against children in its many forms with the formation of a Task Force to put forward a line of action for future implementation and priority attention to education reforms as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 emergencies.

- Participants in the UAE Forum were supportive and committed to measures that can contribute to cultivation of co-existence, tolerance, social inclusion, and peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic world;
- Concrete actions to combat climate change and a commitment to a sustainable future for all people;
- Actions needed to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen health systems more generally;
- Effective mechanisms that can implement global standards to eradicate labor and sex trafficking, sexual exploitation of children online, and all forms of violence against children;
- Careful analysis of the necessary economic and financial policy changes required to effectively address moral concerns for the vulnerable;
- Expanding and enhancing involvement of women and youth in policy formation;

Paths forward include:

- Forming groups involving Forum participants and others that can generate responsible, credible, and practical substantive recommendations based on Forum deliberations;
- Arranging regional and substantive webinars and other conferences and meetings with the aim of raising understanding of key issues and attracting support for priority recommendations, paying particular attention to country priorities and needs;
- Connecting with relevant policy makers in various G20 countries, including G20 sherpas and other public officials involved in G20 policy formation across the range of G20 countries to open additional channels of support for IF20 initiatives;
- Supporting the “network of networks” of those engaged in efforts parallel to those identified as part of the IF20 agenda;
- Gathering information about needs outside the G20 countries that warrant G20 attention by facilitating inputs from Africa, Latin America, and other developing regions;
- Providing a repository of best practices derived from the experience and insights of religious communities in addressing sustainable development goals and other global needs; and
- Broadening media (including social media) coverage of IF20 concerns and policy outputs.

The partnerships formed at the UAE Forum will empower and sustain the engagement of faith communities at the global table through 2023 year and beyond.