“We need to promote the conditions where people of different identities, faiths and cultures can live in harmony, free of discrimination and persecution.”

UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Gutteres

We are an alliance of care, of compassion, of love. We represent a far greater, ever growing and ever-radiating alliance of “common action” that Religions for Peace gladly serves.

Declaration of the 10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace
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Multi-Religious and Multi-Stakeholder Partnership for Peace and Development

11-13 December 2019 | Convene: 730 3rd Avenue, 17th Floor, New York, USA

PROGRAM

- Day 1: Wednesday, 11 December – Multi-Religious and Multi-Stakeholder Partnership for Peace and Development; All Invited Participants
- Day 2: Thursday, 12 December – RfP Strategic Planning; RfP Internal
- Day 3: Friday, 13 December – Closed Meetings of the RfP World Council, IWCC and IYC; RfP Internal

CONCEPT

A seminal 2015 report on religious dynamics published by a United Nations development agency illuminated the clear intersections between the realms of religion and policymaking in the shifting sands of human and planetary engagement:

“Geopolitical alliances, governance regimes and the direction of international development aid are all shifting. Plants and animals are facing drastic environmental changes in basic survival patterns. One of the many changes becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, especially for longstanding secular organizations, is the extent to which religion is surfacing as a critical broker of human and governmental existence… Given the realities of spiritual needs, service provision, resource capacity, political presence as well as the potential of faith leaders and organizations to mitigate or aggravate a variety of conflict intra and inter-communities, being knowledgeable of the work of faith-based actors is necessary in order to benefit from the social capital available for sustainable human development, human rights, and peace and security. It is therefore essential to undertake informed and systematic outreach to key partners in the world of religion, where community service provision has been a reality – for centuries.” (Religion and Development Post 2015, UN)

Mindful of these critical considerations for humanity, and with the experience of nearly five decades of engagement in over 90 countries, Religions for Peace (RfP) convened the 10th World Assembly in August 2019 in Lindau, Germany. The Assembly brought together an unprecedented number of local, national, regional and global religious actors – men, women and youth leaders, together with governmental, inter-governmental and civil-society partners. More than 900 participants from 125 countries, including RfP affiliates from six regions and 90 countries, reaffirmed their commitments to prevent and transform conflicts, advance just and harmonious societies, promote integral human development and protect the Earth, and develop concrete follow-up actions with partner organizations (The 10th World Assembly Declaration).

Following the success of the World Assembly, and mindful of these times of both real and metaphorical hunger – including for social justice and spiritual peace – RfP will convene a multi-stakeholder group of religious leaders and representatives of partner organizations, foundations, governments and multilateral agencies on 11 December in New York, to further advance the outcomes of the Assembly.

This is particularly important given the criticality of 2020 on several levels, and for multiple constituencies. For the United Nations, 2020 marks its 75th anniversary, and a moment to take stock and seek to strengthen the UN system in partnership with global civil society and governments, in support of a people-centered multilateralism.
Among the many milestones this year will be a convening of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, which will assess progress and needs on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources. The year also marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, a defining framework for a world in which each woman and girl can achieve rights and dignity alongside men and boys. At the same time, over 50 countries around the world will be holding important elections. Clearly, 2020 is a pivotal year for global policy.

For RFP, 2020 marks the 50th year of this unique multi-religious, multi-national and multi-stakeholder faith-inspired movement. Amidst these developments, RFP’s call to situate faiths, and faith leaders, to serve together for all peoples could not be more urgent. In addition to honoring the momentum and commitments generated in the 10th World Assembly, therefore, RFP needs to convene its leadership and key partners for strategic review and planning.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify progress and share experiences, challenges as well as best practices in advancing sustainable human development, peace and security and human rights;
- Provide a platform for multiple stakeholders, including religious leaders (men, women and youth), government officials and foundations to effectively partner to address existing and emerging challenges to peace and development;
- Highlight emerging areas of potential multi-stakeholder partnerships for RFP movement.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Agreement on concrete collaborative initiatives for the common good
- New multi-stakeholder partnerships (and means to strengthen existing ones) for select sustainable development goals (SDG 5, 10, 15, 16 and 17)
- An approved Outline for the RFP Strategic Plan 2020-2025
Day 1: Wednesday, 11 December 2019

Participants for this session will include 200 RJP religious leadership (men, women and youth) from the global, regional, national and local levels and 50 scholars, practitioners and organizations engaged in interfaith work as well as foundations, governments, bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies.

