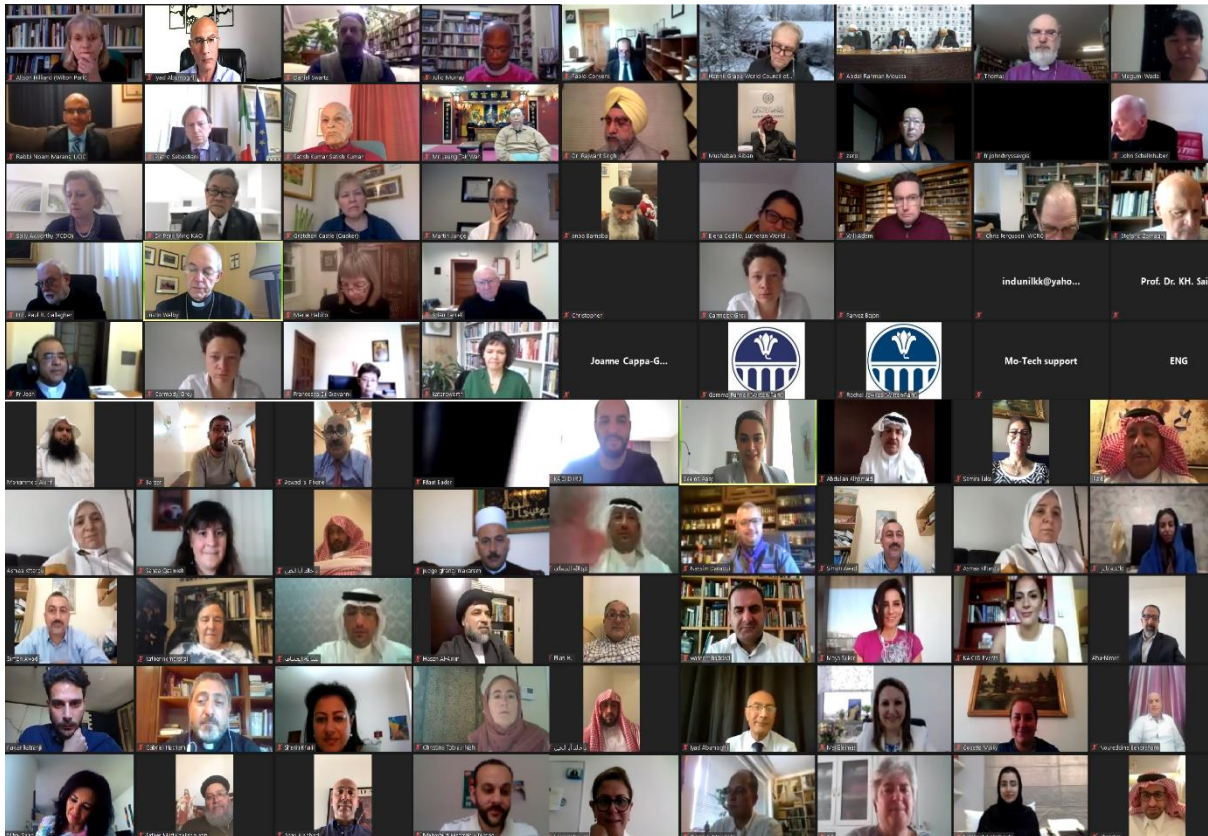


FAITH FOR EARTH



ONE EARTH
MANY RELIGIONS
ONE GOAL



FAITH FOR EARTH

ONE EARTH – MANY RELIGIONS – ONE GOAL

Achievement | 2020
Report

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Forward

The year 2020 was an exceptional year for everyone at all levels and everywhere. For some, this year seemed to be a whole decade with all the challenges it brought about with the spread of COVID-19. The Earth took a brief break for a few months during the global lockdown and nature seemed to revive demonstrating its ability to regenerate when left alone. However, the break was not enough as 2020 completed the decade to be the hottest decade in recorded history.

While governments took different measures to contain the spread of COVID 19, Faith-based organizations and religious institutions have also stood in the frontline mitigating the impacts of the pandemic and providing communities with much needed guidance and support. Churches, Mosques, Temples, Synagogues and other houses of worship had to close their doors to prevent the spread, but faith leaders and faith actors kept their hearts and hands open to provide much needed support. Faith actors have been calling to listen to the cry of the Earth and shared their [sacred commitment](#) to work with nature, not against it.

As we continue to fight the pandemic with awareness and precautionary measures with the hope that the vaccine will provide some immunity, the Earth is still suffering from the overconsumption pandemic that humans have been causing with no vaccine to be seen in the making. Climate Change and destruction of ecosystems are not seen as eminent threats to humans, especially those privileged. However, the poor and less deprived are already facing the impacts of unprecedented weather events caused by climate inaction. Flash floods have swiped away villages, severe draughts have caused famines and forest fires have killed wildlife on which some communities rely for their livelihoods.

At Faith for Earth, we continued our journey with our partners at all levels and we have stepped up our partnerships in a strive to make a better impact. More faith-based organizations have been accredited to UNEP, thousands have engaged in discussing UNEP's priorities and strategies, and faith leaders have engaged in policy dialogue and came together to emphasize their important role in driving sustainable development.

This report gives a good look at what we had in store in 2020 and where we have focused our efforts. The report shows that partners are concerned but serious in pushing an agenda of multilateralism and interfaith collaboration to rebuild better. Faith leaders insisted on creating a new economic paradigm that integrate nature and equality as key economic drivers.

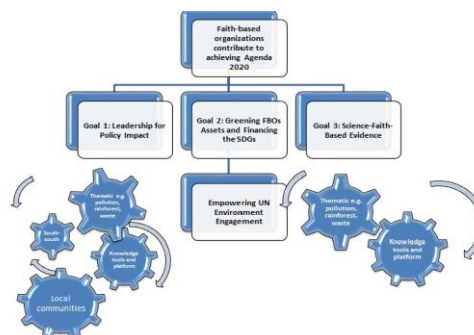
We cannot afford to be complacent and hope that science and technology alone will save our common home. We need to address climate change and protect the natural environment based on ethical values and behaviours and change our vantage point to that of the Earth and all other living things.

