A High-level Multi-religious Delegation to Myanmar

Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
22 – 25 MAY 2018
At the invitation of Myanmar national religious leaders, a high-level international multi-religious delegation will be in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw from 22 to 25 May 2018 to advance a multi-religious vision of peace and development in Myanmar and to further strengthen ongoing collaboration among diverse actors for peace, justice and reconciliation.

The international delegation consists of senior-most leaders of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. International delegates will engage with Myanmar national religious, governmental and civil society actors to better understand the religious, cultural, political and socio-economic challenges the country is faced with, to discern multi-religious responses to those challenges, and to explore ways to advance peace through dialogue and common action.

The international delegation will be welcomed by H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo, Chair of the Myanmar National Organizing Committee, and will meet with key national actors in both closed and public sessions for two days before visiting the country’s capital Nay Pyi Taw to deliver to the H.E. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi a final statement in the form of a multi-religious pastoral letter to the peoples of Myanmar.

The select representatives from national and international delegations will visit Sittwe and Maundaw, Rakhine State, on 26-28 May to observe the current situation and engage in dialogue with key local stakeholders.
22 May

VENUE
Official Residence of Archbishop of Yangon

18:30–20:30 Welcome Dinner

- H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon; Patron, RfP Myanmar
- Remarks by select religious and diplomatic leaders including: H.E. Ambassador Tone Tinnes, The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Myanmar, and Mr. Knut Ostby, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar.

23 May

VENUE
Chatrium Hotel Ball Room

9:00–9:30 OPENING SESSION

Co-Moderators:
- Fr. Joseph Maung Win, Secretary General, RfP Myanmar
- Rev. Kyoichi Sugino, Deputy Secretary General, RfP International

Welcoming and Opening Remarks:
- H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon; Patron, RfP Myanmar
- Bishop Gunnar Stålsett, Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, RfP International, Norway

Introduction of national and international delegates

9:30–11:30 SESSION I: Multi-religious Vision of Peace and Development in Myanmar

Myanmar perspectives:
- Sayadaw U Naryaka, Faundaw Oo Sayadaw
- H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon; Patron, RfP Myanmar
- Al Haj U Aye Lwin, Chief Convener, Islamic Center of Myanmar; Co-founder, RfP Myanmar

International perspectives:
- Rev. Nichiko Niwano, President, Rissho kosei-kai; Honorary President, RfP International, Japan
- Bishop Gunnar Stålsett, Bishop Emeritus of Oslo; Honorary President, RfP International, Norway

Discussion

11:30–12:30 Lunch

12:30–14:00 SESSION II: Multi-religious Action to Transform Conflict and Build Peace

Myanmar perspectives:
- Venerable Ariya Wun Tha Bhiwun Sa (Myawaddy Sayardaw), Abbot of Myawaddy Mingyi, Monastery in Mandalay
- Grand Mufti U Ko Lay, Grand Mufti, Suratee Jamia Masjid Founding Member, RfP Myanmar

International perspectives:
- The Most Ven. Tep Vong, Great Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia
- Prof. Dr. Din Syamsuddin, Special Envoy for Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Affairs; Moderator, Asian Conference of Religions for Peace, Indonesia

Discussion
### DRAFT AGENDA

#### 14:30–15:30 SESSION III:
**Multi-religious Action to Advance Sustainable Development**

*Myanmar perspectives:*
- U Myint Swe, President, Ratana Metta Organization; President, RfP Myanmar

*International perspectives:*
- Dr. Vinu Aram, Director, Shanti Ashram (Hinduism), India

*Discussion*

#### 16:00–17:00 SESSION IV:
**Multi-religious Action for Peace through Women’s empowerment**

- Daw Yin Yin Maw, Chair, Religions for Peace Myanmar Women of Faith Network; Former President, Myanmar Council of Churches

**SESSION V:**
**Multi-religious Action for Peace through Youth engagement**
- RfP Myanmar Youth Leader (TBD)

*Discussion*

#### 17:00–19:00 Visit to Shwedagon Pagoda
Dinner

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#### 24 May

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<td>9:00–10:30</td>
<td>Discussion on the Final Statement</td>
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<td>Adoption of the Final Statement</td>
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<td>11:00–11:30</td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
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<td>11:30–12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:30</td>
<td>Departure from the Hotel</td>
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#### 25 May

