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BUILDING CONSENSUS FOR FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS FOR A DIGNIFIED FUTURE

26 - 28 SEPTEMBER 2018 | BUENOS AIRES | ARGENTINA

CONCEPT PAPER FOR THE 2018 G20 INTERFAITH FORUM

The world of religion plays an enormous role in society, with substantial contributions to a broad spectrum of issues: among them, the economy, the environment, women, families, children, work, humanitarian aid, health, education, global security, and not least, human rights and the rule of law. Acknowledged or unacknowledged, around the world religion addresses the challenging problems societies and nations face as well as broader societal well-being. Without the investment of time and resources that religiously-motivated organizations and individuals provide, the United Nations' SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) are unattainable. Yet consideration of religion is nearly wholly absent from most policy discussion.

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks to remedy this deficiency by providing an annual platform, inputting to the G20 process, where international leaders and influencers from religion, civil society, government, and academia can consider vital linkages between religion and urgent global issues and share perspectives and best practice.

The fifth annual G20 Interfaith Forum will take place 26-28 September 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum has as its theme, "Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development: Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future."

Meetings will be held in the Auditorio Manuel Belgrano of Argentina's Cancillería (Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs), the nearby Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel and Convention Center, and the historic Salón Dorado of the Casa de Cultura of the City of Buenos Aires.

ORGANIZERS:

The 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum is organized by the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, in collaboration with many other organizations. A list of collaborating institutions is included at the end of this document. Details of the Executive Committee can be found on the website.

We gratefully acknowledge key organizers and funders of this year's Forum:

- The International Shinto Foundation (ISF) founded by Dr Haruhisa Handa, supporting multi-faith dialogue through the G20 Interfaith Forum;
- Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa (CALIR), Argentina;
- Centro Regional Ecuménico de Asesoría y Servicio (CREAS), Argentina;

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- Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia;
- The International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS), Brigham Young University, USA.

The 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum is pleased to partner with meetings of the Argentinian project *Ética y Economía*, an ongoing dialogue on religiously- and ethically-informed dimensions of the economy, development, and society.

RATIONALE:

Practical and ethical insights of global religious communities make substantial if often unrecognized contributions to priority global agendas. The annual G20 Interfaith Forum aims to build a network of networks of faith and interfaith leaders from around the world, together with non-governmental organizations and other policy leaders. Through three days of discussion and dialogue, the culmination of extensive prior consultations, participants highlight the roles that religious communities can play in promoting the goals of successive G20 Economic Summits. The Forums draw on the expertise of a range of opinion leaders, including political leaders, academics, lawyers, and civil society leaders.

OBJECTIVE:

The Forum helps to identify and showcase the policy and societal contributions of faith traditions and philosophies on leading global issues. It creates opportunities for communication and relationship building, and raises the profile of participating communities, groups, and organizations. The aim is to develop recommendations on priority issues that draw on interfaith insight and experience. Particular attention is paid to ways that religious communities can contribute to the host country's priorities. Thus, the agenda of this year's Forum reflects topics that the Argentine government has identified for this year's G20 Summit and broader objectives of the continuing G20 Summit process. The long-term objective is to enhance the capacity of different groups to work together to strengthen human development, understood in the broadest sense. Dialogue and networking facilitated by the Forum aim to raise the level and effectiveness of religious input on major global policy issues with recommendations and action geared to the achievement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a key outcome.

FORUM TITLE AND THEME:

The overarching theme for the 2018 G20 Interfaith Forum is **"Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development: Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future."**

Over three days, presentations, panel discussions, and working group sessions aim to build networks and develop concrete policy recommendations on the following sub-themes:

- **Inequality, Religion, and the Future of Work and Education**
 - **Accommodating Religion in the Workplace and Schools of the Future**
 - **Changing Women's Roles to Reflect Equal Rights and Opportunities: Religious Debates and Action**
 - **Religious Perspectives on Innovation, Labor, and Education**
- **Religion, Environmental Change, and a Sustainable Food Future**
 - **Religious Contributions in Movements to Protect the Environment**
 - **Religion and the Fight against Hunger**
 - **Religious Action Regarding Extractive Industries**

- **Urgent Priorities for Social Cohesion**
 - **Refugees, and Migration: Religious Insights and Action**
 - **Religious Perspectives and Action Regarding Violent Extremism, Conflict Resolution, and Peacebuilding**
 - **The Role of Freedom of Religion or Belief: Practical Dimensions**

- **Religion, Good Governance, and Sustainable Development**
 - **Sustainable Finance and Financial Inclusion**
 - **Debates and Action on Economic Policies including Financial Inclusion (Infrastructure)**
 - **Priorities for Equal Opportunities and Respect for Human Rights**
 - **Structural Inequalities and Development**

G20 INTERFAITH FORUM STRUCTURE:

The program in Buenos Aires runs from Wednesday 26 - Friday 28 September 2018. We are preparing for 200 or more participants and attendees. Participants coming from outside the Buenos Aires area should arrive on Tuesday September 25.

The program consists of presentations and panels drawing on leading expertise and global diversity.