9:00-9:30  OPENING AND WELCOME

Moment of Silence

Opening Remarks

- **H.E. Sheikh Shaban Ramadhan Mubaje**, Grand Mufti, Uganda Muslim Supreme Council; Co-Moderator, African Council of Religious Leaders-*Religions for Peace*, Uganda
- **H.E. Henrietta H. Fore**, Executive Director, UNICEF (*Invited*)

9:30-11:00  PLENARY SESSION I: Advancing Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding

**Co-Moderators:** **Hon. Mehrézia Labidi-Maiza**, First Vice-President, Constitutional Assembly; Secretary, Association for Women’s Progress; Co-President, *Religions for Peace*, Tunisia and **H.E. Ambassador Christoph Heusgen**, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

Panelists:

- **H.E. Cardinal Charles Bo**, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar; Co-President, *Religions for Peace*, Myanmar
- **Hon. Mme. Layla Al-Khafaji**, Elected Member of Political Bureau, Alhikmah Movement; Former Member of Iraqi Council of Representatives, Parliament; Former International Relations Director, Al Hakim Foundation; Co-President, *Religions for Peace*, Iraq
- **Rev. Dr. Usman Jesse Fornah**, General Secretary, Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone-*Religions for Peace*, Sierra Leone

11:00-11:15  Coffee/Tea Break
11:15-12:45  PLENARY SESSION II: Advancing Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Environmental Stewardship and Climate Protection

Co-Moderators: Prof. Dr. Din Syamsuddin, Chairman, Advisory Council of Ulama; Moderator, Religions for Peace Asia, Indonesia and H.E. Ambassador Elizabeth Thompson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations (Invited)

Panelists:

- Grand-Mother Marie-Josee Rankin-Tardif, President, Kina8at Together; Elder from the Anicinape (Algonquin) tradition; Member, Religions for Peace International Women’s Coordinating Committee, Canada
- Ms. Laura Vargas, Country Coordinator, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative- Peru; Executive Secretary, Interreligious Council of Peru- Religions for Peace, Peru
- Dr. Charles McNeill, Senior Advisor, Forests and Climate, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

12:45-13:45  Lunch


Co-Moderators: H.E. John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria; Honorary President, Religions for Peace, Nigeria and Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative to the United Nations, Bahá’í International Community; Co-President, Religions for Peace, United States

Panelists

- H.E. Jakob Finci, President, Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Honorary President, Religions for Peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Dr. Suphatmet Yunyasit, Faculty Member, Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University; Secretary General, Interreligious Council of Thailand- Religions for Peace, Thailand
- Prof. Anantanand Rambachan, Professor of Religion, St. Olaf College; Co-President, Religions for Peace, United States

15:15-15:30  Coffee/Tea Break
15:30-16:30  PLENARY SESSION IV: Advancing Multi-stakeholder Partnership to Overcome Gender-based Violence

Co-Moderators: Hon. Ela Gandhi, Trustee, Gandhi Development Trust; Co-President, Religions for Peace, South Africa and Prof. em. Dr. Wolfgang Schürer, Chairman, Foundation Peace Dialogue of the World Religions and Civil Society; Honorary President, Religions for Peace, Germany

Panelists

- Ms. Fatima Hallal, Junior Researcher, Interreligious Relations, Hartford Seminary; Member, Religions for Peace International Youth Committee, Lebanon
- Canon Grace Kaiso, General Secretary, Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA), South Sudan

