



# *Religions for Peace*

**M A N U A L**

*Religions for Peace: A Guide to Building Inter-religious Councils*

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout history and in the modern world, religion is too often a convenient scapegoat for crisis created by violent conflict, political problems, and economic tensions. It is too easy to dismiss religion as a source of discord, without considering the demonstrated capacity of different religious communities to work together to promote peace and sustainable development. In some of the most difficult places around the world, religion is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Religious networks are now working to prevent and mediate violent conflicts, and aid the world's most vulnerable populations. The World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, the largest coalition of the world's religions committed to common action, is playing a key role in this transformation.

Secular societies are undergoing a fundamental shift in their attitudes toward religion and beginning to tap the vast social, moral and spiritual resources of religious communities to tackle the most critical global problems. *Religions for Peace* re-examines religious communities and their social, moral, and spiritual assets related to their roles. Through *Religions for Peace*, representatives of religious communities work to discover how their communities can be engaged in needed roles and how they can complement the roles of other actors such as governments or other elements of civil society.

No form of cooperation has greater potential to improve conditions for more people worldwide than the cooperation of the world's religious communities. Of the world's six billion people, five billion identify themselves as members of religious communities. The capacity of religious communities to meet the challenges of our time is a vast untapped resource.

*Religions for Peace* supports religious communities in their desire to work together for peace by first helping them to *build* unique mechanisms for cooperation – inter-religious councils (IRCs) – and then *equipping* these bodies to take actions that positively impact the lives of the people in their local communities. IRCs and groups are the most efficient way to bring together religious leaders of different faiths, achieve consensus on common problems, and engage the underutilized power of religious communities at the grassroots. Building, equipping and networking an IRC or groups costs relatively little, and delivers powerful results.

*Religions for Peace* makes use of the existing structures that religious communities have built themselves and assists in the formation of IRCs and groups. These inter-religious bodies are locally led by religious leaders of different faiths and designed to provide a platform for cooperative action throughout the different levels of religious communities, from the grassroots to the senior-most leadership.

These action-oriented councils are not themselves religious organizations, rather, they are secular, or public, in character. IRCs and groups can utilize the resources of their member congregations to deliver cost-efficient services, engage in advocacy to prevent war, heal a war-torn nation, eliminate diseases, halt environmental degradation and alleviate poverty, and provide means of equipping local congregations with needed tools.

## **Purpose of the Manual**

This manual is an introductory guide that provides a framework for building an IRC. Though not a complete step-by-step manual, it does refer to additional resources that religious leaders can access to get detailed guidelines.

The main purpose of the manual is to:

- Strengthen awareness regarding the importance of IRCs and groups
- Provide practical ways and means of building IRCs on the local, national and regional level.
- Suggest guidelines for affiliation with the *Religions for Peace* network.

### ***About the Manual***

Section one provides an overview of *Religions for Peace*, explains IRCs as a mechanism for cooperation, and lists the principles that guide IRC capacity building.

Section two gives advice on the areas of affiliation in the larger *Religions for Peace* network, provides an overview of how to establish an IRC, giving suggestions and references in the areas of governance, gender mainstreaming, and institutional sustainability.

Section three gives guidelines as to how to equip IRCs to take cooperative actions to achieve conflict transformation, peace building and sustainable development. It also focuses on the areas of program operations and administration/management.

Section four advises IRCs on the subject of networking that includes sharing information, building alliances and forging public partnerships.

### ***Who Should Use This Manual***

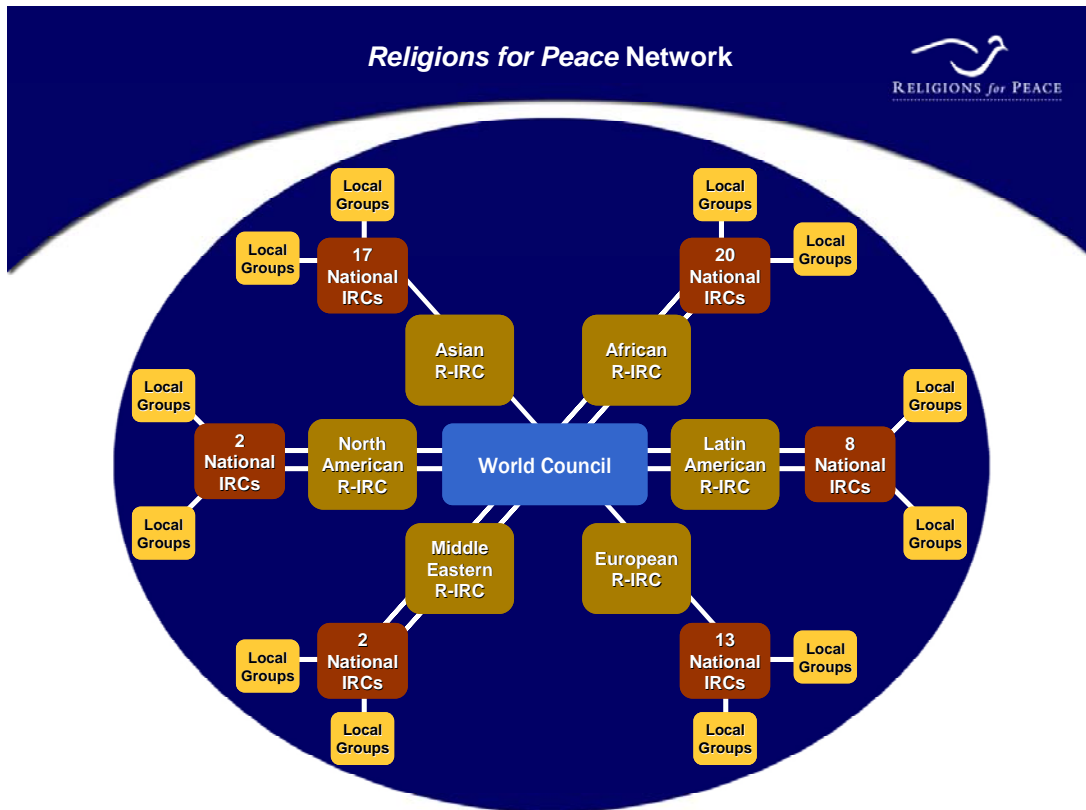
The manual is designed primarily for religious leaders who wish to form an IRC as well as for members of existing IRCs, religious women's groups and youth organizations that wish to affiliate with *Religions for Peace's* global network.

## SECTION I: OVERVIEW

### A. Religions for Peace

#### 1. The Foundation

*Religions for Peace* is a rapidly growing global network of 62 national and four regional affiliated IRCs and groups, including 1,000 women of faith organizations and the World Council, which comprised of 40 elected leaders representing all major faith. Currently, 27 IRCs and groups are in formation (see *Annex 1* for the list of affiliated inter-religious bodies). Each is self-led, but also affiliated to *Religions for Peace*.



The networks of religious women's organizations are in various stages of development and in various degrees of being mainstreamed into the national and regional IRCs and groups.<sup>1</sup> Section II.F gives details of how religious leaders include women of faith and help to incorporate gender issues into all of their work on peace building, conflict transformation and sustainable development.

<sup>1</sup> According to International Labor Organization, "Mainstreaming includes gender-specific activities and affirmative action, whenever women or men are in a particularly disadvantaged position. Gender-specific interventions can target women exclusively, men and women together, or only men, to enable them to participate in and benefit equally from development efforts. These are necessary temporary measures designed to combat the direct and indirect consequences of past discrimination." <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.htm>

*Religions for Peace* also works towards ensuring that IRCs involve religious youth in their programs. Religious youth desks have been established within many IRCs and religious youth networks launched to enable and ensure that these youths can actively participate and have a voice in IRCs.

The strategy of *Religions for Peace* strives to pursue the dream that religions work together for peace. Its principles and agenda for global action are based on this strategy.

- Principles: The *Religions for Peace* network –
  - Respects religious differences;
  - Bases its work on deeply held and widely shared values;
  - Honors the different ways religious communities are organized;
  - Is guided by the principles of representativity<sup>2</sup> and subsidiarity<sup>3</sup>; and
  - Is committed to cooperative action for peace.
- Agenda for Global Action: *Religions for Peace*, through its World Council, seeks to cooperate with its affiliates at the regional, national and local level to advance a global agenda of action to transform conflict, build peace and enhance sustainable development. It builds and equips IRCs, groups, and affiliated women of faith and inter-religious youth networks to draw on the untapped power of religious communities to carry out the agenda for global action.

The principle of subsidiarity ensures that the IRCs choose their own priorities and activities. However, through their affiliation with *Religions for Peace* the IRCs are at the same time identifying with the priorities expressed in the Global Agenda for Action, which are as follows:

- **Transform Conflict:** *Religions for Peace* works around the world in areas of armed conflict to mobilize and equip religious communities to serve as effective agents for peaceful change by –
  - Mitigating ongoing conflict and averting imminent violence;
  - Mediating armed conflict and responding to crisis;
  - Negotiating durable peace; and
  - Providing trauma healing and reconciliation.
- **Build Peace:** Recognizing that while differences of belief have contributed to conflicts throughout history, religious people on innumerable occasions have exhibited a remarkable capacity for reconciliation and service to others. Therefore, *Religions for Peace* builds peace by –
  - Working to prevent conflicts;

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<sup>2</sup> Representativity recognizes that a person, or group of people, can represent, informally or formally, concerns of a larger community. This principle guides the relationship among the different organizational categories in *Religions for Peace* and the selection of *Religions for Peace* members for the offices within the organizational categories of *Religions for Peace* (Standing Rules). It is well understood in *Religions for Peace* that representativity is a principle that needs to be interpreted by each community in accord with its own ways of organizing itself. Importantly, while most "representative" figures provide various forms of leadership in *Religions for Peace*, they typically do so in their own names under the umbrella of the *Religions for Peace* structure. This approach facilitates the positive features of a representative approach with needed efficiency. See Section II, C for details.

<sup>3</sup> Subsidiarity calls for participatory decision-making and implementation. This principle recognizes that local, national, regional and world decisions and actions can be taken at the local, national, regional international levels respectively (Standing Rules). Based on this principle, *Religions for Peace* is committed to complementary partnerships with its network to engage its various levels in cooperative and constructive fashion (Standing Rules). See Section II, C for details.

- Acting to eliminate proliferation of weapons and promote disarmament;
- Promoting reconciliation and securing justice and human rights;
- Assisting in rebuilding post conflict societies; and
- Creating a culture of peace through inter-religious peace education.
- ***Advance Sustainable Development: Religions for Peace*** works with religious leaders and with other international actors to advocate more beneficent governmental policies toward the poor, to engage and empower local communities and to develop programs that put the moral authority of believers to work eradicating poverty and encouraging equitable development on the local, national and global levels by –
  - Addressing the rights and well being of children and families;
  - Advocating for poverty alleviation strategies;
  - Responding to major threats to health and well being, such as HIV/AIDS; and
  - Fostering care and respect for the natural environment.

Strategy: *Religions for Peace* engages existing religious communities locally, nationally, regionally and globally as “building blocks” for multi-religious cooperation. Through the extraordinary contributions of its constituent members, *Religions for Peace* is now a global movement with a shared mission to harness the power of cooperation to transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development.

- As a global agent, *Religions for Peace* pursues the agenda for global action.
 

The World Council of *Religions for Peace* takes action at the global level to transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development through advocacy and actions that include responding to crisis, engaging in inter-religious alliances and building strategic partnerships. The World Council reflects the religious and geographic diversity of the world’s faith communities and is the only multi-religious body with a global mandate, arising from a representative World Assembly.
- *Religions for Peace* builds and equips regional and national IRCs, and youth and women networks to take cooperative action.
 

*Religions for Peace* supports the development of IRCs and groups that operate on the regional and national levels. The formation of IRCs or group is guided by a progressive development process. This starts with gathering religious leaders and assisting them in the formation of a council, including matters of governance, gender mainstreaming and institutional sustainability. Subsequent steps focus on developing organizational capacity in the areas of strategic planning, financial management and program development.

For IRCs to transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development, they need relevant multi-religious training and tools. *Religions for Peace* works to meet these needs by developing and testing multi-religious guides and toolkits on wide range of issues and creating training-of-trainer modules and workshops aimed at equipping a cadre of inter-religious trainers. A gender component is included in all trainings and tools.
- *Religions for Peace* operates the global network by sharing information and building alliances within the network and forging public partnerships.

*Religions for Peace* facilitates connections among its affiliates across national, regional and international levels to foster creative multi-religious solutions to challenging problems.

From sharing lessons learned between countries to building action alliances among its affiliates, the *Religions for Peace* network complements the work of individual IRCs and demonstrates the unique power of a coordinated global approach.

*Religions for Peace* also works to ensure that its program commitments are understood by international agencies and relevant donors. It facilitates partnerships between its affiliates and relevant public institutions, such as the UN agencies, governments and foundations.

### **3. Structure of *Religions for Peace***

*Religions for Peace* is a network organization, with affiliated structures on regional and national levels. The *Religions for Peace* network connects 62 national IRCs and groups: four regional IRCs in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America; the World Council (International Governing Board); and the women and youth groups. Whether it is convening representatives of the entire *Religions for Peace* global network at a World Assembly, providing mechanisms for joint advocacy on the regional level, or facilitating communication between two IRCs that face common challenges, the networking carried out by *Religions for Peace* adds great value to the work of individual IRCs.

