

FAITH-BASED  
ORGANIZATIONS  
FORUM

ON MULTI-RELIGIOUS  
COOPERATION FOR  
HUMANITARIAN RELIEF,  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND PEACE

# FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FORUM

on Multi-religious Cooperation for  
Humanitarian Relief, Development and Peace

Report and Recommendations

October 2010  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Convened by *Religions for Peace*  
Hosted by the African Council of Religious Leaders/*Religions for Peace-Africa*

## ABOUT THE FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FORUM

### on Multi-religious Cooperation for Humanitarian Relief, Development and Peace

When disaster strikes—a tsunami, a hurricane, a civil war—faith-based humanitarian and relief agencies are on the ground, often within hours. They bring water, food, shelter, and medical care. And, very often, they provide the spiritual guidance and counseling that is needed to help survivors cope with the unimaginable. In many cases, they are operating effective, long-term development programs. Collectively, these faith-based organizations provide an invaluable service.

Coordination mechanisms exist to link the humanitarian and development programs of some of the faith communities. Often they have an ecumenical orientation, for example ACT International (Protestant) and Caritas Internationalis (Catholic). Might there be a way for faith-based organizations to cooperate across multiple religions to add to the quality of humanitarian and development responses following protocols that are acceptable to all faith communities?

With the goal of exploring this question, *Religions for Peace* has convened representatives from faith-based organizations working in the fields of humanitarian relief, development and peace (May 2006, Washington D.C.; August 2006, Kyoto) to explore the viability of and interest in an ongoing forum for exploration and dialogue.

Participants in these consultations confirmed the value of an informal forum for dialogue and exploration, and recommended that *Religions for Peace* convene an annual meeting of the FBO Forum on Multi-religious Cooperation.

The “Faith-based Organizations Forum on Multi-religious Cooperation for Humanitarian Relief, Development and Peace,” known as the FBO Forum, is a loosely structured, informal network of organizations engaged in an ongoing dialogue dedicated to:

1. **Building trust** by encouraging multi-religious cooperation and providing a forum in which relationships can be strengthened
2. **Creating a learning forum** to share best practices of FBO collaborations to help ensure continuous improvement in the benefit delivery of humanitarian aid, community development and peace building. Case studies could be geographically or thematically focused
3. **Facilitating joint advocacy** at the local, national, regional or global level to change public opinion and influence government policies; and on a regional and global basis to influence international and United Nations initiatives; conduct joint research to develop advocacy positions
4. **Promoting joint research** that advances multi-religious cooperation including the development of principles, codes of conduct and cases studies

**The 2009 Forum was co-hosted by Islamic Relief Canada in Toronto.** Previous meetings were held in London in 2007 co-hosted the Hindu Aid and in Frankfurt in 2008 with Humanity First-Germany.

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**Dr. Mustafa Ali and the staff** of the African Council of Religious Leaders for hosting the Forum, and especially **Ms. Florence Omtokoh**, for her warm hospitality and handling of local arrangements.

The **Sikh Community of Kenya** for hosting the evening program and opening its Gurdwara to our group.

Thank you to **all the participants** who traveled from near and far to attend the FBO Forum and contribute to this ongoing dialogue.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth annual FBO Forum was convened in Nairobi by *Religions for Peace* and hosted by African Council of Religious Leaders. Representatives of more than forty organizations representing Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh religious communities gathered for the program. The majority of participants came from organizations based in or working in Africa; there was also good representation from individuals and organizations based in Europe and North America.

The FBO Forum follows a case-study format; presentations of on-the-ground projects are followed by small group discussions. The 2010 Forum covered the following agenda items:

- Cases of multi-religious cooperation in Africa
- Principles of humanitarian assistance for FBOs
- Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy at the United Nations
- Potential for building an African FBO Forum

### KEY OBSERVATIONS

- **Multi-religious humanitarian advocacy at the UN**

A major development in the 2009 program was the agreement among participants to explore the formation of a Multi-religious Advocacy Forum at the United Nations. *Religions for Peace* was asked to facilitate the formation of Steering Committee to explore the potential processes for joint advocacy and themes that could be taken up by a wide range of participating organizations.

During 2010, the Interim Steering Committee met twice in New York to formulate a shared framework and process. The themes of Haiti's relief and reconstruction and ending violence against women were recommended for the advocacy agenda. A pilot advocacy program for Haiti was tested. A set of recommendations was presented to the 2010 FBO Forum.

In Nairobi, the participants received the recommendations of the Steering Committee and signaled their support for the advocacy themes and a process for engagement outlined in the terms of reference. (See annex #3). Further, they recommended the agenda be expanded to include three priority humanitarian concerns in Africa: Somalia, Sudan and DR Congo. *Religions for Peace* was urged to move forward, and participants were aware that this could mean request for their human and financial support to carry out meaningful advocacy activities.

- **Principles of humanitarian assistance for FBOs & a Code of Conduct**

Previous forums have touched the issue of humanitarian principles, and how FBOs should behave according to these. In Nairobi another level of relevance was added since some of the FBOs present had been threatened due to allegations of being "missionary organizations." The relationship between

humanitarian principles and conversion was at the heart of the discussion, and the participants saw the forum as useful to work through these questions and come up with a common position that may be signed on to by the participants and other FBOs.

A drafting committee developed a *Statement on Principles for Humanitarian Assistance for FBOs* which was agreed upon by a majority of the Forum. Interested organizations can sign-on by sending a message to the Multi-religious Advocacy Committee. Moving forward, there is a need to distribute the Statement widely, and to encourage FBOs of different religious traditions to sign on and commit themselves to it.

- **Potential for building an African FBO Forum**

In previous meetings, the idea of forming regional and national FBO Forums was raised. The Nairobi Forum illustrated an opportunity and need for an African FBO forum to provide information networking and information sharing opportunities. There were also voices that called for national FBO forums. The African participants and representatives of international organizations in Africa fully supported ACRL to initiate an African FBO forum. This is an encouraging development that was supported by the Forum participants.

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Attendees discussing multi-religious advocacy initiatives for Haiti and humanitarian situations in Africa

## SESSION C: CASES OF MULTI-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION IN AFRICA

### **Mustafa Ali, Secretary General, African Council of Religious Leaders**

Inspired by their religious values, every faith tradition across the globe is engaged in humanitarian efforts to alleviate human suffering. This movement grew tremendously following the end of World War II. Today, faith-based agencies have developed vast infrastructures to carry out their humanitarian interventions and have expanded their mandates to address long-term development needs.

Today, faith-based organizations are working on-the-ground with local communities often in close proximity to one another. In many cases, FBOs have recognized their shared interests and have formed pragmatic partnerships. Examples include Islamic Relief and Christian Aid; NCA and local organizations in Somalia's Gedo region; Muslim Aid and UMCOR.

These faith-based agencies need on-the-ground partners to do their work. They often work through local religious communities to identify beneficiaries and organize their work. On the positive side, FBOs work with religious communities based on the needs and regardless of the faith of the community. However, they may work with multiple religious communities and leaders. This reality can create tension among religious communities on the ground.

This session explores cases in which religious communities have been brought together for common action around shared concerns at the national and regional level. Specifically, these cases look at the role of multi-religious platforms as mechanisms for facilitating cooperation.

### **A CASE IN KENYA: THE “FAITH FOR LIFE” PROJECT**

#### **Dr. Francis Kuria, Secretary General, Inter-religious Council of Kenya (IRCK)**

The Inter-religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) is the national coalition of faith communities in Kenya working through their religious coordinating bodies (RCB). There are nine constituent member organizations. IRCK has been working with UNICEF since 2003 on a number of projects related to HIV/AIDS and child and maternal health.

“Faith for Life” is a three-year project between IRCK, UNICEF and Kenya's Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation to develop mechanisms that support religious leaders' efforts to improve the health of children and their mothers, guarantee their protection and ensure their future through education and life skills. A unique feature of the program is to explore the theological foundations of the various faiths in Kenya to develop information and messages that support child development and use these materials to effect behavior change. Handbooks based on these theological foundations will be published and disseminated to the communities. The aim is to create materials that empower religious leaders to be communicators of best practices for child development.

The project brought thirteen theologians from Roman Catholic, Protestant Christian, Muslim and Hindu faiths together for a process of dialogue and reflection to determine a set of target interventions. The areas of high-impact intervention they chose include Mother and Child Health Care, Water and Cleanliness, Common Diseases, HIV and AIDS, Nutrition, Early Stimulation and Child Protection, Health Seeking Behaviors. Technical materials were developed by experts at the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and UNICEF, and the religious communities came together to test and validate them. The process resulted in faith-specific handbooks being created for Roman Catholics, Protestant Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and was followed by a combined “Faith for Life” manual. They designed publicity materials and community awareness and sensitization materials.

The value of interfaith collaboration facilitated by the IRCK enabled UNICEF, as the technical development partner, to work through a single entity to engage all the faith communities. The interfaith components included multi-religious dialogue on the high impact interventions by Task Force on Health and Children, the validation of materials by a team of theologians representing all the faith communities, and training of facilitators in interfaith gatherings. This enabled the communities to learn specific teachings of different faiths.

In the end, 60 trainers were trained. They trained 1,200 religious leaders from 30 districts, who in turn trained members of their local communities. Ultimately, 27,000 religious leaders were trained on the use of the materials.

The main challenge to multi-religious collaboration is that the process can be slow. Consultations are required at every stage. With Faith for Life, the complexity of religious communities required a careful, thoughtful process. For example, the initial plan was to have a single Christian process; but was determined better to work with the major strains separately. The Hindu compilation involved four main schools of Hinduism and required consultation of scriptures in multiple volumes in five languages, including Sanskrit, which is not widely spoken.