16:30-17:45  PLENARY SESSION V: Building Innovative Partnerships with the Private Sector and Philanthropy

Co-Moderators: Mr. Robert Boisture, President & CEO, The Fetzer Institute; International Treasurer, Religions for Peace and Mrs. Christina Lee Brown, Founder and Board Chair, Institute of Healthy Air, Water and Soil; International Trustee, Religions for Peace (Invited)

Moderated Discussion

17:45 – 18:00  CONCLUDING SESSION: Summary and The Way Forward

Reflection from the Religions for Peace Interfaith Youth Network

- Mr. Renz Argao, Coordinator, Religions for Peace International Youth Committee, Philippines

Reflection from the Religions for Peace Women of Faith Network

- Sr. Agatha Chikelue DMMM, Executive Director, Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace; Chair, Religions for Peace International Women’s Coordinating Committee, Nigeria

Concluding Remarks

- Prof. Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General Elect, Religions for Peace; Coordinator, United Nations Interagency Taskforce on Religion and Development and Rev. Kyoichi Sugino, Acting Secretary General, Religions for Peace

18:30  Dinner
Participants will include 200 of RfP’s International, Regional and National Leaders. (RfP Internal Meeting)

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Facilitated by: Prof. Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General Elect, Religions for Peace, Coordinator, United Nations Interagency Taskforce on Religion and Development

9:00 – 9:10  INTRODUCTION AND WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE DAY

9:10 – 9:30  MULTI-RELIGIOUS COLLABORATION IN TODAY’S WORLD
within the Context Perspective of Development, Human Rights and Peace and Security

9:30 – 10:00  PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY
Aggregated per peace and security; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; gender;
environment; partnerships with secular actors; interreligious education

10:00 – 10:30  Coffee/Tea Break

10:30 – 12:00  CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
for Interreligious Collaboration as the RfP Movement

Divide into regional groups – Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean,
Middle East and North Africa and North America

Each group has a facilitator and a rapporteur

Break out room assignments are as follows:

- Africa: Wharton Forum
- Asia and the Pacific: Tribeca Hub
- Europe: Nolita Hub
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Murray Hill Hub
- Middle East and North Africa: South Lounge
- North America: Soho Hub
Each group should answer:

- Top three challenges for interreligious collaboration around: peace and security; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; gender; environment; interreligious collaboration and partnerships; interreligious education
- Top three opportunities for interreligious collaboration (as per above)

12:00 – 12:30   REPORT BACK (in Plenary)

12:30 – 13:30   Lunch

13:30 – 13:45   OVERVIEW OF COMMON OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

13:45 – 15:30   SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES
of Interreligious Mobilization and Lessons for RfP Movement

Divide into thematic groups: peace and security; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; gender; environment; interreligious collaboration and partnerships; interreligious education

Each group has a facilitator and a rapporteur

Break out room assignments are as follows:

- Peace and security: Soho Hub
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion: Tribeca Hub
- Gender: Wharton Forum
- Environment: Murray Hill Hub
- Interreligious collaboration and partnerships: Nolita Hub
- Interreligious education: South Lounge

Each group should answer:

- What works?
- What doesn’t work?
- What are the top 3 priorities for 2020-2025?

15:30 – 16:00   Coffee/Tea Break

16:00 – 16:45   REPORT BACK (in Plenary)

16:45 – 17:00   Break
17:00 – 18:00  **CONCLUDING SESSION**

- Agreed Thematic Priorities for Strategic Plan 2020-2025
- Agreed Priority Actions for Strategic Plan 2020-2025
Day 3: Friday, 13 December 2019

Participants will include 70 World Council Members, Regional Secretaries General and International Staff. *(RfP Internal Meeting)*

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**9:00-10:30  WORLD COUNCIL MEETING (Closed)**

Moment of Silence  
Adoption of the Minutes of the First World Council Meeting  
Secretary General's Report  
Adoption of the Outlines of the Strategic Plan  
Constitution of the New Finance Committee  
Other Matters

