

2020 Climate Action Program Annual Report

Parliament of the World's Religions

Our Strategy

Convening and Facilitating: A core activity of the Climate Action Program is convening our global network to catalyze and facilitate engagement and action. With partners on six continents representing dozens of faith traditions, we are experts in fostering connections. Faith communities are engaging in several actions to mobilize their communities on climate, including education, policy advocacy, greening congregations, shifting energy infrastructure, and pursuing nature-based solutions. Our Climate Commitments Project is becoming a core reference and hub for diverse faith-based and interfaith actors.

Knowledge Sharing and Disseminating: The Climate Action Program is building an expansive body of knowledge through research and scanning. We work internationally, with multiple partners and collaborations, and through a variety of platforms. We are developing an intricate understanding of how faith communities draw from their traditions in their climate work and tactics. The publication of *Faith for Earth* is a major step in this progress. It is imperative that we enable knowledge sharing. We know that our partners are seeking a '360 degree view' of activity within the global faith community.

Inspiring Action: As the world's largest global interfaith convening body with a 125-year history, Faith-Based Organizations look to us as leaders. Beyond our roles as convenors and knowledge holders, Parliament inspires and motivates action. Through our work with the faith community and mainstream civil society organizations, the Climate Action Program shines a light on our common history and morality, and the teachings in our traditions that compel us to act.

Our Goals for 2020

- Plan climate programming for Parliament's World Interfaith Harmony Week event.
- Collaborate with multiple partners on a 50th Anniversary Earth Day celebration.
- Republish *Earth and Faith*, the seminal work first published in 2000 about the connection between faith and the preservation of our planet.
- Leverage our network to ensure a strong and united message from the global interfaith movement on a *sustainable* pandemic recovery.
- Open multilateral pathways to secure strong commitments from member states at the UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Glasgow (now slated for 2021).
- Establish continuing dialogue between faith communities, particularly Buddhists and Catholics, on critical aspects of climate change.

- Continue to expand and grow capacity for the Climate Commitments Project (CCP), launched at the Toronto Parliament in 2018.
- Establish the Climate Action Program as a leader in advancing nature-based solutions.
- Recognize the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Accomplishments in 2020

February

- World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 6 at the Chicago Cultural Center: Three Chicago faith leaders spoke about why interfaith harmony is important in their work on climate change, including:
 - Pastor Beth Brown, Lincoln Park Presbyterian
 - Rabbi Michael Zedek, Emanuel Congregation
 - Caroline Williams, Chicago Muslim Green Team
- The Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (led by Eric Goplerud in Fairfax, VA) began working with George Mason University on GMU's Sustainability Plan, modeled after College of the Atlantic's plan adopted when David Hales was President at COA.
- We began to build the "new" landing page for Climate Action on the PoWR website, with Tatiana Brailovskaya as Climate Webforum editor.

March

- The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations (CRNGO) formed a Climate Working Group to partner with the Interfaith Liaison Committee of the UNFCCC and to consider how Religious NGOs can function most effectively at annual Climate COP meetings as well as collaborate on other programs and strengthen one another. The Parliament is represented at this Working Group by Kusumita Pedersen.

April

- 50th Anniversary of Earth Day Commemoration, April 20-24
 - Earth Day Blessings – Board Chair Audrey Kitagawa collected Earth Day blessings from leaders around the world, which were mapped on Parliament's website. Many CATF members were engaged in Earth Day celebrations.
 - Earth Day Prayer Service – We were invited to organize an interfaith prayer service during the global Earth Day event organized by the Climate Strike movement. Those giving prayers were Tiokasin Ghosthorse (Lakota), Mindahi Muñoz Bastida (Otomi), Kaleb Nyquist, Hanadi Doleh, Swami Ishatmananda, and Rabbi Rachel Mikva. The service was moderated by Dianne Dillon-Ridgley.
 - 50th Earth Day Observance with Global Religious and Indigenous Leaders – As part of our 'Global Conversation' series, we brought together leaders for a wide-ranging dialogue.

