

FAITH FOR EARTH



ONE EARTH
MANY RELIGIONS
ONE GOAL



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ONE EARTH – MANY RELIGIONS – ONE GOAL

Achievement | 2018-2019
Report

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Foreword

As the Climate Crisis continues to exacerbate and the deadline for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) draws closer, it is imperative that ever more actors are rallied for climate action, as transitioning to a sustainable future must be a truly global effort. The holistic vision of sustainable development embedded within the SDGs implores that all stakeholders, from individuals to nations, and from grassroots NGOs to multinational corporations, contribute to their achievement.

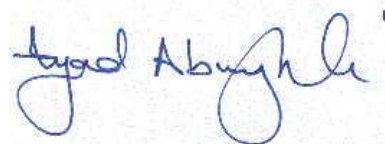
Previously untapped and undervalued contributors to these processes are Faith-Based Organisations (FBO's). FBOs have long existed on the peripheries of large secular multilateral organisations despite sharing intrinsic notions of moral responsibility and the valuable work they do in the field of development. FBOs are becoming increasingly active on environmental issues, as all religions contain messages of environmental care and stewardship for a planet that can provide for human flourishing, with notions of sustainability embedded in religious texts. FBOs are particularly valuable contributors to the SDGs given the immense influence they have. Over 80% of the global population is affiliated to a religious or spiritual community, and for many, faith is the main analytical lens which shapes their worldviews. FBOs are sustainable institutions in themselves, frequently existing for centuries and cultivating deep networks in the communities they are situated in, with faith leaders being viewed as reliable sources of guidance. FBOs are situated across the world, often operating in areas and serving communities that would otherwise be neglected.

We must embed the need for sustainable development in everyday life which can be achieved by tapping into the

spiritual wealth of people. Achieving the SDGs necessitates changes in mindsets, behaviours and consumption patterns, with faith leaders particularly well positioned to relay such messages in a more relatable manner than what may appear to be abstract climate science.

It is in this context, the Faith for Earth Initiative was launched in 2017. Faith for Earth foremost aims to strategically engage with faith-based organizations to collectively contribute towards the SDGs and fulfill the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. The initiative seeks to mobilize new inter-faith partnerships and utilize innovative approaches to unite around the common goal of sustainable development. With the strategic guidance and resources of the United Nations, the Faith for Earth Initiative has worked tirelessly since its inception to achieve its mission and expand the faith / environment nexus. As a testament to its progress thus far and the demonstrated value of engaging with faith communities to attain the SDGs, the Initiative has moved to UNEP's Executive Office under the direct supervision of the Deputy Executive Director.

We provide in this report a summary highlighting the work and achievements of Faith for Earth to date. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with FBOs and Faith leaders as part of the Faith for Earth Coalition to achieve our common goals.



Iyad Abumoghli

Director of Faith for Earth Initiative

Executive Summary

This report highlights the achievements of the Faith for Earth Initiative over the period 2018-2019 and progress made towards the attainment of its three overarching goals:

- 1) Strengthen Partnership with Faith-Based Organizations' Leadership for Policy Impact
- 2) Green Faith-Based Organizations' Investments, Operations and Assets
- 3) Establish an Accessible Knowledge-Based Support System

These goals were formulated to support the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and are intended to complement the holistic design of the SDGs. FBOs can positively contribute to sustainable development in comprehensive and diverse ways and the Initiative seeks to facilitate and catalyse these processes. This involves both broadly ensuring FBO's work is aligned to the SDGs, as well as contextual engagement that embraces the particularities of each faith. Given that Faith for Earth is primarily a normative advocacy initiative, much of the work focuses on expanding its network of affiliated FBOs and forging productive partnerships. These diverse partnerships may consist of linking FBOs with other FBOs, actors in the private and business sectors or with bilateral and multilateral institutions.

An underlying premise governing the work of the Initiative is that many solutions already exist to address climate change, but that is essential to partner organisations that together can mutually implement these solutions. Therefore, SDG 17 on "partnerships for the goals" directs much of the work of Faith for Earth and is the recurring SDG that is addressed in all the work that the Initiative undertakes. Simultaneously, given that Faith for Earth seeks to encourage, catalyse, mobilise, scale up and render more effective FBO

engagement on environment and sustainability, SDG 13 on "climate action" is the other ubiquitous goal that is always targeted. Nonetheless, the qualities and diversity of FBOs means they can contribute to all the different SDGs, whether it be encouraging investment into renewable energy for the attainment of SDG 7 or engaging in conservation efforts for the preservation of life on land (SDG 15). Further, UNEP, as a science-based organization, utilizes scientific knowledge as an effective tool that needs to be embedded in everyday life to help foster behavioral changes in consumption and production patterns (SDG 12). This is where Faith-Based Organizations have a comparative advantage in addressing the cultural dimension of sustainable development through tapping into the spiritual wealth of people, and highlighting that faith and science should be mutually supportive when addressing environmental issues.

Special attention was also paid to ensuring that Faith for Earth supports the implementation of UNEP's 2018-2019

UNEP Subprogrammes	
Climate Change	SP1
Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts	SP2
Healthy and Productive Ecosystems	SP3
Environmental Governance	SP4
Chemicals Waste and Air Quality	SP5
Resource Efficiency	SP6
Environment Under Review	SP7

Programme of Work and UNEP's sub-programmes. This alignment ensures that Faith for Earth supports UNEP's broader Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) that outlines the approach and deliverables for this crucial decade leading up to the deadline for the SDGs. UNEP will, within its mandate, promote environmental sustainability while contributing to a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Faith for Earth contributes to all sub-programmes directly and indirectly. Thus, the Initiative seeks to address all seven

priority areas outlined in the MTS. Emphasis is placed on (SP1) climate change, (SP3) healthy and productive ecosystems, (SP4) environmental governance (SP6) resource efficiency and (SP7) environment under review as these are the sub-programmes where FBOs can contribute most efficiently and where the three overarching goals are oriented towards. Each of the activities in this report demonstrates clear linkages to a particular SDG and UNEP's Programme of Work (PoW), with the Faith for Earth Initiative and its partner FBOs, important contributors to the attainment of the SDGs and the successful implementation of UNEP's Mid-Term Strategy.

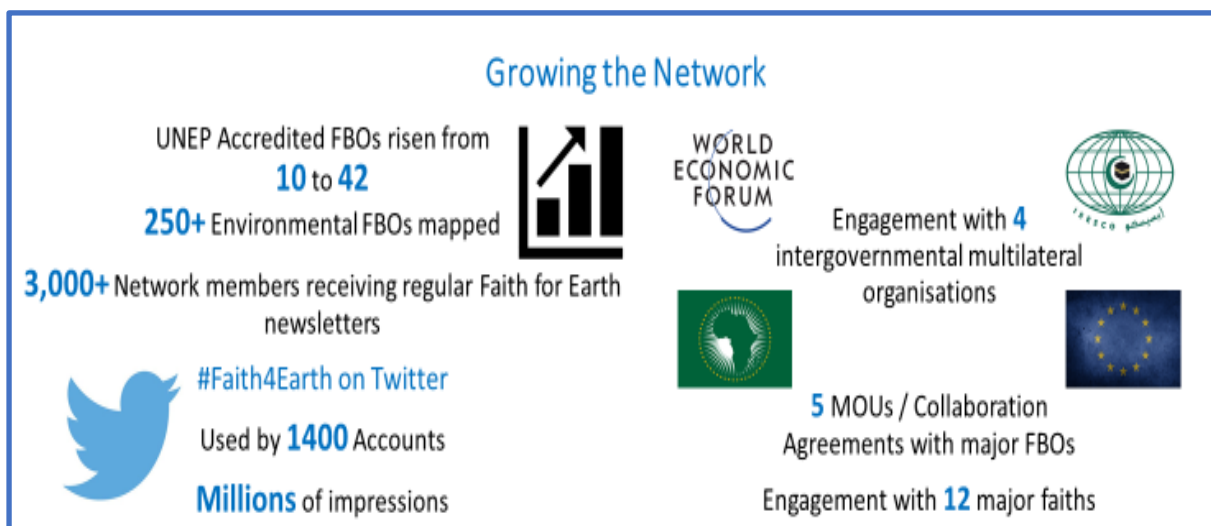
In practical terms, Faith for Earth has been able to increase the number of accredited FBOs from 8 to 45 during this period and enlist more than three thousand faith leaders in its emailing list for advocacy and engagement purposes. The Initiative has also been able to organize 8 global conferences, addressed more than 20,000 individuals, coordinated with 12 major religions, organized more than 30 webinars on environment and religion, and has worked on 15 thematic papers linking sub-programme priority areas with faith and published more than 20 articles as part of its advocacy campaign.

