Declaration of the 10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace

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Preamble

We – 900 women, men, and youth – have gathered in Lindau, Germany, coming from 125 countries for the 10th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace*. We are grateful for 49 years of determined focus on building peace and on speaking for those most in need. We are an alliance of care, of compassion, of love. We represent a far greater, ever growing, and ever-radiating alliance of "common action" that *Religions for Peace* gladly serves. In that light we acknowledge with sorrow the ways – subtle and gross – that we and our religious communities have fallenshort. Our hearts grieve over the misuse of our faiths, especially the ways they have been twisted to fuel violence and hate. Our alliance honors our religious differences, even as it serves the peace for which the human heart hungers. We gather in hope, convinced that the sacred calls all humanity into shared responsibility for our common good, care for one another, the earth, and its entire web of life.

The burdens of the human family are well-known to us. We know too well war, how it kills, maims, and destroys the lives of the innocent. We know the crushing weight of extreme poverty, how it stunts, humiliates, and plunders. Ten percent of our human family is desperately poor. We know that more than 70 million of us no longer find shelter in the sanctuary of their homes. They are refugees, internally displaced, and persons forced to be on the move. We know we have entered a terrifying new arms race, one that includes modernizing nuclear arms, weaponizing space and artificial intelligence, and new energy weapons. These burdens are profoundly exacerbated by the cataclysmic heating of the earth, decimation of the rainforests, poisoning of the seas, and choking of the web of life.

We are also experiencing what we call a "meta-crisis" of our modern order, which lies behind the United Nations and the agreements our states have made on human rights, the rule of law, and international trade. Freedoms of all kinds, the protections of minorities, and the fabric of our connection have come under attack around the world. On the economic front, a meager handful of the richest persons have more wealth than four billion persons. Adding to the political and economic dimensions of this meta-crisis of modern order, there is today a "meta-crisis" of truth, which challenges the notion of "truth," while "fake news" is tailored for political or commercial gain. Today, we are buffeted between inconvenient truths and convenient fabrications. The hour is late: we are called to urgent action.

Caring for our Common Future: Advancing Shared Well-Being

Our heart's inner-most experiences of the sacred and our outer-most social lives cry out to be connected in a state of *positive* peace that *Religions for Peace* calls, "shared wellbeing." Our different experiences of the sacred make clear that we are, at root, relational: radically related to the sacred and to all that is caused or embraced by the sacred. As fundamentally relational, our well-being is intrinsically shared. Helping the other, we are helped; injuring the other, we wound

ourselves. We fully acknowledge the invaluable roles of women and youth among us and will continually mainstream their irreplaceable contributions. Our different traditions make clear that the sacred establishes us as both responsible for and dependent upon each other and the earth that sustains us. Shared well-being calls us to commit to all the ways the modern order supports our human dignity. It also calls us to offer in a constructive spirit any complementary contributions from our religions. We affirm the modern order's recognition of the foundational importance of freedom. At the same time, we are called to show by example the sacred grounding of freedom. It leads through the despair of nihilism, rejects the narcissism of mindless consumerism, and expresses itself as radical care for all.

To our commitment to the importance of human rights, we add our foundational concern for the cultivation of virtues, those habitual orientations to value that sculpt our human potentials. These include our potentials for the most elevated states of mercy, compassion, and love. For us, the labor to become virtuous is not a solitary act; rather, it is an act of "solidarity;" one that can only be achieved by generosity and mutual love. The cultivation of virtue tackles the ignorance, individual egoism, and group egoism that mutilate authentic community.

Shared well-being also calls for a robust notion of the "common good" that can serve all of us in our efforts to virtuously unfold our rights-protected human dignity. The supreme good for us is the sacred, even as we understand it differently. The common good includes the earth with its air, water, soil, and web of life. The common good also includes just institutions that help each to develop her or his human dignity. These call all of us to a shared and grateful responsibility. Each person is to draw from the common good; each is to help build it up.

Advancing shared well-being is concrete. We commit to advancing shared well-being by preventing and transforming violent conflicts, promoting just and harmonious societies, nurturing sustainable and integral human development, and protecting the earth.

