



2025 Year End Document



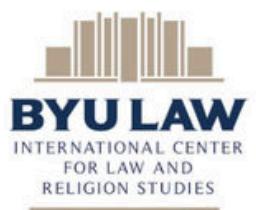




IF20 Partners 2025



BERKLEY CENTER
for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



مجلس حكماء المسلمين
Muslim Council of Elders

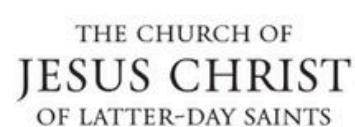


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INTRODUCTION

G20 Africa 2025: The Symbol of the Protea Flower:



The logo for G20 Africa 2025 is based upon an image of the Protea, South Africa's national flower. Known for its ability to regenerate even after a fire, the Protea embodies the strength that can emerge from challenges. The Protea's many distinct petals come together in one bloom, reflecting how diverse faiths, cultures, and perspectives can form something strong, hopeful, and deeply connected. The three themes chosen by South Africa for the 2025 G20 year were solidarity, equality, and sustainability. These themes form a living Protea rooted in Ubuntu, the philosophy that "I am because we are." For the G20 Interfaith Forum, "Ubuntu in Action" became the theme for all our meetings in 2025. Our discussions focused on the needs of the most vulnerable communities around the world. IF20 advanced this theme through five policy areas, each reflecting the Protea's symbolism of interconnectedness:



- 1. Food security and poverty:** Food security is a leading world issue, driving the G20 Global Alliance launched by the Brazil G20 and inspiring both South Africa and the African Union. IF20 supports multi-sectoral efforts, highlighting religious institutions' vital role. Building on global faith initiatives, such as the World Council of Churches, Caritas, PaRD, World Vision, Islamic Relief, and LDS Charities, IF20 strengthens national and transnational commitments against hunger.
- 2. Economic and Financial Action:** Fiscal and debt crises, concentrated in Africa, hinder poverty alleviation, climate action, and essential services. Religious communities highlight equity and thriving, linking 2025's Jubilee vision to urgent reforms. Mobilizing national and multilateral public finance is vital to ensure debt sustainability and advance sustainable, inclusive development.
- 3. Addressing interreligious tensions through education and enhancing understanding of religious matters:** Cross Cultural Religious Literacy (CCRL) and Arigatou International's Ethics Education programs strengthen responses to violence and conflict involving religious actors. Reinforcing social cohesion is vital for education and trust. Religious ethics inform emerging fields like AI, while faith communities help address issues like gender-based violence; supporting women, children, and families; health; and equity.
- 4. Migration and refugee movements:** IF20 emphasizes religious teachings and practices that support vulnerable migrants and refugees, countering fear with compassion. Its longstanding advocacy for multinational cooperation against trafficking shaped 2025 efforts, reinforcing faith-inspired action for justice, dignity, and care. Among the many challenges presented by large movements of people within and among countries is human trafficking and modern slavery, a continuing IF20 focus.
- 5. Disaster prevention, response, and recovery:** The active involvement of religious groups as first responders and policy advocates is vital. Their contributions deserve greater focus as disaster relief intersects with environmental challenges like rainforest destruction and climate migration. The priority is prevention, resilience, and strengthening community capacities, where faith actors play indispensable roles regionally and globally.

The IF20's work this year demonstrated how solidarity, equality, and sustainability can be lived in action. By advancing food security, financial justice, education for cohesion, compassionate responses to migration, and disaster resilience, faith communities illuminated their indispensable role in shaping a more just and humane global order. Together, these petals form a living Protea, an emblem of Africa's leadership.

Marianna Richardson
JoAnne Maluti
Brooke Lounsbury

Social Media Report

Instagram

Likes

 2,381

Views

 7,176

YouTube

Subscribers

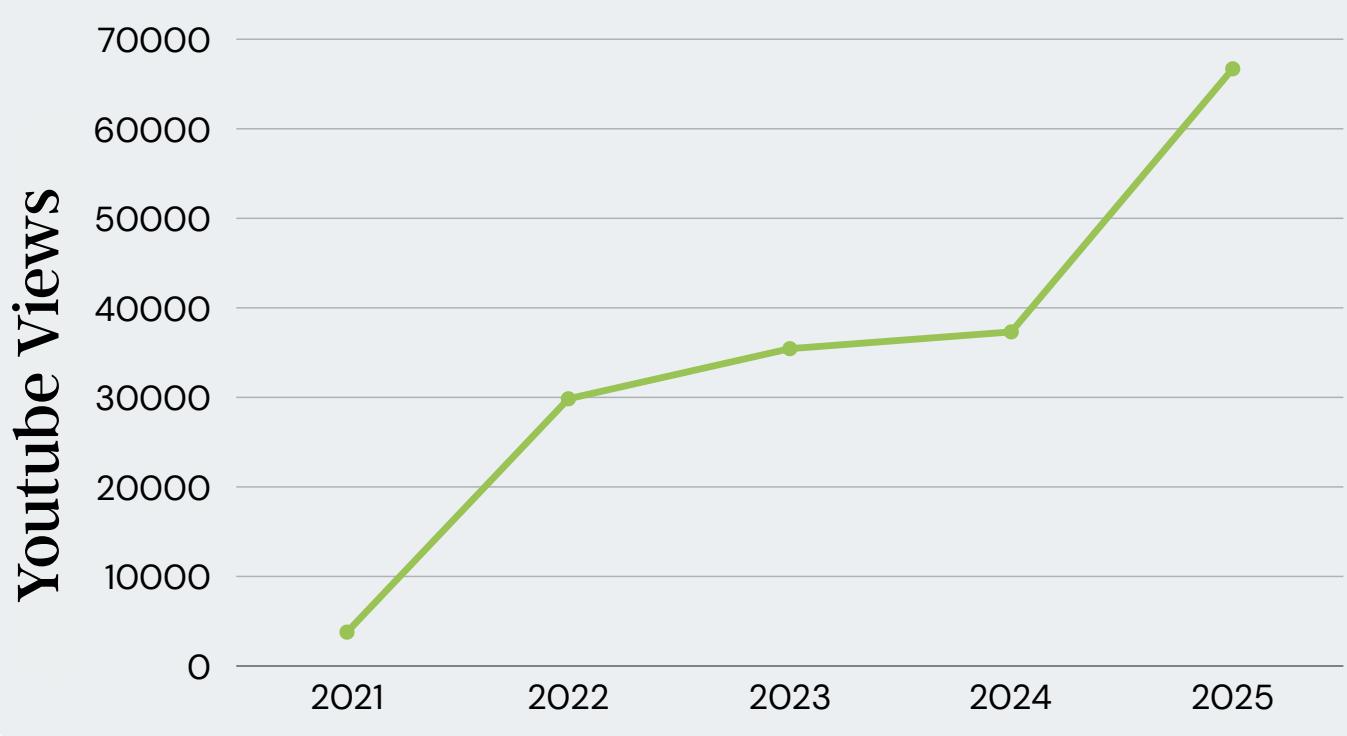
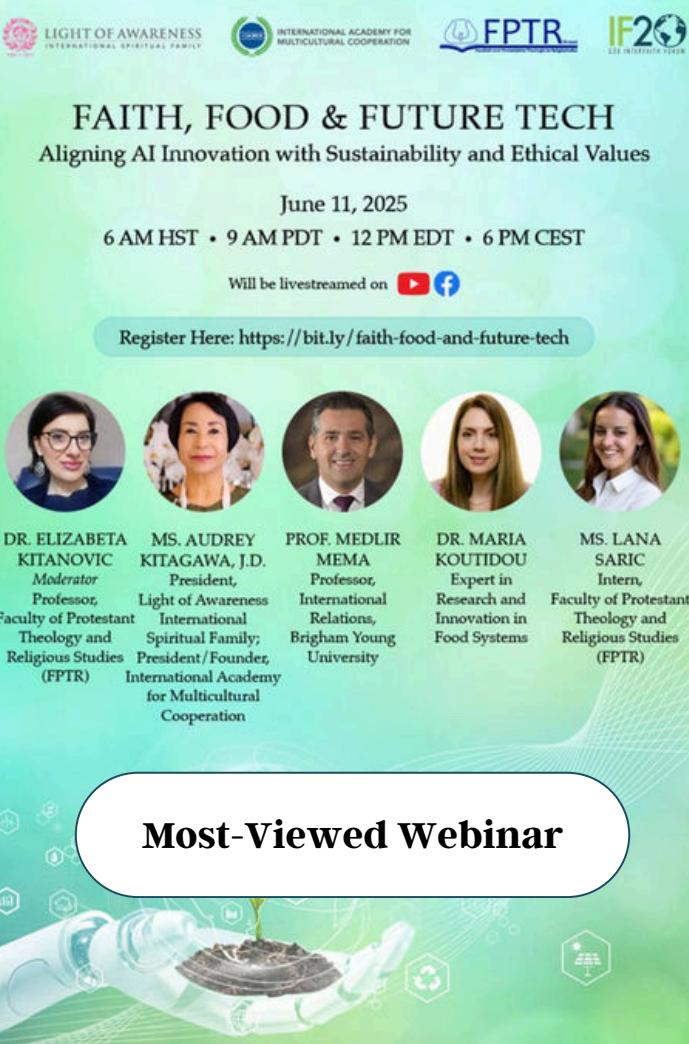
 1,223

Views

 66.7K

Watch Time

 2.6K hours



Most-Viewed Webinar

Facebook

Views

 5,517

IF20 YouTube Video Views

Total Subscribers: 1,223 (+645 in 2025) | Total Watch Time: 2,600 hours



Countries	Active	Users
United States	6.1K	↑ 34.6%
China	3.4K	↑ 729....
South Africa	2.3K	↑ 876....
Singapore	1.9K	↑ 1,63...
United Kingdom	831	↓ 0.1%
Canada	702	↓ 0.3%
Germany	620	↑ 160....