While Faith for Earth is working on its resource mobilization strategy, it has mobilized more than one million USD in in-

kind contribution in organizing its global events including holding the Vatican Laudato Si conference for more than 300 participants at UNEP as well as holding the global Faith for Earth Dialogue during UNEA 4 where 160 faith leaders covered their own participation for five days and organized 13 sessions with 63 speakers.

Faith for Earth is working with Intergovernmental organizations to adopt a strategic approach to engaging faith communities in environmental work. The most obvious success is the adoption of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation of a strategy based on major contributions from Faith for Earth.

Creating institutional partnerships is one of the major goals for Faith for Earth. Five Memoranda of Understanding, regional and global, were signed with United Religions Initiative (URI), the Parliament of World's Religions, the Responsible Finance and Investment Foundation (RFI), World Congress of Mountain Jews, and the Islamic Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).



Conferences & Capacity Building



Faith for Earth has (co)organized **8** major conferences & capacity building workshops



Faith for Earth participated in **16** further events

Nearly **USD 1,000,000** was raised from in kind contributions

20,000 people from diverse backgrounds have been directly addressed

Above **50%** female representation at events

30 Webinars & Online Conferences



Bridging the knowledge gap on linkages between religious teachings and the scientific approaches to fighting environmental degradation is an undertaking that Faith for Earth has prioritized. A text book “Faith for Earth: Time to Act” will be published in the coming few months in partnership between the Initiative and the Parliament of World’s Religions and the Yale University Forum on Religion and Ecology, using UNEP’s sub-programmes as the focus of the publication. The book will provide practical tools for FBOs and Faith Leaders in addressing environmental issues, but also scientists and environmentalists with much needed knowledge on religion’s approaches to environmental issues.

Faith for Earth is conducting its work in full coordination with and participation of FBOs. Several meetings have been held and several surveys have been conducted to assess Faith for Earth approach and identify environmental priority areas where FBOs and Faith Leaders are most interested. In this context, Faith for Earth contributed to global meetings on Faith for Climate, Faith for Water and Faith for Ecosystems Restoration.

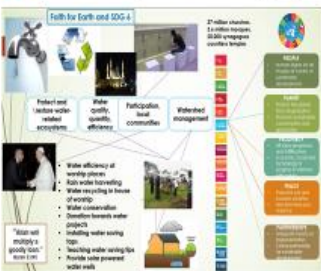
Engagement of young faith leaders is one of the priorities of Faith for Earth. Several workshops, conferences and webinars were conducted targeting and engaging young faith leaders to unleash their potential in designing and running innovative approaches to finding solutions for environmental challenges. The concept for establishing a council of young faith leaders is in the making as part of the Faith for Earth Global Coalition.

Faith / Science Nexus

15 papers and **20** articles produced
52 briefs and presentations prepared



Mapping of faith contributions to the individual **SDGs**



8 Surveys conducted



Collaboration with **10** academic institutions in **4** different continents

Introduction

Following a 2008 General Assembly resolution, the United Nations established the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Actors for Sustainable Development in 2010 to promote interreligious, intercultural and policy dialogues. This Task Force emerged after an acknowledgement that faith-based organisations (FBOs) had long been on the peripheries of secular multinational development organisations, despite their significant potential, and actual, contributions to areas such as education, human rights and conflict prevention, resolution and mediation. With increased calls for more partnerships and the participation of civil society and NGOs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the important role of FBOs in this field could no longer be neglected.

It is in this context, that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched [the Faith for Earth Initiative](#) in November 2017. In January of 2018, the [UNEP Strategy on Engaging with Faith-Based Organisations](#) was released, which established the dynamics of such engagement and guides the work of the Faith for Earth Initiative. UNEP has included engaging with faith leaders and faith-based organizations as a strategy for implementing its sub-programmes in the [2020-21 Programme of Work](#). As a UN programme, the Initiative will be working under the overarching framework of the SDGs and encourages FBOs to do the same.

The overarching objective of this strategy is to integrate faith values with efforts to tackle environmental challenges and for faith leaders and FBOs to integrate the environment into their work and messages, all towards achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2030. Attaining this will be derived from achieving the following three goals:

- 1) Strengthen Partnership with Faith-Based Organizations' Leadership for Policy Impact
- 2) Green Faith-Based Organizations' Investments, Operations and Assets
- 3) Establish an Accessible Knowledge-Based Support System.



UN Organizations members of the UN Task Force on Religion and Development

Addressing these three goals will largely depend on mobilising local communities, coordinating communications and advocacy, encouraging knowledge exchange, advancing South-South cooperation, engaging in faith-environment thematic discussions and fostering new and innovative partnerships.

This report is structured by highlighting the different achievements and activities undertaken in 2018 and 2019 that correspond to each of the three goals outlined above. However, it is important to note that these goals are largely interlinked and that progress towards one goal may impact upon the other two, thus this report's structure is a rough categorisation to facilitate the presentation of achievements to date.

Goal 1: Strengthen Partnership with Faith-Based Organisations' Leadership for Policy Impact

The aim of this goal is to inspire action, empower and engage faith leaders, their institutions and followers to adopt holistic practices designed to tackle environmental challenges and transition to more sustainable practices. Due to notions of environmental stewardship, there are clear synergies between FBOs and sustainability agendas, with religious groups and leaders able to provide additional means of mobilising societal engagement for environmental protection in an unprecedented manner.

This Initiative will foster increased interfaith collaboration through identifying and addressing mutually prioritised issues. Such issues are ones where behavioural changes can have successful outcomes, such as addressing food waste or unsustainable consumption practices. FBOs are very well placed to encourage normative lifestyle changes at local levels, raising awareness and diffusing environmental proactivity. Achieving this goal in mobilising the full potential of diverse faiths and FBOs requires substantial advocacy campaigning to grow the network of FBOs participating in the Faith for Earth Initiative.

Growing the Network

Since its inception, the Faith for Earth Initiative has created an ever-growing global network with over 3,000 Faith-Based Organisations and faith leaders currently subscribed. Relevant resources, knowledge and information are shared with FBOs through this network. Further, an advocacy campaign was launched in early 2018 using the unique hashtag [#Faith4Earth](#) to increase the outreach and visibility of the initiative on

[social media](#). It has been used by 1,400 accounts, reaching several hundred million impressions. It is frequently being used by major faith-based organisations and individuals when referring to issues and intersections of faith and environment. This has been complemented with the creation of an innovative, inclusive and unique logo (seen at top of document), that reflects the diversity of faiths, the mission of the Initiative and the centrality of the sustainable development goals.

Simultaneously, a newsletter is prepared and shared via email with



network members on a regular basis highlighting the achievements and activities of the Initiative, as well as soliciting coordination and cooperation from members. This ensures that collaborating FBOs are kept up to date with the work and progress of the Faith for Earth Initiative.

Early into its inception, the initiative organized consultation meetings with prominent FBOs, including the [World Council of Churches](#), [The Alliance on Religion and Conservation](#), [Green Faith](#), the [World Evangelical Alliance](#), the [Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities](#) (JLIFLC) and the [Parliament of the World's Religions](#). These FBOs, with their own established networks, have been crucial contributors in expanding the Faith for Earth network and providing general exposure. Faith for Earth participated in several global webinars. For example, the World Council Churches' discussion on [Youth and the Environment](#), the Joint Learning Initiative (JLIFLC) on [Faith-Based Climate Programs](#), and the Parliament of World's Religions on [Climate Action](#).

Concerted efforts have been made by the Initiative to increase the number of accredited faith-based organisations to UN Environment. As a result, the number of [accredited faith-based organisations](#) has rapidly increased from 10 to 42. With accreditation, FBOs can participate and contribute to sessions of the UN Environment Assembly and its subsidiary organs, granting FBOs greater influence, as well as insight into UNEP's policy and practice. Furthermore, it signifies that FBOs subscribe to the values and mission of UNEP and helps to bring together secular/religious common understandings.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 13 & 17
PoW: SP1

Capacity Building

Under the tenure of Pope Francis, the Vatican has become increasingly vocal in advocating for climate action and has become an important partner and enthusiastic supporter of the Initiative. From the 5th to 6th of July 2018, the Vatican hosted the international conference on the theme of "[Saving our Common Home and the Future for Life on Earth](#)" to mark the 3rd anniversary of Laudato Si. This event was organized by the Vatican [Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development](#) that is dedicated to addressing care of creation and assisting those in need. UNEP representatives took part in sessions on economy, climate change and faith and the church. Representatives from the [Green Economy](#), [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#) and Faith for Earth introduced UN Environment work highlighting areas of convergence and proposing clear ideas on how to take Laudato Si to more practical and impactful levels. The Executive Director of UNEP, later, had the opportunity to give a briefing to His Holiness Pope Francis on UNEP's engagement with FBOs.

