

The 2024 G20 Interfaith and PaRD
Annual Forum on
Religion and Sustainable Development

Leave No One Behind: The Well-Being of the Planet and Its People

19-22 August 2024

Brasilia, Brazil

Synopsis of the Sessions

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G20 Interfaith Forum 2024, Brasilia

Introduction

By W. Cole Durham, Jr.

August 22, 2024

The G20 Interfaith Forum in Brasilia was not merely a single culminating event held August 19-22, 2024, but involved a much longer process, extending back over a decade to earlier Forums and in particular, to the G20 Interfaith Forum in India, in which Brazilian organizers were already involved. The process reaches back to a set of meetings held in Rio de Janeiro in December 2023 and through a cluster of meetings in Geneva in March of 2024. It included a pre-meeting celebrating religious harmony in Ethiopia in April; meetings in Belem and Manaus, Brazil in June; a conference in Indonesia in July; a conference in August in Malaysia; and then the culminating G20 Interfaith Forum held in Brasilia. The process is in fact not yet complete, because the G20 Interfaith Forum Association (IF20) is hosting a series of follow-up webinars on major IF20 themes in September and October. (See Recent and Upcoming Events on the home page of the IF20 website (www.g20interfaith.org) for more information and links). The IF20 is also planning to participate in the G20 Social in Rio de Janeiro in November.

The IF20 was joined in organizing many of these activities by the Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) and needs also to pay special tribute to the Brazilian Local Organizing Committee, headed by Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves and joined by Ivo Pereira da Silva and their staff members, as well as to the IF20 Advisory Council, the IF20 Communications Committee, and other IF20 officers and staff. The various events are memorialized on the IF20 website, www.G20Interfaith.org, and involved a broad and diverse spectrum of religious actors, government officials, NGO representatives, academics, and others. Tremendous thanks are owed to all of those who participated in any way in this impressive constellation of events.

We were especially honored by the participation of our keynote speaker, Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, former U.N. High Commissioner of Human Rights, and current Chair of The Elders, a distinguished group of former national leaders first convened by Nelson Mandela. She spoke twice during the Forum, emphasizing the need for climate action. She also gave an important interview and joined in side meetings with the President and Vice President of Brazil, and with many others. We were also honored by support throughout the year from Brazilian government officials, including addresses at the Forum by the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Human Rights, as well as participation by five national secretaries and various directors and other officials. We also benefited from the receptiveness of government leaders to our recommendations both prior to and during the August Forum.

There were well over 400 in-person participants in the August event, including individuals from 55 countries, of whom 32% were from Brazil and 68% were from other countries. In addition, we had 338 online attendees. On social media, we had 61,982 views on Instagram, with 3,418 interactions. The event also had over 1200 Facebook followers. Speaking in the concluding

session, Gustavo Westmann from the President's Office noted he had been working with the full range of activities in Brazil's overall G20 process. He complimented the G20 Interfaith Forum on having "definitely the most diverse [representation], not only in terms of people in countries but also in terms of the representation of foreigners."

The IF20 was invited by the government already in June to submit its key recommendations to the government for inclusion in the government's action plan. At the core of our recommendations is the idea that "policy engagement with faith communities should be a priority." Linked to that were five priority recommendations, elaborated in Katherine Marshall's "Retrospective Overview" in this document, related to food crises, the environment, peacebuilding, debt relief, and human trafficking. Policy briefs supporting each of these points are available on our website. See <https://www.g20interfaith.org/2024-policy-briefs/>. In addition, as noted above, a series of webinars highlighting these themes has been organized and can be listened to live or in subsequent recorded versions.

The aim of the foregoing recommendations is not only to urge action on the part of G20 countries, but to highlight these priorities for supportive activities in religious communities, in civil society more generally, and at every level, from international policy making to local action. In addition to the five priority focus areas noted above, a number of other concerns emerged from discussions at the August forum. To simply list a few of the additional vital areas identified during the Forum that need ongoing attention:

- Cross-cultural religious literacy is needs to be promoted, not only through expanding the Indonesian program highlighted in Forum, but in finding ways to extend this type of program to other countries and other spheres.
- Greater engagement with youth is needed, and some funding for such engagement was promised during Forum sessions.
- The challenges and promise associated with AI is an emerging sphere requiring urgent attention.
- The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty deserves broad support from countries around the world.
- David Saperstein emphasized the "fierce urgency of now," noting that for the first time in human history, we face urgent problems that must be solved now or many of our future possibilities will be foreclosed. Significantly, we have the power and ability to solve these problems, if we can generate the political will to do so.
- We need to find ways to filter the poison of polarization out of our societies, among other things by tackling new dimensions of hate emanating from social media
- We need to find new ways to promote partnerships between religious communities and the public sector.

Several powerful metaphors captured our attention during the Forum. Mary Robinson talked about listening to the erosion of a glacier and realizing that it is not enough to listen and become aware: we need to act. Speakers alerted us to the "time bomb" of the youth bulge in African demography. The invisible role of mangrove roots in filtering pollution was compared to the

need to protect cultural and religious roots that can help filter out the poison of polarization. Ivo Pereira da Silva gave an important speech suggesting that the idea of the secular can be wielded either as a sword that attacks religious life or a shield that protects it.

These metaphors connected in my mind with a prophetic passage of hope inscribed on a wall across the street from the United Nations Plaza in New York: “and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: national shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Isaiah 2:4. I have long believed that some divine or impersonal forces would eventually combine to bring about this transformation. But in the context of the Forum and its insistent refrain that we must take action on many urgent fronts, the passage took on a dimension of personal challenge. It is up to us to beat the swords around us into plowshares, and to prevent our tools from being forged into swords. We are not supposed to be spectators in the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, but to be participants. We need to avoid weaponizing ideas. We need to find ways to transform enemies into friends, acquaintances into colleagues and partners. We need to defuse the time-bombs of our age. In the deepest sense, the G20 Interfaith Forum is an invitation to us to find practical ways to participate in the beating of our own swords into ploughshares.



G20 Interfaith Forum 2024, Brasilia

Retrospective Overview

By Katherine Marshall

August 22, 2024

Thanks and appreciation. The teams involved, which include, especially W. Cole Durham, Jr. and Rodrigo Vittorino Alves, have devoted countless hours and creative energy to this event. We have many to thank for making this meeting a success. My colleagues at the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) and Georgetown University's Berkley Center, largely invisible, have contributed in important ways to the substantive preparation and will be actively engaged in follow up. In sum, the team and participants have been magnificent.

Calls to action: We were called to action by Taissa, a young Indigenous girl who lives in the Amazon, who spoke during the opening plenary. Her courage in calling us to action, on behalf of her rising generation, resonated with us all. We come together and act above all on behalf of children and what is to come. Hearing their voice is vital and moving. Mary Robinson, speaking both as chair of the Elders and as an "angry granny" focused on the urgent need for action to change direction on climate change. Marina Silva, Brazil's Minister of Environment, also spoke to urgency and seeing results in practice as our collective responsibility.

The G20 context. A distinctive feature of the focus on the G20 is the link to power, both of mighty nations and of central authority. The G20 leaders exercise power to change direction on many global agendas, and the concentration of this power gives them and those who advise them great responsibility. They have power to make some changes almost instantaneously, for example within aspects of financial regimes and interstate relationships. Their responsibility for other vital issues, notably affecting human capabilities and development, has a longer fuse and requires collaboration and what we now call full stakeholder participation. Action and policy implementation involve resources, especially finance, a G20 focus that also shapes IF20 approaches. The reality, however, is that all have responsibilities and are part of forces of change and stagnation; for the G20 Interfaith Forum, the G20 and its complex roles are the central focus, but we need always to keep in mind a balance between central power and community realities.

Communicating with G20 leadership. I have been close enough to leaders in positions like those who represent the G20 Summit and appreciate the pressures on them, hence the vital need to take their situation and perspectives into account. The road from a global leader through national institutions, local institutions, civil society, congregations of many kinds, to communities, and families is long and bumpy, and for leaders, pressures of their roles can make daily realities especially affecting poor people fade in the distance. Our challenge is to remind and convey those realities through a prophetic voice but also through tangible, understandable, practical ideas and proposals. The learning process needs to go in both directions and listening needs to include hearing appeals to action.

Communication has critical importance. All of us here have special roles as cultural translators, bridging and linking different perspectives and languages among the varied communities involved. Both leaders and those of us advocating or urging them to action can stay in our bubbles and to be blinded to alternative realities.

Our central responsibility and concern, woven throughout the preparations and the Forum, is to highlight those who are central to our concern: the voiceless. “Leave no one behind” is the central theme and we were reminded often that there should be “nothing about us without us”, and that a preferential option for the poor needs to be a reality.

Two faces of religion and reality. We were moved by reminders of religious diversity and complexity, through reports of lived realities and some powerful metaphors. Secularism, for example, can be a sword that damages and destroys, or a shield, a powerful force of protection. Our goal is to “accentuate the positive.”

Brazilian participation from beginning to end was a hallmark of the experience. It enriched every part of the event and allowed us to learn and challenge ideas with lived experience.

IF20 2024 Recommendations. As the Forum began, we highlighted the difficult winnowing process that led to our focus on five vital areas. The Forum has addressed myriad issues and latter discussions opened still more. Their interconnections in today’s dynamic societies complicates the task further. We honor and appreciate these diverse priorities and perspectives and will follow up on the many interconnected issues that are part of today’s mega and perma-crises.

The recommendation process began with a brief one-page summary of 2024 G20 Interfaith recommendations, with backup of each of the five focus areas reflected in briefs (all on the website). There are also briefs on several other areas including post COVID19 actions, climate finance, and racism. We welcome feedback on each topic and plan a webinar on each of the five focus topics in the weeks ahead. Analysis and action, carried to G20 member countries as well as the Brazilian G20 hosts, will be a focus at the November Social Summit. These topics demand continued focus and we plan to pursue these and other topics into the future.

Poverty and hunger: The Forum was fired by the cause of poverty and food insecurity. The call to be part of the new Alliance against Hunger resonates with central religious teachings. The aim is to join forces with the Alliance leaders as a central stakeholder. Advocacy and accountability are two important faith contributions but so are the myriad actions by communities worldwide: soup kitchens, modeling constructive behaviors, supporting smallholder agriculture and countless other areas of action.

Aspects of global governance also call us to active participation in global alliances, for example those focused on debt restructuring, reforms of global tax regimes, and climate finance. We look to strong advocacy, action to hold leaders to account for implementation at many levels, and faith contributions to the broad objectives. Supporting vital lifesaving humanitarian action is central to this focus on global systems of social protection that look to addressing inequalities and poverty. These are at the heart of the G20 mandate.

The climate and ecological crisis called us all throughout the Brasilia Forum to urgent action—from Taissa's call to Bartholomeo, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and each participant. The many dimensions of the crisis include prominently the tropical rainforests where the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) exemplifies the collaborative and inspirational approaches we seek. IRI brings different religious traditions together and includes in integral ways Indigenous communities (recognizing their vital roles, with governments, business, civil society, and other stakeholders).

Education for Social cohesion and harmony. Religious literacy and aspects of education systems that address pluralism are not prominent on G20 agendas but they should be. The inspirational examples of the Indonesian Cross Cultural Religious Literacy program, with its focus on teachers and messages of competencies and respect, and Arigatou International's bold longstanding approach to ethics education for children offer inspiration. We need strong models to highlight the vital importance of leadership to benefit from the world's rich and increasingly plural societies and to address intergroup tensions that are sadly on the rise.

Trafficking in persons and modern slavery are longstanding G20 Interfaith Forum areas of focus. For 2024 we urge practical action to take the ideas and calls for action to a new level, with a working group and calendar for reporting and accountability. The G20 Interfaith Forum proposed active support, including putting financial numbers and other actions to calls for stepped up action.

We look forward to active participation in the Social Summit and to learning about and addressing the 2025 G20 agenda, with South Africa taking on the presidency on December 1.

Opening Plenary: Towards an Equitable World of Promise and Opportunity

*The opening plenary session of the G20 Interfaith Forum in Brasilia, Brazil set the stage for discussions on creating an equitable world of promise and opportunity. The session featured a diverse lineup of speakers, including **Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves**, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee; **Flávio Pazeto** from Brazil's G20 Sherpa Team; **Irenilda Aparecida Maria Francisco (Iya Gilda)**, General Coordinator for Religious Freedom, Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship; **His Virtue Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade**, Chairman of the Caucasus Muslim Board, Spiritual Leader of the Muslims of Azerbaijan and Entire Caucasus; **W. Cole Durham Jr.**, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum; **Khushwant Singh** of PaRD; **Hamad Khatir** of the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities; **Katherine Marshall**, Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Forum; and **Mary Robinson**, Chair of the Elders and former President of Ireland, who delivered the keynote address (see appendix for full text). **Taissa Silva da Costa** (Taissa Kambeba) spoke as a youth representative. Religious perspectives were shared by leaders from various faiths, including **Archbishop Dom Zanoni Demettino**, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Feira de Santana; National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB); **Rev. Juan Cruz**, President, Latino Evangelical Alliance (AEL); **Ven. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati**, Sectary General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance; **Mohamed Bahr**, Head of Strategic Planning at the Muslim Council of Elders; **Elder Ahmad S. Corbitt**, Seventy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and **H.E. Sheikh Al-Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah**, Secretary General, Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace, United Arab Emirates. Finally, video messages were played from the **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople**, and **Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa**, founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. **Romana Remor** served as MC throughout the event.*

Overview

The session began with the Brazilian national anthem, followed by an interfaith group presenting their varying perspectives, that set a tone of unity and diversity, with a shared purpose. Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves welcomed attendees and highlighted the importance of interfaith dialogue in addressing global challenges. Flávio Pazeto outlined Brazil's G20 presidency priorities, emphasizing social inclusion, sustainable development, and reform of global governance structures.

W. Cole Durham Jr. provided context on the G20 Interfaith Forum's history and objectives, explaining its role in bringing religious voices to global policy discussions. Khushwant Singh of PaRD stressed the need for collaboration between governments, religious actors, and civil society to achieve sustainable development goals. Katherine Marshall traced the journey of the G20 Interfaith Forum, highlighting its evolving links to the G20 and the importance of the “network of networks” that the G20 Interfaith Forum draws on across the world.

The keynote address by Mary Robinson was a powerful call to action on climate change and global inequalities. She emphasized the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations and the urgent need for transformative action. Robinson stated:

"As my dear friend, the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, used to say, I am a prisoner of hope. I know we can tackle the climate and nature crisis. Solutions are already underway and we must support and accelerate them."

Following the keynote, religious leaders offered perspectives from their respective traditions. Ven. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati spoke about the Hindu view of nature as sacred and the importance of conscious living. Mohamed Bahr highlighted the role of education and faith in creating a sustainable world. Elder Ahmad S. Corbitt discussed the Christian principles of loving God and neighbor as foundations for addressing global challenges. H.E. Sheikh Al-Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah offered closing remarks, emphasizing the need for unity in addressing global challenges. He asked for people of faith to unite their voices for peace.

The session also included video messages from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, and Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa, founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists. These messages reinforced the global nature of the forum and the shared commitment to interfaith cooperation on pressing issues.

A unique element of the plenary was the inclusion of a young indigenous leader's perspective. Taissa Silva da Costa (Taissa Kambeba) spoke passionately about the importance of including indigenous voices in discussions on sustainability and environmental protection.

The opening plenary set a tone of urgency, hope, and interfaith cooperation for the remainder of the forum. It highlighted the interconnectedness of global challenges and the vital role that religious communities can play in addressing them.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the plenary session:

- Urgent need for action on climate change and environmental protection
- Importance of including diverse voices, especially indigenous perspectives, in global discussions
- Role of education and ethical values in creating a sustainable world
- Need for interfaith cooperation to address global challenges
- Emphasis on leaving no one behind in pursuit of sustainable development
- Recognition of the moral authority of faith communities in influencing global policy
- Commitment to leveraging faith networks for climate action and social justice

Importance of long-term thinking and leadership in addressing global crises
Call for increased visibility and participation of faith communities in global forums like the G20 Plenary #2: 2024
Imperatives and Interfaith Contributions

*Moderated by **Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves**, the panel featured **David Beckmann** of Circle of Protection and President Emeritus of Bread for the World; **Eric LeCompte**, Executive Director, Jubilee USA Network, **David Saperstein**, Senior Advisor for Policy, the Union for Reform Judaism; and **Chief Dr. Doliwura Zakaria**, Chairman, African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum, with **Elcior Santana**, Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University (joining virtually). The session addressed the multifaceted crises and challenges confronting G20 leaders and the role of interfaith contributions in addressing these issues.*

Overview

The session began with Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves introducing the panel and setting the context for the discussion on 2024 imperatives and interfaith contributions.

David Beckmann opened the panel by discussing the Circle of Protection, a U.S.-based advocacy coalition of church bodies representing 100 million people. He emphasized the need to revive progress against hunger and poverty as a foundational priority for faith leaders. Beckmann highlighted the unprecedented progress made against extreme poverty in recent decades but noted that this progress has stalled and, in some cases, reversed. He called for faith leaders to teach about social justice and help build push organizations to advocate for the disadvantaged.

Beckmann also introduced the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, an initiative proposed by President Lula of Brazil and set to launch at the upcoming G20 summit. He encouraged the Interfaith Forum to support this alliance by recruiting governments to join and make commitments to overcome hunger and poverty.

Eric LeCompte of Jubilee USA Network spoke about the biblical concept of Jubilee and its relevance to current economic challenges. He emphasized three key areas where the G20 needs to take action: debt relief, sufficient economic aid to end poverty and protect the planet, and addressing climate finance. LeCompte stressed the importance of the faith community's voice in influencing G20 decisions on these issues.

David Saperstein provided a broader context for the interfaith efforts, highlighting the unprecedented level of multi-faith dialogue and cooperation in human history. He emphasized the "fierce urgency of now," referencing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and outlined the critical global challenges that require immediate attention, including climate change, threats to democracy, and economic injustice. Saperstein stressed the unique moral voice that religious communities can bring to these issues.

Chief Dr. Doliwura Zakaria spoke about the African Union's recognition of the role of faith leaders in ensuring peace and development across the continent. He outlined several key areas where interfaith contributions are crucial, including peacebuilding and conflict resolution, countering extremism, promoting human rights and dignity, humanitarian efforts, climate action, and public policy advocacy.

Elcior Santana, joining virtually, focused on three interrelated issues: debt, climate finance, and global financial institutions. He emphasized the need for debt relief and the challenges posed by rising interest rates, especially for developing countries. Santana also highlighted the importance of climate finance and the need for reform in global financial institutions to better represent the voices of developing countries.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the plenary session:

- Urgent need to revive progress against hunger and poverty
- Importance of supporting the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty
- Call for debt relief and reform of global financial systems
- Need for increased climate finance and action
- Recognition of the unique moral voice religious communities can bring to global challenges
- Importance of interfaith cooperation in addressing issues like peacebuilding, human rights, and climate action
- Opportunity to leverage the 2025 Jubilee year for faith-based initiatives on economic and social justice
- Call for reform of global financial institutions to better represent developing countries
- Emphasis on the role of faith leaders in promoting peace and development, especially in Africa
- Recognition of the interconnectedness of global challenges and the need for comprehensive solutions

A1: Religious Freedom in Brazil

*The session was moderated by **Flavio Alegretti de Campos Cooper**, Justice at the Labor Court of São Paulo, and **Renata Bahrampour**, Area Coordinator at the Office of External Relations of the Bahá'í Community of Brazil. The session featured an introduction by **Irenilda Aparecida Maria Francisco (Iya Gilda)**, General Coordinator for Religious Freedom at the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, followed by short issue statements from **various religious leaders and experts in Brazil** (see below). The concluding remarks were given by **Gary Doxey**, Associate Director for the International Center for Law and Religious Studies.*

Overview

The session began with an introduction highlighting the importance of religious freedom in Brazil, a country with significant religious diversity. Irenilda Aparecida Maria Francisco emphasized the role of the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship in promoting and protecting religious freedom as a fundamental right.