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**10:30-11:00  Coffee/Tea Break**

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**11:00-12:00  ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH UN AGENCIES AND OTHER PARTNERS**

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**12:00-13:00  Lunch**

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**13:00-16:00  MEETING OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE (RfP- IWCC) (Closed)**

Participants: *RfP- IWCC* members

Development of the Annual Plan for 2020

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**MEETING OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE (RfP- IYC) (Closed)**

Participants: *RfP- IYC* members

Development of the Annual Plan for 2020
Religions for Peace

DOCUMENTATION

Declaration of the 10th World Assembly & Action Points
PREAMBLE

We – 900 women, men, and youth – have gathered in Lindau, Germany, coming from 125 countries for the 10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace. We are grateful for 49 years of determined focus on building peace and on speaking for those most in need. We are an alliance of care, of compassion, of love. We represent a far greater, ever growing, and ever-radiating alliance of “common action” that Religions for Peace gladly serves. In that light we acknowledge with sorrow the ways – subtle and gross – that we and our religious communities have fallen short. Our hearts grieve over the misuse of our faiths, especially the ways they have been twisted to fuel violence and hate. Our alliance honors our religious differences, even as it serves the peace for which the human heart hungers. We gather in hope, convinced that the sacred calls all humanity into shared responsibility for our common good, care for one another, the earth, and its entire web of life.

The burdens of the human family are well-known to us. We know too well war, how it kills, maims, and destroys the lives of the innocent. We know the crushing weight of extreme poverty, how it stunts, humiliates, and plunders. Ten percent of our human family is desperately poor. We know that more than 70 million of us no longer find shelter in the sanctuary of their homes. They are refugees, internally displaced, and persons forced to be on the move. We know we have entered a terrifying new arms race, one that includes modernizing nuclear arms, weaponizing space and artificial intelligence, and new energy weapons. These burdens are profoundly exacerbated by the cataclysmic heating of the earth, decimation of the rainforests, poisoning of the seas, and choking of the web of life.

We are also experiencing what we call a “meta-crisis” of our modern order, which lies behind the United Nations and the agreements our states have made on human rights, the rule of law, and international trade. Freedoms of all kinds, the protections of minorities, and the fabric of our connection have come under attack around the world. On the economic front, a meager handful of the richest persons have more wealth than four billion persons. Adding to the political and economic dimensions of this meta-crisis of modern order, there is today a “meta-crisis” of truth, which challenges the notion of “truth,” while “fake news” is tailored for political or commercial gain. Today, we are buffeted between inconvenient truths and convenient fabrications. The hour is late: we are called to urgent action.

CARING FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE: ADVANCING SHARED WELL-BEING

Our heart’s inner-most experiences of the sacred and our outer-most social lives cry out to be connected in a state of positive peace that Religions for Peace calls, “Shared Well-Being.” Our different experiences of the sacred make clear that we are, at root, relational: radically related to the sacred and to all that is caused or embraced by the sacred. As fundamentally relational, our well-being is intrinsically shared. Helping the other, we are helped; injuring the other, we wound ourselves. We fully acknowledge the invaluable roles of women and youth among us and will continually mainstream their irreplaceable contributions. Our different traditions make clear that the sacred establishes us as both responsible for and dependent upon each other and the earth that sustains us. Shared Well-Being calls us to commit to all the ways the modern order supports our human dignity. It also calls us to offer in a constructive spirit any complementary contributions from our religions. We affirm the modern order’s recognition of the foundational importance of freedom. At the same time, we are called to show by example the sacred grounding of freedom. It leads through the despair of nihilism, rejects the narcissism of mindless consumerism, and expresses itself as radical care for all.

To our commitment to the importance of human rights, we add our foundational concern for the cultivation of virtues, those habitual orientations to value that sculpt our human potentials. These include our potentials for the most elevated states of mercy, compassion, and love. For us, the labor to become virtuous is not a solitary act; rather, it is an
act of “solidarity;” one that can only be achieved by generosity and mutual love. The cultivation of virtue tackles the ignorance, individual egoism, and group egoism that mutilate authentic community.

