

AGENDA

**Interfaith Dialogue in Line with the High-Level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda
Multi-Religious and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for the Advancement of New Urban
Agenda: How Far Have We Come? Where to Next?**

Tuesday, 26 April 2022

9:00 a.m. – 10.30 a.m. EDT

09:00-09:02

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Moderated by Prof. Azza Karam, Secretary General, Religions for Peace

- Moment of Silence
- Prof. Azza Karam, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*
- Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher, Secretary General, World Evangelical Alliance and Co-President, *Religions for Peace*
- Mr. Andre Dzikus, Head, Urban Basic Service, UN-Habitat

09:22-09:32

Framing the Issue

- Dr. Chris Elisara, Executive Director, Creation Care Task Force, World Evangelical Alliance

09:32-10:30

Multi-religious Perspectives

Moderated by Mr. Daniel Perell, Representative to the United Nations, Bahá'í International, New York

- Priestess Beatriz Schulthess; President, Indigenous Peoples Ancestral Spiritual Council; Honorary President, *Religions for Peace*; Indigenous; Costa Rica
- Rabbi Daniel Swartz, Temple Hesed, Pennsylvania
- Ms. Ana-Maria Daou, Head of Research and Courses Unit, Adyan Foundation Beirut Lebanon (*invited*)
- Dr. Aditi Mishal, Chief Sustainability Officer, Govardhan Ecovillage
- Ms Molly Burhans, Founder and Executive Director, GoodLands, New York
- Sheikh Ebraheem Ssali, Executive Secretary, African Forum for Muslim Councils; Member, Governing Board of African Council of Religious Leaders-*Religions for Peace*, Uganda
- Prof. Omar Cortes Gaibur, Executive Director, Chilean Association of Interreligious Dialogue for Human Development; *Religions for Peace* Chile
- Ms. Merylene Chitharai, *Religions for Peace* Interfaith Youth Network, South Africa

Question and Answers

Multi-Religious and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for the Advancement of New Urban Agenda: How Far Have We Come? Where to Next?

Tuesday, 26 April 2022

Speakers and Facilitators

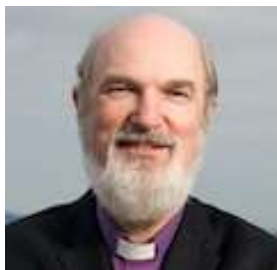
Prof. Azza Karam, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*



Prof. Dr. Azza Karam serves as the Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*—the largest multi-religious leadership platform with 92 national and 6 regional Interreligious Councils. She also holds a Professorship of Religion and Development at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), of which she is a citizen.

Dr. Karam served in intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organisations since the early 1990s, and has lectured in various academic institutions in Europe, North America (including the United States Military Academy/West Point), and in the Arab region. She served in different positions in the United Nations since 2004. Her last post was as a Senior Advisor on Culture, at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and as Founder and Convenor of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development; where she coordinated engagement with over 20 members of the United Nations system, as well as with over 600 faith-based and faith-inspired NGO members of a Global Interreligious Network on Development from all regions of the world. She was a founder of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council of the UN Interagency Task Force, and the Lead Facilitator for the United Nations' Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion, Development and Diplomacy, building on years of experience as a trainer on inter-cultural leadership in the Arab region, Europe and Central Asia. Her Ph.D., in 1996, focused on Political Islam, and became her first book in Arabic and English. She has since published widely, in several languages, on international political dynamics, including democratization, human rights, peace and security, gender, religious engagement, and sustainable development. She was born in Egypt, lived and worked in many countries, and now resides in the United States

Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher, Secretary General, World Evangelical Alliance and Co-President, *Religions for Peace*



Archbishop Prof. Dr. theol. Dr. phil. Thomas Schirmmacher, PhD, DD, (born 1960) is since 2021 Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance, which represents Protestant churches belonging to 143 National Evangelical Alliances with altogether 600 million members. He is also President of the International Council of the International Society for Human Rights. Till 2021 he was Associate Secretary General for Theological Concerns (Theology, Theological Education, Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations, Religious Freedom, Research, and director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom

(Bonn, Cape Town, Toronto, Colombo, Brasilia), the largest research network for religious freedom and against persecution of Christians and other religions and world views. Schirmmacher is extraordinary professor of the sociology of religion at the state University of the West in Timisoara (Romania) and teaches human rights and religious freedom at Oxford University (Regent's Park College). He is also founder, meanwhile the President Emeritus, of 'Martin Bucer European Theological Seminary and Research Institutes' with campuses in Berlin, Bielefeld, Bonn, Chemnitz, Hamburg, Innsbruck, Istanbul, Izmir, Linz, Munich, Pforzheim, Prague, Sao Paulo, Tirana, Zurich, where he taught social ethics and

comparative religions. Schirrmacher has given guest lectures at more than 200 universities and institutions around the globe in most any major country in the world.