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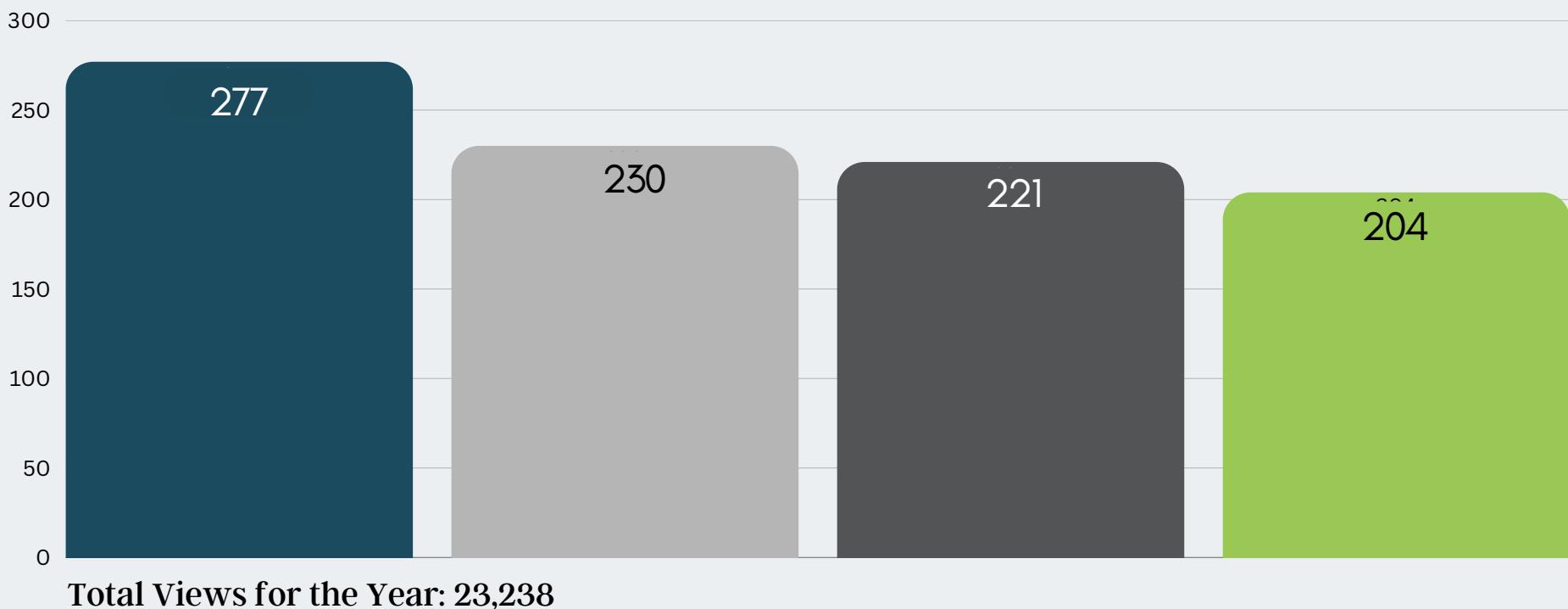
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VIEWPOINTS



IF20 Members Launch Modern Slavery Prevention Index at G20 Social Summit

By JoAnne W · December 30, 2025 · Humanitarian Aid, Regional Meetings, Viewpoints · 0 Comments

By JoAnne Wadsworth, Communications Consultant, G20 Interfaith Forum – At the historic G20 ...



Elder Gerrit W. Gong: AI Perspective for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

By JoAnne W · December 30, 2025 · AI, Technology and Innovation, Viewpoints · 0 Comments

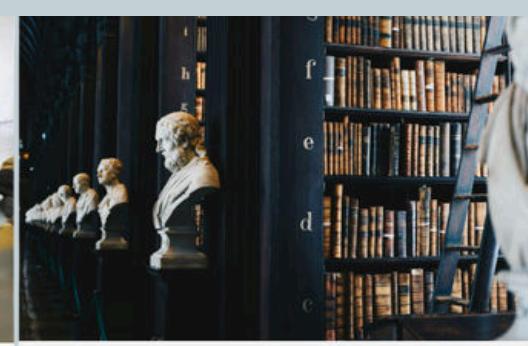
By Marianna Richardson In his address on November 6, 2025 at the Organized Intelligence Conference ...



Building Social Capital Through Multi-Faith Engagement: Indonesia's Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy Initiative

By JoAnne W · November 24, 2025 · Children and Youth, Education and Religious Literacy, Viewpoints · 0 Comments

This blog post is based on a presentation delivered by Matius Ho, Executive Director of ...

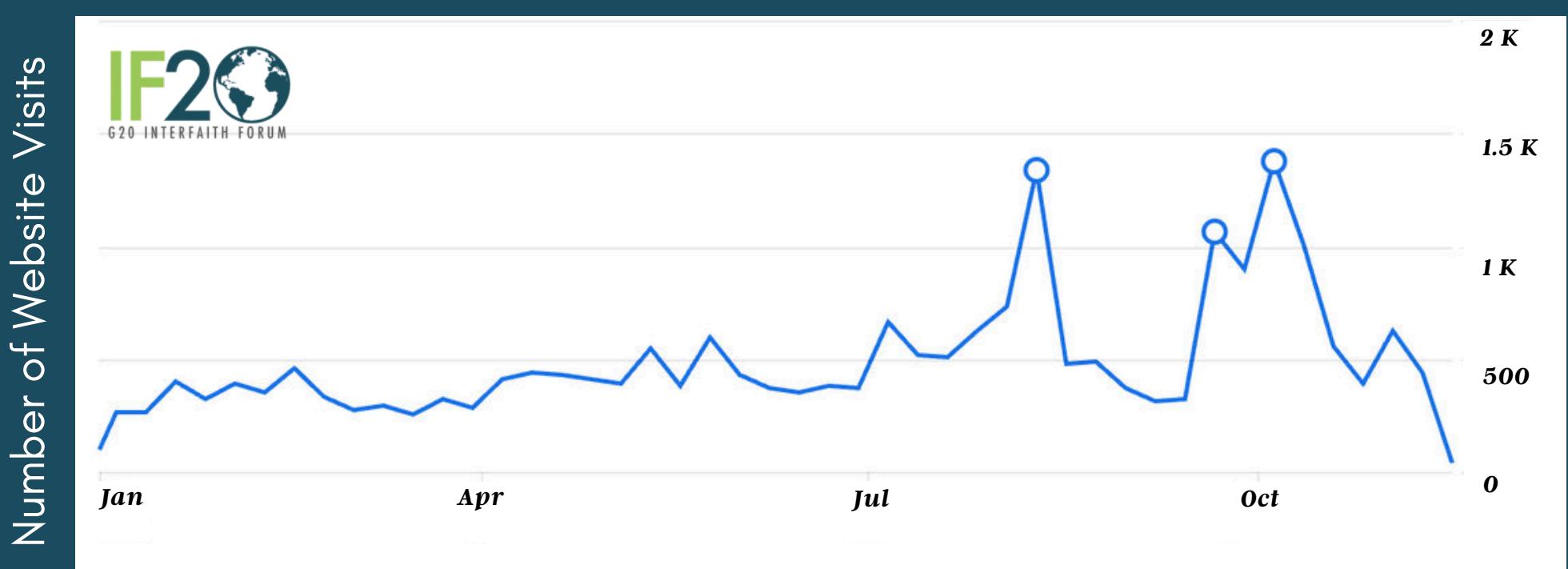


Executioner: A soul song raising eternal questions

By JoAnne W · November 22, 2025 · Cultural Unity, Viewpoints · 0 Comments

By Doug Koop -- David Foster Wallace began a memorable commencement address with ...

IF20 Monthly Website Visits 2025





A M E S S A G E F R O M

President W. Cole Durham Jr.

It is with deep gratitude that I reflect on the G20 Interfaith Forum's activities throughout 2025, a year that has been both challenging and profoundly meaningful for our organization. I have spent much of the year working alongside countless colleagues around the world on preparations for our various engagements, and I firmly believe that 2025 has been the most impactful year we have experienced in the decade we have been working on this process. The year's events and activities could not have taken place without countless hours expended by numerous local and international colleagues who each deserve profound personal thanks.

Most people hear briefly about G20 activities each year in headlines about the recurring annual G20 Summits, but often people don't fully realize the significance of these events. The annual summits bring together leaders of the nineteen largest economies on earth, plus the European Union, and since 2023, the African Union. This means that the G20 represents a total of ninety-six countries, representing over 85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade, and approximately two-thirds of the world's population. Because of its importance, many other countries are involved as guests of G20 proceedings, so its influence extends even further. We had the opportunity to join with many others two years ago in recommending that the African Union become a member of the G20. We were delighted to join in the process this year in South Africa, with the opportunity to give a special African focus to this year's proceedings. We are particularly grateful that South Africa's G20 leadership welcomed IF20 as a stakeholder in the process.

The G20 Interfaith Forum Association seeks to add the strength of diverse religious voices to the process of framing key policies and actions starting at the G20 level and penetrating down to local communities. Religious communities have been addressing concerns such as those identified by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for longer than there have been nation states. These concerns have long been central to the deep concerns of religious communities, and these communities bring depth of experience, insight, practical contacts, and expertise that can add major synergies to efforts to achieve the SDGs. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how these objectives can be achieved without optimizing religious partnerships.

One of the great strengths of the G20 Interfaith organization is that it exemplifies an important type of multifaith effort. It provides a platform that brings experts together from widely differing religious traditions and professional backgrounds who understand the need to identify priority religious concerns that can become the basis for meaningful common efforts. My hope and prayer as I reflect on this remarkable year is that our work has opened important practical vistas giving us all a richer sense of how we can join together to have shared impact.



A MESSAGE FROM

Katherine Marshall

At the opening of the G20 Interfaith Forum meetings in August, Professor Mosoma began by reminding us to take a moment to remember the people who are suffering in the world, to remember the violence that's taking place, the hunger, the people who don't have opportunities. Throughout that event, and the remainder of 2025, this call and this reminder has stayed on our minds. We also come away from the year inspired by the spirit and hope of the ideals of Ubuntu and the work that you, and we, all do that brings us together.

We've heard much that is inspirational about Ubuntu and the spirit of Ubuntu. Ebrahim Rasool's reminded us, however, of Ubuntu's hard edge: "I am my brother's keeper, and we have the responsibility to act so, with words and ideas and experience, with prophetic voices that call us to action, to demand action, for peace, for caring, for compassion." I think we all leave 2025 with a powerful sense of what we can do and what we must do together.

A young leader's quip about a conference echoes in my mind: "NATO: no action, talk only." I have been exploring some alternatives that convey our true spirit at IF20, which is decidedly *not* NATO. My favorite acronym is ADVANCE, because it brings together some words that I think reflect our discussions and efforts as the G20 Interfaith Forum.

- So A is for accountability, as we heard at the forum time and time again, that we have and we need to build practical mechanisms for accountability.
- We also heard a lot about D: determination, and commitment to action.
- V stands in for the idea that we are inspired and directed by a vision, by a prophetic voice.
- A is for action and the courage, moral and physical, to act.
- N is for now, which symbolizes urgency but also that we are living another Kairos moment, a moment when we can be transformational, reflecting the wisdom in the idea that in crisis there is both danger and opportunity.
- C calls us to compassion, with grace and spirit.
- And the final E exemplifies empowerment and the inspiration it calls out.

There are many other words and ideas, but those in ADVANCE represent some of the thoughts that echo as we move away from talk and the need for dialogue and learning from each other to action.

At this year's forum, we were reminded of the miracle of South Africa's transition, which is very much a centerpiece of my own professional life and experience. 1994 was a great year, a year dominated by Nelson Mandela, who remains one of the greatest inspirations among all world leaders, ever. Mandela is our model, our example, our inspiration. But there are so many others, men and women, young and old, who inspire us. So special thanks to all of you, South African brothers and sisters.