### **Mr. Sewa Singh Mandla, Representative, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha**

The Sikh faith has a tradition of “selfless service” to the community by contributing to its spiritual, social, cultural, educational and economic needs. The Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, an international organization based in the UK, has been involved in intra-faith work in Kenya and India informally since 1950, and formally in the UK since 1978 as a registered Charity. It mobilizes volunteers and is supported by voluntary financial contributions, coupled with time and effort from members of the community.

While the Sikh community is not presently a constituent member of the IRCK, it was involved in UNICEF’s “Faith for Life” project. The Sikh community held a meeting in Kericho, Kenya to reflect on the Sikh scriptures and traditions, and to develop its own community response to the target interventions raised by “Faith for Life” project. The community published a comprehensive report, which was distributed widely, and was utilized by UNICEF in the publication of the combined “Faith for Life” manual.

## THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE

### **Rev. Usman Fornah, Secretary General, Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone has a long history of religious tolerance and cooperation. From the early days of its government schools, tolerance for religion was promoted and separate worship space provided for the Christian and Muslim students, respectively. The society also supported and encouraged inter-marriage between Christians and Muslims. Further, the principle of representativity is embedded in the Sierra Leonean presidency: when a political flag bearer is Muslim, his vice or assistant should be a Christian. So, the formation of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone formalized a strong interfaith relationship that has existed over a long time.

The Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone enjoys the respect and recognition of the Sierra Leonean populace and the International Community for its role in ending of the civil war, its involvement in the sensitization of Sierra Leoneans (both ex-combatants and civil society) about the Lome Peace Accord, its voter education programs and its role in the formation and provision of leadership positions in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In times of political intolerance, it has engaged leaders of the various political parties to call for sustainability of its hard-earned peace. The Governments of Sierra Leone has resolved/decided that for all interfaith issues, the IRCSL is the recognized body to reckon with.

The Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone does not implement humanitarian relief projects. Its greatest strength is social mobilization, advocacy, sensitization and mediation. Today, it is implementing awareness raising and education programs that are addressing HIV/AIDS, child protection and essential family practices. Example include:

- Through a partnership with UNICEF, the IRCSL is also involved in child protection. It has trained nationally over 500 religious leaders in various aspects of Child Protection based on the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and the Child Rights Act of Sierra Leone, enacted by Parliament in 2007. It is playing a lead role in the advocacy against the Early Marriage of the Girl Child and for the education for women and girls. We have just concluded the formulation of by-laws against Early Marriage of the Girl Child in twelve chiefdoms from the six operational districts of UNICEF.
- The IRCSL has trained 36 religious leaders (men and women) and 26 young people on HIV/AIDS. This activity increased members' knowledge on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and encouraged voluntary counseling and testing and caregiver support to those infected by the virus. These trainings were replicated at the community level. Project funds were provided by Religions for Peace-United Kingdom.
- The IRCSL trained 600 religious leaders nationwide on Essential Family Practices (EFP) in collaboration all 12 of the District Health Management Teams across the country. Topics taught included hygiene promotion; factors influencing the Human Development Index; children and HIV;

Child Rights Training and Advocacy; Use of Anti Retroviral Drugs; Child Nutrition, Feeding and Immunizations; and Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT) of HIV.

One of the challenges facing the IRCSL is the lack of interest by Pentecostal communities to engage in multi-religious cooperation, and the growing phenomena of “irresponsible evangelism” led by the newly established Pentecostal churches as well as some Muslim communities. Funding is another major challenge, even as the IRCSL encourages national members and constituencies to provide annual subscriptions to support the core functions of the Council.

### **Remarks and Questions from the Plenary Session**

- These cases outline examples of inter-religious councils operating as partners of UNICEF. FBOs also work with UNICEF. How can IRC and other multi-religious platforms be facilitators of this work and not competitors and operators in parallel?
- It is also true that FBOs partner with different religious communities. Could they operate through multi-religious platforms to reach target groups, and not try to implement through them all individually?
- IRCs are exclusive clubs of religious communities. They are not comprised of other stakeholders. They are different from other partnerships. For comparison, the Hope for African Children Initiative (HACI), a child-focused multi-stakeholder partnership, brought together the IRCK and faith-based and secular development agencies. The biggest challenge with FBOs is they take the pragmatic approach of NGOs. FBOs look at small, defined areas for intervention. IRCs look at the national level. How does a platform like the IRCK work with an FBO like World Vision? How do you fit FBO’s efforts with those of the faith structures? The management structures are not the same. The IRCK has been able to develop cooperative partnerships with FBOs like ADRA and Caritas. Ethiopia/EIFFDA is a good example of how cooperation between IRCs and FBOs can happen.
- In Sierra Leone, the IRC has no competition with FBOs. If they have a project, they come to us to mobilize our networks in support of it. But there is a need for networking to coordinate our resources. The IRCSL structure supports local mobilization. The four regions each have their own Executive Committees. The next level of organization is at the district level. The Secretariat is coordinating at the regional and district level; it does not impose.
- There is an opportunity for national IRCS to initiate dialogue with FBOs.
- One challenge that must be mentioned is the difficulty in finding funding to support multi-religious platforms. There is a need to generate funds locally, and to go to local donor agencies. Subscriptions or annual contributions by member bodies to the national IRCs are another possibility.

- The idea of networking to link and learn is an important role for IRCs. It is not good if structures take over activities that should be appropriately tasked to religious communities. Because it hampers ownership of religious communities if someone does all the work for them. UNICEF finds it easy to work through one structure but that can destroy ownership. Can IRCs contribute to facilitation of these partnerships?
- Inter-religious Councils cannot implement work; religious communities do the implementation. IRCs are mechanisms for administration, fund raising, networking, advocacy and documentation. Funds are transferred to religious communities through contracts so the communities can do the work.
- In Sierra Leone, the High Commissioners always ask “where’s the other community” because they expect better outcomes from multi-religious collaboration. They appreciate working through a multi-religious platform.

## CASES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

### **Mr. Seppo Rantanen, Representative, FinnChurch Aid, East Africa**

FCA involved in peacebuilding efforts that are coupled with humanitarian efforts in Somalia. We aim to resolve about 10 conflicts year. We have identified a 6-step approach with religious leaders inside Somalia. The usual timeframe for a single process is 1-3 months and costs approximately 12,600 USD. FCA has received a lot of positive feedback. Today elders and local authorities are coming to FCA asking its assistance. Seppo Rantanen of FCA asked the Forum participants for advice on how to ensure that the “Church” in the organizations name does not cause misunderstanding.

### **Mr. Berhane Wolde Michael, Somalia Coordinator, Norwegian Church Aid**

Somalia is the worst humanitarian crisis in Somalia. International community has contributed a lot to its disaster. Reality is that al-Shabaab controls most of South Central Somalia. Despite our views on al-Shabaab, it is easier for humanitarian organization to work in area under its control. Some organizations are thrown out because they are seen as doing evangelizing work. NCA has not experienced challenges based on its Christian identity because it has kept close contact to the local population. The local population has convinced radical leaders that NCA is a lifeline for critical services, including emergency assistance for the displaced, education and water and sanitation projects. NCA believes in empowering communities, and each sector program includes a peacebuilding component. NCA also is seeking ways to address the root causes of piracy.

### **Mr. Mohamed Noor, Programme Manager, Conflict Transformation, African Council of Religious Leaders**

Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in Horn of Africa (RL PIHA) started with the Muslim-Christian regional conference in Tanzania in 2007. Since then, the RL PIHA organized a series of consultative meetings and peace missions to share information and build harmony among the sub-regions’ religious leadership.

Missions were sent to Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya-Somalia border, and meetings held with AU, IGAD etc. The interfaith approach to peace building is new in the region, and the space in which religious leaders to engage is affected by the political climate. Thus, the goal was to establish national and local cooperation structures that complement and link to the regional level.



Mr. Mohamad Noor

Today, the RL PIHA is operating on three levels: 1) the Regional Conference/Assembly, which meets every two years; it is composed of senior religious leaders from the IGAD countries as well as observers from Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. It charts the direction of the RL-PIHA; 2) the Religious Leaders Contact Group, composed of country level religious leaders contact persons, who liaise with the regional as well as grassroots levels; and 3) the Working Group, which is composed of regional Institutions that provide technical support to the Rls Contact Group. These structures were formalized in early 2010 in Naivasha. The ACRL serves as the Secretariat of the RL PIHA and chairs the Working Group. The ACRL is not an implementing body but rather a coordinating body with interfaith mandate. In 2011, the RL PIHA will focus on Somalia and Sudan.

### **Comments and Responses from the Plenary Discussion**

- There is need to make the agreements FCA is facilitating binding and to follow up of the implementation. Response: FCA aims to make these agreements sustainable by training the local community on problem solving and mediation processes. It also focuses on youth programming and vocational training to provide other means of survival for this constituency.
- Multi-religious cooperation is in reality very difficult because of radicalization. Religious leaders can also be counterproductive and create sensitivities by their statements. This makes the work of other religious leaders and FBOs difficult.
- NCA operates without challenges but other organizations with Christian identity have been thrown out of Somalia. An example is World Vision, which was working peacefully in an al-Shabaab-controlled area for more than three years. Indigenous Somalis were pushed aside by the group, which demanded large sums of money to continue operations.

- It was also mentioned that top down approach to peacebuilding does not usually work. What is operating at the regional level has to be supported by local initiatives. RL PIHA is being as practical as possible. The national level networks are supported to do their own work. With specific faith communities, the faith leaders are asked to facilitate and lead efforts within their own communities.
- Religious leaders were also called to engage with international community to influence their policies, because these external forces are part of the problem.

### **Summary of Multi-religious Cooperation in Africa**

In Africa, there are 23 national-level inter-religious councils or interfaith platforms. As the cases presented here attest, it is challenging for these multi-religious platforms to coordinate different religious communities. Some development actors have found it useful to work through a single entity to engage all the faith communities. UNICEF, in particular, is taking this approach in a numbers of countries on a range of projects.