*Shared Well-Being* also calls for a robust notion of the “common good” that can serve all of us in our efforts to virtuously unfold our rights-protected human dignity. The supreme good for us is the sacred, even as we understand it differently. The common good includes the earth with its air, water, soil, and web of life. The common good also includes just institutions that help each to develop her or his human dignity. These call all of us to a shared and grateful responsibility. Each person is to draw from the common good; each is to help build it up.

Advancing *Shared Well-Being* is concrete. We commit to advancing *Shared Well-Being* by preventing and transforming violent conflicts, promoting just and harmonious societies, nurturing sustainable and integral human development, and protecting the earth.

**Preventing and Transforming Violent Conflict**

We commit to preventing violent conflicts by advancing peace education – from early childhood to adults across our religious communities – focusing on shared values, religious literacy, and narratives of peace. We will build skills in conflict management that address the drivers of conflicts non-violently. Our commitments to transforming violent conflicts are actualized in our Assembly by the religious leaders from Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and South Sudan. Our commitment is also expressed in the religious women represented by those from the Middle East and North African Region in the Assembly plenary. Here, also, religious persons from North and South Korea have worked to construct conditions for peace on the Korean Peninsula. These religious leaders have convened privately in the Assembly to strengthen one another as partners, peacemakers, and healers. We commit to supporting their efforts in their respective countries and regions. We adopt The Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation, convinced that transforming violent conflicts requires the healing of historical wounds and painful memories, forgiveness, and reconciliation. We commit to integrating efforts for healing into all our conflict resolution work.

To renew our commitment to nuclear disarmament, we pledge to be a full partner of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. We condemn the existence of nuclear weapons, affirm our support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and will educate, mobilize, and engage religious communities toward these ends. We also call for immediate steps toward general disarmament including all weapons of destruction – conventional, nuclear, chemical, biological, and those newly emerging.

**Promoting Just and Harmonious Societies**

We take heart that multi-religious actors and institutions are working to build just and harmonious societies with a vibrant spirit of care and commitment to justice. We commit to continued common action to tackle injustices, including the large-scale displacement of persons, and resulting challenges from the migration crises – both for refugees and migrants and the societies where they settle. We will make the global forced migration crisis a priority for action. We will lead by example in “welcoming the other.” We commit to instilling the respect, mutuality, and solidarity that are essential to promote, build, and sustain just, harmonious, and diverse communities. A cross-cutting commitment can be education, including religious literacy, from early childhood to adults, that focuses on shared civic virtues and appreciation for social diversity. We will develop an *Alliance of Virtue* based on a declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages.

We pledge to protect children, vulnerable individuals and communities and advocate for their human rights and well-being in the face of grave suffering. We will speak up forcefully and take action against corruption and for good governance. We commit ourselves to caring and determined effort to address the causes and reality of widespread abuses and violence, especially against women and children. We also commit to common efforts within our communities, with civil society partners and governments to ensure principled freedom of religion worldwide. We,
persons of faith, yearn to protect holy sites and feel safe within them. We will preserve and protect holy sites against violence and desecration, partnering with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to form living rings for peace around them.

**Sustainable and Integral Human Development and Protecting the Earth**

We commit to human development as set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will foster sustainable and integral human development by promoting the justice, inclusive citizenship, and equal opportunities interwoven through the SDGs. We will champion personal accountability for sustainable consumption, the dignity of labor, and equitable distribution of wealth. We will honor the insights of science and steward progress in digital technology toward the good of all. We will advance universal access to education. We will continue to promote the role of women and youth in society and their leadership in institutions at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

