

Achievement Report 2021-2022

Faith for Earth Initiative



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Suggested citation: United Nations Environment Programme (2022). Faith for Earth Achievement Report 2021-2022. Nairobi.

Production:

Law Division
United Nations Environment Programme
P.O. BOX 305521
Nairobi 00100
Kenya
Tel.: +254 20 7623487
E-mail: iyad.abumoghli@un.org
www.unep.org

Photo Credit

[Front cover](#)

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Message from the Director of the Initiative

The last two years were unprecedented in many ways due largely to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic relative to the way in which we engage with our partners and faith actors at the community level, and in putting our best foot forward as a network, a community, a fraternity of religious and spiritual actors.

The coronavirus has changed the world and thus required changing the way we do business and address important issues. On the second day when airports around the world closed, a successful global meeting was held by Faith for Earth and its partners. UNEP has adopted a strategic approach to accommodate these changes, especially relying more on digitizing environmental governance which was demonstrated by holding a successful Environment Assembly UNEA 5.2.

The Faith for Earth Dialogue during UNEA 5.2 saw the highest participation ever with more than 680 participants and 190 speakers during the two weeks of addressing the Triple Planetary Crisis and the role of religious actors. The pandemic exacerbated socio-economic inequalities and vulnerabilities at all levels - countries, vulnerable groups and people least responsible for climate change are the most affected – underlining the need for universal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Dr. Iyad Abumoghli,
Director, Faith for Earth

From heavy monsoon rain and flooding leaving one third of Pakistan below water; heat waves in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe causing wildfires, droughts, and record-shattering temperatures, these two years have proven that Climate Action, Nature Action, and Chemicals and Pollution Action are essential interconnected response to climate and environment-related threats.

This report shows how our strategic partners have contributed to the successful implementation of our strategy.

As Faith for Earth prepares to launch a new strategy for engaging faith actors for the period 2023-2028, we remain committed to all existing partnerships in serving the aspirations, priorities and common goals of UNEP and the partners towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I am pleased to announce that due to the strategic restructuring of the Law Division where Faith for Earth is hosted, and to strengthen our approach moving forward, the initiative has been renamed to Faith for Earth Coalition.

Introduction

The United Nations Environment Programme's Faith for Earth Coalition (Faith for Earth), is committed to strengthening the environment and climate-related arm within the UN System by the inclusive engagement of religious and faith actors as a member of the [UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development](#) (UN IATF-R), UNESCO's [Inter-Agency Platform for Culture and Sustainable Development](#) (IPCSD), and work with other UN agencies in the spirit of One UN.

The [Strategy](#) consists of three main pillars:

1. Strengthen Partnership with Faith-Based Organization's Leadership for Policy Impact;
2. Green Faith-Based Organization's Investments, Operations and Assets; and
3. Establish an Accessible Knowledge-Based Support System using faith scripts and scientific evidence.

In 2021-22, more than 62 faith-based organisations (FBOs) are accredited and many more committed to formal and informal partnerships with Faith for Earth. Faith leaders have rallied around the climate agreements and participate both physically and virtually, building momentum for a global interfaith movement for the planet.

Communications and advocacy are central to our outreach. Faith for Earth has expanded its activity on its social media accounts, on Twitter: [@UNEPFaith4Earth](#); on Instagram: [@unepfaith4earth](#); and the [Faith for Earth Newsletter](#) sharing its upcoming, as well as previous events; opportunities to engage; publication of resources; best practices ; faith engagement on internationally recognized days and religious occasions, and general updates from UNEP on related thematic areas.

Faith actors are deeply connected to the health of this planet and its people. As such, Faith for Earth continues to avail a global platform for faith actors to respond to the Triple Planetary Crisis and push for a [new paradigm](#) based on ethical principles and behaviours.

This programme report provides an insight on the Faith for Earth's activities, partnerships, and publications for the years 2021-22.

[Read the 2020 Achievement Report.](#)

Young Professionals

The [United Nations Internship Programme](#) is a premier opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day working environment of the United Nations, work with experienced and inspiring career professionals and senior management, participate in high-profile conferences and meetings, and contribute to analytical work as well as organizational policy of the United Nations.

At Faith for Earth, interns have been part of a dynamic and innovative team working on the nexus between environment, science, policy, and faith values and ethics. Faith for Earth has worked with over 36 interns to learn and advance our priorities. Interns have explored UNEP's project management cycle; Researched climate change, biodiversity protection, ecosystem restoration, sustainable consumption and production, food systems, culture and sustainable development; and coordinated events at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) through the Faith for Earth Dialogue, the Climate and Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COPs), and the work on chemicals and plastics under the Multifaith Action Group on Pollution.

Faith for Earth thus acknowledges the impressive contributions such young professionals have brought about during their employment. This is a demonstration of the leadership role we provide for the youth.

UNEP Moments

UNEP@50

2022 marked the [50th anniversary](#) of the establishment of UNEP. In 1972, at the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, civil society were recognized to directly address Member States and since then, civil society and stakeholder groups have contributed to driving UNEP's strategy development and work plans, as well as their reach and impact at the regional and global levels.

The [UN Environment Programme Medium-Term Strategy \(MTS\) 2022-2025](#) highlights the ways in which UNEP will tackle climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste for the period 2022-2025. Engaging with faith actors has been prominently reflected in the MTS while Faith for Earth has developed a comprehensive strategy to implement the MTS which will be reflected in the new 5-year programme.

Faith for Earth Dialogue at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)

The resumed [Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly \(UNEA-5\)](#) in 2022 was an opportunity for faith actors to be part of multilateral environmental efforts on biodiversity, climate, food systems, and pollution.

The theme [“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”](#) is closely linked with the [Faith for Earth Strategy](#) and the tremendous efforts that the faith partners are undertaking.

Faith for Earth convened the second **Faith for Earth Dialogue** where a [historic statement](#) by Faith-Based Organizations representing 98 religions and congregations originating from 92 countries was presented during the closing session plenary of UNEA 5.2. The statement reiterated the important role faith actors play in achieving the SDGs and strengthening actions for nature.