A key added value of these platforms is their ability to providing networking and linkages for information sharing and networking. This approach can be especially useful in the peacebuilding arena, as evidenced by the broad participation of faith organizations in the RL PIHA. The African Union is taking steps to formalize its engagement with religious communities through the ACRL's regional multi-religious platform.

## SESSION D: PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR FBOs

### **Mr. Arne Sæveraas, Senior Peace & Reconciliation Advisor, Norwegian Church Aid**

During the last FBO Forum in 2009, the typologies of the faith-based humanitarian/development and peace organizations (FBOs) were deliberated on. There are many variations among FBOs, there are challenges connected with being an FBO, and there are definitely advantages and added values confirming the relevance of FBOs on the humanitarian and development scene.

As a follow-up to last year's consultation on FBOs, and after some informal bilateral consultation between some of the members of this forum, the concern of reassuring target and host communities of the 100% humanitarian focus and objective of the humanitarian FBOs has come up. A few humanitarian FBOs have experienced allegations suggesting that they have a hidden agenda of proselytization (conversion). There have also been other kinds of allegations suggesting that some FBOs have a political agenda to change and radicalize people's political standpoints and to establish local structures as focal points for external political agendas. These allegations sometimes come from religious communities but they also come from other organizations, including external one, that have hidden agendas of their own, and raise objections to get rid of the FBOs.

Most humanitarian FBOs have signed and committed ourselves to adhere the Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. Based on the allegations described here, some FBOs have adopted even stricter codes, and respect and follow international humanitarian law as a way to remove unnecessary suspicion and fear with regard to the strategies and objectives underlying our humanitarian assistance.

There may be FBOs providing humanitarian assistance that are guilty of the kind of allegations mentioned above, but most serious international humanitarians are not. Therefore, we need mechanisms for relieving the host communities from suspicion and fear while we are providing humanitarian assistance in their context. Such mechanisms will also contribute to protecting ourselves from false accusations that may create security risks for our staff and partners working with us.

Acknowledging that this issue is disturbing members of faith communities in particular, and the fact that FBOs representing different religions face similar challenges, we thought that this forum, hosted by *Religions for Peace* and the ACRL, would be a relevant structure that could contribute to reflecting on ways to provide credibility to other serious FBOs carrying out authentic humanitarian agenda without hidden strategies to further any religious or political agenda.

In order to strengthen the credibility of all FBOs with host communities, we are looking for ways of clarifying our commitments to humanitarian agenda in order to allay fears and suspicions coming from local faith communities representing different faith from those the humanitarian FBOs represent. We propose to develop a statement that outlines an interfaith code of conduct for humanitarian assistance.

See Draft Statement, Annex 1.

### **Comments from the Plenary**

- This is the biggest challenge of FBOs working in the humanitarian field. Fellow Muslims accused my organization of being a puppet of the US because it works on the issue of female genital mutilation. Islam is an evangelical religion. I am called to proselytize when I have the chance. We should be honest and frank about that.
- We must acknowledge that all religions have a missionary component to some extent – especially the Abrahamic faiths – and carry the “truth.” But we need to contrast this with our commitment to impartiality in humanitarian situations. Through such a multi-religious statement, we can distinguish between our commitment to the principles of humanitarian relief but still recognize our faith values.
- The purpose of the statement is to show that we have been thinking through who we are and what we do and to increase our credibility and show that we are reflecting on these situations.
- We should recognized that the ICRC principles are naïve when it comes of the reality on the ground, especially 1, 3, and 4. Further, I do not believe the principles can or should be extended to address long-term development contexts.
- As proposed in the draft statement, the FBOs present here that agree with the statement can sign for themselves. Regarding the inclusion of focal points on the documents, on whose behalf will they sign? For themselves or their organizations?
- How do we define humanitarian intervention? For governments, it is not a matter of choice whether to respond to humanitarian situations; it is a right of citizens that their government respond to crises. For FBOs, there is a choice whether to respond to humanitarian crises and our work unfolds in stages. In emergencies and disasters, the goal is to restore human dignity. These efforts transition into long-term efforts for human resettlement and development.
- This draft statement says that our faiths are not to be used as a development tool and that the missionary/evangelizing motivations of religion should not prevail in humanitarian relief. We should endorse the Code of Conduct.
- Another approach could be to speak of the added-value of faith in development contexts. The values of justice and solidarity have importance for our work. We need to include the language of neutrality and impartiality.

## **Results of Small Group Discussions**

### **Group 1**

- Our group feels that it can subscribe to the draft statement but believes further work on the language is needed. The principles statement needs to reflect the values of justice and solidarity, which are important value-added ingredients in faith-based efforts. The statement needs to include the notions of impartiality and neutrality. We need to further discuss whether to expand the statement to cover peace and development situations.

### **Group 2**

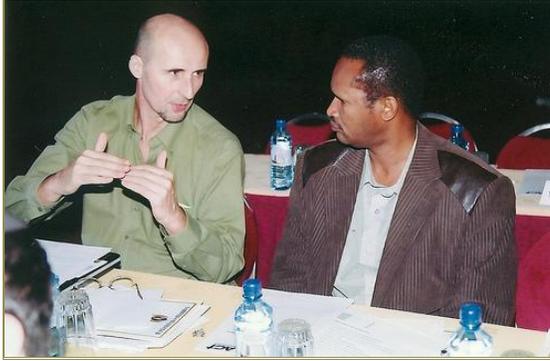
- Instead of developing a code that would apply to all, because there is no mechanism to enforce it, we recommend using the statement as a guide. The guiding principles should place an emphasis on our interests in providing purely for humanitarian aid.
- With the ICRC Code of Conduct, some aspects are difficult to follow because it is divorced from our religious imperatives. Even if faith communities are not evangelizing, we bring our values to this work.
- We should not use the ICRC code but make one of our own that addresses working with other faiths. Response: The purpose here is not to edit the ICRC code, which has been operational for the past 15 and widely adopted within the humanitarian field. What I believe we need is language that addresses the faith-based context with an operational precision.
- Perhaps we should develop our own code to address work in complex faith environments.

### **Group 3**

- Our group felt that a statement addressing the faith-based environment could be helpful in the field. Religious coordinating bodies might present it for endorsement in particular situations.

### **Group 4**

- Our group does not endorse extending the statement to the peace and development environment. Advocacy is part of the development agenda, which involves pushing political agendas. So, extending the Code of Conduct to cover peace and development contexts would not be appropriate.
- Because of the dilemmas we encounter on the ground, the statement needs to be clear about our commitment to impartiality.



Small group discussions on humanitarian advocacy

### **ACTION POINT**

The Forum was invited to endorse the draft **Statement on Multi-religious Cooperation for Humanitarian Relief for FBOs**, which clearly commits the signatories to adhere 100% to the humanitarian agenda. The Forum determined that the language needed to be further developed, and a drafting committee was assigned to refine the statement and share with the group on Day 2.

### **REVIEW OF THE SECOND DRAFT OF THE STATEMENT ON MULTI-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FOR FBOs.**

- We should not reference the ICRC Code of Conduct.
- While proselytization is a concern, we don't need to refer to the ICRC code. My community has not reviewed or endorsed the ICRC code.
- If we leave off the particular context of the ICRC, could we endorse the statement? I would also limit the statement to focus on humanitarian needs, and not development.
- Conversion is the key issue to this exercise. But looked at broadly, the issue is our commitment to give aid without bias.
- We need a minimum ceiling or standard that all organizations have to live up to. The ICRC offers that standard, particularly in principle #2. If the ICRC meets the bare minimum, let's accept that.
- The ICRC reference is challenging so we should remove it. We could add a small quotation that our religious texts support the imperative to serve all in need. Response: we might be able to add an annex citing supporting religious passages.

- There is clearly an uneasiness with the reference to the ICRC code; some may disagree with elements of the code; others may be unfamiliar with it. If the ICRC code is the sticking point, we could state that we accept “all internationally accepted codes,” without explicitly stating ICRC.
- We should avoid framing the statement as an answer to our critics and frame what is of fundamental value to religious communities.
- In order to establish ownership of this process, the statement should include the date and place of the meeting. Response: I propose that we do not date this document. Many of us do not have a mandate to commit our organizations.

### **ACTION POINT**



Drafting Committee

The drafting committee agreed to further refine the Statement based on the feedback and to circulate to the FBO Forum by the end of December/early January. The final text will be circulated for voluntary sign-on by FBO members with timeframe of March/April 2011.

## SESSION E: FBOs AND DEVELOPMENT

### **Ms. Hahna Fridirici, Program Coordinator, World Faith & Development Dialogue**

The World Faith & Development Dialogue (WFDD) was founded by Lord Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a response to the MDGs and 9/11. It was created as a mechanism to bridge the tension at the World Bank to interacting with religious groups. Upon the retirement of its founders, the WFDD became an independent, non-profit research group based in the U.S. It is currently affiliated with Georgetown University.



Ms. Hahna Fridirici and Ms. Ruth Kabanga

WFDD's own story reflects the tensions between faith and international development. In the World Bank, early discussions about working with religions prompted much tension. Religion was seen as divisive. Challenges included conflicts around religion, tensions within religions, issues of separation of church and state, issues of voice and representation. As a result, it was seen as simply too complicated to deal with. Religion is seen by others as essentially dangerous.

Some argued that religious leaders were attached to the status quo and patriarchal, excluding women or opposing women's rights; that they are opposed to modernization and reproductive health rights. In the area of health, questions arose as to whether work is evidence based or grounded in "values" or "faith." Some have noted barriers or resistance to evaluation that would prove results as sustainable. There was also the issue of the hidden motivations of faith communities: do they serve for the common good or for the purpose of conversion? Further, religion was seen as defunct or declining in importance worldwide. This "secular myth" still persists in some quarters. The bottom line in development circles was that religion was not a priority.