We commit to urgent action against the climate crisis. We will mobilize religious communities to protect the earth – including the promotion of “green congregations.” Leaders and partners in the fight against environmental degradation, our Indigenous brothers and sisters remind us, “when Mother Earth suffers, human beings suffer; when human beings suffer, Mother Earth suffers.” We, guardians and caretakers of earth, endorse the *Faiths for Forests Declaration*. We commit to raise awareness about tropical deforestation and to educate our religious communities about the dire spiritual and sustainability crisis. We will take action to live ecologically balanced and sustainable lifestyles and advocate for government policies to protect rainforests, defend the rights of Indigenous peoples, and fulfill their pledges to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

**CALL TO COMMON ACTION**

Guided by the principles of our own religious traditions, and respectful of religious differences, we personally commit to fostering positive peace as Shared Well-Being. We will be partners with sincere believers of other religions and all women and men of good will to:

- produce positive peace materials and workshops for multi-religious contexts with the Institute for Economics and Peace;
- develop tools and training on the positive roles of women in preventing and transforming conflicts, and on the issue of violence against them;
- acknowledge past hurts – including across religious traditions – and foster public acts of forgiveness and reconciliation;
- work for the well-being of refugees and migrants and develop programs of accompaniment and support;
- urge religious communities to invest their resources in alignment with achieving the SDGs;
- raise public awareness about deforestation with the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative and through the acceptance and promotion of the *Faith for Forests Declaration*, take action against climate change in general, and advocate for policies that protect the earth;
- advance reconciliation as a vital dimension of positive Peace within persons and among communities and nations as per The Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation;
- commit to be a full partner to support the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons;
- forge an Alliance of Virtue based on a declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages.

We speak with humility, asking for support and blessings.
PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED
There is an urgent and profound need for reconciliation in communities in conflict and coming out of conflict. Experience shows that conflict settlements and peace accords tend to be short-lived; and that conflicts resume in the absence of reconciliation, which includes addressing deep wounds, injustices, distrust, fear and hatred. Without reconciliation, disturbed memories lurk under the surface and are not brought out into the open to be slowly healed. In conflict situations, very often urgent efforts to end the physical violence do not address the important process of reconciliation, which needs to be advanced through truth telling, accepting responsibility, embracing repentance and transacting forms of restitution. This absence of reconciliation compromises peace settlements and thwarts true positive Peace. Religions for Peace (RfP) has repeatedly experienced the absence of reconciliation among people and communities struggling to come out of situations of destructive violence and oppression. In these situations, RfP has long recognized that a deeper process of forgiveness and reconciliation is profoundly needed to achieve positive Peace. Moreover, RfP knows well that religions have profound and unique resources that can—if mobilized and creatively adapted—contribute to reconciliation.

Adopting the Peace Charter will help to equip the RfP global family of affiliated multi-religious bodies for the important work of reconciliation by raising awareness, deepening understanding, and increasing reflection on the crucial role of forgiveness and reconciliation in sustainable positive peacebuilding. The Peace Charter is a tool that can lovingly inspire, educate and provide guidance in processes of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace building amongst persons, communities of all types and nations. Importantly, it can also be a resource for healing painful historical memories within religions’ various histories. It will also make a vital contribution to value-led peace education in formal and informal settings, thereby strengthening ever more the foundation for more just and peaceful persons, communities and nations.

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AND THE PEACE CHARTER
Religions for Peace is deeply seized by the agony and suffering of people in midst or aftermath of violent conflicts, and it is convinced that forgiveness and reconciliation are profoundly needed and must be integrated into efforts to build sustainable positive peace.

Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia, Co-President of RfP, invited Dr William F. Vendley, the Secretary-General emeritus of RfP, in 2014, to join him as a Co-convener of the Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Dr Vendley co-convoked the Charter’s Editorial Panel in 2016, thereby ensuring the strong and foundational contributions of RfP leaders. A formal presentation of the Peace Charter was made by Bhai Sahib (by video conference) to the RfP International Executive Committee and International Trustees meeting on 20th October 2016, in Abuja, Nigeria. Advancing the Peace Charter is part of the current five-year RfP International Strategic Plan.