Representatives from all of the affiliated national and regional bodies and networks convene at *Religions for Peace*'s World Assembly approximately every five years. The World Assembly elects the World Council, which has specific legal functions set forth in the World Conference for *Religions for Peace*'s Standing Rules (see *Annex 2* for the list of World Council members).<sup>4</sup> The World Council of the *Religions for Peace* network acts on a global level, developing positions of shared concern on behalf of the entire *Religions for Peace* network, facilitating the building of the organizational and program capacity of IRCs, women of faith and inter-religious youth networks, and maintaining a dynamic network among all IRCs and groups.

To fulfill its functions, the World Council elects, from its own membership, an Executive Committee that is charged with key decision-making responsibilities on its behalf.

The World Council of *Religions for Peace* and its Executive Committee is served by its executive arm, the International Secretariat.

Local inter-religious groups and structures may be linked to a national body, which may be an IRC, or an issue based inter-religious structure that may develop into an IRC. Existing faith communities recruit representatives to the governing bodies of the national councils through their own structures and procedures.

On a regional level, councils have been formed in four regions, while a fifth is expected to be formed in 2006. The national IRCs do not report to the regional councils, but may choose to be affiliated with their respective regional council and place representatives to its governing body.

The relationship between the structures of the respective faith communities and IRCs on different levels may be illustrated by the following examples:

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<sup>4</sup> The use of the term "World Council" as another way of describing the International Governing Board in its role as an active multi-religious body has been encouraged by a unanimous resolution by the Executive Committee. In this text, both terms are used interchangeably and refer to the same body.

- International denominational and faith bodies and centers (e.g., World Council of Churches, the Vatican, Global Muslim Associations and International Buddhist Associations) recruit representatives to the World Council
- Regional denominational and faith bodies (e.g., All African Conference of Churches, African Muslim Council and African Hindu Council) recruit representatives to regional Councils of Religious Leaders
- National denominational bodies and national councils (e.g., Church Councils and Muslim Councils) recruit representatives to national IRCs.

#### **4. *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat**

The main formal function for the International Secretariat is to serve the World Council of *Religions for Peace*. The role of the International Secretariat is to implement the decisions of the World Council, prepare and conduct meetings and World Assemblies. In order to fulfill the decisions and intentions of the World Assembly and the World Council, the International Secretariat must in principle be ready to extend its services to all levels and configurations of IRCs and religious women and youth networks.

The International Secretariat has three main tasks:

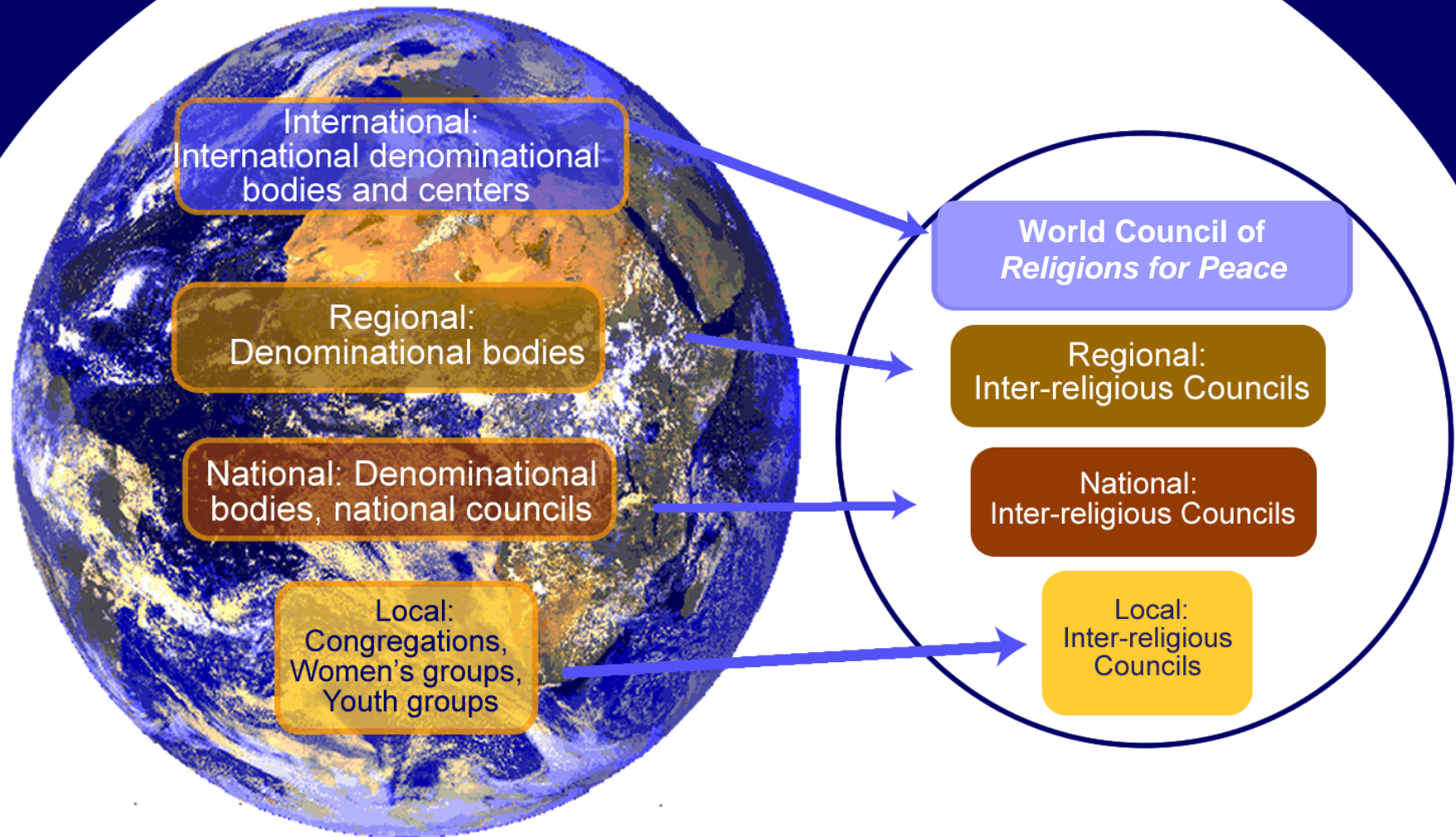
- a. Serving the World Council according to the “Standing Rules,” which includes preparing and organizing World Assemblies, World Council meetings and follow-up, and preparing and organizing meetings and follow-up of the Executive Committee meetings. This could include advocacy action on a global level, ad hoc interventions in geographically focused or event/process related engagements in the name of the council.

To serve programmatic and resource mobilizing purposes, the International Secretariat explores and negotiates multilateral and bilateral partnerships with, e.g., UNICEF, Hope for African Children Initiatives (HACI), UN Millennium Development Goals Campaign, governments, foundations, etc.

In line with the vision and objectives of the World Council, the International Secretariat will, within its capacity, be ready to serve national and regional councils of *Religions for Peace* upon their requests.

- b. Operating the networking task by maintaining web-site(s), facilitating forums for interaction at different levels, organizing exposure/solidarity delegations as mandated and requested by the World Council/Executive Committee.
- c. Building capacity of the affiliated IRCs and groups, and the religious women and youth networks. The following main tasks fall under capacity building:
  - Building and strengthening the councils and women and youth networks.
  - Equipping the councils and women and youth networks to carry out action projects by providing resource materials, training and systems.
  - Assisting in resource mobilization for the capacity building activities and for the priority actions by the councils and women and youth networks. The primary responsibility of sustaining the IRCs lies with the respective IRCs. Therefore, resource mobilization for their councils and programs will logically be done by the councils operating at the national and regional level. However, the Secretariat would make an effort to do as much resource mobilization as possible together with representatives of the respective councils and networks of *Religions for Peace*.

# Religious Communities: Grassroots to Global



## B. Inter-religious Councils as Mechanism for Cooperation

IRCs are mechanisms that engage religious leaders and their communities in multi-religious cooperation working at the national and regional level to transform conflict, promote peace and advance sustainable development. This approach recognizes that religious communities themselves, through their leaders, outstanding persons, grassroots congregations and other organizational manifestations are the main “agents” of multi-religious cooperation, and that *Religions for Peace* structures should be designed to support the religious communities’ efforts for cooperation.

Each IRC in the *Religions for Peace* network is independent, self-led, and honors the ways the different religious communities in its area are organized and represent themselves. Three features characterize each IRC at the international, regional, and local level:

- i. **Representative:** They engage entire religious communities through the persons that each community has chosen to represent it in various ways.
- ii. **Action-oriented:** Their purpose is to facilitate collaborative action to address shared concerns among the religious communities.
- iii. **Sustainable:** They are built from the religious communities to serve as a durable platform for cooperation, able to address whatever critical issues of shared concern that emerge over time.

The IRCs have three main functions:

- a. To encourage, equip and facilitate actions (service deliveries) by their member faith communities in their own capacity.
- b. To bring together the member faith communities through their respective leaders and institutions to initiate and facilitate joint action (service delivery/advocacy/interventions).
- c. To act in the name of the council as mandated by the appropriate organ of the council (service delivery/advocacy/interventions).

The guiding principles that each member of the *Religions for Peace* network needs to adhere to are as follows–

- Respect religious differences;
- Base its work on deeply held concerns and widely shared values;
- Honor the different ways religious communities are organized;
- Be guided by the principles of representativity and subsidiarity and
- Be committed to cooperative action for peace.

## C. Principles for Engagement in Capacity Building of Inter-religious Councils

As described in the strategies (Section A above), one of the main roles of the World Council, working through the International Secretariat, is to contribute to building IRCs and equipping them for action on different levels to transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development. This work is guided by the following principles:

### ***Building Organizations***

- 1) *Limited*: Targets the essential capacity needed by religious leaders to engage their own communities around common concerns.
- 2) *Efficient*: Utilizes the capacity of religious communities as the first source of IRC organizational strength.
- 3) *Engaged*: Connects organizational strengthening to increase the ability of IRC to take action and exchange experiences among IRCs.

### ***Equipping for Action***

- 1) *Consensual*: Focuses solely upon those areas of concern that are deeply held and widely shared among the religious communities.
- 2) *Community Based*: Assists religious leaders to further equip their own communities for cooperative action.
- 3) *Collaborative*: Prepares IRCs to enter into program partnerships with other key stakeholders.

### ***Networking among IRCs***

- 1) *Autonomous*: Acknowledges the independence and autonomy of each IRC.
- 2) *Complementary*: Draws upon the different strengths of religious communities working together to solve common problems.
- 3) *Linked*: Fosters solidarity, shared identity and common action across national, regional and international levels.

Annex

## Annex 1: Religions for Peace Affiliated Inter-religious Councils/Groups

<i>Religions for Peace Regional and National Affiliated Inter-religious Councils and Groups</i>			
<b>African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL)</b>	<b>Asian Conference on Religions and Peace (ACRP)</b>	<b>European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL)</b>	<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean Council of Religious Leaders (LACCRL)</b>
Botswana	Bangladesh	Austria	Bolivia
Burundi	Cambodia	Belgium	Chile
Cameroon	China	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Dominican Republic
Cote d'Ivoire	India	Croatia	Ecuador
D. R. Congo	Indonesia	France	El Salvador
Ethiopia	Japan	Germany	Guatemala
Ghana	Mongolia	Italy	Guyana
Guinea	Nepal	Kosovo	Panama
Kenya	Pakistan	Poland	Peru
Liberia	People's Republic of Korea	Romania	Puerto Rico
Malawi	The Philippines	Russia	Surinam
Mozambique	Republic of Korea	Sweden	Trinidad and Tobago
Nigeria	Singapore	The Netherlands	
Rwanda	Sri Lanka	United Kingdom	<b>North America</b>
Sierra Leone	Thailand		Canada
South Africa			United States of America
Tanzania			
Uganda	<b>Oceania</b>		<b>Middle East</b>
Zambia	Australia		Iraq
	New Zealand		Israel

<i>Religions for Peace Inter-religious Councils and Groups in Formation</i>			
<b>Africa</b>	<b>Asia</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</b>
Benin	Laos	Albania	Argentina
Egypt	Malaysia		Brazil
Namibia	Myanmar		Colombia
Senegal	Vietnam	<b>Middle East</b>	Costa Rica
Sudan		Jordan	Mexico
Swaziland		Lebanon	Paraguay
Zimbabwe		Syria	Uruguay

## **Annex 2: Religions for Peace World Council (1999-2006)**

### MODERATOR

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Muslim, Hashemite Kingdom of JORDAN

### VICE MODERATOR

V. Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Orthodox, USA, Director of Ecumenical Affairs, Orthodox Church in America

### TREASURER

Mr. Simon Xavier Guerrand-Hermès, Protestant, Kingdom of MOROCCO, Chairman, Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace

### SECRETARY GENERAL

Dr. William F. Vendley, USA

Dr. Agnes R. Abuom, Anglican, KENYA, President, World Council of Churches

Ms. Farida Ali, Muslim, PAKISTAN, Program Officer, United Nations Children's Fund

Fana-fi-Allah Shaykh Muhammad Nazim Adil Al-HAQQANI, Muslim, CYPRUS, Grand Mufti of Turkish Cypriots