Faith communities have expressed an equal range of doubts about the international development approaches. Far-ranging critiques of the development processes include suspicions of neo-liberalism and accusations of injustice and materialism in aid delivery. Further, debt, environmental degradation and certain changes brought by modernization are seen as negative aspects of the development legacy. There is a general lack of understanding about the international development community. The field of economics is seen as a competing "theology" that is creating another "clash of civilizations." Finally, there are tensions around issues of money and resources.

For all the tensions and mistrust the intersection between faith and development is real. Faith communities have been key development actors since missionaries began establishing hospitals and through the colonial period. The legacy of colonial and missionary history exists in the complex mosaic

of faith based development infrastructure. It can be generalized that the global health context and global poverty challenge hold special importance to faith communities. While extensive, the mosaic is not well-mapped. There is a need for research that provides better picture of range and volume of activity, evidence of the faith sector's contributions and stories from the ground.

The WFDD's main focus is researching what is taking place within the faith and development arena. It is interested in institutions and communities, and covers sectoral and regional approaches. The cornerstone of its research methodology is the interview with the practitioner. In addition to releasing research reports, it also organizes consultations and brings all communities to the table for its convenings. While not specifically tasked to address interfaith issues, the WFDD is interested in whether multi-religious cooperation is effective.

Among the lessons WFDD has learned:

- There is great diversity in the faith and development arena.
- Ethics and values are intertwined in debates on faith and development.
- Religion cannot be separated from culture.
- "Development" is a complex world of institutions and ideas, in flux and with many different approaches
- Religious communities are important local and community anchors.

Ideas on the path forward

- A strong country focus is a prerequisite for real development progress;
- There is a need to amass and use evidence-based data;
- Engagement with faith communities requires discernment and political antennae.
- Dialogue with faith communities on tough issues is needed.
- There needs to be purposeful thinking on appropriate networking .
- If religious communities are not at the table, then are they on the menu?

### **Comments from Plenary Session**

- Why is there discomfort with the term faith-based vs. faith-inspired? FBOs seem to have linkages to their respective faith communities to different degrees. Therefore, we might use the term "faith-inspired" as it could be seen as a looser and less institutionally linked term.
- The work of WFDD is appreciated as back donors ask for evidence to prove the faith-based approach. However, the WFDD's list of lessons learned is disappointing; they are rather weak or non-descript. Response: The field of FBOs is diverse and complex, and comparisons can be difficult. Some FBOs want to distance themselves from other FBOs. It is difficult to draw conclusions on any number of arguments.
- In fragile states, faith-based providers are often the only ones on the ground. This speaks to the special role of faith-based organizations. By necessity, they provide essential services when

governments cannot or will not. There are some groups – McKinsey & Company, the Tearfund, the Tony Blair Foundation – that are making the case for FBOs are the preferred partners for development. WFDD will also enter this field through evaluations for groups like the Global Fund and Pefpar, which have funded FBOs.

- The UN system took a long time to accept NGOs and civil society in their processes. It has not accepted religious communities, per se, and embraces FBOs within the COS umbrellas. Religious communities are protesting this status and tensions exist in the UN on this issue. What type of research could FBOs/religious communities recommend to begin to bridge this divide?
- In Washington D.C., faith-based groups are working together on language to represent FBOs at the White House and the UN.
- The 2008 FBO Forum initiated an action research project on the Horn of Africa/Somalia on how religious communities were contributing to peacebuilding and reconstruction, as well as how they contributed to ongoing strife. We recommend that WFDD take up such action research with relevant platforms.
- There is the phenomenon of religious-inspired political movements. These groups often fill critical needs but they can also foment conflict. WFDD might research how widespread this is and call for mainstream responses. Response: There are such examples in Pakistan where the U.S. government was seeking means for supporting on-the-ground efforts. Some local groups are providing needed services but they appear on blacklists. The tsunami response in Aceh was heralded as an interfaith response to the crisis and there are examples of successful partnerships. However, in the process, these agencies hired the moderate voices and overlooked the more vociferous imams, who ultimately felt slighted. Extremism in the region may be on the rise now as a result.
- What would WFDD recommend the FBO Forum do between the next meeting? Response: The WFDD wants to hear your stories. Efforts around a focused theme with stories would be especially helpful. How do you come to this work? How are interventions done and distributed could serve as a starting point for learning. We want to know your challenges as well as your successes. The FBO Forum could do this; it has created an honest platform for sharing.

## SESSION F: MULTI-RELIGIOUS HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY AT THE UN

### The Potential for Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy at the United Nations

#### **Stein Villumstad, Deputy Secretary General, *Religions for Peace***

The decision-making structure at the United Nations can be roughly divided into three groups: the political level, which includes the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly Committees and the UN Peacebuilding Commission; the administrative/operational level, which includes OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and the Peacebuilding Support Office; and the Member States and their "Groups of Friends" committees.



Mr. Stain Villumstad

Among the non-state actors engaged in advocating to the UN system are business (the Global Compact); NGOs and NGO coalitions accredited to the UN /ECOSOC; representatives of religious communities and media and other interest groups.

The religious actors are comprised of single religion umbrellas (e.g. World Council of Churches); individual religious communities (Risso Kosekhei, Won Buddhism International, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Quakers, World Union of Progressive Judaism); interfaith organizations (*Religions for Peace*, Temple of Understanding, United Religious Initiative); and religious coordinating mechanisms (Committee of Religious NGOs; the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, and Working Groups (largely ecumenical) addressing specific themes and/or situations).

What is missing is a multi-religious mechanism focused on advocacy efforts. There is great potential for faith-based organizations to engage in effective multi-religious advocacy action at the United Nations in New York.

At the 2009 FBO Forum in Toronto, participants asked *Religions for Peace* to explore interest in the formation of working group for Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy at the United Nations.

Throughout 2010, *Religions for Peace* facilitated a consultative process to explore the feasibility of initiating a multi-religious humanitarian advocacy mechanism around the UN in New York.

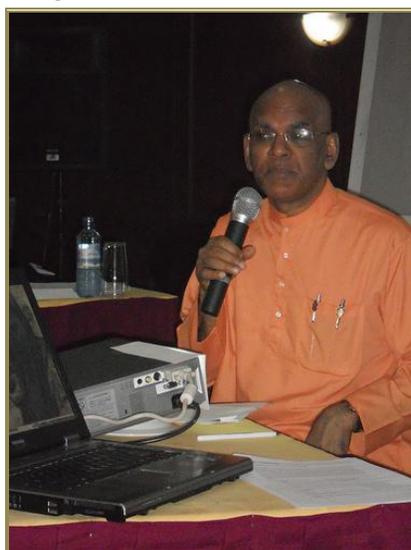
The purpose of the proposed Multi-religious Advocacy Forum is to organize international multi-religious advocacy at the UN in New York to prevent and respond to humanitarian crises and situations of human suffering, address root causes of suffering, defend and promote International Humanitarian Principles, and multiply our impact by combining our efforts and speaking with a common voice.

## Forming the Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum

### **Swami Parameshananda, Representative, Bharat Sevashram Sangha**

Throughout 2010, *Religions for Peace* convened a Steering Committee twice to develop a shared framework for multi-religious advocacy, and developed a Terms of Reference to guide a process.

Advocacy actions on behalf of the people of Haiti were piloted as test of the Terms of Reference. This included a solidarity mission to Haiti to meet with religious communities, leaders and FBOs to get their perspectives on appropriate advocacy messages. We learned that violence against women is becoming the norm, and peacekeeping force is not equipped in terms of language-capacity to hear grievances of sisters and mothers affected by the violence. There is need for women peacekeepers on the ground to hear and document cases, and to give comfort.



H.H. Swami Parameshananda

We tested the advocacy messages through mission visits to UN members states serving on the interim Haiti Recovery Commission (Canada, Norway, the United States and Brazil) and meetings with OCHA and DPKO.

Through the advocacy actions undertaken by the Forum, there was an effort to infuse spiritual energy into the discussions at the UN.

## Terms of Reference for the Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum

### **David Michaels, Director of United Nations and Intercommunal Affairs, B'nai B'rith International**

Many religious groups do not have direct engagement or formal voice at the UN, especially those communities that do not have large structures. The Steering Committee developed a Terms of Reference to guide an advocacy forum designed to enable a diverse coalition to come together for joint action.

We can make four observations about advocacy efforts of faith-based and religiously-inspired organizations efforts based on the pilot actions undertaken in 2010.

- There is a value in collective engagement and the potential for impact when religious groups work together.
- There is recognition among the religious communities that much of what we hold in common – our voices and perspectives - is sacred. But it is an uphill job to inform the UN system on the unique perspectives of religious communities on global issues.
- We can have strength in numbers.
- We have concrete opportunities to demonstrate our collective power through action around two common concerns: Reconstruction of Haiti and Ending Violence Against Women.

The Terms of Reference proposes a structure and procedures for multi-religious advocacy action. A key principle is the desire for a consensus model of operation. This principle is particularly important to my own community, and likely to others. Employing this principle, we may encounter certain cases in which certain members will be unable to specific actions or sign-on to specific messages. In such cases, care will be taken to protect those who have to abstain from participation by organizing a sign-on process and developing a strategy that enable action but does not implement in the name of the Forum.