Several speakers provided brief statements on various aspects of religious freedom in Brazil:

Christine Alves Bastos, Women of Axé Collective, spoke about the challenges faced by practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions, emphasizing the need for greater recognition and protection of their religious practices.

Damaris Moura Kuo, Sub-Mayor of São Paulo, discussed the importance of religious freedom in the context of local governance and the need for policies that ensure equal treatment of all religious groups.

Girrad MahmoudSammour, President of the National Association of Islamic Jurists (ANAJI), addressed the concerns of the Muslim community in Brazil, highlighting issues of religious discrimination and the importance of interfaith dialogue.

Thiago Vieira from the Brazilian Institute of Law and Religion (IBDR) focused on the legal aspects of religious freedom in Brazil, discussing recent court cases and legislative developments affecting religious rights.

André Fagundes, an associate researcher at the Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion (CEDIRE), presented research findings on the state of religious freedom in Brazil, identifying both progress and ongoing challenges.

Bruno Silva Augusto, Vice President of the Law and Religious Freedom Committee of OAB/PR, discussed the role of legal professionals in protecting religious freedom and advocating for the rights of religious minorities.

Andrea Letícia Carvalho Guimarães, also from CEDIRE, addressed the intersection of religious freedom with other human rights issues, such as gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights.

Samuel Gomes de Lima from the Brazilian Association for Religious Freedom and Citizenship (ABLIRC) spoke about the importance of civic engagement and education in promoting religious tolerance and understanding.

Odacyr Carlos Prigol, Brazil Area Director at J. Reuben Clark Law Society, discussed the role of faith-based organizations in promoting religious freedom and social justice.

Evaldo Dias Lima Filho, Advisor on Inter-Religious Dialogue at Amazonizar Network, highlighted the unique challenges and perspectives of indigenous religious practices in the Amazon region.

Martinho Arnaldo Campos Carmona, a parliamentarian and evangelical pastor, provided insights on the role of religious leaders in shaping public policy and promoting religious freedom.

Themes

Throughout the session, several key themes emerged:

1. The diversity of religious experiences in Brazil, ranging from Afro-Brazilian traditions to mainstream Christian denominations, Islam, and indigenous spiritual practices.
2. The ongoing challenges faced by religious minorities, including discrimination, lack of recognition, and sometimes violence.
3. The importance of legal protections for religious freedom and the need for effective enforcement of existing laws.
4. The role of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in promoting religious tolerance and understanding.
5. The intersection of religious freedom with other social issues, such as racial equality, gender rights, and environmental concerns.
6. The need for greater education and awareness about religious diversity and the principles of religious freedom.
7. The importance of balancing religious freedom with other fundamental rights and societal values.

Speakers emphasized that while Brazil has made significant progress in protecting religious freedom, there is still work to be done. They called for greater cooperation between religious communities, civil society organizations, and government institutions to address ongoing challenges.

Conclusion

In his concluding remarks, **Gary Doxey** highlighted the global significance of Brazil's experience with religious freedom. He noted that as one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world, Brazil's successes and challenges in this area offer important lessons for other nations. Doxey emphasized the need for continued vigilance in protecting religious freedom and the

importance of fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding among different faith traditions.

The session concluded with a call to action for all participants to continue working towards a Brazil where all individuals can freely practice their faith without fear of discrimination or persecution. Speakers emphasized the importance of religious freedom not just as a legal right, but as a fundamental aspect of human dignity and social harmony.

Takeaways

Key takeaways from the session included:

- The need for stronger legal protections and enforcement mechanisms for religious freedom
- The importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in promoting religious tolerance
- The role of education in combating religious discrimination and promoting understanding
- The interconnectedness of religious freedom with other human rights and social justice issues
- The unique challenges faced by indigenous and Afro-Brazilian religious practices
- The potential for Brazil to serve as a model for religious pluralism and freedom on the global stage



A2: Religious Engagement on Food Security

*The session was moderated by **Maurice Bloem**, President/CEO of the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI), and **Romanna Remor**, Chair of the Board of Directors of Roble del Sur Foundation. The panel featured experts from various faith-based organizations and government agencies, including **Asma Lateef**, Policy and Advocacy lead at the SDG2 Advocacy Hub (participating virtually); **Peter Prove**, Director, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches; **Andrea Kaufmann**, Director, Faith and External Engagement, World Vision International; **Cleusa Alves**, Vice President of Caritas Brazil; **Paulo Lopes**, Director, South American Division, ADRA International; and **Renato Godinho**, Special Advisor, Brazil's Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family, and Fight Against Hunger.*

Overview

The session began with an introduction highlighting the importance of faith-based organizations in addressing food security issues globally. Renato Godinho provided an overview of Brazil's Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty initiative, emphasizing the country's experience in successfully reducing hunger through nationally led policy instruments. He explained that the alliance aims to mobilize partnerships between national governments, financial institutions, and knowledge organizations to implement effective programs against hunger and poverty.

Asma Lateef, joining virtually, stressed the urgency of addressing the current food crisis, noting that 150 million more people are hungry today than in 2019. She highlighted the importance of financing in supporting the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, particularly through mechanisms like the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) replenishment.

Paulo Lopes shared a successful case study from Brasilia, where the cultivation of medicinal and traditional herbs has played a crucial role in ensuring food security for local communities while also preserving cultural traditions and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

Cleusa Alves presented the experience of Caritas Brazil in addressing hunger and poverty through their annual fraternity campaign and various initiatives such as supporting seed houses and fostering economic solidarity groups.

Andrea Kaufmann emphasized the role of faith communities in transformative approaches to hunger, nutrition, and food systems. She highlighted three key areas where faith actors contribute: providing immediate support to those in need, acting as stewards of land and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and serving as social mobilizers for policy change.

Peter Prove shared the World Council of Churches' "Ten Commandments on Food," a set of principles aimed at promoting responsible and ethical food practices. He also discussed the rising challenge of food insecurity due to conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change, highlighting the specific case of Kiribati as an example of extreme vulnerability to food insecurity and climate change.

Themes

Throughout the session, several key themes emerged:

1. The critical role of faith-based organizations in addressing hunger and food security at local, national, and global levels.
2. The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and government-led initiatives in combating hunger and poverty.
3. The need for sustainable and culturally appropriate approaches to food security, including support for small-scale farmers and traditional agricultural practices.
4. The interconnectedness of food security with other issues such as climate change, conflict, and economic development.
5. The potential for faith-based organizations to influence policy and mobilize resources for food security initiatives.

Takeaways

Key takeaways from the session included:

- The importance of national-level systems and policies in addressing hunger and poverty
- The need for increased financing and support for food security initiatives, particularly through mechanisms like the World Bank's concessional lending arm, International Development Association (IDA)
- The value of traditional and sustainable agricultural practices in ensuring food security and preserving cultural heritage
- The potential for faith-based organizations to serve as bridges between communities, governments, and international organizations in addressing food security issues
- The urgency of addressing hunger and malnutrition, particularly in light of recent global crises and ongoing challenges like climate change

A3: Faith in Action: World Economic Forum (WEF) and USAID

*The session, moderated by **Judd Birdsall**, Assistant Professor of Practice, Georgetown University, featured presentations on recent strategic reviews by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) regarding their engagement with faith-based organizations and religious actors. Speakers included **Jack Hildebrand and David Sangokoya** from WEF (joining virtually), **Peter Mandaville**, Senior Advisor for Faith Engagement, USAID and **Katherine Thompson**, Senior Program Analyst, Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, USAID, with commentary from **Kimberly Parent**, External Affairs Officer, World Bank.*

Overview

David Sangokoya and Jack Hildebrand presented WEF's "Faith in Action" report, released in early 2024. They highlighted the Forum's long-standing engagement with religious leaders and the growing interest among business partners in engaging with faith communities. The report emphasizes three fundamental factors of religion and spirituality: community, creed, and citizenship. It showcases current impacts of faith-based organizations, explores partnerships between global leaders and faith sectors, and addresses challenges in engaging with religious actors.

Peter Mandaville introduced USAID's work with faith-based organizations, dating back to the 1960s. He highlighted the agency's Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, established in 2002, which serves as an entry point for faith-based organizations, builds capacity within USAID's workforce, and focuses on policy and outward partnership building. Mandaville emphasized USAID's recent "Building Bridges: Strategic Religious Engagement Policy," the first comprehensive policy by a U.S. federal agency explaining why and how they work with faith-based partners.

Katherine Thompson elaborated on USAID's policy, which aims to strengthen partnerships with religious actors, build workforce capacity, and integrate strategic religious engagement across the agency. The policy outlines a four-step framework: surveying the landscape, laying the foundation, building together, and maintaining and repairing partnerships.

Kimberly Parent from the World Bank discussed their approach to faith engagement, emphasizing the need for two-way communication and the importance of hearing from communities about their needs and expertise. She highlighted the World Bank's efforts to engage with faith-based organizations and religious actors at both global and local levels.

Themes


Key themes that emerged from the discussion included:

1. The growing recognition of the importance of faith-based actors in development and humanitarian work.

2. The need for mutual understanding and capacity building between international organizations and faith communities.
3. The importance of inclusive engagement that goes beyond formal religious hierarchies to include grassroots leaders and diverse voices.
4. The potential for faith-based partnerships to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and social cohesion.
5. The challenges of navigating power dynamics and ensuring authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships.

Takeaways

Key takeaways included:

- The growing importance of faith engagement in international development and business sectors
 - The need for more inclusive, equitable, and context-sensitive approaches to faith partnerships
 - The importance of addressing power dynamics and ensuring mutual learning and benefit
 - The potential for faith-based collaborations to contribute significantly to addressing global challenges
 - The ongoing need for capacity building and improved understanding on all sides
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A4: Rebuilding from COVID-19

*The panel, moderated by **Salette Aquino**, United Religions Initiative, Brazil and **Stefan Sengstmann**, World Vision and PaRD, featured speakers from various health organizations and faith-based groups discussing the challenges and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists included **Doug Fountain**, Executive Director, Christian Connections for International Health; **Monica Paschoal Nogueira**, Orthopedic Surgeon, Hospital do Servidor Público Estadual in São Paulo; **Abdul Muti**, Secretary General, Muhammadiyah, Indonesia; **Lely Guzman**, Pan American Health Organization, **Ricardo Gadelha de Abreu**, Social Policy Analyst, Brazil's Ministry of Health, and **Ahmed Shehata**, CEO, Islamic Relief USA.*

Overview

The session began with an acknowledgment of the personal toll of the pandemic, with Salette Aquino sharing her experience of losing a family member to COVID-19. Stefan Sengstmann emphasized the importance of learning from the pandemic to prepare for future health crises.

Key themes that emerged from the discussion included:

1. The need for a holistic approach to health systems that can handle multifaceted challenges.
2. The importance of community-based responses and the role of faith-based organizations in health crises.
3. The ongoing mental health impacts of the pandemic and the need for increased support.
4. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations and the need for equitable health solutions.
5. The importance of accurate information dissemination and combating misinformation.

Doug Fountain emphasized the need to avoid obsessing over the next pandemic at the expense of other health challenges. He highlighted the importance of addressing mental health issues, particularly among young people in low and middle-income countries.

Monica Paschoal Nogueira presented a case study on treating clubfoot deformities, emphasizing the importance of continuing non-COVID-related healthcare during the pandemic. She stressed the need for local autonomy in treating such conditions.

Abdul Muti shared Indonesia's experience in managing the pandemic, highlighting the importance of interfaith cooperation and community-based approaches. He emphasized the need for disaster resilience and reinterpreting religious texts to support public health measures.

Lely Guzman discussed the Pan American Health Organization's role in the Americas, emphasizing the need for strengthening global health architecture and ensuring equitable access to vaccines and treatments.

Ricardo Gadelha de Abreu shared Brazil's experience in vaccine development and distribution, highlighting the country's success in providing free vaccines to its population.

Ahmed Shehata discussed Islamic Relief USA's role in supporting communities during the pandemic, including efforts to maintain religious practices while adhering to public health guidelines. He emphasized the importance of interfaith cooperation and supporting financially struggling religious institutions.

The discussion also touched on the challenges faced by faith communities during lockdowns and the need for balanced approaches that respect both public health needs and religious freedoms.

Action Points

Key action points for the G20 included:

1. Invest in mapping and understanding faith-based health assets and their potential contributions to global health.
2. Strengthen community-based approaches to health crises and disaster resilience.
3. Develop more inclusive and equitable global health systems that leave no one behind.
4. Address the mental health impacts of the pandemic, particularly among young people.
5. Ease processes for NGOs and faith-based organizations to operate and transfer funds during crises.
6. Invest in local capacity building for health systems and pandemic preparedness.
7. Ensure equitable access to vaccines and treatments globally.
8. Develop policies that balance public health needs with religious freedoms during crises.

A5: Sacred Sites

The session was moderated by **W. Cole Durham Jr.**, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum, and **Marcio Henrique Pereira Ponzilacqua**, Vice Dean, Faculty of Law, Ribeirão Preto, University of São Paulo. Panelists included **Knox Thames**, Professor, Pepperdine University, **Archbishop Nikitas**, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, President of Conference of European Churches; **Elizabeta Kitanovic**, the Conference of European Churches; **Maria Claudia Bucchianeri Pinheiro**, former judge of Brazil's Supreme Electoral Court; **Rabbi Simantob Nigri**, Israelite Union of Peru, Vice President, Interreligious Council of Peru, Religions for Peace, and **Imam Marwan Gill**, Imam, Argentina's Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Themes

Key themes and points discussed:

1. The potential of sacred sites to promote pluralism and interfaith dialogue: Knox Thames highlighted the unique role sacred sites can play in fostering conversations about diversity and respect for others' beliefs. He proposed a framework for leveraging sacred sites to promote pluralism in locally acceptable, flexible, and sustainable ways.
2. Challenges to protecting sacred sites: Archbishop Nikitas raised concerns about the destruction and exploitation of sacred sites due to greed, war, colonialism, and tourism. He emphasized the need to return stolen artifacts and protect indigenous sacred lands.
3. The Franciscan perspective on sacred spaces: Marcio Ponzilacqua discussed the Franciscan view of all nature as sacred, emphasizing the interconnectedness of humans and the environment.
4. Religious intolerance and violence against sacred sites: Maria Claudia Bucchianeri Pinheiro highlighted the increasing attacks on Afro-Brazilian religious sites in Brazil, linking this to growing religious intolerance and political polarization.
5. Islamic perspective on protecting sacred sites: Imam Marwan Gill emphasized the Islamic duty to protect not only mosques but all places of worship. He stressed the importance of converting hearts into sacred spaces to foster respect for all sacred sites.
6. Jewish perspective and concerns: Rabbi Simantob Nigri discussed the concept of sacred places in Judaism and raised concerns about the destruction of Jewish cemeteries and other sacred sites.
7. Financial support for protecting sacred sites: Elizabeta Kitanovic proposed establishing a global fund for sacred sites, encouraging national governments to allocate dedicated budgets, and promoting public-private partnerships for site preservation.
8. Indigenous perspectives and challenges: Several participants raised concerns about the protection of indigenous sacred sites, which are often not recognized or protected in the same way as more conventional religious sites.
9. Digital preservation and technology: The potential use of digital technology for preserving and documenting sacred sites was discussed.

10. Legal and political challenges: Discussions touched on issues of church-state separation, property rights, and the complexities of sites with layered historical and religious significance.

Recommendations

Key recommendations and action points:

1. Establish a global council or commission to provide advice and share experiences on protecting sacred sites.
2. Create a global fund for the preservation and protection of sacred sites.
3. Develop more inclusive legal frameworks that recognize and protect indigenous sacred sites.
4. Promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the protection of sacred sites.
5. Address the root causes of religious intolerance and political polarization that lead to attacks on sacred sites.
6. Explore the use of digital technologies for preservation and education about sacred sites.
7. Improve religious literacy and understanding of diverse sacred spaces among policymakers and the general public.
8. Encourage national governments to allocate dedicated budgets for the protection of sacred sites.
9. Foster community engagement and ownership in the preservation of sacred sites.
10. Develop strategies to balance the needs of worshippers with the preservation of historical and cultural heritage.

A6: Acting on Disinformation and Social Media: Incitement to Violence

*The session, moderated by **Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves**, Chair of Local Organizing Committee for IF20, and **Luiza Guimarães Cavalcanti Spinassé**, Institutional representative of the Baha'i Community of Brazil, featured speakers from various backgrounds discussing the challenges of disinformation, hate speech, and social media incitement to violence, particularly in relation to religion and belief. Panelists included **Michael Wiener**, Human Right Officer at the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (attending virtually); **Nazila Ghanea**, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief; (attending virtually); **Jayme Weingartner Neto**, Justice at the Justice Court of Rio Grande do Sul, Professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul; **Fábio Carvalho Leite**, Professor, Potifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro; **Thiago Alves Pinto**, Departmental Lecturer, University of Oxford; and **Angela Redding**, Executive Director, Radiant Foundation.*

Themes

Key themes and points discussed:

1. Legal frameworks and international standards: Speakers highlighted the importance of international standards such as the Rabat Plan of Action and UN resolutions on combating intolerance. The role of criminal justice in addressing hate speech was discussed, with most panelists agreeing that it should be used as a last resort.
2. Social media responsibility: The responsibility of social media companies in moderating content and preventing the spread of hate speech was a major focus. Panelists discussed the challenges of balancing freedom of expression with the need to combat harmful content.
3. Religious discrimination and intolerance: Several speakers addressed the specific challenges faced by religious minorities, including Afro-Brazilian religions in Brazil and the rise of antisemitism globally.
4. Misinformation vs. disinformation: Thiago Alves Pinto clarified the distinction between misinformation (accidentally spread inaccurate information) and disinformation (intentionally spread false information to cause harm).
5. The role of education and media literacy: Panelists emphasized the importance of education and media literacy in combating disinformation and hate speech.
6. Contextual understanding: The need to consider the context in which potentially harmful speech occurs was stressed, with references to the Rabat Plan of Action's six-part threshold test.
7. Positive representation of religion in media: Angela Redding presented research showing the prevalence of negative portrayals of religion in media and called for more balanced and positive representations.
8. Intersectionality of discrimination: Speakers noted that religious discrimination often intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism.

9. The role of religious leaders: The importance of religious leaders in countering hate speech and promoting tolerance was discussed.
10. Technology and content moderation: The use of AI and other technologies in content moderation on social media platforms was addressed, along with the challenges and potential benefits.

