

Strengthening *Religions for Peace* Mongolia: Interreligious Harmony and Collaboration

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia | December 9-11, 2025



Religions for Peace



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Introduction

Religions for Peace International and *Religions for Peace* Asia in partnership with *Religions for Peace* Mongolia convened a series of meetings, including a high-level forum from 9 to 11 December 2025 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Mongolia offers a rich opportunity for interreligious dialogue and cooperation, enriched by its plural religious traditions, its culture of relative tolerance, its developmental trajectory, and global symbolic significance. Buddhism accounts for the majority of the population, while the rest constitutes a minority from the Muslim, Christian, Shamanism and others such as Baha'i faith traditions. The opportunities lie in service and social work, cultural heritage, education, environmental cooperation, and peacebuilding.

In December 2025, an international delegation comprising Ms. Deepika Singh,

Deputy Secretary General, *Religions for Peace* International; Rev. Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace* Asia; and Prof. Pablito A. Baybado, Jr, Associate Secretary General, *Religions for Peace* Asia met and worked with the leaders of *Religions for Peace* Mongolia: Dr. Gavj Bulgan Tumeekhuu, Secretary General, Dr. Lkhagvademchig Jadamba, Associate Secretary General, and Dr. Jalsraijamts Ganbaatar, Youth Secretary.

Through meetings with government officials, senior religious leaders, and expert academicians they also learned about and discussed the unique features of interfaith collaboration and explored common action for collaboration at the national, Asian, and international level.

Meeting with Hon. Dr. Dulam Bum-Ochir Member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia and Former Adviser to the President of Mongolia on Cultural and Religious Policy

During a meeting with Hon. Bum-Ochir, Ms. Singh presented the nature of *Religions for Peace*, particularly its global presence and operations. She went on to share the importance, and Rev. Dr. Shinohara provided an overview of *Religions for Peace Asia*.

Hon. Dulam recalled the great achievement of Mongolians in Karakhorum, the 13th Century Capital of the Mongolian Empire founded by Ogedei Khan, with its striking policy of institutionalizing religious tolerance and interreligious coexistence. Ogedei Khan encouraged and supported the establishment of Buddhist temples, Mosques, Christian churches, Shamanic practices, and other beliefs. They were publicly recognized and allowed to function side by side and are located within the heart of the capital.

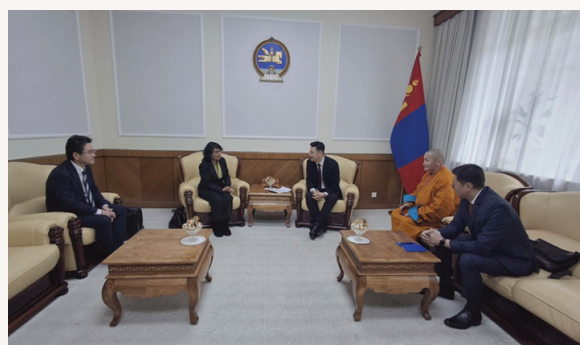
The lasting contribution of the Mongolian empire, he said, is respect for different religions. This respect has served as the foundation of Mongolia's self-understanding as a land of openness, dialogue and religious freedom. He went on to explain that if there is Pax Romana, there is also Pax Mongol, which refers to the period of relative stability, security, and order across much of Eurasia during the 13th and early 14th centuries, when vast territories were unified under the rule of the Mongol Empire. One of the key elements of the Pax Mongol is religious tolerance.

For this reason, Mongolia, historically, culturally, and geo-politically serves as an important country in the pursuit of world peace. Consequently, he said, Mongolia can play an important role in advancing the vision and mission of *Religions for Peace*.

Rev. Dr. Shinohara expressed his appreciation to the Mongolian government for their humanitarian assistance during the Great Eastern Japan earthquake. He then presented the upcoming 10th ACRP General Assembly in Singapore, and the necessity of conducting consultation meetings with the different ACRP chapters to deepen understanding of the situation in Asia and explore common action in preparation for the meaningful and fruitful assembly.

Through this meeting, Hon. Bum-Ochir and *Religions for Peace Asia* resolved to work on the following: 1). To hold the ACRP Executive Committee (EC) meeting in Mongolia around

May to July 2027; 2). To host the South Korea and North Korea high level religious leaders meeting in June or July 2026 as a preparatory activity for the upcoming 10th ACRP General Assembly; and 3). To formally invite Hon. Bum-Ochir Dulam to participate and speak during the 10th ACRP General Assembly.



The meeting's participants also agreed that the financial component of this historic meeting will be provided by *Religions for Peace Asia*. *Religions for Peace Mongolia* will be supported by the Mongolian Government. For the proposed EC Meeting in 2027, the minister proposed that the key theme be "Peace and Environment as Key to Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding."