Iyad Abumoghli

Director of Faith for Earth

Introduction

The Faith for Earth Initiative, established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2017, is tasked with strategically engaging and partnering with faith-based organisations to collectively contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030. The [Strategy](#) is based on three overarching and interlinked goals that mobilize faith actors and resources to employ innovative approaches to live in harmony with nature:



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

It has been emphasized time and again that a value and ethical based development system is essential to ensure an equitable sustainable future for people to live on a healthy planet. Achieving the SDGs necessitates changes in mindsets, behaviours and consumption patterns, with faith leaders particularly well positioned to drive the same in a relatable and trustworthy manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly emphasises humanity’s [strained relationship with nature](#) and demonstrates that transitioning to a sustainable future must be a truly global effort in 2021. The ongoing and evolving effects of the COVID-19 pandemic requires an aggressive response to the environmental crises through bold leadership for environmental change and sustainable investment. Despite a reported dip in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions attributed to the pandemic, [The Emissions Gap Report 2020](#) still cites a trajectory of a 3°C rise in temperature – far beyond the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C as the world reels from the pandemic. Now more than ever, the need to build better with an inclusive stimulus package necessitates that ever more actors are rallied for climate action, with faith actors recognised as crucial contributors to these processes. The need, fuelled by the active participation and interest by faith leaders and faith-based organisations in 2020 for environmental care and sustainable development, signals positive indicators that must be embedded as a component of spiritual devotion, as embodied in so many religious scriptures.

UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021

UNEP is responsible for leading and coordinating action on environmental matters within the overall United Nations system. Falling under UNEP’s mandate, the Faith for Earth Initiative seeks to approach UNEP’s [Medium-Term Strategy](#) (MTS) and the Programmes of Work by strategically employing interreligious action for environmental sustainability.

The MTS 2018-2021 prioritised progressive use of results-based management and strategic partnerships to strengthen planning and delivery processes. The Operating Principles governing the MTS are: 1) Synergy through Strategic Partnerships; 2) Strategic Regional Presence; and 3) Greater Integration of Normative Frameworks. These strategic approaches for implementing the MTS and its Programme of

Work are also the driving forces of the Faith for Earth Initiative in engaging with faith actors in response to the three planetary crises of climate change, pollution and ecosystem destruction.

The Programme of Work (PoW) seeks to promote environmental sustainability through seven thematic areas where UNEP’s capacities can be leveraged for greatest effect.

The Faith for Earth Initiative’s Strategy aims to make the most of the comparative advantage of UNEP, which is to provide a scientifically-based environmental lens through which to view, understand, and advise on sustainable development. Strengthening the science-policy interface to inform society of the risks as well as the opportunities of new developments is therefore at the heart of the work of UNEP and an essential component of Faith for Earth’s Strategy in engaging with faith actors.



The previous [Faith for Earth Achievement Report 2018/2019](#) was structured to highlight the achievements and activities undertaken in 2018 and 2019 that correspond to the three goals as outlined in the Initiative’s Strategy. In this Report, focus is placed on the Faith for Earth Coalition and institutionalizing interfaith collaboration, High-Level Engagement, the role of Faith Leaders on the Frontline of Covid-19 Response, Religious Charters, Youth Engagement, Capacity Building, Greening Faith-Based Assets, and the Faith for Earth National Coordination Hubs.

Faith for Earth Coalition



[The Faith for Earth Coalition](#) is a self-sustaining global platform to strengthen cooperation with and among faith actors at a local, regional and global level by facilitating policy dialogue and public engagement on environmental issues. To encourage innovative approaches to finding long-lasting solutions to environmental challenges, the Coalition will comprise of four Councils:

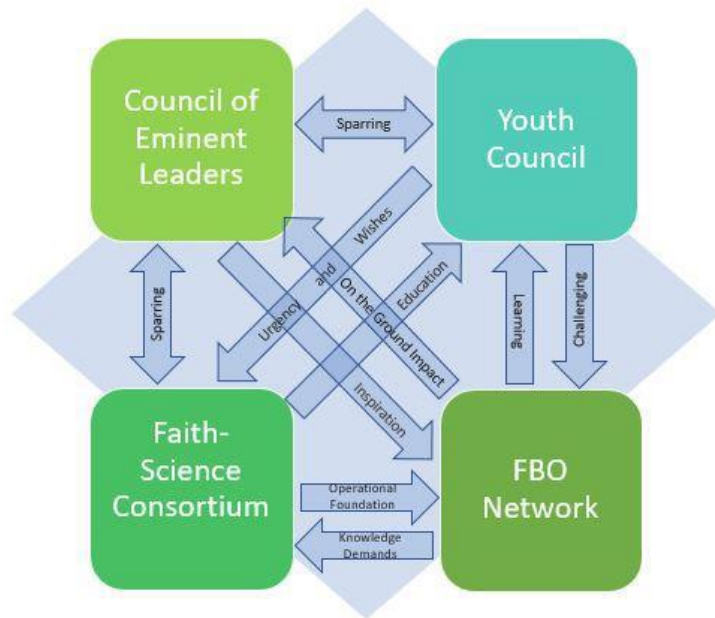
1. The Council of Eminent Leaders: Composed of high-level faith leaders representing all world religions in terms of number of adherents.
2. The Youth Council: Composed of young faith leaders and members of youth movements advocating for living in respect and harmony with planet earth.
3. The Network of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of FBOs: Composed of faith-based organizations with a focus on the environment or those working with (local) faith communities responding to the Sustainable Development Goals.