Recommendations

Key recommendations and action points:

1. Implement and promote the use of international standards like the Rabat Plan of Action in addressing hate speech and incitement to violence.
2. Encourage social media companies to adopt more transparent and effective content moderation policies based on human rights standards.
3. Promote education and media literacy programs to help individuals critically evaluate information and recognize disinformation.
4. Support research on the impacts of hate speech and disinformation, particularly on religious communities.
5. Encourage positive and balanced representations of religion in media.
6. Foster interfaith dialogue and cooperation to counter religious intolerance and discrimination.
7. Develop comprehensive approaches that address the root causes of hate speech and intolerance, rather than relying solely on criminal justice measures.
8. Strengthen partnerships between governments, civil society organizations, and tech companies to combat disinformation and hate speech.
9. Promote the use of counter-speech and positive narratives to combat hate speech and disinformation.
10. Support the development of local and culturally appropriate strategies to address hate speech and disinformation in different contexts.

B1: Women Building Peace and Resilient Communities

*Speakers included **Musimbi Kanyoro**, Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, and **Paola Spikes**, Judge at the Federal Court of Rio de Janeiro, as moderators, along with **Maricarmen Plata**, Secretary for Access to Rights and Equity, Organization of American States; **Bani Dugal**, Principal Representative to the United Nations, the Baha'i International Community; **Anne Simmons-Benton**, W20 USA Co-Chair (joining virtually); **Elcimar Dias Pereira**, International Advisor at Geledés Black Women's Institute; **Kathia Kozlowski**, Manager of Government Relations, CONIB; and **Rachel Tavernor**, Programme Strategist on Gender Justice, ACT Alliance. The session aimed to highlight priority areas for further analysis and action on gender issues within the G20 and Interfaith Forum agendas.*

Overview

The session began with opening remarks from the moderators, who emphasized the importance of women's equality and leadership as central to global progress, as highlighted in the G20 agenda. They noted that while women have always played significant roles in religious communities, their contributions are often underrecognized. The moderators framed the discussion as an opportunity to deepen understanding, share insights, and identify actionable steps to amplify women's roles in peacebuilding and creating resilient communities.

Maricarmen Plata from the Organization of American States provided a multilateral perspective, highlighting the low number of women in leadership positions in multilateral organizations. She emphasized the importance of promoting women's voices and creating spaces for dialogue at the multilateral level. Plata discussed three key components for advancing women's participation: focus on pluralism, civil society engagement, and intersectionality.

Bani Dugal from the Baha'i International Community spoke about reconceptualizing peace and security to include access to social services, education, and community well-being. She emphasized the importance of women and men working together with people of all faiths to transform societies and make them more resilient.

Anne Simmons-Benton presented on behalf of the W20 (Women 20), an official G20 engagement group. She outlined the W20's mission to remove barriers to women-led development and ensure an enabling environment for women to thrive. Simmons-Benton detailed the W20's five priority areas for the current year: women's entrepreneurship, women in STEM, the care economy, tackling violence against women, and climate justice.

Elcimar Dias Pereira from Geledés Black Women's Institute spoke about the challenges faced by Black women in Brazil and the importance of addressing racial and gender inequalities simultaneously. She emphasized the need for intersectional approaches in policymaking and community-building efforts.

Kathia Kozlowski shared perspectives from the Jewish community in Brazil, discussing the role of women in preserving cultural and religious traditions while also pushing for greater equality and leadership opportunities within religious institutions.

Rachel Tavernor from ACT Alliance highlighted the pivotal role of faith-based actors in advancing gender equality and contributing to peacebuilding and resilience. She emphasized the need to address patriarchal interpretations of religious texts and transform social norms to promote gender justice.

The session included a roundtable discussion where speakers shared their experiences and insights on women's leadership in various contexts. They discussed strategies for overcoming barriers to women's participation and the importance of engaging men as allies in the pursuit of gender equality.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the plenary session included:

- Recognize and amplify the contributions of women in building peace and resilient communities, particularly within faith-based contexts
- Advocate for increased representation of women in leadership positions across all sectors, including multilateral organizations and religious institutions
- Promote intersectional approaches to address the unique challenges faced by women from diverse backgrounds, including racial and ethnic minorities
- Reconceptualize peace and security to include access to social services, education, and community well-being
- Engage men as allies in promoting gender equality and transforming patriarchal norms
- Increase funding and resources dedicated to women's empowerment initiatives and gender-specific programs
- Address discriminatory interpretations of religious texts and cultural norms that limit women's participation and leadership
- Foster dialogue and collaboration between faith-based actors and policymakers to advance gender equality
- Promote women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship support and access to markets
- Prioritize gender mainstreaming in all policy areas, including climate justice and violence prevention
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms for existing gender equality laws and policies
- Support grassroots women's organizations and movements working to build peace and resilience at the community level

B2: Communities of African Descent: Group and Individual Rights

*The session was moderated by **Quezia Barreto**, Director of Communication and Publicity of the National Association of Islamic Jurists, and **Alexis Artaud-de-la-Ferriere**, Professor at the University of London. Speakers included **Babalawô Ivanir dos Santos**, Professor, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; **Nicholas Miller**, Director of the International Religious Liberty Institute; **Isabela Cristine Dario**, the Institute for the Defense of the Rights of Afro-Brazilian Religions, and President of the Religious Freedom Commission of the Bar Association, Minas Gerais Section; and **Fernando de La Rocque Couto**, ICEFLU - Ceu do Planalto.*

Overview

The session began with brief introductions by the moderators, who outlined the purpose of the discussion and its relevance to the broader G20 agenda. They emphasized the importance of addressing both group and individual rights in the context of communities of African descent, particularly in Brazil. The moderators then invited each panelist to present a short introductory statement of approximately 5 minutes.

Babalawô Ivanir dos Santos began by providing historical context for the challenges faced by Afro-Brazilian communities, emphasizing the long-standing issues of racism and religious intolerance. He highlighted the importance of recognizing and protecting traditional African-derived religious practices in Brazil.

Nicholas Miller followed, discussing the evolution of the session's focus from previous meetings. He emphasized the need to broaden the conversation beyond just indigenous peoples to include Afro-Brazilian communities and other traditional groups. Miller also stressed the importance of balancing collective rights with individual freedoms, particularly in the context of religious liberty.

Isabela Cristine Dario spoke about the legal challenges faced by Afro-Brazilian religious communities and the work being done to protect their rights. She emphasized the intersection of racial and religious discrimination and the need for comprehensive legal frameworks to address these issues.

Fernando de La Rocque Couto provided insights into the spiritual and cultural practices of Afro-Brazilian communities, highlighting the importance of preserving these traditions while also allowing for individual choice and autonomy.

Following the initial presentations, the moderators opened the floor for a roundtable discussion. This allowed panelists to engage with each other's ideas and delve deeper into specific issues.

Topics

Key topics that emerged during this discussion included:

1. The tension between group autonomy and individual rights within traditional communities
2. The challenges of defining and protecting religious freedom for non-Western spiritual practices
3. The impact of historical racism and colonialism on current legal and social structures
4. The role of education in combating religious intolerance and promoting cultural understanding

Draft Policy

The session also included a presentation of a draft policy document that had been developed in previous meetings. Alexis Artaud-de-la-Ferriere explained that this document aimed to provide guidelines for protecting the rights of indigenous and traditional peoples, including Afro-Brazilian communities. The panelists and audience members were invited to provide feedback and suggestions for improving the document.

A notable quote came from Isabela Cristine Dario, who emphasized the importance of recognizing the unique challenges faced by Afro-Brazilian communities:

"We need to understand that the racism experienced by Afro-Brazilian communities is not just about skin color, but also about the criminalization and stigmatization of their religious and cultural practices. Our legal frameworks must address this intersectionality to truly protect the rights of these communities."

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session included:

- Recognize the need to broaden the scope of discussions on indigenous and traditional peoples' rights to explicitly include Afro-Brazilian communities
- Address the tension between collective rights and individual freedoms within traditional communities
- Develop more inclusive definitions of religion and spirituality that can accommodate non-Western belief systems
- Strengthen legal frameworks to protect against both racial and religious discrimination
- Promote education and cultural understanding to combat religious intolerance
- Continue refining the draft policy document to ensure it adequately addresses the needs of all relevant communities
- Engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives from diverse communities to inform policy development
- Explore the concept of "material religion" as a potential framework for understanding and protecting traditional spiritual practices
- Address the historical context of racism and colonialism in developing policies for equitable inclusion
- Consider the global implications of these discussions, recognizing that similar challenges exist in many countries

B3: Child Dignity in the Digital World

*The session was moderated by **Mustafa Y. Ali**, Secretary General of Arigatou International - Kenya, and featured a distinguished panel of speakers including **Rabbi Diana Gerson**, Associate Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis, Senior Advisor, Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities; **Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome**, Secretary General, Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR); **Rev. Wellington Pereira Silva**, Director of Institutional Relations, World Vision Brazil; and **John Dye**, Executive Director of Skylight. The session aimed to explore the impacts of online threats to children, highlight the importance of education and family empowerment, and identify actionable steps for religious communities to protect children's dignity in the digital world.*

Overview

The session began with Mustafa Y. Ali introducing the topic and emphasizing the significance of addressing child safety in the digital realm. He highlighted how technological advancements, while beneficial, also pose significant risks to children, including cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation, and abuse.

Rabbi Diana Gerson opened the discussion by sharing sobering statistics about children's access to digital devices. She noted that giving children unrestricted access to the internet is akin to "giving the world access to our children." Gerson stressed the need for parental involvement and education to ensure children's safety online.

Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome followed, emphasizing the role of religion in guiding children's use of technology. He stated, "Religion must help us understand the world we are living in today and how to deal with the challenges of today." Lethome advocated for a balanced approach, recognizing both the benefits and risks of digital technology.

Rev. Wellington Pereira Silva spoke about the importance of parental engagement and the need for religious leaders to address digital safety issues within their communities. He highlighted the gap between parents' technological knowledge and their children's digital literacy, calling for more education and support for parents.

John Dye, representing Skylight, shared alarming statistics about mental health issues among young adults, linking many of these problems to excessive digital device use. He emphasized the need for a spiritual connection in addressing these challenges, stating:

"We believe that if you want to have a full and fulfilling life, God has to be a constant in that mathematical equation of life. And if God is absent, the equation doesn't balance."

The session then opened up for questions and comments from the audience. Participants raised concerns about poverty's impact on parents' ability to monitor their children's online activities, the role of governments in promoting religious education as a counterbalance to digital risks, and practical advice for parents of young children.

In response to these questions, the panelists emphasized the need for community involvement in child protection. Rabbi Gerson stated:

"We need to make sure that we're empowering people, not making them scared of it. But we actually have to show them how to use it in a way that does enhance one's dignity."

The panelists agreed on the importance of leading by example, with Sheikh Lethome encouraging parents to model responsible digital behavior for their children. They also stressed the need for interfaith cooperation in addressing these challenges, as the digital world affects children regardless of their religious background.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session include:

- Develop comprehensive online safety curriculums for both children and adults
- Establish task forces or committees within religious communities to address digital safety
- Encourage parents to engage with their children's online activities and model responsible digital behavior
- Promote interfaith collaboration to create a united front against online threats to children
- Advocate for the inclusion of religious education in schools as a means to combat digital risks
- Create supportive environments and after-school programs to ensure children have safe spaces away from unrestricted internet access
- Leverage technology positively to enhance spiritual connections and mental well-being
- Encourage open dialogue about online experiences between parents and children
- Advocate for government policies that protect children's dignity in the digital world
- Recognize that protecting children online is a collective responsibility involving parents, educators, religious leaders, and technology providers

B4: Poverty and Inequality

*The session was moderated by **Deepika Singh**, Deputy Secretary General of Religions for Peace, and **Asher Maoz**, Founding Dean and Head of International Relations at Peres Academic Center, Tel Aviv University. The panel featured speakers including **Fred Nyabera**, Director of End Child Poverty, Arigatou International; **Rev. Harold Segura**, Director of Faith and Development, World Vision Latin America and the Caribbean, Benjamin Laniado, Founder of CADENA; and **Francisco Hernández**, Director, Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano y Caribeño (CELAM). The session aimed to explore religious approaches to poverty and inequality, highlight Brazil's experiences, and discuss contested definitions and solutions.*

Overview

The session began with Asher Maoz providing a theological framework for addressing poverty, citing biblical passages and rabbinic teachings. He emphasized that while God created an imperfect world, humans have a responsibility to improve it. Maoz highlighted the Jewish concept of tzedakah (righteous giving), noting it is not merely charity but a religious obligation.

Deepika Singh then introduced the session's focus, reminding attendees that over 700 million people still live in extreme poverty worldwide. She emphasized the need for comprehensive strategies involving religious communities, institutions, and faith-based organizations working alongside other sectors of society.

Fred Nyabera from Arigatou International focused on child poverty, emphasizing that inequality is a critical driver of poverty affecting children. He argued for a broader definition of poverty beyond monetary measures, considering multidimensional aspects like access to education, healthcare, and social inclusion. Nyabera stated:

"Child poverty is more than an economic issue. It is a moral crisis that undermines the well-being of all society." He stressed the importance of addressing both immediate needs and long-term structural issues to combat child poverty effectively.

Rev. Harold Segura discussed the moral and spiritual dimensions of poverty and inequality. He presented statistics on food insecurity among migrant and Afro-descendant children in Latin America, arguing that these figures contradict the core teachings of all faiths emphasizing justice and compassion. Segura called for collaboration among religious communities to address poverty and inequality through economic measures and by promoting justice and human dignity.

Benjamin Laniado shared his experience founding CADENA, an NGO providing humanitarian response in disasters worldwide. He emphasized the power of faith in inspiring young people to help those in need. However, Laniado acknowledged the limitations of NGOs in solving structural problems, stating that they could not solve the structural problems of the countries.

Francisco Hernández emphasized the need for collective action to transition from less humane to more humane conditions. He called for including indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and the poor as central voices in social dialogue. Hernández advocated for fair and sustainable trade practices, protecting labor rights, and prohibiting forced and child labor.

Panelists and audience members shared various examples of faith-based initiatives addressing poverty:

1. The Indonesian government's zakat (Islamic alms) collection and distribution programs, including the development of "Zakat Villages" to help poor communities become self-sufficient.
2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' practice of monthly fasting and donating the cost of skipped meals to help the needy, which raised \$1.36 billion in the past year.
3. Legal empowerment programs for the poor, such as providing birth certificates to children in Sri Lanka and the Philippines to ensure access to education and health services.
4. Training programs for people living with HIV in Ethiopia, enabling them to engage in income-generating activities and regain their dignity.
5. The World Council of Churches' promotion of an "economy of life" and the "Zacchaeus Tax" campaign, inspired by biblical principles of economic justice.

Panelists emphasized the need for a multifaceted approach to addressing poverty and inequality, combining immediate assistance with efforts to change structural issues. They stressed the importance of interfaith collaboration, advocacy for policy changes, and partnerships between religious organizations, governments, and civil society.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session include:

- Recognize poverty as a multidimensional issue that goes beyond income measures
- Address both immediate needs and long-term structural causes of poverty and inequality
- Promote interfaith collaboration to create a united front against poverty
- Engage in advocacy to influence government policies and structural changes
- Develop and support community-based initiatives that empower the poor
- Emphasize the restoration of human dignity alongside material assistance
- Encourage religious communities to fulfill their moral and spiritual obligations to help the needy
- Foster partnerships between faith-based organizations, governments, and civil society
- Promote fair and sustainable economic practices that protect labor rights and prohibit exploitation
- Include marginalized voices, such as indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, in decision-making processes

- Leverage the moral authority and community reach of religious institutions to mobilize resources and volunteers



B5: Faith-sensitive Mental Health and Psychosocial Support to Displaced Populations and People on the Move

*The session was moderated by **Andrea Kaufmann**, Director of Faith & External Engagement at World Vision International, and **Flávia Cristina Silveira Lemos**, Professor at the Federal University of Para. Speakers included **Dr. Mohammad Abo-Hilal**, MHPSS Consultant at Syria Bright Future; **Dr. Kathleen Rutledge**, Queen Margaret University (via video); **Nelson Arns Neumann**, Board of Directors of Pastoral da Criança International; and **Rachel Miner**, Founder and CEO of Bellwether International. The session aimed to identify barriers hindering access to faith and culturally sensitive mental health support for displaced children and to propose steps for donors, governments, and implementing agencies to uphold the rights of these children to such care.*

Overview

Andrea Kaufmann opened the session by highlighting the scale of the issue: globally, over 70 million children are displaced due to war, conflict, climate change, and economic migration. These children face increased exposure to violence, persecution, and poverty, leading to higher rates of stress and emotional challenges. Kaufmann emphasized that the current global mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) system is ill-equipped to respond to these children's needs, particularly those on the move who struggle to access formal systems.

Dr. Kathleen Rutledge, in a pre-recorded video, provided context on faith-sensitive MHPSS. She explained that this approach involves adapting standardized activities to the faith and cultural priorities of individuals. Rutledge emphasized that faith-sensitive MHPSS is not only a human right enshrined in various international conventions but also a practical necessity, given that 80% of the world's population has some form of faith affiliation.

Dr. Mohammad Abo-Hilal shared his experiences as a Syrian psychiatrist working with displaced populations. He highlighted the challenges of implementing faith-sensitive approaches in humanitarian settings, noting how faith is often not allowed to be brought up by mental health providers.

Abo-Hilal emphasized the need for a paradigm shift in humanitarian work, calling for more local funding mechanisms and greater respect for cultural and faith components in MHPSS interventions.

Rachel Miner presented Bellwether International's work with the Yazidi community in Iraq, demonstrating a successful implementation of faith-sensitive MHPSS. She shared impressive results from their program:

"100% of the women who have participated in our program report improved Mental Health outcomes. We've piloted our faith sensitive program with 300 Yazidi women, Yazidi women helping Yazidi women."

Miner stressed the importance of community-led approaches and the need to build trust over time for sustainable impact.

Nelson Arns Neumann discussed the challenges faced by Venezuelan immigrants in Brazil, highlighting the importance of integrating faith and cultural elements into MHPSS interventions. He emphasized the need for a holistic approach that considers not only mental health but also physical health, education, and social integration.

Action Points

Panelists agreed on several key action points:

1. Advocate for increased funding and support for locally led, faith-sensitive MHPSS initiatives.
2. Encourage collaboration between faith-based organizations, mental health professionals, and humanitarian agencies.
3. Promote the integration of faith-sensitive MHPSS into existing education and community systems.
4. Support research and evidence-gathering on the effectiveness of faith-sensitive MHPSS approaches.
5. Work towards decolonizing mental health practices and ensuring cultural relevance in MHPSS interventions.

Rachel Miner emphasized the importance of trust-building in implementing faith-sensitive approaches:

"The greatest challenge is trust. If you're going to work at a community level, people are not going to trust you initially. They're not going to trust your programing, especially in the Middle East... It's going to take longer to establish a faith sensitive approach. It's going to take more emotional energy to earn the trust of this community. But it will last longer. And it is sustainable because once you have trust and once you have an evidence-based program, it runs forever."

