Religions for Peace

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 - 2025

# Preface & Acknowledgements

This Strategic Plan outlines the goals and strategies of *Religions for Peace* (*RfP*) for the upcoming years, 2020-2025, before the next World Assembly.[1]

The sections that follow articulate the organisation's mission; describe the *RfP* movement; identify the core strengths of the *RfP* approach; set the organisation's global agenda and goals for the period before the next World Assembly; and elaborate strategies to achieve these goals.

This document is the result of the most inclusive and participatory strategic planning process in *RfP's* 50-year history. The process began with national- and regional-level consultations held across the globe by *RfP* affiliates, which informed deliberations at the 10th World Assembly in Lindau, Germany. Over 1,000 delegates from 125 countries identified challenges and action areas, which were formally adopted in the Assembly Declaration. These were further augmented by contributions made by the *RfP* coalition via a survey disseminated globally.

The Strategic Plan was further refined at the Multi-religious and Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Peace and Development, convened by *RfP* in New York, USA. Over 250 global religious peacebuilders, government officials, diplomats, United Nations representatives, leaders of partner organisations and philanthropists held consultations to finalise the Strategic Plan outline.

This Strategic Plan was adopted by the World Council[2] on 26 February 2020. The strategic goals contained in this Plan are intended to provide a clear and collaborative framework for the activities of the entire *RfP* movement.

*RfP* is indebted to the support of many donors and partners, including the Federal Republic of Germany, the GHR Foundation and Rissho Kosei-kai, for its support of the strategic planning process.

A special appreciation to the whole of the *RfP* movement that was engaged in this process and provided invaluable inputs. Gratitude is also owed to the *RfP* staff and consultants from Konterra Group for their assistance.

[1] The 11th World Assembly is anticipated to be held in 2025. Every 5–7 years, *RfP* convenes a World Assembly for the purpose of forging a deep moral consensus on contemporary challenges and priority areas, electing a new World Council and advancing multi-religious action across and beyond the movement.

[2] The World Council, *RfP*'s governing board, is comprised of senior religious leaders who represent the world's diverse faith traditions.



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# Executive Summary

*Religions for Peace* (*RfP*) is the only international multi-religious organisation with affiliated and legally registered multi-religious leadership platforms around the world. Membership within these 90 national and six regional Interreligious Councils (IRCs) is built on the principle of religious representativity, reflecting the fabric of religious demography on those levels. Through these infrastructures, *RfP* advances common action among the world's religious communities for a comprehensive, holistic and sustainable peace. For *RfP*, peace has always been more than the absence of war or violence. Indeed, the advancement of human dignity and shared well-being in harmony with the earth, with and through representative religious institutions and faith leadership, is at the heart of *RfP*'s understanding and vision of peace.

*RfP* builds on a 50-year legacy of multi-religious engagement nuanced, informed and challenged by diverse and complex contexts at community, national, regional and global levels. Since its inception in 1970, *RfP*'s affiliated IRCs have engaged in a wide range of social, political, economic and humanitarian issues. As such, *RfP*'s multi-religious vision and engagement are built on shared values derived from both religious tenets and faith-inspired praxis.

Through five decades of learning from its interreligious platforms and multi-religious collaboration, *RfP* has experienced religion contributing to solutions, but has also witnessed "religion" being responsible, in diverse ways, for some of the contemporary challenges. Of special concern today is the fact that religion is misused in support of violent conflict and extremism – exacerbated by the rising tide of hostility among social groups, including religious communities. Space for civil society has been shrinking, eroding the foundations of democracy and respect for human dignity. Furthermore, challenges today all too often disproportionately affect the vulnerable, including the poor, refugees, internally displaced persons and minorities. These vulnerabilities are intensified by the threats to the environment. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that religions (actors and institutions) are engaged in all processes of development, human rights, and peace and security.

Bearing in mind the above challenges and the need for a strong global network of interreligious bodies to lead efforts advancing effective multi-religious cooperation for peace, *RfP* has six strategic goals:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1** Promote Peaceful, Just & Inclusive Societies | **2** Advance Gender Equality | **3** Nurture a Sustainable Environment |
| **4** Champion Freedom of Thought, Conscience & Religion | **5** Strengthen Interreligious Education | **6** Foster Multi-religious Collaboration & Global Partnerships |

*RfP* is committed to a stronger civic engagement for global peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. By aligning this plan with Agenda 2030[1] and its indicators, agreed to by 193 governments, *RfP* affirms its commitment to leaving no one behind.[3] The process of developing this Strategic Plan was inclusive in nature, encompassing the entire *RfP* movement.[4]



[3] With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 193 United Nations Member States pledged to ensure no one will be left behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.
[4] *RfP* movement refers to the entire *RfP* network: the World Council with its International Secretariat; regional and national IRCs, which also encompass women and youth networks on these respective levels; the Global Women of Faith Network; Global Interfaith Youth Network; and their religious constituencies.