The Faith for Earth Initiative has since been in sustained contact with the Dicastery and is in the process of planning the Living Chapel Initiative with the Vatican. Although to be inaugurated as the Living Chapel Initiative, Faith for Earth has contributed to widening the conceptualization into a global interfaith initiative on Living Spaces of Worship. Thus, temples, mosques, synagogues and any other form of religious building are incorporated within this future initiative.



In 2019, the partnership with the Vatican culminated by holding the 2nd International Conference on Laudato Si. Faith for Earth, in collaboration with the [WWF's Africa office](#), the Vatican's [Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development](#) and the [Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa](#) (CYNESA), organized the [2nd international conference on Laudato Si](#) on the 15th and 16th of July 2019 at UNEP's premises. This conference, celebrating the 4th anniversary of Laudato Si, was attended by over 300 participants from 50 different countries. It is important to note that perspectives from the scientific community and other faiths were valued, in keeping with the mission of Faith for Earth. Notably, indigenous knowledge and practices were highlighted as providing key insights into sustainable living. The event culminated in showcasing FBO's work in environmentalism, success stories and examples of best practice in the faith-environment nexus. An immediate outcome of this conference was that some of the young participants representing youth organisation began to start the formation of the Youth Council which will form one of the parts of the Faith for Earth

Coalition currently being established. Overall this conference reaffirmed papal backing for the initiative, including the youth and interfaith dimensions, which are of paramount importance to Faith for Earth.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **4, 12 & 13**
PoW: **SP1 & SP6**

In January 2019, the Faith for Earth Initiative participated in the [Bonn Salon discussions](#), held in Germany. Under the auspices of a global development consultancy, 35 CEOs and managers of FBOs rallied together around the guiding theme of “Developing (by) Faith Sustainably – Christian Responsibility in the Era of the Agenda 2030”. The goal of this conference was to strengthen Christian development NGOs in the field of development cooperation and enhance the role of religious leaders on environmental issues. The discussion sought to draw out the special traits and moral foundations of FBOs that enable them to most effectively contribute to the SDGs. There was also a special discussion on how faith-based development organisations work in an intercultural and interreligious context, allowing participating FBOs to more closely align with the mission of Faith for Earth.

Coordination meetings continued in Bonn with the German Ministry for International Cooperation (BMZ) and the German Development Agency (GIZ). It was agreed that the project showed great value, progress and relevance and was thus appealing for the consideration of donors. It was also agreed that Faith for Earth should join the [International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development](#) (PaRD) as a member of the UN advisory group. PaRD was founded a year earlier than Faith for Earth in order to harness the positive impact of religion and values in sustainable development. PaRD has similar values and objectives to Faith for Earth’s in that it is evidenced based, shares best practices amongst members, forges

interfaith collaboration and proves that joint advocacy leads to better policies concerning the intersection between religion and sustainable development.

Faith for Earth lobbied for establishing a new work stream on “Environmental, Water and Climate Action”. This initial commitment was solidified during the [General Assembly of the Partnership on Sustainable Development in Copenhagen](#) between the 1st and 3rd of May 2019. The Assembly welcomed the Initiative’s introduction of [Environment, Water and Climate Action](#) as a new working stream. This event marked the beginning of a reciprocal partnership with PaRD. This ensures that two organisations with similar ambitions and objectives have entered into fruitful collaboration within the faith-environment nexus.

As co-chair of the work stream on Environment, Water and Climate Change, Faith for Earth contributed to the discussions of the work plan for 2020 in PaRD’s meeting in Vienna from the 9th to 10th of December 2019. This work-stream particularly focuses on and rallies PaRD members around Clean Water and Sanitation, Climate Action, Life Below Water and Life on Land (SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15 respectively). The underlying premise being that faith-based approaches and faith-actors have the potential to contribute positively to global efforts to address environmental, water and climate issues. They can have an impact, in a way that adds unique value and complements non-faith-based or secular led actors, approaches and engagements.



SDGs & SPs Targeted

SDG: **6, 13, 14 & 15**

PoW: **SP1 & SP3**

A prime example of the value of FBO accreditation to the UN as referred to earlier, occurred during [the Faith for Earth Interfaith Dialogue](#) that was held between the 11-15 of March 2019 as part of the events of the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly. This dialogue was organized by the Faith for Earth Initiative over a period of five days and was divided into [11 separate sessions](#).

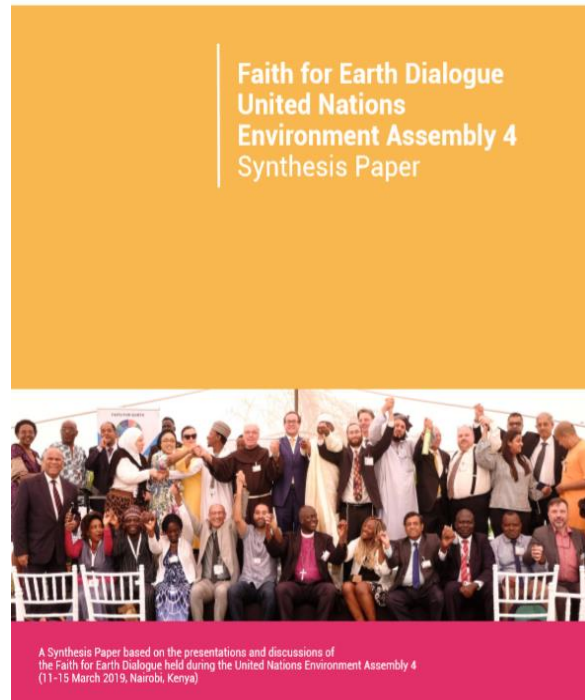
These sessions ranged from “Advancing Climate Justice with Faith-based Renewable Energy Projects” to “Faith, Global Ethics and Climate Commitments”, covering a wide range of topics. Altogether, it was an excellent demonstration of interfaith dialogue with more than 135 faith leaders and representatives of 56 faith-based organisations representing 12 different faiths and congregations from all continents of the world. Throughout the sessions there were 63 speakers with more than 220 individuals in attendance.

Conferences such as this have been essential to mobilise support within the UN by demonstrating the value of interfaith dialogue and the potential solutions that can emerge from such discussions. Panellists from FBOs elaborated in detail on innovative solution for environmental challenges and that the need for sustainable consumption / production is urgent, yet doable and the right way forward. Upon the conference’s conclusion a [synthesis report](#) was published highlighted the cross-cutting and mutually synthesized areas of priorities for faith based organisations.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



“Bringing Agenda 2030 to life” was the title of a workshop that focused around how SDG-driven policies provide synergies with Laudato Si’ and the role that the Catholic Church and FBOs will have in advancing them. The workshop was held in



Kenya for 15 organisations representing the Catholic Church in Africa on the 12th of June 2019. This workshop was organized in partnership with [CAFOD](#) (the official aid agency of the Catholic church in England and Wales), the [University College of London](#) and [Caritas Africa](#). Alongside CAFOD, these organisations have long been committed to addressing the needs of the world’s poorest people, but now must factor in environmental considerations in their work and approach.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



ABRAHAMIC TRADITIONS & ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Growing environmental challenges in the Middle East & North Africa Region (MENA), demand an urgent need for cross disciplinary approaches to address them and implement successful mitigation and adaptation strategies. Further the roots and consequences of these challenges must be identified. To tackle such an issue, the Faith for Earth Initiative participated in the workshop titled the “[Abrahamic Traditions and Environmental Change](#)”, where it spoke at the “[Environmental Policy and Development](#)” session about the Faith for Earth Initiative, the Coalition being created and how participating organisations can contribute to Faith for Earth’s objectives and *vice versa*. The workshop was hosted from the 23rd to 26th of June 2019, in Rhodes, Greece and was organized by the University of Connecticut, Al Alkhawayn University and the Forum on Religion and Ecology at the University of Yale.

Most religious adherents in the MENA region belong to the three main Abrahamic traditions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Each have monotheistic basis’ and commonalities in doctrinal teachings, cosmologies and ethics, with these being identified throughout the sessions. Thus, one of the main objectives of this workshop was to explore how the [Abrahamic traditions](#) impact the ways in which people perceive and interact with the natural environment. Following this workshop, an intern at Faith for Earth undertook a mapping project of faith-led green initiatives across the MENA region and expanded a paper on the specific

environmental challenges faced in the region.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **4, 8 & 13**

PoW: **SP1 & SP6**

Following the successful session that was held during the UN Environment Assembly, Faith for Earth Dialogue, Faith for Earth has continued its partnership with the Islamic Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO). As a result, Faith for Earth attended the [8th Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers](#), held in Rabat, Morocco, from the 2nd to 3rd of October 2019.