Dr. Vinu Aram, Hindu, INDIA, Director, Shanti Ashram

Dr. Deepali Bhanot, Hindu, INDIA, Professor, New Delhi University

Lord Carey of Clifton, Anglican, UK, Church of England

Ayatollah Seyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, Muslim, IRAN, Professor, The Academy of Sciences

H.E. Godfried Cardinal Danneels, Roman Catholic, BELGIUM, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussel

H.E. Demetrios, Orthodox, USA, Archbishop, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Mrs. Judith M. Hertz, Jewish, USA, Co-Chairperson for Interreligious Affairs, Union for Reform Judaism

H.E. William Cardinal Keeler, Roman Catholic, USA, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Baltimore

H.E. Metropolitan Kirill, Russian Orthodox, RUSSIA, Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Moscow Patriarchate

Prof. Dr. Norbert Klaes, Roman Catholic, GERMANY, Professor, University of Würzburg

Prof. Dr. Hans Küng, Roman Catholic, GERMANY, President, Global Ethic Foundation

Ven. Dr. Grace Chung Lee, Won Buddhist, KOREA, President, Won Buddhist International

Dr. Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Muslim, INDONESIA, President, Muhammadiyah

Mr. Mir Nawaz Khan Marwat, Muslim, PAKISTAN, Moderator, Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace*

Imam Wallace Deen Mohammed, Muslim, USA, President, The Mosque Cares

Mr. Ziad Moussa, Christian, LEBANON, Founder, Islamo-Christian Youth Council

Rev. Nichiko Niwano, Buddhist, JAPAN, President, Rissho Kosei-kai

H.E. Dr. Adamou N'Dam N'Joya, Muslim, CAMEROON, Minister Plenipotentiary, Republic of Cameroon

Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, Protestant, SWITZERLAND, General Secretary, World Alliance of Reformed Churches

His Grace John O. Onaiyekan, Roman Catholic, NIGERIA, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Abuja

Rt. Rev. Dr. William Phipps, Protestant, CANADA, Former Moderator, United Church of Canada

H.E. Oscar Cardinal Rodriguez, Roman Catholic, HONDURAS, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa

Chief Rabbi David Rosen, Jewish, ISRAEL, President, International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations

Mr. Jehangir Sarosh, Zoroastrian, UK, President, World Conference of *Religions for Peace* – Europe

Mrs. Beatriz Schulthess, Indigenous, COSTA RICA, President, Return to the Earth

H.E. Peter Cardinal Seiichi Shirayanagi, Roman Catholic, JAPAN, President, Japanese Committee of the World Conference of *Religions for Peace*

Chief Rabbi René Samuel Sirat, Jewish, FRANCE, Vice President, Conference of European Rabbis

Bishop Gunnar J. Stålsett, Protestant, NORWAY, Bishop Emeritus of Oslo, Church of Norway

His Holiness Sri Swamiji Sugunendra Theertha, Hindu, INDIA, Abbot, Sri Putige Matha Monastery

Rev. Naoki Taketani, Buddhist, JAPAN, Associate Program Officer, Rissho Kosei-kai

Bishop K.H. Ting, Protestant, CHINA, President, China Christian Association

## SECTION II: BUILDING AN INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

### A. Affiliation

The formation of IRCs begins with religious diplomacy and confidence building through consultations and dialogue that build trust and commitment to collaboration. *Religions for Peace* has established protocols of multi-religious leadership that guide this process. It fosters progressive stages of development by helping IRCs develop their organizational capacity to carry out program initiatives and achieve self-sustainability. (See *Section E*.)

National inter-religious bodies are encouraged to seek formal affiliation with *Religions for Peace* through a written request to the International Executive Committee. An affiliation agreement would then be signed between the international and national bodies outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of each. (See *Annex 3* for a sample agreement.)

The national IRCs will receive all the rights and privileges of national affiliates spelled out in the *Religions for Peace* International Standing Rules, including representation at the World Assembly, regular reports and communication from the International Secretariat, and the right to use the name and symbols of *Religions for Peace* and publicly communicate its status in the *Religions for Peace* network. The IRC will also be able to receive various types of assistance from the International Secretariat in organizational development.

In turn, the IRC is expected to respect and carry out the organizational principles and methods of *Religions for Peace* as stipulated in its Standing Rules and other relevant policy guidelines adopted by the International Executive Committee. The IRC is also expected to communicate regularly with the International Secretariat and share annual reports and other information on its activities.

### B. Entry Points for Creation of Inter-religious Councils

There are three main avenues or entry points for forming mechanism of inter-religious cooperation: 1) chapters, 2) institutional cooperation on specific issues, and 3) formalized cooperation.

**Chapters:** During the early years of the organization, committed and interested people shaped national and regional *Religions for Peace* chapters. Their institutional rooting in the respective faith community varied from situation to situation. It was, however, soon realized that an institutional representation would strengthen the impact of the inter-religious cooperation. The WCRP Standing Rules encourages “religious bodies, institutions, organizations and individuals” to form local bodies and chapters (Article II, Section 1, A and B). A number of national chapters are current affiliates of *Religions for Peace*. Some chapters have gone through a strategic and organizational change to become representative bodies for their respective religious communities that constituted them and thus they have developed into IRCs.

**Cooperation on Specific Issues:** In some countries religious leaders have joined hands, on some level, to work on specific issues. For example, the HIV/AIDS crisis has sparked institutional inter-religious cooperation in a number of African countries. In some countries such bodies have addressed specific local conflicts and political crises. Yet, in other countries, inter-religious bodies have addressed democratization and peoples’ participation in this process. These bodies may not have the senior most religious leaders in their governing structure, and may not be mandated by the

respective religious communities to work beyond the specific issue(s) that helped form them. However, in some countries such bodies have been the entry point for engaging the senior-most religious leaders and their respective religious institutions in the development of IRCs.

**Formalized Cooperation:** A third method of entry is when senior most religious leaders realize the need for inter-religious cooperation within their country and explore the possibilities for formalizing cooperation to address issues of common interest and concern. Religious diplomacy gradually moves this exploration into a focused path towards shaping an IRC. The consultations and negotiations leading up to the formation of an IRC are in many instances assisted by *Religions for Peace* staff specifically mandated to support the building of inter-religious councils.

Irrespective of the entry points, there are systematic efforts to build institutionally mandated and representative IRCs in many countries. *Religions for Peace* is involved with all three categories of inter-religious bodies to assist them to appropriately represent the member faith communities and their existing institutions. A number of national chapters have over time evolved into duly representative bodies without changing names. Issue-based bodies are in many cases exploring ways of bringing the inter-religious cooperation to a higher and more inclusive level. Senior most religious leaders are engaged in finding ways of building on the issue-based bodies to create a representative IRC as an umbrella for inter-religious cooperation.

*Religions for Peace* receives requests regularly to assist in religious diplomacy to facilitate the coming together of senior most national religious leaders to form IRCs. The aim is gradually to have inter-religious bodies develop into representative organizations. When relating to inter-religious bodies, *Religions for Peace* will consider three aspects:

**Affiliation:** A key mechanism for identifying an inter-religious body with *Religions for Peace* is to enter into an agreement of affiliation (see *Section B* below). Both IRCs and other bodies may be affiliated with *Religions for Peace*.

**Principles:** Subsidiarity and representativity are two principles on which IRCs and their relationship to *Religions for Peace* are built. When developing IRCs, these principles need to be respected and nurtured (see *Section C* below).

**Process of Building:** Depending on what category of entry point, the building of IRC needs to be adjusted to its own history and local context (see *Section D* below).

### C. Principles of an Inter-religious Council

Two principles guide the structure and operation of an inter-religious council affiliated with *Religions for Peace* – ‘representativity’ and ‘subsidiarity.’ These concepts can be explained briefly as:

**Representativity:** The principle of representativity recognizes that a person, or group of persons, can represent, informally or formally, concerns of a larger community. *Religions for Peace* is committed to assisting entire religious communities to cooperate with one another for the common good. Access to the spiritual, moral and social assets of religious communities relevant to the common good must be made “through” the religious communities and their own structures and institutions.<sup>5</sup> Thus the principle of representativity entails engaging the enormous range of already-

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<sup>5</sup> *Religions for Peace* believes that the already well-established social infrastructures of religious communities should be mobilized “through religious communities” themselves. In the *Religions for Peace* model, *Religions for Peace* acts as a servant to religious communities in their efforts to connect with each other and to take common action for peace. The *Religions for Peace* model is in contrast with that of “individual-based” inter-religious groups in its greater emphasis on an entire religious community being mobilized for the common good.

existing religious structures in multi-religious cooperation. For *Religions for Peace*, the religious communities and their structures are the “primary actors” in multi-religious cooperation. *Religions for Peace* also recognizes the unique role that “creative minorities” have within their own communities as they work to help their communities address new challenges.

It is important to note, however, that the notion of representativity functions as a principle, not a rule. Rules are to be followed, but principles always need to be “interpreted.” Thus, *Religions for Peace* believes that the principle of representativity needs to be interpreted at every level of religious community and applied to groups typically excluded from “official” positions in religious leadership. Consonant with this understanding, *Religions for Peace* has taken affirmative action to ensure that representatives of religious women and youth groups are among *Religions for Peace* leadership. Nevertheless, significant additional steps need to be taken in this regard. See *Section F* for details.

***Subsidiarity:*** The principle of subsidiarity is designed to ensure that appropriate leadership occurs on every level of IRCs and that all levels are organically linked to one another. The *Religions for Peace* Standing Rules make clear that local leadership applies at the level of sub national units, national leadership at the national level, regional leadership at a regional level and world leadership at the international level. The principle of subsidiarity also clarifies reciprocity among all levels. No level can disregard the principles that guide the entire organization, but each restricted level is included in and is part of all broader levels of organization.

This principle allows for inclusive representative participation regarding situations that affect the whole organization, but also ensures that local actors remain the agents of their own affairs regarding local issues.

The principles of representativity and subsidiarity are complementary and are necessarily understood together. They encourage the development of structures and program responsibilities that are mutually supportive and respectful of the different capacities for action at each level of the organization.

## **D. Process of Building**

### **1. Identifying Leadership**

In accord with the principle of representativity, religious communities and their senior leaders should be approached to set in motion the process of forming an IRC. Apart from names that may be provided through existing *Religions for Peace* networks or through direct contact with individual religious communities, the most effective way to contact new groups or individuals is through relevant peak-bodies, seeking listings of those who hold senior leadership positions in specific religious communities. For example:

- a. *Contacting Buddhist Organizations:* Where a National or State Buddhist Council exists, in addition to seeking the names of the Council leadership themselves, request a list of monasteries or training institutions, including the names of those who hold leadership positions within these bodies. Alternatively, the World Fellowship of Buddhists or similar international and regional Buddhist organizations may be able to provide points of contact in the area. Beyond this, Buddhist organizations already involved in *Religions for Peace* activities might also be able to suggest names or organizations to contact. When initiating

inquires with any of the bodies mentioned above, also request information on any individuals or committees responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths.

- b. *Contacting Christian Organizations:* National or State Councils of Churches usually maintain a listing of the heads of member denominations and often non-member churches as well. If no such Councils exist, the World Council of Churches may be able to supply a listing of member churches in the area. Many Councils of Churches also maintain units responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths that would be important potential partners in *Religions for Peace* activities. The leaders of National and State Council of Churches themselves are also important figures to involve in *Religions for Peace*. In addition to the above, it may also be necessary to contact Catholic Church structures and religious orders independently. A regular Bishop's Conference is a common forum within most countries and it may be possible to obtain a listing of participants. Similarly, many diocesan or national offices have ecumenical or interfaith units, which would also be useful points of contact. Indeed, many denominations maintain similar structures for relations with other faiths that would also be important partners in *Religions for Peace* programs.
- c. *Contacting Hindu Organizations:* Where a National or State Hindu Council or Society exists, in addition to seeking the names of the Council leadership themselves, request a list of temples or other Hindu institutions, including the names of those who hold leadership positions within these bodies. Alternatively, the World Hindu Parishads or organizations may be able to provide points of contact in the area. When initiating inquires with any of the bodies mentioned above, also request information on any individuals or committees responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths.
- d. *Contacting Islamic Organizations:* Where a Council of Mosques, Islamic Federation or similar body exists, in addition to seeking the names of the office bearers themselves, request a list of mosques and other significant Islamic institutions, including the names of those who hold leadership positions within these bodies. In many places, Boards of Imams or similar organizations will also exist, which may be able to provide a list of members or other senior figures from within the Islamic community. Alternatively, the World Muslim League or Congress, or similar international Islamic

### Case Study

#### Cambodian Inter-religious Council

The Cambodian Inter-religious Council (CIC) is the first-ever coalition of Buddhist, Muslim and Christian communities in Cambodia committed to common action for peace. CIC will mobilize religious communities' moral and social assets to address issues of common concerns such as development, peace education, democracy and human rights, eradication of small arms, the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and environment degradation.

Launched on October 10, 2002, the inauguration of the CIC brought together 200 Buddhist, 200 Muslim and 100 Christian delegates, as well as government, the United Nations and civil society representatives. His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, who had already endorsed and supported the CIC, delivered the Royal Address. Other speakers included Rev. Nichiko Niwano, President of Rissho Kosei-kai, Rev. Noyu Yamada, Representative of *Religions for Peace* Japan and Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*.

