

To the G20 Leaders: A Moral Call to Action

Policy Recommendations for the

G20 Osaka Summit



G20 Interfaith Forum Japan 2019

7-9 JUNE 2019 (Venue: Hotel New Otani Makuhari)

Co-organizers:

Worldwide Support for Development (WSD)

G20 Interfaith Forum Association

International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University Law School

World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD)

Under the auspices of:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

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TOKYO, JAPAN PEOPLE, PEACE, PLANET: PATHWAYS FORWARD

7 - 9 JUNE 2019

www.g20interfaith.org

To the G20 Leaders: A Moral Call to Action Policy Recommendations for the G20 Osaka Summit

Faith actors, reflecting their deep moral convictions, vast global networks, daily lived experience with communities across the world, and their witness for the most vulnerable and those left behind, **call the leaders of the G20 to urgent action.** Faith traditions across the world work for justice and peace, to enhance people, and to protect our planet. With an urgency inspired by the world's crying needs, **the G20 Interfaith Forum urges that the priority agenda in Osaka include a focus on the five topics identified here.**

The G20 Interfaith Forum met in Tokyo from June 7-9. This gathering of 200 leaders from across the world drew on leading networks of faith-inspired actors that are engaged with global agendas and especially the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Religious leaders from different traditions, political leaders and former heads of state, civil society leaders, faith inspired organizations working on peace and development, scholars, social activists, and young people reviewed leading issues in the light of Japan's G20 agendas. Participants and a public audience of over 2000 challenged each other on 20 topics where there are compelling ideas for dialogue, partnership, and action. In general, they called for ramped up partnerships with faith actors in addressing "peace, people, and planet."

Messages from global religious leaders, including Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and Lord Carey of Clifton, 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, called the Forum to action. Three political leaders and former Prime Ministers, David Cameron (UK), Enda Kenny (Ireland), and Sir John Key (New Zealand), Graça Machel (the Elders), a prominent civil society leader, and from KAICIID and prominent scholars underscored how vital it is that **the Forum's priority conclusions be marked by the G20 Osaka Summit.**

The following five recommendations reflect urgent priorities on which the G20 can act:

1. Commit to working for peace in collaboration with faith actors, with a new framing of religious roles in conflict and polarization.

Interreligious action to broker peace, counteract negative patterns of hate rhetoric, safeguard sacred sites, address violent extremism, and support refugees and internally displaced populations are vital to global challenges for peace. These perspectives need recognition in positive and practical ways. Faith actors urge the G20 to facilitate actively spaces for dialogue and peaceful interactions that can enhance respect for diversity and inclusion. Further, the dangerous framing of religious engagement that unduly emphasizes religion as a source rather than as a cure for conflict needs nuanced revision. This means reframing discourse focused on countering violent extremism.

2. Focus sharply and explicitly on the needs of children and commit resources vital to address those needs.

The 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be marked by renewed focus on and commitment to children. Widespread violence against children calls for a specific and forceful leadership response. Each G20 agenda item should be viewed through the lens of the impact on children and youth. G20 leaders should put children first on the agenda and commit to bolder partnerships with faith actors on education, countering online abuse, and assuring priority support to children in situations of conflict, displacement and trafficking. More resources need to be devoted to early childhood education, with attention being paid to needs during the first years of life. Youth calls for action on issues that affect their future deserve to be heard and heeded.

3. Put resources behind promises to protect the planet, focusing in particular on rainforests in partnership with religious, indigenous, and local actors.

Religious communities in partnership have defined feasible actions to protect rainforests—the vital life-support system and resource for reducing atmospheric greenhouse gases and protecting biodiversity. These actions include assuring land rights for indigenous communities, reforms to end subsidies and incentives leading to deforestation, and implementing economic incentives to protect forests. It is imperative to build the capacity of faith actors and local communities that are at the front-lines of responding to climate challenges at every level.

G20 leaders should reinforce such efforts through key action measures. These should include time and resource commitments, and action to build viable and practical partnerships with faith organizations and communities to achieve sustainable development in the face of mounting climate crises. Other specific actions can include a common commitment to rapid and large-scale reduction in use of plastics.

4. Bolster action to strengthen rule of law and protection of human rights, with particular emphasis on freedom of religion or belief and action to fight against corruption.