Venerable Bulgan, the Secretary General of *Religions for Peace Mongolia*, expressed his gratitude to the Honourable Parliamentarian, and reiterated the Pax Mongolia as the spirit and guide of *Religions for Peace Mongolia* in its collaboration with *Religions for Peace Asia* and *Religions for Peace International* in their common pursuit of interreligious harmony and collaboration. Emphasizing the tremendous change that took place in Mongolia since 1990, human rights and religious freedom have been the key principles of social cohesion and nation building, thereby giving respect and encouraging growth of all religions, including traditional and non-traditional religions.

The Honourable Parliamentarian reiterated his gratitude and willingness to support the hosting by *Religions for Peace Mongolia* of the South Korea and North Korea High Level Religious Leaders Meeting. Noting that Mongolia is a neutral country with an open foreign policy, the high-level dialogue will be a historic and important meeting in the history of interreligious cooperation in Mongolia.

Meeting with the Head Abbot, His Eminence Mr. Geshe Lhaaramba D. Javzandorj, Ganadantsegchenling Monastery

After the brief introduction by Venerable Dr. Bulgan of the international delegations, The Head Abbot of Ganadantsegchenling Monastery, Center of Mongolian Buddhists, His Eminence Venerable Geshe Lhaaramba D. Javzandorj, welcomed everyone and commended their work of interreligious dialogue and action.

When he became the Head Abbot, H.E. Venerable Javzandorj acted on one of his key priorities by organizing the interfaith assembly in 2024. In addition, in January and October 2024, Mongolian

Buddhists have participated in a meeting at The Vatican with Pope Francis, which also included religious leaders from various parts of the world. He emphasized that they have been working on closer collaboration with the interfaith community on peacebuilding and interreligious ecology. He went on to say that while dialogue involves talking, action is the most important.

Ms. Deepika shared with the Head Abbot *Religions for Peace's* multi-religious and multistakeholder collaborative actions around the world focusing on peace and security, sustainable development and human rights at the local, national, regional

and international level. She went on to express her gratitude to the H.E. the Head Abbot for his leadership and support of *Religions for Peace* Mongolia.



Rev. Dr. Shinohara considered this meeting with the Head Abbot as a deeply spiritual experience. After expressing his gratitude, he admitted that he was inspired and encouraged more because of the dedication and advocacy of the Head Abbot in their collaboration with various religions in Mongolia.

The meeting reaffirmed the Gandantegchenling Monastery's role as a moral and spiritual anchor for interreligious engagement in Mongolia. Participants expressed a shared commitment to further strengthen cooperation among religious communities through joint initiatives that promote peace, environmental responsibility, and social well-being. The exchange highlighted the strong alignment between the values and vision of the Mongolian Buddhist community and *Religions for Peace*, underscoring the monastery's important contribution to advancing sustained interreligious collaboration at both the national and international levels.

Visit to the Apostolic Prefecture of the Catholic Church in Mongolia

The delegates were warmly welcomed by Fr. Thomas Ro Sanguin, Fr. Peter Hong Jengsu and the rest of the volunteers and staff of the Apostolic Prefecture. After the introduction by Dr Jadamba to all the delegates, they were ushered in for a tour of the prefecture.

In 2023, Pope Francis visited Mongolia, a country that has approximately 5,000 Catholics. The delegation was shown the modest room and office within the building of the prefecture that Pope Francis used during his visit. Rev. Shinohara was touched by being able to visit the modest accommodation of Pope Francis. He said that the simplicity of Pope Francis, indicated by his room and office, deeply inspired him to continue his work in promoting peace and social harmony through multi-religious cooperation.

The delegates also learned about the many programs of Catholic Church in providing services to the people of Mongolia. One of the most important ministry, which was opened during the visit of Pope Francis, is the House of Mercy Program. It serves as a soup kitchen; offers shower and laundry facilities; and provides medical assistance to poor, marginalized and homeless people. In response, Ms. Singh expressed her appreciation of the services that the Catholic Church has been providing and the commitment to explore opportunities to work with *Religions for Peace* of Mongolia.

Fr. Thomas, on behalf of His Eminence Cardinal Marengo, who is currently in Rome, expressed his gratitude for the visit and the opportunity to dialogue with *Religions for Peace*.

High-Level Interreligious Forum on Harmony and Collaboration

Held on Dec. 10, the High-Level Interreligious Forum brought together representatives from various religious traditions and senior academicians for a day-long program emphasising listening, dialogue, and discernment of action. It was held at Battsagaan Hall, Gandantegchenling Monastery, the Centre for Mongolian Buddhists, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The welcome ceremony featured traditional Mongolian music, a performance of the Morin Khuur, the national musical instrument of Mongolia and a primary symbol of its nomadic culture.