The founding members of CIC, Supreme Patriarch of Mahanikaya Buddhist Order, Supreme Patriarch of Dhammayuttika Buddhist Order, Grand Mufti of Phnom Penh, Grand Mufti of Kampon Chhnang, and senior Catholic and Protestant representatives issued a joint statement, pledging themselves to "playing religion's important role in reconciliation, development, and peace building in Cambodia." In the statement, religious leaders also "commit themselves, through CIC, to entering into partnership with relevant public and civil society institutions and groups including governments, United Nations, and NGOs."

organizations, may be able to provide points of contact in the area. When initiating inquires with any of the bodies mentioned above, also request information on any individuals or committees responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths.

- e. *Contacting Jewish Organizations:* Where a National or State Jewish Federation, Board of Deputies, or Council exists, in addition to seeking the names of the Council office bearers themselves, request a list of synagogues and other significant Jewish institutions, including the names of those who hold senior leadership positions within these bodies. In places with large Jewish communities, Boards of Rabbi, Jewish professional associations, or similar organizations will also exist, which may be able to provide a list of members or other senior figures from within the Jewish community. Alternatively, various international Jewish organizations may be able to provide points of contact in the area. When initiating inquires with any of the bodies mentioned above, also request information on any individuals or committees responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths.
- f. *Contacting Sikh Organizations:* Where a National or State Sikh Council or Society exists, in addition to seeking the names of the Council leadership themselves, request a list of gurdwharas or other Sikh institutions, including the names of those who hold leadership positions within these bodies. When initiating enquires with any such bodies, also request information on any individuals or committees responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths.
- g. *Contacting Other Religious Organizations:* Other religious organizations who are regular participants in *Religions for Peace* activities may have similar structures to those mentioned above. Again, when contacting these bodies, request information on any individuals or committees responsible for dialogue or relations with other faiths.

The listing above represents only some of the largest religious faith in the world today. There are other religions such as Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, etc., and ought to be represented in an IRC on behalf of their faith communities.

## **2. Formation**

The following outlines the essential steps that are typically taken to form an IRC:

- a. *Convene Private and Joint Meetings of Religious Leaders:* Private and joint meetings of religious leaders should be organized to assist them to develop effective and durable channels of communication among themselves, to build confidence among religious communities, and to prepare the groundwork for jointly working towards the formation of an IRC. By identifying the needs and capacities of the various communities, these meetings can lead to the development of a working agenda for collaboration.
- b. *Form a Preparatory Committee/Working Committee Consisting of Representatives Appointed by Senior-most Religious Leaders:* A 10-15 member preparatory committee/working committee should be constituted of representatives appointed by senior-most religious leaders, as well as religious experts in program areas such as conflict transformation, human rights, development and peace education. This preparatory committee/working committee will prepare an agenda, and draft a strategy, for the formation of an IRC.
- c. *Draft a Constitution and Standing Rules:* The preparatory committee/working committee should draft a constitution of the IRC (see a model constitution in *Annex 5*). The constitution should clearly delineate the principles, missions and organization of the IRC.

The draft constitution will be reviewed by a local lawyer and submitted to the senior-most religious leaders for final approval.

- d. *Develop a Set of Shared Principles That Can Serve as the Basis for Multi-religious Cooperation:* The preparatory committee or the working committee can draft a statement for senior-most religious leaders that can offer, in the form of public statement, the moral warrants and commitments for religious communities working together in addressing their deeply held and widely shared concerns.
- e. *Organize an Inauguration Meeting of the IRC:* The preparatory committee/working committee organizes an inauguration meeting of the IRC that will bring together national religious leaders, as well as political and civic leaders. The preparatory committee or the working committee prepares an agenda, organizes meetings, and coordinates any public statement and related reception/press events.

### **3. Development and Sustainability of Affiliated IRCs**

The goal of multi-religious cooperation is to build a large network of scalable sustainable multi-religious mechanisms designed to implement action programs that transform conflict, build peace and advance sustainable development. Integral to this goal is building the capacity of national and regional affiliated IRCs in order that they may operationalize the large capacities of religious communities.

*Religions for Peace* has developed an IRC Development Model to map growth of organizational capacity across a continuum, with four distinct development stages (see the chart below).

Establishing IRC structures and creating basic program priorities are taken up at the earliest stages of IRC formation. This constitutes the first stage.

IRC's that are legally registered, have basic governing and staff structures, and some program activities are considered to have emerged into the second stage of development.

IRC's that are establishing partnerships, developing strong organizational systems and are publicly recognized for their work are considered to have advanced to the third stage.

In the final stage of IRC development, the IRC has matured to be fully functioning with a diversified resource base and partnerships, and is playing a leadership role in *Religions for Peace* network. (See *Annex 4*).

#### **Statement of Shared Moral Commitment – Albania**

After a year of working closely with all communities, the religious leaders from the Albanian Islamic Community, Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church and Bektashi Community signed an historic "Statement of Shared Moral Commitment" on March 18, 2005. With this declaration, the religious leaders of Albania, who endured enormous suffering for over four decades, affirmed their shared moral values while recognizing their unique faith traditions. The declaration also clearly states their continued commitment as religious leaders to promote tolerance, coexistence and the positive development of a vibrant, open civil society in Albania. The statement calls upon civil authorities to protect the religious freedom of each individual and the practices of religious communities. At the signing ceremony, attended by leading national figures and representatives including many foreign embassies, the Prime Minister of Albania, H. E. Fatos Nano, declared his support for the multi-religious initiative, stating that "these religious leaders are far more important (to Albania) than any political officer."

<b>CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES</b>				
<b>Stages of Organizational Capacity of Affiliated National Inter-religious Councils</b>				
	<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>STAGE 2</b>	<b>STAGE 3</b>	<b>STAGE 4</b>
	<b>Inter-religious Councils</b>			
<b>Assumptions for Each Stage of Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are establishing a presence within their country</li> <li>• Are creating basic capacity for program work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are legally incorporated</li> <li>• Have operational capacity through core staff</li> <li>• Are establishing a program task force</li> <li>• Are engaged in initial program work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an active task force advising on program development</li> <li>• Are engaged in expanded program work in more than one issue</li> <li>• Are working in partnership with NGOs, INGOs, government</li> <li>• Are attracting additional funds for programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are self-sustainable in program work</li> <li>• Are involved in development of newer IRCs by participating in exchange visits, training workshops and development activities</li> </ul>

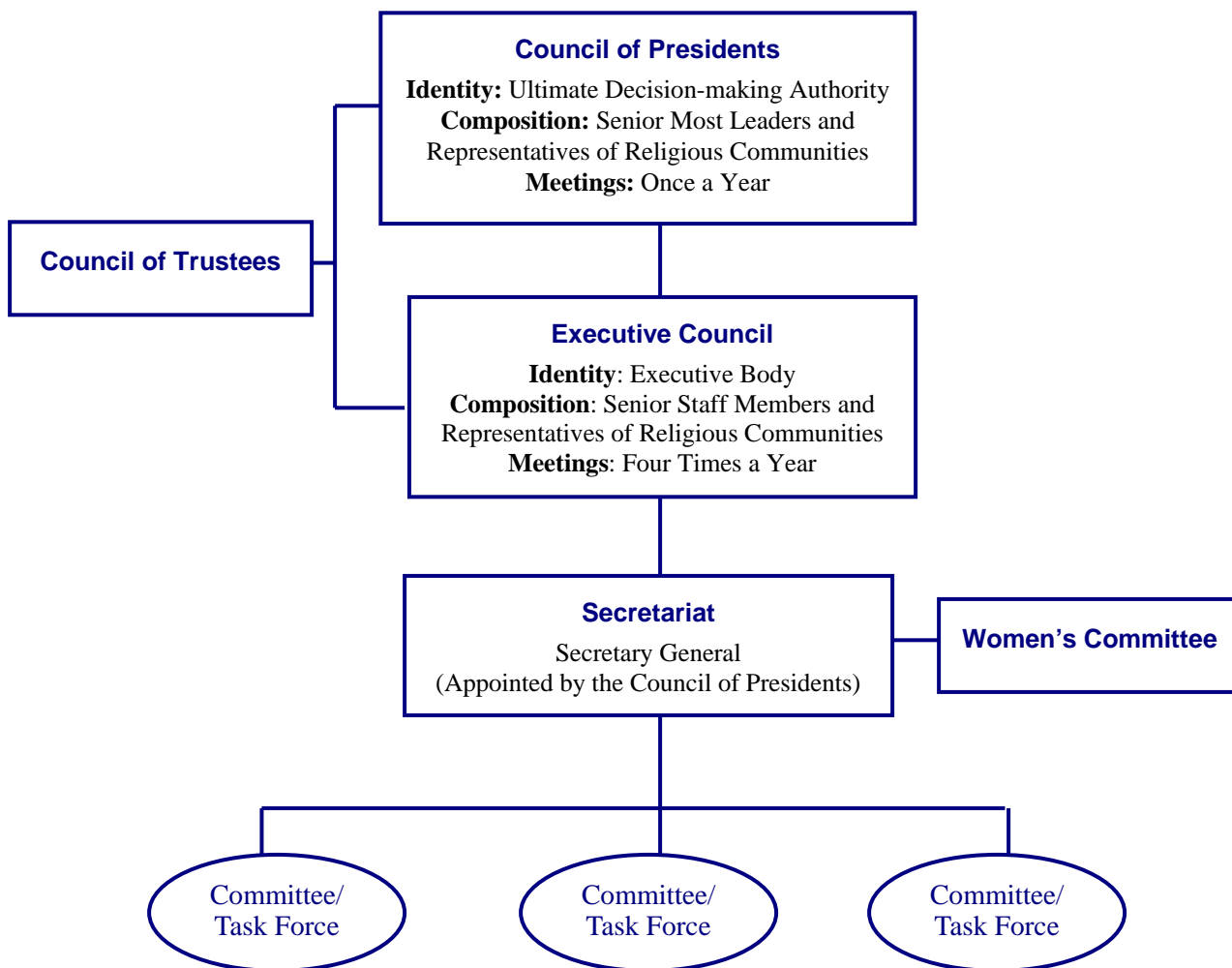
An organizational capacity assessment (OCA) tool has been developed by *Religions for Peace* to determine the needs of the IRCs, and help them advance from one development stage to another. IRCs are evaluated according to the level of their organizational development relevant to the six key organizational and program categories: 1) governance; 2) representativity; 3) gender mainstreaming; 4) global affiliation and networking; 5) program operations; and 6) sustainability. Concrete benchmarks have been assigned for each category (see *Annex 4*). Affiliated IRCs are assessed to ascertain their relative states of capacity. Once an IRC is evaluated using the OCA tool, *Religions for Peace* may enter into capacity building agreement with that particular IRC with specific quality benchmarks as targets.

<b>Additional Resources</b>
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool for Inter-religious Councils. Conference of <i>Religions for Peace</i> , 2005. This is an analysis tool to evaluate IRCs to identify areas of needed growth.

## **E. Governance Structures**

This section can be useful in establishing an IRC and can be adapted differently for different regions and religious communities. It outlines various organs that can be formed to carry out an IRC's mission and describes their roles and responsibilities. Following is a suggested structure for the governance of an IRC.

### Basic Model Structure of an Inter-religious Council



The policy-making of the IRC can be carried out by two principal organs: a *council of presidents* at the senior leadership level and an *executive council* at the executive level.

A *council of presidents* is composed of senior-most religious leaders who are chosen on the basis of their leadership roles in their religious communities, their ability to influence their respective religious communities at all levels, and for their moral stature.<sup>6</sup> This group will serve as the ultimate decision-making body for the IRC, ensuring broad access to religious structures at the regional, national and local levels for carrying out collaborative action for peace.

An *executive council* is typically composed of senior representatives duly appointed by the senior-most religious leaders of their respective communities who serve on the *council of presidents*. Under the ultimate authority of the *council of presidents*, the *executive council* deliberates on issues relating to policies, programs and administration of the IRC, and makes recommendations to the

<sup>6</sup> In order to ensure gender representativity, the Council members may choose to allocate a position to religious women – in an affirmative move – to compensate for situations where women have no access to leadership positions in their respective communities. In such cases, an exception can and may be made to include a senior-most religious woman representative.

*council of presidents*. The *executive council* may decide to set up **committees** or **task forces** on specific program areas such as conflict transformation, children, human rights, and development.

A **secretariat** serves the *council of presidents* and the *executive council* in their implementation of programs and projects. The Secretary General is typically appointed by the *council of presidents* at the recommendation of the *executive council*.

A **women's committee** is an organ specifically intended to serve as a vehicle for religious women's concerns regarding multi-religious cooperation for the common good. The chairwoman of the women's committee is encouraged to be an ex-officio member of the executive council.

A **youth committee** is specifically intended to bring forward young adults' concerns regarding multi-religious cooperation for the common good. The chairperson of the committee should be an ex-officio member of the executive council.

**Committees/Task Forces** are designed to become the organs of the IRC's action programs that address issues such as conflict transformation, human rights, development, children, disarmament and security, and peace education.

*Committees/Task Forces* are built on a principle of representativity, but they are also guided by a principle of competency that recognizes that within religious communities there are often specialized structures and competent persons who are highly experienced and specialized in major areas of conflict transformation, peace building and sustainable development. *committees/task forces* are forum of collaboration for these representatives that provide the organizational infrastructure needed to mobilize the respective religious communities in action projects pertaining to the focus of the *committees/task forces*.

A **council of trustees** consists of philanthropists, civic and business leaders, and other individual donors who provide strategic liaison with important publics nationwide, and, most importantly, assume leadership in securing the financial base of support necessary for the growth and development of the IRC.