# I. Our World Today

The challenges faced by modern society are cross-cutting in nature, requiring holistic and inclusive responses. These challenges have arisen within a broader crisis where opportunities for civil society have been shrinking, decreasing the safe space available for dialogue and trust-building, and eroding the foundations of democracy and respect for human dignity.[2]

Over the past decade, 63 percent of countries recorded increased levels of terrorist activity.[3] Since 2014, incidents of far-right terrorism have increased by 320 percent.[4]

Social hostilities involving religion are high or very high in nine out of ten of the world's most populous countries;[5] and in 2016, 83 percent of the global population lived in countries with high or very high religious restrictions.[6]

The global population of forcibly displaced people surpassed 70 million in 2018, a record high.[7]

The world's richest 1 percent in 2020 have more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people.[8]

At the current pace of progress, the gender gap will continue to exist for another 99.5 years.[9]

The percentage of people living in countries where civic space is repressed more than doubled in 2019, from 19 percent to 40 percent.[10]

Finally, 12-13 million hectares of tropical forests are destroyed every year, the equivalent of 40 hectares per minute,[11] and virtually all States are behind in their commitments to the Paris Agreement on climate change.[12]

The extent to which religious actors are able to respond to these challenges has been steadily on the rise for decades, drawing increased attention from governments, bi- and multi-lateral institutions and civil society organisations. United Nations bodies have realised that "being knowledgeable of the work of faith-based actors is necessary in order to benefit from the social capital available for sustainable human development, human rights, and peace and security."[13] Indeed, the modern global context requires more than a mere knowledge of faith actors; it also needs deeper synergy and collaboration in order to most effectively alleviate and overcome current challenges that fall within the moral mandates of the world's religious communities. The necessity of multi-religious and multi-stakeholder partnership to respond to the challenges of our world has never been more profound, and the opportunities it presents have never been more apt to be seized.

Drawing from 50 years of experience advancing multi-religious collaboration for peace, *RfP*, in its outlining of strategic goals for the period of 2020-2025, will harness cooperation among the world's religions and relevant stakeholders to address these major challenges, and seek to advance innovative and inclusive solutions. This Plan outlines the major challenges *RfP* commits itself to addressing and the needed activities designed to meet them.

# II. *Religions for Peace*

## 1. VISION, MISSION & PRINCIPLES

### VISION

The world's religious communities cooperate effectively for peace.

Since its founding in 1970, *RfP* has been guided by the vision of a world in which religious communities cooperate effectively for Peace, by taking concrete common action.

*RfP* is committed to leading efforts to advance effective multi-religious cooperation for peace on global, regional, national and local levels while ensuring that the religious communities organised on these same levels assume and exercise appropriate leadership and ownership of these efforts.

### MISSION

*RfP* advances common action among the world's religious communities for peace.

Multi-religious cooperation for peace and shared well-being is the hallmark of *RfP*. This cooperation includes but also goes beyond dialogue and bears fruit in common concrete action. Through *RfP*, diverse religious communities discern "deeply held and widely shared" moral concerns, such as violent conflict; gender inequality; environmental degradation; threats to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion; lack of interreligious understanding; and the shrinking space for civil society and multilateralism. *RfP* translates these shared concerns into concrete multi-religious action.

### PRINCIPLES

The *RfP* movement advances multi-religious cooperation consistent with its four guiding principles.

- *Respect* religious differences and seek to honour the identity and community of each religious tradition;
- *Leverage* the existing spiritual, moral and social assets of the world's religious communities to act on deeply held and widely shared values;
- *Build* and/or *strengthen* representative, sustainable multi-religious mechanisms, co-owned by religious institutions and communities;
- *Partner* local, national, regional, and global multi-religious structures, with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental civil society actors.

## 2. STRENGTHS & COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

*RfP*'s embodiment of multi-religious cooperation is a powerful way to engage the spiritual, moral and social assets of religious communities to advance shared well-being and counter the misuse of religion. It can be more powerful than the efforts of individual religious groups acting alone, more inclusive than efforts solely within religious communities, and more efficient and sustainable than ad hoc interfaith initiatives. Multi-religious engagement not only enhances knowledge of other religions, but also deepens the understanding and practice of one's own faith.

*RfP*'s work is always multi-religious in nature, which includes intra- and inter-religious engagement. Four strengths distinguish *RfP*'s multi-religious approach.

### MULTI-RELIGIOUS IDENTITY




*RfP*'s multi-religious identity is a strength when peace initiatives are best implemented on a multi-religious basis. In these situations, multi-religious efforts can be more powerful – both symbolically and substantively – than the efforts of individual religious groups acting alone.

The symbolic strength arises when multi-religious cooperation helps to prevent or stop conflict or other challenges that can – directly or indirectly – involve different religious communities. The substantive strength arises when cooperation helps diverse religious communities to align around common challenges to peace, offers them creative ways to take advantage of their complementary strengths, equips them for needed forms of action and – importantly – positions them for partnerships with secular institutions, without engaging those institutions in advancing particular sectarian beliefs.

### INTERRELIGIOUS STRUCTURES

The *RfP* movement refers to the entire *RfP* network: the World Council with its International Secretariat; six regional and 90 national IRCs, which also encompasses women and youth networks on these respective levels; the Global Women of Faith Network; Global Interfaith Youth Network; and their religious constituencies.

