

Panel Session VII: Faith and Earth: Faith-Based Initiatives for Addressing Environmental Challenges

Area in charge: Policy and Programme Division Focal person: Iyad Abu Moghli

Overview:

Around the world, hundreds of millions of people either have faith as an integral part of their lives or are affiliated with a religious group. Globally, faith and religious identities continue to be a major driver of behavior amongst many people. Indeed, the role of faith-based groups and religious organizations in mobilizing action for the sustainable development goals cannot be over-emphasized.

As faith and religion constitute a key part of human identity and cultural values in most parts of the world, any serious efforts on development ought to incorporate faith. To this end, the UN Environment Programme has launched the Faith for Earth Initiative. The Initiative is a platform for Faith Leaders and Faith-based organizations to share experiences on how the environment is an integral part of different faiths and how issues ranging from climate change to sustainable lifestyles impact us all.

The *2019 Expo* will take the Faith for Earth engagements further, convening key representatives of faith-based organizations, faith leaders and notable spiritual figures to explore the links between faith, religion, spirituality, morality and sustainable consumption and production. A primary goal would be to increase the number of international and local faith-based organizations integrating environmental sustainability in general, and particularly ideas and solutions on sustainable consumption.

Possible outcome/impact:

Key outcomes of the panel discussion could be having renowned faith leaders commit to championing sustainable consumption and production in their places of worship and to raise public awareness on the solutions, ignite partnerships and possibly support resource mobilization. *Please note that these outcomes should contribute to Priorities 3(c), 3(e) and 3(g) of the Draft Ministerial Declaration.

Moderator:

Iyad Abumoghli – Principal Coordinator – Faith for Earth Initiative – UN Environment

Panellists invited:

1. Mr. Martin Palmer, Secretary General of the Alliance on Religion and Conservation

2. CEO of FaithInvest
3. Fr. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director, *GreenFaith/Living the Change Initiative*, Living the Change: Faith-consistent lifestyles
4. Rabbi Yonatan Neril, Founder & Executive Director, The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development, *Renewable Energy and Religious Institutions: Who, How, Why, and When*.
5. Mr. Fazlun Khalid, Director and Founder of Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, *The Climate Crisis, Sustainability - Whither Economic Growth?*
6. Mr. Saleh Suleiman Al Harthi, Ambassador, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Nairobi, *Tolerance in Islam and the Environment*

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WITHIN**