

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

UNPRECEDENTED MEETING OF WORLD FAITH LEADERS TO TAKE ON GLOBAL DEFORESTATION

MONDAY, JUNE 19, AT THE NOBEL PEACE CENTER, OSLO, NORWAY

****Event will be webcast on 19 June starting at noon CET - RSVP for access****

****For more information, please visit <http://bit.ly/2rPaQOI>; password: Oslo****

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Norway to host leaders from world's spiritual and religious traditions, engaging faith communities to protect rainforests

Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist, Jewish leaders to join with indigenous forest guardians to express moral commitment, explore faith-based mobilization to end deforestation

For the first time, leaders from many of the world's religions will meet to discuss the spiritual and ethical responsibility they share to protect rainforests, one of the planet's most vital life-support systems. Besieged by growing global demand for commodities, tropical rainforests are being cleared at a perilous rate, with an area the size of Austria chopped down each year.

The meeting, which will take place in the presence of His Majesty King Harald V of Norway, will discuss how to activate the collective moral influence of religious communities across the planet. Based on sheer numbers, they could prove decisive in protecting the world's last standing rainforests.

There is growing consensus among the world's religions that environmental concerns are closely linked to social justice, a position reinforced by Pope Francis' *Laudato si* and high-level declarations from many other faiths about the spiritual imperative of protecting the planet and its most vulnerable people.

The multi-faith summit marks the first significant engagement by the world's religions with an issue that climate scientists and development experts argue is a lynchpin for global efforts to address climate change, poverty, food insecurity and violations of human rights. It also heralds the first time that religious leaders from a broad spectrum of faiths will work hand-in-hand with indigenous peoples, the historical guardians of rainforests, on an action agenda to end deforestation.

Host: His Excellency Vidar Helgesen, Minister of Climate and Environment (Norway)

Partners: The meeting is being convened by Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in cooperation with the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University, GreenFaith, Parliament of the World's Religions, Religions for Peace, REIL Network, and the World Council of Churches.

Where: Nobel Peace Center, Oslo, Norway. *For security reasons, please RSVP to attend.*

When: Monday, 19 June 2017

- **12:00pm - 1:00pm** Launch of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative Dialogue
- **1:00pm - 4:00pm** High-level panel discussions

Who:

Indigenous Peoples Leaders

- Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Marivelton Rodrigues Barroso, Director, Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro - FOIRN (Brazil)
- Sônia Guajajara, National Coordinator, Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil – APIB (Brazil)
- Joseph Itongwa, executive Committee Member, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee – IPACC (Democratic Republic of Congo)
- Harol Jhonny Rincon Ipuchima, Secretary General, La Organización Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana - OPIAC (Colombia)
- Abdon Nababan, Vice Chairperson, National Council, Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago - AMAN (Indonesia)
- Jorge Perez, President, Organización Regional de los Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente – ORPIO (Perú)

Religious Leaders

- H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel, Exarch, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Christian)
- Dr. Nanditha Krishna, Founder, The C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation (Hinduism)
- Abbot Phra Paisal Vongvoravisit, Co-Founder, Sekiya Dhamma (Buddhism)
- Sir Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee and Director, Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding (Judaism)
- H.E. Monsignor Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor, Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (Catholic)
- Bishop Emeritus Gunnar Stålsett, Honorary President, Religions for Peace (Lutheran)
- Dr. Din Syamsuddin, Chairman, Center for Dialogue and Cooperation Among Civilizations (Islam)
- The Right Reverend Bishop Pierre W. Whalon, Bishop-In-Charge, Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe (Episcopal)

Interfaith Leaders

- Reverend Henrik Grape, Coordinator, Working Group on Climate Change, World Council of Churches
- Reverend Fletcher Harper: Executive Director, GreenFaith
- Dr. Kusumita Pedersen, Vice Chair, Parliament of the World's Religions
- Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker: Director, Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University
- Dr. William F. Vendley: Secretary General, Religions for Peace

Academics and Experts

- Lars Løvold, Director, Rainforest Foundation Norway
- Dr. Antonio Donato Nobre, Visiting Scientist at the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and Senior Researcher at the National Institute of Amazonian Research (INPA)
- Frances Seymour, Distinguished Senior Fellow, World Resources Institute

Among the questions to be addressed at the event:

- How do religious and spiritual teachings support the care and protection of rainforests, and how do they relate to environmental, socio-cultural and economic justifications for ending deforestation?
- How can religious and spiritual communities contribute to the battle to protect rainforests and stop deforestation? What are the specific actions on the ground undertaken by spiritual groups and mainstream religions to protect forests?
- Where are forests most under threat and what do spiritual and religious leaders, and their communities and constituencies, propose to do to protect them?
- What can indigenous forest communities teach that can help influence a world that judges the value of forests through the lens of price, utility, or efficiency?
- How does this initiative complement and add to other interfaith efforts?
- Why are the Norwegian government and civil society convening this event? Why now?
- What are the planned next steps for this initiative?

About Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI)

Since its launch in 2007, the Government of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) has cooperated with international partners, governments in forest and donor countries and a broad range of non-governmental organizations to reduce tropical deforestation and forest degradation.

About Rainforest Foundation Norway

Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) is one of the world's leading organizations in the field of rights-based rainforest protection. We support Indigenous Peoples and traditional populations in the three main rainforest regions of the world: the Amazon, the Congo basin and Southeast Asia. We work to counter drivers of deforestation, influence political, legal and economic framework conditions for rainforest management, and support rights-based sustainable forest management by forest-dependent local communities.