B6: Climate Finance at the G20 Interfaith Forum

*The session was moderated by **Eric LeCompte**, Executive Director of Jubilee USA Network. Panelists included **Ven. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati**, Secretary General of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance; **Cristina Reis**, Undersecretary for Sustainable Economic Development of the Ministry of Economy of Brazil; **Aharon Ariel Lavi**, The Ohr Torah Interfaith Center and the Blickle Institute for Interfaith Dialogue; **Carrick Reddin**, Manager of Faith and Sustainability Initiative at the World Resource Institute (WRI); and **Katherine Marshall**, Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Forum, Executive Director of World Faiths Development Dialogue. The session aimed to situate the challenges of financing adaptation and mitigation measures in the global context and explore the contributions of faith-based resource mobilization and accountability measures.*

Overview

Eric LeCompte opened the session by emphasizing the critical nature of climate finance in the G20 agenda. He highlighted the concept of climate debt, where the Global North owes a debt to the Global South for environmental degradation caused by resource extraction. LeCompte stressed the importance of clearly defining climate finance to ensure that aid for climate change impacts doesn't create more debt for recipient countries.

Aharon Ariel Lavi began the panel discussion by highlighting the complexity of climate finance issues. He used the example of taxing international flights to illustrate potential unintended consequences, such as negatively impacting tourism-dependent economies in the Global South. Lavi emphasized the need for holistic approaches that consider second and third-order effects of climate finance decisions.

Ven. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati brought a spiritual perspective to the discussion, emphasizing that the role of faith and religion is to harness moral and prophetic voices to guide actions in climate finance. She stated that many countries can pour money into security and protect their borders, but if their people are dying inside those borders due to climate issues, there's no point.

Saraswati stressed the need to redefine wealth to include clean water, air, and soil, not just monetary assets.

Carrick Reddin presented research from the World Resources Institute, highlighting the pressing need for climate finance to be both adequate and effective. He pointed out significant gender disparities in climate finance allocation and a crisis in accountability. Reddin emphasized the potential role of faith-based organizations in addressing these challenges, stating:

"Faith communities indeed are uniquely positioned to advocate for more equitable and accountable climate finance, ensuring that those resources are used to protect both the environment and vulnerable communities."

Katherine Marshall outlined four areas where faith communities can contribute to climate finance: (1) advocacy, (2) modeling good practices, (3) ensuring accountability, and (4) resource mobilization. She highlighted the tension between climate finance and development finance, noting that increased funding for climate initiatives might be taking away from other crucial development programs.

Cristina Reis, speaking in Portuguese, shared Brazil's perspective on climate finance as the current G20 president. She emphasized the importance of addressing inequalities in climate finance distribution and highlighted Brazil's bioeconomy initiative as an example of sustainable development that benefits both the environment and local communities.

Katherine Marshall noted the challenge of balancing global and local perspectives:

"The G20 platform is about emergencies, and it is about global level action. That's for better or for worse. The global leaders are probably not going to be interested in your Uganda Nile project per se. They're looking for scale and they're looking for impact."

Carrick Reddin emphasized the need for devolution in climate finance:

"We also might want to consider more opportunities for devolution so that we're empowering local governments, civil society organizations, particularly women-led organizations and other grassroots organizations to manage and allocate climate finance in ways that respond to local needs and priorities."

Takeaways

Key takeaways from the session included:

1. The need for a clear definition of climate finance that doesn't create additional debt for developing countries
2. The importance of considering unintended consequences and second-order effects of climate finance decisions
3. The potential for faith communities to play a significant role in advocacy, accountability, and resource mobilization for climate finance
4. The necessity of balancing global action with local, practical solutions
5. The value of incorporating indigenous knowledge and empowering local communities in climate finance allocation
6. The need to address intersectional inequalities in climate finance distribution
7. The potential tension between climate finance and other development priorities

Plenary 3: Holistic well-being in a World in Turmoil: Moving from a Linear to Cyclic Worldview and Developing Alternative Paradigms to Measure Development and Prosperity

*The G20 Interfaith Forum in Brasília, Brazil hosted a plenary session on holistic well-being and alternative paradigms for measuring development and prosperity. The session was moderated by **Khushwant Singh**, Head of Secretariat of the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). Panelists included **Mindahi Crescencio Bastida Muñoz**, Chief of the Grand Council of the Eagle and the Condor; **Venerable Monk Napan Santibhaddo Thawornbanjob**, Head of the Institute of Buddhist Management for Happiness and Peace Foundation; and **Dilmohan Singh**, the Sikh Council & Sikh Teachings (joining virtually).*

*The session began with a keynote address by **Marina Silva**, Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Brazil.*

Overview

Khushwant Singh opened the session by highlighting the world's current state of turmoil, citing statistics on wealth inequality, poverty, armed conflicts, and refugee crises. He emphasized the need for alternative, holistic concepts of development and prosperity drawn from indigenous, spiritual, and religious traditions.

Minister Marina Silva delivered a powerful keynote address (see appendix for her full text), emphasizing the need for a paradigm shift in how we approach development and environmental issues. She stressed the importance of moving from a model of exploitation to one of cooperation with nature, highlighting Brazil's efforts to protect the Amazon and promote sustainable development.

Mindahi Crescencio Bastida Muñoz spoke about indigenous perspectives on well-being and circularity. He emphasized that the concept of "well-being" as currently understood is often based on domination and extraction of nature. He advocated for a "good living paradigm" based on responsibility and reciprocity with nature. He stressed the importance of moving away from linear, accumulation-based thinking towards a more circular, reciprocal relationship with the Earth.

Venerable Monk Napan Santibhaddo Thawornbanjob discussed the Buddhist perspective on well-being and circularity. He emphasized the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of inner peace and contentment. The monk stated:

"In Buddhism, when we talk about wellbeing, it's not just only our health, it's about the planet health as well, environmental."

He advocated for a shift in perspective that focuses on reducing obstacles to happiness rather than constantly pursuing external gains.

Dilmohan Singh, speaking virtually, discussed the Sikh perspective on well-being and spirituality. He emphasized the importance of spiritual maturity and selfless service, stating:

"The well-being for all comes from the spiritual maturity, the inner voice and the guidance. It motivates us to come out as a selfless service as well."

Singh highlighted the need for balancing spiritual and material pursuits and the importance of respecting all creation.

The discussion then turned to alternative measures of development and prosperity, with panelists discussing the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as developed in Bhutan. They explored the possibility of adapting such holistic measures on a global scale, considering challenges such as cultural diversity and political will.

Recommendations

Key points and recommendations that emerged from the session included:

1. The need to shift from linear, growth-centered economic models to circular, holistic approaches that consider the well-being of nature, humans, and animals.
2. The importance of incorporating indigenous and spiritual wisdom into policy-making and development strategies.
3. The potential for alternative measures of prosperity, such as Gross National Happiness, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of societal well-being.
4. The need for education systems to promote circular thinking and holistic well-being from an early age.
5. The importance of addressing the root causes of societal issues, including the spiritual and psychological aspects of human well-being.
6. The call for policies that protect biocultural diversity and promote responsibility towards all forms of life.
7. The recognition that technological solutions alone cannot solve the world's problems without a corresponding shift in consciousness and behavior.

Plenary 4: Challenges of Sustainability and Peace: For People and Planet

*The G20 Interfaith Forum in Brasilia, Brazil hosted a critical plenary session on the challenges of sustainability and peace for people and the planet. The session was moderated by **Mohamed Elsanousi**, the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. Panelists included **Elder Ulysses Soares**, Apostle, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; **Palwasha Lena Kakar**, Director of Religion and Inclusive Societies, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP); **Rabbi Abraham Skorka**, Senior Research Fellow of Jewish Studies and Jewish-Catholic Relations, Georgetown University; **Esben Lunde Larsen**, Senior Specialist, World Bank, former Minister of Environment, Agriculture, and Food, Denmark; and **Carlos Vicente**, National Facilitator, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative Brazil. The session began with introductory remarks from **Mary Robinson**, Chair of the Elders and former President of Ireland, and concluded with a video message from **H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel**, Elder Metropolitan of Chalcedon.*

Opening

Mary Robinson opened the session by emphasizing the need to "make peace with nature," sharing a personal experience from a scientific expedition to Greenland where she witnessed the rapid melting of glaciers. She stressed the importance of understanding our interconnectedness with nature and the role of faith communities in addressing climate challenges.

Overview

Elder Ulysses Soares emphasized the importance of spiritual values in addressing global challenges. He stated:

"We need to recover collective dignity as a species. And this collective dignity has to do with how we behave in daily life, but also how we honor our ancestors and honor the future."

Soares highlighted the Church's efforts in providing sustainable solutions for communities worldwide, including water and food security projects in Africa.

Palwasha Lena Kakar presented statistics on conflicts related to climate change and resource scarcity. She emphasized the need for inclusive peacebuilding processes that involve religious actors, women, youth, and indigenous communities. Kakar stated:

"We need to make sure that we are also including the indigenous people in peace processes. When we talk about religious actors at USIP and working not just with religious leaders but with religious actors on peacebuilding, we're talking about including the indigenous, we're talking about including the women."

Rabbi Abraham Skorka provided a historical perspective on humanity's relationship with nature, drawing from Jewish and Christian traditions. He emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue in addressing environmental challenges and quoted Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* as a model for such dialogue.

Esben Lunde Larsen shared personal anecdotes to illustrate sustainable living practices, including the example of his grandmother's lifestyle. He emphasized the need for individual action and community engagement in addressing sustainability challenges. Larsen stated:

"The challenge of handling sustainability must begin with us in the global North. We need to live more actively after planetary boundaries, and we need to do more modest living."

Carlos Vicente, speaking in Portuguese, highlighted the work of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative in Brazil. He emphasized the importance of preserving indigenous knowledge and practices in environmental conservation efforts. Vicente stressed the need for collaboration between religious communities, government, and civil society in addressing environmental challenges.

H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel, in a video message, emphasized the spiritual obligation of environmental stewardship and the interconnectedness of environmental and social justice issues. He called for a coordinated response to climate change that involves religious leaders, indigenous communities, and global partnerships.

Recommendations

Key themes and recommendations that emerged from the session included:

1. The need for a paradigm shift in how we approach development and environmental issues, moving from exploitation to cooperation with nature.
2. The importance of including diverse voices, particularly those of indigenous communities, women, and youth, in peacebuilding and sustainability efforts.
3. The role of interfaith dialogue and collaboration in addressing global challenges related to peace and sustainability.
4. The need for individual action and community engagement in promoting sustainable lifestyles.
5. The importance of preserving and learning from indigenous knowledge and practices in environmental conservation.
6. The interconnectedness of environmental issues with social justice, peace, and human rights.
7. The potential for religious communities to mobilize resources and influence policy decisions related to sustainability and peace.

C1: Religion, Civility, and Healing Polarization.

*The session was moderated by **Juan G. Navarro Floria**, Vice President of the Argentine Council for Religious Freedom, and **Irenilda Aparecida Maria Francisco (Iya Gilda)**, General Coordinator for Religious Freedom at the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship in Brazil. Panelists included **Elder Ahmad Corbitt**, Seventy, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **Ramin Mammadov**, Chairman, Azerbaijan's State Committee on Affairs with Religious Associations, **Mejindarpal Kaur**, Legal Director, United Sikhs UK, Malaysia & India, **Luka David Mosoma**, [Former] Chairperson of South Africa's CRL Rights Commission, **Rev. Juan Cruz**, President, Latino Evangelical Alliance, and **Daniela Chavez**, Director of Worship, Argentina's Salta Government Religious Affairs Office, KAICIID Fellow.*

Overview

Key points from the discussion included:

1. The need to address hate speech and religious intolerance at both grassroots and policy levels.
2. The importance of religious literacy and understanding to foster respect and cooperation among different faith communities.
3. The role of education, especially early childhood education, in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.
4. The potential for interfaith dialogue and collaboration to heal societal divisions and promote peace.
5. The responsibility of religious leaders to speak out against intolerance and promote unity within their communities.
6. The importance of balancing freedom of speech with protection against hate speech and discrimination.
7. The need for governments to work with religious communities in developing policies that promote social cohesion.

Elder Corbitt emphasized the importance of focusing on divine principles and respecting others' rights to worship. Mammadov shared Azerbaijan's experience in fostering interfaith harmony. Kaur highlighted the challenges of addressing hate speech while protecting free speech. Mosoma stressed the importance of character formation and addressing systemic issues of intolerance. Rev. Cruz called for practical actions to promote understanding and compassion among different groups. Chavez emphasized the role of local governments in managing religious diversity and promoting inclusive policies.

The session concluded with a call for religious communities to take a leading role in healing societal divisions, promoting understanding, and working collaboratively with governments and civil society to address polarization and intolerance.

C2: Lessons from Religious Advocacy on Environment

*The session was moderated by **James Taylor Christie**, Ambassador of the Canadian Multifaith Federation, and **Father Marcus Barbosa**, Advisor to the Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil. Speakers included **Pastor Romi Márcia Bencke**; Secretary General, National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil, **Arthur Lyon Dahl**; President, International Environment Forum, **Sheikh Jihad Hassan Hammadeh**; Religious Advisor, National Association of Islamic Jurists, **Sherrie Steiner**; IF20 Historian, Associate Professor, Purdue University Fort Wayne, **Paulo Ricardo Sampaio de Sousa**, Institute for Study of Religion in Rio de Janeiro, and **Dom Zanoni Demettino**, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Feira de Santana, the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil.*

Overview

The session began with James Taylor Christie providing context on the importance of religious advocacy in addressing environmental challenges. He referenced the vision of Hans Küng and Martin Luther King Jr., emphasizing the need for unity, peace, and community among nations and religions.

Father Marcus Barbosa then introduced the first speaker, Pastor Romi Márcia Bencke, who discussed the role of Christian churches in Brazil in addressing environmental issues. She emphasized the importance of connecting faith teachings with practical actions to protect the environment.

Arthur Lyon Dahl provided a historical perspective on the Baha'i community's engagement with environmental issues, dating back to 1912. He outlined various initiatives and statements made by the Baha'i community over the decades, highlighting the need for interfaith collaboration on environmental advocacy.

Sheikh Jihad Hassan Hammadeh discussed the Islamic perspective on environmental stewardship, drawing parallels between the teachings in the Quran and the message of Laudato Si. He emphasized the importance of balance and moderation in human interactions with the environment.

Sherrie Steiner presented a sociological perspective on the evolution of religious engagement with global governance structures, particularly in relation to environmental issues. She introduced the concept of "loyal opposition" as a way for religious communities to engage critically yet constructively with global governance initiatives.

Paulo Ricardo Sampaio de Sousa and Dom Zanoni Demettino provided insights from the Brazilian context, discussing the role of religious communities in addressing environmental challenges in the Amazon region and beyond.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session included:

1. The need for religious communities to lead by example in environmental stewardship
2. The importance of translating religious teachings into practical actions for environmental protection
3. The potential for interfaith collaboration to strengthen environmental advocacy efforts
4. The role of religious leaders in educating their communities about environmental issues
5. The need to engage youth in environmental initiatives within religious communities
6. The importance of connecting local environmental actions with global advocacy efforts
7. The potential for religious communities to influence policy-making on environmental issues
8. The need for ongoing dialogue between religious communities and scientific experts on environmental challenges
9. The importance of addressing environmental justice issues within religious advocacy efforts
10. The potential for religious environmental advocacy to contribute to broader social and economic transformation



C3: Women and the Environment

*The session was moderated by **Carolina de Almeida Pereira**, International Advisor at Geledés – Black Women's Institute. The session featured a distinguished panel of speakers, including **Laura Vargas**, National Facilitator of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative in Peru; **Deepika Singh**, Deputy Secretary General of Religions for Peace; **Ven. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati**, Secretary General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance; **Musimbi Kanyoro**, the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians; **Monica Eghrari Maghami**, an EU and Brazilian Sustainability and Technology Lawyer, International Environmental Forum; and **Dr. Husna Ahmad**, CEO of Global One 2015.*

Overview

The plenary session opened with Carolina de Almeida Pereira introducing the topic and the panelists. Each speaker then presented their perspectives on the intersection of women, faith, and environmental advocacy. The discussions highlighted the unique roles women play in environmental protection, particularly in indigenous communities, and the challenges they face in leadership positions.

Deepika Singh began by discussing the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) and its efforts to engage women in rainforest conservation. She emphasized the need for greater inclusion of women, especially indigenous women, in decision-making processes. Singh highlighted two research papers that explored gender roles in faith-based environmental work, revealing both progress and persistent challenges.

Laura Vargas shared powerful stories of indigenous women leaders in Peru who have successfully fought against environmental threats. She spoke about women like Amateur prima, who won historic rulings recognizing the rights of rivers, and Ruth Buendia, who prevented the displacement of thousands due to a hydroelectric plant.

Ven. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati provided a spiritual perspective, emphasizing the deep connection between women and nature across various cultural and religious traditions. She shared examples of women-led environmental movements, such as the Chipko Movement in India, where women literally hugged trees to prevent deforestation.

Musimbi Kanyoro discussed the concept of collective leadership and its importance in addressing environmental challenges. She emphasized the need for individual transformation, community resilience, and organizational performance in achieving climate justice.

Monica Eghrari Maghami focused on the importance of integrating science and spirituality in environmental efforts. She stressed the need for new conceptual frameworks and methodologies that involve women as active protagonists in the development process.

Dr. Husna Ahmad highlighted the crucial role of youth leadership in addressing climate change. She discussed initiatives to prepare future leaders and the importance of bringing academia,

industry, and humanitarian projects together to focus on women's roles in environmental protection.

The session included a lively Q&A segment, where audience members raised questions about specific environmental challenges and the role of women in addressing them. One particularly poignant moment came when an audience member from Kenya asked for advice on combating a proposed nuclear plant in her community.

Laura Vargas's response to this question exemplified the session's emphasis on women's unique perspective in environmental advocacy:

"We say that without forests there's no life. And this statement is more than a motivational phrase, expresses a very large aloha to reality. Because today the life of the planet is seriously threatened by a predatory logic that only seeks quick and easy profit without taking into account the ecological disaster and the impact on the life of many people and communities that live off the forests."

Another powerful quote came from Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, highlighting the interconnectedness of women and nature:

"There is something really inherent in our international cultures and our international understanding transcending religions, transcending races, transcending languages that has this connection of women and the Earth."

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session included:

- Increase women's representation in environmental decision-making processes at all levels
- Strengthen partnerships between faith-based organizations and women's groups in environmental initiatives
- Develop and implement gender-sensitive environmental policies and programs
- Amplify the voices and experiences of indigenous women in conservation efforts
- Integrate spiritual and scientific approaches in addressing environmental challenges
- Invest in education and capacity building for women and girls in environmental leadership
- Create platforms to share women's stories and achievements in environmental protection
- Address social and cultural barriers that prevent women's full participation in environmental initiatives
- Promote intergenerational dialogue and youth leadership in environmental advocacy
- Develop a common conceptual framework for gender-inclusive environmental action
- Encourage men to be allies in promoting women's leadership in environmental causes

- Utilize legal systems and courts to challenge environmentally harmful government actions



C4: Religious Action on Corruption

*The session was moderated by **Marianna Richardson**, IF20 Director of Communications and featured a distinguished panel of speakers including **Elias Szczytnicki**, Regional Secretary General of Religions for Peace - Latin America and the Caribbean; **Katherine Marshall**, Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Forum and Executive Director of World Faiths Development Dialogue; **Rudolf von Sinner**, Professor in Theology, Human Rights, and Public Policies at PUCPR and Board member of Globethics; and **Denise A. O. Kodhe**, Presiding Officer Emeritus of AU ECOSOCC and Director General of the Institute for Development and Leadership in Africa (IDEA).*

Overview

The session began with Marianna Richardson introducing the topic and panelists. Elias Szczytnicki opened by discussing the challenges of addressing corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean. He highlighted that religious communities often don't make significant contributions to denouncing corruption, citing reasons such as the prevalence of prosperity theology, traditional theologies that view societal problems as irrelevant to faith communities, and cultural factors that normalize corruption.