The [Faith for Earth Dialogue](#) “Changing the Future” was hosted 680 participants during the period 21 February to 4 March, including 24 thematic sessions that addressed 24 critical themes and priorities concerning faith actors. Issues ranged from a discussion about the ethical crises that underpins the triple planetary crisis to the practical implementation of the Faith for Earth Coalition. Efforts culminated in a web-



Figure 1: Panellists at the Faith for Earth Dialogue

based [synthesis report](#) overviewing the Dialogue, summarizing lessons learned, and exploring opportunities for future work and collaboration.

Note: Sessions during the Faith for Earth Dialogue were mainly organised by accredited faith-based organisations with the participation of UN entities and other intergovernmental organisations and were open to all irrespective of status.

As Member States negotiated on the [need for a legally binding agreement to establish an internationally negotiating committee on plastics](#), faith-based organisations demonstrated their ability to rally the network and communities producing a coherent work plan under the newly formed [Multifaith Action Group on Pollution](#) to advocate for the voices of those whose livelihoods and health are threatened by the pollution crises, including the human and economic rights of the waste pickers. Read more about the Multifaith Action Group in the ‘Pollution’ Section of this Report.

The [Faith for Earth Dialogue Series at UNEA 5.2](#) demonstrated the breadth of the Initiative’s work and ambition for delivering on ambitious solutions to the Triple Planetary Crises with a focus on faith and interfaith engagement.

Accreditation to UNEA is key to engaging at the “world’s highest-level decision-making body on the environment”. In 2019 there were only 15 faith-based organisations accredited to UNEA. In 2022, this figure more than quadrupled to 62 accredited faith-based organisations falling mainly within the Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) Major Group, and a small number falling within the Children and Youth Major Group.

Following an informal networking session held at UNEPs Headquarters in Nairobi during UNEA 5.2 with 10 faith-based organisations, there was a consensus and expectation for better coordination and networking of accredited faith-based organisations in addition to Civil Society-led events, leading to the establishment of the [Steering Committee of Accredited Faith-based Organisations](#).

Accreditation

UNEP-Accreditation will grant your organization consultative status at UNEP within the [rules of procedure](#) of the [UN Environment Assembly](#) (UNEA).

- Find out [what ‘accreditation’ means](#).
- View the list of accredited organisations [here](#).

Building momentum for interfaith engagement at UNEP: Partnership with Iceland

The Iceland Minister for Environment and Natural Resources in his address during UNEA [Leadership Dialogue](#) on 22 February 2021 called the international community and the decision makers to integrate working with faith actors in their policy dialogue and gave a vote of support to Faith for Earth reiterating the important role faith-based organizations are playing in restoring our nature and adopting nature-based solutions.

Through a series of [strategic online meetings](#) during the Faith for Nature global conference co-organized with Iceland to discuss the role of ethics and spirituality in advancing environmental governance, an impressive list of [Skálholt III Recommendations](#) was issued along with adopting the [Our Sacred Commitment](#) that was translated into 8 languages and was supported by 100 faith-based organisations, faith leaders, and key partners within the network, and all of whom submitted formal letters of interest to join the Faith for Earth Coalition – the mechanism for engagement.

Resource

[The Role of Faith, Values and Ethics in Strengthening Action for Nature and Environmental Governance](#), United Nations Environment Programme (2021)



Figure 2: Leadership Dialogue, Stockholm+50 (2022)

Stockholm+50

“Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity” (Stockholm+50) brought together the global environmental community in Stockholm, Sweden for a major international environmental meeting on 2 and 3 June 2022, the week of [World Environment Day](#). This global event was convened by UNEP and hosted by the Government of Sweden with support from the Government of Kenya.

[Stockholm+50](#) took place five decades after the historic 1972 [United Nations Conference on the Human Environment](#). The event provided leaders with an opportunity to draw on 50 years of multilateral environmental action to achieve the bold and urgent action needed to secure a better future on a healthy planet. UNEP and UNU-CPR – with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) – led a collaborative effort to capture, interrogate, and elevate alternative paradigms of the human/nature relationship, seeking views from diverse sources. Read the Faith for Earth paper on [Reimagining the Human-Environment Relationship](#) – Religion and Environment.

[Faith-based engagement](#) drove active dialogue for environmental governance in the lead up to, and at Stockholm+50 through 22 engaging multistakeholder in-person and online consultations. More than 250 FBOs sent a [strong message](#) to the conveners of [Stockholm+50](#) affirming their commitment to support the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

“[Faith Values and Reach – Contribution to Environmental Policy](#)” called on member states and other stakeholders to recognize the role of faith, ethics, spiritual and cultural values in environmental governance.

World Environment Day #GenerationRestoration (2021) #OnlyOneEarth (2022)

#Reimagine, #Recreate and #Restore” in Lahore, Pakistan was hosted by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on [Ecosystem Restoration](#) on [World Environment Day 2021](#) and around the launch of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) co-led by UNEP and FAO.

Resources

[Strategy for Engagement:](#)

The Role of Faith Leaders and Faith-based Organisations in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, United Nations Environment Programme (2021)

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a strategic [global campaign](#) focused on reversing the degradation of ecosystems around the world, where Faith for Earth placed [the relationship between religions and the environment at the forefront](#) alongside the wider faith network. Read the Faith for Earth Newsletter on [3 June 2021](#).

Motivated by spiritual values and driven by an ethical responsibility to mitigate human impact on the environment, Faith for Earth

highlights, through a strategy document, the necessity of faith actors for overcoming [the barriers](#) through social, economic, and political influences of faith communities around the world, and in developing actions at the global level. Read more about Faith for Earth's engagement in the 'Ecosystem Restoration' Section.