It is encouraged that IRC policy ensures 50% or no less than 30% women representation at the executive council, secretariat, committees, task forces and project implementation level. Details of how this can be achieved are given in the latter part of this section (*Section F Gender Mainstreaming*).

For sample structures of existing IRCs in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, see *Annex 6*.

## Case Study

### Inter-religious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina

#### **Overview of the IRC**

Despite the return of many refugees to their homes and a peace plan in place, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosnia) remains a divided land that continues to struggle with economic, political and social transitions, including changes in gender norms and the role of religious communities. The majority of the Orthodox population still lives in the Republika Srpska, while the majority of Muslims and Catholics reside in the Federation. With the absence of strong political leadership and continual pressure by the international community on the Government of the Republic Srpska to apprehend at-large war criminals, the political climate in the country remains tense. Individuals now enjoy freedom of religious belief and practice, however only when they live in an area dominated by members of their own religious group. Unfortunately, religious minorities commonly experience intimidation and harassment.

Recognizing the void in moral leadership and potential impact by collaborative action, the four traditional religious communities of Bosnia united to form the Inter-religious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina (IRC-BiH) soon after the war ended. Through on-going assistance of *Religions for Peace*, the IRC-BiH is now a registered and nationally operating non-government organization that remains committed to building a strong and united civil society through inter-religious cooperation by all citizens of Bosnia.

#### **History and Context**

At the request of the religious communities in Bosnia, the *Religions for Peace* Secretariat established a field office in Sarajevo in 1996, just months after the signing of the Dayton Accords and the cessation of armed hostilities. Through the assistance of its International Governing Board, *Religions for Peace* successfully sponsored a meeting of Bosnia's religious leaders in the fall of 1996. This meeting was the first time since the outbreak of war that the four most senior religious leaders had met together. This process led to the public issuance of a *Statement of Shared Moral Commitment* in June 1997, whereby ranking Roman Catholic, Serbian Orthodox, Islamic, and Jewish officials announced their intention to create the IRC- BiH.

#### **Actions Undertaken / Building Capacity**

During the past eight years, the IRC-BiH has collaborated with *Religions for Peace* to build the promising institutions of a multi-ethnic, democratic state. It has sought to reverse the communist-era restrictions on citizen associations and promote religious communities as vital civic actors. It has acted as a neutral partner in seminars with human rights activists and theologians, and it has worked to create legal, fiscal, and governance structures necessary to sustain the IRC's autonomous role in Bosnian civil society.

Through its five working groups, the IRC-BiH has made an important impact on Bosnia's peace and reconciliation process. It has helped create a law regarding freedom of religion and religious communities; established a region-wide network of women who work together on projects to address society's problems; created dialogues between youths and equipped them with skills to prevent conflict in their own communities; and reached out to the general public through several publications, roundtable discussions, and radio programs broadcast throughout the region.

In March 2003, the IRC-BiH was officially registered as a local, non-governmental organization and a year later in April of 2004 they moved into an office space donated by the city of Sarajevo. Over the past year, *Religions for Peace* worked closely with the staff of the Council in order to ensure they have the skills necessary to operate a sustainable and successful program. After a series of trainings in grant writing, fundraising, strategic planning and NGO management, the IRC-BiH now has an operating Secretariat with a three year proposal which has already received funding from the local government and various international organizations.

#### **Looking Forward/Next Steps**

As the IRC-BiH looks to the future, they remain focused on spreading the vision and goals of the Council through facilitating projects initiated by *Religions for Peace* that focus on women and youth, grassroots inter-religious cooperation and legal reform. Additionally, the Council continues to operate as the primary inter-religious body in Bosnia that is consulted on local and diplomatic levels with regards to religious affairs. As they gain their autonomy and sustainability, their influence and involvement in the development of the civil society will continue to rise.

## Case Study

### Ghana Conference of *Religions for Peace*

#### Overview of the IRC

A number of challenges face the country of Ghana as it works to maintain stability after restoring multi-party democracy in 1992. Each election brings the fear of slipping back to the days of violent coups and limited democracy that plagued the country since its independence in 1957. Ghanaians who had left to work the cocoa fields of Cote d'Ivoire have returned to avoid conflicts there and seek accommodation and reintegration in Ghana. Refugees from Liberia and other neighboring countries are in great need of resources.

In the mid 1990s a group of religious denominations in Ghana started to come together at an ad-hoc basis to address these and other common concerns. The group, originally called the Forum of Religious Bodies, is now the Ghana Conference of *Religions for Peace* (GCRP), a coalition of deeply committed leaders working together for the good of all communities in Ghana.

#### History and Context

In 2002, desiring greater capacity and the involvement of more denominations, the leaders and constituencies of the Forum started to work with *Religions for Peace* towards the formation of an affiliated inter-religious council (IRC). The president of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, attended the inauguration of the GCRP in December of 2003 along with other national dignitaries, *Religions for Peace's* Secretary General, and representatives from the international staff.

The leaders of the GCRP recognize the value of involving all denominations represented in Ghana in order to fulfill the organization's mission of fostering peace among religious communities and promoting the well-being of all Ghanaians. Though the current GCRP is representative of the majority of people of faith in Ghana, the Conference is continuing to reach out to additional faith communities, including Hindu, Buddhist and indigenous groups.

The GCRP uses the credibility and respect they have earned to issue impactful statements in times of need; for example, when current and former government leaders were in dispute, they quickly issued a statement calling for reconciliation in the name of preventing escalated conflict. Such joint declarations carry more weight than separate statements by individual religious leaders because they represent a strong coalition and constituencies willing to cross borders of faith and put aside differences to voice their concerns for the common good.

#### Actions Undertaken / Building Capacity

The GCRP has begun to network its constituent women and youth. Led by one of the women members of the GCRP executive council, the women's network is constituted by women from each of the member denominations. A similar plan for network building is underway to bring together the youth of member denominations, promoting the development of another generation of leaders committed to multi-faith collaboration.

*Religions for Peace's* Conflict Transformation Program works with the West African Inter-religious Coordinating Committee (WA IRCC), of which the GCRP is a member, to mitigate and mediate cross border conflicts throughout the region. Throughout West African conflict zones, representative teams of IRC members have visited refugee camps, home to thousands of refugees and internally-displaced people, to provide psycho-social counseling and support. The WA IRCC allows religious leaders in the region to learn from each other's experience in building IRCs and to discuss the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo, the latter two being of great concern to Ghanaian leaders because of their proximity and the influx of refugees.

#### Looking Forward / Next Steps

As the leaders look to the future, their main concern for the GCRP is resource mobilization. Once they have mobilized additional resources, the GCRP would undertake more projects such as supporting the education of refugee children currently being victimized and recruited to serve in their home countries as soldiers.

The GCRP leaders have accepted the responsibilities that come with their status as religious and moral leaders in a country where political leadership is at times unstable or in conflict. By joining together in collaboration and solidarity, the constituent denominations and faith communities are transforming themselves into a stable multi-partisan mechanism for advocacy and change.

## **F. Gender Mainstreaming**

From the earliest times, religious communities have relied on all of their members to enhance their cohesion and effectiveness. Women have been and continue to be important actors, participants, and decision-makers in religious communities. Moreover, there are many issues on which religious women have been able to develop particular skills and a distinguished record of leadership, such as caring for their communities' health, education, welfare, morality, and the reconciliation of differences.

Gender mainstreaming within an IRC refers to the process of including women's perspectives<sup>7</sup> and their actual presence at all organizational levels and in all aspects of an organization's work. Women should be involved, and their perspectives solicited, with regard to each project and/or program activity that the IRC and/or chapter undertake. Their actual involvement needs to take place from the earliest stage of conceptualizing these projects, and up until the evaluation and completion of any activity. Moreover, gender mainstreaming also entails that specialized programs are developed which specifically target the constituency of religious women and their needs. These programs can then undertake to tailor projects based on identified needs that religious women voice. This particular attention to religious women enhances their capacities for leadership and performance, a fact that can only benefit their entire community.

*Religions for Peace* seeks to fully integrate women of faith into the governance structures and operations of inter-religious bodies at the national, regional and international levels, thus providing women a place at the table for inter-religious leadership and dialogue to express concerns and offer valuable perspectives and resources.

### **1. Elements**

#### **a. Policy**

Although not stated as official *Religions for Peace* policy, there is commitment within the *Religions for Peace* network to include greater representation of women in leadership positions. IRCs are encouraged to ensure that religious women leaders make up 50% or no less than 30% of the IRC leadership at the executive, secretariat, committees, task forces, and project implementation levels.

#### **b. Leadership**

In order to ensure gender representativity, the senior-most leadership of the IRC may choose to allocate positions in its leadership level to religious women – in an affirmative move – to compensate for situations where women do not hold leadership positions in their respective communities.<sup>8</sup> The chairwoman of a religious women's network or women's committee may serve as the ex-officio member of the Executive Council of the IRC.

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to distinguish between women's *perspectives* and women's *issues*. The former relate to what women have to say, based on their experiences and insights, on all matters and affairs. Women's issues, on the other hand, are often perceived to be those relating to the family, children, and reproductive health.

<sup>8</sup> In such cases, the senior-most religious leadership should make an exception to the rule, and include women leaders from the second or third tiers among their ranks.

### **c. Ways IRCs Can Engage Women**

*Promoting Women as Leaders:* Women's representation in the IRC is key to their participation in inter-faith cooperation, however, it is not sufficient condition for ensuring their leadership. Promoting women's leadership within an IRC requires targeted actions to include them in decision-making and the implementation of all IRC activities. These actions include:

- Giving women in the IRC a prominent role in executing specific activities or projects;
- Assigning women as chief guests, facilitators and moderators in key meetings, and as the spokespersons for the media and public relations on initiatives of the IRC;
- Ensuring that in all public appearances, women leaders from the IRC are present along with their male counterparts;
- Promoting opportunities for women members of the IRC to attend leadership training and workshops offered by local organizations and international institutions; and
- Ensuring that women's involvement in programs is not strictly related to issues that pertain to women.

*Creating Open Forums for Discussion:* Given traditional roles of women, it may be necessary for members of an IRC to fully understand and accept the advantage of having women as equal partners and leaders. For this to happen, it is necessary to open lines of communication and organize candid discussion within an IRC. These discussions may be facilitated by an outside non-partisan person, or they can be co-conducted by male and female leaders within the IRC. The questions or topics for discussion should include:

- What factors prevent women from taking on a fully equal leadership role within the IRC?
- Do members feel that women and men are equal leaders? Why or why not?
- What roles do men and women feel they should have within the IRC?
- What would women members of the IRC like more or less from their male counterparts?
- What would male members of the IRC like more or less from their female counterparts?
- What are the advantages to having women's equal participation as leaders?
- What could IRC's do specifically to promote women's leadership?

*Creating Opportunities for Educational Exchanges with Women from Other Countries:* Drawing on examples from other countries can both inspire and guide IRCs to promote women's leadership. Countries that have a long-standing IRC with active women's leadership can advise newer IRCs based on their experiences. Men and women within an IRC should take part in this sharing of information. These exchanges can happen in a number of ways including:

- Site/country visits to study women's leadership within an IRC;
- Sub-regional and regional training programs;
- Mentoring programs;
- E-mail/internet exchanges or cyber-discussions on good practices; and,
- Sub-regional or regional newsletters dedicated to promoting women's leadership

## **2. Process for Mainstreaming Gender**

IRCs are encouraged to establish a women's desk within the IRC and cooperate with and involve existing multi-religious women of faith networks in their countries. If there is not an existing

network, the IRC can follow the steps outlined below to form a women of faith network to provide a platform for women of faith to collaborate at the programmatic level in multi-religious initiatives.

IRCs are advised to engage the leadership of religious women's organizations, women's groups within religious communities, and religious women scholars in their respective countries to form a national network of women of faith. These leaders can use their positions within their communities to establish coordinating mechanisms for the delivery of technical assistance and the sharing of best practices, to participate in the leadership and initiatives of the IRCs, and to promote participation in international networking through *Religions for Peace's* Women's Mobilization Program.

Women of faith representatives may be informally convened by the IRC in each country to develop effective communications and relationships within the women's network and with the council. Drawing on the discussions during the meeting, the needs of various communities should be identified to formulate a working agenda for multi-religious cooperation. These meetings can lead to the formation of women of faith network linked to a national IRC.

### **Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender into IRC Projects and Activities**

Below are eight suggestions for mainstreaming gender into IRCs:

- i. When forming, evaluating or assessing IRCs, determine if their leadership represents those who are active in their regions (especially women);
- ii. Remind delegates of the mandate and encourage women's participation;
- iii. Invite male and female experts to consultations, trainings and meetings and make sure they include gender experts;
- iv. Legitimize your gender perspective to partners, work from a global context by referring to international resolutions on gender and bring it back to the national/regional level from there;
- v. Draft proposals that include a comprehensive approach to gender and women's issues;
- vi. Organize meetings/conferences that address gender and women's concerns;
- vii. Report to what extent and in what ways women were included in activities on your missions, projects and initiatives; and
- viii. Include women's participation in all evaluations of programs and activities.
- ix. Share financial, informational and materials resources with national women of faith networks so that they can take advantage of fundraising activities for their projects

**Case Study**  
**IRCs in Sierra Leone and Liberia**

After a sub-regional training in West Africa organized by *Religions for Peace* in 2003, women from Sierra Leone and Liberia returned to their respective countries and started women's desks within their IRCs. In the case of Sierra Leone, the IRC started with leadership and mobilization training for women in Freetown and have since replicated the training in other parts of the country. The women have worked with the men in the IRC to play an equal role in the UN-based Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In Liberia, one woman's inspiration from the conference opened new doors for women's participation in peace building. Using the information from the conference, she organized a follow up training in Liberia with IRC members. They then helped plan and facilitate peace workshops in Monrovia for warring factions, civil society and refugees. The women of faith took on a leadership role in the December 2003 solidarity visit to Liberia which included IRC members from Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and *Religions for Peace* staff. They have also played a significant role in educating rural communities about the Accra Peace Accord.