No single religious community leads *RfP*. Rather, representatives from diverse religious traditions working together constitute all of *RfP*'s structures and leadership. Its multi-religious identity helps *RfP* to convene and mobilise common action across many faiths.[5]

The *RfP* Global Women of Faith Network includes religious women's organisations as well as growing national and regional women of faith networks in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the

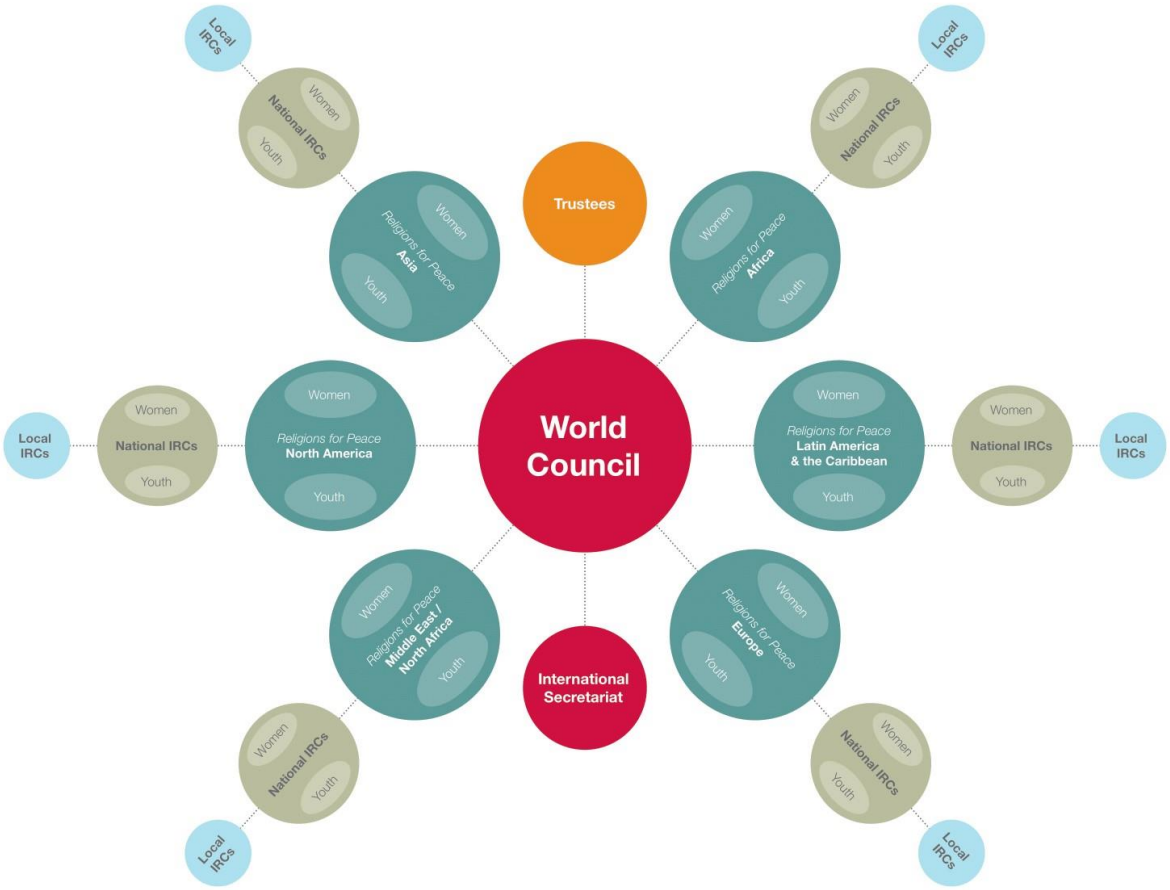
[5] Many of the world's diverse faith communities operate or have affiliated to themselves well-established intra-faith organisations – including NGOs – that are committed to advancing peace. Many of these organisations are committed to multi-religious work and *RfP* greatly welcomes partnerships with them.

Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and North America. The *RfP* Global Interfaith Youth Network comprises national and regional interreligious youth networks in these same six regions.

Each interreligious body affiliated with *RfP* is self-led, but also part of the global *RfP* network. These action-oriented councils and women and youth networks are multi-religious and "public" in character. They are led by the representatives of diverse religious communities and are designed to provide a platform for cooperative action throughout the different levels within these religious communities, from grassroots to the senior-most leaders. Successful *RfP* bodies serve as bridges between diverse religious communities that can help build trust, reduce hostility in areas of conflict and provide a platform for common action.

## MODUS OPERANDI

*RfP* recognises that religious communities should be the main agents of multi-religious collaboration. Thus, *RfP* engages religious communities through their own representatives – leaders, outstanding persons, grassroots congregations and other organisational manifestations – in the work of building




*RfP*-affiliated structures on every level, local to global.

A central feature of the *RfP* approach is its commitment to engage existing religious structures as the "building blocks" for multi-religious collaboration. Thus, multi-religious collaboration is mandated

and backed by religious institutions and guided and implemented by senior-most religious leaders with community involvement. This approach has great strength insofar as it can effectively and efficiently engage religious communities' existing strengths to build peace through the power of collaboration. It also enables *RfP* to have wide reach on the grassroots level.

The method for common action developed by *RfP* is practical and open to continuous creativity. It assists religious communities to correlate, or work out a connection, between their capacities for action and specific challenges. The method is simple yet powerful. When applied, it discloses large, often hidden or underutilized capacities for action that lie within the reach of religious communities. Importantly, it also identifies the advantages of multi-religious cooperation and the kinds of capacity building needed for effective multi-religious action.

Concretely, the method assists *RfP* to analyse specific problems; make an inventory of related religious assets and the added values of cooperation; match these with needed problem-solving roles and identify areas of capacity building essential for common action.

### Legacy of 50 Years of Multi-Religious Collaboration

Built on 50 years of cultivating trust, building peace and elevating the voices of those most in need, *RfP* serves as an ever-growing alliance of care, compassion and love. In its public mode, *RfP* brings great moral clarity, credibility and visibility through nurturing collaboration across diverse religious communities and other key stakeholders. In fragile situations, *RfP* is often able to work effectively "behind the scenes" to open safe "off-record" encounters designed to help create the trust essential for more public dialogue and action.

