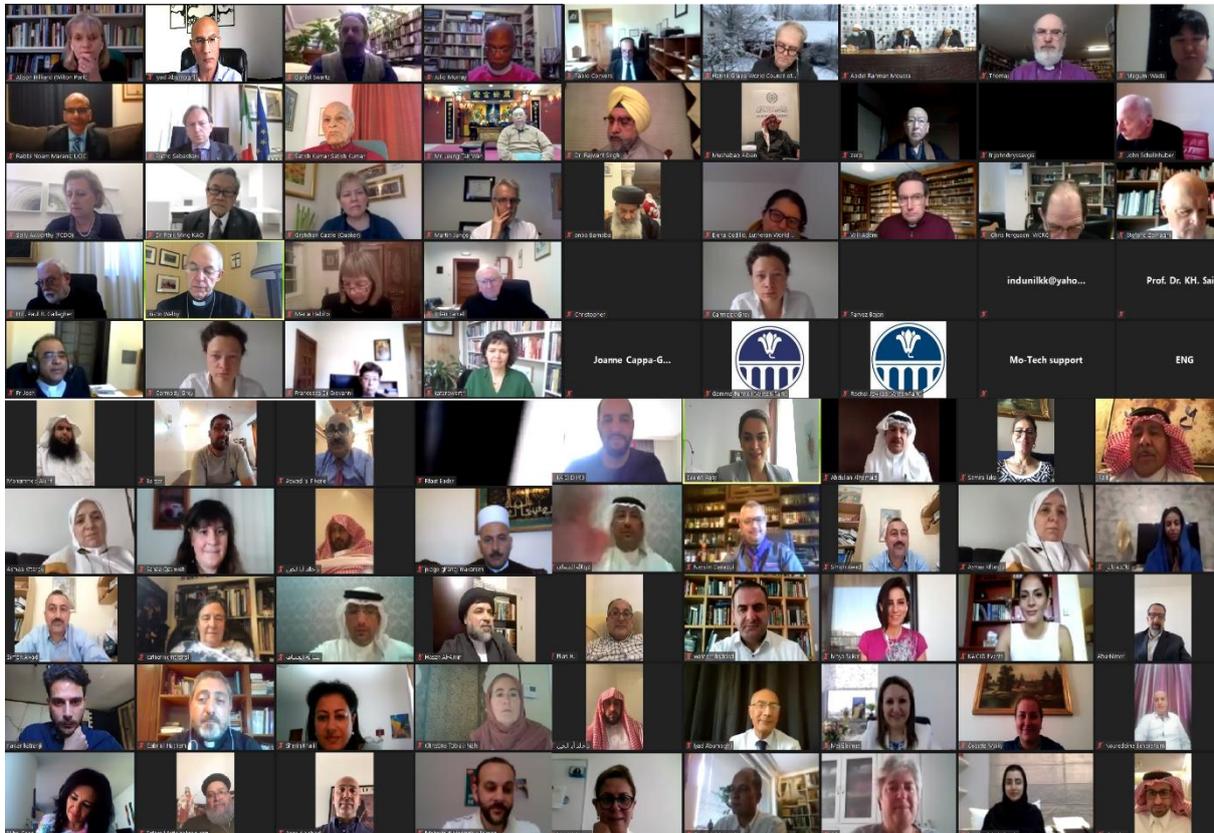


FAITH FOR EARTH



ONE EARTH
MANY RELIGIONS
ONE GOAL



FAITH FOR EARTH

ONE EARTH – MANY RELIGIONS – ONE GOAL

Achievement | 2020
Report

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Forward

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

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

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

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

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

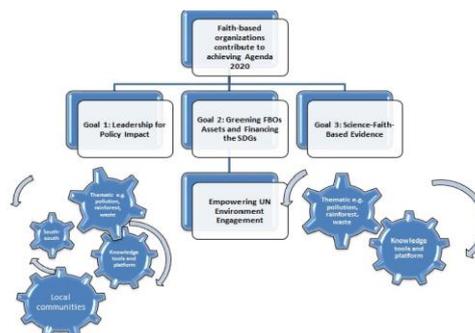
We cannot afford to be complacent and hope that science and technology alone will save our common home. We need to address climate change and protect the natural environment based on ethical values and behaviours and change our vantage point to that of the Earth and all other living things.

Iyad Abumoghli

Director of Faith for Earth

Introduction

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



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

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

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

UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021

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

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

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

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

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



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

Faith for Earth Coalition



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

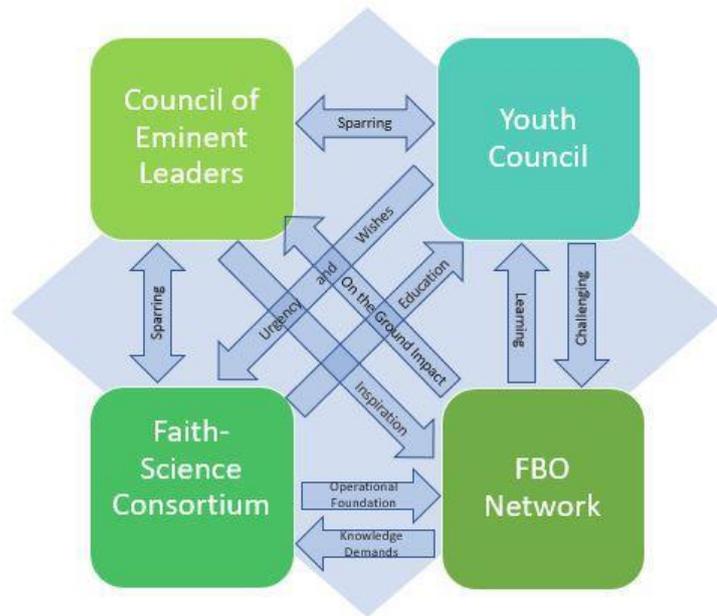
1. The Council of Eminent Leaders: Composed of high-level faith leaders representing all world religions in terms of number of adherents.
2. The Youth Council: Composed of young faith leaders and members of youth movements advocating for living in respect and harmony with planet earth.
3. The Network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