The World Environment Day engagement has included other activities and events:

- [World Vision, UNEP and FAO](#) co-hosted 'Unleashing the Underground Forest: A Catalyst to Achieving SDGs for the Benefit of Children Now and in the Future" giving special attention to SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 5 (Gender Equality) and 13 (Climate Action) in a discussion about key drivers and consequences of deforestation and landscape degradation, as well as nature-based solutions (NbS).
- [The Hope Cathedral](#), inspired by the boundless ocean and care for our planet, opened its doors to the world as a source of inspiration and a place to come together through a Live Inauguration Ceremony. UNEP was honoured to launch an endeavour fostering cooperation across national identities, ages, and faiths, both to clean up the shores and to build peace and strong communities.
- **Restoring the Ecosystems:** With the goal of bringing together bright minds of both environment decision-making and experts to talk about the 2021 theme of Ecosystem Restoration, an interesting panel consisting of representatives from The Arab League, [Kuwait Water Association](#), UNEP Faith for Earth, IUCN, GreenWave, and others came together for a webinar offered in Arabic.

Faith for Earth embraced the theme on [World Environment Day 2022](#) based on a spiritual transformation and on building a common understanding between religions and the sciences on environment and climate-related issues and reiterated the commitment of faith actors to use their convening and convincing powers in mobilizing massive public engagement.

An Interagency Approach to Interreligious Engagement

UN Interagency Task Force for Religion and Sustainable Development

The UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (UN IATF-R) has established a momentum and modality of collaboration with a diverse range of FBOs and civil society partners.

Over the years, the UN IATF-R has grown considerably bringing together 27 UN entities from across the system who meet on a

Resources

[Faith organizations: the fourth economic power on Earth](#) (2021)

Read the [Annual Reports](#) of the UN IATF-R (2020, 2021, 2022).

regular basis and co-organize joint advocacy and capacity-building activities.

UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform for Culture and Sustainable Development (IPCSD)

Faith for Earth has been engaged in the implementation of [IPCSD's Strategic Goals](#), and in particular in contribution to the [Culture for Climate Action](#) thematic group, with UNESCO and UNFCCC in the areas of Sustainable consumption and production patterns and civil society-led action.

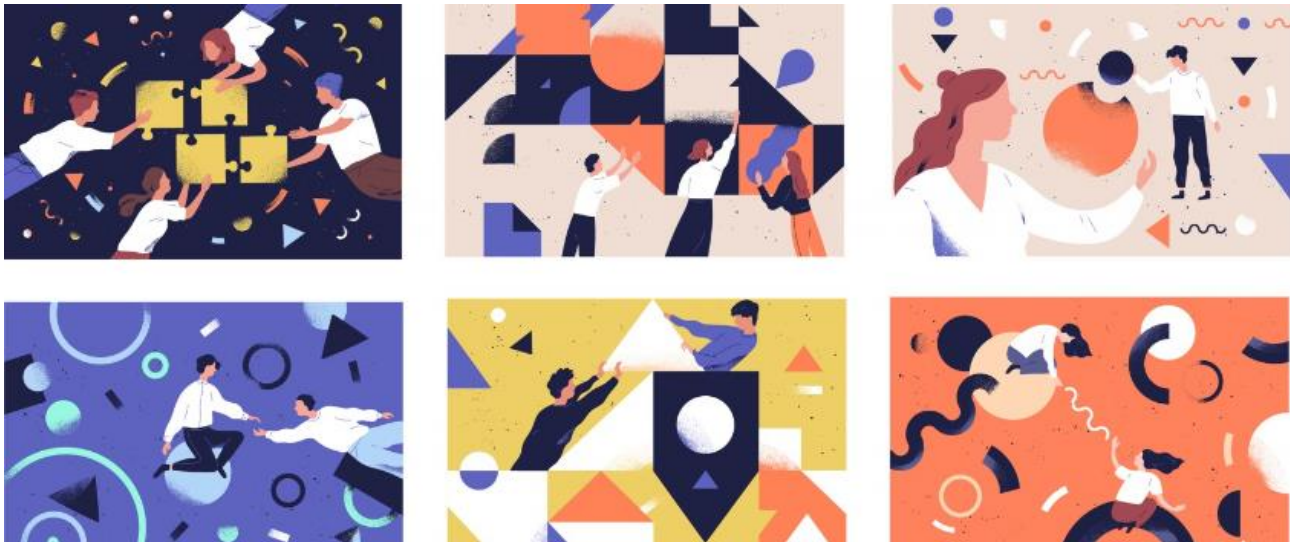


Figure 3: UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development

Environmental Governance

Building on the [discussions](#) held as part of the faith-based interventions at [Stockholm+50](#), the First Meeting of the Global National Focal Points of the Montevideo Programme V (second session held on 6 – 9 June 2022) invited Faith for Earth to convene a [side event](#) demonstrating how FBOs take “Action for Nature and Environmental Governance: Approaches by Faith-based Organizations, Indigenous and Local Communities”.

This [report](#) by Faith for Earth argues that FBOs are essential to be integrated into environmental

governance and policy-making processes, from the local to the global level. To support this argument, the report outlines the role of faith, ethics, values, and culture, highlighting the benefits of values-based approaches in addressing environmental challenges. At the Side Event, a call for legal and scholarly yearbook to explore the [law and praxis of environmental protection in Africa](#) was

Resource

[The Role of Environmental and Spiritual Ethics in Global Environmental Governance](#) (2021)

A policy brief co-published with [KAICIID](#) highlighting critical challenges to current-day environmental governance, such as the impacts of human activities on biodiversity, the rise of climate change impacts and consequent growth in inequalities, while addressing a way forward where Faith and conservation are aligned.

launched in partnership with [Kabarak University](#). The discussions focused on how faith actors can act for nature and enhance multistakeholder engagement for the governance of natural resources in collaboration with Indigenous and Local Communities. The event highlighted the need to include academia in exploring the role of indigenous religions culminating in the [African Faith and Environment Yearbook](#) (2023).