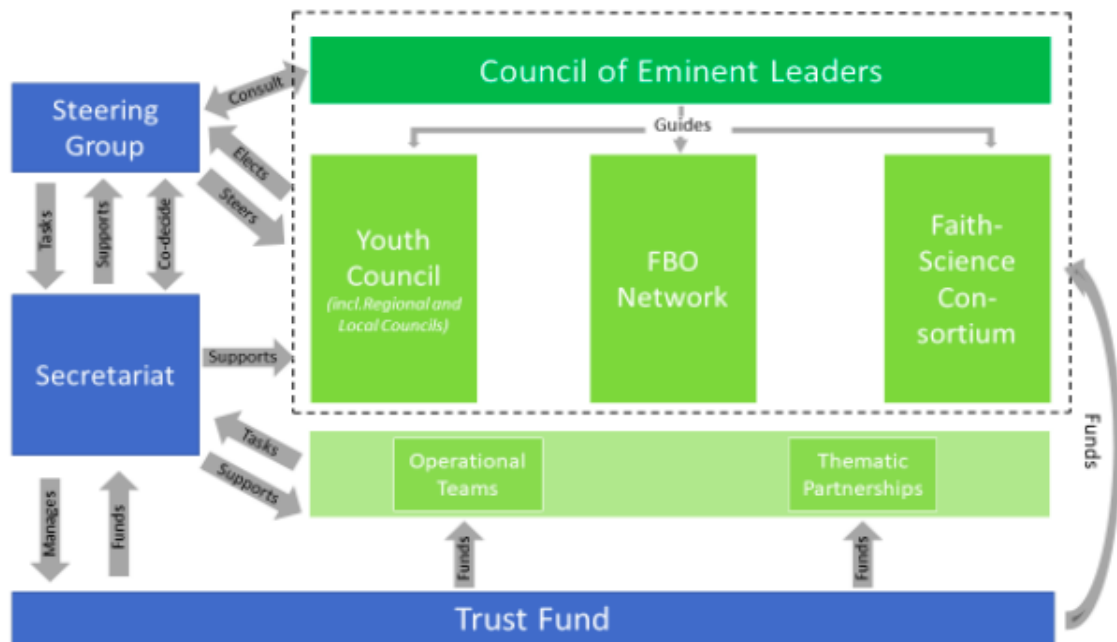
- The Faith-Science Consortium: Composed of theologians, scientists and environmentalists to bridge the gap between environmental science and religions.

The nexus of the relationship is one of sparring partners to encourage and challenge the exchange of ideas, experiences and viewpoints with the goal to foster intergenerational learning:

The Trust Fund of the Faith for Earth Coalition is established as a self-sustaining mechanism to sustain engagement with FBOs and mobilise the global faith community in a powerful way while integrating the goals of the Initiative into the MTS and PoW of UNEP.



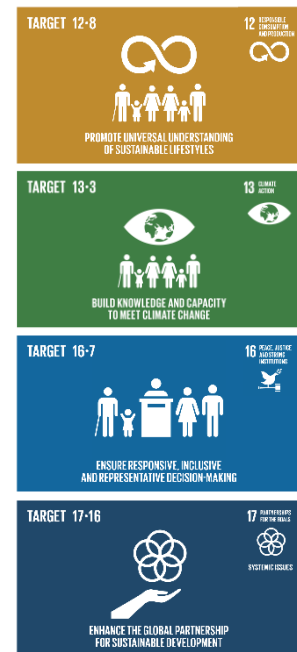
The Coalition will be governed by an Annual Steering Committee, while the Coalition Secretariat will be hosted by UNEP. The Fund seeks to attract traditional donors such as governments and non-traditional donors including but not limited to philanthropists, family foundations, faith-based organisations and faith-based financial institutions, private sector, and others.



In October 2020, the President, Prime-Minister, Minister of Environment of Iceland, in collaboration with UNEP’s Executive Director and a number of partners including the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, United Nations Association of Iceland, Soil Conservation Service of Iceland, Religions for Peace, and the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, hosted a high-level Global Conference to lay the foundations for greater inter-faith collaboration for sustainable and regenerative development to achieve the SDGs, placing particular importance on nature-based solutions, in line with the theme of UNEA 5. [Faith for Nature](#) laid the foundations for greater inter-faith collaboration for sustainable and regenerative development to achieve the SDGs through ‘[Our Sacred Commitment](#)’ which was endorsed to communicate a commitment by faith-based organizations to take concrete, scientifically-guided action to protect and restore nature. The Commitment called for the creation of the Faith for Earth Coalition to enable faith groups to promote action and influence policy decisions at all levels towards achieving the SDGs. During the conference, Faith for Earth launched:



- 1) [Faith for Earth: A Call for Action](#), co-authored with the Parliament of World’s Religions and the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, comprehensively explores different theological perspectives that the world’s religions have towards the natural environment, demonstrating the intricate linkage between faith and nature.
- 2) The landmark progress and outlook report on [Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) was developed in partnership with the Parliament of the World’s Religions, the Bhumi Global and the United Religions Initiative on the occasion of the Sustainable Development Goals five year anniversary. It focuses on mapping the contributions of FBOS to the SDGs, highlights impactful projects and provides recommendations for achieving greater impact.
- 3) [The Role of Environmental and Spiritual Ethics in Galvanizing Nature Based Solutions](#) paper outlines what Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) are, how the UN is supporting these practices, how FBOs are already engaging with NBS and what can be done to scale up action.
- 4) [The People and Planet: Faith in the 2030 Agenda](#) policy paper summarises the outcomes of a March 2020 conference organised in conjunction with partners in Sweden. The event sought to elevate and enrich partnerships towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on strengthening linkages and collaborations with faith-based and indigenous knowledge, networks, and resources.



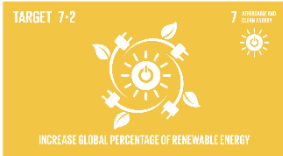


King Hussein Mosque in Amman – Jordan by Wed Abumoghli

High-level Engagement

A primary goal of the Initiative is to institutionalise its work and embed the need for faith engagement at high levels of environmental governance. A safe, clean and healthy environment is integral to the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights.

The [Shift in Mindset: Faith-based Solutions to Climate Action Obstacles](#) interfaith parallel session held during the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2020 was sponsored by faith-based organizations associated with an emerging Climate Working Group within the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN (CRNGO). HLPF2020 offered an ideal opportunity for faith-based organizations to consider climate action accomplishments and to identify and analyze obstacles to progress and develop joint strategies to accelerate ambition and related goals ahead of COP26.



The global leadership of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in February 2020 demonstrated WEA’s increased strategic focus on engaging with United Nations organisation in relation to the SDGs.

With WEA, Faith for Earth organised a general meeting in Bonn with including the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN SDG Action Campaign. The Secretary General of the WEA reiterated their commitment to strengthening collaboration with the UN, forging new linkages and scaling-up existing efforts to address environmental issues. WEA programmes include working on the 2020 launch of a global youth campaign focused on climate change and creation care, which Faith for Earth has already contributed towards. The [WEA Sustainability Center](#) has already engaged in the different activities and dialogue conferences organized by Faith for Earth.