I end with our sense of deep appreciation, for the learning, for the fellowship, for the caring, for the passion, for the disagreements about how we should handle what we should do. And with our firm, collective commitment, our solidarity, that we will be taking our issues, our five issues, but also the others that people care about so deeply, forward in every way that our imagination, our energy, our creativity, our intelligence, and our spirit allows. Because we care, and we believe so deeply that the voices that you represent, the experience you represent, the commitment you show, belong at the tables all the way from the most senior leadership in the world, which is reflected in the G20, to every community and every family.

Thank you to all of you.

G20 Interfaith Forum Pre-Meetings in South Africa

February 17-19 2025 | Gauteng, Pretoria, South Africa

The G20 Interfaith Forum sponsored a three-day convening in Pretoria to optimize religious input into South Africa's G20 presidency, which focuses on the themes of solidarity, equality, and sustainability. Hosted at the University of Pretoria's Future Africa Centre and Freedom Park, the event brought together religious leaders, academics, government officials, and civil society representatives to identify priority subthemes and develop practical recommendations for advancing South Africa's G20 agenda. The gathering opened with interfaith prayer and featured panels on the spirit of Ubuntu, perspectives from the Brazilian G20 experience, and insights from the African Union on the 2025 G20 process.

Through concurrent working sessions, participants ranked priority issues within each thematic area and formed task forces to advance the work. The convening emphasized building core competencies in networking, policy development, programming, and communication strategies. Part of the program took place at Freedom Park, South Africa's national spiritual monument, where participants received an overview of the G20 Interfaith Forum's mission and next steps. The event concluded with the announcement of the G20 Interfaith Local Organizing Committee and a press conference, establishing the infrastructure needed to sustain religious engagement throughout South Africa's G20 presidency.

IF20 Board member Professor Brett Scharffs, director of BYU Law School's International Center for Law and Religion Studies, led discussions and spoke at the summit, emphasizing the virtues essential for promoting religious freedom. IF20 President W. Cole Durham, Jr. participated in a panel focused on forging the next generation of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) champions, discussing strategies for mentoring younger leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability and strength of the religious freedom movement. The summit's panels and discussions emphasized practical, compassionate approaches to advancing global religious freedom, including respecting faith differences in diplomatic contexts and supporting those unjustly imprisoned for their beliefs.



G20 Interfaith Forum 2025: Ubuntu in Action—Focus on Vulnerable Communities

AUGUST 10-14, 2025 | CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



The G20 Interfaith Forum convened its annual meeting in Cape Town under the theme "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability," bringing together 457 in-person participants from 48 countries representing 50 religious traditions, with 704 additional participants watching in real time. The five-day forum included 14 policymakers, 31 academics, 126 religious administrators, and 286 civil society representatives in a historic gathering that positioned faith communities as essential partners in South Africa's G20 presidency—the first time an African nation has led the G20 process.

The forum aligned closely with South Africa's G20 priority themes, grounding discussions in Ubuntu philosophy—the African concept that emphasizes our shared humanity and interconnectedness. Opening sessions featured powerful addresses from South African religious and civic leaders who challenged participants to move beyond dialogue toward concrete witness. Sessions included high-level plenaries on finance and debt, hunger and poverty, education, sustainability, and vulnerable communities, alongside approximately 29 breakout sessions addressing diverse topics including cross-cultural religious literacy, AI ethics, health and COVID-19 recovery, peacebuilding, human trafficking, refugees and migration, corruption, gender-based violence, climate change impacts on vulnerable populations, the protection of sacred sites, and the distinctive wisdom of traditional and indigenous communities.

The forum featured a vibrant Youth Delegation of approximately 50 young leaders representing the YIF20 (G20 Youth Interfaith Forum) who participated in all sessions and moderated several breakout discussions, bringing fresh perspectives and on-the-ground insights to global challenges. In a powerful demonstration of interfaith solidarity, all faith communities participated together in a service project packing food to fight children's hunger in local Cape Town neighborhoods. The gathering's final day included a groundbreaking "Youth and Elders" discussion that brought time-honored wisdom into dialogue with contemporary youth perspectives on pressing global issues.

Participants engaged in intensive working sessions that produced concrete policy proposals for the G20 Summit, drawing on the diverse expertise of religious leaders, academics, policymakers, and civil society organizations working directly with marginalized populations. The forum emphasized practical, implementable solutions rather than aspirational statements, demonstrating how faith communities leverage their unique moral authority, extensive service networks providing healthcare and social services across Africa and beyond, and trusted relationships within communities. Throughout the gathering, IF20 strengthened its "network of networks"—fostering partnerships that transcend borders, beliefs, and sectors, ensuring that policy discussions at the G20 Summit reflect the lived experiences and spiritual wisdom of diverse faith traditions committed to building more just, peaceful, and sustainable societies.

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba: Opening Keynote Address

Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town Thabo Makgoba welcomed participants to the G20 Interfaith Forum with a powerful reflection on the distinctive contribution of faith communities to global governance. Emphasizing that the Forum's importance lies not in numbers but in core values, he highlighted the Christian commitment to "abundant life for all, not only for those with powerful connections in politics or business." Archbishop Makgoba reminded attendees of their shared responsibility to a world in war and turmoil, stressing fundamental human connectedness regardless of geopolitical alliances or divides between North and South, rich and poor, powerful and powerless.

The Archbishop framed South Africa's G20 presidency themes of "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability" within the context of Ubuntu philosophy and the urgent need to address global crises including climate change, underdevelopment, inequality, poverty, hunger, and geopolitical instability. He noted that only 12% of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals are currently on track, with South Africa identifying inequality as a key cause of lack of progress. Drawing on the Ubuntu principle that "individual nations cannot thrive in isolation," he called for partnerships across all sectors of society, emphasizing that faith communities support the SDGs because they align with God's vision for humanity and the world.

"Through solidarity, we can create an inclusive future centered on people. Solidarity will allow us to develop our societies in a way that reflects our shared humanity. In our interconnected world, the challenges faced by one nation impact all nations."

Michael-Daniel Bam: Call to Action from Cape Town's Youth

Cape Town Junior Executive Mayor Michael-Daniel Bam delivered a stirring call to action representing South Africa's youth, challenging faith communities to move from rhetoric to reality. His address confronted uncomfortable truths about the failure to keep peace and live in unity, citing Gaza where children know the sound of sirens better than laughter, Nigeria's sectarian tensions fueling cycles of revenge, and Myanmar where communities are displaced because of how they pray. Bam challenged attendees to examine whether their faith leads to peace, whether their religious education teaches respect, and whether their morality is truly lived or merely performed.

The Junior Mayor called for teaching peace as a central part of faith, making morality a way of life rather than a performance, and giving young people the wisdom and courage to see difference not as a threat but as a gift. He emphasized that youth need education not just in mathematics or science, but in respect, empathy, and interfaith understanding. Bam's vision was clear: raising a generation who will not inherit conflicts but hopes, who will not need to gather to talk about peace because they will be living it every day, transforming words into action and replacing fear with understanding.

"If our faith does not lead to peace, what is it leading to? If our religious education does not teach respect, what is it teaching? If our morality is not lived, is it morality at all?"





Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool: Courage Amidst Conflict and Vulnerability

Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool highlighted moral courage, drawing on Immanuel Kant's insight that courage is not the opposite of cowardice—recklessness is—but rather the perfect middle that can call out cowards while diminishing extremism. He challenged faith communities to speak truth to both sides of every equation: to those who are morally cowardly and ultra-cautious in the face of power, and to those who are morally reckless and extreme when they should be measured. Rasool emphasized that Ubuntu has a hard edge, grounded in the scriptural principle that we are each other's keepers, accountable to one another and responsible for calling out demons on all sides so that the world finds its equilibrium.

Rasool's address traced how the predictions from the previous year's forum in Brazil had become urgent realities: populism had become mainstreamed extremism, differences had become divisions, tensions had become full-blown conflicts, the vulnerable had become victims of massacres and starvation, and fears had become intolerances. He declared that when faith itself stares down the barrel of a gun, interfaith work must move beyond competitive, comparative, or cooperative approaches to become truly collaborative. Religion must act drawing from its deep spiritual resources, speaking not to compromised powers but to the people of the world—the campuses rising against capitals, the streets becoming restless against palaces, the ordinary people who want to believe again and find God's manifestation in their places of worship.

Jewish-Muslim Declaration: A Commitment to Reconciliation

In a significant moment of the Forum, Jewish and Muslim faith leaders issued a declaration committing to a long-term process of reconciliation between their communities. The delegation, part of ongoing dialogue and cooperation efforts, announced their intention to make religious identities a source of connection rather than conflict, drawing inspiration from the Medina Constitution of the 7th century and the historic *Nostra Aetate* declaration of 1965 that transformed Jewish-Christian relations. Commemorating the 60th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* in 2025, these leaders committed to embarking on a parallel journey for Jewish-Muslim relations, critically examining both convergences and distinctions between their traditions.

The declaration acknowledged the long and complex road ahead, requiring strategic planning, scholarly engagement, participation in global forums, dedicated women-led interfaith dialogue, and educational outreach. Imam Dr. Talib M. Shareef emphasized that Muslims and Jews are "not enemies of each other; we are branches of the same sacred Abrahamic tree," stressing that both communities should inherit the intelligence and mercy of scripture rather than the hatreds of history. The delegation called for cooperation in serving humanity—fighting hunger, educating the poor, protecting the planet, and building peace—not as a favor but as fulfillment of divine responsibility, inviting the global community to join this sacred undertaking ahead of the 2026 G20 in the United States.

"Rooted in our shared humanity as descendants of Adam, we view the deepening of religious fraternity between Jews and Muslims not merely as a means to ease tensions but as a revival of our common Abrahamic heritage and a fulfillment of God's will."

Deputy Minister Ganief Ebrahim Hendricks: Closing Reflections on Ubuntu and Vulnerability

Deputy Minister of Social Development Ganief Ebrahim Hendricks addressed the persistent challenge of inequality in South Africa, noting the country remains one of the most unequal globally with limited recovery from apartheid and unresolved land issues. He emphasized that despite goals to eradicate poverty, it persists across Africa, with approximately 38 million of South Africa's 62 million people relying on government grants. Hendricks called on the interfaith community to play a vital role in addressing gender-based violence, child pregnancies, and elder abuse, urging leaders to prioritize the Global South on the global agenda and work toward ending starvation.

The Deputy Minister highlighted how South Africa's G20 presidency represents the first time an African country has presided over the series, consciously adopting the theme "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability" to place the continent's developmental priorities on the global agenda. He acknowledged that faith communities have demonstrated extraordinary acts of courage and solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic and continue valuable work in strengthening families, improving education, tackling gender-based violence, and providing humanitarian relief. Hendricks concluded by affirming the government's commitment to throwing its weight behind South Africa's interfaith initiatives, confident these efforts will lay a legacy for shaping global policy, cementing international solidarity, and reigniting socio-moral and regenerative spirit globally.

"The faith sector remains a critical stakeholder in addressing the deep-rooted social challenges our world continues to face. It also plays a vital role in our collective efforts to restore the moral fiber of society."





