

Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Spirituality and Justice Initiative

Spirituality and Justice Declaration [Draft 2.0 Sept 13, 2019]

Recognizing the mission of the United Nations, as stated in the preamble of its charter (June 26, 1945, San Francisco), includes the following aspirations:

*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war
to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person
to promote better standards of life in larger freedom
to practice tolerance and live together in peace in larger freedom*

And noting the mission of the UNODC is to:

to contribute to the achievement of security and justice for all by making the world safer from crime, drugs and terrorism; and

Being committed to the achievement of the 17 SDGs put forward by the General Assembly in September 2015, and noting particularly the importance of Goal 16, which calls for promoting:

peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Recalling the United Nations 1955 Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the “Mandela Rules” (Resolution 70/175) approved by the General Assembly in December 2015; and

Appreciating the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) established by the Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/1 upon request of the General Assembly resolution 46/152 as one of its functional commissions, whereby the Commission acts as the principal policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice; and,

Aware of the value of partnership between UN agencies and a variety of non-governmental organizations, as affirmed in Article 71 of the UN Charter; and

Noting the existence of some 400 NGOs affiliated with ECOSOC in consultative status that have drawn inspiration from the world’s religious values, teachings and sacred texts, known as faith-based organizations (FBOs); and

Acknowledging the ongoing significance of religious traditions from throughout the world as shapers of individual, social, cultural, national and civilizational values and identities; and

Realizing that religions are not only repositories of doctrines, rites, and sacred texts, but animators of social engagement, activism for the good on many levels, humanitarian, philanthropic, charitable, and service oriented; and,

Noting that virtually all religious teachings affirm core principles and norms, virtues and practices that promote kindness, service, care for others, and justice; and,

Respectful of those believers from any and all religions who devote themselves to practices that contribute to crime prevention, social justice, rehabilitation and re-entry of offenders, ministries to victims, restorative and reconciliatory practices, prison ministries, and advocacy for the incarcerated; and,

Recognizing that in 2008 the first Global Forum on Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-based Actors was

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organized in Istanbul, establishing the UN Inter Agency Task Force on Religion and Development (now comprising 17 UN entities); and,

Wanting to encourage productive and fruitful partnership between such FBOs and the UN agencies devoted to crime prevention and criminal justice, we, members of the coalition of faith based organizations, convened in San Francisco on November 13, 2019, and linked with many others from around the world, representing all the world's religions, and who have reviewed and endorsed these affirmations, we hereby affirm the following recommendations:

Given their numerous capacities in crime prevention, to strengthen constructive partnership between FBOs and the UNODC and CCPCJ;

To engage FBOs in exploration of restorative practices of justice;

To enlist FBOs in specific focal points that are of paramount concern to UNODC and CCPCJ;

To provide training for FBO representatives that may be applied at the grass roots level in countries throughout the world, including fostering a greater knowledge and appreciation of the documents of the United Nations, particularly of the sustainable development goals and the United Nations programme of crime prevention, anti-corruption, treatment of prisoners, restorative justice, victim assistance;

To begin active UNODC participation in the interagency task force on religion and development

To engage FBOs in the promotion of criminal justice reforms that contribute to the overall wellbeing of society;

To engage FBOs as partners who may complement the work of UN agencies, and who have capacities that serve to strengthen the UN.

To draft documents that underscore best practices of FBOs engaged in crime prevention

To convene fora for dialogue and exchange of best practices, academic studies, and platform of links to agencies collaborating with faith based organization

To encourage UNODC participation in the FBO briefings and report to the UN General Assembly

To promote endorsement of the "Spirituality and Justice Declaration" by the UNODC and the General Assembly

Hereby provisionally affirmed—pending further vetting and edits—this day, by acclamation, at Grace Cathedral, November 13, 2019 in San Francisco, California.

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