In July 2020, Faith for Earth participated with the Liechtenstein Institute at Princeton University in its XIIIth Annual Colloquium - Program on Religion and International Relations (PORDIR). The event, “[People Religion, Policy, and the Global Environmental Crisis](#)” convened notable keynote speakers to discuss the critical interplay between religious beliefs, international actors and organizations, national and communal environmental policy and interstate issues. Master’s students at Princeton presented and discussed several papers related to the state of play of religions, development, economic growth and the environment.



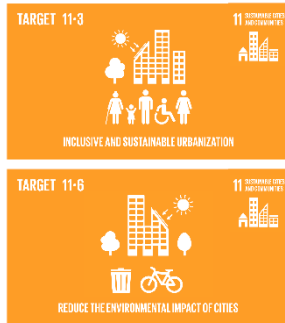
At the G20 Interfaith Forum for the Arab Region held in July 2020, and that for Africa in August 2020, as part of a global consultation process led by King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz’s International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue (KAICIID), Faith for Earth presented several keynote address on the importance of better environmental governance. Both G20 members and faith actors are involved in global crisis response, with forums such as this presenting an opportunity for further synergies and pertinent policy recommendations, in parallel with but integrated in the continuing G20 interfaith agenda. Priority recommendations formulated from this consultation were presented to the G20 Member States before their November 2020 Summit in Saudi Arabia.



In 2019, ten thousand people gathered to listen to Faith for Earth message – Adventists – Kenya by Iyad Abumoghli

In November 2020, Living Laudato Si' Philippines, the Climate Change Commission of the Philippine's Government, Uniharmony Partners Manila, GreenFaith and Faith for Earth organised the [Philippine Interfaith Summit on Climate Emergency](#).

It was a platform for different religions and religious denominations in the Philippines to discuss how their respective doctrines, spirituality and traditions compel them to care for the planet. Notably, the interfaith Living Laudato Si' Philippines calls on local financial institutions to divest from fossil fuels and other environmentally harmful commercial activities, particularly deforestation.



In November 2020, Faith for Earth was a keynote speaker at the “3rd International Forum on Religious Life” in Bandung, Indonesia. The Forum was co-hosted by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Consortium of Religious Studies (ICRS) to launch a new multi-faith urban organization. The International Council of Faiths for Urbanism (ICFU) is intended to be an international multi-faith organization that facilitates high-level expert discourse on urbanism. The aim of the organization is to enable religious stakeholders to present a united faith-based voice on urban issues, concerns, and policies at an international level, inspire action to advance sustainable urban development, and to breathe life into the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Faith Leaders on the Frontline of COVID-19 Response



Healthy and Productive Ecosystems



Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, faith actors around the world have demonstrated their agility and ability to respond quickly to disasters and public health emergencies. Aside from having to adapt religious practices to adhere to physical distancing measures, faith actors and leaders have also implemented mitigation strategies to curb the spread. Faith for Earth has continually emphasised the environmental dimension of the Coronavirus outbreak to our Network. Firstly, that humanity's unsustainable and unhealthy relationship with nature increases the likelihoods of such pandemics occurring. Secondly, that amongst this crisis, we cannot lose sight of the threats of climate change, environmental degradation and pollution, using this as an opportunity to build a more sustainable and resilient future.

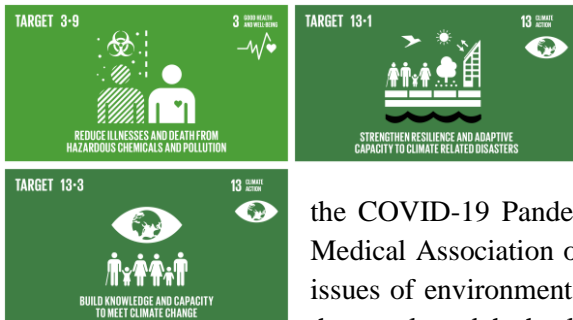


Contributing to the second and third pillars of the [United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19](#) published in June 2020, [Faith in the Frontline of COVID19](#) highlights actions by faith-based organisations and religious institutions on the frontlines mitigating against the impacts of the virus, assisting affected communities, and providing guidance and support.

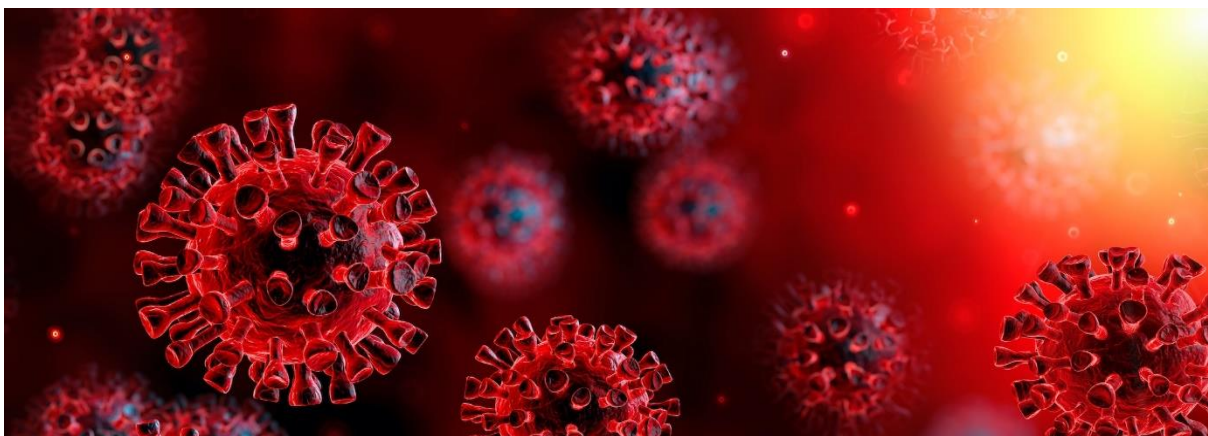
In June 2020, Faith for Earth also participated in a virtual dialogue with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) where faith leaders discussed visions of a new post-2020 world highlighting the need for solidarity, unity and change. Faith for Earth Presented UNEPs strategic response to build better post-COVID [‘Working with the Environment to Protect People’](#) to provide a platform for turning these visions into reality.