### **Comments from the Plenary Session**

- Is this multi-religious advocacy forum distinctly focused on humanitarian issues or more broadly working on humanitarian/development/peace/ justice? Response: This is an important clarification. The Forum is humanitarian focused. If we pursued peace and development, we could go in many directions at the UN. We understand that by starting the humanitarian arena, we can create a larger tent with a strategic focus. It will be easier to find agreement. It is possible to expand the mandate once there is a level of comfort with the original intent of the Forum and its processes. A early focus on humanitarian issues is our best chance to bring the most groups to the table.
- Why are we focused on the UN in New York when there are a number of UN forums are based in Geneva? Response: Geneva is an important venue for the UN as is Nairobi and Vienna. But the political center, the General Assembly, is in New York. With limited human and financial resources, it seems wise to start in one venue and work incrementally from there. If we are successful in our effort, we could have hubs elsewhere.
- An observation on the attitude of the UN toward religious communities is demonstrated in the High-level Consultation of Religion, Faith and the MDGs held at the UN during the General Assembly week. The group was asked to leave the UN meeting room in the middle of its session to accommodate an emergency meeting of Ministers. Response: this side-event on MDGs was interrupted to accommodate an emergency meeting of a Heads of States Committee. This was a procedural matter related to lack of meeting space available at the UN due to the renovation of the Secretariat offices. Are we downgraded as FBOs and religious communities? We had an

- opportunity through the High-level Consultation and the one-on-one meetings with Missions to have an impact on the decision-makers within the system.
- We are swimming against the current. On the one hand, we are getting less access because the political space and access for NGOs at the UN seems to be challenged after many years of improvements. On the other hand, we are getting more because there is growing interest in engaging religious voices. This is contradictory situation but is also a question of quantity versus quality.
- The UN is nervous about sectarianism and giving access to one group and not others. Therefore, the multi-religious approach is best.
- Regarding the consensus model and allowing some Forum members to abstain from an advocacy action: how can this function? Can the Forum do advocacy without doing it in the name of the Forum?
- Please explain why this Forum should be expanded. Why can't the Committee of Religious NGOs take this up? This Forum can be easily seen as a vehicle/platform for *Religions for Peace* and its affiliates in the global network. But it is not being presented as such. Also, the Forum should be open and inclusive. Response: The Committee of Religious NGOs has no humanitarian or advocacy mandate. Its purpose is much more modest around how religious communities relate to the UN. The FBO Forum is welcomed and seen as complementary by the RNGO Committee.
- Regarding a process, if the Forum or members organizations agree to an pursue an issue and the committee agrees, we will work to build consensus around that issue and create appropriate messages. To the extent that an organization agrees with the language, it can use the messages in its own actions. Religions for Peace will facilitate a process; it is not a coordinating body. In some cases, we will not be unable to have full consensus of the Forum yet the issues will be too important to halt action. Any action that result will not carry the weight of the Forum; rather it will carry the collective weight of those organizations that signed-on. In such case, we will not use the logo.
- An advocacy platform needs to be operational and have a certain level of commitment. We do not want to create a new institution but we need a Steering Committee to lead a way forward. Do we agree that the Terms of Reference (TOR) as presented are appropriate? Did we respond appropriately to the mandate set forth in Toronto last year?

## **ACTION POINT**

There was general consensus that the TOR was discussed and agreement that to the proposed way forward. A Steering Committee, appointed to Forum members, will serve and convene the Forum and suggesting policy and working style. The Forum will have rotating moderator. The first meeting of the Steering Committee will be held at the end of January 2011.

## **Advocacy for the Humanitarian Recovery and Reconstruction of Haiti**

### **Rev. Christopher Ferguson, UN Representative, World Council of Churches**

As explained earlier, the Steering Committee piloted a multi-religious advocacy program on behalf of the people of Haiti and the reconstruction efforts. Our solidarity visit was conducted before the cholera outbreak, so our report needs updating. It is clear now that the UN does not know how to adequately respond to the outbreak. Currently, only 10% of needs are being met. That is a sad statement on the situation on the ground. The security situation is getting worse for women and girls. We feel women need to be consulted about the priorities. A people-led response could help.

OCHA coordination response has marginalized Haitians from the recovery and created a situation that will take many years to bridge. FBOs could help make the bridge; NGOs could be encouraged to put Haitians first.

The members of the Steering Committee would like to get the Forum's input on the Haiti pilot project to see if our process was appropriate and acceptable and to see if there is agreement on the advocacy messages.

### **Mr. Yousef Abdallah, Operations Manager, Islamic Relief USA**

The Steering Committee traveled to Port-au-Prince for office visits with representatives of religious communities and FBOs. The FBO/humanitarian sector provided context on the situation. The religious communities spoke of needs and priorities. Some informal site visits were conducted but, due to the challenges on the ground, these were not as extensive as we would have liked.

It is clear that the humanitarian situation is getting worse. Haiti is not following the development curve of humanitarian intervention to long-term development. Rather the humanitarian situation is leading to more crises. The voices of Haitians themselves are not being heard. Haitians feel that in every aspect of the humanitarian delivery they are not being treated with full dignity.

The following points were recommended as focus for advocacy actions.

- Everyone on the ground agrees that operationalizing the reconstruction plan has proved problematic. However, it is essential that all measures be taken to achieve it. It is a moral issue.

- The MINUSTAH force is not seen as neutral; it is seen as foreign occupier and part of the structure that deposed Aristede.
- Many groups are focused on short-term needs but the key need is a systematic long-term solution
- The largest and most popular political party is excluded from the elections with the tacit approval of world governments.

Based on these recommendations, the Steering Committee recommends the following four priority advocacy messages to advance to UN representatives and Missions:

1. **Haitians must be at the center of the re-building and re-shaping of their society.**
2. **Urgent and Haitian-led approaches are needed to address growing insecurity and violence.**
3. **Solve the housing crisis and solve the land tenancy problem.**
4. **Advance decentralization as a strategy for achieving good governance.**

The Steering Committee seeks to build support with the Forum for these messages. Do Forum members agree with these messages? Do they have the correct moral tone?

### **Comments and Remarks from the Plenary**

- This information is helpful and was shared with AFSC. It could influence thinking at different levels. I recommend that the first message be key in the humanitarian agenda.
- Is it possible for the civilian population to be trained as police officer to security in the hands of the community?
- These recommendations are very good. Many of them are already picked up by others. What are the additional messages that come from FBOs?
- Regarding the method, I am glad the delegation is multi-religious but women should be included on these delegations. There would be even more weight if field visits had been conducted. That would put the most vulnerable at the center. Response: There was a gender dimension in the local delegation. On the field visits, we allowed the organizations working on the ground to instruct us how on what advocacy messages they wanted to advance. We did not want to leap over the people we work with. We did not want to parachute in and out.
- Our next step is to operationalize the messages. If the Forum gives us the signal to turn the messages into a advocacy platform.
- One solidarity visit is not enough. Do you have resources to conduct future visits? Response: We need to pool some resources to support a continued process.

- The ACT Alliance and NCA have already supported this effort. There should be the possibility of financial support from other members of the Forum. The members of the Forum would need to be visible and involved, and assist in the mobilization of human and financial resources.
- I applaud the decision of the Forum and the advocacy plan. I feel for the people of Haiti as I felt for myself in Liberia. Let's not waste time with diplomacy and go forward as people of Haiti are suffering.

## African Humanitarian Situations for Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy at the United Nations

There are issues and situations in Africa that need attention and could be the focus of multi-religious advocacy at the UN. The Forum was tasked with recommending two to three priority issues that could be pursued. Small discussion groups formed.

There was informal consensus that the priority African cases for advocacy are **Somalia, the DRC and Sudan**, with the protection of civilians being a theme that applies to all three.

### **ACTION POINT**

The Steering Committee asked African Forum members to assist by providing advocacy messages and recommending advocacy actions related to immediate needs in Somalia and the DRC.

As for the Sudan, the Forum members will watch developments related to the referendum and advise the Steering Committee, as needed, on advocacy messages and strategies.

### **Comments from the Plenary Session**

- Many participants noted the difficulty their group had in choosing one or two issues. First, there wasn't enough information available. Second, there wasn't enough time within the session for adequate discussion.
- It is difficult to make decisions on this level. Many of us need to consult our communities first. However, civilian protection is a major issue. We could draw on information we have on the DRC and Somalia, sharpen the issue and draw a strategy.
- The RL PIHA has already developed messages regarding Somalia/Horn. These can be provided to the Steering Committee.
- Pragmatically, what can be done in New York depends on how the messages are sharpened in Africa and your requests to us. Whatever actions are taken – visitations, consultations, delegations – takes time and resources.

- I'm surprised we would take on all three issues. This is an ad hoc forum that does not have resources. We should not spread ourselves too thin.
- We should determine what can be taken up by African FBOs with the AU and IGAD, and what can be taken up in New York.
- I recommend that we build a case for crisis in Central Africa as a whole, rather than focusing on a single country. Many NGOs tend to focus on a single country. This Forum should take up the region.
- Without out good support, it would be difficult to cover three issues. We already have Haiti. Please help the Steering Committee working in New York to discern the one priority issue. If a crisis breaks out in Sudan, of course the Committee will respond.
- Let the African Faith Based Organization Forum and its members identify the issues that need advocacy at the United Nations, and convey the same to the Steering Committee
- There is a need for an African FBO Forum. I suggest we be pragmatic in thinking about creating national FBO Forums and then think about a regional forum. If Kenya had such a Forum during the election crisis, there might not have been a need to outside for help.
- In the Kenyan context, there is no advocacy message to the UN. One message that could be, needs to be, addressed across Africa is the structural problem of poverty. This is a root cause of most problems. The multilateral agreements connected to the WTO round of talks are negatively impacting poverty across Africa. Response: While this is a concern, the Forum is currently focusing on immediate humanitarian crises.
- We need to know the root causes, advocate against bad governance and ensure our constitutions are adhered to, the rule of law is applied and UN resolutions are achieved. We need to be preventers of fire.
- In the eyes of communities, the UN is losing its place as the agency to change the delivery system because its responses are not satisfactory to local indigenous communities.

## SESSION G: POTENTIAL FOR AN AFRICAN FBO FORUM

### **Mustafa Ali, Secretary General, African Council of Religious Leaders**

There are many FBOs and initiatives across Africa engaged in humanitarian, development and peace building work. Joint humanitarian actions by Islamic and Christian FBOs in Somalia and other places, for example, have been noted. Such actions are normally designed to respond to specific situations, mostly of humanitarian disaster, and to mobilize relief aid. There have also been joint missions by faith leaders mainly from Muslim and Christian faiths to fragile, war-torn countries, including in the war zones. Often, these missions are prompted by emergencies, and the need for rapid mobilization to reduce tension.