Bishop Sithembele Sipuka: From Words to Witness—Our Covenant of Action

Bishop Sithembele Sipuka, President of the South African Council of Churches's closing address that held up a mirror to faith leaders, confronting uncomfortable truths about proximity to power and complicity in systems that perpetuate injustice. He challenged religious leaders living in mansions while congregants queue for food parcels, institutions accumulating wealth while children go hungry, and the blessing of policies that oppress rather than liberate. Drawing on Ubuntu's prophetic call beyond mere acknowledgment of connectedness to active responsibility for one another's dignity, Sipuka emphasized that the Forum had revealed the same divine call expressed in different sacred languages across all faith traditions.

The Bishop outlined five pillars of commitment: food security as empowerment that restores dignity, economic justice through Jubilee debt cancellation with transparent accountability, education cultivating cross-cultural religious literacy, migration advocacy creating practical sanctuaries of hope, and climate justice as sacred duty. He called for a shift from issuing statements "calling on governments" to actual commitment and action, urging faith communities to have "the smell of the sheep" they claim to pastor—living so close to those they serve that their struggles become shared struggles. Sipuka challenged attendees to sign with their lives, not just signatures, a covenant of transparency, service to the marginalized, mutual accountability, prophetic courage, and practical action that transforms systems rather than symptoms.

"The vulnerable communities we claim to serve are not objects of our charity—they are the measure of our authenticity. The children of the global south, the poor of this world, the marginalized of every nation, are not waiting for our next conference. They are waiting for our conversion."

Indonesia's Example in Education

The Indonesian Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Abdul Mu'ti gave a keynote address opening the plenary session on education and leading human development imperatives. Mu'ti stated that education plays a crucial role in developing the character of the younger generation. One Indonesian initiative, the CCRL program, has been proven to help students discover their identity, understand others, and collaborate to build a peaceful, happy, and prosperous society.

From Indonesia, the panelists included Executive Director of the Leimena Institute, Matius Ho, and Amin Abdullah, a member of the Steering Committee of the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency (BPIP). Both presented the CCRL program, which has trained more than 10,000 teachers of various religions from across Indonesia.

Mu'ti explained that in its primary and secondary education policies, Indonesia prioritizes character education for the younger generation through the Seven Habits of the Great Indonesian Children Movement, strengthening the role of teachers, and in depth learning. In line with this, CCRL can strengthen the Habits of Great Indonesian Children, especially in society, by teaching values of tolerance and eliminating hostile behavior and attitudes toward followers of other religions, including labeling based on differences in religious interpretation.

According to Mu'ti, CCRL calls for cooperation among various religious groups and beliefs, races, ethnicities, and genders to address global humanitarian issues, such as environmental destruction, global warming, climate change, and inter-state wars. "Through cross-national, cross-cultural, and cross-religious collaboration, we can raise a generation of young people who are not only academically intelligent but also socially wise," said Mu'ti. All parties must collaborate to face global challenges. Big changes start with small, consistent steps supported by schools, families, communities, and the media.

Matius Ho, Executive Director of the Leimena Institute, said that the CCRL program in Indonesia, which has been running for four years, is a concrete example of interfaith collaboration, involving more than 40 educational institutions and religious organizations. The CCRL program began with a simple idea: teacher training to foster mutual trust as social capital in a pluralistic society. "Indonesia, for example, has been engaging in interfaith dialogue for decades, but dialogue is often only a first step; dialogue stops at dialogue. We need to take more concrete steps to collaborate with people of different faiths," he said. "I think it's increasingly urgent and important how we teach future generations to reach out to people outside their own groups, whether ethnic or religious."





Feeding the Hungry: A Service Project During the Forum

By Christina Tobias-Nahi

The African philosophy Ubuntu as this year's cross-cutting theme emphasized the interconnectedness of individuals within a broader communal, societal, environmental and spiritual context and was illustrated by summit participants coming together around the SDGs including SDG2 to end hunger and achieve food security for all.

The spirit embodied in Ubuntu was fully visible when the IF20 Secretariat and organizers this year decided on a side service project to take talk to action. Under the direction of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, South Africa leadership, partnering alongside Islamic Relief USA and Sewa International represented by their Director of Public Affairs, and a local Hindu civil society, a large food packing event was organized for interested participants at the Summit with Rise Against Hunger Africa. As a result of this collaborative effort and because so many chose to join!, 33,000 meals were made for preschool children in an underserved community in Cape Town.

By working shoulder to shoulder, from African tribal kings who rolled up their sleeves to practitioners of all faiths and none, and across ages and genders, we showed how people can put differences aside, and moreover need to, if we are going to heed the urgent call of the outgoing UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. He has noted with concern that only 12% of the SDG targets are currently on track to be met, with approximately 50% needing more substantial progress, and more than 30% of the SDGs having either stalled or reversed. Moreover he has called out that to have any hope to achieve the 2030 SDGs, we must encourage a paradigm shift and accelerate the implementation of practical solutions.

A Continent in Crisis: The need for a Jubilee Year

The first plenary was focused on the realities of finance and debt, especially for African countries. Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Board Chair of the United World Colleges in Kenya, opened the panel with a powerful reminder: "Leave no one behind is not a joke—it is real." She highlighted the disconnect between Africa's abundant resources and the persistent lack of opportunity for its youth. Despite 65% of the continent's land being arable and rich in minerals, the benefits rarely reach the people. Kanyoro urged participants to return to their communities with a renewed focus on tax justice and civic engagement.

Eric LeCompte, Executive Director of Jubilee USA, painted a stark picture of Africa's development challenges. "The Sustainable Development Goals are completely out of reach," he said, citing compounding crises in food, fuel, health, and poverty. One in five children in Sub-Saharan Africa still dies from preventable diseases, while governments spend two-thirds of their revenue servicing debt rather than investing in social services. LeCompte proposed a return to the biblical Jubilee model: "God created a rich and abundant world... we are closest to the Creator when we share the resources God gave us." He called for systemic reforms including debt relief, innovative aid, and an international bankruptcy process.



The need for a Jubilee Year was also discussed in a breakout session with Eric LeCompte as the moderator. The session examined how Jubilee 2025 principles could transform global financial architecture to address debt crises and inequality. LeCompte opened by noting these issues have been faith community priorities for 30 years and are now central to South Africa's G20 presidency, with the incoming US presidency also adopting them as critical issues. Ndidi Nwuneli presented stark statistics showing Africa pays 500% more for debt than other regions due to unfair bias – with African bonds averaging 9.8% interest compared to Germany's 3% – representing a \$75 million penalty. Mohammed Ameen Hassen offered a philosophical framework, arguing that both capitalism (anchored in absolute freedom) and socialism (anchored in absolute equality) create extremes, while justice can provide the counterbalance needed for a practical economic system.

Justice must serve as the balance between freedom and equality in economic systems, ensuring fairness for all. Surplus Islamic finance capital can be matched with African fiscal deficits to improve sovereign debt pricing, while use-of-funds requirements and civil society accountability frameworks safeguard vulnerable populations. Diaspora remittances offer alternative financing, and colonial legacies in financial architecture must be acknowledged. Debt forgiveness should be personalized, with faith communities rejecting corrupt practices. Equality of opportunity must be prioritized, alongside vigilance against corruption. Applying Ubuntu principles reframes finance as a tool for collective flourishing, advancing sustainable, just, and inclusive development rooted in dignity.

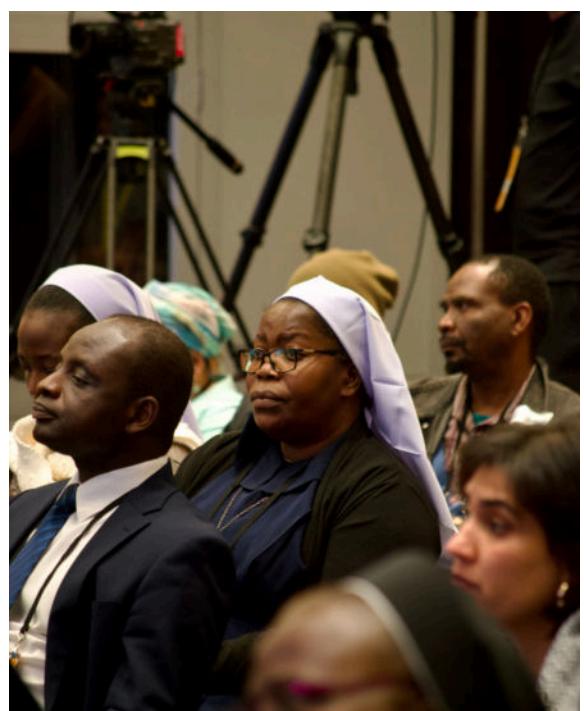
Sisters Making a Difference Around the World

Katherine Marshall highlighted the presence of Catholic sisters, supported by the Hilton Foundation and Georgetown University, as a meaningful step toward integrating women's voices and agendas into global interfaith dialogue. They proved to be a significant voice throughout the forum focusing on their global work to help the most vulnerable. Their experiences inspired the efforts of NGOs, NPOs, and other religious groups. For example, in the breakout session on human trafficking, Sister Diana Kanyere examined trafficking as both a local and global crisis requiring systemic change beyond individual rescue efforts. Trafficking is fundamentally an economic crime generating \$260 billion annually in illicit profits, with poverty driving families to unknowingly push children into exploitation. Sister Kanyere shared how using prayer and community mobilization rescued a child trafficked for organ harvesting.

Sister Francisca Ngozi Utu, HHCJ, Executive Director of the Centre for Women Studies and Intervention in Nigeria was the moderator and Sister Sr. Dr. Teresiah Muthoni, Legal Advisor/Officer for the Archdiocese of Nairobi/Hilton Foundation in Kenya, was a panelist in a breakout session on women and youth. This discussion explored women's and youth's leadership within interfaith contexts, emphasizing the Ubuntu principle that "it's not a win unless we all win." Speakers addressed systemic barriers including patriarchal religious structures, lack of political will, and exclusion from decision-making processes. Sr. Muthoni highlighted disability inclusion challenges, noting how able-bodied people create barriers for those with disabilities and calling attention to the lack of accessibility at the forum itself. The discussion culminated with participants offering words of encouragement to women who would never enter rooms like these, with responses ranging from "mobilize" to the Zulu phrase "wathinta umfazi wathinta umbokodo" (you strike a woman, you strike a rock).

Sister Alexandra Smerilli, FMA, Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Vatican City, emphasized the urgent need to shift from global indifference to solidarity, drawing on Pope Francis's 2013 visit to Lampedusa as a moral call to action. She highlighted the Pope's response to the migrant tragedy—not with words, but with presence—challenging the world to confront the causes of migration and ecological crisis. Migration, she stressed, must be seen not as a problem but as a human reality requiring compassion and coordinated support. She introduced the Vatican's transformation of Castel Gandolfo into a center for integral ecology and education, offering vocational training in sustainable agriculture, circular economy, and regenerative practices. This initiative aims to educate youth, elders, and business leaders, fostering ecological conversion and replicable models of sustainability. Sister Alexandra called on faith communities to recognize their responsibility to protect creation, welcome the marginalized, and act prophetically. Her message underscored that faith must inspire concrete, systemic change for a just and sustainable future.