Through the years, *RfP* has amassed a solid record of multi-religious engagement. Ranging from conflict transformation to environmental protection, this history has included mediating conflict and negotiating the release of child hostages in Sierra Leone, providing care and support for orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS, mobilising 21 million multi-religious youth for global disarmament, and forging partnerships between religious and indigenous communities for rainforest protection, to name a few.

Five decades of experience has refined *RfP*'s approach, which is comprehensive, flexible enough to respond quickly to changing circumstances, and highly efficient in terms of utilizing local resources and sustaining community-led actions.

*RfP* will continue its legacy through responding to the sacred call to share responsibility for the common good and care for one another, the earth and its entire web of life.

# III. *RfP* Strategic Planning Process

## 1. 10th WORLD ASSEMBLY

From 20-23 August 2019, more than 1,000 religious actors from 125 countries – women, men and youth from six regions – joined governmental, inter-governmental and civil-society partners in Lindau, Germany, for *RfP*'s 10th World Assembly. The theme of the Assembly was "Caring for Our Common Future: Advancing Shared Well-Being."

In preparation for the Assembly, *RfP* prepared five background papers. Each paper focused on a specific area of shared well-being, including a multi-religious vision of positive peace, preventing and transforming violent conflict, promoting just and harmonious societies, advancing integral human development and protecting the earth.

During the Assembly, participants discussed and reaffirmed *RfP*'s commitment to common action for advancing each of these themes and developing concrete follow-up actions with partner organisations.

The commission papers, topics discussed and commitments made during the 10th World Assembly laid the foundation for a follow-up meeting in New York in December 2019 and the Strategic Goals described in Section IV that follow.






## 2. MULTI-RELIGIOUS & MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE & DEVELOPMENT

Following the success of the World Assembly, *RfP* convened the Multi-religious and Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Peace and Development meeting from 11-13 December 2019 in New York (NY) to further advance the outcomes of the Assembly.

In preparation for the NY meeting, *RfP* administered a survey to gather input into the top challenges and opportunities for interreligious collaboration for 2020-2025. The responses were categorised into six themes and presented during the NY meeting: peace and security concerns; gender; environment; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; interreligious education; and multi-religious collaboration and partnerships.

During the first day of the meeting, government officials, diplomats, United Nations representatives, leaders of partner organisations and philanthropists joined the *RfP* network of religious communities to advance solutions to challenges faced by the international community.

The second day focused on internal strategic planning. It began with exploring multi-religious collaboration in the context of development, human rights, peace and security, followed by the survey presentation. The main components of the day were regional sessions exploring challenges and opportunities for interreligious collaboration, and thematic sessions focused on successful practices,

lessons learned and strategic priorities. The day concluded with agreements on the six strategic goals and actions presented in Section IV.

The World Council met on the third day and approved the general outline for the strategic plan for 2020-2025.



# IV. Strategic Goals

*RfP* has set six strategic goals for the period of 2020-2025. Each of the goals advance *RfP*'s multi-religious vision of peace, build on *RfP*'s past work and align with one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *RfP*'s strategic goals are interdependent; progress towards one goal contributes to progress towards the others.

- Promote Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies
- Advance Gender Equality
- Nurture a Sustainable Environment
- Champion Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion
- Strengthen Interreligious Education
- Foster Multi-religious Collaboration and Global Partnerships

## 1. FRAMEWORK

Based upon deeply held moral principles widely shared by the world's faith traditions, *RfP* advances a multi-religious vision of positive peace. This notion of peace is multi-dimensional, recognises the responsibility to reject the misuse of religion in support of violence, and includes peaceful, just and inclusive societies, advancing integral human development and protecting the environment. *RfP* has a legacy of harnessing the power of cooperation to unleash the capacities of religious communities – including their spiritualties, moral heritages and vast grassroots networks – to advance peace.

Positive peace offers the foundation for *RfP*'s engagement in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs that were adopted by all UN member states in September 2015 for the 15-year period 2016–2030. *RfP*'s strategic goals, like the SDGs, are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while considering different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. They integrate economic, social and environmental aspects and recognise their inter-linkages in achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions.

## 2. METHODS OF OPERATIONALISATION

In pursuing these six strategic goals, *RfP* will work in partnership with its regional and national affiliates and strive to enhance their leadership on their respective levels.[6] Advancing each aspect of the strategic goals will typically include the following key methods of operationalisation:

| ADVOCACY | CAPACITY BUILDING |
|---|---|
| *RfP* will implement various initiatives intended to encourage policy formulation, influence thoughts and/or behaviours, raise awareness and/or mobilise specific communities and actors. | *RfP* will seek to build the capacities of its affiliated Interreligious Councils (IRCs) in all its actions. This may include, but is not limited to, linking IRCs with context-specific partners such as UN offices or faith-based organisations (FBOs), providing training to religious and community actors, and offering safe spaces for multi-stakeholder dialogue and action. |
| **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT** | **HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT** |
| *RfP* develops multi-religious resource guides, toolkits and manuals to equip its movement for action. Another component of *RfP*'s work is the creation and dissemination of multi-religious statements and declarations calling on leaders and communities to advance peace as it relates to *RfP*'s strategic goals and "deeply held and widely shared" concerns. *RfP* also supports communities in adapting inter-governmental and interreligious declarations to ensure they are relevant and digestible for their local communities, to improve their implementation. | In addition to preventative and pre-emptive measures, IRCs respond to humanitarian and development needs through interfaith prayer services, psycho-social and spiritual counselling, care and support, medical treatment, and basic needs and supplies. By providing these services, IRCs can also promote interreligious relationship building.<br><br>Humanitarian support may not cut across all goals but will be included where relevant. |
| Cross cutting the above operational modalities is the inclusion of women, youth, and all religious actors. | |

[6] The strategic priorities adopted by the World Council, however, do not preclude multi-religious activities in other areas by members within the *RfP* movement. Each independent member of the movement is free to set its own locally contextualised priorities within the broad mission of *RfP*.