Ven. Dr Gavj Bulgan Tumeekhuu, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace* Mongolia welcomed the delegates and all participants.

In the words of Ms. Deepika Singh at the Opening Session, today's forum was particularly significant in light of Mongolia's history and the global context, with the world facing numerous conflicts, increased polarization, and climate change, among other issues continuing to negatively impact the vulnerable sectors of society. *Religions for Peace* is concerned about all these things. The unique feature of *Religions for Peace*, she emphasised, is its capacity to bring together multi-religious communities, while respecting each other's tradition, to collaborate based on shared commitment to achieving common goals through common action.

Ms. Singh further emphasized that religious leaders are uniquely positioned to speak to the hearts and minds of their people. They have the moral authority to champion peace and harmony. Thus, the collective action based on shared values among religious leaders is able to bridge theory and practice to address local, national, regional, and international concerns. It is for this reason that *Religions for Peace* Mongolia can play a critical role both at the national and international levels in advancing positive peace, she said.

In his welcome remarks, Rev. Dr. Shinohara, expressed his gratitude to Mongolia for their tremendous support to Japan when the Great East Japan Earthquake struck in March 2011, fifteen years ago. He cited two symbolic and deeply meaningful acts: all national civil servants in Mongolia donated one day's worth of their salaries, and approximately 40 orphans aged 8 to 18 years old donated one month's worth of their government-provided welfare benefits.

In view of the upcoming 10th ACRP Assembly, Rev. Shinohara called on *Religions for Peace* Mongolia for mutual collaboration and solidarity. He said, "I believe that the compassion for others and the



Our shared human history reminds us that the path to interfaith harmony is not without challenges. Yet it is precisely within our diversity that we find strength, and a foundation upon which we can build a more peaceful, just, and equitable world.

Ms. Deepika Singh,
Deputy Secretary General,
Religions for Peace



Rev. Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara



Ven. Dr. Gavj Tumeekhuu

conviction of coexistence cherished by Mongolia's religious leaders represent precisely the way of life the world needs today. In that sense, I wish to act together with you all for peace."

Recalling his mentor Rev. Norio Sakai who had visited Mongolia a number of times in support of educational and medical support programs, among others, he called on *Religions for Peace* Mongolia to work together, because "the role of religious leaders in presenting hope for the future and taking concrete action for people's happiness is extremely important. I wish to continue lighting the flame of hope for people around the world, together with all of you."

High-Level Interreligious Forum on Harmony and Collaboration

Session 1: Multi-Religiosity and Interreligious Harmony and Collaboration in Mongolia

Facilitated by Dr. JalsraiJamts Ganbaatar, Youth Secretary of *Religions for Peace* Mongolia, this session featured the different religious communities in Mongolia. The presentation included programs and activities of collaboration with other religions.

Session One explored Mongolia's rich landscape of multi-religiosity, highlighting how diverse faith traditions coexist and actively collaborate to sustain social harmony. The session situated Mongolia's religious plurality within its historical and cultural context, emphasizing mutual respect, freedom of belief, and the shared ethical values that underpin peaceful interreligious relations. The discussion underscored how interreligious engagement in Mongolia goes beyond tolerance, evolving into concrete partnerships that address social, cultural, and humanitarian concerns.

The session included representatives from a wide range of religious and faith-based institutions—including Buddhist, Catholic, Muslim, Shamanist, Baha'i, and lay Buddhist organizations, as well as academic and civil society actors—to share

experiences, programs, and collaborative initiatives. These contributions highlighted practical models of interfaith cooperation, such as joint community activities, peace education, cultural preservation, and youth engagement. Collectively, the session illustrated how Mongolia's religious communities serve as active partners in peacebuilding and social cohesion, offering valuable lessons on interreligious harmony and collaboration in a pluralistic society.

The various religious communities participating included those from: Gandantegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists; Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace; Apostolic Prefecture of Ulaanbaatar, Catholic Church in Mongolia; Mongolian Muslim Association; Honoured Cultural Worker of Mongolia, Dr. Galaard Badam-Ochir of Shamanism; and representative from the Mongolian Baha'i Community, Risho Kosei-kai of Mongolia, Zuum Khuree Daschoiling Monastery, Astral NGO and, Zanabazar Buddhist University.