Preventing and Transforming Violent Conflicts

We commit to preventing violent conflicts by advancing peace education – from early childhood to adults across our religious communities – focusing on shared values, religious literacy, and narratives of peace. We will build skills in conflict management that address the drivers of conflicts non-violently. Our commitments to transforming violent conflicts are actualized in our Assembly by the religious leaders from Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and South Sudan. Our commitment is also expressed in the religious women represented by those from the Middle East and North African Region in the Assembly plenary. Here, also, religious persons from North and South Korea have worked to construct conditions for peace on the Korean Peninsula. These religious leaders have convened privately in the Assembly to strengthen one another as partners, peacemakers, and healers. We commit to supporting their efforts in their respective countries and regions. We adopt *The Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, convinced that transforming violent conflicts requires the healing of historical wounds and painful memories, forgiveness, and reconciliation. We commit to integrating efforts for healing into all our conflict resolution work.

To renew our commitment to nuclear disarmament, we pledge to be a full partner of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. We condemn the existence of nuclear weapons, affirm our support for the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, and will educate, mobilize, and engage religious communities toward these ends. We also call for immediate steps toward general disarmament including all weapons of destruction – conventional, nuclear, chemical, biological, and those newly emerging.

Promoting Just and Harmonious Societies

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We take heart that multi-religious actors and institutions are working to build just and harmonious societies with a vibrant spirit of care and commitment to justice. We commit to continued common action to tackle injustices, including the large scale displacement of persons, and resulting challenges from the migration crises – both for refugees and migrants and the societies where they settle. We will make the global forced migration crisis a priority for action. We will lead by example in “welcoming the other.” We commit to instilling the respect, mutuality, and solidarity that are essential to promote, build, and sustain just, harmonious, and diverse communities. A cross-cutting commitment can be education, including religious literacy, from early childhood to adults, that focuses on shared civic virtues and appreciation for social diversity. We will develop an *Alliance of Virtue* based on a declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages.

We pledge to protect children, vulnerable individuals and communities and advocate for their human rights and well-being in the face of grave suffering. We will speak up forcefully and take action against corruption and for good governance. We commit ourselves to caring and determined effort to address the causes and reality of widespread abuses and violence, especially against women and children. We also commit to common efforts within our communities, with civil society partners and governments to ensure principled freedom of religion worldwide. We, persons of faith, yearn to protect holy sites and feel safe within them. We will preserve and protect holy sites against violence and desecration, partnering with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to form living rings for peace around them.

Sustainable and Integral Human Development and Protecting the Earth

We commit to human development as set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will foster sustainable and integral human development by promoting the justice, inclusive citizenship, and equal opportunities interwoven through the SDGs. We will champion personal accountability for sustainable consumption, the dignity of labor, and equitable distribution of wealth. We will honor the insights of science and steward progress in digital technology toward the good of all. We will advance universal access to education. We will continue to promote the role of women and youth in society and their leadership in institutions at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

We commit to urgent action against the climate crisis. We will mobilize religious communities to protect the earth – including the promotion of “green congregations.” Leaders and partners in the fight against environmental degradation, our Indigenous brothers and sisters remind us, “when Mother Earth suffers, human beings suffer; when human beings suffer, Mother Earth suffers.” We, guardians and caretakers of earth, endorse the *Faiths for Forests Declaration*. We commit to raise awareness about tropical deforestation and to educate our religious communities about the dire spiritual and sustainability crisis. We will take action to live ecologically balanced and sustainable lifestyles and advocate for government policies to protect rainforests, defend the rights of Indigenous peoples, and fulfill their pledges to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Call-To-Common-Action

Guided by the principles of our own religious traditions, and respectful of religious differences, we personally commit to fostering positive peace as shared well-being. We will be partners with sincere believers of other religions and all women and men of good will to:

• produce *positive* peace materials and workshops for multi-religious contexts with the Institute for Economics and Peace;

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• develop tools and training on the positive roles of women in preventing and transforming conflicts, and on the issue of violence against them;

• acknowledge past hurts – including across religious traditions – and foster public acts of forgiveness and reconciliation;

• work for the well-being of refugees and migrants and develop programs of accompaniment and support;

• urge religious communities to invest their resources in alignment with achieving the SDGs;

• raise public awareness about deforestation with the *Interfaith Rainforest Initiative* and through the acceptance and promotion of the *Faith for Forests Declaration*, take action against climate change in general, and advocate for policies that protect the earth;

• advance reconciliation as a vital dimension of *positive* Peace within persons and among communities and nations as per *The Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation*;

• commit to being a full-partner to support the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons;

• forge an *Alliance of Virtue* based on a declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages.

We speak with humility, asking for support and blessings.

Source: Ring of Peace / Religions for Peace.

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