The G20's commitments to enhancing the rule of law, fighting corruption, and freedom of religion or belief need bolder action that draws on the strength of partnerships with faith networks. The synergies that religious communities can provide in advancing SDGs and other social goods presuppose strong rule of law institutions and protection of freedom of religion or belief. Similarly, corruption undermines progress on virtually every front, including fighting poverty, addressing climate change, trust in institutions, and supporting those who are most vulnerable. Fighting corruption thus belongs at the center of global policy agendas. Faith networks can enhance transnational, national, and community action on this vital SDG agenda.

5. Initiate and commit to global and national measures to combat trafficking and modern slavery as part of a long-term G20 priority.

People being traded as a commodity in a \$150 billion per year industry is a critical moral and economic crisis. Dedicated attention and action are needed to improve identification of victims, to better understand the scale of the crisis, and to bolster structural changes on the ground that can address transnational legal loopholes and facilitate dialogues of encounter with victims. Partnerships of trust between religious communities and their leaders and legal and judicial bodies offer a strong moral compass and model for action.

Broader Recommendations and Policy Analysis

The G20 Interfaith Association in its Japan meetings identified other recommendations beyond the “top five” list. The wealth of ideas at the Forum are captured in session notes on the Forum’s website at www.g20interfaith.org, and will be elaborated in a fuller note. Deserving particular mention are specific recommendations backed by detailed policy analysis involving engaged networks. These include calls to:

- develop action plans to reduce risk and strengthen resilience in dealing with disasters
- take advantage of the potential of religious innovation in dealing with emerging focus areas such as artificial intelligence and aging populations
- engage more directly with religious actors to serve refugees and other forcibly displaced persons
- focus on education quality and relevance, taking into better account civic values, education about religion, and education delivered by faith-linked institutions
- support study in several areas to promote deeper awareness and understanding of the ways that religious entities and governments can cooperate in synergistic ways

Following the G20 Interfaith Forum in Tokyo, (June 7-9), which highlighted global perspectives and addressed influencers across a wide spectrum, the Kyoto G20 Interfaith Forum was held June 11-12. Its declaration also responds to the G20 2019 agenda and highlights priorities for G20 action, drawing on a gathering of religious voices representing especially Japanese leaders and communities. The shared objectives of the two events underscore the rich resources that faith communities offer to the G20.

Running through much of the work of the Forum is a deep consciousness of the need to confront inequality in all its manifestations—with prime examples being women’s issues and the challenges of growing economic disparities.

These and many other issues make clear the ongoing need to explore the ways that religious actors can contribute to the work of successive G20 Summits. Accordingly,

The G20 Interfaith Forum Association looks forward to continued engagement with the G20 Summit process in Saudi Arabia in 2020 and beyond.

Principal Participants in the G20 Interfaith Forum Japan 2019

Keynote

David Cameron / Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Sir John Key / Former Prime Minister of New Zealand; Patron, Worldwide Support for Development (WSD)

Enda Kenny / Former Prime Minister of Ireland; Patron, Worldwide Support for Development (WSD)

Her Excellency Graça Machel / First Education Minister of Mozambique; Chancellor of the University of Cape Town; President, SOAS University of London (School of Oriental and African Studies)

Greeting Remarks

Haruhisa Handa / Chairman, Worldwide Support for Development (WSD)

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Katsuei Hirasawa / Member of the House of Representatives; Acting Chairperson of General Council, LDP

Messages to the Forum from Religious Leaders

Message to the Forum from the Pope Francis
(Read on behalf by The Most Reverend Joseph Chennoth, Apostolic Nuncio to Japan)

Video Message by His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

Main Speakers and Panelists

Ishmael Noko / Former Secretary General, The Lutheran World Federation; Chairman, Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA)

Osama Al Azhari / Inter-Parliamentary Union; Member of Egyptian Parliament; Professor at Al Azhar University

Denise Coghlan / Former General Manager, Jesuit Service Cambodia (JSC); 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Gunnar Stålsett / Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, Religions for Peace

Nedžad Grabus / Grand Mufti of Ljubljana; Co-chair, Muslim Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC)

Ján Figeľ / Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the European Union

Vishwanath Karad / UNESCO Chair Holder for Human Rights, Democracy and Peace

William Vendley / Secretary General, Religions for Peace International

Sulak Sivaraksa / Buddhist Spiritual Leader and Humanitarian; Niwano Peace Prize Laureate

Elder Gerrit W. Gong / Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Chris Ferguson / General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

Carlos Tapiero / Deputy Director-General, Maccabi World Union

Jonathan Duffy / President, Adventist Development and Relief Association

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and many others.

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International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)
International Religious Liberty Association
International Shinto Foundation founded by Dr. Haruhisa Handa supporting multifaith dialogue
Islamic Relief USA
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