# 3. STRATEGIC GOAL IMPLEMENTATION

## S1: PROMOTE PEACEFUL, JUST & INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Working towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies builds on *RfP*'s previous work under the strategic plan for 2014-2018 to transform violent conflict, promote just and harmonious societies, and advance human development. *RfP*'s ongoing work towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies supports several SDGs.

### Activities

1. Initiate an *RfP* advocacy campaign that emphasizes the economic costs of conflict
2. Contribute to a growing culture of forgiveness and reconciliation, both in public processes and in private settings to build lasting and sustainable peace, as expressed, inter alia, in the Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation[14]
3. Strengthen systematic IRC partnerships with UN and other multilateral agencies as a means of interreligious support to multilateral efforts and build synergy with global human rights commitments to better integrate religious peacebuilding with socioeconomic development and resource management initiatives
    - Advocate to ensure that international commitments (such as UN Resolution 1325) to the inclusion of women at all levels and stages of peace processes are honoured
    - Mobilise religious communities to invest their resources in alignment with achieving the SDGs
    - Continue to advance partnership with UNICEF to strengthen the collaborative engagement of religious communities for child well-being through initiatives such as "Faith and Positive Change for Children – Global Initiative on Social and Behaviour Change"
4. Facilitate responses to public health challenges such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola
5. Advocate to governments and mobilise communities to promote good governance, the rule of law, and implementation of international law and agreements
6. Engage religious communities toward general disarmament including all weapons of destruction – conventional, nuclear, chemical, biological, and those newly emerging
    - Advocate in support of international treaties and agreements, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons[15]
    - Mobilise and position youth as advocates for disarmament
7. Address inequalities and advance poverty alleviation strategies
    - Strengthen the legal identity and voice of the poor and vulnerable
8. Build capacity and expertise of religious peacebuilders by working with experts on peacebuilding, mediation and negotiation, and help develop evidence base for religious peacebuilding
    - Develop tools and training on the positive roles of women in preventing and transforming conflicts, and on the issue of violence against them
    - Build skills in conflict management that address the drivers of conflicts
    - Produce positive peace materials and workshops for multi-religious contexts[16]
    - Support credible internal intermediaries to promote dialogue with alienated groups and intervene where possible
9. Work for the well-being of refugees and migrants through advocacy and community mobilisation, and provide solidarity and support to host countries and communities

## S2: Advance Gender Equality




*RfP* has a legacy of advancing gender equality, especially the promotion of women's leadership in institutions at the local, national, regional and global levels, and will continue to promote it as a core goal. The Global Women of Faith Network, led by its International Women's Coordinating Committee, is at the forefront of *RfP*'s work towards gender equality.



### Activities

1. Develop a shared understanding of the meaning of gender within *RfP* for effective collaborative action to promote gender equality
2. Support women's leadership roles
    - Increase the number of women leading/taking responsibility for priority initiatives within the *RfP* movement
    - Provide greater opportunities for women's involvement in decision-making
    - Recognise and celebrate women-led initiatives
3. Provide means/tools and advocate for an intersectional approach to gender, including poverty and climate concerns
    - Build on National Action Plans of countries to translate SDGs, as related to gender, into actions
4. Build on international agreements and interreligious declarations that recognise and promote women's rights
5. Develop policies, document best practices and, where absent, build mechanisms to hold accountable those who perpetrate gender-based violence and biases, and monitor the implementation and activation thereof
    - Support the programme on forensic DNA to enhance accountability for sexual violence
6. Provide trainings/strategic learning exchanges for IRC members (including men, women and youth) around human rights, gender-based violence (including sexual violence in conflict), and gender and gender mainstreaming
    - Educate women/girls and men/boys about gender and human rights
7. Create safe spaces for dialogue among religious leaders on potentially sensitive and contentious issues related to gender
    - Initiate dialogue on LGBT issues
    - Initiate dialogue on sex education, with the aim to produce proposals for advocacy with governments

## S3: Nurture a Sustainable Environment

Religious communities recognise the dynamic inter-relationship and dependency between all forms of life, which has also been substantiated by modern science. *RfP* will work to ensure that multi-religious collaboration is geared towards nurturing a sustainable environment for all living species.

### Activities

1. Support and promote the development of international and/or multi-faith alliances that aim to protect and restore the planet's vital ecosystems and have a meaningful and lasting impact on the health of our global environment and the achievement of sustainable development
    - Raise public awareness, promote policies and forge partnerships between religious and indigenous communities through the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative to protect the world's remaining rainforests and the indigenous peoples who serve as their guardians[17]
2. Mobilise *RfP* movement to campaign for lifestyle changes to reduce consumption and energy use
3. Deepen engagement with indigenous communities and their elders to learn from and disseminate traditional knowledge and wisdom
4. Educate community leaders and advocate to policymakers on issues of environment and climate change
5. Utilize data and analysis from research institutions to challenge global financial systems/major institutions that support environmental degradation

