

Forging Paths *for* Shared Sacred Flourishing

International Council Meeting | June 23-25, 2026 | Mauritius

THEMATIC DIALOGUE III

Reimagining Multilateralism

Trust Deficits, Fragmentation, and the Role of Religious Actors in Inclusive Global Governance

The multilateral architecture built in the late twentieth century is under severe pressure as geopolitical rivalries intensify, international norms weaken, and trust in global institutions continues to erode. Across many regions, armed conflict, political polarization, economic inequality, forced displacement, and climate-related pressures are contributing to growing fragmentation within and between societies.

In this context, there is growing recognition that addressing today's challenges, rebuilding trust, and strengthening inclusive global governance requires a "whole of society" approach. Religious multilateralism—defined as the structured engagement of diverse faith traditions within international policy frameworks—presents a vital pathway for bridging these systemic gaps. Religious and faith actors have long played a critical role in their societies and often retain significant levels of community trust and local legitimacy where confidence in political institutions has weakened.

Furthermore, robust multi-religious collaboration serves as a powerful antidote to polarization,

demonstrating that diverse belief systems can unite around shared human values. Through grassroots presence and long-standing engagement in conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation, these

collaborative interfaith networks and individual faith actors can contribute to fostering multilateral cooperation and global solidarity.

At the same time, religious actors also face important questions regarding representation, accountability, and how to engage constructively within increasingly polarized political environments. Their engagement in public life may also raise concerns related to politicization, exclusionary narratives, and alignment with

universal human rights norms.

Reimagining multilateralism in the current global context requires renewed attention to inclusive participation, ethical leadership, and the strengthening of trust between institutions and communities. As international institutions confront increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, there is a growing need for more inclusive forms of cooperation – anchored in religious multilateralism and inspired by a shared sacred worldview – that bridge global policymaking with local realities and community-based approaches to peace, resilience, and sustainable development.



The importance of interreligious dialogue in an increasingly fragmented world cannot be overstated.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased understanding of the ways in which growing trust deficits and societal fragmentation are affecting the effectiveness of multilateral institutions.
- Greater reflection on the opportunities and limitations in engagement of religious and faith actors in multilateral governance, peacebuilding, and humanitarian efforts.
- Identification of practical approaches for strengthening inclusive partnerships between governments, international organizations, and faith-based actors in responding to global crises.
- Encouragement and support for communities in fighting for their human rights during times of political crisis.
- Exchange of experiences and good practices on fostering dialogue, social cohesion, and locally grounded approaches to peace, resilience, and sustainable development.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the principal drivers of growing trust deficits and fragmentation within the current multilateral system?
2. How can multilateral institutions become more inclusive, representative, and responsive to the realities faced by local communities and vulnerable populations?
3. What role can religious and faith actors play in rebuilding trust, strengthening social cohesion, and advancing dialogue across political, cultural, and social divides?
4. In what ways can communities support and work with faith leaders towards unity?
5. What challenges and opportunities arise from greater engagement of religious actors within multilateral processes and international policymaking spaces?
6. How can partnerships among governments, international organizations, civil society, and faith communities strengthen collective responses to today's interconnected global crises?



Targeted support is helping to strengthen Interreligious Councils across the *Religions for Peace* movement—building the infrastructure for dialogue. In this photo, diverse religious leaders convened in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to reflect on improving interreligious collaboration.