This meeting of the ministers of environment from 57 Islamic countries, brought together by the belief that pressing environmental problems require close cooperation and partnerships to address them. Following ministerial working sessions, where environment ministers reviewed and discussed several documents aimed at developing joint Islamic action in the field of environmentally sustainable development, a series of strategies were adopted. These included a “Strategy for the Activation of the Role of Cultural and Religious Factors in

Protecting the Environment and Achieving Sustainable Development in the Islamic World” and “Guidance Document on Strengthening the Role of Youth and Civil Society in the Protection of the Environment and Achievement of Sustainable Development”.

At this conference the faith dynamic was brought to the forefront, partially inspired by the work of the Faith for Earth initiative and keynote address delivered during the conference. Whilst the important strides being made by Islamic nations was lauded, emphasis was also placed on the need for interfaith dialogue and collaboration. During the conference, the King of Morocco also announced the establishment of the Islamic Academy for the Environment and Sustainable Development. Simultaneously, Princess Sumaya bent Alhasan, president of the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, highlighted the importance of adopting innovative approaches to tackle the complex environmental challenges the world is facing. These strategies and declarations are significant because they represent high-level political engagement and interest from 57 countries in the faith-environment nexus. Achieving sustainable development requires a symbiotic combination of bottom-up, as well as top-down initiatives and actions, with events such as these important contributions to such processes.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **4, 9 & 13**
PoW: **SP1 & SP4**

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals was the theme of an expert consultation meeting held in Copenhagen, Denmark from the 7th to 8th of October 2019. The meeting was sponsored by Denmark and Norway and was organized in cooperation with UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

(OHCHR), the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, Stefanus Alliance and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The interesting and challenging synergies between gender issues, climate change and health were discussed in depth. During the meeting, participants held dialogues at the [Danish parliament](#) with parliamentarians, secular NGOs and civil society organisations, FBOs, academics and others who were interested in the subject, Faith for Earth presented in both events on Climate Change, and its Impacts on Women and Religious groups. This meeting confirmed for participants the value of engaging with FBOs across a range of different developmental issues.

SDGs & SP's Targeted:



SDG: **4, 9 & 13**
PoW: **SP1 & SP4**

In preparation for the [2019 Article Circle Assembly](#) discussions, Faith for Earth travelled to Iceland to partake in the pre-event meetings on the 8th and 9th of October 2019. The initiative had been working alongside the [Icelandic Institute on Religion and Reconciliation](#) (IIRR), the [Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland](#) (ELCI), the [United Nations Association in Iceland](#), the [Soil and Conservation Service of Iceland](#) and the [Iceland Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources](#) to organize and sponsor this consultation meeting. Faith for Earth was at the centre of discussions during the meeting at the historic Skálholt Cathedral where the work, aims and objectives of the initiative were outlined. This meeting was attended by religious leaders from the Nordic countries, USA and Canada, as well as scholars, artists, wellbeing practitioners, environmental grassroots activists and

representatives from environmental organisations.



The role of faith, spirituality and religious belief in tackling the challenges of climate change and environment degradation were discussed. This meeting was addressed by Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, Iceland's Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, who has taken an active interest in the Initiative. At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants agreed that while faith leadership and communities are engaged in protecting the environment, there is a need to strengthen their efforts in facilitating more effective communication, networking, collaboration and alignment. Further, more efforts must be made to rally more faith actors to the cause of environmentalism and increase engagement from this previously undervalued sector.

SDGs & SP's Targeted:



SDG: **13, 14 & 15**
PoW: **SP1 & SP4**

In Amsterdam, a symposium fostered dialogues between activists, scientists, governments, businesses, NGOs and faith groups on the essentialness of water to the sustainability and viability of earth. Faith for Earth, at the opening session at the symposium on "[Water in Times of Climate Change](#)" held between the 6th and 7th of November 2019 reiterated the role of faith in tackling water issues. This event was hosted by the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam and the [Ecumenical Patriarchate Bartholomew](#), in close collaboration with the [Amsterdam Centre for Religion and Sustainable Development](#), UNEP, the Amsterdam International Water Week and partners from business, religion, government and NGOs.

Representative from the cities of Amsterdam, Cape Town and Jakarta were also present given that these are amongst major global cities to be most negatively impacted by climate change and rising sea levels. Water related issues and climate changes were investigated through the interlocking dimensions of science, politics, economics and religion. This was to encourage the formulation of holistic perspectives and search for mutual understanding, language and areas of priority to address a variety of water issues



(desertification, conflicts, rising sea levels etc.). To contextualize the challenges, they were addressed from the vantage point of the three major cities and practical solutions from diverse participants were brought forth.

Patriarch Bartholomew emphasised that today's ecological problems, require not only technical solutions, but also a revaluation of ethical and spiritual ethos'. Reiterating that faith is of crucial importance to ensure more widespread involvement in addressing climate change, as well as emphasizing that it is human behaviour causing it. This makes it appear less of an insurmountable problem, that can only be tackled by technical experts, but rather one that requires the active engagement from the full spectrum of society.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:

			SDG: 6, 9 & 11 PoW: SP1 & SP2
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2019 finished with Faith for Earth hosting a capacity building workshop in Nairobi from the 17th to 19th of December. The overall goal was to “develop the capacities of United Nations staff and partner faith-based organisations to capitalize on the intrinsic relationship between faith and

religious beliefs and environmental sustainability”. The workshop was attended by local, regional and international UNEP and UN staff, as well as, representatives of FBOs. Initially, participants presented the work and ambitions of their organisation, the key areas that they hope to address, and the steps needed to scale up their actions in the form of projects.

These projects were then presented, with other groups offering insights, advice and support. Undertaking these activities helped ensure that the enthusiasm of participants was translated into practical outcomes and that synergies were created to help scale up the work of FBOs. Simultaneously, it also allowed UN staff from different offices to see the value of FBOs and potential avenues of collaboration with them going forward.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:

			SDG: 13, 15 & 16 PoW: SP1 & SP4
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Localized Efforts

Whilst much of Faith for Earth's advocacy work has been organising and participating at international events in interfaith and multinational contexts, the Initiative has also been involved in much more localised efforts. In particular, the



Initiative has been engaged in projects around Kenya, Russia and India, where UNEP offices are located.

In India, Faith for Earth addressed [Greening the Globe for Sustainable Living Conference](#) held from the 1st to 4th of August, 2019 in Chennai, India. This eco-conference sought to present models of sustainable living, mitigation and adaption to diverse participant groups, including FBOs. Altogether 380 participants, 14 schools and 13 colleges participated at the event, with many coming from rural areas and attending an international conference for the first time. The conference functioned as an educational and networking opportunity to foster synergies between previously unconnected educational institutions, NGOs and Faith communities interested in environmentalism. 25 invited speakers participated at the conference and 80 reviewed research papers were used to provide scientific perspectives. A primary aim of the conference was for participating faith leaders and FBOs to utilize the knowledge they had gained and

While in Kenya, on the 31st of August 2019, the Faith for Earth Initiative, gave an empowering speech addressing the issue of Environmental Stewardship to congregants of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church in Mathare North. The Sabbath congregation rallied over 10,000 SDA faithful to attend the speech. Engaging with faithful at a direct grassroots levels is essential to the work of the Initiative. Further, with over 10,000 attendees, the multiplier effects of such outreach efforts cannot be neglected; some attendees will continue to dispel both the message of sustainability, as well as the work of the Faith for Earth Initiative.

Since its inception, the Initiative has supported FBOs around the world in organizing activities to celebrate the past two [World Environment Days](#). Following a meeting with the [United Religions Initiative, Africa](#) and the [All African Conference of Churches](#) on the 31st of May 2019, Faith for Earth helped organize clean-up campaigns in slum areas, most notably close to home, in Nairobi. Given the theme of World



encourage sustainably-oriented behavioural and attitudinal changes amongst their followers, in keeping with the work of Faith for Earth. Advocacy, outreach and educational conferences such as this are crucial to embed the work of Faith for Earth into local communities around the world and ensure that it becomes a truly global initiative and not one merely existing within the confines of the UN.