The Interfaith Liaison Committee, which serves as a platform during UNFCCC COPs, organised a webinar series titled [“Faiths Unite: Visions for Transformative Climate Action”](#) to learn, discuss and explore climate action in the run up to COP26. The first webinar “The World We Want”, held in October 2020, explored responses by different faith traditions to the climate crisis and COVID-19. The discussion involving policy makers, scientists and religious representatives focused on how different faith perspectives might help us to navigate through this precarious moment and forge a more sustainable world moving forward. Faith for Earth focused on the spiritual and economic strength of the faith community to help drive such transformations, notably towards nature-based (economic) solutions.



Faith-based public health organizations (FBPHOs) are emerging as additional voices taking action, and bring a unique combination of religious ethics and science to policy making conversations and cultural forums alike. This is particularly relevant in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Faith for Earth joined forces with The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) in addressing the critical issues of environmental health, impacts of climate change on the health of the people and the health of the planet. Consisting of medical experts inspired by their Islamic faith, members of IMANA view climate change as the greatest public health threat in history and have implemented a [series of commitments](#) to address it, including attempts to reduce emissions caused by health services.



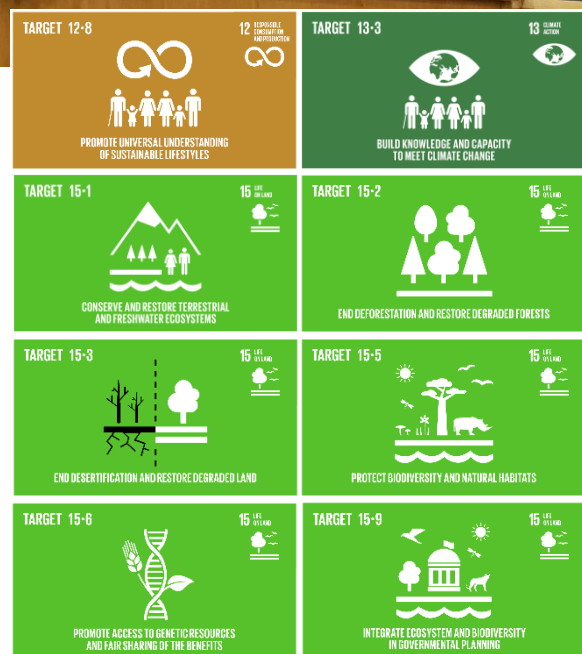
Religious Charters



The UN Environment Programme promotes sound environmental governance – the rules, policies and institutions that shape how humans interact with the environment. Faith for Earth’s work on religious charters seeks to bolster UNEPs approach to promoting environmental governance by leveraging existing religious governance systems that are robust and multijurisdictional to safeguard the environment and human rights.

Laudato Si’

With Laudato Si’ (Praise Be), Faith for Earth has, in the past years, supported related activities in the implementation of the Encyclical Letter. 2020 marks five years since Pope Francis’ Encyclical on Integral Ecology- Laudato Si’. In the last year alone, Faith for Earth has engaged in numerous speaking engagements and capacity-building sessions for interfaith leaders to support the implementation of the Papal Encyclical seeking to connect the natural world with justice for the most vulnerable members of society. In May 2020, Faith for Earth joined Living Laudato Si’ Philippines and the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development to discuss the interlinkages between Laudato Si’ and the SDGs. To build on the discussions of the webinar, The Interreligious Responses to Laudato Si’ Series that was co-sponsored by Georgetown University’s Office of the President; Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; and Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement with the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University sought to discuss the role of international and interfaith communities in supporting the vision of Laudato Si. During this session in October 2020, representatives of various agencies and organizations connected religious communities with environmental concerns and explored how multireligious cooperation enhances care for the earth and for the vulnerable towards Partnerships for the Goals (Goal 17).



Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth

Faith for Earth initiated a global push to give a voice to the Islamic perspective on the environment. [Al-Mizan](#), Arabic for “balance”, is a covenant designed to showcase Islam’s teachings on the environment and spur the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims to embrace sustainability as part of their everyday lives in a bid to combat climate change.

Mizan ميزان

[In an interview](#), the Director of Faith for Earth addressed why Al-Mizan is important, and who the partners are. In March 2021, in cooperation with Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Uskudar University in Istanbul, the Qur'anic Botanic Garden and the College of Islamic Studies at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar, the draft charter will be distributed to over 300 Islamic institutions around the world, as part of a consultative process to solicit feedback. Al-Mizan hopes to be as inclusive as reasonably possible to inspire every one of the 1.8 billion Muslims for greater environmental action. Upon completion it will provide a set of authoritative standards for Muslims to follow in their daily lives.



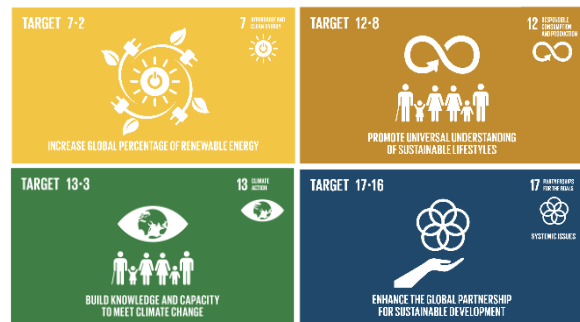
Pilgrims at the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Photo: Unsplash / Ömer Arslan

Youth Engagement

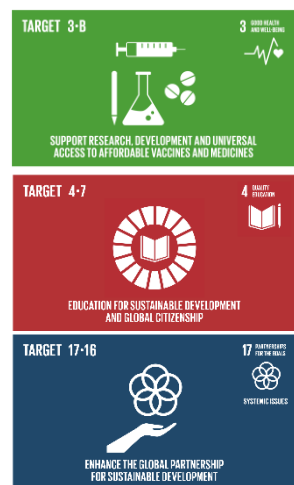
As the share of young people in the world population continues to grow rapidly, it is essential that youths are mobilised to be an environmentally conscious generation who will better influence environmental decision-making processes, act responsibly to promote sustainable development, and actively address climate change. Faith-based youth organisations and young people of faith can be

invaluable assets in spurring such momentum and Faith for Earth has been actively seeking members to join the Coalition’s Youth Council, with all events listed below correlating to this.

