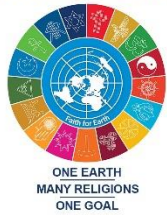


FAITH FOR EARTH



Faith for Earth Updates August 26, 2019



Dear Brothers and Sisters;

It's been almost 6 weeks since my last message on the two successful global meetings of [Laudato Si 2nd International Conference](#) and the [Kofi Annan Faith Briefing](#). While I have been quiet over this period, I have been working, along with colleagues, on several issues that I thought of sharing with you.

Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director's Statement on the Amazon Rainforest Fires

With more than 41,000 fires in the Amazon rainforests in that past 8 months only, millions of people have been directly impacted and dozens of thousands of plant, animal and fish species have been affected. UNEP stands ready to work with Member States in responding to this present crisis as stated in the [statement](#) made by Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP. Ms. Andersen reiterated UNEP's commitment in providing the science, tools and assessments to guide evidence-based policy, convening Member States to address pressing environmental challenges, and advocating on behalf of the Amazon and other forests across the world.

Our colleagues at the [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#), a UNEP managed project, at the margins of Religions for Peace Summit, have launched a [short movie](#) on the Initiative calling all people around the world to protect rainforests in their #FaithsForForests campaign.

Faith for Water

At the [World Water Week](#), being held this week in Stockholm, several side events and meetings will be held on Faith for Water on 29 August. The Water and Faith Network Meeting will follow directly after the Water and Faith public Showcase. The same evening will witness an important meeting on the newly established [PaRD](#) Environment, Water and Climate Action (EWCA) working group. The working group's focus are the four goals concerned with protecting

the biosphere: SDGs 6, 13, 14, and 15. The working-group is well underway to transform itself into a full PaRD work-stream, which will be officially introduced by PaRD. [Faith for Earth](#) will be represented in all of these events by Joakim Harlin and the UNEP delegation and I will participate by a video conference. Furthermore, UNEP will be co-convening several events and will be showing a one-hour long movie on SDG implementation and monitoring. For the full programme of the Week, go to <https://www.worldwaterweek.org/programme>.

Dr. Azza Karam, First Woman Secretary General of Religions for Peace

It is with mixed feelings we learnt about the appointment of Dr. Azza Karam the [first woman secretary general](#). Azza has been serving as the chair of the [UN Task Force on Religion and Development](#) for several years. We will dearly miss Azza as a very active, dedicated and visionary chair, but the faith community will be winning Azza to lead one of the most prominent multi-religions coalitions [Religions for Peace](#). Heartfelt congratulations to Azza.

High-profile Roundtable “Inter-confessional Dialogue and SDGs”, 8 July 2019, Moscow, Russia

Implementing an MOU with the World Congress of Mountain Jews (WCMJ) signed last May, a high-profile roundtable titled “[Inter-confessional Dialogue and Sustainable Development Goals](#)” was held at the UN House in Moscow on Monday, 8 July 2019. The roundtable discussion was organized by the WCMJ, an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, in partnership with UNEP. The event was attended by prominent representatives of various religious confessions, renowned political figures, members of the local artistic, scientific and business communities. It is worth mentioning in conclusion that the roundtable discussion seems to have been a real success. Its bottom line is that the commandments, true values and traditions of monotheistic religions urge their followers, in the spirit of brotherly love, to join efforts for peace and harmony between people and to strengthen human health, development potential, quality education, natural environment, economy and public institutions, - all but true ‘unifiers’ of people of different faiths on the firm foundation of the need to achieve the SDGs.

The Church of South India Eco-Conference

Faith for Earth was represented by Mr. Atul Bagai, Head of UNEP's India office at the [Greening the Globe for Sustainable Living Conference](#) held 1-4 August 2019 in Chennai. During the conference, which was attended by 380 participants, 14 Schools and 13 colleges screened the documentary "How Green we are?". Most of the participants were from rural areas and it is the first time they got an opportunity to attend an international conference. The conference included 25 invited speeches and 80 Reviewed Research papers at the conference.

