CLIMATE ACTION
AT THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD’S RELIGIONS
2018
Key Projects in 2018

CLIMATE COMMITMENTS PROJECT
With support from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation we launched an effort to bolster the interfaith climate action movement in order to strengthen the effectiveness of climate commitment campaigns. We have identified a need to assist our climate action partners specifically by mapping existing climate commitment campaigns, sharing resources, and creating methodologies for tracking and measuring the impact of climate commitments.

The Climate Commitments Project of the Parliament was officially launched at the Toronto Parliament with a workshop “From Words to Change: The Climate Commitment as a Bridge to Modifying our Policies, Lifestyles and Communities” and a celebratory reception attended by over a hundred people.

CLIMATE ASSEMBLY AT THE TORONTO PARLIAMENT
The first time we brought interfaith leaders and others of faith and conscience together was in 1893 at the World’s Fair in Chicago. At our seventh international convening in Toronto this November we will present a Climate Assembly with dozens of plenary speakers and breakout sessions that will enlighten and empower 10,000+ participants.

JULIANA VS. THE UNITED STATES, FRIEND OF THE COURT
We are petitioning to be recognized as an ‘amicus curiae’, or friend of the court, in this important case involving 12 young suing the Federal Government for violating their constitutional right to a stable climate.

INTERFAITH RAINFOREST INITIATIVE, FOUNDING MEMBER
We helped establish an interfaith movement of religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples from Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Meso-America & Peru to make protecting rainforests an ethical priority.

WE’RE STILL IN CAMPAIGN, MEMBER
We stand with organizations, companies and individuals in the US that support the spirit of the Paris Climate Accord. On June 4, 2018, World Environment Day and the anniversary of the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, we brought together a diverse interfaith group for a conference in which we declared our united commitment as faith and interfaith leaders to confronting climate change.
Climate Action at the 2018 Parliament

Climate change was a central theme at the Toronto Convening of the Parliament of the World's Religions on November 1-7, 2018, attended by over 8,000 participants from more than 80 countries and an immense diversity of religious traditions, spiritual paths and ethical teachings. The Toronto Parliament was a watershed in the Parliament’s long-standing commitment to climate change and the environment.

The Climate Action Task Force of the Parliament organized an extensive and diverse offering of substantive programs and events which included the Climate Action Assembly, more than 70 panels, workshops and lectures, the launch of the Parliament's Climate Commitments Project, and many meetings on future plans in the “Climate Hub.”

The Climate Action Assembly on the morning of November 4, with an audience of 4,000; many said it was “inspiring,” “moving” and “gave us hope.” Highlights included a poem by Kathy Jetñil Kijiner and all singing “We shall overcome, we shall heal the Earth” together to close – and these speakers:

Christiana Figueres, Convener of Mission 2020 addressed the Assembly; as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) she had been largely responsible for the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. She said: “We are called upon to expand the arc of our love – to yes, absolutely, stand resolutely in solidarity with those who are most vulnerable, but also and perhaps more difficult, to stand in loving and active expectation of everyone to do the right thing, make the right choices and take the right decisions.”

Indigenous spiritual leaders from three continents made statements: Uncle Angaangaq Angakkarsuag (Eskimo-Kallaalit), Davi Kopenawa Yanomami (Yanomami), and Baba Wande Abimbola (Yoruba). Uncle said, “Unless you melt the ice in the heart of man, we will not have the chance to change and begin using our knowledge wisely.”

Messages from Pope Francis and The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I were received, with speeches by their representatives, The Rev. Dr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, SDB, Coordinator of the Sector on Ecology and Creation, Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Roman Curia of the Holy See, and The Reverend Archdeacon John Chryssavgis, Theological Advisor on Environmental Issues, The Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Fifth Directive of the Parliament’s Global Ethic, created for the Global Ethic’s 25th anniversary, was formally presented by Rabbi David Rosen.
Other internationally known figures who spoke in the Assembly included Vandana Shiva, founder of Navdanya, Weiming Tu of Peking University, Muslim leader Professor Ingrid Mattson, and Iyad Abu Moghli, Director of the Faith and Earth Initiative of UN Environment, who attended the entire Convening representing UNEP.

**Programs:** Only a brief selection of the dozens of extremely varied breakout sessions can be mentioned here. A representative cross-section follows:

**Climate Keynote presentation:** “Climate, Science and Faith” by Ken Kimmell, President, and Brenda Ekwurzel, Director of Climate Science, of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS)

**“Communicating Effectively about Climate Change: An Evidence-based Approach”** by Ed Maibach, co-founder of the Center for Climate Change Communications at George Mason University

**“Water and Justice”** with Karensa Gore, Center for Earth Ethics, Margaret Lokawua (Karamajong) of the Women’s Environment and Conservation Project (WECOP), Uganda, The Rev. Dr. Rachel Mash of South Africa, founder of Green Anglicans, and Hopi Elder Vernon Masayeva.

**“Protecting the Future,”** presentations by attorney Howard Lerner, Parliament Chair Rob Sellers, Climate Action Chair and Trustee David Hales, and Onondaga Clan Mother Frieda Jacques on the Parliament’s amicus brief supporting plaintiffs in the case Juliana vs. the United States

**“The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative,”** introducing a new global alliance mobilizing religions to save the world’s rainforests, in which the Parliament is a partner with UN Environment

**“Earth Democracy”** with Vandana Shiva, founder of Navdanya, Chris Peters, President of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, Heather Eaton, St. Paul University, Teresia Hinga, Santa Clara University, and Grove Harris, The Temple of Understanding.

The many other programs focused on: the papal encyclical Laudato Si,’ (several of these), the United Nations, local faith-based climate action, civil disobedience, women’s leadership on climate, perspectives of different traditions engaging the climate crisis, interfaith dialogue, monastic interfaith dialogue, divestment from fossil fuels, the nature of climate commitments, ecological spirituality, and the Earth Charter.