

PLENARY III:

Advancing *Shared Well-Being* by Promoting
Just and Harmonious Societies

Action Point on the Alliance of Virtue



ACTION POINT ON BUILDING AN ALLIANCE OF VIRTUE

PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, is arguably one of the greatest achievements of the human family in the Modern period. It serves as a powerful touchstone for advancing humanity's Well-Being.

There is no equivalent companion document for virtues, despite the fact that across history for religious communities and many other traditions, the cultivation of virtue is a primary way to unfold the enormous potentials of human dignity, to advance the development of good societies and—for religious communities—to cultivate the states of Compassion, Mercy and Love related to the Sacred.

In the absence of a “virtue equivalent” to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, religious communities and men and women of good will are missing a key consensual text that can provide a base for an Alliance of Virtue that would unite people across the world in the labor of becoming good persons and building just societies.

Human rights and virtues are not in conflict. They are essential and complementary approaches to protecting and unfolding human dignity and building good and just societies.

Like the historic development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a statement of consensus on virtues needs to be open to the contributions of all virtue traditions and expressed in public language.

Religious communities working together are uniquely equipped to initiate a process designed to discern and produce a declaration on the profound consensus of virtues. Based on this declaration, they are furthermore exceptionally well-positioned to advance a concrete Alliance of Virtue, in tandem with their already on-going commitments to advance respect for human rights.

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AND SHARED VALUES

For two years prior to the Assembly, a great number of *Religions for Peace* Co-Presidents met every three months to discern the ethical dimensions essential to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Central to these reflections was the discernment of virtues shared across the religious traditions. These Co-Presidents' efforts were substantial. Their discernments contributed greatly to this Assembly's focus on *Shared Well-Being* which includes the recognition of the vital role of virtues as complementary to human rights.

In addition, a number of *Religions for Peace* leaders, notably Co-Moderator Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah and International Trustee Chairman Wu, have already begun to take important steps to lay the groundwork for a multi-religious Alliance of Virtue.

CALL FOR ACTION

Respectful of human dignity which the religions understand to be rooted in the Sacred and protected by rights;

Mindful that for the world's religious and other traditions, the cultivation of virtues is the central way of unfolding rights-protected human dignity to become a good and integrally developed person;

Further mindful that the world's religions and other virtue traditions have great heritages of “civic virtues” that orient persons toward building good and just societies, and that the world's religions recognize specific “religious virtues” as valuable in cultivating states of Mercy, Compassion and Love;

Cognizant that there is a great overlap among the major virtues of the religious and other virtue traditions, the Assembly is invited to affirm the following motion:

That the *Religions for Peace* 10th World Assembly mandate the World Council to develop an Alliance of Virtue based on a Declaration of virtues widely shared across religious traditions and other virtue heritages; and to develop as part of such a Declaration, individual introductions from each participating religion and virtue school engaged.