Ideally, religious women's organizations will increase their access to international donor agencies and a variety of multi-faith women's projects would be funded by major donors in each continent. Women of faith will then be active partners on negotiation tables and mediation processes, at the top levels of religious leadership, and their voices will be heard on all matters of development and peace building locally, regionally and internationally.

*Religions for Peace* builds the capacities of each IRC at the national and regional level. It provides technical advice and practical trainings to each body with regard to gender mainstreaming, responding to expressed needs and concerns of both religious men and women in these specific structures.

In most instances, to safeguard the interests that women express and to ensure the inclusion of religious women and their perspectives in the work of the IRC, a specialized desk officer and/or women's coordinating committee is formed. This does not mean that women become separated from the development of the rest of the IRC. On the contrary, this process ensures that religious women, who are traditionally alienated from positions of leadership within their own communities, have a mechanism that can investigate, promote, and safeguard their interests as a collective and thus, a strong unit.

*Religions for Peace* has identified interventions and goals to help IRCs mainstream gender into their plans and activities. IRCs can:

- Establish women's desks at each IRC and train IRC staff in gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming;
- Establish national multi-religious women of faith networks;
- Expand the leadership of IRCs and regional bodies to 50% or no less than 30% women leaders;
- Integrate women of faith and their concerns in all programmatic areas and field programs of *Religions for Peace*. Women of faith will be active partners on negotiation tables and mediation processes, at the top levels of religious leadership, and their voices will be heard on all matters of development and peace building locally, regionally and internationally; and
- Increase the access of religious women's organizations to international donor agencies and secure donor funding for multi-faith women's projects in each continent.

In five years time, each IRC should have established its own women's desk, with trained staff member(s) who themselves have mobilized and expanded their local network of religious women's organizations, trained them, and integrated them into all areas of IRC activity.

At the national and regional levels, women of faith are already on their way to achieving these guidelines. In 2004, the West Africa Inter-religious Coordinating Committee (WA IRCC) and women representatives from each IRCs attended a joint consultation in Sierra Leone. The joint collaboration enabled the more advanced IRCs to share their success stories and offer ideas to those that have not actively initiated the participation of women of faith in IRCs. As a result, each IRCs developed a plan for mainstreaming gender into their respective national councils.

### **3. Formation of a Women of Faith Network**

The first step in building a women's network is to identify and nominate senior representatives from various religious denominations as well as faith-based and multi-religious organizations to form a women's committee. The women's committee serves as a collective voice for women of faith. If there is an existing IRC in the country, the women of faith network may consult and collaborate with the women's group or women's desk within the IRC at the programmatic level.

Once identified, the women of faith representatives may informally convene to develop effective communications and relationships within the women's network. Drawing on the discussions during the meeting, needs of various communities should be identified to formulate a working agenda for multi-religious cooperation. These leaders can also leverage their positions within their communities to establish coordinating mechanisms for the delivery of technical assistance and the sharing of best practices, to participate in the leadership and initiatives of the networks, and to promote participation in international networking through *Religions for Peace's* Women's Mobilization Program.

The following steps outline a process that may be useful to form multi-religious women of faith networks:

- i. Identify senior religious women leaders, leadership of religious women's organizations, women religious leaders in inter-religious bodies, women's groups within religious communities, and religious women scholars in their respective countries.
- ii. Convene private and joint meetings of these women religious leaders.
- iii. Form a preparatory committee/working committee consisting of women representatives from various faith traditions.
- iv. Draft a strategy for communication and action for multi-religious cooperation for the women's network.
- v. Develop a set of shared principles that can serve as the basis for multi-religious cooperation among women of faith.
- vi. Organize an inauguration meeting of the women's network.
- vii. During the inauguration meeting endorse or agree upon a framework for collaborative action.

#### **Creating a Women's Group in Cote d'Ivoire**

After becoming affiliated with *Religions for Peace* in 2003, the National Forum of Religious Confessions (NFRC) in Cote d'Ivoire, started a women's group to undertake community-based action programs. The NFRC began as a coalition of diverse faith communities working together to prevent the eruption of ethnic violence in 2000, and has been deeply engaged in a national process of conflict transformation since. The Forum recognizes the important contribution of women and encourages their active participation in all of their initiatives, particularly those that involve gender-based violence.

#### **a. Strengthening Women of Faith Networks**

IRC members can increase cooperative efforts between men and women by strengthening women's networks. These efforts can manifest in a variety of ways, including:

*Alliance Building:* There are women and men in religious communities who are conscious of the need for inclusive strategies for multi-religious collaboration for development, and there are those who are not open to change. It is critical for men and women, who understand the benefits of mainstreaming gender to target responsive/positive senior religious male leaders, support them in working for gender equality and, in turn, help them build alliances with their peers and constituencies in support of sustainable multi-religious collaboration that is responsive to gender needs and perspectives.

*Gender Analysis:* IRC members and representatives from the Women's Desks can gather and present gender desegregated data and analysis to IRC leadership. This information reveals the nature and level of inequality and highlights the ways in which crises impact males and females differently, including issues such as refugee situations, sexual violence as a means of subjugating the enemy in conflict, maternal/child health and poverty.

*Open Dialogue and Forums:* Advocates of gender mainstreaming within IRCs can organize forums for open dialogue about the challenges of accepting women in leadership roles and integrating their needs into multi-faith efforts. It is useful in these forums for women to share their stories of being excluded, and how they have used strength and tenacity to ensure that women's needs and perspectives are included. This type of forum creates a social consensus among religious women and men on the need for gender mainstreaming.

*Women's Networking:* The collaboration and mutual support among women can be an excellent source of inspiration and ideas to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into the work of IRCs. Women of faith can join together through national and regional networks, or within their IRCs to troubleshoot, plan collective activities and to provide the moral support necessary to deal with adversity.

#### **4. Linking Women's Desk with the Network**

Every country's experience with establishing women's desks within IRCs and women of faith networks is different. As such, there is no set of steps to follow to create links between these two structures. There are, however, guidelines to assist in this process. While the councils and the networks are two separate entities, their goals should be to work together towards promoting women's multi-faith participation in peace building. In order to do this, systems to promote collaboration must be in place. To support linkages and synergy, IRCs and women of faith networks should consider the following initiatives:

- In countries with a women's desk within an IRC, work with fellow IRC members to establish a women of faith networks;
- In countries with a women of faith networks, work with IRCs to promote the establishment of a women's desk;
- In countries with a women's desk within an IRC and a women of faith networks, these two groups organize quarterly or bi-monthly meetings with leadership representation (including male participation from IRCs) to plan short-term and long-term goals;
- Representatives from women of faith networks and IRCs attend each other's meetings as often as possible to ensure that they are updated on initiatives and to seek ways to support each other; and
- IRCs and women of faith networks communicate regularly through one-page updates (by e-mail or hard copy) to keep each other informed of activities.

## **5. Role of Religions for Peace's Women's Mobilization Program**

As affiliate members of *Religions for Peace*, IRCs have access to the extensive resources and expertise of the Women's Mobilization Program of *Religions for Peace*. *Religions for Peace* launched the Global Network of Religious Women's Organizations as part of its Women's Mobilization Program in 2001 to build, equip and network women of faith all over the world to work together on common concerns. Currently, the network includes more than 1000 Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Zoroastrian, indigenous and multi-religious women's organizations with membership ranging from five to 5,000. The Global Network is served by the International Women's Coordinating Committee (IWCC), which consists of women of faith leaders from geographically diverse regions and also acts as a consultative body to the Women's Mobilization Program. The IWCC, which is nominated approximately every five years at *Religions for Peace's* World Assembly, advises and provides direction to the Women's Mobilization Program on strategic planning and policy development.

In addition, the Women's Mobilization Program has convened and launched regional women of faith networks in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South and South East Asia and South East Europe. Through their national women's networks or women's committees, IRCs are linked to these regional and global bodies to share experiences, exchange best practices, and participate in their efforts to address issues that cross borders.

*Religions for Peace's* Women's Mobilization Program supports women of faith network members through:

- Convening international consultations and leadership trainings, seminars, and workshops;
- Forming global and regional women of faith e-groups;
- Disseminating newsletters to network members and international agencies to highlight the unique roles of women of faith in peace building and sustainable development;
- Sending regular updates on the *Religions for Peace* website with regional field reports and other relevant information;
- Developing a women's multi-faith calendar to voice the concerns of women of faith;
- Creating a directory of the Global Network of Religious Women's Organizations; and
- Developing training manuals on leadership and conflict transformation from the perspective of women of faith that have been tried, tested, and developed with religious women in the field.

### **Additional Resources**

*Planning for Change: A Handbook for Training Workshop Leaders on Organizational Development and Strategic Planning*. International Federation of University Women, 1995. A guide to assist women's organizations in developing their goals, missions, budgets and membership base. [www.ifuw.org](http://www.ifuw.org)

*Planning for Growth*. International Federation of University Women, 1998. A follow up guide to the 1995 publication to help women's organizations after the initial groundwork has been achieved. [www.ifuw.org](http://www.ifuw.org)

*Picturing a Life Free from Violence.* United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2001. Media and communications strategies from around the world for ending violence against women. (Available on CD Rom). [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

*Supporting Women's Use of Information Technology for Sustainable Development.* Women in Global Science and Technology (WIGSAT), 1997. A paper on using IT with women in Africa. The content covers how to overcome barriers and how women have used IT to network. [www.wigsat.org](http://www.wigsat.org)

*Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference.* The United Nations Development Fund for Women. A composite of stories from women's NGO's around the world on peace-building. [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

*A Woman's Place: Religious Women as Public Actors.* World Conference of Religions for Peace, 2001. This book describes the religious mandates for women to play an active public role mirrored through different traditions in the voices of women of faith from around the world.

*Recommendations for Action: Situating Women of Faith in a Global Coalition for Children.* World Conference of Religions for Peace, 2002.

*Religious Women, Armed Conflict: Multiple Challenges, Unique Opportunities.* World Conference of Religions for Peace, 2002. Provides a political analysis of the role of religion and women of faith in transforming conflicts around the world. Includes perspectives from UN agencies and case studies narrated by women of faith.

*Women of Faith Transforming Conflict: A Multi-Religious Training Manual.* World Conference of Religions for Peace, 2004. This training manual offers insights for readers who want to learn more about the controversial and often contentious role of women and religion in situations of conflict. It is aimed at providing step-by-step sessions for trainers working on three issues: (1) conflict transformation; (2) communication and leadership skills; and (3) media and advocacy.

*Leadership Resources.* International Federation of University Women, 2005. An on-line informational kit including workshop exercises on organizational development materials.

*Building and Equipping Women of Faith Networks.* World Conference of Religions for Peace, 2006. This guide provides women of faith with information on establishing and building a network, and it includes examples from regions around the world.

**Newsletter.** World Conference of Religions for Peace. These regular newsletters, highlighting actions carried out by members of the global women's network, is produced and disseminated quarterly. These profiles offer inspiration to other activists and allow them to be recognized by the international community, increasing their potential to access resources and funding.

**E-groups.** World Conference of Religions for Peace. Religions for Peace is improving the facilitation of the global e-group and regional groups of Latin America and Africa to include more region-specific and issue-specific communications and more frequent updates of information.

**Multi-faith Women's Calendar.** World Conference of Religions for Peace. The multi-faith calendar is produced yearly and distributed to network members and other Religions for Peace affiliates and partners. The calendar notes holidays from religious traditions throughout the world and includes quotes from women's network members about their perspectives and involvement in multi-religious collaboration.

**Global Directory.** World Conference of Religions for Peace. Religions for Peace updates the Global Directory of Religious Women's Organizations on its website and refines its mechanism to keep the directory up-to-date and accessible to all parts of its network.

**Website:** [http://www.religionsforpeace.org/RforP/WOMEN\\_MAIN.html](http://www.religionsforpeace.org/RforP/WOMEN_MAIN.html)

## **G. Institutional Sustainability**

Organizations that sustain themselves over time have several things in common: they are built around a “raison-d’être,” or mission, and have organizational focus and structure that enable them to realize the mission. Further, they can effectively secure needed resources to support the programs and services developed to realize the mission (see Section G.2).

### **1. Organizational Sustainability**

The following are ten ingredients of sustainable organizations:

- A compelling vision, focused mission and a strategic plan
- Effective governing structures
- Diverse resource mobilization, or fundraising efforts
- Intentional leadership, including volunteer involvement and staff development
- Effective and focused programs
- Systematic and effective administrative procedures, and clear and accurate financial management and budgeting
- Networking among constituencies and in communities, and visibility
- Clear communication within a learning environment
- Appropriate technology that supports the organization’s work
- Ability to celebrate successes and enjoy the work

Regional and national IRCs achieve organizational sustainability by developing in progressive stages of maturation (see Section II.D.3). This process requires the executive leadership of IRC to member religious institutions to: i) encourage participation of the member religious institutions of the council and its governing structures; ii) establish and strengthen governance, management and administrative functions to realize its mission and implement effective programs, and iii) create programs and services that are in concert with its mission.