When such joint actions are undertaken, faith leaders and FBOs usually meet in the ‘theater’, without having known each other before. Leading up to these missions and work, little or no confidence is built before hand to have a sufficiently cohesive team to mount joint actions and missions. Added value to these work, where relevant and necessary can benefit from a more inclusive process where other faiths are also included.



Dr. Mustafa Ali

Further, the role of religious leaders and other faith based actors is growing in recognition by political actors. This is demonstrated in the landmark event organized by the African Union in partnership with Religious Leaders. In June 2010, they jointly convened the First African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum, a landmark event held in Abuja, Nigeria, to find ways to mobilize religious leaders and communities in Africa to work closely, and cooperate with the African Union in various areas.

A Permanent Steering Committee (PSC) was formed to ensure that proposals put in place during the Interfaith Dialogue Forum are carried out, and to ensure sustainability of these engagements. The PSC is a formal and permanent body composed of mainly constituency-based organizations. The African Council of Religious Leaders was mandated by the Forum to be the AU’s technical partner in providing advice, expertise and facilitation to the body. The PSC will explore and act on areas where Tracks I, II and III actions and engagements add value to each.

Consequently, an African FBO Forum could be an opportunity to expand on the action by creating spaces for formal and informal sharing of ideas, challenges, success stories in order to help faith communities and FBOs to build confidence to work across these tracks, and with each other. An African FBO Forum could provide space for an extended and inclusive platform that brings also FBOs – key resource organizations – that will complement what FBOs are already doing; add value where possible to emerging joint and/or separate Tracks I, II and III processes undertaken by the PSC.

## **Remarks and Questions from the Plenary Session**

- Questions were raised about a process for an African FBO Forum: When does it act? Who convenes it? Who belongs? It was suggested that the structure of the African regional process could follow the model of the global FBO Forum: structured as an informal platform that decides for itself when to convene and around which issues. There are no formal membership criteria or mandates. Interested organizations can signal their interest by attending sessions per their availability and interest, and by supporting the costs of their participation. Light coordination would be provided for meeting logistics and agenda development. in meetings and activities. The Forum might chose an informal way to take action on a specific topic. The ACRL would be the logical convener.
- Another participant raised the idea of forming national FBO Forums. Participants at the session were encouraged to form national FBO Forums in their countries, and suggested to consider a multi-religious platform around which to convene.
- Another participant asked about the comparative advantage of this Forum, compared to other informal ongoing networks covering youth, trade, etc? The African FBO Forum will differ from the Permanent Steering Committee (PSC) because it engages faith-based humanitarian and development agencies from Africa as well as those based abroad and working in Africa. The comparative advantage of this Forum, compared to other informal networks, is its multi-religious character and value-base of the participating organizations. The African Forum could decide to serve as a critical conduit of information from faith- based aid organizations to global bodies about what is happening on the ground to facilitate better access to and services for vulnerable groups. It could decide to undertake advocacy campaigns.
- One participant called for support for an African FBO Forum as a complement to the African Union Permanent Steering Committee (PSC). The FBO Forum will bring together all the FBOs interested everywhere, and working in Africa. It can bring issues to the PSC. It's a good opportunity for African FBOs to come together. “
- Comment: French and Portuguese-speaking regions should be represented in the Forum.
- The African Council of Religious Leaders was asked by Forum participants to convene the African FBO Forum.

## SESSION H: EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

- The program covered many topics; there was not enough time to adequately address and reflect on everything presented. There is a lot to read and digest. The participating organizations are working on many different issues. The participants do not know each other. The design and preparation should take into account how to bring 40 people together.
  - The most interesting session was the small group discussion around principle of humanitarian assistance. We shared with each other what we do and do not do. This is quite unique because we do not each others' organizations. The small group discussion on prioritize humanitarian situations in Africa requiring advocacy was much too short. But it did elicit some honest conversations.
  - I recommend you invite members of the media as partners.
  - The high moment in this Forum and the previous ones was the visit to the local community. Every one of these experiences have been an opportunity to cross boundaries and learn, and they have touched my heart. They are worthwhile in themselves. There were many substantive issues addressed in the Forum and there was too little time to address them all adequately. That is certainly true of the humanitarian advocacy session. But as a place for connection and networking, the Forum is worthwhile.
  - This was an eye-opening Forum. I am interested to see how the potential African FBO Forum links to the global FBO Forum. What are their respective strengths, and complementarities?
  - My organization is doing its work at the grassroots but we see the necessity of moving outside our own circles. I look around the room and see other organizations reaching outside their circles. My organization is benefitting as a result of the Forum. The UN is now opening up to FBOs. This is the group that can make that concrete. We need to think universally.
  - On the issue of advocacy, it is not only FBOs that need to undertake action on behalf of people in communities. It is the job of the African Union and others and there are other networks exist. However, there are areas of advocacy that faith communities can have a unique voice and perspective.
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## 2010 FAITH - BASED ORGANISATIONS FORUM



HELD AT NAIROBI SAFARI CLUB - KENYA

## ANNEX 1: DRAFT STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR FBOs

### STATEMENT ON MULTI-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR FBOs:

#### INTRODUCTION

Faith Based Humanitarian, Development and Peace Organizations (FBOs) are working closely with many religious communities and structures on local and national levels. FBOs have developed impressive professionalism in working with local partners, and particularly through local and national faith institutions. The urgent need to work across religions has resulted in a number of initiatives in which FBOs support organizations and communities of different religions to work in coordinated ways, or even in joint actions, addressing humanitarian needs, development and peace building.

In the spirit of common goals and concerns across religious lines, Religions for Peace convened representatives of Faith Based Humanitarian, Development and Peace Organizations to establish an interfaith FBO forum for consulting on matters of common concern. Some concern has been expressed among members of faith communities that FBOs may use humanitarian assistance to convert people to a particular religious creed. We therefore want to make our position clear with the following statement:

#### STATEMENT

**We as FBOs** are rooted in faith, and believe that religion can be a power of positive change when people, across religious boundaries, identify and strengthen the values and potentials within their own religion that affirm justice and protect the oppressed and destitute.

**Being committed** to various relevant and internationally recognized codes of conducts.

**We, the undersigned FBOs**, hereby make clear beyond any doubt, that our humanitarian, development and peace assistance is provided based on mutual respect without any intention of converting people. In our program work we oppose proselytization or any discriminatory treatment based on religious affiliation.

List of FBOs sharing the statement

Signatures of RfP focal points

## ANNEX 2: SUMMARY OF THE MULTI-RELIGIOUS HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY FORUM IN 2010

### Context

The role of religion is frequently debated at the United Nations. A number of religious organizations are accredited to the United Nations and therefore given access to its deliberations and respective member state missions. Among these organizations are globally-based umbrella organizations with presence in New York that are deeply involved in advocacy efforts at the UN.

These groups are pursuing issues and concerns of importance to their member organizations and their constituencies. Their advocacy work is informed by their extensive network of humanitarian and development programs. Caritas Internationalis and the World Council of Churches are examples of major constituency-based organizations with lean but powerful presence at the United Nation. Between them, they represent a vast array of churches and communities around the world with impressive humanitarian and other service delivery efforts. Their voices should be – and are – heard in the UN context.

Similarly, there are other religious traditions with smaller constituency bases that also have skillful presence at the UN and, in many instances, are operating efficient and effective humanitarian and development services. Their advocacy work is similarly informed by their actions on the ground on behalf of the most vulnerable. Examples of such organizations include the Mennonite Central Committee, American Friends Service Committee and Bharat Sewa Sangha.

At the same time, there are many religious communities and faith-based organizations concerned with humanitarian and development issues that do not have representation at the United Nations. Because they lack effective mechanisms to serve as advocacy agents, these groups are missing important opportunities to [bring their prophetic voices] to bear on the dialogue within the UN system.

### Opportunity

There is great potential for faith-based organizations to engage in effective multi-religious advocacy action at the United Nations in New York. While existing advocacy efforts by aforementioned organizations are effective and substantial, there is no established mechanism or forum for multi-religious advocacy. (Given their mandate, history, function), there is great potential for faith-based organizations to have a more effective multi-religious advocacy role at the United Nations in New York.

Participants at the 2009 FBO Forum asked *Religions for Peace* to explore interest in the formation of working group for Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy at the United Nations. *Religions for Peace*

facilitated a consultative process to explore the feasibility of initiating a multi-religious humanitarian advocacy mechanism around the UN in New York. The following summarizes the exploratory process.

### Actions of the Multi-religious Advocacy Forum's Interim Steering Committee

#### Consultation #1, April 12-13

The first meeting of the interim steering committee was convened in New York. While not all religious communities are organized in hierarchical ways or through representative bodies, the attempt was to have as broad representation as possible. Global umbrella agencies within respective faith traditions were invited to participate as were communities without a global base but presence in New York.

The participating organizations are: ACT Alliance, World Council of Churches, CARITAS Internationalis, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Bharat Sevashram Sangha and B'nai B'rith International. Two Buddhist and one additional Hindu organizations were invited but did not attend. The interim Steering Committee achieved the following:

- Jointly defined the elements of multi-religious advocacy as well as the benefits and challenges;
- Developed a concept paper for a Multi-religious Advocacy Forum that includes a shared purpose and operational principles; the decision to structure the mechanism as a forum was deliberate.
- Hosted a public panel for the faith-based UN, and NGO communities on Haiti's post-earthquake humanitarian crisis. Panelists from the World Food Program, Caritas-Haiti and the Global Policy Forum spoke of the circumstances on the ground.