Katherine Marshall provided insights from her 35-year career at the World Bank, tracing the evolution of thinking about corruption in development work. She highlighted the East Asia financial crisis of 1997-99 as a turning point in understanding the systemic nature of corruption. Marshall also discussed the success of Transparency International but noted its tendency to focus on technical rather than ethical aspects of anti-corruption efforts.

Rudolf von Sinner represented Globethics, discussing their work in ethics education and efforts to combat corruption within religious communities. He presented research showing that more religious societies tend to be more corrupt, not due to religion itself, but because of factors like lower accountability and excess trust in religious leaders. Von Sinner emphasized the need for transparency and accountability in religious institutions.

Denise A. O. Kodhe provided an African perspective, describing corruption as endemic, inhumane, and the biggest threat to development and human rights. She raised critical questions about religion's role in either enhancing or combating corruption and offered suggestions for how religious institutions can take a more active stance against corrupt practices.

A key point emphasized by Dennis Kodhe was the critical nature of corruption in Africa:

"Corruption fights back, and I would like to mention a few effects of corruption: retards development, affects people's lives, affects people's moral authority, denies people good life and survival as it affects their basic needs, and corruption destroys people and destroys society."

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session included:

- Religious institutions need to take a more active role in denouncing and combating corruption
- There's a need for increased transparency and accountability within religious organizations
- Education and sensitization about corruption should start from childhood
- Religious leaders should refuse corrupt resources and bar corrupt individuals from participating in religious activities
- There's a need to change social values and perceptions around corruption
- Religious institutions should lead by example in maintaining ethical practices
- Collaboration between religious organizations, civil society, and government is crucial in fighting corruption
- The impact of corruption in developing countries, especially in Africa, is particularly severe and requires urgent action
- Religious leaders need to regain moral authority to effectively combat corruption
- There's a need for practical, actionable strategies beyond just condemning corruption



C5: Community Peacebuilding Through FoRB Education

*The session was moderated by **Filip Pedersen**, CKU Center for Church Based Development & NORFORB Learning, and **Rafael Soares de Oliveira**, Secretary of Planning & Cooperation at Koinonia ACT Alliance. Speakers included **Rev. Fred Nyabera**, Director of End Child Poverty at Arigatou International; **Liliya Khasanova**, Director of A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY); **Katherine Cash**, Advisor at SMC Faith in Development/FoRB Learning Platform (participating virtually); and **Graham McGeoch**, Coordinator of International Relations at Faculdade UNIDA, Brazil.*

Overview

The session began with Filip Pedersen introducing the topic and explaining that this workshop would be more interactive and dynamic than previous sessions, requiring participants to think and share their thoughts.

Katherine Cash from the FoRB Learning Platform gave a virtual presentation on the importance of FoRB education at the community level. She introduced the Local Changemakers course, a set of downloadable materials for running workshops on FoRB at the grassroots level. Cash emphasized the course's accessibility and potential for scalability, highlighting its use in various countries and contexts.

Rev. Fred Nyabera led an interactive exercise called "The Soup of Life," demonstrating how human rights concepts can be made more relatable and understandable. Participants were asked to choose human needs cards and align them with articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This exercise aimed to demystify human rights and show their relevance to daily life.

Graham McGeoch shared his experience implementing the Changemakers course in Brazil during the politically volatile 2022 election year. He described how they adapted the course for the Brazilian context, reaching 14,000 people across all states in Brazil. McGeoch emphasized the course's impact:

"We managed to gather more than 500 documented examples of interventions from those 14,000 people all over Brazil based on the framework offered by the FoRB Learning platform."

Liliya Khasanova presented on behalf of A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY), sharing their approach to promoting religious harmony among young people. She described ACWAY's annual forums that bring together young leaders from around the world to share best practices in interfaith dialogue and community engagement.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session included:

- The importance of making FoRB education accessible and relatable to local contexts
- The effectiveness of interactive, participatory learning methods in FoRB education
- The need to engage youth in interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding efforts
- The potential for FoRB education to contribute to community resilience and social cohesion
- The value of sharing best practices across different cultural and religious contexts
- The importance of adapting FoRB education materials to specific national and local contexts
- The need for sustained investment in FoRB education at the community level
- The potential for FoRB education to address and mitigate social and political tensions
- The role of universities and civil society organizations in promoting FoRB education
- The importance of documenting and sharing the impact of FoRB education initiatives



C6: Harnessing Spiritual Practices for Mental Health and Well-being in Peacebuilding Contexts

*This session was moderated by **Andres Martinez**, Technical Advisor, United States Institute of Peace (USIP).*

Overview

This session was organized as a workshop designed for development of professionals, peacebuilders, and religious actors participating in the IF20 – PaRD Annual Forum. The session's primary objective was to promote mutual learning by identifying and sharing religious and spiritual practices from various religious traditions that have traditionally been used to improve mental health, address mental health problems, and promote well-being. Participants explored and discussed psychosocial well-being practices within a variety of traditions.

Takeaways

- Religions should promote mental health and well-being.
- Religions should share and identify readily spiritual practices that improve mental health.
- Such practices should be used often to improve well-being and bring peace to people's lives.



Plenary 5: Leaving No One Behind

*The session was moderated by **Bani Dugal**, Principal Representative to the United Nations for the Bahá'í International Community. Speakers included **Bruno Renato Nascimento Teixeira**, National Secretary for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights at the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship of Brazil; **Sharon Eubank**, Director of Humanitarian Services for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; **Kevin Hyland OBE**, Strategy Director of the Santa Marta Group; **Nelson Arns Neumann**, Director of Pastoral da Criança International; **Mustafa Y. Ali**, Director of Arigatou International-Kenya; **Isabela de Oliveira Mazao**, Assistant Protection officer, UNHCR Brazil; and **Ebrahim Rasool**, Founder of the World for All Foundation in South Africa.*

Overview

The session began with Bani Dugal introducing the topic and emphasizing the importance of moving beyond rhetoric to concrete action in caring for vulnerable populations, such as children, minorities, refugees, and women. Each speaker was then given a brief opportunity to introduce themselves and frame the issue they would be addressing.

Bruno Teixeira opened the discussion by outlining the Brazilian government's approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, emphasizing the importance of democratic principles and social inclusion. He highlighted recent initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and inequality in Brazil.

Sharon Eubank shared a personal story about an encounter with a homeless woman, using it to illustrate the importance of human dignity and connection in addressing vulnerability. She outlined four commitments of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in humanitarian work, including non-extractive relationships, connecting faith actors to government, bringing their own resources to the table, and funding coalitions.

Kevin Hyland focused on the intersection of faith and crime, particularly in the context of human trafficking. He discussed the role of religious communities in combating trafficking and called for a significant investment from G20 countries to build infrastructure against this crime.

Mustafa Ali provided stark statistics on the vulnerability of children globally, emphasizing the failure of states to protect children in conflict zones. He announced an upcoming forum in Abu Dhabi focused on interfaith cooperation to build a hopeful world for children.

Nelson Arns Neumann discussed the work of Pastoral da Criança in Brazil, highlighting their community-based approach to supporting vulnerable families and children.

Isabela de Oliveira Mazao from UNHCR Brazil spoke about the challenges faced by refugees and the importance of community integration and support.

Ebrahim Rasool provided a provocative perspective, challenging religious communities to examine their own roles in perpetuating or combating systemic injustices. He called for a new "liberation theology" to address contemporary global crises.

The session included a robust Q&A period, with audience members raising questions about topics such as the role of artificial intelligence in addressing vulnerability, the implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees, and the need for concrete action steps.

Ebrahim Rasool challenged religious leaders: "We, the middle ground, are often found ambiguous and fearful, tentative, boring and unimaginative. The victims of politics, rather than the agents of the new future that we look for."

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the plenary session included:

- The need for immediate and concrete action to address the needs of vulnerable populations, particularly children in conflict zones
- A call for G20 countries to invest \$30 billion by 2030 in infrastructure to combat human trafficking
- The importance of interfaith cooperation and coalition-building in addressing global challenges
- The need to address structural injustices and not just symptoms of vulnerability
- The role of religious communities in providing moral courage and speaking truth to power
- The importance of integrating technology and artificial intelligence in humanitarian efforts
- The need for better implementation of existing policies and international agreements
- The value of community-based approaches in supporting vulnerable populations
- The importance of maintaining high aspirations while working on practical, achievable goals
- The need for religious communities to examine their own roles in perpetuating or combating injustice
- The importance of building resilience and capacity at the grassroots level
- The need for a new "liberation theology" to address contemporary global crises
- The importance of balancing immediate humanitarian needs with long-term structural changes

D1. Religious action on climate and environmental justice: Interfaith Rainforest Initiative

Carlos Vicente, National Facilitator for the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) was the moderator for this session with a panel of experts on this topic, including **Rev. Jimmy M. Immanuel Sormin**, Executive Secretary, Communion of Churches in Indonesia, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative of Indonesia; **Laura Vargas**, National Facilitator, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Peru; **Arturo Coña**, Vice President, Chilean Association on Interreligious Dialogue for Human Development (ADIR) Chile, Religions for Peace; **Francisco Cruz da Costa**, Indigenous representative from Manaus, Brazil.

Overview

The session started with Vicente showing a video illustrating the problems of exploitation of the rainforest and the multiple negative problems it brings to the world in general, such as pollution, food shortages, and disease. Influencing governments and companies is crucial, along with the responsibilities of individual to be aware of climate problems and issues.

The discussion centered around the critical environment issue of protecting the tropical rainforests in three geographic areas: the Amazon Basin, Congo Basin, and Southeast Asia, particularly, Indonesia. The program was aimed to enhance understanding the diverse influence indigenous people play in this important issue. Indigenous communities play a pivotal role in rainforest protection, which advances their people's wellbeing – since this is their home.

The focus is on a multisector action, ranging from very local issues to global advocacy and action. Brazil's experience with the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative was highlighted with insights from the other members of the panel on their geographic areas and the coordinated problems.

The IRI was also set in the broader context of climate and ecological activism and their work with other religions.

Takeaways

- The rainforest must be protected.
- Indigenous voices should play a major role in the discussion about protecting the rainforest.
- Government players must understand the long-term problems of exploiting these regions.
- Businesses must be held accountable for the mess they make in destroying natural resources.

D2: Human Trafficking: Proposing IF20 Leadership to Propose an Action Agenda

*The session was moderated by **Archbishop Nikitas** of Thyateira and Great Britain, and **Márcia Leonora Santos Regis Orlandini**, Director of the Clinic to Combat Slave Labor at the Federal University of Uberlândia. Speakers included **Kevin Hyland OBE**, Strategy Director of the Santa Marta Group; **Bishop Alistair Redfern**, former Member of the House of Lords of the UK; **Sr. Rosa Elena Cipres Diaz**, Talitha Kum Network in Brazil; and **José Monteiro**, Regional Vice President at International Justice Mission (IJM).*

Overview

The session began with a sobering overview of the global human trafficking crisis, highlighting the staggering number of victims - estimated at 50 million - and the enormous profits generated by this illicit industry, approximately \$236 billion annually. Kevin Hyland presented a bold proposal dubbed the "30 by 30" plan, calling for G20 countries to invest \$30 billion by 2030 to combat human trafficking. This ambitious yet concrete goal was presented as a means to significantly boost anti-trafficking efforts on a global scale.

Speakers emphasized the unique position of faith communities in addressing human trafficking. Their moral authority, grassroots presence, and ability to reach vulnerable populations were cited as key advantages in this fight. The importance of multi-sectoral collaboration was stressed, with speakers calling for stronger partnerships between religious organizations, governments, law enforcement agencies, and civil society groups.

Prevention and education emerged as crucial themes, with several speakers discussing the need for greater awareness, particularly among youth. Examples of school programs and faith-based initiatives were shared, demonstrating the potential for education to serve as a powerful preventive tool.

The session also highlighted the importance of victim-centered approaches, emphasizing the need to focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking survivors. Speakers discussed the necessity of addressing root causes such as poverty, inequality, and lack of economic opportunities that make people vulnerable to trafficking in the first place.

The role of technology in both facilitating and combating trafficking was explored. Speakers noted the potential of AI and improved data collection in anti-trafficking efforts, while also calling for better regulation of online spaces where exploitation often occurs.

Policy and legislative action were identified as crucial components of the anti-trafficking strategy. Speakers advocated for stronger laws, better enforcement, and policies to hold businesses accountable for labor exploitation in their supply chains.

The session concluded with a proposal to create a G20 Interfaith Forum working group dedicated to advancing anti-trafficking efforts. This group would document faith-based initiatives, identify gaps in intersectoral action, and advocate for G20 prioritization of the issue.

Recommendations

Key recommendations from the session included:

1. Pushing for strong anti-trafficking language in the G20 communiqué
2. Developing the proposed working group to coordinate interfaith anti-trafficking efforts
3. Advocating for the "30 by 30" funding plan with G20 governments
4. Expanding education and prevention programs, particularly in schools
5. Strengthening partnerships between faith groups, law enforcement, and governments
6. Focusing on victim support and rehabilitation services



D3: Focus on refugees, Faith, Rights, and Protection

The session was moderated by **Huda Alawa** from USA for UNHCR and **Thiago Biazin** from Barnabas Aid Brazil. Speakers included **Raphael Marcus**, Chief Program Officer at HIAS; **Christina Tobias-Nahi**, Director of Public Affairs at Islamic Relief USA; **Paulo Sergio Almeida** from UNHCR Brazil; and **Manoel Moraes**, Coordinator of the Sergio Vieira de Mello Chair at the State University of Para.

Overview

The session began with an overview of the global refugee crisis, highlighting that there are over 120 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Speakers emphasized the unique position of faith-based organizations in addressing refugee needs, given their moral authority, grassroots presence, and ability to reach vulnerable populations.

Speakers shared examples of successful faith-based initiatives, such as HIAS's work with Jewish communities to resettle refugees, Islamic Relief's efforts to provide culturally sensitive mental health support, and Barnabas Aid's focus on supporting persecuted Christian communities.

A key point emphasized by Raphael Marcus was the importance of access to rights: "It is not only about getting the correct right. Once you have a right to do something, it does not say that you have access to rights. And that's the really important part."

Christina Tobias-Nahi highlighted the role of faith in refugee resilience: "The spiritual needs are such an important part of your resilience. And that's, you know, I strongly believe that the Jewish people have survived, partly if not in totality, because of their of their belief of the religion, of the unity and what it provided to them."

The session concluded with a call for increased collaboration between faith-based organizations, governments, and international agencies to better address the needs of refugees.

Recommendations

Recommendations included:

- Strengthening partnerships between faith-based organizations and UNHCR
- Advocating for more inclusive refugee policies at national and international levels
- Developing faith-sensitive approaches to refugee support and integration
- Increasing funding and resources for faith-based refugee initiatives
- Promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation in refugee response efforts
- Addressing root causes of displacement, including conflict and climate change

D4: Global Reforms of Taxation

*The session was moderated by **Fr. Charles Chilufya**, Director of the Justice and Ecology Office at the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar, and **Rachel Miner**, Founder/CEO of Bellwether Foundation. Speakers included **Eric LeCompte**, Executive Director of Jubilee USA Network; **Antonio Freitas**, Undersecretary of International Finance at the Brazilian Ministry of Finance; and **Ann Kioi**, Programme Development, the All-Africa Conference of Churches.*

Overview

The session began with Rachel Miner framing taxation as a critical tool for financing social infrastructure and protecting human rights. She highlighted the scale of global tax avoidance and evasion, estimated at \$5 trillion annually. Speakers emphasized the moral imperative for faith communities to engage in tax reform discussions.

Themes

Key themes discussed included:

1. The role of taxation in reducing inequalities and funding social programs
2. Challenges of tax avoidance and evasion by multinational corporations and wealthy individuals
3. The need for a global tax convention to address cross-border tax issues
4. Brazil's leadership in proposing taxation of billionaires through the G20
5. The importance of progressive taxation and closing tax loopholes
6. The role of faith communities in advocating for just tax policies

Antonio Freitas highlighted Brazil's efforts within the G20 to promote taxation of high-net-worth individuals and international tax cooperation. He emphasized the importance of addressing inequalities for economic growth and social stability.

Eric LeCompte stressed the moral dimension of tax reform, stating: "When we have kids dying of preventable diseases, and we have the money to stop it. So that's our role as people of faith." He called for framing tax issues in moral terms and pushing for higher corporate tax rates.

Ann Kioi discussed the challenges of unjust tax systems in Africa, using Kenya as an example where recent tax policies led to civil unrest. She emphasized the need for transparency and accountability in tax collection and spending.

Recommendations

The session concluded with recommendations for action, including:

- Advocating for a UN Framework Convention on Tax Cooperation
- Pushing for higher corporate tax rates and closing loopholes

- Educating faith leaders on tax issues to enable effective advocacy
- Promoting transparency and accountability in tax systems
- Supporting progressive taxation measures, including wealth taxes
- Engaging civil society in tax reform discussions at national and international levels



D5: Challenges of AI in a Faith Context

The session was moderated by **Stephen D. Richardson**, Associate Professor of Computer Science at Brigham Young University. Speakers included **Manisha Jain**, Distinguished Engineer/Architect, Microsoft; **Medlar Mema**, Heade of Programme, Global Governance Institute; **Thobias Prado Moura**, Director of Communication, Internet Society Brazil Chapter; **Harpreet Singh**, SikhiCouncil & SikhTeachings (participating virtually); **Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake**, Superior General, Konko Church; and **Rabbi Fishel Szlajen**, Ordinary Member of Pontifical Academy for Life (Vatican City) / Professor at University of Buenos Aires.

Overview

Key themes discussed included:

1. The potential benefits and risks of AI for religious practices and communities
2. Ethical considerations in AI development and deployment
3. The role of faith communities in shaping AI governance and ethics
4. Challenges of preserving human dignity and judgment in AI systems
5. Opportunities for AI to enhance religious education and outreach
6. Concerns about AI's impact on human consciousness and spirituality

Manisha Jain highlighted the need for proper technical literacy and guardrails when using AI, while also noting its potential benefits for religious practices. Medlar Mema emphasized the importance of religious communities engaging with AI governance to shape debates and frameworks.

Rabbi Fishel Szlajen raised concerns about AI's potential to undermine human autonomy and moral judgment, calling for regulations to ensure AI remains a supporting tool rather than replacing human decision-making.

Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake stressed the need for religious leaders to understand and respond to the latest technology, proposing the incorporation of physicality and animistic elements in AI development to better understand humanity.

Harpreet Singh discussed the potential for AI to help interpret religious scriptures more accurately by providing historical and linguistic context.