## Case Study

### The National Forum of Religious Confessions of Cote d'Ivoire

The National Forum of Religious Confessions (NFRC) of Cote d'Ivoire, a coalition of diverse faith communities working together to prevent the eruption of ethnic violence, has been deeply engaged in a national process of conflict transformation and peace building since its founding in 2000.

Facing rising political violence between a predominantly Muslim north and Catholic south and ultimately, the outbreak of civil war in 2002, Ivorian religious leaders recognized the need to come together around timely and well-coordinated initiatives for peace.

To expand their capacity to achieve this goal, the NFRC became affiliated with *Religions for Peace* in 2003. Immediately taking action to prevent Côte d'Ivoire from slipping into a civil war, *Religions for Peace* sponsored a rapid reaction mission by regional senior religious leaders to Abidjan. Representatives from the Inter-religious Councils of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Ghana met with leaders of the National Forum of Religious Confessions of Côte d'Ivoire in an international consultation which resulted in the first national call for peace and religious tolerance, and a pledge from all those assembled to work together for peace both within the country and throughout the region.

These religious leaders assisted their Ivorian colleagues to formulate a Peace Building Action Plan for the Forum and urged West African citizens to refrain from turning their political struggles into religious conflicts. Under the Action Plan, the members of the National Forum committed to actively supporting the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire by engaging all parties to the conflict and pledged to meet regularly with each other and to engage in prayer, fasting, and consultations, in order to reinforce inter-religious relations.

Through its ongoing relationship with *Religions for Peace*, the Forum has continued to deepen its engagement of local stakeholders and international partners to transform present conflict.

Today, the Forum is one of the most inclusive and well-developed IRC's in West Africa, representing more than 30 different religious communities jointly-engaged in a broad set of initiatives. A model of institutional sustainability, the Forum funds its activities through the membership fees and monthly dues of its constituents, who meet regularly to further the process of dialogue in a neutral meeting space acquired with the assistance of *Religions for Peace*. The advanced nature of the Forum's structure has allowed it to develop targeted and responsive programming that effectively responds to specific incidences of potential conflict.

Although not formally networked to date, the Forum's constituent religious bodies have developed fully operational women's and youth groups to undertake community-based action programs. These bodies meet to share past experiences, discuss best practice guidelines, and plan to undertake joint initiatives in the future.

The Forum regularly conducts national prayer days for peace as well as stakeholders' consultations, and sends trained religious leaders of the executive board to make solidarity visits to villages and communities affected by violence. Often in partnership with local civil society organizations, faith communities associated with the Forum provide humanitarian services to these vulnerable populations. The trust accorded to the organization by belligerents and government alike has allowed NFRC's humanitarian delegations to reach rural areas previously sealed off by rebel forces.

Most recently, senior religious leadership of the Forum was called upon by the government of Cote d'Ivoire to intervene in the small town of Anyama. There, trained NFRC representatives worked carefully to mediate a dispute between Christians and Muslims, demonstrating their unique capacity as trusted moral leaders to transform religious conflicts.

In a conflict in which the line between politics and religion is blurred, the peace building efforts of religious communities have acquired a unique significance. Through its work with *Religions for Peace*, the NFRC of Cote d'Ivoire continues to facilitate inter-cultural exchange, to promote inclusive dialogue and to engage local communities to find solutions for peace.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the International Secretariat**

*Religions for Peace* is committed to work with affiliated IRCs to build organizational capacity. The International Secretariat offers a range of tools and support in areas such as strategic planning, financial management, program development and resource mobilization. One important tool is the Organizational Capacity Assessment, which is used to assess IRC capacities in six areas (see Section II.D.3). Conducting an assessment gives IRCs a clear picture of their current situation and provides the basis of a capacity building plan.

### **2. Resource Mobilization/Fundraising**

A key ingredient for institutional sustainability is the ability of an organization to secure needed resources to support its mission and programs. By positioning themselves as capable instruments of funding, IRCs can mobilize resources in support of core operations, program initiatives and advocacy campaigns.

Each IRC in the *Religions for Peace* network is responsible for achieving financial sustainability, and develops and implements its own resource mobilization program. *Religions for Peace* can assist IRCs in developing fundraising strategies and plans, and will provide needed training and resources as part of its capacity building support.

*Sources of Financial Support:* IRCs are encouraged to seek support from a diverse pool of funders. The main sources of financial support for IRC may include the following:

- IRCs' member religious communities, organizations and groups through grants, in-kind support and annual membership fees;
- Individual donors;
- Fundraising meetings and events;
- Local community organizations, companies and foundations;
- Religious and secular aid organizations;
- Social, health, educational and humanitarian units of local and national governments;
- Public and private international funding organizations;
- International multi-lateral funding organizations and initiatives;
- Donations of voluntarily contributed time and services; and
- Collaboration in funded international projects of *Religions for Peace*.

*Preparing a Fundraising Campaign:* *Religions for Peace* developed the *Handbook on Resource Mobilization for Inter-religious Councils*, which provides extensive information on creating resource mobilization plans for institutional support and for program and project funding. Following are basic steps involved in developing a resource mobilization plan for institutional support.

- a. Ensure legal requirements are met: IRCs are encouraged from the outset to investigate local and national legal and taxation requirements of incorporation and registration for operating as a nonprofit organization.
- b. Conduct an analysis of needs and strengths: For many organizations, conducting an analysis of their organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (risks and drawbacks) can

be very instructive. This so-called “SWOT” analysis can help clarify organizational priorities, financial needs and available resources (i.e., skills, contacts, administrative capabilities).

- c. Develop a strategic funding plan and identify potential donors: From the SWOT analysis, IRCs begin to develop a strategic funding plan that outlines key funding priorities and identifies prospective donors. It is helpful to consider IRCs needs in two categories: core institutional support and program and project support. IRCs are encouraged to build a base constituency of support from the local community in support of core needs (such as meetings of the governance bodies, basic administrative and financial operations, and communications). The most likely sources of core support are the IRC’s member faith communities, individual donors, fundraising meetings and events and local community organizations, companies and foundations. Private and governmental funding sources working at the national and international levels are most likely to partner with an IRC to implement specific programs and projects.
- d. Create case materials: Case materials are public documents developed specifically to share with potential donors and provide an overview of the organization and its mission and goals. They might include brochures, news articles and publicity communiqués, lists of participating leaders, descriptions of past and current IRC activities, and testimonials from eminent persons, partners or beneficiaries.
- e. Develop funding proposals: Funding proposals are developed to make a case to a potential donor for a mutually beneficial collaboration around a specific program or project. The components of a funding proposal include proposed funding objectives and rationales, organizational background, description of program activities to be carried out to achieve the objectives, expected outcomes, benefits to constituents, and evaluation measures. Proposals are generally more detailed than case materials and are accompanied by detailed project budgets.
- f. Communicate successes with current and potential donors: An IRC’s ability to mobilize resources increases with its visibility in the community. Therefore, affiliates are encouraged to develop strategic communications plans to complement fundraising programs and to ensure

**Case Study**  
**Inter-religious Council of Uganda**

In 2001, *Religions for Peace* initiated consultations with the senior religious leaders of Uganda to assess their interest in developing a formal inter-religious body. They expressed enthusiasm regarding the idea, and *Religions for Peace* provided a small organizing grant of \$10,000 to facilitate the activities of the working committee and the formal inauguration of the “Inter-religious Council of Uganda” (IRCU). This grant was renewed for three years to assist the IRCU in developing its basic operations.

In 2002, *Religions for Peace*’s Program on Advocacy and Action for Children facilitated the formation of an HIV/AIDS Committee within IRCU and provided an initial program operations grant of \$30,000 that allowed the IRCU to hire an HIV/AIDS project coordinator and begin project activities.

IRCU began to participate in the Hope for African Children Initiative (HACI), serving as the Uganda country representative for *Religions for Peace*, which is one of the founding global partners in HACI. IRCU members take key leadership positions in HACI.

In 2003-2004, IRCU received program grants of \$175,000 from *Religions for Peace* that helped initiate a small grants program, conduct training workshops, and carry out advocacy on HIV/AIDS and children. These initiatives provided support to more than 20 local religious groups to care for close to 10,000 children, trained over 100 local care givers and engaged 50 national religious leaders in advocacy efforts.

In 2004, the IRCU received grants from USAID totaling more than \$ 2 million to provide services for orphans and vulnerable children and support to those living with HIV/AIDS. The IRCU was also named as the prime sub-recipient for Global Fund money in Uganda for all faith-based organizations. The IRCU currently operates sub-grants with over 130 local faith groups in all regions of the country and plays a leadership role in national policy and planning efforts on HIV/AIDS.

that their program accomplishments are shared with and recognized by the wider community. (See Section IV.A: Sharing Information.)

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the International Secretariat**

The International Secretariat provides three types of support to IRCs seeking to develop resource mobilization programs.

### Facilitates training and information sharing

The Secretariat has developed the *Handbook on Resource Mobilization for Inter-religious Councils* and accompanying training modules. Whenever possible, the Secretariat will work with an IRC to conduct a needs assessment, assist in the development of a strategic resource mobilization plan and facilitate training for the IRCs' leadership. It also facilitates communication and information sharing with IRCs that are implementing successful resource mobilization programs, and prepares case studies on such IRCs.

### Develops global partnerships

*Religions for Peace* develops program and funding partnerships with relevant public institutions, such as the UN agencies, governments and foundations, to carry out specific programs and projects on behalf of the global network. In many cases, these partnerships include collaboration with affiliated IRCs. For example, it has received funding from donor agencies to conduct conflict transformation programs in partnership with IRCs in West Africa. In East Africa, it is facilitating collaboration between IRCs and other development agencies to care for children affected by HIV/AIDS. When presented with such opportunities, *Religions for Peace* may enter into a program partnership with an affiliate to implement specific programs or projects. The terms of partnership are determined by a "Project Agreement."

### Develops joint funding proposals with IRCs

The Secretariat is committed to working in partnership with national affiliates, whenever possible; to implement programs and projects that address a specific need in the respective country. On these occasions, the Secretariat will develop a project partnership with the national IRC, defined by a "Project Agreement." Together the Secretariat and the IRC will develop funding proposals and seek support from relevant funding agencies.

### **Additional Resources**

*The Worldwide Fundraiser's Handbook, (A Guide to Fundraising for Southern NGOs and Voluntary Organizations)*, by Michael Norton, 1998, (Directory of Social Change of the International Fund Raising Group, London)

*The Complete Eastern Africa Fundraising Handbook*, by John Chikati, The Institute for Fundraising and Direct Marketing, Nairobi 1999.

*Getting Started in Fundraising*, by Michael Norton, 2000, (Sage Publications, London and New Delhi)

*Fundraising Management*, by Adrian Sargeant, 2004, (Routledge Publications, London and New York)

*Effective Fundraising for Nonprofits*, by Jack Warner and Lisa Guerin, 2005, (Nolo Publications, Berkeley, California)

*Handbook on Resource Mobilization for Inter-religious Councils*. World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, 2005. (Draft). Equips IRC leaders to develop a “case” for their work that clearly identifies priority actions and needed resources, to identify potential partners and donors, and to present their case to these groups and to constituent communities.

Annex

## **Annex 3: Religions for Peace Affiliation Agreement**

### **DRAFT**

This agreement is made between the World Conference of Religions for Peace (“*Religions for Peace*”) and \_\_\_\_\_ (“the Affiliate”) who agrees to establish formal affiliation with *Religions for Peace* under the terms of this agreement and join its global network to achieve the shared goals of transforming conflict, building peaceful societies and advancing sustainable development.

#### Principles of Affiliation

As *Religions for Peace* is a coalition, inter-religious bodies at the national and regional levels may become members of the network through a voluntary affiliation. The principle of affiliation is reciprocal, involving *Religions for Peace* through its Executive Committee, which is authorized to establish affiliation, and the respective inter-religious body that seeks affiliation.

By seeking affiliation, the inter-religious body accepts and commits itself to the vision, mission and objectives of *Religions for Peace*<sup>9</sup> and its Standing Rules in so far as they address affiliated bodies. Through being affiliated to *Religions for Peace*, the inter-religious body will enjoy the rights and privileges stipulated in the Standing Rules and benefit from the services and opportunities provided by the *Religions for Peace* network and its Secretariat.

While this agreement does not address the relationships between national and regional bodies affiliated with *Religions for Peace*, such linkages are encouraged as complementary in furthering the overall vision, mission and strategies of the global network.

