

Terms of Reference for the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award*

Background

Women of faith are the backbone of all faith communities and religious institutions. In 2000, *Religions for Peace* conducted a study of 300 religious institutions worldwide and concluded that approximately 90% of those delivering services within and through the institutional religious infrastructure of healthcare, education, nutrition, sanitation, and general services, were women. However, the work of these women remains largely obscured or even deliberately unrecognised. By creating this award, *Religions for Peace* aims to recognise and highlight the vital efforts spearheaded by women of faith in service that encompass human rights, peace and security and sustainable development. Furthermore, by collating the initiatives stewarded by women of faith networks across the globe, *Religions for Peace* seeks to document the rich contributions of women to their communities and the world.

The *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* has been made possible by funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners. The Award will be presented at a ceremony in New York on 20 September, at the side-line of the United Nations General Assembly, to honour the work of the women of faith and raise the media profile of the awardees, enabling them to find new partners and supporters, and allowing others to learn from them.

The Award

The award selection committee—composed of co-presidents and honorary presidents serving on the World Council (*Religions for Peace* governing board), members of the *Religions for Peace* Standing Commissions, Women of Faith, youth, representatives from partner organisations, and academics working on research relevant to *Religions for Peace* priority areas—will nominate one woman of faith or woman-led multireligious initiative from each of the following regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and North America. These nominated initiatives will be highlighted through a coordinated media campaign to raise the profile of the women of faith and their initiatives. One winner and two runners-up—chosen by the award selection committee—will be invited to attend an award ceremony wherein they will receive a cash prize (1st Place = \$7,356; 2nd Place = \$5,000; 3rd place = \$2,500). This award money will be used to scale up the scope of their work. The award will also build the capacities of interreligious networks by providing a platform for nominees to act as trainers for other women of faith and share best practices throughout the *Religions for Peace* movement that consists of over 90 Inter-religious Councils (IRCs)¹ and their Women of Faith Networks and Interfaith Youth Networks that work at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Award Criteria and Process

With the call for nominations, *Religions for Peace* welcomes individuals and organisations to nominate women of faith—religious leaders and non-traditional faith actors—and women-led initiatives who have contributed to the six Key Strategic Priority Areas of *Religions for Peace* ([Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#); [Advancing Gender Equality](#); [Nurturing Sustainable Environment](#);

¹ Each interreligious body affiliated with *Religions for Peace* is self-led, but also part of the global *Religions for Peace* movement. These action oriented councils and women and youth networks are multi-religious and "public" in character. They are led by the representatives of diverse religious communities and are designed to provide a platform for cooperative action throughout the different levels within these religious communities, from grassroots to the senior most leaders. Successful *Religions for Peace* bodies serve as bridges between diverse religious communities that can help build trust, reduce hostility in areas of conflict and provide a platform for common action.

[Championing Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion; Strengthening Interreligious Education; Fostering Multi-religious Collaboration and Global Partnerships](#) through multireligious collaboration at the local, national, regional and global level. Nominated women of faith and women-led initiatives must be affiliated with a *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Council, whether regional, national, or subnational. Members of the selection committee are not eligible for nomination for the award. Self-nominations are not accepted.

The launch date for the Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award is set for **23 March 2023**. The submission process is detailed in the attached nomination packet. The final deadline for submission for this first round of awards is, **15 May 2023**.

Evaluation and Selection

Award selection committee members will evaluate initiatives using established criteria based on which they will nominate one woman of faith or woman-led initiative from each region. Additionally, the selection committee will identify the overall winner, as well as the alternative first and second runners-up.

The selection committee members will review the dossiers on women of faith initiatives collated by *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat. They will evaluate initiatives using established criteria which include active engagement and leadership of women of faith, concept novelty, strong multi-religious collaboration and effect on interfaith social cohesion. Selection committee members will meet virtually twice - in May and June to discuss potential nominees, nominate woman-led initiatives, and vote to determine the winner and runners-up. The awardees will be announced on **25 June 2023**.

Religions for Peace will coordinate a multi-pronged media campaign featuring the six nominees and their initiatives to shine a spotlight on them and their work.

Award Ceremony

The winner and the two alternative winners will be invited to the Award Ceremony that will take place on **20 September 2023**, during the high-level meeting that *Religions for Peace* will hold at the time of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.