A key point emphasized by Stephen Richardson was the importance of human involvement in AI: "We believe in humans, and humans being assisted by technology is a good thing. But humans are the first technology."

Recommendations

The session concluded with recommendations for faith communities, including:

- Educating themselves on AI technologies and their implications
- Engaging with AI governance at local, national, and global levels
- Promoting transparency and accountability in AI systems
- Developing faith-sensitive approaches to AI development and use
- Contributing religious perspectives to ethical frameworks for AI
- Exploring ways to use AI to enhance religious education and outreach
- Advocating for the preservation of human dignity and judgment in AI systems



D6: Indigenous Peacebuilding and Indigenous Religious Freedom for Building Sustainable Peace and Planet

*The session was moderated by **Binalakshmi Nepram**, Senior Adviser on Indigenous Issues at the United States Institute of Peace. Speakers included **Dr. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine** from Mali (participating virtually), **Dr. Vera Solovyeva** from Siberia, and **Nidia Bustillos**, a Bolivian Indigenous healer.*

Overview

The session began with an Indigenous ritual to harmonize the space, led by Nidia Bustillos. Binalakshmi Nepram then provided context on the global Indigenous population and their role in conflicts and peacebuilding. She highlighted that 80% of the world's conflicts occur in biodiversity hotspots where Indigenous people live.

Dr. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine emphasized the impact of conflicts on Indigenous communities and the need for their inclusion in peace processes. She stated: "If you want to achieve peace, justice, and really sustainable development for Indigenous people, we need to be involved in the peace process."

Dr. Vera Solovyeva discussed the challenges of integrating Indigenous worldviews into sustainable development goals, highlighting colonialism as a major obstacle. She noted: "The main core of our Indigenous belief, of our Indigenous worldview, is respectful negotiation and finding balance between people and nature, and people and people, and balance between past, present and future."

Nidia Bustillos shared practical steps for incorporating Indigenous perspectives at local, national, and global levels. She emphasized the importance of recognizing Indigenous ancestral knowledge as part of humanity's heritage.

The session concluded with breakout discussions on three themes:

1. How Indigenous communities and knowledge systems can collaborate effectively for peacebuilding
2. Challenges and opportunities in integrating Indigenous perspectives and religious freedom approaches
3. Practical steps and recommendations for enhancing collaborations at various levels

Recommendations

Key recommendations included:

- Ensuring Indigenous representation in peace negotiations and policy-making
- Protecting and preserving Indigenous languages and cultural practices
- Incorporating Indigenous knowledge in environmental conservation efforts

- Promoting interfaith dialogue that includes Indigenous spiritual traditions
- Developing policies that recognize and protect Indigenous land rights
- Creating educational programs to share Indigenous peacebuilding methodologies



Plenary 6: Modeling Diversity and Inclusion: Peacebuilding through Understanding and Education

*Moderated by **Katherine Marshall**, Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Forum, Executive Director, World Faiths Development Dialogue, the panel featured speakers from government, academia, and civil society organizations, including **Peter Mandaville**, Senior Advisor for Faith Engagement, USAID; **Matius Ho**, Executive Director, Leimena Institute; **Alexandre Brasil Carvalho da Fonseca**, National Secretary for Higher Education at the Ministry of Human Rights of Brazil; **Ivo Pereira da Silva**, Professor, Federal University of Para, and Brazil's Ministry of Human Rights; **Maria Lucia Uribe** from Arigatou International; and **Kenarik Boujikian** from Brazil's General Secretariat of the Presidency. The session explored solutions to address polarization and misunderstanding as root causes of social divides and conflict.*

Overview

The plenary began with Katherine Marshall welcoming attendees and introducing the panelists. Before the main discussion, attendees were led through a brief breathing and stretching exercise to help focus their attention. Marshall then provided an overview of the session's theme, emphasizing the critical role of education in promoting peace and understanding across diverse communities.

Peter Mandaville opened the discussion by sharing examples of USAID programs that integrate interfaith cooperation into development work. He described projects in Morocco and Indonesia that bring together different religious communities to achieve shared economic and humanitarian goals. Matius Ho followed by presenting on the cross-cultural religious literacy program implemented in Indonesia, which trains teachers to foster mutual understanding among students of different faiths.

Alexandre Brasil Carvalho da Fonseca discussed Brazil's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in higher education, highlighting initiatives to increase access for underrepresented groups. Ivo Pereira da Silva then explored the concept of secularism as a "shield" to protect religious freedoms rather than a "sword" against religion.

Maria Lucia Uribe shared Arigatou International's approach to ethics education for children, emphasizing the importance of challenging prejudices from an early age. She recounted a powerful story of bringing together children from conflicting ethnic groups. Kenarik Boujikian concluded the initial presentations by discussing Brazil's strategies for promoting interfaith dialogue and social cohesion at the national level.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points from the session:

- Education plays a crucial role in fostering peace and understanding, but must be approached critically to avoid reinforcing prejudices
- Interfaith cooperation can be effectively integrated into broader development and humanitarian efforts
- Teacher training is essential for promoting cross-cultural understanding in diverse classrooms
- Secularism should be viewed as a protective framework for religious freedoms rather than an opposing force
- Early childhood education is vital for challenging prejudices and stereotypes before they become entrenched
- Social media poses challenges for promoting nuanced understanding, requiring creative approaches to engagement
- Parental involvement and community-wide approaches are necessary for successful interfaith education initiatives
- Global events and conflicts can significantly impact local interfaith efforts, requiring sensitive navigation
- Addressing structural and cultural violence is essential for creating lasting peace and social cohesion
- Interfaith initiatives should focus on shared humanity and dignity rather than attempting to erase all differences



E1: Religious Literacy

Speakers included **Caetano Dias Corrêa**, Professor at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and **Halim Mahfudz**, Chairman, Pesantren Tebuireng Waqf Foundation, as moderators, with discussion launchers **Matius Ho**, Executive Director, Leimena Institute; **Maria Lucia Uribe**, Executive Director, Arigatou International; **Gilbraz Aragão**, Observatory of Religions and Professor at Catholic University, Pernambuco; and **Abdul Muti**, Secretary General of Muhammadiyah.

Overview

The session began with the moderators welcoming participants and providing an overview of the importance of religious literacy in today's diverse societies. They emphasized how greater appreciation of religious forces and assets can enhance well-being and progress at many levels, including for policymakers.

The discussion launchers then took turns presenting different models and perspectives on religious literacy and education:

Matius Ho discussed Indonesia's Cross Cultural Religious Literacy Program, highlighting its approach to fostering understanding across religious divides in the world's largest Muslim-majority country.

Maria Lucia Uribe shared insights on Arigatou International's Ethics Education approach, which focuses on interfaith learning for children and youth.

Gilbraz Aragão provided a Brazilian perspective, discussing efforts to promote religious diversity and understanding in the country's educational system.

Abdul Muti explained Muhammadiyah's work in Indonesia on religious education that embraces pluralism and moderation.

Throughout the presentations, speakers emphasized the importance of moving beyond just intellectual knowledge to fostering real relationships and engagement across faith lines. As one speaker noted, "Religious literacy is not just about facts and figures - it's about learning to see the world through others' eyes and hearts."

As Halim Mahfudz stated, "Religious literacy is not a luxury - it is essential for building the mutual understanding and respect needed in our diverse world."

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points:

- Develop educational curricula and programs that go beyond facts to foster genuine interreligious relationships and engagement

- Ensure religious literacy efforts address both majority and minority faith communities
- Integrate religious literacy into policy-making processes at local and national levels
- Create more opportunities for interfaith experiential learning, especially for youth
- Establish an international network to share best practices in religious literacy education
- Conduct further research on effective models for enhancing religious literacy in diverse contexts



E2: Crossing Bridges Among Sectors and Institutions

*This session was moderated by **Marianna Richardson**, IF20 Director of Communications. The panel of well-established experts included **Maurice Bloem**, President/CEO, Joint Learning Initiative (JLI); **Peter Mandaville**, Senior Advisor for Faith Engagement, USAID; **Doug Fountain**, Christian Connections in International Health; and **Judd Birdsall**, Assistant Professor of Practice, Georgetown University.*

Overview

The problem of international organizations handling the differences in legal requirements for NGOs and NPOs, societal differences, various distribution procedures, and innumerable cultural traditions is a cause of constant difficulties. Gaps in understanding and engagement among humanitarian and development institutions are often linked to the poor or distorted information outside organizations receive as they look into new countries.

Following the Istanbul “Grand Bargain,” the move towards local leadership and localization has presented new challenges to leading organizations. The focus of the discussion was around (1) what can be done to strengthen communications and the flow of information and (2) how can the benefits of global perspectives be better linked to local knowledge and leadership.

The main conclusions pointed to the importance of having strong local ties with key people in each country that you are working in. Additionally, as an organization expands into other countries, finding those key people is the most difficult problem. This is where networking with other organizations that have already been working in that country is helpful so that costly mistakes are not made.

Takeaways

- Organizations must be flexible to handle the differing needs of different countries
- Local leadership is key
- Finding key people needs to be done strategically.
- Getting government help can be useful but may have pitfalls.

E3: Confronting Racism, Hate Crimes, and Radicalization

In this session, **Audrey Kitagawa**, President of the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation and the Chairperson for the IF20 Anti-racism Initiative, gave introductory remarks. The moderators were **Hamad Khatir**, Vice-President, Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities, and **Denise Posse-Blanco Lindberg**, District Court Judge, Third Judicial District, Utah, USA. The panelists included **Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome**, Secretary General, Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR); **Knox Thames**, Professor at Pepperdine University; **James Patton**, President and CEO, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (attended virtually); **Rabbi Diana Gerson**, Associate Executive Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis, Senior Advisor for Partnerships and External Relationships, Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities; **Mohd Herizal Bin Hazri**, Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, Abu Dhabi; **Muzaffar Kamilov**, Senior Advisor for Religious Affairs to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Denise Lindberg shared her personal experience with dehumanization during the Cuban revolution when she and other refugees like her were called “worms.” During the Rwandan genocide, people were labeled as “cockroaches.” Such language fosters hate crimes, violence, and radicalization.

Audrey Kitagawa explained that this discussion has broad implications, striking at the heart of human rights and the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Interfaith and multicultural efforts will be crucial to weaving strands of cooperation, trust, tolerance that hold together our multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, a fact recognized by the international community. Adopted on June 14, 2020. UN Resolution 2086 acknowledges the crucial role of inter-religious efforts. A brief written by the IF20’s Anti-Racism Initiative recommends that the G20 establish a high-level international commission on racism. This issue affects all 17 SDGs.

Takeaways

- Racism, hate speech and radicalization can turn into violent extremism.
- It is important to recognize that diversity is a part of the divine plan and people should confront these issues through education, tolerance, and legal action.
- We should foster positive conversations about coexistence and the importance of addressing hate speech without infringing on freedom of expression.
- Legal frameworks, such as international covenants, are crucial in navigating the challenges of protecting rights.
- Dehumanization fosters the belief that the survival of the “we” group depends on eliminating the “other.”
- Solutions lie in restoring nuance to identities.
- Society should foster empathy and shared values, including religious frameworks that promote kindness, healing, and dignity over hostility and exclusion.

- Promoting intersectionality and dialogue across diverse groups, especially for children and youth, can combat the spread of disinformation and hate speech.
- Children are particularly vulnerable to hate speech attacks and to disinformation.
- Starting education efforts early in life and maintaining them is crucial.



E4: A Faith Perspective on the Future of Work

Moderated by **Brian Grim**, Founding President of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation, and **Aloisio Cristovam**, Judge at Labor Court of Bahia, the panel featured **Richard T. Foltin**, Executive Director of the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, as a key discussion launcher.

Overview

Brian Grim opened the session by highlighting the Faith at Work Network for Latin America, launching that afternoon. He presented videos showcasing how major corporations like Google, Salesforce, and Dell Technologies are creating faith-friendly workplaces. Grim emphasized that this approach attracts and retains top talent, benefiting businesses.

Richard Foltin discussed the legal aspects of religious accommodation in the workplace, focusing on U.S. law. He explained the evolution of the "undue hardship" standard in religious accommodation cases, noting a recent Supreme Court decision that strengthened protections for religiously observant employees. Foltin also addressed the delicate balance between accommodating religious practices and avoiding coercion or harassment of other employees.

Judge Aloisio Cristovam, speaking in Portuguese, provided a Brazilian perspective on religious freedom in the workplace. He emphasized the importance of respecting workers' religious beliefs and practices, noting that this is not only a legal requirement but also contributes to a more productive and harmonious work environment.

The discussion touched on several key points:

- The growing recognition of spiritual health as a component of overall employee well-being
- The challenges of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that genuinely include religious diversity
- The need for balance between accommodating religious practices and maintaining a secular workplace
- The importance of educating both employers and employees about religious accommodation rights and responsibilities

As Grim noted, "Religious literacy is not just about facts and figures - it's about learning to see the world through others' eyes and hearts."

Takeaways

Key takeaways included:

- Companies are increasingly recognizing the value of faith-friendly workplaces

- Legal protections for religious accommodation are evolving, with recent U.S. court decisions strengthening these protections
- Balancing diverse religious needs in the workplace requires ongoing dialogue and education
- Faith-friendly policies can contribute to employee well-being and company success



E5: Faith and Environmental Defense: Protecting Life and Territory

Moderated by **Carrick Reddin** from the World Resources Institute and **Pastor Romi Márcia Bencke** from the National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil, the panel featured **Carlos Vicente** from the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative Brazil and **Binalakshmi Nepram** from the United States Institute of Peace as key discussion launchers.

Overview

Carrick Reddin opened by highlighting recent research from the World Resources Institute and Laudato Si' Research Institute, which shows that faith communities are important but often neglected actors in socio-environmental disputes in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. He emphasized the unique strengths these communities bring, including extensive grassroots networks, moral authority, and commitment to social justice.

Pastor Romi Márcia Bencke discussed the importance of protecting indigenous cultures and spiritualities, emphasizing their deep connection to the environment. She highlighted the challenges faced by these communities, including threats to their territories and way of life.

Carlos Vicente presented on the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative's work in Brazil, focusing on their efforts to train and equip faith leaders and communities for environmental advocacy. He stressed the importance of interfaith collaboration in addressing environmental challenges.

Binalakshmi Nepram provided a global perspective on indigenous environmental defense, highlighting that 80% of the world's conflicts occur in biodiversity hotspots where indigenous people live. She discussed the concept of environmental violence and the work being done to recognize and address it at the UN level.

Key points from the discussion included:

- The deep spiritual and existential connection between faith communities and the natural world
- The crucial role of women in organizing for environmental defense
- The need for formal recognition and support for faith actors in environmental advocacy
- The concept of environmental violence and its impact on indigenous communities
- The importance of interfaith and intercultural dialogue in environmental protection efforts

Participants emphasized the need for respect, harmonization of values, and true listening among different communities. They also highlighted the importance of acknowledging past mistakes by mainstream religions and working towards reparation and coexistence.

The session ended with a call to action for faith leaders and environmental advocates to work together in protecting life, territory, and the planet as a whole.

E6: Challenges facing Africa: 2024 and Beyond

*Moderated by **Dr. Sylvia Mamohapi Pheto**, Deputy Chairperson of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Rights in South Africa, the panel featured **Michael Swain** from Freedom of Religion South Africa, **Professor Maniraj Sukdaven** from the University of Pretoria, and **Najat Abdi Mohamed** from Global One Kenya as key discussion launchers.*

Dr. Pheto opened by highlighting the importance of addressing Africa's challenges and opportunities in light of the African Union's recent inclusion in the G20. She emphasized the need to showcase both the continent's potential and its pressing issues.

Najat Abdi Mohamed presented an overview of Africa's challenges, including climate change impacts, population growth, and the need for economic reforms. She stressed the importance of harnessing Africa's resources effectively and promoting good governance.

Michael Swain discussed religious freedom in Africa, emphasizing its importance as a foundational human right. He cautioned against over-regulation of religion by states and highlighted the need to protect parental rights in education.

Professor Sukdaven provided statistical insights into various challenges facing Africa, including food security, water scarcity, health crises, and environmental degradation. He emphasized the need to address root causes rather than just symptoms.

Key points from the discussion included:

- The need to prioritize a few key issues for the G20 agenda rather than presenting a long list of challenges
- The importance of addressing youth unemployment and disillusionment
- The potential for Africa to leapfrog in technological development
- The need to combat corruption and promote transparency
- The importance of interfaith dialogue and collaboration in addressing Africa's challenges

Participants emphasized the need to highlight Africa's successes and potential, not just its challenges. They called for a focus on practical solutions and the sharing of best practices across the continent.

The session concluded with a call for African leaders and faith communities to work together in preparing for the 2024 G20 summit in South Africa. Participants stressed the importance of presenting a united African voice and focusing on key priorities that can make a significant impact on the continent's development.

Takeaways

Key takeaways included:

- The need for Africa to harness its resources more effectively

- The importance of promoting good governance and combating corruption
- The potential for interfaith collaboration in addressing social and economic challenges
- The need to prioritize youth employment and engagement
- The importance of presenting Africa's successes alongside its challenges at the G20



Concluding Fishbowl Discussion

*The concluding session of the G20 Interfaith Forum in Brazil featured an open "fishbowl" discussion moderated by **Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves**, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, and **Thiago Alves Pinto**, Lecturer at University of Oxford. **Silvio Almeida**, Minister of Human Rights and Citizenship of Brazil also shared some words. The session aimed to capture final impressions and ideas from participants as the forum concluded.*

Overview

The fishbowl discussion allowed participants to share their reflections on the forum and raise topics for further consideration. Key themes that emerged included:

- The need to translate forum discussions into concrete actions at local and national levels
- The importance of including youth and marginalized voices in interfaith dialogues
- Calls for faith communities to address climate change and environmental protection
- The role of religious actors in promoting peace and reconciliation in conflict zones
- Suggestions for improving implementation of policy recommendations from the forum

Participants highlighted the value of the cross-cultural and interfaith connections made during the event. Many expressed a desire to continue collaborations and dialogues beyond the forum.

The moderators synthesized key takeaways, including:

- The critical importance of religious freedom and interfaith cooperation for addressing global challenges
- The need for ongoing dialogue between faith communities, governments, and civil society
- Calls for concrete commitments and action plans emerging from the forum discussions
- Suggestions for themes and focus areas for future G20 Interfaith Forum events

The session concluded with expressions of gratitude to the Brazilian hosts and organizers, and a commitment to continue advancing the forum's mission of harnessing the power of religion to support the G20 agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Participants were encouraged to implement insights gained and continue collaborations as they returned to their home contexts. The moderators emphasized that the real work of the forum begins as attendees put ideas into action in their communities and spheres of influence.

Concluding Session

*Speakers included **Gustavo Westmann**, Head of the Special Advisory Office for International Affairs of the Brazilian Presidency; **Felipe Hees**, Minister at the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; **Archbishop Makgoba of Cape Town** (via video); **Khushwant Singh**, Head of Secretariat, The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD); **Peter Prove**, World Council of Churches; **Hamad Khatir**, Vice President, Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities; **Katherine Marshall**, Vice President, G20 Interfaith Forum, Executive Director, World Faiths Development Dialogue; and **W. Cole Durham, Jr.**, President of the G20 Interfaith Forum. The session focused on Brazil's G20 agenda, preparations for upcoming summits, and the transition to South Africa's G20 presidency.*

Overview

The session opened with remarks from Brazilian government representatives outlining the country's G20 priorities and plans for upcoming summits. Gustavo Westmann highlighted Brazil's commitment to social participation in the G20 process, announcing a new platform for global input on G20 priorities called G20 Social.