#### Consultation #2, July 12-13

The second consultation was also convened in New York and was attended by the committee with the exception of the World Council of Churches. The group accomplished the following:

- Reviewed and agreed upon the concept of "Multi-Religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum;"
- Adopted two advocacy concerns to serve as pilot cases: Haiti Humanitarian Recovery and Reconstruction (geographic concern) and Violence Against Women (thematic concern);
- Developed a shared framework for advocacy messaging for both issues ;
- Conducted joint advocacy mission to UN members states serving on the interim Haiti Recovery Commission: Canada, Norway and the United States;
- Mandated *Religions for Peace* to draft Terms of Reference (TOR) to present to the wider FBO Forum.

#### Solidarity Visit to Haiti, August 26-27

A delegation that included Islamic Relief USA, World Council of Churches, *Religions for Peace*-International and *Religions for Peace*-Latin America and Caribbean visited Haiti to meet with local faith leaders to get their perspectives and inputs to the advocacy agenda and messaging. The group was

hosted by Bishop Dumas of Caritas-Haiti with assistance from ACT Alliance and Islamic Relief representatives. Together they:

- Gathered concrete information and analysis of the reality “on the ground” from the perspective of the faith communities and faith-based humanitarian actors;
- Conducted a systematic review and testing of advocacy messages and strategies that could be advanced in New York to members states and UN agencies.

#### Haiti Advocacy Meetings, September 29

The visit of Bishop Dumas of Caritas-Haiti invited an opportunity for targeted advocacy meetings with key actors in the UN system. The interim Steering Committee was represented by Bharat Sevashram Sangha, B’nai Birth International and *Religions for Peace*-International. Together the group:

- Developed and refined a set of advocacy messages covering the themes of full Haitian participation in recovery process, insecurity and violence in the camps, resettlement, and decentralization as a strategy for good governance;
- Attended targeted sessions with representatives of OCHA, DPKO and the missions of Norway and Brazil.

#### Looking ahead to 2010 FBO Forum, Nairobi

A full session will be devoted to reviewing the actions of the Multi-religious Advocacy Forum. The interim Steering Committee will report on its work and the Terms of Reference drafted on behalf of the Steering Committee will be considered, and possibly endorsed, at the Forum. Methods for developing shared advocacy messages will be discussed as will modes of communication. Additional FBO Forum members will be invited to join the advocacy forum.

## ANNEX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MULTI-RELIGIOUS HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY FORUM

### Multi-Religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum Draft Terms of Reference (July 2010)

At the request of the Faith-Based Organization Forum in Toronto in October 2009, *Religions for Peace* invited representatives of some faith-based organizations of different faiths for a two day consultation in April 2010.

The role of religion is frequently debated at the United Nations, and a number of religious organizations are accredited to the United Nations and therefore given access to its deliberations and respective member state missions.

Some global network organizations have presence in New York and are deeply involved in advocacy efforts on behalf of concerns raised by their member organizations and their constituencies. They represent vast number of religious organizations and communities around the world with impressive humanitarian and other service delivery efforts. Their voices should be – and are – heard in the UN context. Other religious traditions have skillful presence at the UN. While their constituency base may be narrower, their delivery mechanisms many times are quite efficient and effective.

Finally, there are many major religious communities or faith-based organizations that do not have not any representation at the UN , and lack the tools to be effective advocacy agents at the United Nations Headquarters on humanitarian concerns that impact their member communities and those communities they serve.

Nor are there established mechanisms for multi-religious advocacy. Therefore, The consultation explored the feasibility of establishing a “multi-religious forum for humanitarian advocacy” at the UN in New York that can bring the voices of religious communities together for effective advocacy The participants agreed to constitute an initial Steering Committee for the “Multi-Religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum” to undertake:

**International multi-religious advocacy at the UN in New York to prevent and respond to humanitarian crises and situations of human suffering affecting vulnerable populations and addressing root causes, defending and promoting International Humanitarian Principles and bringing significant added value by mobilizing our constituencies in fulfillment of our core missions, multiplying impact through the combined efforts of our constituencies and speaking with a common voice. We recognize we cannot accomplish our mandates on our own; we emphasize the Divine call to the unity of humanity, acting together with timeliness, empathy and accountability.**

The Forum will add value in following ways:

- Our constituencies will give strength by numbers, through genuine and original voices and possibilities for greater exposures to different and imperative “facts on the ground” as compared to information channeled through official systems
- Combined actions by our constituencies add strength by real outcome and by symbolism
- Common voice will give strength and prevent a “divide and rule” response from i.a. governments, politicians, media and religious leaders
- If done together, religious leaders will enhance their possibility of being included in important processes through having greater access to top level representatives of UN and governments

It is a necessity/Imperative:

- The Forum, representing religious communities cannot do what it aims to do unless changes are taking place at the UN... and strong advocacy is needed
- Individual actions will not be sufficient to achieve what needs to be done. The Forum will offer the platform for common action.
- A record of mutual accountability, empathy and deliberate investments in operational partnerships

#### “Multi-Religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum”

*Who can be members of the Forum?*

- Faith Based Organizations representing faith communities in engaging in humanitarian concerns, assistance and advocacy
- Faith Based Organizations that respect and adhere to internationally accepted humanitarian principles

*The following are proposed as guiding principles of the Forum:*

- The Forum is a functional mechanism and not a new institution
- It is and should operate truly multi-religious, with diverse participation and with mutual respect for the respective religious traditions and their values. Inclusion of women and youth of faith in its advocacy actions will be encouraged.

## ANNEX 4: ANNOTATED AGENDA

### 2010 Annual Meeting

22-23 November (arrival 21 November) / Nairobi Safari Club

#### Concept and Annotated Agenda

##### **Summary**

Faith Based Humanitarian, Development and Peace Organizations (FBOs) are working closely with many religious communities and structures on local and national levels. FBOs have developed impressive professionalism in working with local partners, and particularly through local and national faith institutions. The urgent need to work across religions has resulted in a number of initiatives in which FBOs support organizations and communities of different religions to work in coordinated ways, or even in joint actions.<sup>1</sup>

In the spirit of common mission and concerns, *Religions for Peace* (see annex 1 for background on *Religions for Peace*) convened representatives of Faith Based Humanitarian/Development/Peace Organizations to explore the viability of a *Religions for Peace* Roundtable during the Kyoto VIII World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* in August 2006. (See annex 2 for a short introduction to the FBO Forum)

As a follow-up, *Religions for Peace* convened meeting in London in November 2007, Frankfurt in November 2008 and Toronto in 2009. Participants in the three forums have recommended some priority areas for the Forum:

- *Case studies / best practices / pilot initiatives*  
*Policies/principles/guidelines*  
*Advocacy/research*

##### **Objectives for the fourth Forum 2010**

The specific focus for 2010 will be to:

- a. Deepen the understanding of the value of multi-religious action in Africa through highlighting field experiences, and explore cooperation between FBOs and their relationships with respective local faith communities.
- b. Develop principles of humanitarian assistance for FBOs
- c. Explore the potential of an “African FBO Forum” as an important instrument for multi-religious actions related to humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peace-efforts.
- d. Explore and confirm the “Multi-religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum” as a viable instrument. This process was initiated in the 2009 Forum.

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<sup>1</sup> On national and regional levels different mechanisms and platforms for multi-religious dialogue and joint action have been established. Some of them have followed the pattern of Ecumenical Councils, but with a multi-religious representation. Leaders of the respective religious communities form an Inter-religious council, and within the council a number of working groups and coordination/action committees have been formed.

## Arrival - 21 November

Arrival in Hotel Nairobi Safari Club

19:00 *Reception and short program hosted by African Council of Religious Leaders*

## Day One - 22 November

08:30 *Check in. Coffee / Tea*

A. Introductions and setting the scene.

09:00 *Opening and Presentation of participants*

09:15 *Review of program/agenda*

B. Background to *Religions for Peace* and observations from previous Forums

Expected outcome:

- Building a common understanding and profile of the Forum concept
- Updating on actions since the Frankfurt meeting that may be relevant to the Forum.

09:20 *Re-capitulation of the process leading to this meeting, including main observations and recommendations from 2007, 2008 and 2009*

*Introduction by Religions for Peace:*

*Observations from the participants*

C. Deepen the understanding of the value of multi-religious action in Africa.

Focus:

During the previous FBO Forums we have visited cases in which there have been inter-faith cooperation in different ways. Building on the learning from these cases, new cases from Africa will be presented to further deepen our understanding and give inspiration to new operational inter-faith partnerships. The aim will be to present case-studies in the following categories: a. humanitarian crisis, b. development cooperation, and c. peace-building/reconciliation. The aim will be to look for principles, approaches and actions that most effectively were addressed through multi-religious cooperation.

Expected outcome:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of how the potential of multi-religious action has been pursued in Africa.
- Increased potential for identifying possible cooperation across religious divides in new humanitarian situations and related to development challenges

09:30 *Case studies of multi-religious cooperation in Africa*

*Dr. Mustafa Ali, Secretary General of ACRL-RfP will introduce the theme.*

- 09:40 *Case A: Kenya: "Faith for Life". Project with UNICEF*  
Dr. Francis Kuria, Executive Director, Inter-Religious Council of Kenya
- 09:50 Mr. Sewa Singh Mandla, Representative of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewa Jatha
- 10:00 *Case B: Sierra Leone*  
Rev. Usman Fornah, Secretary General, Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone
- 10:15 *Plenary discussion*
- 11:00 *Coffee / tea*
- 11:30 *Case C: Faith Based Organizations Responses and Experiences in the Horn of Africa*
- A. External perspective  
Mr. Seppo Rantanen – Representative of FinnChurch Aid, East Africa  
Mr. Gaim Kebreab – Representative Norwegian Church Aid
- B. Regional Perspective – Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in the Horn of Africa  
Mr. Mohamed Noor, Programme Manager, Conflict Transformation, African Council of Religious Leaders
- 12:00 *Plenary discussion*
- 12:30 *Lunch*
- D. FBO Principles of humanitarian assistance

Focus:

Some faith based humanitarian organizations are in some areas being questioned and suspected for having e.g. conversion of people with other faiths as a hidden agenda. Some Church based organizations have experienced this in Afghanistan, and organizations with different faith backgrounds have experienced the same in Haiti. There are additional examples. The FBO forum, which is a forum for organizations of different religions, could be the right place to develop a simple joint document that explains what faith based organizations are and which basic principles they follow when implementing humanitarian assistance. The sign-on document may be used in different ways, e.g. be attached to registration papers, shared with community groups if the questions or suspicion related to an organization's identity and agenda should come up. We propose to develop a draft document that may be reviewed and possibly endorsed during the FBO Forum.

