

Statement of the *Religions for Peace* World Council on International Women's Day

On the occasion of International Women's Day, 8 March 2022, we leaders of diverse faiths, beliefs, traditions and spiritualities, from different countries around the world, come together to acknowledge the crucial role that women have in promoting "gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow."

We acknowledge that women disproportionately suffer—as they have throughout history—the consequences of violent conflict, discrimination, poverty, and restrictions on their freedoms. Yet we also know that women bear significant responsibilities and are the first to respond in situations of social and political unrest that, as we witness with distress, are unfolding in so many corners of our world today. Many women are motivated and strengthened by their faith. Yet, their experiences, stories, knowledge, wisdom, and myriad forms of expertise are too frequently unrecognised and remain underutilized in decision-making contexts.

For over 50 years, *Religions for Peace* has brought together diverse faith leaders, communities, and institutions to advance gender equality and equip women and girls with the resources that they need to thrive. The impact of the global pandemic on women and girls has only reinforced the urgency of working together towards gender equality, which is one of *Religions for Peace*'s strategic priorities identified in our international movement of faith communities, leaders, and institutions from over 90 countries and regions.

As we work together, we also know, beyond a shadow of doubt, that faiths, collaborating in service, are a powerful force for a just, peaceful, and harmonious coexistence. There is no comparable or parallel force of nature than that of all faiths uniting for positive peace.

On this International Women's Day, we unite our voices to:

- Acknowledge the injustice that has been done to women through patriarchal interpretations of our religions that contributed to promoting a perception of women as being of lesser value and possessing less mental and spiritual capacity than men.
- Recognize the efforts of all women—and men—who work for peace in families and communities, in every corner of our world;
- Commit to being accountable to support the voices, efforts, and leadership of women in our communities and throughout the world;

As we continue our work toward gender equality and women's empowerment during this time of multiple global challenges, we remember also to pray for those still suffering from the many impacts of gender-based inequities and violence.

We reaffirm our commitment to the *Religions for Peace* mission and purpose: of serving together, for the common good, so as to leave no one behind.