Other events and engagements

- **20th Plenary of the Bishops:** Faith for Earth delivered a keynote address at the 20th Plenary of Bishops held between 9-18 July in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania by the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa ([AMECEA](#)). Addressing the theme of Environmental Impact on Integral Human Development Faith for Earth promoted collaboration amongst different faith-based organizations across Africa to engage in projects and programs combatting ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, particularly for the support of projects like the Great Green Wall Initiative.
- **Role of Faith Actors: Addressing Climate-Related Challenges and Threats in Indonesia:** FBOs and faith actors have been essential in driving catalytic actions to raise environmental awareness and mitigate the effects of climate change. Faith for Earth mobilized its UNEPs Asia and the Pacific Regional Office to share good practices by faith-based organisations in Indonesia in an event on 13 August to address the triple planetary crises, calling for more partnership and engagement promoting interfaith action.

The Second International Conference on Cohesive Societies took place on 6-8 September 2022 in Singapore receiving high level of patronage from the President of Singapore, and facilitated by the Ministry of Culture and Youth. The conference was attended by hundreds of in person attendees representing 40 countries as well as online participants from across the globe. Faith for Earth delivered a keynote address focusing on the role of religious actors in environmental governance, the role of ethics and values in driving behavioural change towards the environment and the necessity of multilateralism and interfaith collaboration on environmental issues. Faith for Earth took part at the **International Conference on Alternative Dynamics of Religions in International Affairs**, organized by the University of Geneva from 9-10 June 2022 that included high level representatives of the university, interfaith institutions, human rights representatives, scholars and theologians. The discussions focused on different approaches to integrate the role of religions in development, challenges facing the faith and interfaith community, and opportunities to engage in international affairs. Multilateralism is key in solving global issues and this cuts across religions in making interfaith and intra faith collaboration key in responding to challenges. The opportunities that Faith for Earth recognised during the event included multilateralism and interfaith collaboration; an institutional set up and network of the Faith for Earth coalition; bridging the gap between Science and Religions and converging on common understandings.

Sustainable Lifestyles

Many of the world's religions and faith traditions harbour untapped resources for implementing more sustainable living and lifestyles. They contain teachings regarding care of the Earth, wise use of natural resources, working for the common good, promoting social justice for all irrespective of one's gender, age, socio-economic status or background, and well-being for all which speak to the four dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social, economic, and cultural sustainability).

Events and activities

- In January 2021, Faith for Earth participated in a [TV Interview](#) hosted by **Cimpatico Studios** to discuss the critical role that faith communities play in advancing environmental stewardship by sharing the vision and mission of Faith for Earth, as well as the work of Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth and the Faith for Earth Coalition.
- **Sustainable Development Goals through the Lens of Values Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative** organised an interactive online webinar in February 2021 where Faith for Earth spoke about the Sustainable Development Goals, the universal values upon which the Initiative operates to promote environmental stewardship, and the particular importance of engaging youth groups.
- **Ahimsa and the Environment: Making Peace with Nature** in October 2021 explored the principles of *ahimsa* or non-violence with Go Dharmic to highlight harmful practices on the posterity of the earth, develop and strengthen partnerships with policy makers, civil society leaders, faith-based organisations and the private sector, and to facilitate an exchange of experiences.
- Following the [Abrahamic Traditions & Environmental Change Workshop 2019](#), a meeting was held in January 2022 to continue the exchange of information. UConn's Abrahamic programs have continued to advancing collaborations and growing the network while also branching out to build its other initiatives in Literature Culture & Arts and Entrepreneurship & Innovation. Find published [proceeding and working papers](#) and an [array of interviews](#).
- **"Religious Communities and Sustainability: Ecological Perspectives on Religious Practice"** was held in June 2022 where Faith for Earth partnered with the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin that explored the relationship between religious communities and socio-ecological transformation, considering that in recent years engagement with ecological sustainability by religious communities has substantially increased. Faith for Earth highlighted how spiritual values can contribute to sustainable policymaking "The Role of Religions, Values, Ethics, and Spiritual Responsibility in Environmental Governance and Achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda".
- **Mindfulness for Earth: Charting A Path for Higher Education** is a partnership with the [University of Connecticut Office of Global Affairs](#), [Mindfulness for Earth](#), and Faith for Earth. In October 2022, a workshop was held to discuss the role of universities in promoting mindfulness practices and increasing active engagement with nature. During the [workshop](#), the group of 30 scholars determined how to bring these practices into curricula and health services—in higher education—to make a positive impact on health and wellness, relationships with the environment, personal reflections on our individual carbon footprints, reducing consumption and promoting behaviour change that protects planet Earth.

Call to People of Faith to Protect our Planet

Laudato Si': Care for our Common Home

The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development published a [special e-book](#) about the various ways people have brought Laudato Si' to life over the last six years. **Laudato Si' Reader: An Alliance of Care for Our Common Home** includes Faith for Earth's journey since 2017, inspired by Pope Francis' vision, the Dicastery, and the global Faith community, and how Laudato Si' inspired Faith for Earth as a programme and the launch of [Al-Mizan: Covenant for the Earth](#).



Figure 4: Laudato Si' Reader: An Alliance of Care for Our Common Home

The [UN Secretary General António Guterres](#) referred to Laudato Si' as an "important impetus" promoting peace, justice, equality, the dignity and worth of the human person through the Care of our Common Home.

Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth

Strengthening the role of religious and faith actors with climate responsibility is a cornerstone to achieve Agenda 2030, as well as encouraging them to implement environmental actions.

Faith for Earth and representatives of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the Islamic Foundation



Figure 5: Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth

for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES); Uskudar University; the Qur'anic Botanic Gardens; and the College of Islamic Studies at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar constitute Al-Mizan's Core Team. Al-Mizan (meaning 'the balance') is an Islamic Charter designed to showcase Islam's teachings on the environment and spur the world's 1.8 billion Muslims to embrace sustainability as part of their everyday lives building on the efforts of the [Islamic Declaration on Climate Change](#).