Expected outcome:

- Common position on the distinction between basic humanitarian principles and missionary/proselytizing activities
- A joint document that declares our joint common position on the distinction between religious promotion and principles of humanitarian assistance.
- A joint commitment to adhere to the document.

14:00 *Basic principles to be guiding FBOs involved in humanitarian assistance, presenting a draft document for endorsement*

Mr. Arne Sæveraas, Senior Peace and Reconciliation Advisor, Norwegian Church Aid

14:30 *Group discussions*

15:00 *Plenary reporting back and consensus building*

15:30 *Coffee / tea*

#### E. FBOs and Development

Focus:

Most of discussions in our FBO forums have so far concentrated on humanitarian assistance. World Faith Development Dialogue was initiated through a cooperation between the World Bank and the Archbishop of Canterbury. “The World Faiths Development Dialogue works to bring to light the efforts of faith-inspired individuals and organizations working to address local and global humanitarian challenges, and to bring together leaders from the worlds of religion and development to advance partnerships that have as their goal the elimination of global poverty. This module shares what is known about what faith-inspired actors are doing to address the range of humanitarian challenges framed by the MDGs, and issues and challenges associated with their work.” (quotation from their website).

The session will explore WFDD as an instrument for promoting interfaith cooperation for development – experiences, successes and challenges. What might be some lessons that could be considered for future concrete cooperation between international FBOs and local religious communities and their development instruments / structures? How may multi-religious platforms, e.g. Interreligious Councils be encouraged to play constructive roles in this mix?

Expected outcome:

- Knowledge of World Faith Development Dialogue and its main priorities and operational principles
- Identification of how WFDD may be a useful instrument for FBOs of different faiths in their development assistance efforts

16:00 *“World Faith Development Dialogue”, what is it? How can WFDD contribute to interfaith cooperation for human development?*

Ms Hahna Fridirici, Program Coordinator, World Faiths Development Dialogue

Groups and Plenary Discussions and possible recommendations as deemed appropriate.

17:30 *End of day*

18:00 *Depart by bus for Baba Isher Singh Community Centre, Westlands*

Short program and dinner hosted by Sikh Community of Kenya

20:30 *Depart for hotel.*

## Day Two - 23 November

### F. Multi-religious Advocacy at the United Nations

**Focus:** Advocacy related to humanitarian concerns may be relevant on local, national, regional and global levels. Participants in the Toronto forum realized that there is a need to have a more effective multi-religious advocacy action at the United Nations in New York. *Religions for Peace* was asked to facilitate consultations with the aim of exploring the feasibility of initiating a multi-religious humanitarian advocacy mechanism around the UN in New York. In April *Religions for Peace* invited for the first consultation that resulted in the agreement to initiate the “Multi-Religious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum”. Two additional consultations were held with what is now called the “Steering Committee”. The Steering Committee agreed to adopt two initial advocacy concerns: The recovery and rebuilding of Haiti after the January earthquake (geographic concern), and Violence Against Women (thematic concern). A draft “Terms of Reference” will be considered for endorsement during the Forum. A delegation of the Steering Committee visited Haiti in September, and suggested advocacy messages were discussed with local partners. The Steering Committee will report on its work, and will invite member of the FBO Forum to join the advocacy forum. ( Documents will be shared prior to the meeting).

Expected outcome:

- Inform about the background and initiation of the Multireligious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum (MHAF)
- Endorsement of the TOR, and solicit support and commitment for MHAF
- Build support for the multireligious humanitarian advocacy for Haiti
- Identify priority situations in Africa that call for multireligious humanitarian advocacy at the UN

09:00 *Multireligious humanitarian advocacy at the United Nations*  
Stein Villumstad will introduce the session

09:20 *Establishment of “Multireligious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum” – the process and potentials*  
Swami Parameshananda, Bharat Sevashram Sangha

09:30 *Terms of Reference for the “Multireligious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum”*  
Mr. David Michael, Director of United Nations and Intercommunal Affairs, B’nai B’rith International

09:40 *Discussion of Terms of Reference, resulting in endorsement by the Forum*

10:00 *Multireligious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum and Haiti*  
Rev. Chris Ferguson, World Council of Churches will share actions taken so far, including delegation visit to Port-au-Prince and proposed advocacy strategy

10:15 *Discussion and possible recommendations for endorsement and signing on to the Multireligious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum Haiti advocacy strategy.*

10:30 *Coffee / tea*

11:00 *African Humanitarian situations that call for advocacy action by the Multireligious Humanitarian Advocacy Forum.*  
Overview, George Wachira, Nairobi Peace Initiative (TBC)

11:15 *Groups discuss priorities and potential advocacy focus and messages to be promoted at the UN in New York*

12:00 *Plenary conclusions and recommendations*

12.30 *Lunch*

G. Potential for building an African FBO Forum

Focus:

A theme throughout our previous forums has been the relevance and importance of forum ideas on different levels. Examples of national mechanisms have been highlighted, and the potential of regional forums has been discussed. While convening the 2010 Forum in Africa, and expecting a good number of Africa-based FBO representatives to participate, we believe it may be relevant to explore the feasibility of an African FBO Forum. African Union and religious leaders in Africa jointly convened an important Forum in June of this year to initiate a systematic dialogue with the religious communities in Africa and the African Union. A mechanism for moving this process forward was established. It may be of interest to explore how an African FBO Forum may link with this process related to advocacy and humanitarian policy work. Exploring potentials for, and areas of possible joint Track I and Track II approaches to conflict transformation and peace building and sustainable development in Africa will be considered. Another aspect of an African FBO Forum could potentially be a mechanism for exploring practical areas of cooperation across humanitarian coordination mechanisms that already exist to secure multi-religious partnerships in humanitarian efforts.

Expected outcome:

- Potential agreement on convening an African FBO forum
- Initial ideas about themes and timing for the possible African FBO forum

14:00 *Introduction of the idea to initiate an African FBO forum*  
*Dr. Mustafa Ali, Secretary General of African Council of Religions for Peace - RfP*

14:15 *Discussions in groups*

14:45 *Plenary summary and recommendations*

15:00 *Tea / coffee*

15:30 *Final observations, conclusions and suggested way forward*

Expected outcome:

- Main conclusions of the Forum
- Suggestions for the next Forum

**16:00 *End of the FBO Forum***

## ANNEX 5: LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

### 2010 Annual FBO Forum

22-23 November / Nairobi

#### List of Participating Organizations

African Council of Religious Leaders/*Religions for Peace*-Africa  
African Religious Youth Network  
African Union Commission  
All Africa Council of Churches  
Alshahid Center for Research and Media Studies  
American Friends Service Committee  
Anglican Church of Kenya  
Bharat Sevashram Sangha USA  
B'nai B'rith International (B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund)  
Christian Aid  
Church of Sweden  
EIFDDA/*Religions for Peace*-Ethiopia  
European Council of Religious Leaders/*Religions for Peace*-Europe  
FECHLAHA  
Finn Church Aid  
Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, Kenya & UK  
Hindu Council of Africa  
ICCO  
Interfaith Peace-building Initiative of Ethiopia  
International Islamic Relief Organization, Kenya  
Inter-Religious Council of Kenya/*Religions for Peace*-Kenya  
Inter-Religious Council of DRC/*Religions for Peace*-DRC  
Inter-Religious Council of Liberia/*Religions for Peace*-Liberia  
Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone/*Religions for Peace*-Sierra Leone  
Islamic Foundation  
Islamic Relief-USA  
Life and Peace Institute, Nairobi  
Lutheran World Federation/World Service  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Muslim Aid  
Nairobi Hebrew Congregation

Nigeria Inter-religious Council  
Norwegian Church Aid  
PLeROC/*Religions for Peace*-Madagascar  
*Religions for Peace*-International  
Trocaire / Caritas Internationalis  
Winchester Centre for Religious Reconciliation and Peace  
World Assembly of Muslim Youth  
World Council of Churches  
World Faith Development Dialogue  
World Muslim League  
World Vision International  
ZINGO/*Religions for Peace*-Zambia

### Religions for Peace

*Religions for Peace*—the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition—advances common action among the world’s religious communities for peace.

- *Religions for Peace* builds peace by working to transform violent conflict, promote just and harmonious societies, advance human development, and protect the earth.
- At a time in history when religion is viewed increasingly as a source of division and violent conflict, *Religion for Peace* advances the concern for human flourishing found in all religions.

**What we do.** *Religions for Peace* leads action programs; builds inter-religious councils around the world; and keeps them working together in a dynamic network. This global alliance includes thousands of religious leaders, women’s organizations, and youth groups.

**Why it works.** *Religions for Peace* respects religious differences. It aligns faith communities around shared concerns and uses their great religious, institutional, and human resources as building blocks of a global coalition.

**Our leadership.** Sixty international senior religious leaders serve as a World Council. They represent the world’s diverse faith traditions: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Shinto, Taoist, Zoroastrian, and Indigenous.

**Our history.** Founded in 1970 as an international, non-sectarian organization, *Religions for Peace* has a long track record of building peace around the world through action programs. *Religions for Peace* is supported by religious communities, religiously affiliated development agencies, governments, inter-governmental organizations, foundations, and individuals.