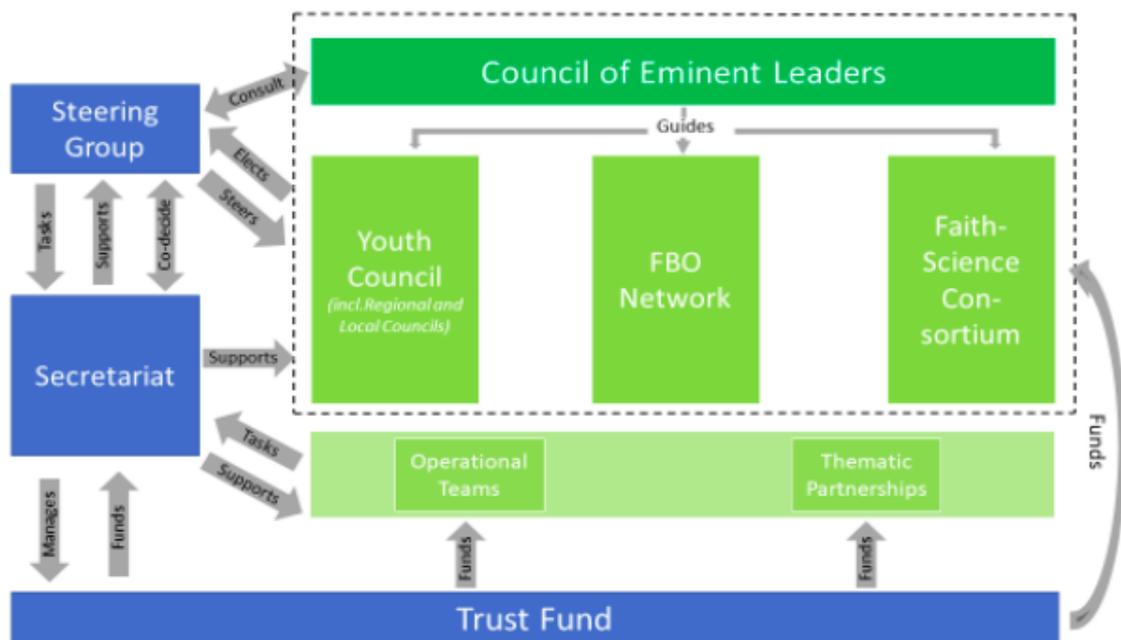
- The Faith-Science Consortium: Composed of theologians, scientists and environmentalists to bridge the gap between environmental science and religions.

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

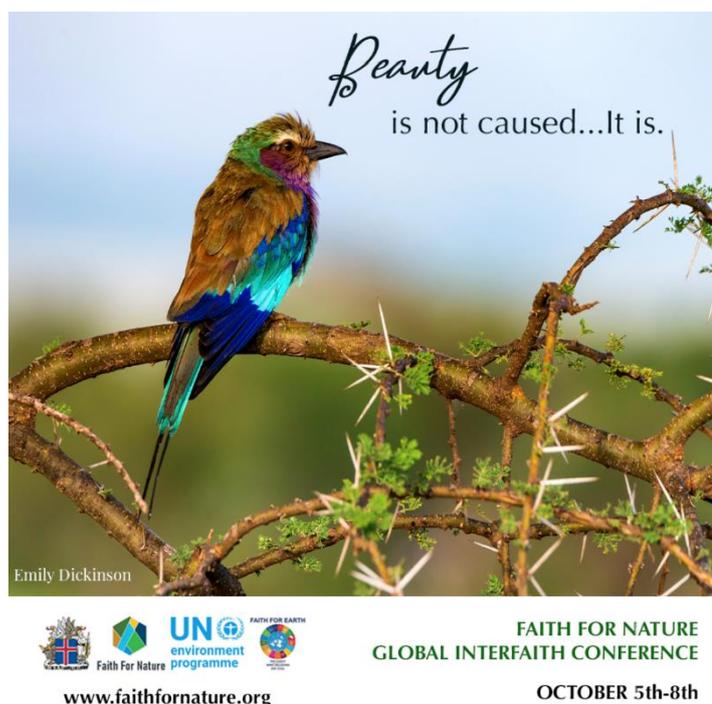
The Trust Fund of the Faith for Earth Coalition is established as a self-sustaining mechanism to sustain engagement with FBOs and mobilise the global faith community in a powerful way while integrating the goals of the Initiative into the MTS and PoW of UNEP.



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



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



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





King Hussein Mosque in Amman – Jordan by Wael Abumoghli

High-level Engagement

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

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



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

With WEA, Faith for Earth organised a general meeting in Bonn with including the UN Convention to Combat

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