The Scholars Drafting Team led eminent scholars and practitioners of Islam and Ecology announced the completion of the English version of [Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth in 2022](#). UNEP has submitted the document to Al-Azhar and the Muslim Council of Elders for review and approval. The

draft has already been made available in 5 languages. The final document will be submitted to the 9th session of the Conference of Environment Ministers in the Islamic World for adoption. [Watch this space for updates.](#)

Building momentum for Al-Mizan globally

- **Imams, Mosques & Climate Change Workshop** in collaboration with The Bahu Trust and the Islamic Foundation on Ecology and Environmental Sustainability (IFEES) convened Muslim FBOs and Faith Leaders in Mombasa and Nairobi, Kenya in March 2021.
- The Core Team of Al-Mizan hosted an online webinar at the **2021 Parliament of the World's Religions Assembly** that explored the basis for the Covenant presenting [Al-Mizan](#) as a means to inspire and motivate faith-based institutions as summarised in this [video](#).
- [Sustainability Talk Series 2022](#) was launched by the Secretary General, Ministry of Environment and Water Malaysia. In May 2022, Faith for Earth described the role FBOs can play by supporting the Islamic movement for the environment under Al-Mizan and by engaging core institutions in the Muslim world to advocate for protecting the environment.
- The Universiti Malaya Centre for Civilisational Dialogue (UMCCD) hosted a Special Lecture & Book Launch entitled "[Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth - The Islamic Heritage](#)". During this Book Launch Faith for Earth called all Muslims worldwide to intensify their role in caring for the earth as the only home, sentiments that are also highlighted in [Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth](#).
- In September 2022, Faith for Earth joined the meeting **Al-Mizan: A Call to Action on Climate Change** as the first workshop organized to discuss the *implementation* and *sustainability* of Al-Mizan and its contribution to fighting climate change and environmental degradation. The two-days' workshop involved academia and scholars who discussed the need for an Islamic guidance based on Islamic values and principles to engage policy makers and the public as part of a behavioural change to tackle environmental issues. Subsequently, FBOs continue to strengthen their commitment to address the triple planetary crisis as an expression of faith, elevating their proposals to the highest political level, and implementing positive environmental actions.

The "**Al-Mizan: Islam and Climate Advocacy Training Program**" breathes life to the Covenant, seeking to build capacities about Islam and the Environment.

Faith & Climate Change

In response to the urgent call for climate action made in the previous two IPCC Reports, Faith for Earth called for urgent commitments and cooperation to tackle climate change and to ensure that no one is left behind. The [Climate Initiatives Platform \(CIP\)](#) has been jointly established by UNEP and UNFCCC to connect different projects and build momentum to achieve bolder goals regarding environmental care. Faith-based Organisations are encouraged to [share their projects, programmes, and initiatives](#) on the CIP.

The Climate Conference of the Parties (COP)

Faith & Science Towards COP26

In recognition of the role of faith leaders in tackling climate change and to lead preparations for COP26 that was held in Glasgow in November 2021, the British and Italian Embassies to the Holy See, together with the Holy See, facilitated a series of [virtual preparatory meetings](#) to enable faith leaders to

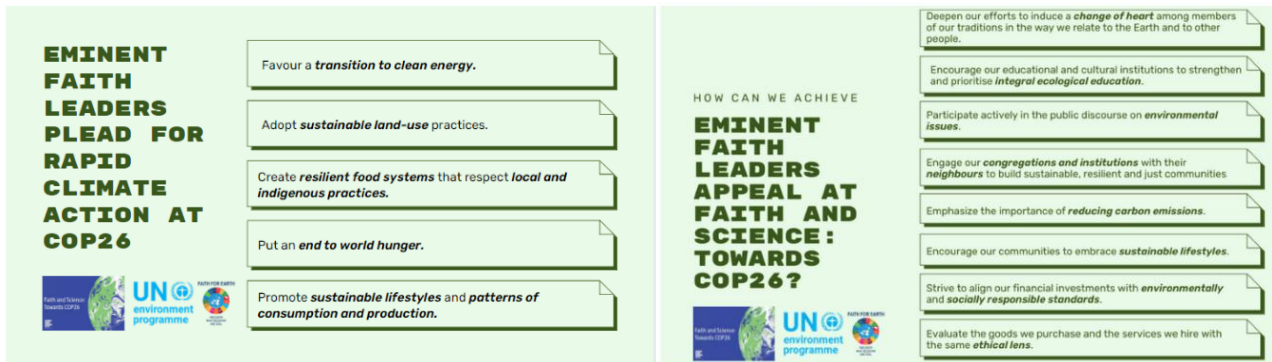


share their faith's theology for the environment; outline the action they have taken so far in tackling climate change; and discuss the way forward to COP26.

Religious leaders and scientists signed at the Vatican a unified [appeal to the world](#) in relation to the faith community expectations of COP26 and their *commitments* to action.

Faith for Earth was invited as a UN advisor to these discussions. In late September 2021, a [discussion session](#) was held with the global interfaith community about its role heading into COP26 and beyond.

These series of dialogues provided a platform for faith leaders to articulate a common duty to address climate change, encouraging national governments to raise their ambition regarding their NDCs, to reach the Paris Agreement goals, to demonstrate how the faiths are leading the way by greening their own operations at central and local level, making or scaling-up new commitments; and to encourage the faithful to take action to slow global temperature rises.



[The Interfaith Appeal](#) called for “speedy, responsible, and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship.”

Other events and activities:

- [faith and interfaith engagement at COP26](#) co-led by Faith for Earth
- [Muslims in the UK & Ireland Unite in Call for COP26 Climate Action](#) for world leaders to act decisively on the climate crisis through a joint statement on climate and the environment.

Faith leaders and FBOs are reflective of the [need to maximize the impact of their activities](#) at the UNFCCC COP signalling a need for greater communication, networking, and a process for engagement focusing on agreed upon priorities.

Under the Working Group on Climate Change of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC) to the UN IATF-R in partnership with UNEP, UNFCCC, and several faith-based organizations including the Parliament of World’s Religions, the World Council of Churches, Brahma Kumaris, Bhumi Global, and the Anglican Communion Office worked together to organise the interventions of the faith network.