Sr. Hedwig Muse, Legal Officer and Program Manager for Catholic Care of Children and Human Rights at the Association of Sisterhoods of Kenya highlighted how her Catholic organization empowers Muslim girls to wear hijabs, demonstrating that protecting one religion's rights protects all others. She stressed the importance of practicing tolerance and respect while maintaining the right to disagree, recognizing that government cannot legislate hearts but communities must coexist. Without a profit motive, faith-based organizations contribute to a community's well-being and should be supported by governmental agencies.



Serving the Most Vulnerable: IF20's Focus on Eliminating Human Trafficking

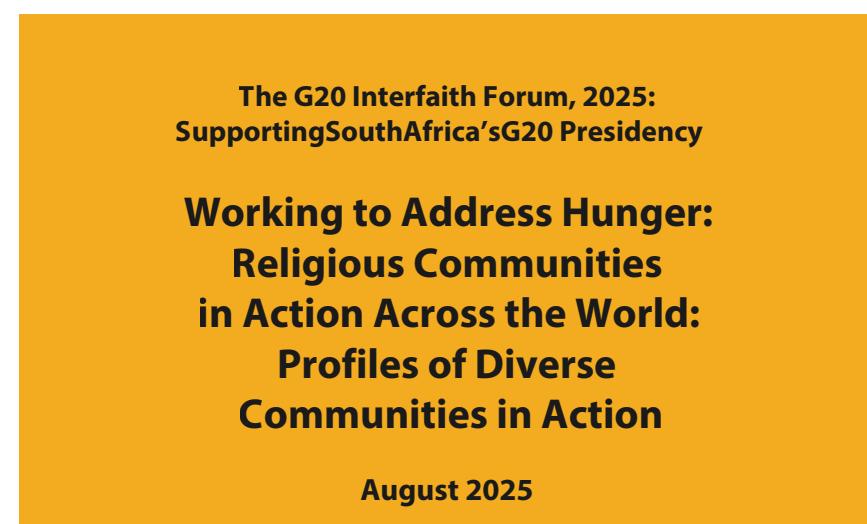
Kevin Hyland OBE, CEO of Praeveni Global, exposed the brutal realities of human trafficking, emphasizing that vulnerability is created and exploited by the wealthy and consumers. With 50 million victims globally and justice rare, he called for urgent action. Governments must invest in prevention and uphold every person's right to life, dignity, and equality. Hyland challenged world leaders to feel the shame of global injustice. He praised faith communities for their resilience and called for ego-free leadership that welcomes migrants and prioritizes compassion. This has been a major focus for IF20 for the last two years – to stop human trafficking around the world. Kevin Hyland and Duncan Jeppson have spearheaded IF20 efforts to stop this travesty against the most vulnerable. Their efforts have gone far beyond the G20 Interfaith Forum. (See our website for more information.)

Documents Addressing Hunger at the Forum

The G20 Interfaith Forum in collaboration with World Faiths Development Dialogue, and the Berkely Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University published two documents on the worldwide problem of food inequity.

The first, *Religious Leaders and Actors on Moral Imperatives to Serve the Hungry and to End Hunger*, centers on the statements of religious leaders who explain their feelings on why serving the hungry and ending hunger is an issue all humanity should try to solve. The second, *Working to Address Hunger: Religious Communities in Action Across the World: Profiles of Diverse Communities in Action*, contains practical descriptions of religious actors who work to address hunger. It highlights religious and diverse communities across the world that help those who need food. This booklet's four sections describe: (1) communities, (2) institutional approaches, (3) projects, and (4) advocacy groups. Each includes various examples and ideas that other communities might follow in their quest to address world hunger.

These documents were distributed during the Forum and are posted on the G20 Interfaith Forum website (www.g20interfaith.org).



South Africa G20 Interfaith Forum

Media Report

Follower Growth Across Platforms

+125

Total Increase
3.62%

Total Followers

3,581



Instagram Views

54.6K



Instagram Interactions

982

Instagram Profile Visits

561

Total Increase
490.5%

Forum Participants

31

ACADEMICS

48

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

50

RELIGIONS REPRESENTED

126

RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATORS

300

CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES & POLICYMAKERS

457

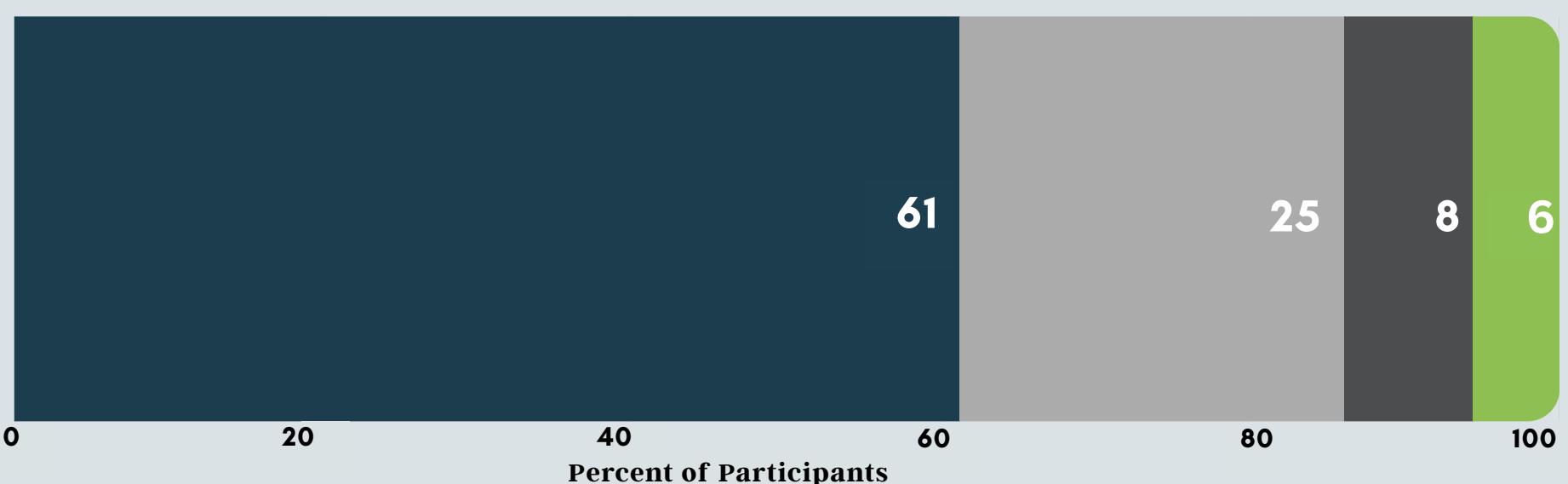
IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

704

PEOPLE WATCHED THE EVENT IN REAL TIME

● Civil Society Representatives ● Religious Administrators ● Academics ● Policymakers

Participants



After the Forum: Official G20 Documents and Initiatives

G20 Leaders' Declaration (Johannesburg, November 22-23, 2025)

The 2025 G20 Leaders' Declaration represents a historic milestone as the first G20 Summit held on African soil, and it reflects several key priorities that align with IF20's mission and advocacy work. The Declaration prominently features Ubuntu philosophy—"I am because we are"—as its foundational principle, emphasizing interconnectedness and the imperative that "no one is left behind." This philosophy resonates deeply with IF20's approach as a "network of networks" supporting vulnerable communities through interfaith dialogue and policy advocacy. The Declaration addresses multiple areas where IF20 has been active, including strong commitments to uphold international law and the UN Charter, condemning attacks on civilians and infrastructure, and affirming respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms "without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion"—language that directly supports freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) advocacy.

The Declaration's comprehensive agenda echoes themes central to IF20's work throughout the year. Significant attention is given to disaster resilience and response, debt sustainability for low-income countries, just energy transitions, and food security—all areas where IF20 has developed policy positions and engaged in advocacy. The document emphasizes the establishment of universal social protection systems, gender equality and women's empowerment, climate action and the Paris Agreement, support for migrants and refugees, and anti-corruption measures. The Declaration explicitly welcomes the G20 Social Summit in Johannesburg, acknowledging the importance of "strengthening partnerships and expanding dialogue with a wide range of actors" to shape the G20's approach—a direct validation of IF20's engagement model and the value of civil society input in global governance discussions.

G20 Social Summit Declaration

The G20 Social Summit Declaration acknowledges the role of "traditional and faith leaders" alongside other civil society actors in shaping the people-centered contribution to the G20 Leaders' Track. IF20 was one of the 230 community groups represented at the Social Summit and was explicitly mentioned at both the opening and closing ceremonies, participating actively in the consultative process that produced this final document. The organization's participation and voice contributed to the broader interfaith and civil society input that shaped the Summit's outcomes. The Declaration's foundation in Ubuntu philosophy—"I am because we are"—closely mirrors IF20's own operational philosophy as a network of networks rooted in interconnectedness and collective responsibility.

The Declaration's substantive sections align well with IF20's priority areas and advocacy throughout the year. It calls for digital inclusion grounded in "dignity, autonomy, cultural identity, and ethical governance"—language that resonates with FoRB principles and human rights frameworks central to IF20's work. The document emphasizes inclusive climate justice and just transitions that place "workers, communities, and vulnerable groups at its core," echoing IF20's focus on protecting vulnerable populations. It advocates for universal social protection systems, gender equality, and targeted financing for vulnerable groups including "indigenous communities, women, youth, persons with disabilities, migrants, and queer communities." The Declaration's conclusion states that its legacy projects aim to "institutionalise people-centred participation, elevate community-driven innovation, advance the rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups, strengthen social justice ecosystems, and ensure that the voices gathered throughout this process remain embedded in future global decision-making spaces"—a vision that reflects the broader goals of sustained civil society engagement in global governance that IF20 champions.

Modern Slavery Prevention Index Launch

A significant development at the G20 Social Summit was the launch of the Modern Slavery Prevention Index (MSPI) by Kevin Hyland, chair of IF20's Working Group on Human Trafficking. The MSPI represents a groundbreaking platform that tracks and analyzes how G20 and other governments are working to prevent exploitation and modern slavery. The platform examines national plans and strategies, activities, resource allocation, and implementation efforts across countries, providing unprecedented transparency into governmental commitments to combat human trafficking. Hyland and Jepson's work on this initiative directly reflects their contributions to IF20's policy development on human trafficking issues, demonstrating how IF20 network members are advancing concrete tools for accountability and progress on this critical human rights concern.