Expert Consultation Workshop – Freedom of Religion or Belief, Gender Equality and the SDGs

Faith for Earth has been working with partners in organizing a consultative workshop on Freedom of Religion, Gender and the SDGs to be held in Copenhagen 7-8 October 2019. The workshop is part of a consultative process sponsored by Denmark and Norway, and organized in cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNEP, UNFPA, the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, Stefanus Alliance and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

Water in Times of Climate Crisis

Faith for Earth has been working on and will be attending the symposium on water in times of climate crisis to be held in Amsterdam on 6-7 November 2019. The symposium is being hosted by the Vrije Universiteit & the Ecumenical Patriarchate in close collaboration with Amsterdam Centre for Religion & Sustainable Development, UNEP, the cities of Amsterdam, Cape Town, and Jakarta, partners from business, religion, government, NGOs and the Amsterdam International Water Week. The combination of the three areas of water, climate change and religions is an impressive approach to mobilize action by non-state actors to deal with the most pressing issues of our times.

Faith and Community Engagement for the SDGs in the Arctic

Faith for Earth has been working with the Icelandic Institute on Religion and Reconciliation (IRR), Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland (ELCI); Faith and Community (F&C); and the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural

Resources to hold two meetings on "Faith and Community Engagement for the SDGs in the Arctic as well as the "Knowledge and Prosperity: Building Bridges to Empower Community Action in Skálholt-Iceland on 8-9 October 2019. Further discussions are being held for a global Faith for Earth Coalition conference in 2020.

8th Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers

Following the successful session that was held during the UN Environment Assembly Faith for Earth Dialogue, Faith for Earth is continuing its partnership with the Islamic Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([ISESCO](#)). Faith for Earth will attend and hold discussions at the 8th Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers to be held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 2-3 October 2019. The programme of the conference includes discussions on the "Draft Strategy for the Activation of the Role of Cultural and Religious Factors in Protecting the Environment and Achieving Sustainable Development in the Islamic World". This comes in congruence with UNEP's "Global Strategy on Engaging with Faith-based Organizations" and the corresponding Faith for Earth Initiative.

Financing the Future Summit

Faith for Earth has been invited to the [Financing the Future](#), the Global Climate Divest-Invest Summit in Cape Town, 10-11 September 2019. This conference is being organized by a coalition of organizations including Together, [350.org](#), GreenFaith, Fossil Free South Africa, Divest Invest, the Shine Campaign, Wallace Global Fund, the Global Catholic Climate Movement, and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance. The Summit objectives include accelerating global divestment movement, showcase investments that help developing nations leapfrog dirty energy and to provide a platform for new Divest Invest announcements and the release of a statement from prominent religious leaders challenging the global community to shift capital out of fossil fuels and into energy access.

Seventh-Day Adventist Camp Meeting

With an expected audience of ten thousand faith followers, Gary Lewis, Director of the Policy and Programme Division, hosting the Faith for Earth Initiative, will be addressing the S.D.A Church camp meeting. The meeting has started today until the 31st in Nairobi – Kenya at Mathare North S.D.A.

Church. Gary will be talking about Environmental stewardship on Saturday 31st.

Accreditation to UN Environment Assembly

If your organization is not yet accredited to UN Environment Assembly and if you are interested to be accredited and gain a consultative status within the [rules of procedure](#) of the [UN Environment Assembly](#), please refer to the criteria for accreditation as derived from Rule 70 of the Rules of Procedure and submit your request accordingly. [Guidelines here.](#)

Warm wishes
Iyad

[Faith4Earth Website](#)

Social Media Hashtag [#Faith4Earth](#)

iyad.abumoghli@un.org

Twitter/LinkedIn/Skype: [@iyadabumoghli](#)

Instagram: [iyad_abumoghli](#)

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