



## United Nations Environment Programme

### Faith for Earth Initiative

#### UNEA 5.2 Faith for Earth Dialogue

#### *The Power of Faith Partnerships to Safeguard Nature: PaRD a case in point*

**Date: Wednesday, 2 March 2022, 14.00-15.30 (Eastern Africa Time) (12.00-13.30 CET)**

#### **Dialogue Session Concept Note : PaRD WECARE**

#### **Background**

One of Faith for Earth's core goals is to "Strengthen Partnership with Faith-Based Organisations' Leadership for Policy Impact". This can be achieved by empowering Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) to enhance their participation in policy debates and decision-making. To this end, Faith for Earth has participated in numerous workshops, conferences, and forums since 2018, facilitating policy dialogue by bringing together policymakers, scientists, government officials, and religious representatives to discuss relevant environmental issues.

#### **PaRD Water Environment and Climate Action (WECARE) Work-stream**

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), established in 2016, brings together partners from all over the world in order to harness the positive impact of religion and values in sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. Membership in PaRD is voluntary and currently comprises of 135 organisations bringing diverse perspectives and expertise. Membership is open to all governmental and intergovernmental entities, civil society and non-governmental organisations such as religious and value-driven organisations, secular NGOs, community initiatives, foundations, academic institutions and other relevant development organisations.

PaRD aims to provide a neutral space for all its members to discuss development goals, review evidence-based research, share best practices, and develop independent policy recommendations, with the aim of fostering partnership between government and faith-based organizations, while respecting the unique identity and positions of all members. The work of PaRD is divided into work-streams: Health, Gender Equality and Empowerment, Sustaining Peace, and Water, Environment and Climate Action (WECARE). The latter, WECARE, focuses on Clean Water and Sanitation, Climate Action, Life Below Water and Life on Land (SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15). Faith for Earth is a co-chair of WECARE, along with the World Evangelical Alliance, Global One 2015, Tearfund, and the World Council of Churches. The purpose of the WECARE work-stream is to:

1. Foster collaboration between PaRD members around SDGs 6, 13, 14, and 15.
2. Enable sharing of knowledge, learning and best practice among members and beyond, in order to facilitate learning and uptake of effective inclusive and faith-based approaches for tackling environment and water related issues.

3. Promote and advocate for the role of faith actors and inclusive and faith-based approaches to addressing environment, water and climate action related challenges, in order for the breadth of knowledge and best practices.

PaRD WECARE launched a [Resource Catalogue](#), which contains knowledge resources from the WECARE and PaRD members alike, related to SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15. Moreover, in collaboration with Humboldt University Berlin (HU), WECARE co-hosted a [Capacity Building Workshop on the topic Religious Communities and Ecological Sustainability in Southern Africa](#) during the 2020 PaRD Virtual Annual Forum. This virtual workshop focused on climate change, sustainable agriculture, eco-feminism, eco-theology, and local multi-faith action by sharing insights into ecological sustainability from theological perspectives and highlighting the value of engagement with religious leaders and faith-based organizations. It was also an important opportunity to discuss faith-environment linkages through a gendered lens and the essential, but frequently undervalued contribution of women in this field. Building on the findings of the event, the HU will develop a comprehensive report, including research findings as well as policy recommendations, which will be presented to the [Annual Forum 2021 in South Africa](#) this November.

## Way Forward

PaRD WECARE is currently conducting a mapping exercise to identify and raise awareness of the work of faith-based, religious and civil society organisations working on the environment. Working on behalf of PaRD, the research is being conducted by the [Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities \(JLI\)](#). This activity will enable the formation of a centralised online database which will help raise awareness of faith-based environmental projects underway and increase the visibility of the mapped organisations, and hopefully will also lead to opportunities for mutual learning and networking between organisations.

Moreover, decisive steps to advance FBOs' policy engagement are currently underway. In collaboration with the Government of Iceland and other stakeholders, Faith for Earth is pushing for the [adoption of a global resolution, integrating the contributions of faith actors in environmental governance](#), as well the creation a global Faith for Earth Coalition within UNEP. The Faith for Earth Coalition will be a self-sustaining global platform to strengthen cooperation with and among faith actors locally, regionally, and globally by facilitating policy dialogue and public engagement on environmental issues. When finalised, these landmark initiatives will help institutionalise the participation of FBOs in policymaking at all levels.

## Objectives of Session

- Exchange on best practises by FBO/FIOs that can contribute to accelerating climate action, water justice and environment protection
- Engage with policy actors and identify how effective partnerships with religious actors can strengthen community-led eco justice engagements to protect nature.

**Topic of the session: *The Power of Faith Partnerships to Safeguard Nature: PaRD a case in point***

Title	Speaker(s)	Duration
<b>Introduction</b>	PaRD WeCARE Co-lead – Ms Joan Okitoi-Heisig, WEA	5 mins
<b>Keynote address:</b>	Mr Peter Prove, Chair of PaRD <i>(USP of PaRD, We Care mapping and resource catalogue)</i>	10 mins
<b>Part 1:</b> Showcase FBOs' good practices and opportunities to protect nature	Moderator: Mr Dinesh Suna, WCC/ Co-lead PaRD We Care  1. <b>Archbishop Thomas Schirmmacher</b> , Secretary General, WEA <i>(Sustainability Center of WEA, Local projects on ecology)</i> 2. <b>Ms Jean Duff</b> , President Partnership for Faith and Development <i>(power of faith partnerships to drive change at scale)</i> 3. <b>Prof. Katherine Marshall</b> , Executive Director of World Faiths Development Dialogue <i>(G20 IFS, Energy Transition)</i>	50 mins
<b>Part 2:</b> Challenges and obstacles in FBOs' policy engagement	4. <b>Mr Peter Prove</b> , Director, CCIA, WCC <i>(WCC divestment policy, climate responsible finance, Blue Community)</i> 5. <b>Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati</b> , Secretary General, GIWA <i>(harnessing religious events &amp; gatherings, Clean India Mission, India as ODF)</i> 6. <b>Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp</b> Founder, Green Cross International and GIWA <i>(soetendorp institute for human values – good practices, Green Cross International)</i>	
<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>		20 mins
<b>Summary and Closing</b>	PaRD WeCARE Co-lead – Joan Okitoi-Heisig, WEA	5 mins
		<b>90 min</b>