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<td>AM:</td>
<td>Meeting with H.E. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi</td>
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<td>16:00</td>
<td>Departure from the hotel</td>
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<td>17:50</td>
<td>Myanmar National Airlines UB122 for Yangon</td>
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PARTICIPANT LIST

MYANMAR NATIONAL DELEGATES

- **H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo**  
  Archbishop of Yangon;  
  Patron, Religions for Peace Myanmar

- **Sayadaw U Naryaka**  
  Faundaw Oo Sayadaw

- **Venerable Ariya Wun Tha Bhiwun Sa**  
  (Myawaddy Sayardaw)  
  Abbot, Myawaddy Mingyi Monastery in Mandalay

- **U Myint Swe**  
  President, Ratana Metta Organization;  
  President, Religions for Peace Myanmar

- **Grand Mufti U Ko Lay**  
  Grand Mufti, Suratee Jamia Masjid;  
  Patron, Religions for Peace Myanmar

- **Al Haj U Aye Lwin**  
  Chief Convener, the Islamic Center of Myanmar;  
  Founding Member, Religions for Peace Myanmar

- **Daw Yin Yin Maw**  
  Former President, Myanmar Council of Churches;  
  Chair, Religions for Peace Myanmar Women of Faith Network

- **Rev. Father Joseph Maung Win**  
  Head of the Office of Yangon Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith;  
  Secretary General, Religions for Peace Myanmar

- **Hindu Dharma Aćāriā B.Ramaesh Kumar (a)**  
  U San Min Naing  
  Core Member, Peaceful Myanmar Initiative (PMI)  
  EC Member, Religions for Peace Myanmar

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

- **The Most. Ven. Kotugoda Dhammawasa Thera**  
  Sadharama Keerthi Sri Tripitaka Visharadha Aggamaha Panditha;  
  Supreme Patriarch of Amarapura Nikaya;  
  (Theravada Buddhism), Sri Lanka

- **The Most Ven. Tep Vong**  
  Great Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia;  
  (Theravada Buddhism), Cambodia;  
  Co-President, Religions for Peace International

- **Rev. Nichiko Niwano**  
  President, Rissho Kosei-Kai;  
  (Mahayana Buddhism), Japan;  
  Honorary President, Religions for Peace International

- **Prof. Dr. Din Syamsuddin**  
  Special Envoy for Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Affairs;  
  Former Chairman of Indonesian Ulema Council;  
  (Islam), Indonesia;  
  Moderator, Religions for Peace Asia

- **Dr. Vinu Aram**  
  Director, Shanti Ashram;  
  (Hinduism), India;  
  Co-Moderator, Religions for Peace International

- **Bishop Gunnar Stålsett**  
  Bishop Emeritus of Oslo;  
  (Christian), Norway;  
  Honorary President, Religions for Peace International

- **Rev. Kyoichi Sugino**  
  Deputy Secretary General, Religions for Peace International;  
  (Coordinator for the International Delegation)
RELIGIONS FOR PEACE
ASIAN OFFICERS

- Ven. Medawachchiye Dhammajothi Thero
  Secretary General, Religions for Peace Sri Lanka

- Rev. Keiji Kunitomi
  Secretary General, Religions for Peace Japan

- Rev. Nobuhiro Masahiro Nemoto
  Secretary General, Religions for Peace Asia

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE
MYANMAR SECRETARIAT STAFF

- Mr. Patrick Aung Tu
  Program Manager
  Religions for Peace Myanmar

INVITED GUESTS

- H.E. Ambassador Tone Tinnes
  The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Myanmar

- Mr. Knut Ostby
  UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar;
  UNDP Resident Representative in Myanmar;
  UNIC Director in Myanmar

- H.E. Ambassador Scot Marciel
  U.S. Embassy in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury
  Embassy of Bangladesh in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Andrew Patrick
  British Embassy in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Olivier Richard
  French Embassy in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Dorothée Janetzke-Wenzel
  German Embassy Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Vikram Misri
  Embassy of India in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Prof. Dr. Iza Fadri
  Embassy of Indonesia in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Ichiro Maruyama
  Embassy of Japan in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Lyying Sayaxang
  Embassy of Laos in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Mohd Haniff Abd Rahman
  Embassy of Malaysia in Yangon