Felipe Hees then spoke about Brazil's focus on addressing inequalities, sustainable development, and reforming global governance. He stressed the need for greater representation of the Global South in international organizations.

A video message from Archbishop Makgoba of South Africa followed, emphasizing interfaith cooperation and the upcoming South African G20 presidency. The session then transitioned to closing remarks from partner organizations.

Katherine Marshall summarized five key recommendations emerging from the forum, including support for Brazil's Alliance Against Hunger initiative and action on debt, tax, and climate finance.

Cole Durham offered concluding reflections, using metaphors like "beating swords into plowshares" to emphasize the forum's goals of transforming challenges into opportunities for positive change. The session concluded with expressions of gratitude to organizers, volunteers, and participants, and announcements about follow-up activities and resources.

Takeaways

Key takeaways and action points:

- Support Brazil's new platform for global input on G20 priorities
- Advance the Alliance Against Hunger initiative
- Develop proposals on debt relief, tax reform, and climate finance
- Create a working group on human trafficking
- Organize a youth meeting connected to next year's forum in Africa

- Promote cross-cultural and religious literacy training
- Continue work on the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative
- Carry forward social participation emphasis to future G20 presidencies
- Utilize recordings and upcoming webinars to further engage with forum content
- Contribute to the ongoing development of recommendations for the G20



Appendix A - Keynote Address by Mary Robinson

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here with you at the G20 Interfaith Forum. The theme this year – “Leave No One Behind: The Well-Being of the Planet and Its People” – resonates deeply with me.

I speak to you today as Chair of The Elders, the group of independent global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela. We are committed to advancing peace, justice, human rights and a sustainable future for our planet. Frankly, I also speak as an angry granny!

Earlier this year, I was in Brazil with eight fellow Elders. We had the pleasure of meeting with young climate leaders, black and indigenous activists, as well as the Minister of Racial Equality Anielle Franco and the Finance Minister Fernando Haddad. As the current holder of the G20 presidency and the host of next year’s global climate conference COP30, Brazil is uniquely positioned to mobilise the world to address the crises we face.

Today, I want to talk further about how we can create a sustainable planet, one where our climate is stable and our nature restored, and where people thrive. This requires a holistic approach drawing on the diversity of civil society as well as sustained political leadership, and in which faith leaders and religious communities can play an important role.

I realise these are not novel ideas for this distinguished audience.

Just last year, Pope Francis released *Laudate Deum*, his response to the climate crisis and his hope for how societies must address it.

In 2015, when the landmark Paris Agreement was adopted, Islamic and Hindu leaders called for urgent climate action in their declarations ahead of the summit.

Religion is no stranger to the concept of caring for our planet.

Buddhism offers important teachings about how interconnected and interdependent everything is on our planet. About how human beings are part of the environment, and vice-versa.

The same idea is at the core of many indigenous religions. Indigenous peoples have a deep kinship with nature and profound understanding of the importance of caring for nature in order to care for humanity.

Sadly, we know this wisdom has not prevailed over the past centuries.

Today, our planet is on a path of runaway climate change due to the rate of global warming. The Earth is warmer than it has been in the last 125,000 years.

This makes extreme weather events more severe and more frequent.

Just last month, typhoon Gaemi wreaked havoc in the Philippines, Taiwan and China, killing over a hundred people, and displacing hundreds of thousands.

When I was in Brazil last May, severe floods in the south of the country killed and injured hundreds and displaced half a million people.

Earlier this year, thousands of wildfires burned through the Amazon rainforest, threatening its collapse. And last year's wildfires in Canada burned more forest area than in all recorded North American history.

And just a few months ago, 1,300 people perished from deadly 47C heat during the Haj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

And it's not just a climate crisis. It is a climate and nature crisis.

Since 1970, we've seen a 69% drop in wildlife populations. The ocean, which is the largest ecosystem on Earth, teeming with wondrous life, is experiencing increasing acidification and marine heatwaves, threatening countless species.

Our planet is undergoing its sixth great mass extinction. This should alarm us all.

But we know the root causes, which is the first step in solving this crisis.

First, the burning of coal, oil and gas accounts for three quarters of global greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions blanket the Earth and trap the sun's heat, driving the climate breakdown we're experiencing.

Scientists have been raising the alarm for decades now. And yet fossil fuels continue to represent 80% of our total energy supply, still polluting the air we breathe and threatening life on Earth.

Second, the way we produce, process, package and transport food is responsible for a third of emissions that heat our planet.

Our global food system is also the primary driver of biodiversity loss. This is largely because we've converted natural ecosystems for farming and grazing. We have already altered 70% of the land, destroying habitats and the sources for food and shelter that wildlife depends on.

The loss of nature is an existential threat for over a quarter of the global population which depends on its resources for their livelihood.

The climate and nature crisis confronts us with major ramifications for food and water security. More frequent extreme weather events threaten food production worldwide, while our limited supply of freshwater is dangerously dwindling every year our planet continues to heat up.

Left unchecked, this crisis' greatest toll will be on human life itself, with a direct cost to health estimated to US\$ 2-4 billion per year by 2030 and increasing humanitarian emergencies.

And let us not forget that this crisis is a profoundly unfair one. The most vulnerable, who have contributed the least to the problem, are already suffering the most.

More frequent hurricanes, rising sea levels and coastal erosion are threatening small island developing states and their very existence.

Extreme flooding in Pakistan in 2022 submerged one third of the country and affected 33 million people.

And the list sadly goes on.

Each of these countries has emitted well below 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This disproportionate burden should outrage us. And we must transform this outrage into action.

Because, if there is one thing you should take away from this speech, it is that however devastating this crisis is, we are not helpless against it. Far from it.

As my dear friend the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu used to say, I am a prisoner of hope. I know we can tackle the climate and nature crisis. Solutions are already underway, and we must support and accelerate them.

Renewable energy is being built at an unprecedented rate, with each new gigawatt of clean energy moving us one step closer to phasing out fossil fuels.

At last year's COP28 climate conference, world leaders agreed to triple global renewable capacity by 2030. This ambitious goal can make all the difference in averting the worst impacts of climate breakdown for today's generations.

Food producers across the globe are already shifting towards regenerative practices, which both reduce harm to nature and actively restore it. Regenerative farming alone could provide a third of land-based climate action needed by 2030.

At their local level, farmers, fishers, agroforesters and many others are leading the way to help transform our global food system from an extractive to a restorative one.

Coupled with measures to improve the transport and processing of food, and to reduce food waste, we can *not only* mitigate climate change and support nature, but also enhance the resilience of our food system, in turn helping achieve food security.

This is the beauty of these transitions. They can have a ripple effect on innumerable facets of society. They can help solve many interconnected crises today and for generations to come.

And this is an important point. We must remember that we don't just inherit this earth, we are borrowing it from future generations.

Indigenous peoples speak of the Seventh Generation Principle, which invites us to think of the decisions we take today and whether they will result in a sustainable world seven generations in the future.

So how do we make the right decisions today? I believe it starts with having more diverse voices at the table and creating greater pluralism.

We need better representation of women, youth, LGBTI communities, indigenous peoples and marginalised groups in the decision-making process. This can help deliver the inclusive, transparent and accountable mechanisms we need.

Above all, we need to encourage a sense of connection between all of us striving for that healthier, fairer, renewable-energy powered world. That is what Project Dandelion – a women-led climate justice movement – is seeking to do. We are inspired by the dandelion, which grows on all continents, is both resilient and regenerative of the soil, can be consumed in its entirety, and is spread by blowing its seeds.

Already, Project Dandelion has connected with a Multi-faith Women-led Climate Action Network, and I am pleased to be invited to their second meeting in Rome in October. Connecting networks like this is a way of growing our power to influence climate and nature outcomes. Project Dandelion is women-led but not women only. As well as faith-based groups, we hope to link with indigenous communities, young people, progressive business, scientists, artists, farmers etc, and show that we are in fact the majority in the world.

And from world leaders, who are the ultimate decision-makers on the global stage, we need long-view leadership.

We need to persuade decision-makers to understand the urgency of the existential threats we face and to believe in our ability to overcome them.

Long-view leaders must have the moral strength to address both current concerns *and* long-term risks, often at the expense of vested interests. They must think beyond short-term political cycles and deliver solutions for both current and future generations.

This is a call The Elders made to world leaders earlier this year. A call that I reiterate today. A call that I urge you to make with us and which I hope can become a rallying cry in your communities around the world.

Imagine the change we can create if we all join our voices.

We're on the cusp of a wonderful, safer, fairer, cleaner, healthier world. We are moving towards it, but not fast enough for science.

Our leaders must accelerate the transition away from extracting industries and fulfil their promises to deliver on the global climate and nature goals.

They must seize the opportunity this year during the G20 meetings, at the COP16 nature conference in Colombia, at the COP29 climate conference in Azerbaijan and at COP30 next year in this country.

Later is too late. I call on world leaders to deliver the finance needed for nature and climate which is the focus of COP29 this year. Only then can we create a just and equitable transition that safeguards the rights of the most vulnerable and of future generations.

Thank you.



Appendix B - Keynote Address by Marina da Silva, Brazil's Minister of Environment

Summary:

Marina da Silva emphasized the urgency of aligning our worldview with actionable steps to address global challenges, particularly those related to the environment and social well-being. She highlighted the G20's focus on holistic well-being in a world fraught with turmoil, pointing out that this turmoil stems from a lack of harmony with nature and within societies. Da Silva identified climate change as a significant factor exacerbating poverty and vulnerability worldwide, citing examples from Brazil, such as devastating floods in Rio Grande do Sul and severe droughts in the Pantanal and Amazon regions.

The Minister underscored the critical state of the Amazon rainforest, warning that if deforestation surpasses 25%, the forest could reach a point of no return, leading to widespread environmental and economic repercussions. She connected the Amazon's health to South America's GDP, emphasizing that 75% of it depends on the rains produced by the forest. The destruction of the Amazon would have catastrophic effects, transforming large parts of the continent into deserts.

Da Silva argued that the current global crisis is a result of prioritizing material wealth over sustainable living. She called for a shift from a mindset of "having" to one of "being," where value is placed on human potential and creativity rather than on the exploitation of natural resources. She referenced historical efforts to address climate change, such as the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and lamented the slow progress since then.

The Minister highlighted Brazil's successes in reducing deforestation during her previous tenure, achieving an 83% reduction and preventing the release of billions of tons of CO₂. She expressed hope that current efforts, including the resumption of anti-deforestation initiatives under President Lula, would continue to yield positive results. However, she acknowledged the challenges posed by systemic contradictions and the need for global cooperation.

Da Silva concluded by stressing the importance of a fair transition to a sustainable future, where richer countries support poorer nations in addressing climate change. She advocated for taxing the super-rich to fund the fight against inequality and to finance the ecological transition, promoting a model of sustainable development that is economically, socially, politically, and ethically balanced.

Portuguese Transcript

Pela honra do convite para participar desse importante fórum e de pensar como vamos é? Tratar as questões desafiadoras que estão diante de nós. Numa perspectiva de mudança de visão de mundo, mas uma mudança de visão de um mundo que seja acompanhada da necessária ação, que diga. Que de fato, aquilo que nós pensamos, dizemos, sentimos é traduzido? Em uma ação é real, não é que dá os verdadeiros frutos. É quando me foi feito o convite. Hoje de pela manhã eu estive no Rio de Janeiro participando do g 20 social e estou aqui agora no fórum inter-religioso. É do g 20 pensar o bem-estar Holístico em um mundo in Turbilhão.

Eu gostei muito desse paradoxo, não é pensar algo que nos leva para uma perspectiva de integração e conectividade com a natureza, com a gente mesmo e com as outras pessoas. EE enfim, é. Mas no mundo em turbilhões, e talvez fosse interessante a gente pensar muito rapidamente que turbilhões seriam esses? Esse mundo in Turbilhão. Tem muitas formas desses turbilhões se realizaram, mas eu? Escolhi aqui alguns poucos. É só para ilustrar, um dos grandes turbilhões que nós vivemos é a falta de Harmonia que temos. Com a gente mesmo e com a natureza. E a insuficiência das normas e das regras que fazem com que a gente possa no se relacionar uns com os outros. É com é a sociedade, com o estado. Tudo isso é motivo de desarmonia. Mas com certeza, entre esses turbilhões tem o problema da pobreza. Nós temos é milhões de pessoas que vivem em situação de muita vulnerabilidade no mundo todo. Uma vulnerabilidade que cada dia gravada. Porém, esses fatores. E um deles é o da mudança climática, dos eventos climáticos extremos que estão destruindo os sistemas alimentares, estão empobrecendo e destruindo é as áreas terrestres na quais nas quais cultivamos os nossos alimentos. Aqui no Brasil, nós vivemos uma experiência muito difícil. De mudança do clima e de eventos climáticos extremos. Tivemos uma grande enchente num dos nossos estados. Aqui, o Rio Grande do Sul. Foi preciso fazer o salvamento de 80000 pessoas. Cerca de 2000000 de pessoas foram atingidas com essas chuvas. E nesse momento nós temos uma situação muito grave no Pantanal, que é um bioma é do Brasil, uma das maiores áreas alagadas do mundo, que está sob a ameaça das mudanças climáticas, sua biodiversidade, suas populações originárias. É, temos. Agora, uma escassez hídrica severa nessa área, que é uma área alagada com uma grande quantidade de de de animais. E nesse momento nós temos ali uma situação que chega a ter umidade de 12% AA umidade relativa do ar é com ventos que vão. De 30 a 70 km por hora, com temperaturas altíssimas. E é milhares e milhares e milhares de focos de calor. Só para se ter uma ideia, né? Temos uma quantidade enorme de pessoas fazendo o combate ao fogo e equipamentos, mas isso já é efeito das mudanças climáticas. E isso agravam as situações de vulnerabilidade. A mesma coisa nós estamos enfrentando na Amazônia. Temos uma imensa cerca, que intercala entre um período de chuvas fora de controle e, em seguida, uma estiagem muito grande. Temos um dos estados que está já vivendo essa escassez, com municípios alargados. É, aliás, isolados e uma situação de penúria, pela grande quantidade de mortandade de peixe. A baixa é de. De de de estoque de alimentos. A população da Amazônia, a mal parte da proteína que elas ingerem vem da pesca e a grande mortandade de peixes em função da baixa dos rios. O aumento da temperatura dos rios está levando a uma situação de escassez. Então a questão é. Da da pobreza é um

problema agravado pela mudança do clima. Eu citei aqui alguns exemplos. A questão é das é, enfim, da destruição. Nós temos um processo de destruição que faz com que alguns cientistas digam que isso não é novidade aqui nesse fórum. Nós já estamos com cerca de 30% do planeta no vermelho. No caso da floresta amazônica, por exemplo, aqui no Brasil, os cientistas dizem que se ultrapassarmos a 25% de destruição da floresta, ela entra num processo de savanização hoje. Nós já temos uma perda de cobertura Florestal na Amazônia em torno de 19 a 20% e não pode ultrapassar os 25% para que não entre em ponto de não retorno. Isso é um prejuízo para o equilíbrio do planeta, mas também do nosso país, da nossa região. Só para se ter uma ideia, a Amazônia é responsável por cerca de 75%. Não é do PIB da América do sul. 75% do PIB da América do sul depende das chuvas que são produzidas pela floresta amazônica. Que é algo em torno de 20 bilhões de toneladas de água por dia, que é transformada em vapor e lançada na atmosfera. Uma parte disso vai para os oceanos, que é fundamental. A outra parte cai sobre a própria floresta e se transforma nos rios voadores. A destruição da floresta seria transformar. A maior parte do nosso país, em desertos como o Saara e a ta cama, então vivemos o Turbilhão da destruição. Dos recursos naturais dos serviços ecossistêmicos. De um modo geral, é. E a conclusão que eu chego é que nós estamos gastando tempo e dinheiro naquilo que não é pão, como diz um dos ensinamentos da minha tradição religiosa, com todo o respeito aqui, e agradecendo por essa possibilidade de um diálogo inter-religioso, a gente, a gente possa estabelecer esses pontos. De conectividade entre nós, bem.

Um dos outros turbilhões que nós vivemos é o da visão que dá sustentação ao que levou à crise do planeta, nós. Já temos um ensaio. Acho que o primeiro ensaio sobre mudança do clima foi escrito em 1896, pelo físico e svante arranhões. E lá ele já dizia que nós poderíamos chegar onde chegamos. Mas nós fomos para Rio 92 após o relatório, nosso futuro comum, e ali estabelecemos que precisávamos. Resolveu o problema da desertificação que assola a África e vários países do mundo, inclusive o Brasil. No semiárido brasileiro, é, nós precisávamos em resolver o problema da perda de biodiversidade e precisávamos enfrentar aquilo que leva a mudança do clima. E o que leva a mudança do clima? De desmatamento? É o uso de carvão, é o uso de petróleo, é o uso de gás. É isso que leva a mudança do clima e infelizmente tivemos que ficar durante 31 anos para chegarmos agora nos Emirados Árabes Unidos e ser tomada a decisão de que é preciso fazer. Transição para o fim do uso de combustível fóssil. A humanidade tem um dever de casa a ser feito, e esse dever de casa nos remete para essa ideia, né? De termos é uma visão que não seja linear, não é para uma visão mais cíclica. De paradigmas e de integração não é das nossas ações. E eu só consigo é imaginar isso, é. Pensando que seria essa mudança mesmo? É divisão, acho que a gente vive. No ideal, o que fomos capturados? Não nós individualmente, que acho que cada um tem um estilo de vida que já é bastante, é integrado. Mas o sistema no qual nós estamos dentro e fazemos parte, queiramos ou não, ele é avassalador. E ele parte de uma visão de uma forma de ser, de estar no mundo que é. É a visão que nos leva para o ideal do TE. Essa visão do ideal do t está fazendo com que a gente destrua as bases naturais da nossa existência.

Estamos destruindo e arriscando não só a nossa vida, mas estamos destruindo. É as condições em que a vida nos foi dada, como eu disse a filósofa Hannah Arendt, então é, e eu só consigo entender que é preciso a gente fazer um deslocamento. Para o ideal do ser. Porque

se há limites para ter, não há limites para ser. E talvez seja nesse lugar que a gente consiga uma visão mais holística. Os povos indígenas, as comunidades tradicionais, as comunidades é tradicionais do mundo inteiro. Em todos os lugares nos ensinam como ter. Uma relação de respeito com a natureza, mesmo quando essa natureza obviamente é transformada para assegurar o nosso sustento. A gente vive numa lógica dos limites extensivos, né? Estamos. Nos espaços extensivos, nós estamos disputando coisas. Estamos disputando minérios, estamos disputando Terra, estamos disputando madeira, estamos disputando o petróleo, estamos disputando essas coisas. Isso são os limites extensivos. E o planeta é limitado, extensivamente falando. Mas talvez a gente tenha que ir para os limites intensivos. Se nos limites extensivos é a gente está disputando coisa nos limites intensivos, nós vamos disputar as nossas habilidades. E obviamente que isso é bem menos ofensivo. Das condições que promovem e sustentam a vida. Porque se há limites para ter, não há limites para ser. Não há limites para fazer a melhor poesia para compor é os melhores, é as melhores canções. Não há limites para. É fazer a melhor jogada de futebol. Não há limites para. Escreveu o melhor livro. Não há limites para ser um bom escritor, um bom poeta. 11, enfim, uma pessoa que se dedica à sua fé. Então isso é uma mudança muito significativa. E. Se temos mudanças na nossa percepção, isso tem que nos levar para algo que seja, no sentido de transformar aquilo que compreendemos numa prática, numa atitude. Porque é, eu li certa vez um. Um artigo de um escritor é muito famoso da África de que que me tocou muito é o meu corpo.

