

Annual G20 Interfaith Forum Convenes Global Religion Representatives to Address Responses to COVID, Inequality, Climate Change, and Other Pressing Societal Challenges

Virtual summit precedes November 2020 G20 Summit in Saudi Arabia where world leaders gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Oct. 5, 2020 – The G20 Interfaith Forum, a leading organization focused on bringing faith and policy together, today announced plans, participants and highlights for its seventh annual G20 Interfaith Forum to be streamed virtually from Riyadh with leaders from across the globe on Oct. 13 to 17, 2020. More than 500 leaders and representatives from several of the world’s major religions and global policy institutions will participate and address crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, disaster risk reduction, hate speech and racism. In addition to attracting leaders from most major world religions, denominations and interreligious organizations, the G20 Interfaith Forum will include representatives from the United Nations, the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), the World Muslim League, and the European Commission.

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives and calls upon the world’s political leaders to include religious actors in the policymaking process leading up to November’s 2020 G20 Leaders’ Summit in Riyadh as well as to build policy based on shared values of solidarity, coexistence and respect.

The 2020 G20 Interfaith Forum is co-organized by the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the National Committee for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (NCIRD).

“The seventh annual G20 Interfaith Forum represents the culmination of a yearlong process of consultation that has brought together more than 500 representatives of religious and faith-based organizations, international and national policymakers and experts in six regional meetings,” said Professor Cole Durham, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum Association and Founding Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies. “At each meeting, participants focused on global policies and highlighted relevant actions the G20 leaders and religious communities should consider at the G20 Interfaith Forum. This forum convenes the global religious community at precisely the most opportune moment, as the world faces an unprecedented combination of interrelated challenges.”

Recommendations from these meetings and of continuing task forces on priority topics will be presented to the G20, which is chaired this year by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The five-day G20 Interfaith Forum conference is open to the public and will be streamed live at www.G20Interfaith.live. Sessions will focus on ways religious leaders can work with governments to combat racism and hate speech; contribute to the advancement of migrants,

refugees, women and youth; address the issue of modern slavery and human trafficking; protect shared religious and cultural heritage; and mitigate the consequences of environmental degradation and climate change. An entire day of the program will be dedicated to discussing the COVID-19 pandemic as religious communities are both uniquely affected by the pandemic: being scapegoated for rising infection rates in many parts of the world, on the one hand, yet also leading in the provision of aid for those affected by the pandemic and the social inequities it has exposed on the other.

Leading participants include the following:

- His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Orthodox Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch
- H.E. Dr. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group
- H.E. Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa, Secretary General, Muslim World League
- H.E. Dr. Yousef bin Ahmed Al-Othaimeen, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- H.E. Abdullatif Al-Sheikh, Minister of Religious Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and member of the KAICIID Board of Directors
- H.E. Rev. Kjell Magne Bondevik, former Prime Minister of Norway and Founder and Executive Chair of the Oslo Center
- Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, Conference of European Rabbis
- Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General of Religions for Peace
- H.E. Faisal bin Muaammar, Secretary General of the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)
- H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)
- H.E. Aminata Toure, former Prime Minister of Senegal

To register and for a complete program with a schedule of topics, speakers and sessions times, visit g20interfaith.live

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks to raise awareness of the role of religious organizations and faith-based organizations in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, a comprehensive list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals that seeks to ensure that every person has access to the basic necessities of life: health, education, water, security, equality and a clean environment.

“The potential of religious communities as a partner for policymakers often goes unrecognized. The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks to network these religious communities with each other and with policymakers so that their voices can be heard and their contributions amplified. KAICIID is proud to be part of this process, as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting interreligious dialogue around the world,” said Faisal Bin Muaammar, KAICIID Secretary General.

“More than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group worldwide. In this context, religious leaders have an important role to play in strengthening cohesive and inclusive societies,” said Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). “As one of the leading United Nations entities in the fields of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, UNAOC supports the G20 Interfaith Forum as it provides a vital platform for religious leaders and other actors to address pressing social issues.”

"As the host country of the G20 Summit, and the land of Two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always supported the efforts of religious leaders from different religious traditions and policy makers to tackle global challenges in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect" said Dr. Abdullah Alhomaïd, the Secretary General of the National Committee for Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue (NCIRD).

About the G20 Process

The Group of Twenty, or the G20, is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. The G20 brings together the leaders of leading economies on Earth.

Collectively, G20 members represent around 80% of the world’s economic output, two-thirds of the global population and three-quarters of international trade. Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues as well as broader humanitarian issues targeted by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

The G20 Leaders’ Summit brings together world leaders to discuss international economic cooperation. The participants in the G20 Summit are Heads of State or Government from 19 countries and the European Union. In addition, leaders of guest countries and representatives of invited regional and international organizations participate in the Summit.

About the G20 Interfaith Forum

The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives. It builds on vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting a rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. The membership includes interfaith and intercultural organizations, religious leaders, scholars, development and humanitarian entities, and business and civil society actors.

Convened each year in the host country of the upcoming G20 Summit, the G20 Interfaith Forum offers an annual platform where a network of religiously linked institutions and initiatives engage on global agendas. The goal of the meetings is to contribute meaningful insight and recommendations that respond to and help shape the G20 Summit and thus global policy

agendas. The 2020 G20 Interfaith Forum agenda builds on the goals of social cohesion, equity, and sustainability that have been a central underlying theme for the Forum from its inception.

For more information, please visit www.g20interfaith.org.