  Embassy of Philippines in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous
  Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Vanessa Chan
  Embassy of Singapore in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Paul Seger
  Embassy of Switzerland in Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Jukr Boon-Long
  Royal Thai Embassy of Yangon

- H.E. Ambassador Haydar Kerem Divanlioglu
  Embassy of Turkey in Yangon

- Ms. June Kunugi
  UNICEF Representative in Myanmar

- Mr. Giuseppe De Vincentiis
  UNHCR Representative in Myanmar

- Ms. Janet Jackson
  UNFPA Representative for Myanmar

- Ms. Jean D’Cunha
  UN Women Representative for Myanmar

- Mr. Mark Silverman
  Deputy Resident Representative of ICRC
ADVISERS

- Léon de Riedmatten
  Senior Adviser

- Janelle Saffin
  Senior Advisor

OBSERVERS

- Ven. U Janinda
  Assistant, Sayadaw U Naryaka

- Ven. Oeun Sam Art
  Assistant, The Most. Ven. Tep Vong

- Mr. Kahanda Koralage Vajira Priyankara

- Ms. Yoshie Niwano
  Rissho Kosei-Kai, Japan

- Rev. Shuji Okamura
  Rissho Kosei-Kai, Japan

- Mr. Yoshiro Takahashi
  Reporter, Japan

- Mr. Hiroaki Shibata
  Reporter, Japan

- Mr. Takashi Hashimoto
  Staff, Religions for Peace Japan
H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo
Archbishop of Yangon;
Patron, Religions for Peace Myanmar

H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo was ordained to the priesthood of Salesians of Saint John Bosco, in Lashio, N.S.S. on 9 April, 1976. Upon ordination, he was assigned as Parish Priest to different townships. Archbishop Charles Bo was ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Lashio in Shan State on 16 December, 1990.

After serving as bishop of the Diocese of Lashio for six years, on 24 May, 1996 he was transferred to the Diocese of Pathein in Ayeyarwaddy Division, and was installed as Bishop of Pathein on 25 August, 1996. On May 24, 2003, he was nominated Archbishop of Yangon and was installed on 7 June, 2003. He was appointed 1st Cardinal of Myanmar on 4 January 2015 by His Holiness Pope Francis and consistory was held in Rome on 14 February 2015.

H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo is the head of the Office of Human Development in FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference). He also serves as the Secretary Treasurer for the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Myanmar (CBCM). H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo also teaches on interreligious dialogue at the national level and heads the department of theology at major seminary in Yangon.
Sayadaw U Nayaka
Faundaw Oo Sayadaw

Sayadaw U Nayaka was deeply concerned that his country would never be able to sustain democracy because a large section of the population lacked access to basic education. In 1993 he set up a monastic school to educate poor children, monks and nuns regardless of race, gender, ethnicity and religion, thus breaking the tradition that monastic schools normally serve only monks and male students.

Sayadaw U Nayaka aims to reform religious education to produce well qualified teachers and educated students who can become leaders. He is a leading advocate for change from traditional rote memorization teaching to a child-centered approach, not just in monastic schools but across the entire education system. His goal is to provide well-trained teachers who will bring his approach to poor rural areas and the many conflict zones of Myanmar.

He has built Phaung Daw Oo school in Mandalay which has an enrollment of over 8,000 students as well as a network of cooperating monastic schools across the country which are serving several thousand more students. In addition to standard academic and Buddhist studies, students are given the opportunity to learn English and develop professional skills in carpentry, tailoring, IT, culinary arts and journalism.

Sayadaw U Nayaka’s work has been acknowledged by several awards, including the Order of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar President’s State Excellence Award in 2013.

Venerable Ariya Wun Tha Bhiwun Sa (Myawaddy Sayardaw)
Abbot, Myawaddy Mingyi Monastery in Mandalay

Ven. Bhiwun Sa is the Abbot of Myawayy Mingui Monastery in Mandalay, Myanmar. He was ordained and educated as a Buddhist monk in the eravda Monastic order. In 1986 he became a Lecturer at Mandalay University, teaching about Buddhism to College students. In 1990, during the political unrest in Myanmar that led to heavy crackdowns on monks, he was forced to ee to Monywa. In 1993 he went to Sri Lanka to further his education. In 2006, he started a HIV care and support center for people who had been diagnosed with HIV. Starting from 2010, he launched a monastic school in Wandwin Township and in the village of Ma Gyi Kone.