Environment Day in 2019 was on [air pollution](#), special attention was also paid to [educating on this issue](#) and organising tree planting ceremonies to acknowledge the crucial role trees play in regulating our atmosphere. [Special guidelines](#) for different faiths were prepared by the project to highlight how they could contribute their energies to tackle air pollution, in particular by linking them to religious festivities. Witnessing the impact of such campaigns,

the Initiative inspired the formation of [Eden's Stewards Ministry](#) at Nairobi Chapel Ongata Rongai Church.

World Environment day 2019, in particular, witnessed an impressive increase in the number of faith-based organisations participating at the global, regional and local levels, with [hundreds of events organized](#). Whilst World Environment Day celebrations may often be one-off events, they primarily serve to rally people around climate action that they can then carry forward in posterity.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **4, 13 & 17**
PoW: **SP1**

Engagement with Multilateral Institutions

Working with the EU DEVCO, a capacity building training was conducted on the 8th of April 2019 for EU staff in Brussels. This introductory training was themed “Faith and Climate Change” designed to introduce the intersection of FBOs and sustainability agendas. UNEP has a historically strong and solid partnership with the European Commission and has successfully implemented a wide range of projects. The EU has already cooperated with FBOs in development and humanitarian aid, with this workshop serving to highlight the approach of Faith for Earth. Participants acknowledged the value of engaging with FBOs and that they are important actors on the ground that can deliver results in an effective manner. As a result, discussions began on an EU strategy on engaging with faith-based organisations, highlighting its visibility and rallying an important new multilateral actor in the EU that can offer further institutional support. Further, it was agreed to organize an international conference with FBOs within the EU in early 2020.

Finally, Faith for Earth has been in discussions with the World Economic Forum (WEF) concerning potential

avenues of cooperation to implement joint activities. The WEF could become a key actor by providing expertise, data, connections and clout within economic spheres to facilitate the greening of FBOs assets. The World Economic Forum has already extensively explored the role of faith in shaping and influencing socioeconomic developments. In particular the role of faith in creating moral frameworks for the [Fourth Industrial Revolution](#) and alternative economic practices and concepts, such as impact investing. Beyond purely economic matters, the WEF acknowledges the role that faith can play in other areas as well, notably conflict resolution, environmental protection and broader humanitarian work. It too describes faith leaders and FBOs as an untapped resource capable of fostering positive impact in diverse ways.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **13, 16 & 17**
PoW: **SP1 & SP4**

Strengthening Partnerships

Several memoranda of understanding have been signed between regional offices of UNEP and FBOs to consolidate partnerships. UNEP's Africa office signed one with the [United Religions Initiative Africa](#) (URI) to help leverage the wisdom, power and influence of faith-based communities across the continent. Establishing official and durable partnerships like this, helps take the Initiative's work to more grassroots levels. An example being work in engaging local communities to sustainably manage rainforests in the Congo basin and the Amazon as part of UNEP's Interfaith Rainforest Initiative. The interfaith dimension of this MOU is particularly rewarding as it exponentially increases outreach potential and very much keeps in line with the objectives of Faith for Earth.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 13 & 15
PoW: SP1 & SP3



A high-profile roundtable titled “Inter-confessional Dialogue and SDGs” was held on the 8th of July 2019, in Moscow, Russia. This formed part of the implementation of an MOU signed between the UNEP Moscow office with the [World Congress of Mountain Jews](#), (WCMJ), who organized the conference. The WCMJ aims to unite communities of Mountain Jews across the globe. It is an NGO with consultative status with Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and is now in partnership with UNEP’s Moscow office. It also aims to foster collaboration with organisations involved in promoting peace, tolerance, scientific progress and humanitarian development in keeping with the SDGs. The event was attended by prominent representatives of various religious confessions, renowned political figures and members of the local artistic, scientific and business communities. Since this conference, the WCMJ is currently in discussions with UNEP’s Moscow office to sponsor and host a Faith for Earth conference in late 2020.



SDGs & SPs Targeted:
SDG: 1, 4 & 16

PoW: SP1 & SP4

An MOU was also signed with the Responsible Finance and Investment

Foundation (RFI) prior to the Faith and Finance roundtable held in Zurich in April 2018. This roundtable organized by [RFI and Swiss Arab Network](#) was designed to bring together key stakeholders within responsible finance and impact investing to help scale up these movements. At a roundtable co-hosted with UNEP, Faith for Earth held discussions concerning the role and potential of faith inspired investment in this sector. Notably, that many FBOs are wealthy institutions, whose investments are often already guided by moral principles and that they are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious. The role of the SDGs in these processes was emphasized, as was the need to ensure that financial systems become more socially inclusive.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 7, 12 & 13
PoW: SP1 & SP6



To ensure that the contemporary science and knowledge of environmental issues is very well addressed by and connected to faith teaching, Faith for Earth signed an MOU with the [Parliament of World’s Religions](#) to produce a print and online text book on Faith for Earth: Time for Action” in collaboration with Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 4, 12 & 13
PoW: SP1 & SP7

Signing MOU's with different types of organisations enables Faith for Earth to create sustainable partnership with actors involved in diverse spheres that focus on attaining different SDGs. Such close cooperation also contributes to achieving the overarching goals of the initiative.

Internal Mobilisation

Whilst the mobilisation of FBOs and their members for climate action is the most important outcome of this initiative, it has also been crucial to mobilise support from within the UN system. The initiative relies on the continual support and resources of the UN, so it is imperative that it demonstrates the value of its work and progress towards the attainment of its goals. As previously mentioned, the number of UN accredited FBOs has risen, as has the participations of FBOs at conferences and workshops hosted under the auspices of the UN. Faith for Earth has undertaken further work within the UN system and worked with different branches to highlight its role and increase the visibility of the initiative and more broadly the potential of FBOs in sustainable development processes.

Notably, the Faith for Earth Initiative supported UN Habitat to co-organize the interfaith dialogues held during the 1st UN Habitat Assembly in late May 2019. UN-Habitat is mandated to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements with the goal of providing adequate shelter and quality of life for all. These dialogues concerned the role of faith in shaping cities and how faith perspectives can assist in addressing the multitude of issues currently facing urban centres. Notably how modern cities can become more inclusive, tolerant, resilient, safe and sustainable. With exponentially growing urban populations, cities will become ever more important sites for attaining the objectives of the SDGs. These sessions enabled participants to better understand the various role FBOs can play and how

they can be empowered to work more effectively in urban spaces. Finally, given the assembly coincided with Islamic holy month of Ramadan, all guests were invited to attend a breakfast in the spirit of interfaith harmony.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 7, 11 & 12
PoW: SP1 & SP6

Faith for Earth also participated in 2019's [World Water Week](#) in collaboration with UNEP's Fresh Water Unit. Three events were organized on the 29th of August: [Water and Faith Public Showcase](#), [the Water and Faith Network Meeting](#) and the [PaRD Environment, Water and Climate Action \(EWCA\)](#) work stream. The primary objective of the Water Week is to align priorities across the global water sector to address critical gaps in achieving SDG 6 and 14. There has been growing acknowledgement that faith actors and faith-based approaches have an important contribution to make to global efforts to reduce, prevent and reverse the degradation of natural water sources. This is partially because water is considered as a sacred resource in all religions, thus facilitating finding common ground for interfaith collaboration.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 6, 13 & 14
PoW: SP1 & SP2

Further as part of UN interagency collaboration, Faith for Earth has been working with the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR) to produce educational videos to be utilized in training and capacity building. This online course, titled "[Leading with Ethics in Achieving the SDGs](#)" is designed to assist decision-makers in fostering the character traits and developing the durable skills necessary for SDG leadership. Courses such as this are helpful for FBOs and faith leaders that wish to actively contribute to the SDGs but may lack some of the necessary knowledge and skills to most effectively do so. The ethical and value driven dimensions of such courses resonate strongly with those approaching the SDGs from a faith perspective. The course also facilitates the process and achievement of interfaith collaboration through addressing cross-cultural competencies. The production of such a course is a prime example of the value of utilizing the resources of the wider UN system to both embed and assist faith perspectives in sustainable development.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:

