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## G20 Interfaith Summit Association

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### Concept Paper for G20 Interfaith Summit Association's 2017 Initiatives

Based on the successful precedents of events organized in conjunction with prior G20 Summits since 2014, the G20 Interfaith Summit Association will hold a conference involving a broad array of universities, faith groups, academic experts and government officials as part of the lead up to this year's G20 Summit in Hamburg, Germany. (Information about prior events is available at the Association's website, [www.g20interfaith.org](http://www.g20interfaith.org). A list of collaborating institutions is provided below.) The plan is to structure the Association's conference (to be held in Berlin on June 15-17, 2017) and preliminary events so that it can contribute to the G20 process in place with the overall 2017 G20 process. The aim is to draw on interfaith insight and experience to develop recommendations regarding issues relevant to the priorities that the German Chancellery has identified for this year's summit.

### Conference Title and Subthemes

The overarching theme for this year's G20 Interfaith Summit is **"Religion, Sustainable Development, and the Refugee Crisis."** In order to draw on the diverse backgrounds and interests of our various constituencies, a number of preliminary planning events will be held and the focus of the final event will be on a series of subthemes germane to the G20 Summit themes of Building Resilience, Improving Sustainability, and Assuming Responsibility. Specifically, we will organize a conference including an opening inaugural session on the evening participants arrive, followed by two days of conference presentations and working group sessions on the following themes:

- **Alternate Visions of Development.** The conference will explore alternatives to pure market systems and secular models of development, taking into account the richer perspectives on human development deriving from religious sources and how these can be integrated synergistically with broader strategies for promoting resilience and enhancing the UN's sustainable development goals.
- **Religion and the Refugee Crisis.** The conference will explore the ways that religion can contribute to resolution of the causes and effects of the refugee crisis.

- **Religious Strategies for Countering Youth Radicalization.** In addition to exploring interfaith experience in dealing with radicalization of youth and resulting violence in the name of religion (education program, alternative forms of engagement, strategies for expanding youth employment, etc.), the conference will bring together youth leaders from various religious backgrounds to contribute insights.
- **Additional Working Group Sessions** (emerging from the ongoing planning process)

In each of the foregoing areas, experts from a wide range of religious, national, and academic backgrounds will be brought together to raise the level of discourse on the relevant issues and to develop practical recommendations. The aim will be 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.

**Rationale.** The impact of past Interfaith Summits has been acknowledged by G8 leaders in the past and G20 leaders of today. The Interfaith Summit will bring together experts on economy, law and politics, as well as global leaders from various religious, professional and humanitarian backgrounds to highlight the key role that religion plays in promoting aspects of achievement of the United Nation's post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals that Germany has chosen to highlight during this year's G20 Summit. Special attention will be paid to issues surrounding the refugee crisis, addressing issues of religious extremism, and addressing other issues such as the environment, where religious voices have much to contribute.

**Objective:** The objective of the G20 Interfaith Summit is to facilitate peace and harmony between people of all religious and philosophical traditions while exploring ways to work together to strengthen human development understood in the broadest sense. This is important because religion plays a major role in global events today, but its role is complex and can easily be misunderstood or even overlooked as a factor on the global stage. By focusing on a series of concrete issues that are much in the public eye, we hope to suggest a variety of ways that religion can contribute to enhanced responses to crucial social challenges.

**Participants:** The annual G20 Interfaith Summit brings together opinion leaders such as scholars, lawyers and political leaders with faith and interfaith leaders from around the world for three days of discussion and dialogue as a substantial contribution to the G20 Summit Process. Such a gathering showcases the scholarly and societal contributions of faith traditions and philosophies from around the world. Furthermore, this conference creates opportunities for communication and relationship building and raises the profile of participating communities, groups and organizations. Summary videos and programs of previous events can be viewed [here](#).

## **G20 Interfaith Summit Proposal**

The program will be held in the Berlin area from June 15-17, 2017. The program consists of an array of presentations drawing on leading expertise and global diversity. Based on increasing interest over the years, we are preparing for 200, and possibly as many as 300-400 participants and attendees in Germany. In the past, there have been only informal ties to the overall G20 process. Our hope this year is that this initiative could be incorporated into the formal process, most likely as part of C20 events, but also possibly as part of the T20 process as well. The aim is to provide a recognized, independent and strong internationally based contribution to the overall G20 process. As in past years, we anticipate organizing a small number of regional pre-summit meetings that can feed recommendations into the final event. We are happy to work closely and synergistically with other developing programs in the G20 process.

### **Tentative Schedule of Events**

#### **Day One:**

Afternoon panel presentations by student scholars  
Conference opening dinner and keynote speaker

#### **Day Two:**

Panels and plenary addresses, primarily from the perspective of legal scholars, economists and policymakers. In addition to the major themes identified above, working groups may emerge on some of the following supplemental themes.

- Legal Strategies for Protecting Social Stability and Promoting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
- Best Practices for Facilitating Religious Contributions to the Economic Sector
- Religion and the Environment
- Religion and gender issues
- Religion and the World of Digital Technology

#### **Day Three:**

Panels and keynote addresses, primarily from the perspective of civil society and faith community leaders. The focus will be on the major conference themes, but working groups may emerge on the following supplemental themes:

- Faith Perspectives on Addressing Socioeconomic Inequality
- The Ethics of Sustainable Development (religion and corporate compliance policies, social responsibility of entrepreneurs, etc.)
- Case Studies of Interfaith Dialogue and Harmony with particular emphasis on partnership with Africa

#### **Extracurricular programs:**

- Specially arranged tours to important historic and religious sites in the area.
- Meetings with religious and governmental leaders.

## 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
- Brunel Law and Religion Research Group, UK
- Canadian Council of Churches
- 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
- Consejo Argentino para la Libertad Religiosa (CALIR), Argentina
- Consorcio Latinoamericano de Libertad Religiosa
- Department of Law and Religion, Complutense University, Spain
- Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance, Bangladesh
- International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, Milan
- International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, USA
- International Religious Liberty Association
- 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
- World Faiths Development Dialogue

**Location:** Potsdam University in the Berlin area.

**The annual G20 Interfaith Summits** have attracted increasing numbers of government, academic and interfaith leaders. For information on these events, see our website of past summits [here](#). This site contains leads to the official web pages for past summits that include programs, speakers, videos of many of the conference speakers, and so forth.