His deep commitment to community mobilization for more harmonious society enabled him in 2011 to establish a group helping vulnerable children, especially targeting children from Kachin state. In 2012, he organized the rst ever interfaith dialogue in Myanmar. Throughout his years serving at Myawaddy Mingyi Monastery-Ven. Bhiwun Sa was instrumental in organizing peace events for the students, sa ron revolution day and in erecting a modern art statue symbolizing peace.

U Myint Swe
President, Ratana Metta Organization;
President, Religions for Peace Myanmar

Mr. Myint Swe has served as president of Religions for Peace Myanmar since 2012. He is also President of Ratana Metta Organization (RMO), a Buddhist faith based organization implementing health, child protection, livelihood and peace building all over Myanmar, especially at the village level.

As President and Founder of Pyit Taing Htaung Foundation and President of Yangon Binaya Notegaha, a long-standing religious organization holding exams for Buddhist Monks since 1932, Mr. Myint Swe has been involved in religious and social affairs, such as grass-root level community development, monastery building, shelter construction for children affected in armed conflicts, peace-building awareness raising and health care programs. In addition, he is a patron of Myanmar Interfaith Network on AIDS.
Grand Mufti U Ko Lay

Grand Mufti, Suratee Jamia Masjid; Patron, Religions for Peace Myanmar

Grand Mufti U Ko Lay is the head of the Islamic community in Myanmar, Suratee Jamia Masjid. As head of the Islamic community, Grand Mufti U Ko Lay has initiated programs concerned with engaging and educating followers of Islam about the importance of interfaith dialogue and action for peace.

As Patron of Religions for Peace Myanmar, Grand Mufti U Ko Lay has been actively involved in action driven programs for conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Additionally, Grand Mufti U Ko Lay was one of the senior religious leaders who launched a multi-religious project to promote the well-being of children in partnership with UNICEF. The project has produced multi-religious pedagogical resources for the use of religious leaders and practitioners in advocacy, education and common action for the protection of children.

He is also the Principal of the Islamic Institute, which trains both male and female Islamic scholars. He is a well-known speaker and has written many publications on Islamic studies.

Al Haj U Aye Lwin

Chief Convener, the Islamic Center of Myanmar; Member, Kofi Annan led Rakhine Advisory Commission; Founding Member, Religions for Peace Myanmar

As a Khalifa from the Qadariyah Aliya Sufi Order in Myanmar since 1984 and the Chief Convener of the Islamic Center of Myanmar since 1978, Mr. Al Haj U Aye Lwin has been the Muslim representative and a core member of Religions for Peace Myanmar since 2012. Al Haj has served as a Counselor and Member of Management Board in the Diplomatic School in Yangon, Myanmar from 1976 until present. He is currently the Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Scholarship Division and counterpart organization Chairman for Myanmar, and has been the treasurer in the Management Committee of the Bahadur Shah Zafar Mausoleum for 9 years since 2004. He has authored, translated and edited more than a dozen books on Islam and comparative religion. He is deeply involved in conflict resolution and peace building in Myanmar.

Daw Yin Yin Maw

Former President, Myanmar Council of Churches; Chair, Religions for Peace Myanmar Women of Faith Network

Ms. Maw represents the Anglican Christian Community and is the Chair of the recently launched RfP Myanmar Women of Faith Network.

Ms. Yin Yin Maw has a Bachelor of Science degree in Botany and been awarded many certificates on Gender and Theology.