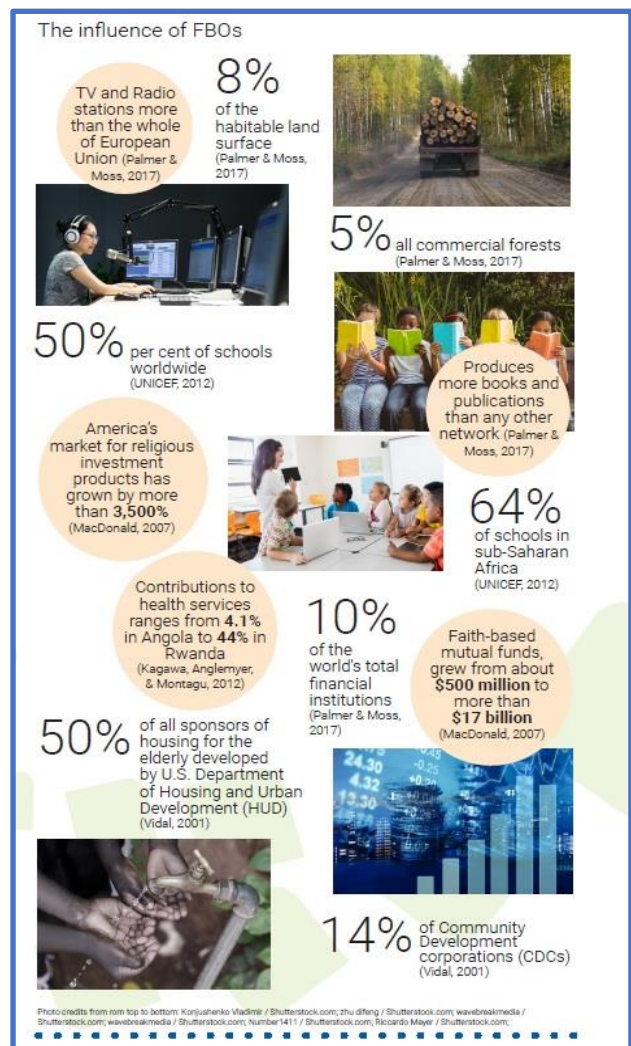


SDG: **4, 9 & 13**

PoW: **SP1 & SP7**

Goal 2: Green Faith-Based Organisation's Investments, Operations and Assets

The objective of this goal is to encourage faith-based organisations to institutionally integrate environmental considerations in greening their investments and assets to support the implementation of the SDGs. This process involves capacity building through hosting and addressing workshops, providing technical assistance, supporting advocacy, providing strategic guidance, knowledge production and best practice sharing.



FBOs hold enormous assets and wealth, with faith-based investment corporations and bodies considered to be the third or fourth largest investment group globally. Therefore, FBOs have the potential to make a significant contribution towards plugging the funding gap currently facing the SDGs. This contribution by FBOs is of paramount importance given UNEP's acknowledgement that transitioning to a greener global economy requires massive financial flows far beyond the capacities of conventional development channels, funds and actors (UNSDG 2018). The SDGs are the overarching and unifying framework that investors and FBOs can map and aggregate their contributions towards.

The SDGs' targets and indicators are clear, specific, measurable and time-

bound milestones for FBOs and investors. This will ensure a more integrated approach that disparate actors can align with, exchange common experiences and identify investment opportunities. Through UNEP, the Faith for Earth initiative offers institutional and practical support to FBOs to assist in greening their assets.

Therefore, the Faith for Earth initiative has sought to catalyse greater engagement between faith-based investment vehicles and these growing innovative financial practices, notably impact investing. This involves targeting both existing faith-based assets and investments, as well as projected ones.



Faith for Earth supported the meeting which resulted in the establishment of [FaithInvest](#), an alliance formed in Zug Switzerland. Acknowledging the material wealth of religions, FaithInvest focuses on shifting billions of dollars of conventional faith-based investments into ones that actively support sustainable development and the attainment of the SDGs. This alliance consists of a collaboration of religious investors, philanthropists, the United Nations, national governments and impact investment firms. Overall, faith participants at the Zug conference consisted of over 500 religious investment groups owning trillions of dollars in assets. Notably, to facilitate this process the Faith in Finance conference resulted in the establishment of the Zug Guidelines to Faith-Consistent Investing.

The Zug Guidelines provide a first-time overview of where religious investment is placed now and the faith-inspired criteria that may, or may not, govern these investments. This is aligned with the broader Faith for Earth strategy to better understand what faiths own and their aspirations and priorities for future investment in environmentally focused sustainable development. This enables UNEP to integrate the core values and directives of faiths into the 2030 Agenda and contribute to its attainment. The Initiative seeks to capitalize on this positive momentum and use the capacities of the UN to increase the awareness and adoption of sustainable financial practices among FBOs. This involves creating synergies and pipelines of investable projects with faith networks and development actors. Investments can be made across all asset classes into innovative sectors around the world, including sustainable agriculture, fintech or clean energy. Ultimately, the challenge is to successfully integrate religious beliefs into investments that align with faith teachings, abide by the Principles for Sustainable Banking (created by UNEP-FI and adopted at the 2019 UNGA), whilst creating positive social or environmental impact.

SDGs & SP's Targeted:



SDG: **8, 9 & 12**

PoW: **SP1 & SP2**

As a neutral convener, Faith for Earth co-hosted a roundtable [Responsible Finance and Investment Summit](#) in Zurich from the 25-27th April 2018. Alongside [UNEP-Finance Initiative](#) (UNEP-FI), industry leaders in block-chain, Islamic and sustainable finance, and representatives of major FBOs, discussed environmentally responsible finance and the integration of the SDGs as financial guidelines. Notable faith partners included the Islamic Development Bank, World Council of Churches, Greenfaith and the Church of England. The SDGs and the Paris Climate Accord were the overarching guiding frameworks, with participants learning

more about them and how they can effectively commit to contributing towards them.

UNEP-FI provides a well-established partnership platform, which coupled with its strong focus on policy, can facilitate and improve the adoption of transformative financial practices amongst FBOs. Attendees of this conference departed with a better understanding of the holistic effects that financial activity can have and how to best ensure the creation of positive impacts.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **8, 9 & 12**
PoW: **SP1 & SP6**

The Faith for Earth Initiative contributed to another global conference by providing the faith perspective at the [Zug Impact Summit: Earth and Finance](#) on the 17th and 18th of September 2018. This summit was particularly focused on the notion of **impact** and ensuring that understandings of it are ingrained into financial and economic practice. This event presented further opportunities for networking and establishing linkages between private sector companies, faith-based organisations and entrepreneurs involved in financing sustainable development. It included highly diverse participants working on a variety of different issues ranging from water and sanitation to gender-lens investing and clean energy, thus aligning with the holistic outlook of the Faith for Earth Initiative and the broader SDG framework.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **5, 6 & 7**
PoW: **SP1 & SP6**

The nexuses between faith, sustainability and finance was discussed at the [2018 Arabia CSR Forum](#), in Dubai the 2nd-3rd of October 2018. This forum, held every year, is the region's premier convention on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability where the latest themes, topics and

debates in these fields are discussed. Entrepreneurs, innovators, business leaders, thinkers, policy makers, development experts, theologians and religious representatives attend from all over the world. The key topic in 2018 was on "Driving Innovation Through the Sustainable Development Goals". Innovation is increasingly becoming an international buzzword and the guiding strategy of governments and business around the globe. Participants and experts at this conference sought to emphasise that such innovation and technological breakthroughs should be placed within the context of achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

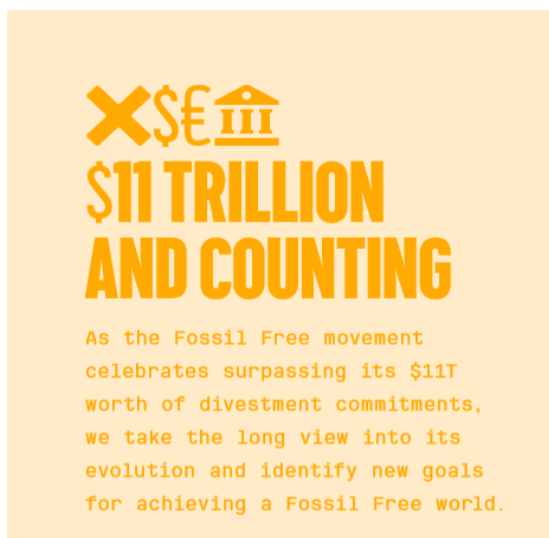
Given the geographic context in which the forum occurred, there was also an emphasis on transitioning to renewable energies and more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Whilst, this forum was primarily intended for those involved in investment, innovation and industry, UNEP acted as a strategic supporter, with the Faith for Earth initiative again providing insights from the faith-sustainability nexus, as well as bringing in the reputation and scientific knowledge of UNEP.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **7, 9 & 12**
PoW: **SP1 & SP6**

The Faith for Earth Initiative also participated at the “[Financing the Future Summit: The Global Climate Divest-Invest Summit](#)” in Cape Town the 10-11th of September 2019. This conference was organised by a coalition of organisations including 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. This diverse coalition of over 300 delegates from 44 countries rallied around the cause of accelerating the global divestment movement.