Faith for Earth was active in engaging with faith-based youth organisations and leaders throughout 2020. Faith for Earth is discussing the establishment of a Youth Council in the United Kingdom which will focus on strategic activities to raise awareness, run educational programmes, promote sustainable lifestyles, conserve nature, support renewable energy transition and implement adaptation and mitigation projects to positively influence the next generation of leaders to incorporate sustainable action for the environment in everyday living. The interfaith Youth Council in the UK includes Faith for Climate, Bahu Trust, Eco Sikh, Bhumi International, Hindu Climate Action, Eco Dharma, Islamic Help, and others.

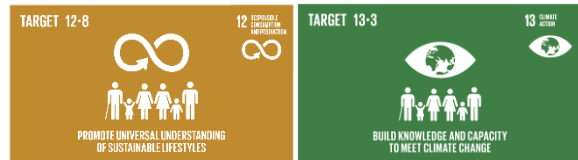


In conjunction with the UNEA accredited Green Hope Foundation, a Canada-based youth sustainability organisation, Faith for Earth discussed the [“Relevance of Peace in the Post-Pandemic Era”](#) in May 2020. The panel included representatives of prominent interfaith organizations, the president of the Global Security Institute and global coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Discussions centered around the importance of youth-driven efforts for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and climate action as the world is building back better as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Green Hope Foundation, in collaboration with the World Future Council, convened an event discussing the steps



and actions required to prevent the widening of the opportunity gap in the [Last Decade of Action for the SDGs](#) in June 2020. The panel included government officials and diplomats, senior UN officials and interfaith representatives. Faith for Earth emphasised the urgency of getting on track with the SDGs, particularly the environmental targets within them given that the environment underpins the achievement of all the SDG goals. It also stressed the value of ecosystem approaches and the importance of accessible and informative data to guide environmental action. UNEP MTS sub-programmes were used to frame the key areas where action must be taken.

Commensurate with the Quranic views on the responsibility of humans towards Earth (guardians), a training for young Muslims in Birmingham was organized by [Islamic Help](#) and [Bahu Trust](#) in February 2020. Faith for Earth supported this training titled “Young Khalifas of the Earth”, by conveying a message to participating youth on how to get involved in campaigning and advocating for climate action, seeking to empower young people to be aware of the environmental challenges and approach solutions based on their faith teachings. Thereafter in May 2020, a webinar hosted by the Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar (AYCMQA) sought to engage young leaders and discussed with Faith for Earth and the Bahu Trust on engaging faith communities in transitioning to a sustainable post COVID-19 world. With the aim of building capacity and bolstering the engagement of Muslims in addressing critical climate concerns as a concerted movement to mobilise the larger community across the world, Faith for Earth in collaboration with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) of the United Kingdom co-hosted a webinar discussing the role of Muslim leaders towards climate change and its impact on humanity in November 2020.



In July 2020, the World Council of Churches (WCC), highlighted the work of Faith for Earth Initiative and the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative in their practical new publication, ‘[Climate Justice with and for Children and Youth in Churches Toolkit](#)’. The educational toolkit promotes intergenerational climate and environmental justice, and care for children and future generations through preventing further environmental destruction. The toolkit provides a comprehensive list of materials, resources and information to enable faith actors to get informed, get inspired and take action against climate action. It highlights inspiring faith-led initiatives, church and young faith leaders, and advocates that all churches unite in the face of the threat posed by climate change.



In September 2020, Living Laudato Si’ Philippines, EcoJesuits and the Don Bosco Green Alliance hosted a virtual dialogue series towards The [Economy of Francesco](#), titled “[Reimagining Development: Youth Perspectives for a Better World](#)”. The dialogue brought together 36 young representatives from



international faith based networks and organizations, seeking to contribute to discourse and actions towards a paradigm shift in development, one that places greater emphasis on caring for the natural world. Faith for Earth highlighted the responsibility of young people to contribute towards the SDGs and advocated for greater collaboration amongst youth organisations of faith to continue working together towards their shared goals. These discussions paid attention to the impacts COVID-19 has had on economies, societies and the environment.

In August 2020, Faith for Earth [presented an address](#) to renowned young (under 35) economists, experts in sustainable development, and business men and women in search of different, more sustainable economic models. The Economy of Francesco sought to enjoin experts and young changemakers. Notable panelists included Jeffrey Sachs, Muhammad Yunus and Kate Raworth, who have all advocated for new, more environmentally focused and people-centric perspectives on development and means of achieving the SDGs.



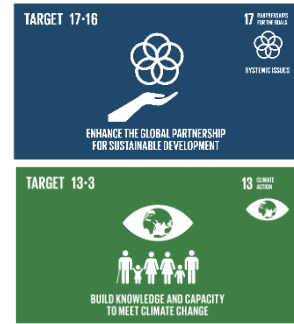
Capacity Building

An integral part of Faith for Earth’s work is building the capacities of Faith-Based Organisations to more effectively inspire their followers, engage in climate action and evaluate their contributions to the SDGs. Adapting to the disruptions wrought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Faith for Earth has organised or contributed to online conferences, dialogues and capacity building workshops throughout the year.

In March 2020, The Swedish International Development agency (SIDA) in collaboration with Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket) and Faith for Earth, held an annual conference on People and Planet: Faith in the 2030 Agenda to elevate and enrich partnerships towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This pioneering digital event was flight-free, connecting participants through six regional hubs around the world, greatly reducing associated emissions and enabling much broader participation. The conference focused on strengthening linkages and collaborations with faith-based and indigenous knowledge, networks, and resources in 6 regional hubs of Kenya, South Africa, Indonesia, Lebanon, Sweden and Bosnia & Herzegovina with people assembling digitally or physically dependent on COVID-19 restrictions. [Discussing the role of faith communities in environmental action](#), participants echoed the need for the inclusion of multi-faith actors as part of a broader cultural sensitivity in all development processes and outcomes with the inclusion of active



youth organisations. As a result, People and Planet - Gender, Environment & Climate in the 2030 Agenda that will be held in March 2021 seeks to engage Faith for Earth on the connections and intersections of gender, environment and climate, and strengthen respective capabilities to act for the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. As the coordinator and facilitator of the African Regional Hub, Faith for Earth seeks to engage faith communities from around the continent on the themes of ecosystem restoration, a global gender strategy and safeguard, gender-based discrimination and inequalities, food insecurity in Africa, and more.