Ms. Maw began her career as the National Women Coordinator for Student Christian Movement in 1992 until 1998 and has been actively involved with the World Student Christian Federation in different capacities which culminated in her appointment as the President of Myanmar Council of Churches from 2012 until 2014. Her currently held positions outside of RfP, are as the Steering Committee member of the Women Organization Network of Myanmar, (WON), Founder of the Mayatanar Women Development Group, and the National Director of The Mothers’ Union, Church of the Province of Myanmar.
Rev. Father Joseph Maung Win
Head of the Office of Yangon Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith; Secretary General, Religions for Peace Myanmar

Fr. Joseph Maung Win has been the core member of Religions for Peace Myanmar since its establishment in 2012. He is currently the Archdiocese Head of the Commission of Ecumenism, Interfaith & Cemetery. Besides his interfaith commitment, Fr. Joseph is also the National Secretary for the office of Ecumenism from June, 2006 and the Archdiocese Director for Karuna Myanmar Social Services & Justice & Peace Commission from April, 2008.

Father Win studied in Bilin and then joined the Seminary from 1973 to 1981. He served in several Parishes as Parish Priest and also as Head in many of the Commissions. At present, he is the Parish Priest at St. Mary's Cathedral in Yangon.

His present positions at the Archdiocesan level are Head of the Commissions of Inter-Religious, Ecumenism, Cemetery, S.S.V.P. and Archdiocesan Director of Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (Caritas) & Justice and Peace Commission.

Hindu Dharma Ačariā B.Ramaesh Kumar (a) U San Min Naing
Core Member, Peaceful Myanmar Initiative (PMI)
EC Member, Religions for Peace Myanmar

Mr. San Min Naing is one of a venerable spoke person of Sannat Dharma Swayamsevak Sangh (H.Q) and Organizer in Hindu Dharma Shiksha Samiti (H.Q) and also spokesperson of Hindu Religion in Myanmar. He was ordained as Hindu Dharma Ačariā B.Ramaesh Kumar in the year of 2000. He has been served 43 year as Hindu Centre Committee member. He is also serving as Auditor in All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation Yangon. He also leads a Coach of the Law of the Game and Hindu Temple Advisor of Trusteeship Council. He has been received Hindu Religion’s Organizing Award 2014.
The Most Ven. Kotugoda Dhammawasa Thera  
Supreme Patriarch of Amarapura Nikaya,  
Sri Lanka (Theravada Buddhism)

The Most Venerable Thera was born on the 26th of January 1933 at Kotugoda, in Minuwangoda, to devoted Buddhist parents. His lay name was Sirimevan. Young Sirimevan, who inherited the virtue of entering the Buddhist Order, was ordained as Kotugoda Dhammawasa, on the 17th of August 1948, at Sri Dharmapalarama Vihara, Galkissa. Dhammawasa, the Samanera Bhikku, received his early education at Paramadhamma Chetiya Pirivena, Ratmalana, and his higher education at Vidyodaya Pirivena, Maligakanda. He gained higher ordination in 1954. Uttaritara Mahanayaka Thera is credited with the distinction of having delivered sermons over national radio for over 50 years. His sermons have also been widely attended by audiences overseas during his great efforts of propagating Buddhism in India, Nepal, China, Japan, Germany, USA, Russia, Singapore, Burma, Thailand, Pakistan and Mongolia. His efforts in spreading the Buddha’s word outside Sri Lanka has resulted in the establishment of Buddhist temples overseas such as the Sri Lankarama in Burma and the Charumati Temple in Nepal.

The Uttaritara Mahanayaka Thera has published more than 36 books on various subjects related to Buddhism since the 1960s. In recognition of his services to the Buddhist Order as well as his brilliance as an erudite Buddhist scholar, the then 37-year-old Dhammawasa Thera was elected to the Executive Council of the Amarapura Chapter of the Amarapura Sect in 1970. He was appointed Anunayaka of the Amarapura Chapter in 1990 and Lekhakadhikari in 2001. In 2016, he became the Mahanayaka Thera of the chapter. The Thera has been honoured with numerous honorary titles in Sri Lanka and abroad. They include the Agga Maha Panditha Degree conferred by the Burmese Government, Mahopadhayaya title from the Amarapura Sangha Council, and the honorary titles Thripitaka Visharada, Prawachana Kirthi Sri Shasana Sobhana, Sri Sumangala Vidyawathsansa, and Sri Sambuddha Sasana Dharmakathika Kirthidhara.