The Index reveals significant challenges in the global response to modern slavery, including highly asymmetric distribution of funding sources, frequent non-disclosure of dedicated funding and impact metrics, and limited annual reporting by most countries. The platform identifies the limitations of the traditional "3Ps" framework (prosecution, protection, prevention) and notes that many challenges and activities are rarely mentioned in national plans and strategies. By making this information publicly available and continuously updated, Hyland and Jepson are creating an essential resource for advocacy organizations like IF20 to hold governments accountable and push for more comprehensive, better-funded approaches to preventing exploitation. The launch at the G20 Social Summit positions this work within the broader G20 agenda and demonstrates the vital role that IF20 network members play in developing evidence-based policy tools that can drive meaningful change at the international level.

G20 Inequality Report: Addressing a Global Emergency

The Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Inequality, convened under South Africa's G20 Presidency and chaired by Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, released its report declaring that humanity faces a "global inequality emergency." President Ramaphosa commissioned the report with a view to shift the G20's long-term agenda, and its findings are stark: the world's richest 1 percent have captured over 40 percent of new wealth since 2000, while the poorest 50 percent gained barely 1 percent. The committee frames inequality not simply as an outcome of market dynamics but as a violation of ethical order, eroding the principle that each human being possesses equal worth. The report's language makes both moral and economic arguments, presenting inequality as something that undermines freedom, corrodes institutions, and violates what many faith traditions call the common good—making its appeal for a global response both technocratic and moral, a call to conscience alongside a call to policy.

Among the report's central proposals is the creation of an International Panel on Inequality (IPI), modeled on the IPCC for climate change, to coordinate research, monitoring, and policy guidance. It calls for a new social contract grounded in justice, reciprocity, and responsibility through progressive taxation of wealth and inheritance, fair wages, universal access to health and education, and curbs on corporate and monopolistic power. The document draws implicit resonance with moral language across global religious traditions—from Pope Francis's denunciation of "an economy that kills" to Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish teachings that equate justice with communal balance. Its insistence on dignity, stewardship, and solidarity aligns closely with Catholic social thought's principles of the common good, subsidiarity, and preferential option for the poor. For IF20, the report's well-defined and continuing G20 focus on inequality resonates strongly with the organization's commitment to leaving no one behind and translating the spirit of Ubuntu into policy and practice, demonstrating how faith traditions can serve as moral catalysts for political courage in confronting entrenched inequality.



Meetings Sponsored by and/or Attended by IF20 (Chronological Order)

FIDELA Meetings (Interreligious Forum of the Americas)

February 2-3, 2025 | Washington, D.C.

The G20 Interfaith Forum Association participated in FIDELA (Foro Interreligioso de las Americas) meetings at the Organization of American States headquarters in Washington, D.C. FIDELA brings together faith-based individuals and organizations to address challenges facing nations and peoples of the Western Hemisphere. It is co-sponsored by Religions for Peace, the Latin American and Caribbean Council of Religious Leaders, IF20, Georgetown University's Berkley Center, and BYU's International Center for Law and Religion Studies. The meetings included discussions with OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro.

The gathering focused on the OAS's four main pillars—democracy, human rights, security, and development—exploring how faith communities can contribute to achieving the organization's essential purposes of promoting peace, justice, solidarity, and collaboration among the 35 independent states of the Americas. FIDELA provides a platform for interfaith dialogue on hemispheric challenges and opportunities for religious organizations to partner with governmental and civil society actors in addressing regional concerns.





Global Faith Forum

February 3, 2025 | Washington, D.C.

IF20 representatives attended the Global Faith Forum held at the Washington Hilton, organized by Imam Mohamed Magid, Ambassador Rabbi David Saperstein, and Pastor Bob Roberts, Jr. The conference brought together faith leaders and advocates to unite around shared values of dignity and respect in a world facing polarization and conflict, emphasizing meaningful dialogue, relationship building, and actions that transform communities.

The forum addressed critical global challenges including the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, the decline of democracy and rise of authoritarian regimes, and the persecution of religious minorities worldwide. Key sessions featured Ambassador Saperstein on the interconnectedness of democracy and religious freedom; presentations on women's vital role as peacemakers through grassroots multifaith groups; successful interfaith education initiatives including Indonesia's Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy program that has trained over 9,000 educators; and Ambassador Rashad Hussain emphasizing that countries protecting religious freedom tend to be more prosperous. The event also included a public dialogue between Pastor Roberts and Elder Ulisses Soares of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, highlighting mutual respect between different Christian traditions and the importance of religious freedom as a shared cause.

International Religious Freedom Summit 2025

February 4-5, 2025 | Washington, DC

The G20 Interfaith Forum Association served as a supporting sponsor of the International Religious Freedom Summit 2025, described by organizers as the largest religious freedom summit in the world. The event brought together global leaders, policymakers, and advocates to promote religious freedom for everyone, everywhere, with a focus on reducing clashes and protecting religious differences. The summit featured Vice President J.D. Vance as the keynote speaker, along with prominent voices including actor and Bahá'í advocate Rainn Wilson and Elder Ulisses Soares of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

IF20 Board member Professor Brett Scharffs, director of BYU Law School's International Center for Law and Religion Studies, led discussions and spoke at the summit, emphasizing the virtues essential for promoting religious freedom. IF20 President W. Cole Durham, Jr. participated in a panel focused on forging the next generation of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) champions, discussing strategies for mentoring younger leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability and strength of the religious freedom movement. The summit's panels and discussions emphasized practical, compassionate approaches to advancing global religious freedom, including respecting faith differences in diplomatic contexts and supporting those unjustly imprisoned for their beliefs.



IF20 FoRB Meetings in South Africa

February 24-28, 2025 | Cape Town, South Africa

IF20 hosted a series of Freedom of Religion or Belief meetings in Cape Town led by IF20 President W. Cole Durham Jr. and CEO Whitney Clayton, aimed at advancing interfaith dialogue and policy recommendations for global peacebuilding, religious freedom, and social cohesion. The series included diverse engagements with religious leaders, policymakers, and community representatives, featuring discussions with FOR SA on legal frameworks for religious freedom, sessions with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation on social cohesion efforts, engagement with the Archdiocese of Cape Town, a virtual meeting with former MP and peace mediator Roelf Meyer on indigenous rights and constitutional development, and community visits in Khayelitsha township. Academic discussions at the University of Western Cape and meetings with the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative Board provided comprehensive perspectives on religious freedom issues from grassroots efforts to high-level policy discussions.

The meetings underscored critical themes including social cohesion through interfaith dialogue and education, the intersection of religious freedom with constitutional protections for indigenous communities, strategies for involving young leaders through university partnerships, and issues of state regulation of religion and self-regulation by faith communities. These engagements served as important preparation for IF20's broader agenda for the 2025 G20 Summit, fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders to integrate faith perspectives into global decision-making processes on religious freedom, peacebuilding, and addressing challenges such as commercialization of religion and abuse within religious institutions.



IF20 Engagement in Geneva

March 2025 | Geneva, Switzerland

IF20 Vice President Katherine Marshall participated in a series of meetings and events in Geneva coordinating with IF20 President W. Cole Durham Jr. and CEO Whitney Clayton, engaging with international partners on religious freedom, humanitarian challenges, and interfaith cooperation. A centerpiece was an event on March 12, "Interfaith Education: Building Bridges in a Fragmented World," organized in the context of the G20 Interfaith Forum and cosponsored by the Geneva UN missions of the Gambia and Indonesia. The event focused on four approaches to education addressing social cohesion in the face of religious diversity, including the Indonesian Cross Cultural Religious Literacy program and Arigatou International's Ethics Education program.

The team attended multiple UN Human Rights Council sessions, including the annual report of UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Nazila Ghanea focusing on hatred based on religion or belief, and discussions with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on countering religious hatred and discrimination. Additional engagements included meetings with the World Economic Forum on faith strategy and rebuilding trust, the Inter Parliamentary Union regarding an upcoming Rome meeting, and various discussions with WHO, UNHCR, WTO Secretary General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and participants in the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance events on topics including genocide prevention, gender-based violence, trafficking, and modern slavery.

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

May 13-14, 2025 | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The G20 Interfaith Forum sponsored a major two-day conference in Addis Ababa, bringing together religious leaders, government officials, and civil society representatives to explore how Africa's faith communities can advance the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and South Africa's 2025 G20 priorities. Organized in partnership with the United Religions Initiative, the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, and the African Union, the conference celebrated the AU's historic membership in the G20 and commemorated World Interfaith Harmony Week and Golden Rule Day. Distinguished guests included Ethiopian President H.E. Taye Atske Selassie, AU Commission Chairperson H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssef, government ministers, religious leaders, and diplomatic representatives from across Africa and beyond.



IF20's sponsorship enabled focused discussions on critical issues including gender justice, women's empowerment, human trafficking, debt relief, youth peacebuilding, and food insecurity. Speakers emphasized that faith-based organizations provide between 40-70% of healthcare services in many African nations and serve as trusted first responders in conflict zones. IF20 President W. Cole Durham Jr. and other leaders participated alongside representatives from major African faith networks, producing concrete recommendations for the G20 and African Union on advancing religious freedom, economic justice, and peace. The conference established IF20 as a vital platform for amplifying African religious voices in global governance, with participants calling for continued engagement to ensure African priorities receive their rightful place in G20 decision-making.



International Conference on Combating Islamophobia

May 26-27, 2025 | Baku, Azerbaijan

The G20 Interfaith Forum co-sponsored the third International Conference on Combating Islamophobia, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, to commemorate the third anniversary of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Organized by the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre and the Center of Analysis of International Relations in partnership with multiple organizations including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, ICESCO, and the Muslim Council of Elders, the conference brought together 124 delegates from 38 countries under the theme "Islamophobia in Focus: Unveiling Bias, Shattering Stigmas." High-level speakers included the President of Azerbaijan, UN officials, and leaders from various interfaith and Islamic organizations.

The two-day conference addressed the rising tide of Islamophobia as a form of discrimination and stigmatization affecting Muslim communities globally, particularly in Europe, South Asia, and North America. Participants discussed the intersectional nature of combating Islamophobia, coordinated efforts to promote tolerance and respect for religious diversity, legal and economic challenges facing Muslim communities, and the impact of artificial intelligence on digital spaces. The conference supported adopting the term "Anti-Muslims Discrimination" as a legal concept and called for urgent international cooperation to address both state-led and societal discrimination, including hate crimes and threats to Muslim heritage.

Africa Week

May 28-29, 2025 | Pretoria, South Africa

The G20 Interfaith Forum Association sponsored a two-day Africa Week conference at Future Africa, University of Pretoria, convening interfaith representatives, youth leaders, and G20 engagement groups to strengthen collaboration on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) policies focused on Africa and identify practical initiatives to advance South Africa's G20 priorities of solidarity, equality, and sustainability. The gathering featured presentations from South African government officials including Ben Joubert, G20 Sherpa Track Coordinator, and Tiego Mothlamme from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, who explained South Africa's G20 presidency priorities and the upcoming Social Summit planned for November 2025.

