

Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Spirituality and Justice Initiative

November 22, 2019 New York, NY

Thomas Walsh, Co-Chair, Coalition of FBOs

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Premises

1. Religion is a very significant social reality.
2. There are billions of believers who practice a religion.
3. Religious ideas affect the way billions of people think, live and act in the world: morally, socially, politically, economically.
4. Most religions, evidenced in scriptures and formal doctrines, promote spiritual practices and justice. Religions affirm law, lawfulness, authority of the state, courts, law-enforcement. Religions affirm mercy, compassion, love, and hope toward both victims and criminals.
5. Religious actors are involved in many programs that are related to criminal justice and crime prevention: prison ministries, law-enforcement ministries, rehabilitation of prisoners, re-socialization of prisoners, restorative justice, victim assistance, criminal justice reform, appropriate treatment of prisoners, crime prevention in communities, overcoming corruption, education in lawfulness, strengthening families.

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Some Terminology

1. **FBO:** faith-based organization or faith-inspired organization
2. **UNODC:** United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime: United Nations office that was established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division. Main HQ in Vienna, Austria
3. **14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice:** Organized by UNODC, April 20-27, Kyoto, Japan
4. **Sustainable Development Goal #16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

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Some Terminology

- 1. Religion** is one of the classifications we use to describe human social groups. We can identify or classify social groups by nationality, ethnicity, race, class, culture, sex, gender, etc. The religious classification is based on identifying a group of people who affirm the existence of a higher power or God, and, to some extent, organize themselves according to a particular set of sacred texts, doctrines, rituals, moral and spiritual practices.
- 2. Spirituality** is a term that derives from the word “spirit” and generally relates to attitudes, disciplines and practices that uplift, nurture, enlighten, strengthen our individual spirit, perhaps connect it to a wider, universal spirit.
- 3. Religion and spirituality** can be understood in various ways. Spirituality may be understood as a necessary part of religion. Spirituality can be seen as something that exists apart from organized religion, or as a universal characteristic one finds in all religions. Some may understand religion and spirituality as incompatible.

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Bridges to Build: Toward Cooperation and Partnership

- 1. Interreligious Relations: Promoting interfaith dialogue, interreligious dialogue to develop understanding and mutual respect among believers and officials of different religions**
- 2. Intrareligious Relations: Promoting intrafaith dialogue to develop understanding and mutual respect among believers and officials of different groups, denominations, sects with a particular religious tradition**
- 3. Religious –Secular Relations: Promoting dialogue to develop understanding and mutual respect among or between religious believers and FBOs, on the one hand, and secular institutions such as governments or intergovernmental organizations, on the other hand.**

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Types of Religious-Secular Relations

- 1. Religions exist entirely separate from secular institutions**
- 2. Religion Dominates the Secular Institutions**
- 3. Secular Institutions Dominate Religions**
- 4. Secular Institutions and Religions in Collaborative Partnership**

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Criminal Justice

1. Laws specify duties and rights of citizens
2. Crimes are violations of law, harmful to society
3. Criminal Justice
 1. Administered by the State
 1. Legislation
 2. Law enforcement agencies [police]
 3. Courts [prosecutors and defense attorneys]
 4. Prisons/Probation

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FBOs and Religion at the UN

1. 5451 NGOs Have Consultative Status with ECOSOC; among these 140 have General Consultative Status; 4342 Special; 969 Roster
2. Approximately 400 Religious or Faith-Based NGOs Have Consultative Status; 60% Christian; 15% Muslim; 7% Jewish; 4% Buddhist; 3% Hindu; 10% Other
3. Primary Areas of FBO Focus at UN: Development, Peace, Environment, Human Rights, SRHR, Religious Spiritual Aims
4. Non-NGO Religious Actors: For Example, Vatican Holy See Observer Mission and Organization of Islamic Cooperation
5. NGOs: Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns; NGO Committee on Religions;
6. UN Alliance of Civilizations, 2005
7. Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development, 2007
8. World Interfaith Harmony Week, 2010

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Coalition Timeline

1. May 20-25, 2019, Vienna: 28th Session of UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: 4 Working Groups; formation of Coalition of FBOs
2. October 7, 2019, Vienna: Coalition Briefing and Preparatory Meeting
3. October 22, 2019, New York: Coalition Briefing and Preparatory Meeting
4. November 12-13, San Francisco: 4 Working Groups to be convened at American Society of Criminology; Public Interfaith Program at Grace Cathedral on Nob Hill, San Francisco
5. April 20-27, 2020, Kyoto: Ancillary Programs to be convened at UNOCD Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

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Working Groups

1. Criminal Justice, Ethics, and Governance: The Relevance of Faith-Based Organizations
2. Appropriate Punishment and Resocialization of Prisoners
3. Restorative Justice and Victim Assistance
4. Empathy and Social Justice

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Goals

1. Increase Awareness and Appreciation of FBOs in Crime Prevention
2. Increase Awareness and Appreciation of UN, the SDGs, the UNODC, and the Kyoto Congress
3. Encourage and Strengthen UNODC Outreach and Partnership with FBOs
4. Promote Community-Level Partnerships Between FBOs and Local Governments and Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Offices
5. Promote Best Practices of FBO – Criminal Justice Partnerships
6. Raise Awareness Among FBOs and within Religious Communities of Value of Criminal Justice Programs