He was elected Uttararitara Mahanayaka Thera of the Amarapura Great Sect (which comprises all 22 Chapters of the Amarapura Sect, with over 16,000 Bhikkus under its tradition of ordination) in May 2018, following the demise of his predecessor Most Venerable Agga Maha Panditha Davuldena Gnanissara Thera.

The Most Ven. Tep Vong  
Great Supreme Patriarch, Kingdom of Cambodia  
Co-President, Religions for Peace  
Cambodia (Theravada Buddhism)

H.H. Samdech Tep Vong was born 12 January 1932. He is a Cambodian Buddhist monk, currently the Great Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia. He was the youngest of seven senior monks re-ordained under Vietnamese supervision in 1979 in order to provide a core leadership group for the re-establishment of the Cambodian Sangha.

H.H. Tep Vong has spoken out on several occasions regarding issues surrounding the HIV/AIDS situation in Cambodia. As a man of strong faith, Vong has spoken of many healing powers within Buddhism, including, the solution to violence in the countries of Cambodia and Vietnam.
Reverend Nichiko Niwano
President, Rissho Kosei Kai
Honorary President, Religions for Peace
Japan (Mahayana Buddhism)

Reverend Nichiko Niwano was born a couple of weeks after his father, Nikkyo Niwano, had founded Risshō Kōsei Kai, a worldwide Buddhist organization in Japan. In 1958, Niwano enrolled in Faculty of Buddhist Studies at Rissho University in Japan. In 1960, he was named the successor to his father. In 1968, when Nichiko graduated from the Rissho University’s Graduate School he was appointed head of the Dissemination Department and president of the Risshō Kōsei Kai seminary. In 1991, Niwano succeeded his father as president of Risshō Kōsei Kai.

Niwano is an author, publishing in English. Some of his books include Modern Meditations, The Inward Path, and My Father, My Teacher. In addition to writing books, Niwano travels to Risshō Kōsei Kai centers within Japan as well as the centers located around the world. Niwano continues his father’s legacy of interfaith work and dialogue by being president and chairman of many organizations. Niwano is Advisor of Shinshuren (Federation of New religious organizations in Japan), Honorary President of the Niwano Peace Foundation, and Co-President of Religions for Peace Asia/ACRP.

Bishop Gunnar J. Stålsett
Bishop Emeritus of Oslo, Church of Norway
Honorary President, Religions for Peace
Norway (Christian)

Dr. Gunnar Stålsett, Bishop Emeritus of Oslo (Church of Norway, 1998-2005), served as moderator of the European Council of Religious Leaders and is an Honorary President of the World Council of Religions for Peace. Previously Stålsett served as general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (1984-1994) and a member of the World Council of Churches’ Executive Committee. Since 2006 he has served as Special Envoy of Norway to East Timor. Bishop Stålsett also co-chaired the XVI International AIDS Conference and is a member of UNAID’s International Advisory Group for AIDS2031. In addition, Stålsett was a member of the Council of 100 of the World Economic Forum and has spent 17 years as a member of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. From 1972 to 1973 he was state secretary in the Ministry of Church Affairs, Culture, and Education; he served as a Norwegian parliamentarian during 1977 to 1981.

Prof. Dr. Din Syamsuddin
Special Envoy for Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Affairs
Former Chairman of Indonesian Ulema Council,
Moderator, Asian Conference of Religions for Peace
Indonesia (Islam)

Dr. Din Syamsuddin is Professor of Islamic Political Thought at National Islamic University, Jakarta. He served as President of Muhammadiyah, the largest modernist Islamic organization in Indonesia from 2005 to 2015, as well as President during 2014-2015, and now (2015-2020) acting as Chairman of Advisory Council of Indonesian Council of Ulama. He has been active in interfaith dialogues and cooperations, as he initiated the creation of and becoming Presidium of Inter Religious Council – Indonesia.

He is currently acting as President-Moderator of Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP), Co-President of Religions for Peace International, as well as Chairman of Center for Dialogue and Cooperation among Civilizations (CDCC), and Chairman of World Peace Forum based in Jakarta. He recently initiated the creation of Indonesia’s Movement to Save the Earth (Indonesia Bergerak Menyelamatkan Bumi) and acts as Chairman of the Movement’s Steering Committee.
Dr. Vinu Aram
Director, Shanti Ashram,
Co-Moderator, Religions for Peace
India (Hinduism)

Dr. Kezevino (Vinu) Aram serves as a Co-Moderator and Executive Committee Member of Religions for Peace. She previously served as Member of the International Youth Committee of Religions for Peace.