Ele fala que se a gente quer fazer. Qualquer coisa mudar, qualquer coisa, a gente tem que se livrar dos 7 sapatos sujos e um dos sapatos sujos que ele diz que a gente tem que se livrar é o sapato sujo de achar que porque nós estamos dizendo, nós estamos concordando, nós já estamos fazendo. Realidade não muda se a gente está concordando, se a gente está dizendo a realidade muda quando a gente transforma o que a gente disse, o que a gente concorda? Em ação prática, infelizmente, a humanidade encontrou um caminho muitas vezes de não fazer. Concordando, se você quer não fazer, cria um consenso. Todos já estamos de acordo que precisa resolver o problema de combustível fóssil, mas ninguém faz o dever de casa. Então é preciso a gente se livrar desse sapato sujo, como diz o mia Couto. E é pensando essa ideia. Né? A 20 anos atrás, quando fui ministra pela primeira vez, eu disse para minha equipe, nós vamos ter que liderar pelo exemplo. Existem muitas pessoas que, de uma forma muito eloquente e muito necessária, estão é dizendo e formulando ideias e propostas. Muito relevantes, nosso papel é. Transformar isso em prática. E aí nós começamos. Não é nessa ideia de liderar pelo exemplo. Fizemos um plano de prevenção e controle do desmatamento da Amazônia em 2004. Esse plano foi responsável por evitar lançar na atmosfera 5 bilhões de toneladas de CO₂. De 2004 a 2012. E isso foi a maior contribuição já dada por um país individualmente desde o protocolo de Kyoto. Reduzimos durante uma década o desmatamento em 83% e criamos 25000000 de hectares de unidades de conservação. Isso equivaleu naquele período a 80% das áreas protegidas que foram criadas no mundo.

Agora nós é depois de um período, não é de mais de 15 anos. Eu retornei com Oo presidente Lula e o plano de combate ao desmatamento havia sido abandonado. O desmatamento estava fora de controle. Pessoas desceu 2 crescendo muito e nós conseguimos já no primeiro ano, em 2023, uma redução do desmatamento. Retomamos o plano, uma redução do desmatamento

em 50%, evitando lançar na atmosfera 250000000 de toneladas de CO2. E esse ano? Os primeiros 6 meses já conseguimos uma redução de 45,7%, evitando lançar na atmosfera 180000000 de toneladas de CO2. Eu digo isso para que a gente possa se animar, porque se multa o nosso entendimento, a gente tem que mudar a nossa prática. E o esforço de que possamos liderar pelo exemplo. Mas eu sei que muita gente diz não, tudo bem, a senhora está no governo. Então é possível fazer isso em nós, que não estamos. As pessoas fazem muitas coisas, porque o que os governos fazem nada mais é do que um reflexo de suas sociedades em todos os níveis. E não existe nada grandioso que se faça sozinho para as pessoas. Você faz com as pessoas. Então, um outro exemplo que eu acho que é importante a gente trabalhar, é a gente superar a ideia de que basta no caso da mudança do clima. A gente mitigar e adaptar. É preciso mitigar, reduzir a emissão de CO2 para que isso aconteça? É reduzir emissão. Por uso de combustível fóssil, desmatamento e outras Fontes. Mas é por fazermos também um esforço muito grande para triplicar energia renovável. Como saiu da cop 28, é. Dobrar não é a energia, eficiência energética e um ponto fazer a transição para o fim do uso de combustível fóssil. Talvez esse tenha sido o maior ganho que já se teve. Nós vamos para a cop 29 no Azerbaijão e ali nós temos que ter os meios de implementação. Porque países? Pobres países em desenvolvimento que emitiram menos e que tem desafios enormes de pobreza. Eles têm que ser ajudados pelos países ricos, que emitiram mais e que têm recursos tecnológicos e recursos financeiros.

É preciso os meios de implementação. A cop 15 estabeleceu que era. Era 100000000. Isso é insuficiente e eu vou dar um dado. Tem um relatório que foi feito, é a pedido do Reino Unido, é pelo indiano das gupta. E ele diz que enquanto a humanidade não consegue os 100000000 para fazer a transição ecológica no planeta, nós continuamos investindo. Sobretudo em combustível fóssil, algo em torno de 4 a 6 trilhões de dólares. É uma luta de dispari, não tem como a gente ganhar nessa forma. Então, nós vamos ter que alocar recursos, seja do poder público, seja da iniciativa privada. Então, fazer essa mudança, duplicar a eficiência energética, triplicar energia renovável e fazer a redução drástica do uso de combustível fóssil aqui no Brasil, o nosso maior vetor de emissão é desmatamento, 53% das emissões do Brasil. É desmatamento. E o nosso compromisso é de zerar desmatamento até 2030. Para isso, nós fizemos um plano de transformação ecológica, que a base dos investimentos que estamos fazendo para fazer as mudanças nessa direção aqui. Obviamente que isso não é algo fácil. Existem contradições dentro do governo. O sistema é contraditório, mas eu espero, não é, que a pulsão de vida seja mais forte do que a pulsão de morte e a gente possa ter uma mudança, tudo isso, se a gente conseguir. Não é fazer também com que se tenha outros mecanismos na indústria, em milhões, que é um mecanismo para pagamento por serviços ecossistêmicos. Preservação de florestas dos países tropicais. É preciso que a floresta seja remunerada pelos serviços ecossistemas. Que ela presta não no sentido mercadológico, mas para que os povos que a preservaram possam viver com dignidade. E também por último, né? Que a gente possa é trabalhar na direção. E o Brasil está fazendo isso no G20, vamos fazer na cop 30. Da cop 30, o que nós queremos é que se tenha. Ndc esse compromisso, as contribuições que são determinadas de redução de seus 2 por cada país o suficientemente robusta para não permitir que a gente ultrapasse 1.5 de temperatura. Para isso vamos ter que fazer um esforço. Aonde países ricos lideram essa corrida. Países de renda média alta, como é o caso do Brasil, vem

em seguida. E países de renda baixa e países de renda média baixa terão a necessária ajuda para poder fazer a sua transição e que seja uma transição justa. O que seria uma transição justa? É que aqueles que emitiram menos, aqueles que tem mais desafios em termos econômicos e sociais possam receber o devido apoio e até mesmo aquilo que nós chamamos de é reparação por perdas e danos, como saiu da última cop. É aqui nós trabalhamos sempre com a ideia de que é possível ter um modelo sustentável de desenvolvimento, não só do ponto de vista económico, ambiental, mas também social também do ponto de vista político, económico é e também do ponto de vista ético, estético. Porque a gente busca é a prosperidade. Nós transformamos natureza em dinheiro. Chegou a hora de usar esse dinheiro para restaurar e preservar natureza. Por isso que no G20 nós propusemos aqui que seja feita a taxação de pessoas super ricas. Para que tirando 2% dessas fortunas? A gente possa ter algo em torno de 500 bilhões de dólares para investir em combate às desigualdades e fazer a transição climática, obrigada.

English

I am honored to be invited to participate in this important forum and to think about how we are going to deal with the challenging issues that lie before us, from the perspective of changing our worldview. But a change in our worldview that is accompanied by the necessary action, that says, that what we think, say, and feel is actually translated into an action that is real. But does it, bear true fruit? That is what I was invited to address.

This morning I was in Rio de Janeiro, participating in the event for the G20 sSocial, and I am here now at the inter-religious forum. The G20 is thinking about holistic well-being in a world in turmoil. I really liked this paradox. It is not thinking about something that leads us to a perspective of integration and connectivity with nature, with ourselves, and with other people. And anyway, it is. But in a world in turmoil, and perhaps it would be interesting for us to think very quickly about what turmoil these would be, this world in turmoil.

There are many ways in which these turmoils have come about, but me? I chose a few here. Just to illustrate, one of the great turmoils we live in is the lack of harmony we have. With ourselves and with nature. And the insufficiency of norms and rules that prevent us from relating to each other. It is with society, with the state. All of this is a cause of disharmony. But certainly, among these turmoils there is the problem of poverty. We have millions of people living in situations of great vulnerability all over the world. A vulnerability that is increasing every day. However, these factors. And one of them is climate change, extreme weather events that are destroying food systems, impoverishing and destroying the land areas on which we grow our food.

Here in Brazil, we have lived through a very difficult experience. Climate change and extreme weather events. We had a major flood in one of our states. Here, Rio Grande do Sul. We had to rescue 80,000 people. Around 2,000,000 people were affected by these rains. And right now we have a very serious situation in the Pantanal, which is a biome in Brazil, one of the largest flooded areas in the world, which is under threat from climate change, its biodiversity, its native populations. Yes, we have. Now, a severe water shortage in this area, which is a flooded area with a large number of animals. And right now we have a situation where humidity can reach

12%, with relative humidity and winds that blow at 30 to 70 km per hour, with very high temperatures. And there are thousands and thousands and thousands of hotspots. Just to give you an idea, right?

We have a huge number of people fighting fires and equipment, but this is already an effect of climate change. And this worsens vulnerability situations.

We are facing the same thing in the Amazon. We have a huge fence, which alternates between a period of uncontrolled rain and, then, a very severe drought. We have one of the states that is already experiencing this shortage, with expanded municipalities. In fact, it is isolated and in a situation of penury, due to the large amount of fish deaths. The low is. Of of ...

We already have about 30% of the planet in the red. In the case of the Amazon rainforest, for example, here in Brazil, scientists say that if we exceed 25% of the forest's destruction, it will enter a process of savannization today. We already have a loss of forest cover in the Amazon of around 19 to 20% and it cannot exceed 25% or we will reach the point of no return. This is detrimental to the balance of the planet, but also of our country, of our region.

The population of the Amazon, a small part of the protein they consume comes from fishing and the large number of fish die off due to the low water levels of the rivers. The increase in the temperature of the rivers is leading to a situation of scarcity.

So the issue is: poverty is a problem that is worsened by climate change. I have given some examples here. The issue is, in short, destruction. We have a process of destruction that makes some scientists say that this is nothing new here in this forum.

We already have about 30% of the planet in the red. In the case of the Amazon rainforest, for example, here in Brazil, scientists say that if we exceed 25% of the forest destruction, it will enter a process of savannization today. We already have a loss of forest cover in the Amazon of around 19 to 20% and it cannot exceed 25% or it will reach the point of no return. This is detrimental to the balance of the planet, but also of our country, of our region.

Just to give you an idea, the Amazon is responsible for about 75%. It's not of South America's GDP. 75% of South America's GDP depends on the rains produced by the Amazon rainforest. Which is around 20 billion tons of water per day, which is transformed into vapor and released into the atmosphere. Some of this goes to the oceans, which is essential. The other part falls on the forest itself and turns into flying rivers. The destruction of the forest would transform most of our country into deserts like the Sahara and the Taca. So we live in the whirlwind of destruction. Of natural resources and ecosystem services. In general, it is.

And the conclusion I reach is that we are spending time and money on things that are not bread, as one of the teachings of my religious tradition says, with all due respect here, and I am grateful for this possibility of inter-religious dialogue, so that we can establish these points of connectivity between us, well.

One of the other whirlwinds we are experiencing is the vision that supports what led to the planet's crisis: us. We already have an essay. I think the first essay on climate change was written in 1896, by physicist Svante Rasqueira. And there he already said that we could get to where we are. But we went to Rio 92 after the report, Our Common Future, and there we established that we needed to. It solved the problem of desertification that is ravaging Africa and several countries in the world, including Brazil. In the Brazilian semiarid region, yes, we needed to solve the problem of biodiversity loss and we needed to address what leads to climate change.

And what leads to climate change? Deforestation? It's the use of coal, it's the use of oil, it's the use of gas. That's what leads to climate change and unfortunately we had to wait 31 years to get to the United Arab Emirates now and make the decision that we need to do it. Transition to the end of the use of fossil fuels. Humanity has some homework to do, and this homework brings us to this idea, right? We need a vision that is not linear, it is not a more cyclical vision. We need paradigms and integration, it is not part of our actions. And I can only imagine that, right? Thinking that this would really be a change? It is division, I think we live in it. In the ideal, what have we been captured by? Not us individually, because I think each one has a lifestyle that is already quite integrated. But the system that we are in and are part of, whether we like it or not, is overwhelming. And it starts from a vision of a way of being, of being in the world that is. It is the vision that leads us to the ideal of TE. This vision of the ideal of t is making us destroy the natural bases of our existence.

We are destroying and risking not only our lives, but we are destroying. These are the conditions in which life was given to us, as the philosopher Hannah Arendt said, so it is, and I can only understand that we need to make a shift. Towards the ideal of being. Because if there are limits to having, there are no limits to being. And perhaps it is in this place that we can achieve a more holistic vision. Indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and traditional communities all over the world. Everywhere they teach us how to have a relationship of respect with nature, even when this nature is obviously transformed to ensure our livelihood. We live in a logic of extensive limits, right? We are.

In extensive spaces, we are fighting over things. We are fighting over minerals, we are fighting over land, we are fighting over timber, we are fighting over oil, we are fighting over these things. These are the extensive limits. And the planet is limited, extensively speaking. But perhaps we have to move towards intensive limits. If in the extensive limits we are competing for something in the intensive limits, we will compete for our abilities. And obviously this is much less offensive. Of the conditions that promote and sustain life.

Because if there are limits to having, there are no limits to being. There are no limits to writing the best poetry, to composing the best, the best songs. There are no limits to. It is making the best football play. There are no limits to writing the best book. There are no limits to being a good writer, a good poet. 11, in short, a person who dedicates himself to his faith. So this is a very significant change. And. If we have changes in our perception, this has to lead us to something that is, in the sense of transforming what we understand into practice, into an

attitude. Because, I once read an article by a very famous writer from Africa that touched me a lot is my body.

He says that if we want to do anything, change anything, we have to get rid of the 7 dirty shoes and one of the dirty shoes he says we have to get rid of is the dirty shoe of thinking that because we are saying it, we are agreeing, we are already doing it. Reality does not change if we are agreeing, if we are saying it. Reality changes when we transform what we said, what do we agree with? In practical action. Unfortunately, humanity has often found a way of not doing it. By agreeing, if you want not to do it, you create a consensus. We all already agree that we need to solve the fossil fuel problem, but no one does their homework. So we need to get rid of this dirty shoe, as Mia Couto says. And it is by thinking about this idea. Right?

Twenty years ago, when I was minister for the first time, I told my team, we are going to have to lead by example. There are many people who, in a very eloquent and very necessary way, are saying and formulating ideas and proposals. Our role is very relevant. To transform this into practice. And that's where we started. It's not about leading by example. We created a plan to prevent and control deforestation in the Amazon in 2004. This plan was responsible for preventing the release of 5 billion tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere from 2004 to 2012. And this was the largest contribution ever made by an individual country since the Kyoto Protocol. Over a decade, we reduced deforestation by 83% and created 2.5 million hectares of conservation units. This was equivalent to 80% of the protected areas that were created in the world during that period.

Now, after a period of no more than 15 years, I returned with President Lula and the plan to combat deforestation had been abandoned. Deforestation was out of control. People have been growing a lot, and we managed to reduce deforestation in the first year, in 2023. We resumed the plan, a 50% reduction in deforestation, avoiding the release of 250 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere. And this year? In the first 6 months, we have already achieved a 45.7% reduction, avoiding the release of 180 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

I say this so that we can be encouraged, because if our understanding is flawed, we have to change our practice. And we have to make an effort to lead by example. But I know that many people say no, that's fine, you're in government. So it's possible for us to do this, since we're not. People do many things, because what governments do is nothing more than a reflection of their societies at all levels. And there is nothing great that can be done alone for people. You do it with people.

So, another example that I think is important for us to work on is to overcome the idea that climate change is enough. We need to mitigate and adapt. Is it necessary to mitigate and reduce CO₂ emissions for this to happen? It means reducing emissions. From the use of fossil fuels, deforestation and other sources. But it is also by making a huge effort to triple renewable energy. As it came out of COP 28, yes. Doubling is not energy, energy efficiency and one point making the transition to the end of fossil fuel use. Perhaps this has been the greatest gain ever. We are going to COP 29 in Azerbaijan and there we have to have the means of implementation. Why countries? Poor developing countries that have emitted less and that have enormous

poverty challenges. They have to be helped by rich countries, which have emitted more and which have technological resources and financial resources.

We need the means to implement it. COP 15 established that it was. It was 1,000,000,000. That is insufficient and I will give you some data. There is a report that was produced, it was requested by the United Kingdom, it is by the Indian Gupta. And it says that until humanity achieves the 1,000,000,000 to make the ecological transition on the planet, we will continue to invest. Especially in fossil fuels, something around 4 to 6 trillion dollars. It is a struggle of odds, there is no way we can win in this way. So, we will have to allocate resources, whether from the public sector or from the private sector.

So, to make this change, double energy efficiency, triple renewable energy and drastically reduce the use of fossil fuels here in Brazil, our biggest vector of emissions is deforestation, 53% of Brazil's emissions. It is deforestation. And our commitment is to eliminate deforestation by 2030.

To this end, we have drawn up an ecological transformation plan, which is the basis for the investments we are making to make changes in this direction here. Obviously, this is not an easy thing. There are contradictions within the government. The system is contradictory, but I hope, right?, that the life drive is stronger than the death drive and we can have a change, all of this, if we can. It is not about also having other mechanisms in the industry, in millions, which is a mechanism for payment for ecosystem services. Preservation of forests in tropical countries. The forest needs to be remunerated for the ecosystem services it provides, not in the market sense, but so that the people who preserved it can live with dignity.

And lastly, right? We can work towards this. And Brazil is doing this at the G20, we will do it at COP 30. What we want is for this commitment to be made, the contributions that are determined to reduce their 2 by each country are robust enough to prevent us from exceeding 1.5 in temperature.

To achieve this, we will have to make an effort. Rich countries are leading this race. Upper-middle-income countries, such as Brazil, come next. And low-income countries and lower-middle-income countries will have the necessary help to be able to make their transition and for it to be a fair transition.

What would a fair transition be? It is that those who emitted less, those who face more challenges in economic and social terms, can receive the necessary support and even what we call reparations for losses and damages, as came out of the last COP.

Here, we always work with the idea that it is possible to have a sustainable development model, not only from an economic and environmental point of view, but also from a social, political, economic and ethical and aesthetic point of view. Because what we seek is prosperity. We transform nature into money. It's time to use this money to restore and preserve nature. That's why we proposed at the G20 that we tax the super-rich. Why take 2% of their fortunes? We

could have around 500 billion dollars to invest in fighting inequality and making the climate transition,

Thank you.