Following the [Abrahamic Traditions and Environmental Change Workshop](#) in August 2019 in collaboration with the University of Connecticut, Al Akhawayn University in Morocco, and YALE FORE, a study on [‘The Environmental Challenges in the Middle East and North Africa Region’](#) was published in February 2020 that sought a means through which the three Abrahamic faiths can help understand and counteract contemporary environmental change in the MENA region through relevant, scalable and sustainable collaborative program between MENA scholars & practitioners and the North American and European partners.

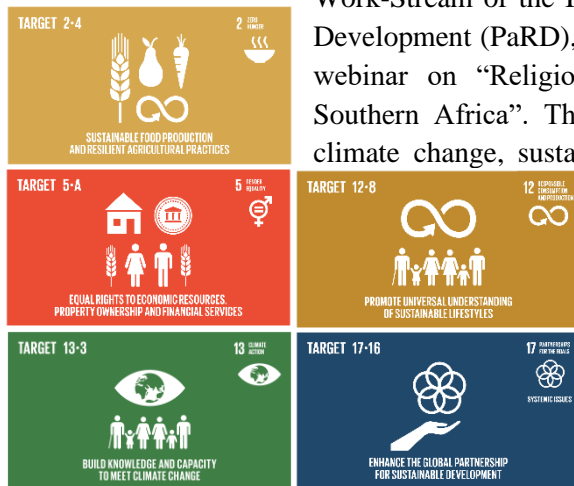


Recognising the vast and extensive multireligious work of the [Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology](#) (FORE), in May 2020, Faith for Earth partnered with the Forum to build on both organisations expertise on ecological issues and the world’s religions. Yale FORE has accumulated a wealth of experience, resources, publications and knowledge in this field, as well as a wide network of partner faith organisations that have implemented projects and programmes around the world.



In September 2020 the Research Programme on Religious Communities and Sustainable Development (RCSD) at Humboldt University Berlin and the Water, Environment and Climate Action (WECARE)

Work-Stream of the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), of which Faith for Earth is a co-chair, hosted a joint webinar on “Religious Communities and Ecological Sustainability in Southern Africa”. This virtual Capacity Building Workshop focused on climate change, sustainable agriculture, eco-feminism, eco-theology, and local multi-faith action. By sharing insights into ecological sustainability from a theological perspective and into the engagement of religious leaders and faith-based organizations. It was also an important opportunity to discuss faith-environment linkages through a gendered lens and the essential, but sometimes undervalued contribution of women in this field.



Organised in collaboration with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) of the United Kingdom in November 2020, the “Mosques, Imams and Climate Action” webinar sought to discuss the role of Muslim leaders towards climate change and its impact on humanity. Building on knowledge, experiences and lessons drawn from the first webinar, the BahuTrust, in conjunction with Faith for Earth will be organising a follow-up webinar on Mosques, Imams and Climate Action in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2021. The series of webinars seek to voice a need for a concerted movement to mobilise the larger Muslim community across the world, having stated that it is widely accepted that the environment is prominently featured in the Holy Quran along with the duty to Muslims to protect it.



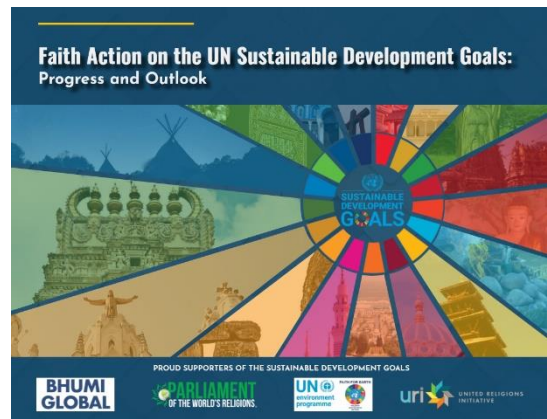
To commemorate World Environment Day in June 2020, the King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (KAICIID), the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Faith for Earth organised a high-level webinar, [Faith for Earth Climate Change and Environmental Justice](#). Leading experts from diverse fields convened to discuss best practices going forward and how to incorporate faith actors. The webinar established the interlinkages between environmental protection and other global challenges such as crime prevention and systems of justice.



In October 2020, Faith for Earth took part in the release of the KAICIID's [Faith4SDGs project](#), a free digital storytelling series that revealed the enormous contributions FBOs around the world are making to help implement the SDGs. Discussions included how faith communities can collaborate with political decision-makers to develop and implement policies on diverse issues; gaps that could be better addressed if



religious actors are regularly included in multilateral efforts for development and aid; and how faith communities are uniquely positioned to help respond to health and environmental crises. Overall, it sought to help religious actors and policymakers speak the same language around development and environmental issues and promote sustainable development from the grassroots to global level.



In December 2020, as a result of the above engagement, Faith for Earth further strengthened its collaboration with KAICIID. KAICIID brings a wealth of experience in promoting interreligious dialogue, building collaborative partnerships and engaging in high-level forums, invaluable assets for the Faith for Earth Initiative. Faith for Earth partnered with the organisation to produce a series of online learning modules that will be made readily



available to relevant stakeholders as a capacity development tool (FBOs, NGOs, Government Officials, Policy Makers etc). The modules focus on the intersection of faith and various dimensions of environmental sustainability. Notably they provide focal knowledge and resources about environmental challenges, as well as offering practical guidance, tools, approaches and methodologies on how faith actors can make tangible contributions to the implementation of the SDGs at all levels. Faith for Earth’s modules will form part of a consolidated platform where other organisations engaging in this field will share their knowledge and best practices. Faith for Earth produced the introductory module titled “Faith for Earth: a Time for Action”, which highlights the importance of engaging with faith actors and an overall approach on the interlinkages between religion and the environment.

The World Sustainable Development Teach-In Day 2020, on December 4th (WSD-TD 2020) was organised by the European School of Sustainability Science and Research (ESSSR) and the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme (IUSDRP). It was an opportunity for lecturers and learners to engage around the latest information, trends and insights on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to showcase



strategies and examples of projects from around the World. Faith for Earth showcased the role of Faith Leaders and Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) in achieving the SDGs by highlighting faith-based initiatives. This was a great opportunity to demonstrate the synergies between faith and science, bridge science-faith divides and create new collaboration opportunities.