CALL TO COMMON ACTION
Deeply moved by the great suffering borne by persons, communities and nations in countless lamentable violent conflicts and their unhealed aftermaths; Firmly convinced that reconciliation is essential to the resolution of these conflicts and that religions have unique resources for achieving the needed reconciliation; and Committed to advancing reconciliation as a vital dimension of positive Peace within persons, communities and nations;

We place before the Assembly the following Motion:

“That the Religions for Peace World Assembly adopt The Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation.”
PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED
Nuclear weapons threaten the very survival of humanity and our entire living planet, and according to the UN, the risk of their use is at its highest since the end of WWII. Any use – whether intentional, including by miscalculation, or by accidental - would cause catastrophic, widespread and persistent humanitarian and environmental consequences that transcend national boundaries and span generations. These immoral, unethical and illegitimate weapons go against the basic tenets of all the world’s major religions, and communities of faith have historically played a large role in the push for their abolition.

On 7 July 2017, 122 nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) - the first multilateral, legally binding instrument to comprehensively and categorically prohibit nuclear weapons. To date, 70 nations have signed it and 23 have ratified it. It will enter into force once 50 governments have ratified it or acceded to it. In addition to achieving their legal prohibition, the TPNW is also changing the norm and creating a stigma against nuclear weapons. For this achievement, ICAN was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AND THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Religions for Peace from its origin to its presence has had a constant and resolute commitment to the total elimination of the nuclear weapons.

Religions for Peace is an intrinsic partner and works side by side with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in this endeavor. The support of the Treaty by faith communities all around the world has been instrumental in achieving it and will be key to its ratification and adoption as a new global norm.

CALL TO COMMON ACTION
Deeply concerned by the resumption of the nuclear arms race and the breaking down of arms control agreements; Challenged by the need to secure the support of every nation to ensure the total eradication of these weapons – before they eliminate us;
Appreciating the historic and on-going commitment by Religions for Peace to the total elimination of the nuclear weapons;

We place before the Assembly the following Motion:

“That the Religions for Peace World Assembly commits as a full partner to support the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and that RfP’s commitment includes:
1. Stigmatizing nuclear weapons by condemning their existence, possession and threat of use from ethical, moral and religious perspectives;
2. Further educating, mobilizing and engaging religious leaders and communities on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the risk of their use and the urgent need for their elimination;
3. Affirming its support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and calling on all governments to sign and ratify at the earliest.
PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, is arguably one of the greatest achievements of the human family in the Modern period. It serves as a powerful touchstone for advancing humanity’s Well-Being.

There is no equivalent companion document for virtues, despite the fact that across history for religious communities and many other traditions, the cultivation of virtue is a primary way to unfold the enormous potentials of human dignity, to advance the development of good societies and—for religious communities—to cultivate the states of Compassion, Mercy and Love related to the Sacred.

In the absence of a “virtue equivalent” to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, religious communities and men and women of good will are missing a key consensual text that can provide a base for an Alliance of Virtue that would unite people across the world in the labor of becoming good persons and building just societies.

Human rights and virtues are not in conflict. They are essential and complementary approaches to protecting and unfolding human dignity and building good and just societies.

Like the historic development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a statement of consensus on virtues needs to be open to the contributions of all virtue traditions and expressed in public language.

Religious communities working together are uniquely equipped to initiate a process designed to discern and produce a declaration on the profound consensus of virtues. Based on this declaration, they are furthermore exceptionally well-positioned to advance a concrete Alliance of Virtue, in tandem with their already on-going commitments to advance respect for human rights.

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AND SHARED VALUES
For two years prior to the Assembly, a great number of Religions for Peace Co-Presidents met every three months to discern the ethical dimensions essential to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Central to these reflections was the discernment of virtues shared across the religious traditions. These Co-Presidents’ efforts were substantial. Their discernments contributed greatly to this Assembly’s focus on Shared Well-Being which includes the recognition of the vital role of virtues as complementary to human rights.

In addition, a number of Religions for Peace leaders, notably Co-Moderator Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah and International Trustee Chairman Wu, have already begun to take important steps to lay the groundwork for a multi-religious Alliance of Virtue.