## S4: Champion Freedom of Thought, Conscience & Religion

During the 10th World Assembly, *RfP* re-committed to leading by example to instil the respect, mutuality and solidarity that are essential to promote, build and sustain just, harmonious and diverse communities. At the core is a commitment to enable all *RfP* IRCs to advance a more robust notion of citizenship that acknowledges basic human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion, in line with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises that, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

### Activities

1. Engage with key political and intergovernmental instruments/processes
    - Contribute to governmental, intergovernmental and civil society forums to advance freedom of thought, conscience and religion
2. Provide safe spaces for reflection on concerns regarding the political instrumentalisation of Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB); the balance between freedom of expression and the elimination of hate speech, and FoRB and the application of blasphemy laws
3. Forge an Alliance of Virtue widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages[18]
4. Eliminate violence and hatred (including hate speech) against all, including members of religious communities
    - Promote and disseminate inter-governmental and multi-religious declarations, including the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites,[19] the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech,[20] the Marrakesh Declaration,[21] and the Beirut Declaration and Commitments on Faith for Rights[22]

## S5: Strengthen Interreligious Education

*RfP* promotes interreligious education to increase trust and improve understanding, respect and relationships between people of different faiths. It includes religious literacy from early childhood to adulthood and focuses on shared civic virtues and appreciation for social diversity.

### Activities

1. Promote interreligious education, dialogue and exchange programmes to counteract tendencies of populism, hate speech, intolerance and social divides
2. Organise interfaith training programmes and youth camps
3. Partner with community and government leaders to host interreligious dialogues, conferences, roundtables and seminars; conduct research and organise lectures and presentations on the various issues identified by this plan
4. Conduct interfaith celebrations of religious holidays, festivals and events – including World Interfaith Harmony Week and the International Day of Tolerance – to promote interfaith hospitality and solidarity

## S6: Foster Multi-Religious Collaboration & Global Partnerships

*RfP* aims to strengthen its capacity for collaborative action and partnership across the *RfP* movement by increasing communication, advancing programme partnerships and facilitating public alliances globally, regionally and nationally.

Recognising the multitude of governmental, intergovernmental, civil society, and multi-religious and faith-based organisations working toward common goals, *RfP* seeks to broaden its partnerships with these organisations to scale up its reach and impact.

### Activities

1. Link IRCs with faith-based development and humanitarian NGOs at national and regional levels as means of strengthening IRC outreach and enhancing the impact of interreligious collaboration
2. Link IRCs to intergovernmental entities and diplomatic missions within countries and with equivalent intergovernmental regional entities (e.g. UN, AU, ASEAN, EU, OAS)
3. Develop resource mobilisation partnerships in order to innovatively raise resources from local, national and regional sources
4. Develop issue-based strategic partnerships with relevant organisations
5. Develop media and communication strategies
    - Develop strategic alliances with media organisations to provide alternative multi-faith messaging/communication to counter narratives of violence which instrumentalise religious discourse/texts

- Develop and strengthen *RfP* internal communication strategy for sharing, networking and building capacity



# V. Monitoring Progress, Measuring Outcomes

The following outputs, outcomes and indicators are illustrative examples which will be further developed and tailored when creating the annual work plan.

**RfP* movement refers to the entire *RfP* network: the World Council with its International Secretariat; regional and national IRCs, which also encompasses women and youth networks on these respective levels; the Global Women of Faith Network; Global Interfaith Youth Network; and their religious constituencies.

| Activity | Indicator | Outcome | SDG Indicator |
|---|---|---|---|
| S1: Promote Peaceful, Just & Inclusive Societies | | | |
| **1.1** Initiate an *RfP* advocacy campaign that emphasizes the economic costs of conflict | Number of campaigns<br><br>Number and range of actors involved in campaign activities (survivors of violence, partners in campaign activities) | *RfP* movement increases awareness of the economic cost of conflict and engages religious communities to advocate to governments | These activities will contribute to SDG indicators 1.3.1, 1.4.1, 1.b.1, 3.8.1, 3.b.1, 3.b.3, 10.3.1, 16.1.3, 16.2.2 and 16.2.3, 16.4.2, 16.5.1 and 16.b.1 |
| **1.2** Contribute to a growing culture of forgiveness and reconciliation, both in public processes and in private settings to build lasting and sustainable peace | Number of initiatives and policies promoting forgiveness and reconciliation | Forgiveness and reconciliation are integral to peace processes and *RfP* initiatives | |
| **1.3** Strengthen systematic IRC partnerships with UN and other multilateral agencies as a means of interreligious support to multilateral efforts and build synergy with global human rights commitments to better integrate religious peacebuilding with socioeconomic development and resource management initiatives | Number of partnerships with UN agencies and other multilateral agencies<br><br>Number of initiatives jointly implemented with UN partners | IRCs are major partners with UN agencies | |
| **1.4** Facilitate responses to public health challenges such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola | Number of responses to public health challenges<br><br>Number of beneficiaries | Public health challenges are alleviated and mitigated | |
| **1.5** Advocate to governments and mobilise communities to promote good governance, the rule of law, and implementation of international law and agreements | Number of advocacy initiatives<br><br>Policy or legislative changes that take place as a consequence of interreligious engagement | *RfP* movement is mobilised to advocate for responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels | |
| **1.6** Engage religious communities toward general disarmament, including all weapons of destruction – conventional, nuclear, chemical, biological, and those newly emerging | Number of activities implemented to educate, mobilise and engage religious communities toward disarmament | *RfP* movement has the knowledge and skills to engage in issues of disarmament | |
| **1.7** Address inequalities and advance poverty alleviation strategies | Number of initiatives<br><br>Number of people helped | Legal identity and voice of the poor is strengthened | |