Divestment will be most effective if those that divest are presented with opportunities to reinvest and still gain favourable returns. Therefore this summit, the first of its kind in the Global South, presented an opportunity to showcase investment strategies that help developing nations in particular, to leapfrog non-renewable energy reliance. Faith for Earth contributed by presenting UNEP’s work that is focused on aligning investments with spiritual values, and the role of faith communities in accelerating the movement; particularly how religious communities can contribute to ending energy poverty by accelerating and encouraging investment into renewable energy and forging new partnerships to achieve this goal.

Faith for Earth also contributed to two workshops; one on Education and Youth and the other on the role of FBOs in tackling environmental issues. In both, Faith for Earth also presented the work of UNEP’s Education Unit and engagement with youth, specifically the Young Champion of the World programme. There was also a meeting discussing a recent fatwa issued by the Fiqh Council of North America and the precedent it set for divestment within Islamic financing. The summit culminated in the release of a joint statement and a series of commitments, including from prominent religious leaders, to divesting and challenging the global community to shift capital out of fossil fuels and into renewables.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: 4, 7 & 9

PoW: SP1 & SP6

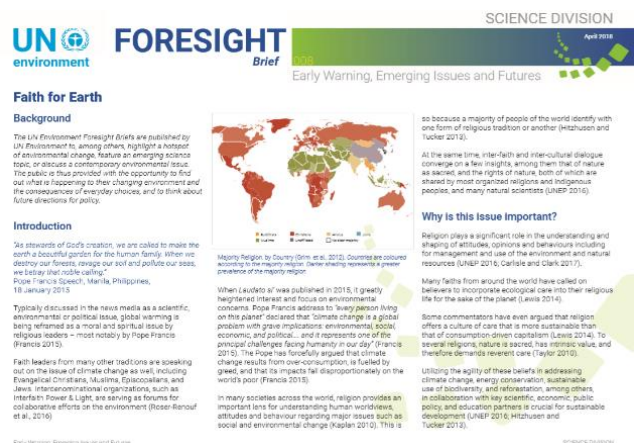
Overall, it is important to note that the greening of financial assets that has been discussed at the above-mentioned events, must apply beyond the institutional and organisational level. FBOs and faith leaders should also encourage their individual members and followers to reflect upon the impact of their personal finances. Ingraining notions of environmental stewardship in all areas and at all levels of socioeconomic activity will provide a massive boost to attaining Agenda 2030, with FBOs particularly well equipped to facilitate this task.

Goal 3: Science-Faith-Based Evidence

The aim of this goal is to break down faith/science boundaries by establishing a knowledge platform where FBOs can access, share and integrate scientific findings into their work and communicate it with policy and decision-makers, the public and other FBOs. Given the enormous diversity of religions and practices, aligning them with the SDGs will require both deeply contextual engagement and a holistic approach in order to incorporate all towards achieving the same common goal. This will require more than just goodwill and a willingness to engage in environmentalism, but proper scientific knowledge to back the activities FBOs engage in. Thus, it is of paramount importance that the Faith for Earth Initiative improves and expands upon science-faith nexuses. It is also essential to ensure that faith and science aren't viewed as dichotomous, but can be mutually supportive. Achieving sustainable development cannot be viewed merely as a scientific and technocratic process, but also a cultural process that must be embedded in everyday life, which can be achieved by tapping into the spiritual wealth of people.

Establishing inter-faith dialogues will allow new perspectives and practices to emerge. The Faith for Earth initiative, operating within the secular and scientific environment of the UN, provides the ideal neutral space for equitable and productive interreligious dialogue and learning concerning environmental issues. This should be supplemented and backed by the scientific knowledge and evidence that UNEP can provide. The scientific resources of the UN should be made readily available so that FBOs can access appropriate knowledge for the environmental issues they hope to address. This is not intended to entirely replace the traditional knowledge and

practices that FBOs may wish to employ, but rather strengthen the effectiveness of the work they are undertaking. Ultimately, this science-faith interaction can become mutually beneficial, with the UN also learning lessons from each faith and better understanding what can inspire people to mobilize for climate action; whilst scientific knowledge is essential, it will be much more impactful if it is internalized in a relatable manner.



In April 2018, the Initiative published a knowledge product in UN Environment Science Division's Foresight linking [environmental conservation to faith and cultural values](#). UNEP Foresight briefs are intended to, amongst other things, highlight hotspots and major developments within the field of the environmental action. This edition concisely introduces the reasons behind the foundation of Faith for Earth and what the initiative hopes to achieve. It outlines the growing involvement of faith actors and FBOs in the field of sustainable development and the important, even crucial, contributions these actors can make in diverse sectors. Notably it highlights the value in framing climate change as a moral and spiritual issues, as well as a scientific, environmental or political one. By overcoming faith-science boundaries and making faith-inclusive scientific resources available, the Initiative hopes to continue this positive momentum and rally ever

more FBOs to contribute towards achieving the SDGs.

In order to highlight some of the specific areas Faith for Earth is focusing on, draft guidelines and publications were created, which link environmental knowledge with faith perspectives. These have been developed in relation to priority areas where religious engagement could have the most positive impact. These include the role faith can play in addressing climate change, conflicts over natural resources, water governance, sustainable lifestyles and finance. The publications describe the particular issue (i.e., resource conflicts) and provide evidence of the supporting and relevant scientific knowledge. They then outline both the work of FBOs already addressing these issues, as well as introducing steps that FBOs not yet engaged in these fields can take. Best practices and measures that FBOs can make to scale up their efforts are then indicated. Finally, they also describe the role that UNEP can play in aiding and facilitating these efforts, as well as highlighting existing resources and initiatives that FBOs can draw inspiration from.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **4, 13 & 17**

PoW: **SP1 & SP7**

A [website](#) for the Initiative was launched in September 2018 to highlight resources, events, achievement and stories. This website is continuously updated and the centralized source for everything pertaining to the Faith for Earth Initiative. Given that the website is embedded within UNEP's general website, anyone accessing the Faith for Earth one can then easily explore more of UNEP's work, priorities, and gain a broader understanding of how they can contribute to its objectives. Simultaneously, an intranet website has been developed to inform, empower and engage UNEP staff on linkages between the program of work and the Faith for Earth Initiative. This refers

to the previous goal of mobilising support within the UN system and heightening the visibility of the initiative. There are avenues for collaboration with FBOs across all parts of the UN and communicating through this medium helps foster the creation of new synergies.

To ensure the adequate integration of engaging with FBOs as a strategy to widen the spectrum of stakeholders and major groups involved in the programme of work and achieving the SDGs, a series of global surveys were conducted in September 2018. These surveys were intended for FBOs, as well as United Nations Environment staff located around the world and working for all the different divisions of UNEP. The surveys introduced the initiative, as well as exploring linkages between the sub-programmes of work and engaging with FBOs by mapping areas of strategic intervention where these synergies could be effective. Therefore, tailored surveys were launched focusing on the following sub-programme topics: [Climate Change](#), [Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts](#), [Healthy and Productive Ecosystems](#), [Environmental Governance](#), [Chemicals](#), [Waste and Air Quality](#), [Resource Efficiency](#) and [Environment Under Review](#). A more [general survey](#) intended to raise awareness amongst UN staff was also conducted. These surveys were designed to establish whether UNEP colleagues were aware of the Initiative's work, if they are already engaged with FBOs, and if not, whether they thought they could integrate faith aspects into their work.

SDGs & SPs Targeted:



SDG: **4, 13 & 16**

PoW: **SP1 & SP7**

In September 2019, the [Faiths for Forests](#) campaign was launched at the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit. The announcement was made by Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, who recognizes the value in working with FBOs to halt

deforestation. It was also endorsed by Sonia Guajajara, Executive Coordinator of the Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB) that advocates for indigenous rights in Brazil. The Faiths for Forests is “a global call to action to all faith-based organisations, networks and places of worship around the world to join the movement to end destruction of the planet’s rainforests and advocate for climate justice”.

The Faiths for Forests campaign is an advocacy movement to mobilise FBOs with an emphasis on advocating for the rights of indigenous people and forest communities that find themselves most adversely affected by this phenomenon. All FBOs are welcome to participate in the



campaign that has already been endorsed by over 900 religious leaders, from 125 countries representing a constituency of over 1 billion people. The Faiths for Forest campaign has a strong educational component. The campaign forms part of, and has access to educational resources of the [Interfaith Rainforest Initiative](#) (IRI), whose mission is to bring moral urgency and faith leadership to end deforestation. It has produced various educational materials that highlight the importance of tropical forests, as well as the connections between tropical forests and climate change and indigenous rights. These educational resources are available in English, French, Spanish, Bahasa Indonesian and Portuguese that reflect the countries where the campaign operates, namely Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Peru,

which together contain 70% of the world’s remaining tropical forests.