Session 2: Mongolia: Issues and challenges for Multi-Religiosity and Inter-religious Harmony and Collaboration

Session Two focused on an in-depth discussion on contemporary issues and challenges affecting multi-religiosity and interreligious harmony in Mongolia. Moderated by Dr. Lkhagvademchig Jadamba of *Religions for Peace* Mongolia, the session examined how social change, evolving religious identities, and the growing visibility of diverse faith communities intersect with questions of national identity, public policy, and social cohesion. Panellists reflected on the tensions that can emerge between tradition and modernity, as well as the need to balance religious freedom with social responsibility in a rapidly changing societal landscape.

Drawing on perspectives from government, academia, and religious studies, the discussants highlighted structural and cultural challenges such as gaps in public understanding of religious diversity, legal and policy frameworks on religion, and the role of education in shaping interreligious relations. The conversation also emphasized the importance of evidence-based research, inclusive dialogue, and sustained collaboration among state institutions, scholars, and religious communities. Overall, the session underscored the

need for informed, context-sensitive approaches to strengthening interreligious harmony and cooperation as essential components of peacebuilding and social stability in Mongolia.

Panellists emphasized challenges such as limited public understanding of religious diversity, evolving legal frameworks, and the critical role of education. The discussion underscored the need for research-based policy, inclusive dialogue, and sustained collaboration among religious communities, academic institutions, and government bodies.

Featured speakers included: Dr. Prof. Yanjinsuren Sodnomdorj, Office of the President of Mongolia; Dr. Prof. Purevsuren Byambakhishig, Director of the Institute of Philosophy, Mongolian Academy of Sciences; Dr. Prof. Otgonbayar Momol, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, National University of Mongolia; Dr. Bataa Mishig-Ish, Head of the Department of Religious Studies, Institute of Philosophy, Mongolia Academy of Sciences; and, Dr. Demberel Sukhbaatar, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, National University of Mongolia.

High-Level Interreligious Forum on Harmony and Collaboration

Session 3: Discussion on the Role of Multi-Religious Collaboration to Advanced Shared Well-being in Mongolia

Translating Interreligious Harmony into Collective Social Action: Session Three emphasized how Mongolia's strong foundation of interreligious respect can be transformed into coordinated action for the common good. Building on existing collaborations,



multi-religious actors can jointly address shared societal concerns such as social welfare, access to high quality education, environmental protection, youth development, and care for vulnerable populations. The session focused on moving from dialogue to impact—demonstrating how faith-based cooperation contributes tangibly to shared sacred well-being.

Strengthening Institutional and Policy Linkages for Sustainable Collaboration: The session also highlighted the importance of institutional partnerships among religious communities, academic institutions, civil society, and government bodies. Drawing from the challenges identified in Session Two, participants explored how clear policy frameworks, inclusive consultation mechanisms, and evidence-based research support sustainable multi-religious collaboration. Such linkages help ensure that

religious diversity is seen as a resource for national development rather than a source of division.

Promoting Inclusive Narratives and Education for Social Cohesion: Advancing shared sacred well-being also requires shaping positive public narratives about religious diversity. Session Three underscored the role of multi-religious collaboration in education, peacebuilding, and public awareness—particularly among youth—to counter misconceptions and prevent polarization. By fostering mutual understanding and shared ethical values, religious communities can collectively strengthen social trust, resilience, and a sense of shared responsibility for Mongolia's future.

Collaboration at the National, Regional, and International Levels: Solidarity is key to effective advocacy and action. Throughout all the discussions, the importance of strengthening linkages and partnership with *Religions for Peace* was emphasised the upcoming 10th ACRP General Assembly and *Religions for Peace* 11th World Assembly are good opportunities to collaborate on concrete action that would promote shared sacred flourishing in order to promote peace and harmony at all levels.



Conclusion

The High-Level Interreligious Forum brought together diverse faith traditions and scholars to reflect on Mongolia's experiences in multi-religious collaboration, identify emerging challenges, and



Prof. Pablito A. Baybado, Jr.

articulate shared responses. Discussions emphasized the need to move beyond dialogue toward collective social action, particularly

in areas such as social welfare, education, environmental protection, youth engagement, and support for vulnerable populations. Participants also underscored the importance of inclusive policy frameworks, evidence-based research, and

education in sustaining interreligious harmony amid social change.

Key outcomes of the meetings included strengthened partnerships between *Religions for Peace* Mongolia, Asia, and International; commitments to host future regional and high-level interreligious engagements in Mongolia; and alignment around advancing shared sacred flourishing through multi-religious collaboration. The upcoming 10th Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace* General Assembly and the 11th World Assembly were identified as a critical platform for consolidating these commitments and translating Mongolia's interreligious experience into broader regional and global peace initiatives.

Overall, the meetings reaffirmed Mongolia's important role in advancing interreligious cooperation and demonstrated how multi-religious collaboration can serve as a powerful mechanism for peace, social cohesion, and sustainable well-being in Mongolia and beyond.