Dr. Aram is a Child Health Practitioner and Director of Shanti Ashram. Dr. Vinu Aram is the daughter of Dr. M. Aram and Minoti Aram, who were both dedicated peace and interfaith dialogue advocates. She completed her medical training from the PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research and completed her Post-Graduate studies at the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Aram has held numerous positions in public health, such as Coordinator of the Prathiba Initiative, Consultant to the Malarunm Mottukal Initiative, and Consultant on violence against children study conducted by UNICEF. She has organized and participated in numerous activities around child health, HIV/AIDS, immunization, and community health practices. She leads a practicum for graduate and doctoral students from the Harvard School of Public Health of community health practices in Tamilnadu and is a Visiting Professor at PSG Institute of Medical Sciences, as well as other institutes. In her role as Director of the Shanti Ashram, Dr. Aram coordinates programs and projects creatively finding ways of addressing issues of child health, education, and poverty alleviation.

Dr. Aram has been awarded numerous honors since she was student at the Harvard School of Public Health, receiving the Best Junior Medical Officer, Dr. Fan Chin Memorial Award, and the Albert Schweitzer Award & Ranchin Award. She has also awarded the Best Medical Officer by the Masonic Medical Centre Award, the Outstanding Young Indian Award, and the Dharmachakra Award for contributing to improve child health in the community. She has published numerous research papers and articles.

Rev. Kyoichi Sugino
Deputy Secretary General, Religions for Peace International
(Coordinator for the International Delegation)

Rev. Kyoichi Sugino serves as the Deputy Secretary General of Religions for Peace (RfP). He coordinates RfP’s affiliated interreligious councils, women and youth networks in more than 90 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Rev. Sugino has been directly engaged in multi-religious diplomacy and track-II negotiations in Iraq, Sri Lanka, and other conflict zones, he co-authored the “Yogyakarta Statement” (March 2015), which aimed at overcoming violent religious extremism and interreligious tensions in South and Southeast Asia.

Rev. Sugino joined the RfP International Secretariat in 1999, and was appointed to his current position at the International Executive Committee meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco in 2011. Earlier in his career, he served as policy research officer at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland.


Rev. Sugino has written on the subjects of humanitarian and peace-building issues in many international journals and publications. Rev. Sugino is a member of the U.S. State Department Working Group on Religion and Foreign Policy, a member of the Non-Official Group of Friends of Sri Lanka, as well as a trustee at the RKK International New York Center for Engaged Buddhism.
ABOUT US

In 2012, religious communities from across Myanmar came together to form Religions for Peace-Myanmar (RfP-M) the country’s first full-fledged representative and action-oriented interreligious body for reconciliation, peace and development.

OUR MISSION

RfP-M’s mission is for communities with diverse beliefs to live in peace and harmony in Myanmar. It works to achieve that by motivating all religious adherents in Myanmar to concerted efforts at promoting peace and harmony; building awareness of the principles of peace within all religious tradition; implementing collaborative actions based on shared moral commitments; and connecting and cooperating with national and international religious bodies, organizations, communities and societies to promote and enhance lasting peace and universal harmony.

OUR NETWORK

RfP-M has a national-level Core Group comprised of leading religious figures that oversee the day to day work of RfP-M, and a Committee of Executive Members that have exhibited a proven record of leadership and engagement in the promotion of peace and harmony in their respective religious communities. It also includes a Yangon-based national Women of Faith Network (WoFN), launched in 2014, that is an interreligious action-oriented network working on development, peacebuilding, and empowerment of women. The RfP-M network also includes a national Interfaith Youth Network (IYN) which is a representative and action-oriented network of interfaith youth that conducts outreach activities to end hate speech and promote respect, understanding and tolerance in order to build a peaceful pluralist society.