Mr. Andre Dzikus, Head, Urban Basic Service, UN-Habitat



Mr. Andre Dzikus is the Chief of Urban Basic Services. Previously he was the Coordinator of the Urban Basic Services Branch (UBSB) at UN-Habitat and the Acting Coordinator of the Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch. Urban basic services at UN Habitat covers its work on water and sanitation, energy, transport, solid waste, ICT. This work covers all three pillars of the UN: humanitarian response, peace and security and development.

Mr. Dzikus has been with UN-Habitat for more than 31 years and managed large projects and programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He was instrumental in setting up the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund (WSTF) to address the MDGs. WSTF was capitalized to the tune of USD 190 million resulting in follow-up investments of USD 2.5 billion. In response to the adoption Agenda 2030 by member states the WSTF was converted into an Urban Basic Services Trust Fund with an initial capitalization of USD 60 million. He was also instrumental in setting up the Waste Wise Cities Campaign in 2018.

Mr. Dzikus holds a degree in Urban Geography, which specialization in urban and regional planning in developing countries, as well as an additional specialization in tropical epidemiology, from University of Heidelberg, Germany.

Dr. Chris Elisara, Executive Director, Creation Care Task Force, World Evangelical Alliance



In 2012, **Dr. Chris Elisara** founded the World Evangelical Alliance's environmental work as the director of the WEA Creation Care Task Force. In 2019 he co-founded the WEA Sustainability Center, in Bonn, Germany, which he currently co-leads.

In this role Dr. Elisara represents evangelicals at the United Nations and other international bodies on a wide range of environmental issues including food systems, climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable urbanism.

A champion of urban design and placemaking, Dr. Elisara leads the Placemaking Studio for the Ormond Center at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Elisara's urban work includes being a long-term member, and former board member from 2014-2018, of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU); co-founder of the CNU Members Christian Caucus; co-founder of the Better Cities Film Festival and UN-Habitat Better Cities Film Festival; international work through UN-Habitat's World Urban Campaign (WUC) where he is co-chair of WUC's civil society partners group; faith-based work through the Urban Shalom Society (co-founder).

Mr. Daniel Perell, Representative to the United Nations, Bahá'í International, New York



Mr. Daniel Perell joined the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office as a Representative in 2011. His areas of work include social and sustainable development, climate change and the environment, global citizenship, human rights, and the role of religion in society. In 2010, Mr. Perell received a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law and an MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.

Priestess Beatriz Schulthess; President, Indigenous Peoples Ancestral Spiritual Council; Honorary President, *Religions for Peace*; Indigenous; Costa Rica



Priestess Schulthess has 30 years of expertise in multilateral diplomacy on behalf of Indigenous Peoples, Women and Environment and Development organisations.

Priestess Schulthess currently serves as the President for the Indigenous People Ancestral Spiritual Council in Costa Rica. She has founded and co-founded various organisations, notably the Indigenous Peoples Ancestral Spiritual Council.

Rabbi Daniel Swartz, Temple Hesed, Pennsylvania



Rabbi Daniel Swartz serves as the executive director of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, which has worked for the past 25 years to engage the Jewish community in the sacred work of the protection of the planet and the poor, and as the spiritual leader of Temple Hesed of Scranton. Rabbi Daniel Swartz has served as the spiritual leader of Temple Hesed since August 1, 2006. At Temple Hesed, he has helped in a resurgence of both breadth of membership and depth of activities, including a national award-winning outreach program, a food drive that collected more food than a Lackawanna County-wide food drive had a few weeks prior, and Purimshpiel productions known throughout the

community for their combination of humour and social commentary.

Ms. Ana-Maria Daou, Head of Research and Courses Unit, Adyan Foundation Beirut Lebanon



Ms. Ana-Maria Daou is the Head of the Research and Courses' Unit at Foundation in Lebanon and serves as Deputy Coordinator of the Interfaith Youth Committee, representing the youth network to the World Council. She is a Chevening scholar and holds an M.A. in Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies at King's College, London.

Ana Maria's thesis, entitled "Know Thy Neighbor: Interfaith Dialogue, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation in the Lebanese Context" explored the role of practical interfaith dialogue in the Lebanese peacebuilding and reconciliation

process, and received highest honors as well as academic praise. Valedictorian of the Faculty of Humanities, she also graduated with a B.A., Summa Cum Laude, in Communication Arts, Journalism and Electronic Media from Notre Dame University – Louaize (NDU), Lebanon and a B.A. in Translation and Modern Languages from Université Saint Esprit – Kaslik (USEK), Lebanon.

Ana Maria currently holds the position of Head of the Research and Courses' Unit at Adyan: Foundation for Diversity, Solidarity and Human Dignity. Her scope of work focuses on the organization's networks in Lebanon and Iraq as well as the program of Religious Social Responsibility for religious leaders and activists. Ms. Daou has also co-authored the book chapter "Religious Pluralism, Interfaith Dialogue and Post-war Lebanon" in Bock, Fahy and Everett's (eds.) *Emergent Religious Pluralisms* (Palgrave, 2019) and a report on inter-faith dialogue mapping in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey to be published by Adyan Foundation. Last but not least, she participated as a trainer and speaker in several workshops and conferences in Lebanon and abroad.

