



*Launching of the DECADE Initiative  
Chateau de Bossey, Geneva, January 2008*



**Initiative** for a **“UN Decade**  
of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Un-  
derstanding and Cooperation for Peace”  
(2011-2020)

Building **sustainable peace** by practicing united  
the **golden rule** all over the world



The **UN Decade Initiative** at the **2009  
Parliament of World's Religions**

**Symposium:** Feeding a plan of action  
for the UN Decade of Interreligious and  
Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding  
and Cooperation for Peace



The **DECADE** is about **PARTNERSHIP**  
towards **UN** goals leading to **SUSTAIN-  
ABLE PEACE**

GENUINE and LASTING PEACE based on JUSTICE  
and SOLIDARITY respect for HUMAN RIGHTS and  
LIFE appreciation of DIVERSITY



**UN** goals such as

- HUMAN RIGHTS
- Dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions
- Promoting a CULTURE of PEACE and NON-VIOLENCE
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

# MDGs

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a Global Partnership for Development

# The **PARTNERS**

- UN Agencies
- Governments agencies
- Values-based civil society organizations
- Faith-based organizations (FBOs)



What does **FBO** means?

**FBO** is an in-construction-operational concept, which may be defined in different ways by different actors.

UNFPA has defined FBOs as “religious or faith-based groups or congregations, and officially registered non-governmental or governmental institutions that have a religious character or mandate”, differentiating the following categories:

- Faith-based and/or faith-inspired development organizations
- Interfaith- or multi-faith-based organizations
- Local congregations
- Governmental bodies dealing with religious affairs

## **MISSION** of the **DECADE**

Better **mobilize the immense spiritual, human and organizational resources** of the

- Religious communities,
- Interfaith organizations,
- Spiritual traditions and movements,
- Traditional indigenous groups
- And other aligned values-based civil society organizations in the pursuit of pertinent **UN objectives, in partnership with....**

## **FOCUS** of this presentation

- HOW the FBOs are contributing to achieving MDGs?
- Which are those RESOURCES to be mobilized?
- How the FBOs are partnering with the UN and government agencies?
- Which new experiences can be reported during this session?

*Which lessons can be learned from accumulated experiences of partnership for a future plan of action of the decade?*



There is an ongoing

REVIEW of experiences of partnership between FBOs and UN and/or government agencies around UN goals

Sources:

- UN Agencies and Programs
- FBOs associated to the COALITION
- Internet

## Preliminary Findings

### A. Main UN Agencies partnering FBOs

- UNFPA Reproductive health, Sexual and reproductive rights, Women empowerment and gender equality
- World Bank Poverty and Social Development, Environment
- UNICEF Children rights
- UNHCR Refugees and displaced people
- UNAIDS Fighting HIV/AIDS pandemic. Coordinates multi-agency programme comprising: ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WFP, WHO and the World Bank.

## Preliminary Findings (2)

### B. Experiences of partnership aimed at selected MDGs

#### **1. Combating HIV/AIDS**

##### **a. Impact of the campaign**

In the newspapers of 25 November:

“Infected by HIV reduced by 17% in the last 8 years due to preventive interventions”

“This reduction was 25% in East Asia and 15% in Sub-Saharan Africa”

## Preliminary Findings (3)

### **b. Main fbo partners of unaids**

Religions and Peace (WCRP), the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, the Tearfund, Caritas Internationalis, World Vision, Positive Muslims, Islamic Relief, the Buddhist Sangha Metta Project, the Art of Living Foundation, Union of Superiors General Men / International Union of Superiors General Women USG-UISG of the Roman Catholic Church, the Interconfessional Committee on HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation and the CHAHAMA Network (Muslim and Christian Religious Leaders in Response to HIV in the Arab Region).


The potential impact of all these groups is large, for example Caritas Internationalis alone works with 163 national member organizations in more than 200 countries and territories.

## Preliminary Findings (4)

### **c. Importance of functions fulfilled by FBOs**

Some of the lessons which appear in the UNAIDS-FBOs “Partnering Strategic Framework” are:

- The cooperation of FBOs is indispensable for achieving the UN goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Actually, they have been main actors in the global response to AIDS over the last 25 years, gaining experience and legitimacy.
- FBOs can fulfil tasks which public services and other social actors are not well equipped to play, such as:
  - HIV prevention education in schools, hospitals, clinics, temples, mosques and churches.

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- HIV prevention among key populations at higher risk of HIV infection
  - Establishing networks of religious leaders affected by HIV, which have mobilized church leaders to respond to AIDS.
  - Home-based care for HIV-positive people, even in remote rural areas.
  - Care and support for orphans, often in their own homes and communities
  - Hospital and clinical care,
  - Pastoral and spiritual care to people living with HIV and their loved ones.
  - Advocacy to influence political decision-making processes, resource allocation and public policies.

## Preliminary Findings (5)

### d. Two illustrative cases



The role of Buddhist monks in fighting HIV/AIDS: In partnership with UNAIDS and within the framework of Buddha's teachings and ethics, the Sangha Metta Project covers an important education activity which consists of (a) teaching Buddhist monks, nuns and novices about HIV/AIDS, equipping them with modern participatory social management skills and tools to take part in HIV/AIDS prevention and care at the community level, and (b) educating youth groups and raising their awareness on HIV/AIDS and narcotic. The project is spreading beyond Thailand to neighbouring countries such as Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam and Southern China.