CALL TO COMMON ACTION
Respectful of human dignity which the religions understand to be rooted in the Sacred and protected by rights;
Mindful that for the world’s religious and other traditions, the cultivation of virtues is the central way of unfolding rights-protected human dignity to become a good and integrally developed person;
Further mindful that the world’s religions and other virtue traditions have great heritages of “civic virtues” that orient persons toward building good and just societies, and that the world’s religions recognize specific “religious virtues” as valuable in cultivating states of Mercy, Compassion and Love;
Cognizant that there is a great overlap among the major virtues of the religious and other virtue traditions,

We place before the Assembly the following Motion:

That the Religions for Peace 10th World Assembly mandate the World Council to develop an Alliance of Virtue based on a Declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages; and to develop as part of such a Declaration, individual introductions from each participating religion and virtue school engaged.
PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED

Tropical deforestation is a crisis of existential proportions – we either deal with it now or leave future generations a planet in ecological collapse. Rainforests are rapidly being decimated: from the Amazon to the Congo Basin to Southeast Asia, rainforests are being cut down at an alarming rate, driven by land conversion for agriculture and extractive industries. Rainforest destruction is undermining international efforts on poverty, climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Research shows that no more forests need to be cleared to feed the planet.

Importantly, rainforest protection is also a human rights issue. Indigenous peoples are the historical guardians of rainforests and where their rights are protected, so often are forests. However, indigenous peoples and forest communities lack legal rights to almost three quarters of their traditional lands and are facing grave threats as they defend their forests from incursion by industries like oil, mining, logging and agribusiness.

The world’s rainforests are a sacred trust, an irreplaceable gift and essential to life on Earth. They contain more than 50 percent of plant and animal species on the planet and provide hundreds of millions of people around the world with food, water, medicine and livelihoods. Rainforests are also critical to combat climate change. Forests are among the only safe, proven, natural solutions that exist to capture and store carbon, and tropical deforestation is a key source of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. The protection, restoration and sustainable management of forests offers one third of the solution to climate change.

While there is a dedicated coalition of indigenous peoples, government, civil society and business partners working to protect tropical forests, more is needed. New leadership and momentum are needed to achieve the speed and scale of required change. Multi-religious cooperation is essential for halting and reversing tropical deforestation. It is time to make the protection of rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples a shared moral concern and religious priority.

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AND THE INTERFAITH RAINFOREST INITIATIVE

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) is an international, multi-faith alliance that brings moral urgency and faith-based leadership to global efforts to halt and reverse tropical deforestation. It is a platform for all religious leaders and communities to work with indigenous peoples, governments, civil society and business on actions that protect tropical forests and safeguard those that serve as their guardians.

Religions for Peace is a founding partner of IRI and a key implementing body both globally and in Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia and Peru – five countries with more than 70 percent of the world’s remaining tropical forests. With Religions for Peace, the IRI is launching the ‘Faiths for Forests’ declaration and action agenda to mobilize new leadership, commitment and momentum on this critical issue.

CALL TO COMMON ACTION

Deeply concerned about the state of the world’s rainforests;
Understanding that tropical deforestation drives climate change, species loss, and poverty;
Standing in solidarity with indigenous peoples as rainforest guardians;
Recognizing that faiths add unique value to government, civil society and business efforts to protect rainforests; and
Realizing that ending tropical deforestation is both a profound moral responsibility and highly achievable;

We place before the Assembly the following Motion:

1. **Raise public awareness about the tropical deforestation crisis**
2. **Promote teaching about the spiritual, moral, scientific, humanitarian and human rights case for ending tropical deforestation**
3. **Assist our respective places of worship, communities and organizations to take action**
4. **Encourage deforestation-free lifestyles and business practices**
5. **Advocate for government policies that protect rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples**
6. **Urge national governments and the international community to put forest protection at the center of efforts to reach the goals of the Paris climate agreement.**
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