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| **1.8** Build capacity and expertise of religious peacebuilders by working with experts on peacebuilding, mediation and negotiation, and help develop the evidence base for religious peacebuilding | Number of religious peacebuilders who report increased capacity and expertise in peacebuilding, mediation and negotiation<br><br>Number of participants in trainings<br><br>Number of tools produced<br><br>Secure the inclusion of IRC tools in regional and international peace databases | *RfP* movement has the capacity to work on peacebuilding, mediation and negotiation | |
| **1.9** Work for the wellbeing of refugees and migrants and develop programmes of accompaniment and support | Number of actions implemented to support the wellbeing of refugees and migrants | Refugees and migrants are integrated into host communities | |
| S2: Advance Gender Equality | | | |
| **2.1** Develop a shared understanding of the meaning of gender within *RfP* for effective collaborative action to promote gender equality | Desk review and research on gender | Common understanding of gender within the *RfP* movement | These activities will contribute to SDG indicators 1.b.1, 5.1.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.2, 5.5.2, 5.a.2, 5.c.1 and 13.b.1. |
| **2.2** Support women's leadership roles | Number of IRCs that adopt and strengthen sound policies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels<br><br>Number of women in leadership roles within the *RfP* network | Sound policies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are adopted by the *RfP* movement<br><br>Women make up 40 percent of *RfP* leadership | |
| **2.3** Provide means/tools and advocate for an intersectional approach to gender, including poverty and climate concerns | Number of research and advocacy materials developed<br><br>Number of advocacy initiatives for an intersectional approach to gender | *RfP* movement acquires the knowledge and skills needed to promote gender equality | |
| **2.4** Build on international agreements and interreligious declarations that recognise and promote women's rights | Number of IRCs that adopt and strengthen sound policies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels | Sound policies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are adopted and strengthened | |
| **2.5** Develop policies, document best practices and, where absent, build mechanisms to hold accountable those who perpetrate gender-based violence and biases, and monitor the implementation and activation thereof | Number of policies and best practices<br><br>Number of survivors who have been supported | All forms of gender-based violence are reduced in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation | |
| **2.6** Provide trainings/strategic learning exchanges for IRC members (including men, women and youth) around human rights, gender-based violence (including sexual violence in conflict), gender and gender mainstreaming | Number of trainings/strategic learning exchanges for IRC members on human rights, gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming<br><br>Number of actions taken to educate women/girls and men/boys about gender and human rights | Knowledge and skills of IRC members around human rights and gender-based violence is increased | |

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| **2.7** Create safe spaces for dialogue among religious leaders on potentially sensitive and contentious issues related to gender | Number of dialogues among religious leaders on sensitive topics related to gender | Safe spaces to discuss sensitive topics related to gender are created | |
| S3: Nurture a Sustainable Environment | | | |
| **3.1** Support and promote the development of international and/or multi-faith alliances that aim to protect and restore our planet's vital ecosystems and have a meaningful and lasting impact on the health of our global environment and the achievement of sustainable development | Number of members within the *RfP* movement that have integrated climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into religious-based educational curricula and awareness raising programmes and activities<br><br>Number of international and/or multi-faith alliances taking action to promote a sustainable environment | Education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning is improved<br><br>*RfP* movement is jointly implementing climate projects with international and/or multi-faith alliances | These activities will contribute to SDG indicators 12.4.1, 12.8.1, 13.1.3, 13.3.1, 13.3.2, 15.2.1, 15.3.1 and 17.7.1. |
| **3.2** Mobilise *RfP* movement to campaign for lifestyle changes to reduce consumption and energy use | Number of initiatives educating and mobilising for lifestyle changes to reduce consumption and energy use | *RfP* movement adopts lifestyle changes to reduce consumption and energy use | |
| **3.3** Deepen engagement with indigenous communities and their elders to learn from and disseminate traditional knowledge and wisdom | Number of indigenous communities engaged in the *RfP* movement<br><br>Number of IRCs that have integrated indigenous/ traditional knowledge into multi-faith initiatives promoting a sustainable environment and sustainable use of natural resources | Engagement of indigenous peoples within the *RfP* movement is enhanced | |
| **3.4** Educate community leaders and advocate to policymakers on issues of environment and climate change | Number of advocacy initiatives with policymakers to integrate climate change measures in national policies, strategies and planning<br><br>Number of IRCs that have integrated climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into religious-based educational curricula and awareness-raising programmes and activities | Education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning is improved | |
| **3.5** Utilize data and analysis from research institutions to challenge global financial systems/major institutions that support environmental degradation | Number of actions taken to challenge global financial systems/major institutions that support environmental degradation | Global financial systems/major institutions take steps to prevent environmental degradation | |
| S4: Champion Freedom of Thought, Conscience & Religion | | | |
| **4.1** Engage with key political and intergovernmental instruments/processes | Number of actions taken to promote freedom of thought, conscience and religion with key national, regional and international organisations | Partnerships with key national, regional and international organisations promoting freedom of thought, conscience and religion are strengthened | These activities will contribute to SDG indicators 16.7.1, 16.7.2 and 16.b.1. |
| **4.2** Provide safe spaces for reflection on concerns regarding | Number of dialogues held on concerns regarding FoRB | Safe spaces to discuss concerns regarding FoRB are created | |

