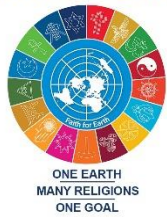


FAITH FOR EARTH



Faith for Earth Updates July 5, 2019



Dear Sisters and Brothers;

I just wanted to update you on some activities we have been working on.

International Conference on Laudato Si 15 and 16 July 2019 at UNEP

We are delighted that we have received hundreds of applications, but we regret that not all can be accommodated. I believe we stand as of today at 360 participants from 43 countries. Our friends at CYNESA are working hard to make everything ready. Cardinal Peter Turkson will be leading a great delegation from the Vatican. We here with our partners WWF, and other UN organizations are ready to receive our guests.

Considering the Laudato Si Conference, I would like to share an example of what joint action between the United Nations system and interfaith partners on issues of care for our common home looks like in practice. The [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#) as an international, multi-faith alliance that is working to build a worldwide movement for the protection of tropical forests that is grounded in the values, ethics and moral guidance of faith communities. It is a platform for religious leaders to work hand-in-hand with indigenous peoples, governments, civil society and businesses on actions that protect rainforests and safeguard the indigenous peoples that serve as their guardians. IRI is implemented by UN Environment, with support from Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), and in partnership with Religions for Peace, GreenFaith, the World Council of Churches, Parliament of the World's Religions, Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology and Rainforest Foundation Norway.

The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, which was inspired by Laudato Si, was launched at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway by Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Taoist religious leaders and indigenous peoples' representatives from Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo,

Indonesia, Meso-America and Peru. See the joint communiqué [here](#) and press release [here](#). IRI works globally as well as in [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Indonesia](#) and [Peru](#), which together contain more than 70% of the world's remaining tropical forests. In these major rainforest countries, IRI is now developing faith-based programs that aim to link religious leaders and spiritual practitioners up with the existing coalition of partners working on the ground to protect forests and the rights of indigenous peoples.

IRI country programs have been launched in Colombia and Peru, with country facilitators and country teams in place, multi-faith and cross-sector Advisory Councils established, and priority action plans identified. Launch events included faith-based trainings on key forest and climate issues, interfaith dialogues, multi-stakeholder planning meetings, a public launch event, and the development of declarations of spiritual solidarity to protect forests. The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative is a project of the Faith for Earth program at UN Environment, and we would encourage you to learn more at the IRI website (www.interfaithrainforest.org), through the IRI concept notes (in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Bahasa](#)) or through the quarterly IRI newsletter (sign up [here](#)), and to reach out to get involved.

Partnering with the University of Connecticut and the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

I have had several very constructive and fruitful meetings during the Abrahamic Traditions and Environmental Change [Workshop](#) that was held 23-26 June in Rhodes. Faith for Earth has committed to supporting the work of the University of Connecticut by initiating a study on faith-based environmental activities as well as environmental priorities in the MENA region. Faith for Earth has also agreed with Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology to unite efforts and strengthen one knowledge platform building on the vast and extensive work of the Forum over the past two decades.

The 146th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UN Environment

During this quarterly meeting on 20th June, the children and youth spoke on behalf of all NGOs, welcoming the new Executive Director and thanking the acting ED for her support towards Faith for Earth dialogue. The support received at UNEA-4 and looking forward to collaborate inclusively in the future. David Munene from CYNESA said: I am speaking on behalf of the Catholic

Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA), a member of the Children and Youth Major Group. We wish to congratulate Ms. Inger Andersen on assumption of office as the new Executive Director and express our endearing support and cooperation for her vision. We are particularly grateful to hear that you, “stand before us as a listener” and we commit to listen to, and engage actively with you. We wish to express our most sincere gratitude to Miss Joyce Msuya for working extra hard, and successfully so, to restore hope and faith in the leadership and ability of the UN Environment as an institution that is working not just for, but with people and planet. We are especially grateful to Miss Joyce Msuya who steered the resounding accommodation of faith-based organizations working on care for creation through the Faith for Earth Initiative particularly during the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly. We are hopeful that this collaboration will continue.

Speakers at the Kofi Annan Briefing on 15 July

I would like to express my special gratitude to the distinguished speakers at the Kofi Annan Briefing to be held on 15 July:

- Jamil Ahmad (Director of Intergovernmental Affairs- UNEP’s New York Office),
- Mary-Evelyn Tucker (Co-Director Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology)
- Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr. Executive Director, United Religions Initiative
- Gopal Patel (Director of Bhumi Project)
- Audrey Kitagawa (Chair of the Parliament of Worlds’ Religions and member of the Advisory Council)
- Rev. Ken Kitatani (Executive Director Forum 21)
- Karenna Gore (Director of the Center for Earth Ethics)
- Honorable Minister Rabbi Sergio Bergman, Minister of Environment – Argentina

Wishing you all a very blessed and restful weekend.

Iyad

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