Greening Faith-Based Assets



*Resource
Efficiency*

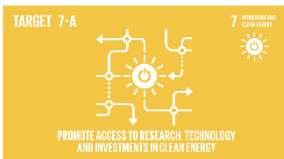
FBOs with enormous assets and wealth, have the potential to make a significant contribution towards plugging the funding gap currently facing the SDGs. This contribution by FBOs is of paramount importance given UNEP’s acknowledgement that transitioning to a greener global economy requires massive financial flows far beyond the capacities of conventional development channels, funds and actors. The objective of the second goal of the Initiatives Strategy is to work with and encourage faith-based organisations and funds to institutionally integrate environmental considerations in greening their investments and assets to support the implementation of the SDGs. Faith-based organizations have already been instrumental in moving the responsible investment agenda forward, adopting policies to encourage corporate social responsibility. This momentum must be capitalised upon and further accelerated. The United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) has been addressing “Decarbonizing ” assets to make investments more climate-friendly through the Portfolio Decarbonization Coalition. There is a great opportunity to expand the membership of religious institutions and other faith-based groups through targeted campaigns, particularly those involved in the divestment movement.



Faith for Earth and WWF convened global faith leaders to explore the role of faith groups in advocating for a green recovery in a post-COVID world in June 2020. The discussion focused on the role of faith in COVID-19 response, supporting a green economy, ensuring financial investments from faith groups



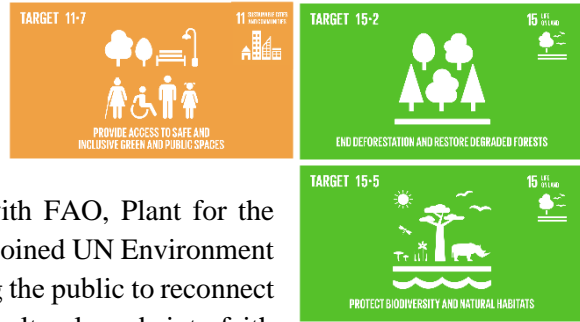
are aligned with their values and that these investments enhance social and/or environmental impact. Experts from [FaithInvest](#), a global membership association and network for faith asset owners addressed participants on how their investment and financial decisions can create a better world for people and the planet. FaithInvest provides FBOs with a network, platform, sustainable investment pipelines and educational material to help empower religious asset owners to green their assets.



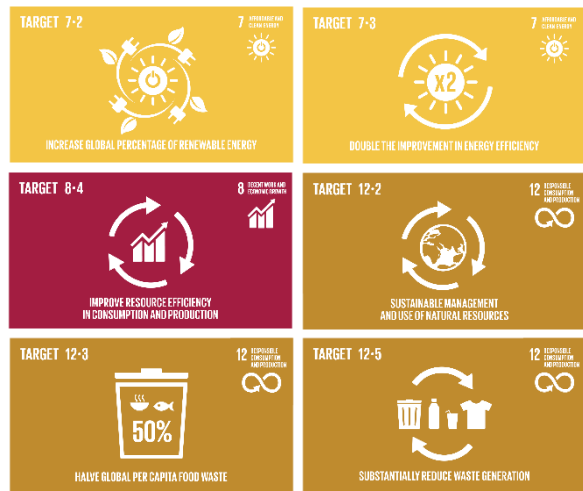
The African Nazarene University, launched a series of events in observance of [Creation Care Green Week](#). Faith for Earth inaugurated the Biblical Botanical Garden at the University, engaging staff and students in discussions about climate change, food security, and the development of Green Sacred Spaces. Activities and the resources distributed were linked to World Environment Day's theme of biodiversity and religion. Faith-inspired clean-up campaigns and tree planting was undertaken around Nairobi by university students. Events such as these helps embed the objectives of faith for earth in higher education and forge new links with the academic institutions.



In June 2020, [The Living Chapel](#) launched at the Vatican Botanical Garden, a movement inspired by the Laudato Si' Gardens, launched in February 2020, where the Faith for Earth Initiative also delivered a keynote address. Following these engagements, The Living Chapel, in partnership with FAO, Plant for the Planet, and the Global Catholic Climate Movement, joined UN Environment Programme's One Trillion Tree Movement, inspiring the public to reconnect with nature and providing a vehicle for intercultural and interfaith collaboration to restore our common home through the creation of Laudato Si' Gardens and Living Sacred Spaces.



Drawing upon the Living Chapel, the concept of Green Sacred Spaces seeks to amalgamate contributions of all faith communities to combat climate change, ecosystem destruction and pollution through sustainable energy practices, building and renovating houses of worship to be more energy efficient. In July 2020, Faith for Earth launched [Guidelines on Green Houses of Worship](#) and [Four ways to make your house of worship eco-friendly](#) contributing towards the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction launched at COP 21 seeking to reduce negative impacts related to the building and construction sector, which amount to 40% of annual global energy use and 30% of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions. The Guidelines are a compendium of efforts, approaches, suggestions and examples of success-stories designed to assist some of the millions of houses of worship around the world to become more resource efficient and act as beacons of sustainability for the communities they serve. The guidelines are linked to global sustainable building standards adopted by the UN and other institutions.



Faith for Earth National Coordination Hubs



*Environment
Under Review*

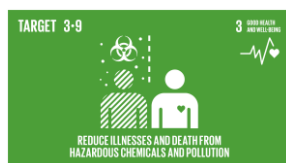


*Resource
Efficiency*

As part of Faith for Earth’s strategy to get closer to faith communities around the world by establishing professional relationships with grassroots environmental organisations, UNEP’s India Country Office [launched](#) the Faith for Earth [Strategy and Action Plan](#) on World Environment Day 2020, becoming the first Faith for Earth National Coordination Hub. The National Coordination Hub in India seeks to play a role in India’s spiritual heritage that places a premium on the need to preserve and protect nature and sustainable consumption. In taking steps to implement the Strategy and Action Plan, Faith for Earth National Coordination Hub in India, in partnership with the United Religions Initiative (URI) will implement a series of SDG mapping activities with faith actors in [India, Lebanon and Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) in 2021. Faith for Earth and URI, a global grassroots interfaith network with 1,045 member organisations in 109 countries



Baptism site at River Jordan by Iyad



working to promote interfaith cooperation, end

religiously motivated violence and create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in August 2020.