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| the political instrumentalization of Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB); the balance between freedom of expression and the elimination of hate speech, and FoRB and the application of blasphemy laws | | | |
| **4.3** Forge an Alliance of Virtue based on a declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages | Number of initiatives that promote an Alliance of Virtue | Initiatives of the *RfP* movement are based on virtue ethics | |
| **4.4** Reduce and eliminate violence and hatred against members of religious communities | Number of initiatives to reduce violence and hatred towards the religious "other" | Violence and discrimination among diverse religious communities is reduced | |
| S5: Strengthen Interreligious Education | | | |
| **5.1** Promote interreligious education, dialogue and exchange programmes to counteract tendencies of populism, hate speech, intolerance and social divides | Number of interreligious education programmes, dialogues and exchange programmes | Knowledge and skills needed to counter tendencies of populism, hate speech, intolerance and social divides are strengthened | These activities will contribute to SDG indicators 4.2.1, 4.7.1, 12.8.1 and 16.6.2 |
| **5.2** Organise interfaith training programmes and youth camps | Number of programmes and camps<br><br>Number of youth engaged | Knowledge and skills related to interreligious understanding are improved | |
| **5.3** Partner with community and government leaders to host interreligious dialogues, conferences, roundtables and seminars; conduct research and organise lectures and presentations on the various issues identified by this plan | Number of partnerships formed<br><br>Number of events held | Partnerships to co-host interreligious events are strengthened | |
| **5.4** Conduct interfaith celebrations of religious holidays, festivals and events, such as the World Interfaith Harmony Week and International Day of Tolerance, to promote interfaith hospitality and solidarity | Number of interfaith celebrations conducted | Understanding among diverse religious communities is improved | |
| S6: Foster Multi-Religious Collaboration & Global Partnerships | | | |
| **6.1** Link IRCs with faith-based development and humanitarian NGOs (FBOs) at national and regional levels, as means of strengthening the IRC outreach and enhancing the impact of interreligious collaboration | Number of IRCs partnering with FBOs | Partnerships between IRCs and FBOs forged for concrete interreligious action | The activities contribute to SDG indicator 17.16.1. |
| **6.2** Link IRCs to intergovernmental entities and diplomatic missions within countries and equivalent intergovernmental regional entities (e.g. UN, AU, ASEAN, EU, OAS) | Number of IRCs partnering with intergovernmental entities and diplomatic missions | Partnerships between IRCs, intergovernmental entities and diplomatic missions forged | |
| **6.3** Develop resource mobilisation partnerships in order to innovatively raise | Number of multi-level partnerships established for resource mobilisation | IRCs succeed in forging local, national and regional partnerships | |

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| resources from local, national and regional sources | | and securing resources at those levels |
| **6.4** Develop issue-based strategic partnerships with relevant organisations | Number of issue-based partnerships | *RfP* movement collaborates with relevant organisations with shared goals |
| **6.5** Develop media and communication strategies | Number of alliances established with media and communications outlets | Multi-faith messaging and success stories to counter violent narratives are disseminated via media outlets |

| Relevant SDG Indicators:[23] | |
|---|---|
| 1.3.1 | Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable |
| 1.4.1 | Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services |
| 1.b.1 | Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups |
| 3.8.1 | Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population) |
| 3.b.1 | Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme |
| 3.b.3 | Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis |
| 4.2.1 | Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex |
| 4.7.1 | Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment |
| 5.1.1 | Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex |
| 5.2.1 | Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age |
| 5.2.2 | Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence |
| 5.3.2 | Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age |
| 5.5.2 | Proportion of women in managerial positions |
| 5.a.2 | Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control |
| 5.c.1 | Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment |
| 10.3.1 | Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law |
| 12.4.1 | Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement |
| 12.8.1 | Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment |
| 13.1.3 | Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies |
| 13.3.1 | Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula |
| 13.3.2 | Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions |
| 13.b.1 | Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities |
| 15.2.1 | Progress towards sustainable forest management |
| 15.3.1 | Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area |

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| 16.1.3 | Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months |
| 16.2.2 | Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation |
| 16.2.3 | Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 |
| 16.4.2 | Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments |
| 16.5.1 | Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months |
| 16.6.2 | Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services |
| 16.7.1 | Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups |
| 16.7.2 | Proportion of population who believe decisionmaking is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group |
| 16.b.1 | Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law |
| 17.7.1 | Total amount of approved funding for developing countries to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies |
| 17.16.1 | Number of countries reporting progress in multistakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals |
| 17.17.1 | Amount of United States dollars committed to (a) public-private partnerships and (b) civil society partnerships |

# Endnotes

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[10] Civicus, 12.
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[14] The *RfP* movement adopted an Action Point adopting the Peace Charter at the 10th World Assembly. The Peace Charter and Action Point are accessible online.
[15] *RfP* has a long history of mobilizing religious communities with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons. The *RfP* movement committed to being a full partner with ICAN in an Action Point adopted during the 10th World Assembly. The Action Point can be accessed online.
[16] The *RfP* movement committed to producing positive Peace materials and workshops for multi-religious contexts in partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace in the 10th World Assembly Declaration.
[17] The *RfP* movement adopted the Faith for Forests Declaration, created and disseminated by the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, in an Action Point during the 10th World Assembly. The Declaration and Action Point are available online.
[18] *RfP* Co-Moderator Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah serves as the President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. The Forum has taken important steps to lay the groundwork for a multi-religious Alliance of Virtue and the *RfP* movement committed to forging an Alliance of Virtue in an Action Point adopted at the 10th World Assembly. The Action Point is available online.
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[23] United Nations General Assembly, *Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/71/313 (6 July 2017) available from undocs.org/A/RES/71/313.



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