FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ten Promises for Children: A Multi-religious Commitment

(14 June 2012 | Washington, D.C., USA) Religions for Peace (RfP) and the Center for Interfaith Action (CIFA) announced the launch of a global initiative to engage religious communities around the world in saving children’s lives through ten concrete and specific acts: Ten Promises to Our Children.

Today, we still lose 20,000 children every day. Most of these deaths are preventable. Many could be saved by behavior changes that can be promoted and taught by religious communities.

These ten behaviors, within the control of families and communities, are endorsed by UNICEF and other development agencies. Over 200 religious leaders from different faith traditions and more than 60 faith-based organizations from around the world, including many Religions for Peace affiliates, have already made their global, multi-religious commitment to adopt and promote these ten behaviors. They are vital to saving the lives of children and reducing the burden of disease. This multi-religious commitment is unprecedented in the breadth and depth of faith leadership and will reach more than 250 million believers around the world.

The initiative engages faith leaders, congregations, faith-based institutions, multi-religious councils and individual believers across diverse faith traditions to: Empower people to take responsibility for their health; connect families to local resources, including through their local congregations which can serve as links to other service-providing institutions; Reach large numbers— including the hard-to-reach; and Drive demand for products and services.

Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General of RfP stated, “We grieve when we lose a child to an incurable disease, but we hold our heads down in shame when we lose a child to preventable disease or violence. We know that such loss should not happen, that it is even worse than ‘senseless,’ that it is morally wrong, grievously wrong.”

He added that as religious people we can save, protect and nurture children. We have capacities to act and make a major difference.

H.E. Faisal al-Muaammar, Secretary General of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, also announced that the Center has committed itself to advancing child survival. RfP salutes the Center’s commitment and believes that it can make a major contribution to saving children’s lives.
The Ten Promises

1. Breastfeed all newborns exclusively through the age of six months.

2. Immunize children and newborns with all recommended vaccines, especially through the age of two years.

3. Eliminate all harmful traditions and violence against children, and ensure children grow up in a safe and protective environment.

4. Feed children with proper nutritional foods and micronutrient supplements, where available, and de-worm children.

5. Give oral rehydration salts (ORS) and daily Zinc supplements for 10 – 14 days to all children suffering from diarrhea.

6. Promptly seek treatment when a child is sick; give children antibiotic treatment for pneumonia.

7. Have children drink water from a safe source, including water that has been purified and kept clean and covered, away from fecal material.

8. Have all children wash their hands with soap and water especially before touching food, after going to the latrine or toilet and after dealing with refuse.

9. Have all children use a toilet or latrine, and safely dispose of children’s feces; prevent children from defecating in the open.

10. Where relevant, have all children sleep under insecticide-treated bed nets nightly to prevent malaria; seek medical care for children at the immediate onset of fever to receive proper malaria testing and treatment.