The conference included collaborative sessions with other G20 engagement groups including Civil 20, Values 20, and representatives from Oxfam South Africa, exploring areas of convergence and opportunities for joint advocacy. IF20 facilitated critical discussions on African traditional religious belief systems and spirituality, led by Katherine Marshall, Nicholas Miller, and Pieter Francois, focusing on developing guidelines for assessing the intersection of indigenous and traditional peoples' rights with freedom of religion or belief. A dedicated youth session empowered young leaders to develop actionable policy recommendations on the G20 themes, emphasizing intergenerational collaboration and the integration of sustainability principles across all sectors of society.



NCLC and G20 Colloquium

June 12-13, 2025 | Cape Town, South Africa

IF20 participated in a colloquium with the National Church Leaders' Consultation at Bishopscourt, headquarters of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The two-day gathering brought together approximately 15-20 senior church and academic leaders including Prof Jerry Pillay (General Secretary of the World Council of Churches) and Prof Heinrich Bedford-Strohm (moderator of the WCC), scheduled strategically just before the Executive Meeting of the World Council of Churches in South Africa to influence priorities of both the WCC and G20 meetings.

IF20 Vice President Katherine Marshall spoke on the challenges related to ending hunger, especially in Africa, in a global context, while Prof Julian May from the University of Western Cape's Centre for Food Security addressed South African challenges. The colloquium focused on ending hunger and poverty as a South African, African, and global challenge for the G20 under South Africa's presidency, dialogue with the Government of National Unity on political, social, and economic challenges, and global and regional political tensions including the redirection of development aid and the endangerment of sustainable development goals.



IRF Summit Africa: Africa Together—A Continental Call to Religious Freedom

June 17, 2025 | Nairobi, Kenya

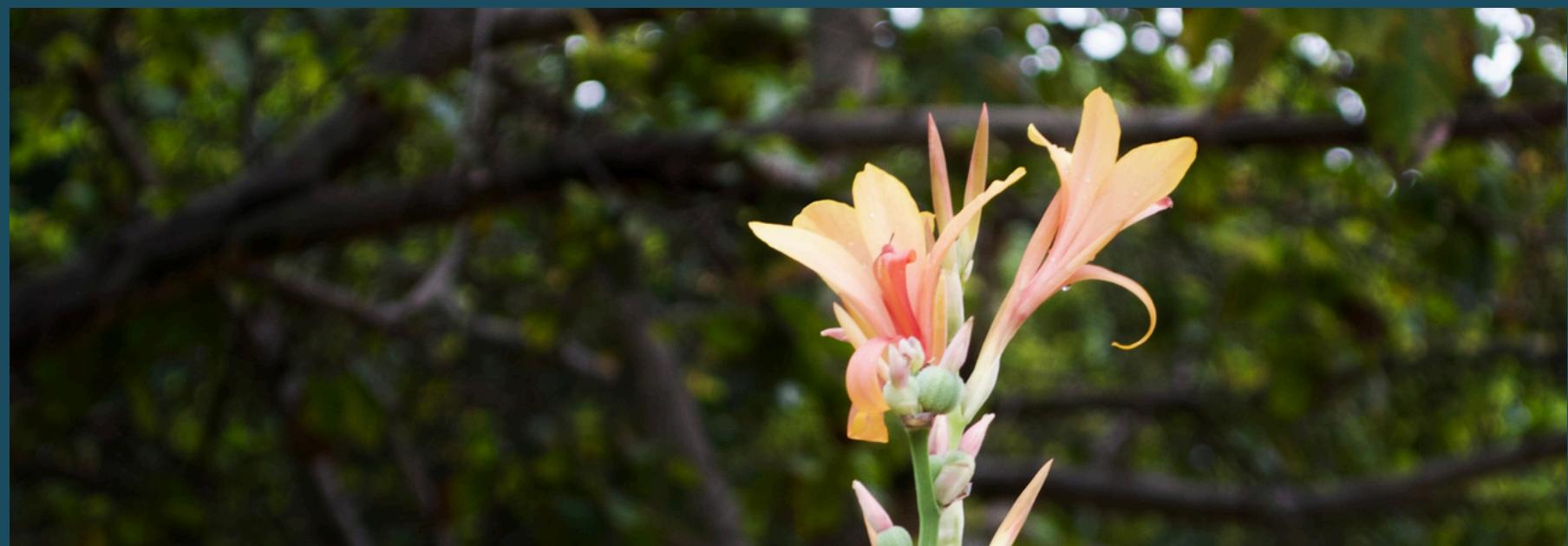
The G20 Interfaith Forum Association participated as a partner in the first regional International Religious Freedom Summit held in Africa, hosted in Nairobi, Kenya. Organized by Pepperdine University and the Religious Freedom Institute in collaboration with the Global Peace Foundation, the summit addressed religious freedom challenges across a continent identified as both the global epicenter of religiously-motivated violence and home to the world's fastest-growing population. Led by panels of regional experts, the gathering examined the impact of government actions on religious freedom in Africa and explored the critical role faith communities play in restoring peace to regions affected by sectarian violence.

The multi-day summit featured survivor testimonies, sessions on African values and religious freedom, discussions on judicial innovations in religious freedom conflicts, and partner events focusing on strengthening collaboration across the continent. IF20 joined other partners including BYU Law's International Center for Law and Religion Studies, ADF International, and African Defenders in advancing conversations about protecting freedom of religion or belief across Africa and positioning faith leaders as ethical innovators for African renaissance.

Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue: "Strengthening Trust and Embracing Hope for Our Common Future"

June 19–21, 2025 | Rome, Italy

The G20 Interfaith Forum team was part of the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue hosted by the Interparliamentary Union, the Italian Senate, and Religions for Peace, which brought together nearly 700 participants from about 100 countries. IF20 Board Member Katherine Marshall represented the organization across multiple sessions, including a thematic working session on lessons from the 2016 Marrakech Declaration regarding the rights of religious minorities, a side event on religious literacy for parliamentarians, and a panel on fostering solidarity and action for people in vulnerable situations. The conference broke new ground by focusing on legislative branches of government rather than executive branches, exploring how parliamentarians can promote interfaith dialogue, religious freedom, and social cohesion. The event culminated in an audience with Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican, where Italy's Prime Minister and other leading political figures joined approximately 1,000 attendees to hear the Pope's address on protecting the vulnerable, religious freedom, and the challenges of artificial intelligence in the context of 2025 as a Jubilee year.



International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS)

June 24–26, 2025 | Singapore

The G20 Interfaith Forum participated in the International Conference on Cohesive Societies, a major gathering hosted by Singapore's government and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies that drew 1,200 participants from over 50 countries. Held under the theme "Cohesive Societies, Resilient Futures," the conference explored how societies can promote unity while managing increasing religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. IF20 Vice President Katherine Marshall moderated a key plenary session following the opening keynote by Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who emphasized that social cohesion requires deliberate policies, leadership, and citizen engagement, using the metaphor of weaving diverse threads into a single tapestry rather than a patchwork quilt that can unravel under stress.

The three-day conference featured high-level keynote speeches from regional leaders, plenary sessions on multiculturalism and resilience, breakout discussions, and a strong youth component with 200 young participants. Recurring themes included the impact of economic insecurity and inequality on social cohesion, the erosion of trust in institutions, the challenges and opportunities of social media and AI, and the need for both top-down government policies and bottom-up community engagement. The event highlighted Singapore's purposeful approaches to managing diversity through housing, education, and community outreach policies while exploring global dimensions of polarization and the vital importance of creating inclusive societies that value diversity as an asset.

IF20 Activities in Brazil

June–October 2025

Prof. Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves, Director of the Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion (CEDIRE), organized and participated in a series of events as a delegate of IF20 in Brazil, advancing dialogue on religious freedom, human rights, and interfaith cooperation.

Roundtable Discussion on Religious Freedom and the Justice System

June 25, 2025, Guarulhos

A dialogue was held at the headquarters of the Brazilian Bar Association to strengthen participants' skills for better protection and promotion of freedom of religion or belief within the Brazilian legal system. The dialogue brought together legal professionals, religious leaders, and human rights advocates to explore the intersection between religious liberty and judicial practices.

Interfaith Dialogue Meeting

September 4, 2025, São Paulo

This meeting brought together over 100 state public servants and members of the Interfaith Forum for a Culture of Peace and Freedom of Belief of São Paulo at the headquarters of the State Justice and Citizenship Department to strengthen the protection of peace, human rights, and the fight against discrimination.

XXVII National Immunization Conference

September 3–5, 2025, São Paulo

A lecture on "The role of faith-based organizations in strengthening health" was based on the experience of the G20 Interfaith Forum, highlighting distinctive characteristics of religious communities including territorial reach, trust relationships, potential for cooperation with the State, and historical experience in healthcare. The lecture referenced the Lancet-Georgetown Commission on Faith, Trust, and Health as an important milestone in the field.

Congress: 100 Years of Church-State Separation in Chile

October 14–16, 2025, Santiago, Chile

This plenary session lecture on "State-Religion Relations" organized by the Law and Religion Center of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile used the IF20 experience in Brazil as a case study, highlighting how the G20 Interfaith Forum promoted structured dialogue between religious leaders and government authorities, achieving unanimous G20 adoption of recommendations to combat human trafficking and eliminate modern slavery.

Roundtable Discussion on Human Rights, Environment and Religion

October 31, 2025, Manaus

This roundtable discussion promoted dialogue about interactions between human rights, environmental care, and religious traditions among religious and interfaith leaders, civil society organizations, public agents, and academics. It culminated with the "Rio Negro Declaration" on the banks of the Amazon River's largest tributary, calling on global leaders based on religious values to care for our Common Home, addressing intergenerational responsibility, a transition to regenerative economies, and international cooperation for planetary wellbeing.



Organized Intelligence Conference

November 4-5, 2025, Salt Lake City, Utah

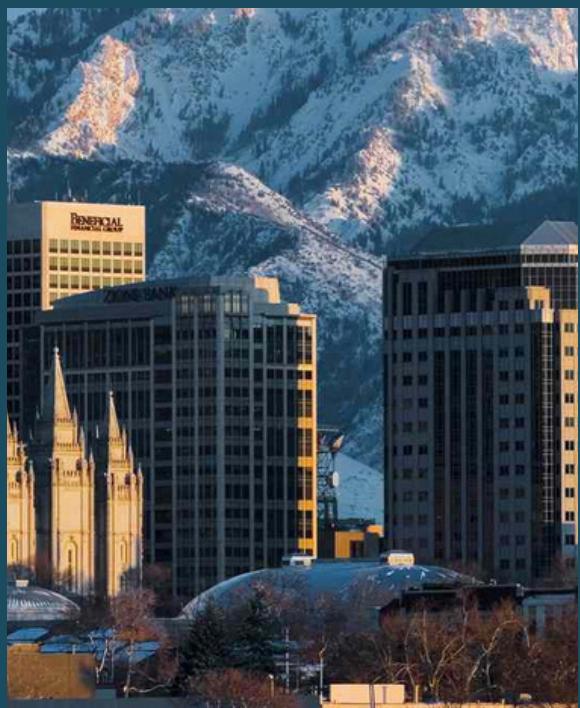
In Salt Lake City, IF20 was a co-sponsor of a two-day conference on the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI). Marianna Richardson spoke on how interfaith efforts can foster ethical dialogue and collaboration in this critical, international conversation.