## Preliminary Findings (6)



Guyana's national 'faith-and-hiv' coalition  
The Guyana Government, UNAIDS and faith leaders from the Hindu, Christian, Islamic, Rastafarian and Baha'i faiths launched on December 2008 a National "faith-and-HIV" Coalition. They committed to move from rhetoric to action. The faith leaders recognize the need to incorporate appropriate HIV information into their discourses, rituals, religious education, and training of future leaders of faith. They also agreed to safeguard the rights of people living with HIV and affected by HIV, and ensure their complete inclusion in religious, social, familial and economic life.

## Preliminary Findings (7)

### **2. Improve Maternal Health**

- Although we couldn't examine the wide field of interventions aimed at improving Maternal Health, we can use the partnership of UNFPA and FBOs as a proxy.
- UNFPA claims partnerships with over 400 different faith-based organizations in more than 100 countries.

## Preliminary Findings (8)

Main FBOs partners of UNFPA have been:

- **AFRICA:** the Botswana Council of Churches, the Catholic congregation of the House of the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Supreme Muslim Council of Ghana, and Religions Against AIDS in Rwanda.
- **Arab States:** Al-Azhar University, the International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research (Egypt) and the World Islamic Council for Advocacy and Rescue (Yemen).
- **Latin America:** Pastoral da Criança (Brazil), Alianza Evangélica de Guatemala, Fe y Alegría (Nicaragua), Latin American Council of Churches and Ayuda y Solidaridad con las Niñas de la Calle (Mexico).

## Preliminary Findings (9)

### **3. Ensure environmental sustainability**

- The World Bank and UNDP seems to be the
- The World Bank and UNDP seems to be the main UN partners
- Alliance of Religions and Conservation - ARC is an important FBO partner
- Christian and Buddhist monks have engaged for protecting NATUREmain UN partners
- Alliance of Religions and Conservation - ARC is an important FBO partner
- Christian and Buddhist monks have engaged for protecting NATURE
- Muslim FBOs are active in this field
- Protecting the environment seems to be a challenge which raises easily interfaith consensus and alliances

## Preliminary Findings (10)

### Three Illustrative Cases



*Sheikh Ali Goma'a, The Grand Mufti of Egypt, speaking at the historic meeting in Istanbul*

### **Muslim seven year action plan on climate change:**

On 5-7 July 2009 Muslim leaders, scholars, civil society members and government ministries from Islamic civil society have agreed in Istanbul to spend the next seven years planning serious commitments to protecting the natural environment, and combating climate change. The plan was drawn by Earth Mates Dialogue and is part of United Nations (UN)/Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) Seven Year Plan Initiative. It includes, among others: developing the major Muslim cities as green city models for other Islamic urban areas; developing an Islamic label for environmentally friendly goods and services and creating a best practice environmental guide for Islamic businesses

## Preliminary Findings (11)



*Photo by ARC/George Ferzoco*

**Protecting the living planet:** Faith leaders from around the world representing nine of the world's major faiths met at Windsor, United Kingdom, from 2 to 4 November 2009, at an event hosted by Prince Philip and attended by the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon to discuss and announce their long term initiatives to Protect the Living Planet. Main partners in promoting this initiative are the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and UNDP.

## Preliminary Findings (12)



### **Arc's mongolian buddhist handbook launched**

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), linked with the World Bank's and the Netherlands government's MEMO Fund in Mongolia, continued their series about Buddhism and the Environment, publishing a handbook entitled "Mongolian Buddhist Protecting Nature". The aim was to highlight the activities and future potentials of Buddhists protecting Mongolia's fragile environment (both at the monastic and community levels) - and then provide the tools for secular NGOs, Governmental and Intergovernmental Agencies to link with Buddhist temples and activists.

## Preliminary Findings (13)

### **4. Fighting poverty and promoting gender equity**

- Although there are projects primarily addressed to these two goals, most of the interventions are instrumental to reduce poverty and pursue gender equity or women's empowerment
- These are two illustrative cases:

## Preliminary Findings (14)



### **NOTHING BUT NETS**

The United Nations Nothing But Nets campaign was created to distribute millions of long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets to children in Africa as a form of preventing malaria. Among the partners and supporters of this project are the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Union for Reform Judaism and the United Methodist Church.

## Preliminary Findings (15)

### **Empowering rural women for fighting poverty in Sudan:**

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), under the Sudan Work Plan 2009 (Humanitarian/Early Recovery Component) has initiated the project “Support Livelihoods and Food Security Initiatives for Women”. Its objective is to promote simple and appropriate agricultural technologies among women groups to strengthen women’s livelihoods through capacity building on entrepreneurial skills and to facilitate the availability of market information and access to credit facilities. The implementing partners are Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNIFEM, CBOs, FBOs, NGOs, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO), the State Ministry of Agriculture (SMoA) and the Ministries of Social Development

## C. A closing remark:

Faith-based communities and organizations seem to be indispensable partners for building sustainable peace.

The challenge is ahead, as stated by the former President of the UN General Assembly:

*“You are coming to the United Nation with a proposal for partnership with a vast constituency –the Brothers and Sisters of the religious communities, faith-based organizations and value-based secular groups around the world. I am convinced that partnerships between our 192 Member States and organized civil society are the only way we are going to successfully meet the overwhelming challenges that threaten our very existence here on our dear, abused Mother Earth.”*

*H.E. Miguel D’escoto Brockmann, President of the United Nations General Assembly, in his message at the launching of the Coalition in support of this proposed UN Decade. New York 4 March 2009.*