

Joint Statement by United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (IATF) with the endorsement of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC)

IATF and endorsed by the co-Chairs of the IATF Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC) on behalf of the MFAC:

For the IATF:

H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations

H.E. Mr. Adama Dieng, UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide

Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director UNFPA

For the MFAC:

Dr. Husna Ahmad, CEO Global One 2015

Mr. Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, General Secretary, Act Alliance

Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations

Mr. Gopal D. Patel, Director, The Bhumi Project

In the face of the global crisis unleashed by COVID-19, unprecedented in recent history, the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development expresses its deep concern about the enormous challenges that this situation presents to the most vulnerable around the world, including the elderly, refugees and migrants, people living in conflict contexts, people

with disabilities, young people, religious minorities, women and children at risk of domestic violence, groups that face discrimination and stigmatization, and all other vulnerable groups.

Unity, solidarity, international cooperation and global coordinated action, as called for by the United Nations Secretary-General¹, are essential to address the pandemic. A comprehensive approach, taking into consideration the complex and multidimensional nature of this crisis, is crucial to addressing immediate and future challenges in a manner that ensures that no one is left behind. The IATF, therefore, calls upon all relevant stakeholders to address all implications of this crisis through a whole-of-society, human-centered approach that prioritizes health safety, the right to access health services, social protection and cohesion.

In response to COVID-19-related disruptions, the IATF calls on governments and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the respect and protection of international human rights standards remain the overarching framework for their policies and actions, and that the promotion of gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and the fight against all forms of gender-based violence² is an integral part of the multi-faceted responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The IATF is committed to working closely with all relevant stakeholders to stand up against stigma, hate speech and hate crimes, xenophobia, racism and all other forms of discrimination.

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Organization on COVID-19. IATF members look forward to working closely with the MFAC in this regard.

IATF members call on religious leaders and faith-based organizations to extend their support and – within their respective spheres of influence and authority – promote and advocate with Member States and other stakeholders for the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and to help implement the Plan so that essential humanitarian relief operations can reach populations in the most fragile and vulnerable contexts. IATF members also urge all relevant stakeholders to expeditiously implement the United Nations Secretary-General’s call for an immediate global ceasefire, which would allow humanitarian workers to provide life-saving assistance during the pandemic to populations affected by conflicts.

We stand ready to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to collectively address the COVID-19 pandemic and all related challenges.

Members of the Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development

ILO (International Labour Organization)

UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS)

UNAOC (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations)

UNCTED (United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate)

UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

UNDPPA (United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs)

UNDGC (United Nations Department of Global Communications)

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme)

Bhumi Project, Oxford Center for Hindu Studies

Caritas Internationalis

Church of Latter-Day Saints

Church of Sweden

Finn Church Aid

Global Interfaith WASH Alliance

Global One

Green Faith

International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Impacted by HIV and AIDS

Islamic Relief

Jewish Theological Seminary USA

Joint Learning Initiative

KAICIID Dialogue Center

Musawah

Muslims for Progressive Values

Nahdlatul Ulama

Parliament of the World's Religions

Religions for Peace

Sant Egidio

Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society

Tanenbaum

The Archbishop of Canterbury

The Focolare Movement

The Interfaith Center of Sustainable Development

The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation

United Religions Initiative

World Council of Churches

World Evangelical Alliance

World Evangelical Alliance Sustainability Center

World Jewish Congress

World YWCA

World Vision International