For the past three years, the G20 Interfaith Forums have discussed the issues of artificial intelligence (AI) and specific issues that religious leaders, educators, and scholars of various faiths have as they look to the future. The first two meetings were held in both New Delhi and Pune, India during the G20 India 2023 year. The AI discussions were very general because ChatGPT had only launched months earlier on November 30, 2022. The next year, G20 Brazil 2024, the concerns became more specific about legal frameworks, international standards, and effects on youth. Finally, this year for G20 South Africa 2025, the discussions became more intense with theological concerns about AI taking over human relationships and people's relationships with God, as well as the concern over biases in AI outputs against religions.

The key points of the conference included the following:

1. AI should not be blamed for all societal problems because AI can also produce answers to these problems.
2. Religious leaders must counter AI-driven isolation by fostering human-to-human connections and personal, spiritual relationships with God.
3. Youth must be taught to critically evaluate AI-generated answers.
4. Interfaith cooperation is essential to combat disinformation and intolerance, with religions working together to address negative portrayals in media and AI outputs.

These points will be issues that the G20 interfaith Forum will continue to address in the 2026 G20 year in the USA and in the 2027 G20 year in the UK.



G20 Social Summit: Pathways for Partnership with Religious Communities

19 November 2025 (by Sandile Makasi)

The G20 Interfaith Forum Association (IF20) convened this side event during the G20 Social Summit to underscore the indispensable role of religious communities in addressing global challenges and advancing G20 priorities. Building on the IF20 2025 Forum's 2025 experience and findings in South Africa, the side event was themed Pathways for Partnership with Religious Communities sought to highlight the value of partnerships between faith actors and public institutions in addressing the challenges that are facing communities across the world.

The event featured an interactive panel moderated by Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr. (President, IF20) and Prof. L. David Mosoma (Chair, IF20 Local Organizing Committee). Using an interview format, panelists shared experiences and strategies rather than formal presentations, ensuring dynamic dialogue and audience engagement.

In his welcoming message, Prof. Cole Durham commented:

"It is one thing to measure success by how many sentences we get into the G20 Leader's Declaration document, but far more significant is coming together and finding ways to work together across denominational lines and government lines to implement the things we care about so much."

Key Speakers & Themes

- Dr. Sylvia Photo, reflected on the journey of the IF20's 2025 in South Africa and the various insights and contributions by interfaith leaders.
- Pastor Bert Pretorius highlighted the role of faith actors in addressing poverty and food insecurity, emphasizing why governments should engage faith and interfaith groups in policymaking and strategic partnerships to end hunger.
- Eric LeCompte spoke on IF20's priority of economic and financial action, outlining the impact of debt injustice, its effects on nations, and pathways for partnering with interfaith communities to advance debt justice and long-term sustainability.
- Kevin Hyland OBE addressed the scourge of human trafficking, sharing ways governments can collaborate with interfaith communities to protect human dignity and eradicate trafficking.
- Michael Swain Reflected on the benefits of religious literacy and education initiatives that build bridges of understanding, strengthen social cohesion, and foster lasting peace.
- Professor Cole Durham in his concluding remarks emphasized the critical services faith actors provide globally, including disaster prevention, preparedness, and response, and stressed the importance of including religious voices in policy discussions to strengthen resilience.

Overall, the side event highlighted the critical role that faith actors play in doing good every day. They provide essential services in health and education, support the destitute, work to prevent conflicts and build peace, seek to protect our environment, and offer hope and meaning to countless lives. Their insight, experience, and commitment to human dignity can contribute significantly to policy development and implementation.

Human Trafficking International Conference

December 10, Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy

The IF20 was well represented at an important, high-level international conference that convened December 10, at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Marking 25 years since the 2000 Palermo Protocol Against Trafficking in Persons, the conference was co-organized by the Sovereign Order of Malta, Praeveni Global (IF20's partner in the campaign against trafficking), the Santa Marta Group, and the Pontifical Gregorian University. It brought together global leaders, experts, and frontline organizations for the purpose of renewing the fight against human trafficking. Kevin Hyland, CEO of Praeveni Global and chair of the IF20 working group on human trafficking and modern slavery, spoke forcefully on the need for G20 governments to expand their resources and increase the effectiveness of their efforts against trafficking. Also participating were Fred Axelgard, IF20 Special Projects Director, and Medlir Mema, Senior Fellow at Organized Intelligence. US Attorney General Pamela Bondi keynoted the event, stressing the importance of coordination between all levels of law enforcement and the American commitment to defeat trafficking.

2025 Podcasts

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BRINGING FAITH AND
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2025 Webinars

Ukraine and Russia: The Increased Nuclear Threat in These Uncertain Times

February 13, 2025

This webinar explored ways to reduce nuclear threats in the Ukraine–Russia conflict through diplomatic solutions. Experts discussed the breakdown of nuclear arms control agreements and Putin's increasingly aggressive nuclear threats. The focus was on finding peaceful pathways that balance security concerns while maintaining international law.

Justice for Victims on the Seas: Human Trafficking in the Fishing Industry

March 27, 2025

This webinar examined human trafficking in the global fishing industry, where workers face debt bondage, physical abuse, and years of isolation at sea without family contact. Solutions included empowering workers to organize collectively, using technology to help fishers stay connected with families, and strengthening the role of faith-based organizations in supporting vulnerable workers.

Guns, Gangs, and Violence: The Role of Faith Communities

April 23, 2025

This webinar brought together a former police chief, an indigenous advocate, and a former white supremacist to discuss preventing violence. Panelists emphasized that trauma and disconnection drive young people toward gangs and extremism, with the solution being compassion-based prevention programs rather than increased law enforcement. Faith communities can help by building genuine connections and taking ownership of their neighborhoods.

The Power of Corporate Governance to Combat Modern Slavery

April 24, 2025

This webinar examined how corporate structures can prevent modern slavery in supply chains. Key issues included failures in getting information from factory floors to corporate boardrooms and the tension between prioritizing shareholder profits versus worker welfare. Solutions focused on personal accountability for executives, making sure workers never pay for jobs, and incorporating faith-based values into corporate culture.

Developing Frontline Anti-Trafficking Services

May 29, 2025

This webinar addressed the urgent need to professionalize anti-trafficking services, as current efforts reach less than one percent of victims globally. Panelists emphasized that effective care requires building trusted relationships with survivors rather than just technical skills. Key recommendations included mandatory accreditation for service providers, government investment, and using data to reduce administrative burden while improving care quality.

Faith, Food, & Future Tech: Aligning AI Innovation with Sustainability and Ethical Values

June 11, 2025

This webinar explored how AI technology intersects with food systems and sustainability. A key challenge discussed was that AI intended to improve agriculture requires massive energy and water that competes with food production needs. The discussion addressed global food waste, bias in AI systems, and the need for human-centered AI development that incorporates indigenous wisdom and protects human dignity.

Failure of Fast Fashion to Address Modern Slavery

June 26, 2025

This webinar exposed how the fast fashion industry deliberately creates conditions for labor exploitation through complex supply chains and broken auditing systems. Seventy million workers, mostly women of color, face forced labor and violence. Solutions emphasized empowering workers through unions, creating binding agreements that center workers' voices, and establishing regulations that create real consequences for companies.

The Role of Inter-religious Actors in Addressing Hunger and Poverty

July 10, 2025

This webinar explored how faith communities can address hunger's root causes rather than just providing emergency food. Speakers highlighted faith communities' unique advantages including their presence in poor communities and long-term commitment. The discussion emphasized that hunger disproportionately affects women and called for systemic transformation through programs like vocational training and community gardens.

Economic and Financial Action: Faith Perspectives on Economic Justice

July 17, 2025

This webinar examined how faith communities can address debt injustice and economic inequality. Panelists discussed how debt should be framed as a moral issue, not just a technical one, drawing on religious principles of debt forgiveness and jubilee traditions. Over half of Africa's population lives in countries spending more on debt interest than on education and health, with women bearing the heaviest burden.

Addressing Interreligious Tensions Through Literacy and Enhancing Understanding and Harmony

July 24, 2025

This webinar explored how ignorance and misinformation drive religious conflict. Panelists discussed how Christianity's arrival in Africa demonized traditional practices and how current education systems promote competition rather than collaboration. Solutions included developing religious literacy programs, taking interfaith dialogue to marginalized communities, and using religious freedom as common ground to unite diverse faith groups.

Migration and Refugee Movements, Human Trafficking, and Modern Slavery

July 31, 2025

This webinar revealed that 50 million people are enslaved globally in a \$258 trillion industry that often goes unrecognized. Faith communities are uniquely positioned as trusted voices to combat trafficking through prevention, protection, and partnerships. The discussion emphasized how xenophobia makes refugees and migrants more vulnerable and called for faith communities to create safe havens and educate people about trafficking warning signs.

Faith Leadership and Missions in the Fight Against Modern Slavery

July 31, 2025

This webinar examined how faith organizations must adapt to combat modern slavery, which unlike historic slavery is now hidden from view. Effective anti-trafficking work requires sustained multi-year commitments to communities rather than short-term mission trips. Solutions included consumer activism campaigns, building partnerships with local authorities, and focusing on prevention through community strengthening.

Disaster Preparedness, Relief, and Recovery

August 8, 2025

This webinar positioned faith communities as uniquely equipped first responders with deep community trust and long-term commitment. Speakers emphasized moving beyond temporary emergency relief to sustainable recovery programs that restore dignity and create self-sufficiency. Faith organizations represent the largest stakeholder group in most countries with established infrastructure ready for immediate deployment during crises.

Forced Labor, Trade Bans and Supply Chains: Do Import Restrictions Work?

August 28, 2025

This webinar examined whether import bans effectively combat forced labor. Evidence shows that 52 enforcement orders blocking imports have prompted companies to improve supply chain transparency and led countries like Malaysia to implement better worker protections. Despite challenges like companies disguising product origins, import bans create meaningful incentives for supply chain transformation when combined with worker-centered remediation processes.

Improving Criminal Justice Outcomes Against Corporations Using Forced Labor

September 25, 2025

This webinar exposed that only one Fortune 500 company has ever been criminally investigated for forced labor violations despite the crime generating \$236 billion annually. Key barriers include law enforcement lacking expertise in financial crimes and poor coordination between agencies. Solutions emphasized reframing trafficking as an economic crime, using creative prosecution strategies like money laundering charges, and improving training for investigators.

Ukraine and Russia: Religion and its Role in the Conflict

October 20, 2025

This webinar examined how both Russia and Ukraine use religion to legitimize their war agendas. The Russian Orthodox Church supports Putin's war, with clerics involved in re-educating deported Ukrainian children. Ukraine's response has raised religious freedom concerns. The discussion concluded that while religion has fueled conflict, genuine dialogue for peace requires mutual listening and willingness to change rather than predetermined positions.

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