Local interfaith committees consisting of township-level religious leaders and local WoFNs and IYNs lead the implementation of child protection, social cohesion, development, and climate change initiatives in Kyaukphyu, Mrauk U, Pathein, Pyay, Meikhtila, Myitkyina, and Mawlamyine.
OUR WORK

Improving Child Survival and Wellness

Children are among the most vulnerable populations in Myanmar and their risk is heightened as a result of insufficient health care and protective services in the country. RfP-M’s work addresses the lack of social cohesion and interreligious harmony that contributes to the inadequacy of safety nets for vulnerable children in Myanmar.

RfP-M member organizations from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim communities developed and strengthened the practice of collaboration and made action-oriented inter-religious harmony more visible to ordinary people at the grassroots-level through concrete interreligious action to protect vulnerable children. RfP-M’s work strengthened three separate but mutually reinforcing strands of the current dynamic affecting children in Myanmar: 1) established community-based child protection systems, 2) provided and enhanced direct services for vulnerable children, and 3) advanced inter-communal harmony and social cohesion through interreligious cooperation, including the growing capacity of RfP-M and its implementing partners, with the key being to harness each other’s strengths into a common vision to protect children.

Social Cohesion

Communal conflict and outbreaks of violence have brought about suspicions and distrust amongst inter-communal groups. Political, social and economic factors have contributed to a cycle of violence that perpetuates distrust, fear and hatred amongst ethnic and religious groups. Hence, there is a need to repair relations among different communities and build a foundation of trust from which peace building and reconciliation can take place.

RfP-M harnesses the immense potential of religious leaders to mitigate conflict and build social cohesion through multi-religious efforts that engage civil society and relevant government officials. Religious leaders, women of faith and youth have been trained in conflict prevention, dialogue and facilitation as well as RfP’s global initiative, “Welcoming the Other” which goes beyond tolerance to promote a shared well-being and concern for the religious and ethnic "other". RfP-M’s national and local networks promote social cohesion through targeted activities that address the fear, mistrust, rumors and socio-economic drivers of conflict.

Sustainable Development

Long-standing conflicts with separatist and ethnic armed groups have made it difficult for the country to meet the MDGs and to achieve the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Youth within the ethnic regions may not have access to the same level of services and the effects of conflict have also given rise to increased drug use and HIV transmission. Those in remote areas are often cut-off from the rest of the country and as a result do not receive the services to meet the MDGs/SDGs and are socially disconnected from the urban youth. In addition, the recent increase in inter-religious and inter-ethnic hostilities threaten to further hinder development and upset peace and stability.

To address these issues, RfP-M, with its partner Treasureland Development Agency and its IYNs, engaged diverse youth in Meikhtila, Myitkyina, and Yangon over the course of two years to increase awareness on the MDGs and later on the SDGs and build social cohesion. Utilizing youth-led information, education and communications (IEC) materials, RfP-M educated the youth and their communities on the economic, social and cultural rights of all people in Myanmar.
Climate Change

Flooding, drought, and cyclones have threatened food security, livelihoods, and peace across the country. Extreme weather events threaten the fragile stability in many parts of Myanmar, particularly in Rakhine State and the Ayeyarwady Region. In these communities, extreme weather events have resulted in increased competition for scarce resources, thereby compounding existing intercommunal tensions. With this in mind, R/P-M has engaged its WoFNs and IYNs to build trust and understanding among diverse communities and raise their awareness to enable them to come together and take collaborative actions to prevent and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and to protect the environment.

R/P-M is also working to alleviate social tensions and strife after a natural disaster through the empowerment of the local IYNs and WoFNs in Rakhine and Pathein. The networks are engaged in peacebuilding through interreligious dialogues and by providing peacebuilding trainings to both network members and influential community actors within their townships. These trainings will galvanize communities to overcome future social hostilities caused by climate change, natural disasters and other socio-political reasons.

Combatting Violence Against Women

R/P-M has partnered with UN Women to advocate to end discrimination and violence against women and girls in Myanmar. Together with UN Women, R/P-M conducted a major event to bring awareness to the situation of violence against women in Myanmar and the role that religious leaders can play to combat this violence. R/P-M facilitated a meeting of the country’s leading religious leaders with the UN’s Goodwill Ambassador to Combat Sexual Violence, Angelina Jolie, and issued a statement condemning violence against women and implored all people of faith to take action to end violence against women. R/P-M is also an active member of the Gender Equality Network and have continued to implement various activities to address violence against women.