Participants included Mirele Goldsmith, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim (Mboro), Lyla June (Diné), Hellen Mugo, Gopal Patel, and Lauren Van Ham.

- Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue on Climate Change – In partnership with the Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, we facilitated a dialogue between these two traditions with distinguished speakers David Loy, writer and Zen teacher, Dekila Chungyalpa, Director of the Loka Initiative, the Rev. Leo Lefebure of Georgetown University, and Kathleen Deignan, CND, Director of the Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona College.

May

- Engagement with the UK Foreign Ministry – We began a conversation with the Civil Society Engagement team working on the UNFCCC Conference of Parties at the UK Foreign Ministry. The resulting partnership will see a webinar and series of climate Webforum articles in 2021. These meetings have continued throughout the year.
- The Vatican Commission on the Covid-19 Emergency was established and its Ecology Working Group formalized, supporting the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, building on the Integral Ecology of Laudato Si' as a foundation for understanding and acting in a COVID world. The Climate Action Program is represented by Michael Terrien at the Ecology Working Group. Nine working papers have been drafted by a supporting team and submitted on a range of topics. This relationship will continue into 2021.

June

- Second Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue on Climate Change, June 23 – As a result of overwhelming response to the first dialogue in April, we laid plans for an ongoing Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue. The second installment included a conversation between youth leader Denise Lopez and Roshi Joan Halifax.

September

- Publication of *FBO Action on the SDGs: Progress and Outlook*: In conjunction with UN Environment, Bhumi Global, and the United Religions Initiative, we released a report assessing faith progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

October

- Publication of *Faith for Earth - A Call for Action*: In partnership with the UN Environment Faith for Earth Initiative, we released the publication in digital and printed form. We also created a roadmap for 'companion briefs', which will be deep dives on specific religions, and began work on a website with many resources to support use of the publication in education and advocacy.
- Launch of faith and biodiversity initiative: We are on the advisory council for an emerging project, led by Bhumi Global and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), convening faith groups to advance solutions to the biodiversity crisis.

November

- *Fezana Journal*, published by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, included an article on our SDG report, authored by Joshua Basofin, David Hales, and Michael Terrien.

Presentations:

- Joshua presented the SDG report at the United Nations Environment Program, Faith for Nature Conference hosted by the President of Iceland (October 5).
- With Iyad Abumoghli, Director of UNEP's Faith for Earth Initiative, Kusumita and David launched **Faith for Earth** at the United Nations Environment Program, Faith for Nature Conference (October 8).
- Joshua presented at the 2nd Annual Sustainable Energy Education and Knowledge Sharing (SEEK) conference at Arizona State University on October 30.
- David Hales participated in a webinar on Complex Emergencies and Climate Change in the Era of COVID on May 27, sponsored by the Society of Environmental Journalists.
- Kusumita Pedersen appeared on November 12 on the radio show "The Yoga Hour" in California, interviewed by Yogacharya Uma O'Brian on how Yoga communities can be involved in climate issues and the publication of Faith for Earth.

Religica Partnership

The Religica online platform has cooperated through an MOU with PoWR in the past two years. In that time, Religica staff have provided PoWR with over 100 quality podcasts of religious and cultural influencers from around the world, including the current conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, a U.S. Presidential Candidate, internationally recognized leaders in Civil Rights and Non-Violence strategies, and more. In its dedication to the wisdom with religious traditions and spiritual pathways, the Religica Podcast seeks to raise the profile of the values and virtues in every story, in an effort to amplify our shared humanity. In times of conflict and uncertainty, the Religica Podcast has worked hand-in-hand with staff from PoWR, in order to provide opportunities to a needful public, and for the sake of the world. The CATF and its members contributed to both the conceptualization and development of the Religica [*Response to a Changing Climate*](#).