Figure 6: Participants of the Faith & Science Meeting

Interfaith Engagement at COP27

COP27 was held in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022. Faith for Earth hosted and participated in several events during and around the Conference along with [several more events, vigils, prayer sessions, pilgrimages for the planet, and other interventions held](#)

- The role of policy in building Africa’s resilience to climate change impacts (Africa Academia’s Critical Role in COP27 Summit-Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change, BUE-COP27 ARCC) on 11 October 2022;

- Achieving Global Climate Justice on 20 October 2022;
- The Right to a Healthy Environment: Faith and Ethical Perspectives on 09 November 2022;
- A Multi-faith/Multi-sector Alliance for Climate Action on 14 - 18 November 2022;
- We have faith: Responding to the call of creation, on 18 November 2022;
- And Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth - Enhancing knowledge, inclusion & enablers for action.

Faith Engagement at COP27: Recap Session

During this [Recap Session](#) aimed at identifying the extent of [Faith actors' participation, contribution and perspectives on the deliberations and outcomes of the COP](#) held on 24 November 2022, Faith for Earth gathered very thoughtful and practical recommendations from representatives of FBOs that were present. Faith for Earth presented [what has and has not been achieved as outcomes of COP27](#). While there was a very strong need for inward reflection to measure and reassess the network's contribution to the COP process, more robust engagement within the network and with other stakeholder groups is needed. As such Faith for Earth committed to working with existing coordination mechanisms and groups towards the recommendations and reflections made ahead of COP28.

Faith for Earth reiterated the need for FBOs to be aware and engaged with Member States in their respective national contexts i.e. where countries are falling short in ambition and implementation of, that faith actors can raise awareness on and build momentum for the most impactful engagement at any COP ensuring that faith and interfaith perspectives are voiced to the decision-makers.

Other events and activities:

- Faith for Earth took part at the [Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, Scene@Synod 2022](#) with the theme "The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" demonstrating that religions can offer the ontological vision and metaphysical connection between humans and the rest of creation, Faith for Earth described environmental ethics as moral obligations for humans— "inscribed for us in our holy scripts and commandments of God. Religions command humans to condemn greed and corruption. Religions urge humans to walk gently on Earth." [Faith for Earth called on religious institutions to be "beacons of global change", highlighting their central role in education.](#)
- Given the increased frequency and severity of natural hazards in recent years, it is necessary for cities to have proper preparedness and enhance Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as part of their process of mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. On 25 November 2021 and 6-8 June 2022, Faith for Earth delivered a capacity building training for [Engaging Academia and Faith Actors to Strengthen Cities Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters](#) highlighting how faith actors are embracing "Eco-DRR" and offer their established, far-reaching networks to support local and communities to address climate-related risks.

The Moral Imperative Initiative for Children

The [Moral Imperative Initiative](#) for Children, pioneered by UNEP, The World Council of Churches (WCC), Muslim Council of Elders, and the New York Board of Rabbis, launched [an appeal](#) calling for climate-responsible finance that garnered support from high-level faith leaders alongside UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres stating that “It is now time for financial service providers to accelerate the shift to renewables. They have the power – and the responsibility”.

Faith-based Institutions own considerable land and assets, and this Initiative attempts to build capacity and support FBOs intending to divest from fossil fuels on a case-by-case basis. During the launch [webinar Climate-Responsible Finance – A Moral Imperative towards Children](#) in May 2022, Faith for Earth shared some insights and conclusions on how faith actors can urge their financial service providers to take urgent and effective action to transition out of fossil fuel financing. Faith for Earth’s engagement was supported by [UNEP Finance Initiative \(UNEP-FI\)](#) for sustainable global economies.

Ecosystem Restoration

A Strategy for Engagement: The Role of Faith Leaders and Faith-Based Organisations in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)

Motivated by spiritual values and driven by an ethical responsibility to mitigate human impact on the environment, Faith for Earth highlighted, through a [strategic document](#), the necessity of working closely with faith actors in overcoming the barriers stated in the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030](#) through social and political influence that faith leaders and their communities wield around the world. It further provides actions that have been adopted by faiths in realizing the objectives and goals of the UN Decade, answering the question “How Faith-based Organizations are Restoring [Nature](#)? Launched on World Environment Day 2021.

Partnerships are a critical component for the implementation of the [Faith Strategy](#) for the UN Decade. As such, in **partnership with the World Wildlife Fund’s Beliefs and Values Programme**, Faith for Earth have undertaken to identify the extent and impact of faith communities and FBOs on conservation and restoration globally, mapping nature-based solutions where faiths are drivers and custodians, exploring faith owned assets, and to support faith groups around nature related advocacy, and more.

As such, the ‘Faith based Tree Growing for Ecosystem Restoration: A Global Overview and the Case for the East African Region’ was developed in September 2022, informed by a 2-day roundtable meeting with the ‘Kenya Faith Tree Growing Network’ made up of 30 state, faith, private, and public sector actors engaged in restoration efforts across Kenya.

Both the meeting and the study prioritised identifying and evaluating the extent of restoration efforts led by faith-based organisations in Kenya with the aim of supporting one flagship project as a model for driving ambition. As such, the scope for multi-stakeholder approaches and participation – including government agencies, multiple faith actors, private agencies and technical entities such as NGOs was emphasized; the need for policy dialogue at local, county and national levels, around ecosystem restoration, involving faith actors; and for faith actors to address existing gaps that threaten or slow achievement of sustainable development and ecosystem restoration.

Values, Culture and Spirituality

The Centre for Earth Ethics convened a Consultation Series on the role of [values, culture and spirituality](#) towards healthy ecosystems, particularly traditional, religious, and indigenous knowledge for transformational social behavioural change, reiterated in the [Faith Strategy for Ecosystem Restoration](#).



Figure 7: This guide is designed for use by faith groups around the world based on the lessons and experiences unique to this constituency.