Dr. Aditi Mishal, Chief Sustainability Officer, Govardhan Ecovillage



Dr. Aditi is an academician, research scholar, sustainability enthusiast, social innovator and corporate trainer with 20 years of experience in diverse fields. Inspired by her mentors, she feels responsibility towards contribution to better sustainable world for all. Presently she works as Chief Sustainability Officer and Dean – Skills initiatives at Govardhan Ecovillage. With a doctorate in Sustainability-Green behaviour, she has to her credit a patent on “Smart Toilet Tracking System” and a Copyright on “Empowering Sanitation Decisions with Global System Science for Sustainability”.

Dr. Aditi has spearheaded 11+ long-term projects and is leading 5 ongoing programs in social and environmental impact areas as Water, Sanitation, Waste Management, Skills Development, Rural Empowerment etc. in collaboration with UNEP, UNEP Faith for Earth, Google, BSE, Israel Government, Reckitt Benckiser, India Infoline for transformative change with sustainability action and social entrepreneurship. She strongly amalgamates research & technology led solutions with participatory action led by network of Governmental authorities, Corporates, Educational institutions, NGOs and local community leaders as in case of her project serving Manual Scavenging abolition and rehabilitation. She has over 10 Research articles and book chapters to her credit and has presented in more than 15 International conferences. Moreover, she is part of happy family, one on the mission of serving with compassion.

Ms Molly Burhans, Founder and Executive Director, GoodLands, New York



Ms. Molly Burhans combines her passion for people and the planet with her experience in design thinking, business development, and scientific research to understand and transform complex systems, manage diverse teams, and communicate ideas and processes through broadly-accessible media that brings people together. Molly is an Ashoka Fellow (2018). Molly was the Chief Cartographer for the first global data-based maps of the Catholic Church and has exhibited these on numerous occasions in the Vatican.

Molly has an M.S. in Ecological Design from the Conway School, where she was her class' Sustainable Communities Initiative Fellow, and a B.A. in Philosophy from Canisius College. She worked in a yeast genetics lab and has designed and developed professional graphic and web media for over ten years, some of which been featured in publications such as Landscape Architecture Magazine, Nucleic Acids Research, and the Association for Advancement of Artificial Intelligence proceedings. She co-founded GroOperative, Inc. 5(a), an indoor-vertical farming worker-owned cooperative in Buffalo, NY, USA in 2013. She has been involved with the Vatican Youth Symposium, Vatican Arts and Technology Council, United Nations Youth Assembly, the Buckminster Fuller Catalyst program and is an Echoing Green Fellowship finalist. She has also been an invited speaker at numerous conferences and institutions, including but not limited to Harvard University, Yale University, Esri, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and ICT4D. She was awarded Young Champion of the Earth by the United Nations in 2019. She is also a National Geographic Emerging Explorer in the class of 2021.

Sheikh Ebraheem Ssali, Executive Secretary, African Forum for Muslim Councils; Member, Governing Board of African Council of Religious Leaders-*Religions for Peace*, Uganda



Sheikh Ebraheem Ssali is the current Executive Secretary for the African Forum for Muslim Councils and Member of the Governing Board of African Council of Religions Leaders- *Religion for Peace* Uganda,

Prof. Omar Cortes Gaibur, Executive Director, Chilean Association of Interreligious Dialogue for Human Development; *Religions for Peace* Chile



Dr. Omar Cortes Gaibur serves as Executive Director of the Chilean Association for Interreligious Dialogue for Human Development (ADIR Chile). He is active as a Facilitator of community and organizational development, Rapporteur in organizational ethics, philosophy, theology, Dialogue, interreligiosity and interculturality and as Consultant advisor to the Government in relation to religions.

Ms. Merylene Chitharai, *Religions for Peace* Interfaith Youth Network, South Africa



Ms. Merylene Chitharai serves the Religions for Peace Youth Media Team and is currently based in Durban, South Africa. Obtaining her Bachelor of Architecture Studies Degree, she works as a graphic artist, 3d designer and architectural technologist with 13 years of experience in the realm of social and sustainable architecture.

This has been driven by her passion for social and environmental justice and is sustained by her written engagement with newsprint and social media. In addition, her passion for spiritual reformation and community service has been sustained by her affiliation with various organizations namely; the Hindu Youth Network of South Africa, the KZN Inter-Religious Youth Council, the Religions for Peace Global Interfaith Youth Network, The African Interfaith Youth Network, the Religions for Peace Interfaith Youth Climate Forum, Religions for Peace South Africa and Bhakti Marga – of which she is an active contributor in a number of ways. This includes driving or participating in various charities, promotional and advocacy initiatives, and engaging in topics and projects within the areas of leadership, seva (service), spirituality and religion. She also has travelled to many countries since 2013 serving, networking and building spiritual relations at various Religions for Peace Conferences. Since 2009 she has been on many spiritual retreats and pilgrimages with her Satguru, Paramahansa Vishwananda.