

Message from the  
**Second Interreligious Forum of the Americas**  
Los Angeles, June 6-8, 2022

The IX Summit of the Americas takes place under the shadows of the extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine and elsewhere, looming fuel and food crises, and ongoing crises in the movement of refugees and displaced persons worldwide, but of special concern in the Western Hemisphere.

In this setting, the Second Interreligious Forum of the Americas (FIDELA) convened in Los Angeles, on June 6-8, 2022, and shares its concerns in support of the IX Summit of the Americas. FIDELA was attended in person by over 100 religious leaders and representatives of faith-based organizations, and policy experts from throughout North, Central and South America and the Caribbean, and was made available to a larger online audience. Significantly, participants included a diverse group of Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Reformed Christians, Baptists, Evangelicals, Adventists, Orthodox Christians, Latter-day Saints, Jews, Muslims, Bahá'is, Indigenous, Afro-Latino Americans and Caribbeans, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and others, including representatives of youth, who came together to share their distinctive insights, values, and concerns regarding the needs of the Western Hemisphere, within the framework of interreligious cooperation that inspires us to work together for peace, justice and solidarity.

Taking in consideration the objectives of and discussions at the IX Summit of the Americas regarding sustainability, resilience, and equity; recognizing the distinctive experience and expertise of religious actors; and in an effort to contribute to calls for action and change, FIDELA participants identified the following priority concerns of religious voices regarding the human impact of inequalities in the hemisphere, shortfalls in protection of human dignity, and the need for purposeful action that truly gives a preferential option to those most vulnerable:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for urgent **health system reforms**, including addressing ongoing immunization issues, transnational preparation for future pandemic events, improvements to assure equitable access and quality, and the need to assure that mental health services have an expanded and integral part of health systems.
- Policies aimed at **eliminating all invidious discrimination** on the basis of race, religion, gender, indigenous heritage, and sexual orientation should be supported, taking care to assure that fairness for all is achieved.
- The continuing and expanding crises associated with **refugees and displaced persons** need to be addressed effectively, paying attention to root causes of the problem, urgent needs of those affected, and finding long term solutions.
- Integral solutions to **environmental challenges** including climate change and Amazon deforestation, and taking into account concerns of all stakeholders, including loss and damage, need to be identified and implemented.
- Priority action must be taken to redress the **lost educational opportunities for children**, especially those without full Internet access.
- Governments should engage the teachings, skills and networks of religious and interfaith communities in promoting **democratization** and in addressing **challenges of violence and corruption**.



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- Continued vigilance in protecting **freedom of religion or belief** and **freedom of expression** is vital because of the fundamental importance of these rights in promoting citizen participation and undergirding the contributions that religious and belief communities and others make to democratic life in the Western Hemisphere.

FIDELA participants plan to find ways to address attention to these priority issues and other important issues identified during the Second Interreligious Forum of the Americas, and will seek continuing opportunities for follow-up in the ongoing Summit of the Americas process.