These discussions focused on advancing the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021 – 2030) by facilitating thematic discussions on Air (St. James Parish, USA); Rivers (River Yamuna, India); Cities (Mombasa, Kenya); Species (Philippine Eagle, Philippines); and Food (Jordan). The Series and the enriching discussions led to the [Values, Culture and Spirituality: Ecosystems Restoration Conversation Guide](#) by the Center for Earth Ethics and the United Religions Initiative (URI); and a [Handbook](#).

Other events and activities

- In the ‘**Restoring the Planet: Faith Drives Urgent Action**’. [webinar](#) co-hosted by Faith for Earth and KAICIID, UNEP Deputy Executive Director spoke about [strengthening faith-based partnerships](#), advocacy, and action. Key amongst the issues discussed was how faith and indigenous communities advocate for restorative action and promotion of sustainable land management, previously unheard voices that hold the key to successful restoration projects.
- **A Living Chapel for Milan, Italy:** On 28 September 2021, UNEP Faith for Earth virtually joined the launch event of [The Living Chapel](#) at Calderini Garden in Milan, Italy, celebrating an innovative demonstration of passion and leadership for employing nature-based solutions towards green sacred spaces ahead of COP26.

The Living Chapel, conceived by musical composer Julian Revie, is a garden that induces spiritual reflection on the intimate need for harmonious connection between humanity and nature and a program of action, supported and shared by the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral



Figure 8: The Living Chapel (Milan, Italy)

Human Development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It is a personal call to action to live in serene harmony.

- **Role of Religions in Ecosystem Restoration:** [AMSET](#)'s monthly webinar on 5 June 2021, presented practical examples of how FBOs are undertaking ecosystem protection and restoration where Faith for Earth introduced the Faith Strategy for the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, its objectives, and current challenges.

From the Jordan to the Ganga: The Power of Faith to Protect our Rivers: On 18 October 2021, faith leaders working on the protection of water sources and the promotion of clean and safe water discussed mobilising action towards cleaning the sacred rivers in the world, including both the Jordan and the Ganga. [Faith for Earth](#) highlighted two main challenges related to water as the lack of access to clean and safe water and sanitation and an increase in water-related disasters such as floods and droughts. At the same time, water is also a resource for collaboration. Faith for Earth calls upon religious and cultural leaders to address these challenges by promoting a positive behaviour change.

- **Bhumi Global Virtual Summit 2022:** Bhumi Global, the world's foremost Hindu environmental organization hosted its first international summit on 27-28 October 2022. [Bhumi Summit 2022](#), which was conducted virtually, explored solutions to the environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity and pollution. Bringing together voices from the worlds of faith, business, activism, and the United Nations, Bhumi Global provided a platform for discussing solutions for a healthier planet. It served as an opportunity to discuss tangible actions and best practices ahead of key UN meetings: the climate change COP27, and the biodiversity COP15. Faith for Earth urged more Hindu groups and communities to take action on the environment and build strong partnerships to tackle the triple planetary crises.

Faith, Food & Food Systems

UN Food System Summit 2021

[The Faith + Food Systems Dialogue \(2021\)](#) convened by Bhumi Global, Interfaith Public Health Network, Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA), Parliament of the World's Religions, the Tzu Chi Foundation, World Evangelical Alliance, the Center for Earth Ethics and Faith for Earth was a series of virtual dialogues to critically examine the role faith-based organizations and what they can bring to conversations about our food systems.

In anticipation of the Food Systems Summit, partners supported by Faith for Earth presented a position paper '[Islam and Food Systems](#)' exploring an Islamic perspectives on our current food systems with a focus on balance and health. This paper puts forward the claim that Islam promotes the ethical production, transport and consumption of food that goes beyond halal designations only, as well as promotes halal and tayyib foods and food systems, and the implementation of farming practices with guidance from Qur'an and Sunnah.

Biodiversity

2022 was a big year for Biodiversity and the Convention on Biological Diversity that saw the adoption of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) in December 2022.

Faith voices, through the [Faith & Biodiversity UN Coordination Group](#) were present at OEWG-4 and OEWG-5 where they called for a just and sustainable transition with civil society, halting harmful extraction and production methods and for increased grassroots funding, captured in the [Multifaith Response to the Post-2020 GBF](#). Efforts sought to shape negotiations in collaboration with IPLCs and the Women's Caucus ahead of COP15 received a warm welcome. [Watch this session evaluating the Groups actions at COP15](#).

Faith for Earth and the Group facilitated a submission to the [Nature & Culture Summit](#) calling for the inclusion of faith actors within the workplan of the [Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity that was renewed at COP15](#).



Figure 9: Faith delegation at COP15 with Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema

Pollution & Waste

Faith Action Towards a Pollution-Free Planet

Faith for Earth, in partnership with The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC); Tearfund; Plastic Bank; IFEES/Ecolslam; Islamic Help; and UNEP MGCY (Faith & Environment Working Group) constitute the [Multifaith Working Group on Pollution](#) ahead of UNEA 5.2 focusing on interfaith global responses to the pollution and waste crises, particularly focusing on the following thematic areas: Air pollution, freshwater pollution, land and soil pollution, marine and coastal pollution, chemical pollution, waste pollution, and online data pollution.

70 representatives of FBOs added their voice to the statement '[Stop plastic pollution and restore our world: Faith communities call on UNEA 5.2 to agree to negotiate an ambitious, legally binding Treaty to tackle plastic pollution](#)' and published a [Catalogue](#) demonstrating global related projects.

Following the adoption of UNEA Resolution 5/14 entitled "[End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument](#)", the Multifaith Action Group on Pollution has been following the INC process, having attended the First Session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC-1) from 28 November to 2 December 2022.