Principal SDGs Targeted:



SDG: 4, 10 & 15
PoW: SP1, SP3 & SP7

Looking Ahead – Faith for Earth’s Objectives in 2020

A major focus throughout 2020 will be finalizing the creation of a global **Faith for Earth Coalition**. The Coalition will be a global platform to strengthen the engagements of faith leaders and faith-based organisations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will facilitate policy dialogue and public engagement on environmental issues encouraging innovative approaches to find enduring solutions to environmental challenges. The overall aim is to inspire, empower and strengthen actions of faith leaders and FBOs and all those of faith more broadly, to engage in environmental action and protection at global, regional and local levels.

The Coalition will serve to attract global attention to environmental emergencies and to mobilise global action amongst faith communities. The structure of the Coalition is being composed and the Initiative is currently working on rallying together important faith leaders and FBOs. The structure will be composed of four different councils.

Firstly, a **Council of the Seniors** composed of high-level faith leaders representing major global religions. Such high-level interfaith collaboration will maximise the impact of our work and serve as an example of tolerance and peace amongst adherents of different beliefs.

Secondly, there will be a **Council of Youth** representing young faith leaders from around the world. The importance of rallying youth has been already highlighted and such a council will encourage innovative actions and increase the engagement of young leaders in tackling environmental issues at the community level.



Thirdly, an **advisory group composed of CEOs** and leaders of faith-based organizations will be tasked with engaging communities to achieve commitments, identifying priorities and mobilising networks for joint interfaith actions. Currently at least 250 FBOs across the globe are committed to environmental action and this council will help to foster collaboration amongst them and streamline their efforts.

Finally, a **Faith-Science Consortium** will be established to contribute to the achievement of the Faith for Earths third overarching goal. This consortium will include theologians, scientists, activists and environmentalists to bridge the knowledge gap between environmental science and faith doctrine. It will be responsible for providing the scientific evidence in connection with faith teachings on the best actions FBOs can take to achieve environmental sustainability. It helps to ensure that the beliefs, goodwill and efforts of FBOs are translated into environmentally effective actions. Ultimately, the Coalition intends to create one environmental interfaith voice without compromising individual teachings,

but rather maximising the commonality on environmental protection in each one. We are also exploring establishing a trust fund that will support the day to day management of the Coalition secretariat. It will also fund global, regional and local activities in addition to demonstration projects on religious approaches to tackling environmental issues.

In 2020, the Initiative will also release a book titled “Faith for Earth: Time to Act”. This publication will comprehensively outline the work area of Faith for Earth by highlighting the role of faith and faith-based organisations in addressing environmental issues and climate change. It will serve as a focal resource for such engagement from an interfaith as well as scientific perspectives and is intended to rally further support. The book will also contain specific guidelines on environmental action that is tailored for different faiths. This publication is being worked on in conjunction with the Parliament of World’s Religion and the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. The book will be made readily available for free in both print and online format, with the online version containing links to additional resources.

After the Islamic Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) adopted a strategy to engage with FBOs on environmental issues, Faith for Earth has been in sustained contact with the organisation. It has been agreed between UNEP and ISESCO to solicit a call to action for environmental protection by different Islamic constituencies around the world. This call to action will be grounded in the teachings of the Qura’n and prophet Mohammad. Although Islam is not as hierarchal and centralised as the Catholic Church, this call to action will be similar in nature to that of Laudato Si with Islamic organizations all around the world encouraged to spread the message that urgent environmental action must be taken.

May 2020 will witness the inauguration of the Interfaith Living Sacred Spaces initiative, inspired by and in partnership with the Vatican's "Living Chapel". The purpose of this initiative is to inspire and encourage the holistic greening of houses of worship throughout the globe. This can consist of ensuring that places of worship are more resource and energy efficient or transfer to use renewable energy sources. It can also involve creating initiatives within these spaces, such as better recycling facilities, encouraging a reduction in waste generation or planting trees and plants within the perimeters of these sites. However, this scope extends beyond just the physical sites of worship but should also factor in efforts by faith leaders to spread messages of sustainability amongst congregation members. Ideally, these sacred spaces will become sites where adherents learn about, witness and are inspired for climate action that they then carry forth into their everyday life. As a focal point for many communities, places of worship have immense potential to act as centres that encourage environmental activism.

After the successful introduction of Faith for Earth's engagement strategy with FBOs, during the 4th UN Environment Assembly, which facilitated a policy dialogue between politicians and faith leaders, the Initiative is working with other intergovernmental organisations. Therefore, in addition to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Initiative will be working with the African Union, the European Union and the World Economic Forum on integrating FBOs in their focus on environmental issues. As prominent regional and global institutions with substantial resources, these organisations will be important collaborative partners that can assist the Faith for Earth Initiative's mission. In particular, they can help influence policy to facilitate FBO engagement in climate action and contribute to the attainment of the Initiative's first overarching goal.

The Faith for Earth Initiative is currently in the process of organising a global digital conference with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to be held in March 2020. The conference, titled "[People and Planet](#)" will be a global learning experience to deepen participant's knowledge and understanding of the nexus of environment/climate and faith, as well as forge new productive partnerships amongst participants. Special attention will be paid to how participants can contribute to Agenda 30 and the relevance of value-based approaches to these processes. Around 180 participants will gather, with not one single flight taken, using modern internet technologies and applications. Participants will be from FBOs, secular NGOs, multilateral institutions, government agencies, academia and the private sector. Policy advisers, programme managers and development specialists are also invited to attend. This innovative conference will be divided into six different hubs located in Sweden, Kenya, Indonesia, Jordan, South Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Given this conference is designed to be digital, flight-free and low-carbon, the hubs will all be connected simultaneously through online streaming services. Each day, the conference will be divided into Global, Twinning and Local discussion sessions.

The theme of 2020's World Environment Day is centred around biodiversity. Therefore, the Initiative will be launching a global interfaith campaign for planting trees as a contribution to global reforestation efforts given that forest ecosystems are often highly biodiverse. The Initiative will strive to mobilise FBO support to plant one million trees in Kenya alone throughout World Environment Week. There will be an emphasis on interfaith cooperation to achieve this goal. Faith for Earth will also solicit comparable activities around the world through its network and encourage widespread participation in World Environment Day. Notably, the Initiative will provide scientific

resources and guidance to ensure that tree planting activities best support biodiversity and conservation efforts.

The initiative will continue to solicit the engagement of young faith leaders in different activities around the globe. Among those, the aforementioned capacity building workshop to be organised in Kenya and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Youth engagement will also be sought through partnering with universities such as Ohio State University and Princeton University.

To support the theme of UNEA 5 “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, Faith for Earth in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of Iceland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland as well as other partners will hold a global conference in Reykjavik in the fall of 2020. The preparatory conference in Iceland will strive to achieve two important outcomes. The first is a “Declaration” of faith leaders that will be submitted to the UNEA Board for inclusion in the Assembly discussions and its resolutions. The declaration will also be presented at the Arctic Circle that will take place in the days following the conference. The second outcome of the conference is an initial signing on the establishment of the Coalition by high level representatives of potential faith members of the Coalition.

Faith for Earth will participate at the Social Forum, during the Rototom Festival held in August in Spain, which gathers more than 200,000 men and women. This innovative event will serve as an excellent advocacy platform to highlight the work and value of the Faith for Earth Initiative. Throughout this forum, attention will be made to ensure that voices of youths from the global south are heard.

Finally, a resource mobilization strategy is being formulated to support the Initiative and the creation of the Faith for Earth Global Coalition. Meetings with interested donors will be organized

throughout the year, as well as creating and harnessing momentum with other faith and interfaith organizations. The target is to create a self-sustaining Coalition that will mobilize FBOs and faith leaders in every corner of the world to be community mobilizers and champions on the implementation of the SDGs and promote an ethical approach to living in harmony with nature and within the boundaries of the only planet.

Faith for Earth 2020 Roadmap

Faith for Earth has adopted a strategy that will ensure clear linkages between the objectives of the Initiative, the Programme of Work of UNEP and the SDGs. Each goal and activity will be linked to a certain sub-programme or several of them. This will ensure that mobilizing the faith community will certainly lead to effective contribution to UNEA resolutions, the expected accomplishments of the programme of work and achieving the goals of the mid-term strategy of UNEP.

