

Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue for the Triple Planetary Crises



A Growing Influence

Developed by the Faith for Earth Coalition, a programme of the United Nations Environment

Programme, on the role of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in addressing the triple planetary crises, in collaboration with the KAICIID Fellows Programme in November 2023.

Our planet, and the multiplicity of values, cultures, and spiritualities attributed to it are in a state of chaos and disrepair.

Reeling from the interrelated and interconnected crises, faith actors are needed as part of the collective movement for positive behavioural change and transformative action at all levels.

The Religion and Ecology movement has gained tremendous momentum in intergovernmental and multilateral fora:

- Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/74/476),
- The Inter-agency Taskforce on Religion and Sustainable Development,
- Multifaith Advisory Council,
- Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development (IPCSD),
- Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, and
- The Faith for Earth Coalition.

The Faith for Earth Coalition, dedicated to the mobilisation and engagement of faith actors since 2017, demonstrates models for **interreligious and intercultural dialogue**.

About UNEP

What is 'accreditation'

Interfaith Thematic Working Groups:

Faith & Climate Action

Faith & Nature Action

Faith & Pollution Action

The network is representative of the highest religious leadership, Faith-based Organisation (FBO), academia, the voice of women decision-makers, and the youth, who are propelling advocacy, ambition, and action for people and the planet.

Starting with 2 FBOs in 2017, FBO observers at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) have almost doubled - from forty-five (2019) to an incredible eighty-five (2023) - with hundreds more engaging through the interfaith thematic working groups.

The Faith for Earth Dialogue

At UNEA 4 (2019), 62 speakers representing 56 organisations laid foundational partnerships with the Faith for Earth Coalition.

During the five-day encounter on **the role** of faith, values, and ethics, the potential areas for collaboration and cooperation were led by a principal strategy for engagement.

At UNEA 5.2 (2022), 24 sessions online attracted the collaboration of 94 FBOs over specific topics like climate change, food systems, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity loss, values and ethics, and more, demonstrating **good practice** and plans for the **interfaith movement**.

These works have subsequently led the Movement across their respective Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and processes:

- The Faith & Science Appeal at COP26,
- Multifaith Action Group on Pollution,
- Faiths at COP15 (now the Faiths for Biodiversity Coalition), and
- Faith-based Engagement at COP28.

Dialogue for the Triple Planetary Crises

The Interfaith Thematic Working Groups facilitate an **exploration** of religious identities and discourse meeting **pro-environmental needs and challenges** in secular and developmental contexts. A culture of respect ensures safe sharing of religious and spiritual scripts and lifestyles.

Prioritising **mutual trust** and support is enforced by a culture of **positive progress** that supports people, communities, and institutions. Where an interreligious and intercultural lens meets emerging issues, challenges locally, nationally or globally are addressed through **cooperation** that celebrates **diversity**.

Serving a triple function of cooperation; sharing good practice; and policy advocacy, substance and procedure are equally important.

Religious Literacy

Community of Practice

Peer-to-peer exchange
Good practice

Environmental Policy

Influence
Implementation

The Interfaith Thematic Working Groups are convening platforms to:

- Foster a culture of respect for communities, perspectives, and approaches;
- Partnership-building: intrafaith, interfaith, within civil society, with State actors;
- Environmental policy awareness and implementation;
- Influence environmental policy and decision-making processes; and
- To bridge capacity gaps: technical and scientific, peer-to-peer learning.

A Process of Mutual Cooperation



Six-phase model of the dialogic process, *Guide to interreligious dialogue: Bridging differences and building sustainable societies (2012)*, The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID).

Essential to an ambitious dialogic process is a set of basic minimum elements tailored for the Interfaith Thematic Working Groups:

- 1 An environmental strategy, policy document, or a set of core priorities outlining thematic goals and objectives sets clear expectations, particularly within intergovernmental processes/meetings.
- 2 Actively defining the priorities of the Working Group, highlighting opportunities, and the extent of agreement on issues/topics, lends itself to the Faith-Science-Policy nexus.
- 3/4 Clarity on the influence of the network shapes common goals and objectives. Participants of the Working Group are encouraged to adopt a results-based approach and share their pursuit of a diverse set of activities.
- 5 A plan of action is essential. It enables visibility of thematic work, growth of the network; key actors and partnerships; promoting inclusive engagement of underrepresented and minority groups. Inclusivity and partnerships are key.
- 6 Agreement on the frequency of meetings and milestones to drive progress within the group defines its success as an inclusive, peoples-based, and network-driven process.

Commitment to Dialogue for Policy Action

Collaboration and cooperation are foundational - within the vast faith network, with other major groups, with (non-)accredited, (in)experienced organisations for a universal and inclusive approach to environmental law, policy and for promoting good governance at all levels.

Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, practiced within the Interfaith Thematic Working Groups, is a means for inclusive civil society engagement at UNEP.

While faith actors fall outside the nine major group categories, the Coalition offers a process for coordinating the robust faith network. The Steering Committee is essential for bridging discreet or siloed processes - whether intergovernmental or within the faith network.

Building mutual confidence and prioritising diversity is essential to achieving an all-of-society, values-driven approach.

The Coalition remains committed to People and the Planet.



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