Faith for Earth National Coordination Hubs

In 2021 and 2022, Faith for Earth and the United Religions Initiative (URI) set out to identify and engage the interfaith networks in India, Lebanon, Jordan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Ethiopia. This partnership, along with key local entities, established plans of actions that equipped Faith Leaders and community members with the skills and resources necessary to establish avenues to address triple planetary crisis and to engage Faith Leaders and their institutions, to prioritize environmental actions within the respective local contexts. [Learn more about the Hubs.](#)

Youth Engagement

Establishing a Rapport with the Major Group for Children and Youth towards the Global Youth Environment Assembly

Faith for Earth in partnership with the [Major Group for Children and Youth](#) and the thematic facilitators for the Faith & Environment Working Group convened a session at the [Youth Environment Assembly \(YEA\)](#) from 12-13 February 2021 and 18-20 February 2021 that drew over 160 participants and delved into the faith perspectives, the role of youth of faith, and how this relationship can be strengthened at intergovernmental processes like the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Climate COP, and others.

Faith for Earth Youth Council: A Platform for Intergenerational Equity driven by Faith, Values and Ethics

The role of young people, including youth of faith, is essential in advancing the implementation of the MTS and POW of UNEP. In 2022, Faith for Earth launched a [Youth Council](#) as one of five councils of the [Faith for Earth Coalition](#). The Youth Council is comprised of young faith leaders from around the world who represent a diverse range of FBOs and is a collaborative endeavour for achieving mutual objectives, chief amongst them is the engagement and integration of faith-youth voices in UNEPs agenda.

Young faith leaders and movements carry with them the potential to mobilise a generation of environmentally conscious leaders who will better influence environmental decision-making processes and act responsibly to promote sustainable development. The lived experience of younger generations is an asset that is taken for granted but is critical for reaching an entire population.

The first meeting of the Youth Council '**Youth-Led Advocacy: Promoting Intergenerational Action for Nature**' was held on 12 August 2022, the [International Youth Day 2022](#). The event focused on the theme of "Intergenerational Solidarity" to leverage the full potential of all generations ensuring that

no one is left behind. Faith for Earth highlighted the importance of listening to the voices of young people as they are the most affected by climate change.

Gender and Environment

On International Women’s Day in 2021, [Faith for Earth](#) with its partners the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), UN Women, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa and Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) organized a global learning conference titled People and Planet: Gender, Environment and Climate in the 2030 Agenda focusing on gender and the environment in regional learning hubs in Nairobi/Kenya, Amman/Jordan and Bangkok/Thailand as well as Härnösand, Sweden.

This conference highlighted the challenges and the opportunities between gender, environment and climate, with Faith for Earth adding one more perspective to the discussion- Inclusive Religious Leadership. The Hub focused on presenting grassroot organisations’ local solutions to water management, drought resilience, and practical ways in which the local communities have derived economic benefits from environmentally sustainable projects.

In 2022, UN Women spotlighted the contribution of women and girls around the world to build a more sustainable future for all. The theme “[Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow](#)” presented a ground for a comprehensive and intersectional understanding of the challenges ahead. Faith for Earth made several interventions on the role of inclusive religious and social leadership, including: in a discussion about “[How Inclusive is a Sustainable Tomorrow?](#)” to diversify peacebuilding processes through a multi-layered inclusive approach across various sectors; “From the Grassroots to the Global: Why Climate Action Needs Women, Religious and Local Actors” offered a mechanism to recognize the contribution women, religious and local actors make to climate mitigation, adaptation and response under the Faith for Earth Coalition; and “[Faith Actors Addressing Gendered Impacts of Climate and Conflict Emergencies](#)” shared with the international community evidence on how the faith community specifically is responding and addressing climate emergencies directly impacting women and girls and ways they can further be assisted to continue and bolster their efforts.



Capacity Building

'Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals' is a joint initiative between Faith for Earth and the [Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology](#), the [Parliament of the World's Religions](#), and [United Religions Initiative](#) to maintain an [interactive database](#) called 'Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals,' featuring [68 projects](#) as of 22 March 2022 by faith-based organisations, Indigenous groups, and/or, spiritual communities around the world doing work within the scope of the environmentally-focused SDGs.

It was launched on the anniversary of the report '[Progress & Outlook Report: Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)' that was developed with Faith for Earth, Parliament of World Religions, Bhumi Global, and the United Religions Initiative in 2019.

Launch of a series of Online Courses

The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) together with Faith for Earth, University of Peace (UPEACE), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), National Muslim Council of Liberia (NMCL), and Institut Superior de Ciències Religioses de Barcelona (ISCREB) unveiled a new e-learning course '**Engaging Faith Actors to Support the Implementation Process of the**



Figure 10: Engaging Faith Actors to Support the Implementation Process of the Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals' designed to help religious leaders and faith-based organisations (FBOs) achieve greater engagement and contribute to the implementation process of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[This course](#) was launched during the [Faith for Earth Dialogue](#) at UNEA and is a free e-learning and training course is formed of seven modules, each offering faith leaders, religious groups, faith-based organisations and other stakeholders a distinct approach to effectively engage and contribute to the process of sustainable development in the communities they serve through different methodologies, models, tools, and other approaches.

One of the identified challenges facing the engagement of faith actors in fighting the planetary crisis is the lack of understanding of the relationship between religions and environmental calamities. UNEP Faith for Earth and KAICIID published **8 thematic e-learning** courses to support formal and non-formal education activities that shift knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and norms to address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and the degradation of nature. Each thematic course



is relevant to UNEPs nexus between faith values and ethics and the Programme of Work 2020/2021 entitled '[Faith, Environment and Climate Change](#)'. Spanning issues related to climate change, water, governance, financing, pollution, environmental security and lifestyles.

Other events and activities

- **Podcast by Religica Theolab and Faith for Earth** in March 2022, Faith for Earth introduced [Religica Theolab](#) podcast about the planetary crisis, our environmental responsibilities, hopes for the youth, and religious multilateralism entitled – [The Future](#). Since then, the [Podcast](#) has grown representing a range of faith actors around the world with a focus on leadership, community, and the shared common good. These Podcasts have been produced in partnership with the Centre for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue.
- Faith for Earth joined the [Southern Africa Youth Forum \(SAYoF\)](#) in an online training session, “**Engaging Faith Actors to Strengthen Cities Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters**” in July 2022, highlighting the role of youth in ecosystem restoration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation with the presence of climate-engaged youths, regional, and local leaders with the SADC region.

Committed we remain...