Ties to the overall G20 process are informal but the Argentinian G20 organizers have displayed strong interest in the work emanating from the G20 Interfaith Forum initiatives, recognizing their potential to make a strong and independent, internationally-based contribution to the overall G20 process.

As in past years, several regional pre-meetings feed recommendations into the Forum and on to G20 leaders. Focused working groups are developing concrete policy recommendations around various G20 themes.

Forum organizers hope to work closely and synergistically with other developing programs and engagement groups in the G20 process.

Simultaneous translation of all sessions will be provided in English and Spanish.

DRAFT SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

DAY ONE (SEPTEMBER 26):

- Inaugural Session with Keynote, Political, and Religious Leaders, to be held in the Auditorio Manuel Belgrano, Cancillería Argentina, Esmeralda 1218-CABA
- Forum reception
- Plenary session on “Inequality, Religion, and the Future of Work”
- Parallel sessions on labor-related issues, refugees, and other religion and human rights issues

DAY TWO (SEPTEMBER 27):

- Plenary session on “Religion, Environmental Change, and a Sustainable Food Future”
- Parallel sessions on religion and the environment, food security, and anti-corruption efforts
- Plenary session on “Religion, Urgent Global Priorities, and the G20 Agenda”
- Parallel sessions on the future of education, addressing religious violence, religious freedom and anti-discrimination norms, global health challenges, and conflict resolution

DAY THREE (SEPTEMBER 28):

- Plenary session on “Advancing the Work of Religiously Affiliated Humanitarian Organizations”
- Plenary session on “Religion, Good Governance, and Sustainable Development”
- Concluding Plenary

The program is subject to adjustment.

The G20 Interfaith Forum in Buenos Aires will emphasize linkages between Argentinian priorities and other urgent global issues including highlighting Latin American and emerging country perspectives on the various subthemes.

Perspectives of indigenous peoples will be reflected. Argentina is not currently facing a major refugee issue however migration challenges are pertinent and religious voices are an important contributor. Similarly, issues regarding sustainable food supplies are tightly linked to broader environmental issues and creating opportunities for dignified labor holds the key to solving many of the problems of youth unemployment and radicalization. The Forum will explore perspectives on human development deriving from religious sources: how can these dimensions be integrated synergistically with broader strategies for facilitating achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

PARTICIPANTS:

Participants from a wide range of religious, national, academic, and policy backgrounds will come together to raise the level of discourse on the relevant issues and to develop practical recommendations. Working groups are being commissioned to cultivate continuing reflection on specific topics where religious voices are particularly well-positioned to make recommendations and to encourage implementation. The aim is to explore ways that religious communities can assume responsibility and contribute distinctive ideas and solutions that can interact with and reinforce the efforts of public and civil society institutions.

Participants in the various Forum working sessions are encouraged to confer in advance to identify key issues and to develop concrete policy recommendations. The Forum will bring together youth leaders from various religious backgrounds to contribute insights on various Forum themes.

Attendance is by invitation, but the organizers welcome all interested persons to request an invitation by sending an email with name, institutional affiliation, and email address to info@g20interfaith.org. Please understand that, due to high interest and limited space, the organizers may not be able to accommodate all requests.

EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS:

- Specially arranged tours to important historic and religious sites in the area may be available.
- Meetings with religious and governmental leaders.
- Possible special meetings can be arranged by various collaborating institutions or religious communities.

VENUE:

Auditorio Manuel Belgrano, Cancillería Argentina, Esmeralda 1218-CABA, Buenos Aires and Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel and Convention Center.

For information on these events, see our website of past Forums [here](#). This site contains leads to the official web pages for past Interfaith Forums that include programs, speakers, videos of many of the Forum speakers, and so forth.

See List of Collaborating Institutions [below](#).

COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

- A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY), UK
- African Consortium for Law and Religion Studies
- Alliance of Civilizations Institute at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Turkey
- Amity Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, New Delhi, India
- Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University
- Brunel Law and Religion Research Group, UK
- Center on Religion, Law and Economy in the Mediterranean Area, Insubria University, Como, Italy
- Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia
- Center for Research and Training in Interfaith Relations, Morocco
- Centro de Diálogo Intercultural Alba, Argentina
- Comisión Nacional Justicia y Paz, Argentina
- Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa (CALIR), Argentina
- Consorcio Latinoamericano de Libertad Religiosa
- CREAS – ACT Alianza, Argentina
- Department of Law and Religion, Complutense University, Spain
- Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance, Bangladesh
- Instituto para el Diálogo Interreligioso, Argentina.
- International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, Milan, Italy
- International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, USA
- International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)
- International Religious Liberty Association
- International Shinto Foundation
- Islamic Relief USA
- KAICIID Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- Ma'din Academy, India
- Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany
- NALSAR (National Academy of Legal Studies and Research) University of Law, Hyderabad, India
- Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
- Oxford Society of Law and Religion, UK
- Regents College, Oxford University, UK
- Royal Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation—Section on Law and Religion and Canon Law, Spain
- Sant'Edigio Community, Italy
- United Religions Initiative
- World Faiths Development Dialogue
- World Jewish Congress