#### Rights and Responsibilities

*Religions for Peace* agrees to:

1. Recognize and honor the independent and autonomous character of the Affiliate in its organization and operation.
2. Provide the privileges and benefits relevant to national affiliates as stipulated in the *Religions for Peace* International Standing Rules, including
  - o The right to send official delegates to the World Assembly, which develops overall long-term policies of *Religions for Peace* and elects its International Governing Board;
  - o The sharing of experiences and information and review of program work of the International Secretariat; and
  - o The receiving of reports and other communication from the international governance bodies of *Religions for Peace*.
3. Offer to the Affiliate the use of its name and symbols [as outlined in the Communications Guidelines] as well as the right to identify itself as “an affiliate of the World Conference of *Religions for Peace*.”
4. Endeavor to provide the Affiliate with assistance in strengthening its organizational capacity, including access to various guides and tools and information related to the methods and mechanisms of *Religions for Peace*.
5. Consult with the Affiliate regarding any programmatic activities it might plan to carry out in the national territory of the Affiliate, and it may enter into a program partnership with the Affiliate in implementing specific programs or projects. The terms of such partnership shall be determined by a separate agreement.

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<sup>9</sup> See Attachment

The Affiliate agrees to:

1. Honor, in its organization and operation, the organizational principles and methods stipulated in the *Religions for Peace* International Standing Rules and other relevant guidelines approved by the International Executive Committee.
2. Participate in program activities, communications and information exchange through the global network of *Religions for Peace*.
3. Identify itself in its own communication materials as an affiliate of *Religions for Peace*.
4. Provide, at the time of its request for affiliation, the following documentation to *Religions for Peace*:
  - o Articles of Incorporation and/or Legal Registration
  - o Constitution and/or Standing Rules
  - o List of officers
5. Provide *Religions for Peace* with its annual report and other periodic reports as appropriate

Other Provisions

This affiliation agreement does not confer any fiduciary responsibility on *Religions for Peace* or the Affiliate towards the other party.

*Religions for Peace* and the Affiliate each have the right to dissolve this affiliation relationship. Either party must give at least ninety (90) days written notice to terminate this agreement.

*Religions for Peace* reserves the right to terminate recognition of the Affiliate if it has engaged in activities contrary to the purposes and character of *Religions for Peace*. Before such action is taken, notification and opportunity to be heard shall be given to the Affiliate.

In case of any controversy or dispute arising out of or related to this agreement, the parties agree first to try in good faith to settle the differences by conciliation, including mediation under the rules of conciliation.

This Agreement will become effective as of the date of signature below and shall continue in full force and effect until terminated under the terms outlined above.

The parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the dates noted below:

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. William F. Vendley  
Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*  
on behalf of  
the International Executive Committee

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary General, \_\_\_\_\_  
on behalf of  
the Executive Board of \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment

### Foundations of *Religions for Peace*

The strategy of *Religions for Peace* strives to pursue the dream that religions work together for peace. Its principles and agenda for global action are based on this strategy.

The *Religions for Peace* network:

- Respects religious differences;
- Bases its work on deeply held and widely shared values;
- Honors the different ways religious communities are organized;
- Is guided by the principles of representativity<sup>10</sup> and subsidiarity<sup>11</sup>; and
- Is committed to cooperative action for peace.

*Religions for Peace* engages existing religious communities as the “building blocks” for multi-religious cooperation. This approach recognizes that religious communities themselves, through their leaders, outstanding persons, grassroots congregations and other organizational manifestations can be the main “agents” of multi-religious cooperation, and that *Religions for Peace* structures should be designed to support the religious communities’ efforts for cooperation.

*Religions for Peace* engages the power of religious communities in its mission by fostering multi-religious cooperation at national, regional and international levels by building and equipping inter-religious bodies and then facilitating a global network among them.

The *Religions for Peace* network connects national inter-religious councils and groups; regional inter-religious councils in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America; the “World Council” (Governing Board); and women and youth inter-religious networks.

*Religions for Peace* seeks to be the principal global network for inter-religious cooperation for peace that facilitates the sharing of information among its affiliates, the building of action-alliances and the development of partnerships with relevant non-religious organizations.

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<sup>10</sup> Representativity recognizes that a person, or group of persons, can represent, informally or formally, concerns of a larger community. This principle guides the relationship among the different organizational categories in *Religions for Peace* and the selection of *Religions for Peace* members for the offices within the organization. (Standing Rules) Within *Religions for Peace* representativity is a “principle” that needs to be interpreted by each community in accord with its own ways of organizing itself. Importantly, while most “representative” figures provide various forms of leadership in *Religions for Peace*, they typically do so in their own names under the umbrella of the *Religions for Peace* structure.

<sup>11</sup> Subsidiarity calls for participatory decision-making and implementation. This principle recognizes that national decisions and actions can be taken at the national level, regional decisions and actions at the regional, and world decisions and actions at the international level. Based on this principle, *Religions for Peace* is committed to complementary partnerships that engage the various levels of its network in a cooperative and constructive fashion, always respecting each level’s area of appropriate authority.

## Annex 4: Stages of Organization Capacity for Inter-religious Councils

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
		Nascent	Emerging	Expanding	Mature
		<i>IRC at early stage of development: establishing its structure, creating basic program priorities</i>	<i>IRC has basic capacity: legally registered, basic governing and staff structures, some program activities</i>	<i>IRC builds record of achievement: establishing partnerships and stronger organizational systems, with work publicly recognized</i>	<i>IRC is fully functioning and sustainable: diversified resource base and established partnerships, leadership role in RfP network</i>
<b>Build</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two or more religions committed to collaborating based upon shared values</li> <li>Working committee established and functional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive IRC membership with increasing number of communities involved</li> <li>Legal registration with initial government bodies and other related structures in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minority and majority religions represented in governance structures</li> <li>Representativity by role and competence in external relations, taskforce and boards</li> <li>Governing board active in policy making and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious communities fully vested in governance structures with engagement at national and local levels.</li> <li>Board is accountable to members through regular review and oversight</li> <li>Fully functioning mechanism for leadership and board renewal in place</li> </ul>
	<b>Gender Mainstreaming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female religious leadership identified and participating in IRC formation</li> <li>Religious leaders encouraged to promote role of religious women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's desk/structure established to mobilize Religious women's groups</li> <li>Special projects targeting women's needs undertaken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network of religious women's organizations in place</li> <li>Religious women's work mainstreamed in program planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical mass of female leaders in decision making roles</li> <li>Program strategy has strong gender perspective and engages wide range of local women's groups and initiatives</li> </ul>
	<b>Management &amp; Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer committees</li> <li>Utilize administrative and financial systems of member communities/individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited staff in place</li> <li>Bank account and basic financial system in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full time executive and program staff</li> <li>Auditable financial systems</li> <li>Basic administrative /personnel systems in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full compliment of competent staff with strong personnel systems/oversight</li> <li>Financial management system able to handle multiple funding sources</li> </ul>
<b>Equip</b>	<b>Program Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake local inter-religious events</li> <li>Conduct basic advocacy actions (statements, letters, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to mobilize religious communities in program activities</li> <li>Technically competent program committee(s) established</li> <li>Coordinated advocacy by leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination and mobilization of religious communities at multiple levels</li> <li>Program and information management system in place</li> <li>Partnerships established with <i>Religions for Peace</i> and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong local ownership in program planning and delivery</li> <li>Full program planning, implementation and monitoring capacity</li> <li>Ongoing advocacy engagement using multiple media</li> </ul>
	<b>Institutional Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliant on contributed services and resources</li> <li>Participate in civil society (CS) networks/coalitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational support from 1-2 external sources</li> <li>Ability to mobilize some funds from local member communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External support from 2-3 key partners</li> <li>Strong buy-in from member religious institutions</li> <li>Developing plan for continuity and sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable funding base with competent staff</li> <li>Institutional partnerships with key funders (e.g. UN, governments, NGOs)</li> </ul>
<b>Network</b>	<b>Global Affiliation &amp; Networking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emerging IRC in contact with <i>Religions for Peace</i> Global Network</li> <li>Initiate relationship building with civil society, government and other organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodic participation in <i>Religions for Peace</i> regional and international structures/activities</li> <li>Ad hoc communication to internal and external constituencies</li> <li>Advocacy and facilitate multi-religious perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent collaboration with <i>Religions for Peace</i> and other partners at national, regional and global levels</li> <li>Functioning communications capacity to reach all key constituencies on regular basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing leadership and models for <i>Religions for Peace</i> network at regional and global levels, including World Assembly</li> <li>Seen as "partners of choice" for civil society, government, and other key actors</li> </ul>

**Annex 5: A Model IRC Constitution**

**THE CONSTITUTION OF  
THE INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL  
OF**

---

**(COUNTRY'S NAME)**

**PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS the constitution of (Country’s Name) provides for the freedom of conscience, of expression, of assembly and of association,

WHEREAS all the religious communities in (Country’s Name) recognize that they share a common destiny founded on love and peaceful coexistence among all the members of the diverse communities,

WHEREAS it is desirable for the various communities to co-operate in matters of common interest,

AWARE of the need to respect the uniqueness of each other religious traditions and differences of practice and belief,

AND AWARE of the need to build bridges and institutions that promote peace and the common good of all human beings,

NOW THEREFORE, We the leaders of the institutionalized religious communities in (Country’s Name) assembled this day.....of the month of.....in the year..... Hereby resolve to establish an organization as the Inter-religious Council of (Country’s Name), and enact this constitution as the ultimate rules and regulations to govern it.

**ARTICLE I NAME AND ADDRESS**

- 1. The organization shall be called the Inter-religious Council of (Country’s Name), herein after referred to as (IRC’s Acronym).
- 2. The headquarters shall be located in (City’s Name)-(Country’s Name).

**ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

The purpose of the (IRC’s Acronym) shall be:

- 1. To promote the sharing of knowledge among religious communities of their respective principles and values which can be related to building a peaceful and just society in (Country’s Name) and the world at large.
- 2. To create a forum for deliberating and articulating on areas of common interest and concern.
- 3. To plan and implement collaborative action programs based on shared moral commitments in (Country’s Name) and in relation to other parts of the world.
- 4. To promote respect for unique tradition and differences in belief and action.

**ARTICLE III PRINCIPLES**

The principles governing the implementation of the (IRC’s Acronym) constitution shall be based on:

**1. Representativity**

The principle of representativity recognizes that religious communities, their structures and representatives are to be respected and duly taken in to account in the work of (IRC’s Acronym). Respect for this principle should guide the development of the (IRC’s Acronym) structures and the selection of members and officers within these structures.

**2. Subsidiarity**

Decision-making and implementation should be guided by the principle of subsidiarity that recognizes that local decision and actions can be taken at the local level, and national decisions at the level of the (Country’s Name) wide-body. The principle of subsidiarity should be applied in the development of the (IRC’s Acronym) in a fashion

that takes into account and respects the functions within the religious communities in (Country's Name). There should be non-violation of the structures and ways of organization of the member communities.

## **ARTICLE IV ORGANISATION**

### **Section 1: Levels of Organization**

There shall be two levels of organization within (IRC's Acronym) namely:

- a. The (Country's Name) wide-body
- b. The local units. Each level shall adhere to the following rules for membership and formation.

#### **A. (Country's Name) -wide-body.**

The (Country's Name) wide-body shall consist of all members of the Council of Presidents, the Executive Council and all National Standing Commissions or Committees duly constituted by authorized organs of (IRC's Acronym), and its decisions shall be binding in the whole country

#### **B. The Local Units**

The local units shall consist of local leaders of institutionalized religious, Communities consistent with those represented at the Council of Presidents.

### **Section 2: Recognition of Different Levels of Organization**

The Executive Council shall retain the right of approval or otherwise, of the formation of any local unit subject to the consent of the Council of Presidents.

### **Section 3: Use of (IRC's Acronym) Names and Symbols**

It is a condition to the recognition of each local unit and the use of the names and

symbols associated with (IRC's Acronym) that the rights to use such a name and symbol is granted and licensed by the Secretary General thereto and that no local unit shall have a right to use any such names or symbol except pursuant to such grant and license at any time.

### **Section 4: Dissolution**

Any local unit has the right to dissolve itself at any time upon notification to the Secretary General of its intention.

### **Section 5: Termination**

Any local unit that has engaged in activities contrary to the purpose and character of (IRC's Acronym) and persists in such activities after the unit has been duly notified by the Executive Council may have its recognition withdrawn. It is understood that such action is taken at the sole discretion of the Council of Presidents. At such time, such local unit shall cease to use the names and symbols associated with (IRC's Acronym) or otherwise present itself as being part of or affiliated with (IRC's Acronym).

### **Section 6: Assets and liabilities**

In the event of section 4 and 5 above, the assets and liabilities shall revert to the (Country's Name) wide-body.

## **ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION**

### **A. Membership**

#### **Section 1: Institutional Membership**

Membership to (IRC's Acronym) shall be open to only institutionalized religious communities in (Country's Name), which are in agreement with the purpose and principles of (IRC's Acronym).

#### **Section 2: Application for Membership**

Any institutionalized religious community in (Country's Name) that is in agreement with the purpose and principles of (IRC's Acronym) may apply for membership with the Secretary General and its application shall be reviewed at an Executive Council meeting. The Executive Council shall have the power to recommend approval or otherwise to the Council of Presidents.

At the local level, applicants for membership shall apply to their local units or, if none exists in their area, to the Executive Council, and in any case the Executive Council shall approve or decline such an application.

### **Section 3: Requirements for Membership**

Each local unit shall enroll new members in consistency with the representation at the higher levels, and with the provisions of this constitution.

### **Section 4: Fees**

Annual membership fees for both the (Country's Name) wide body and local units shall be recommended by the Executive Council and ratified by the Council of Presidents.

### **Section 5: Termination**

Members of (IRC's Acronym) - (Country's Name) wide body - who have engaged in activities contrary to the purposes and principles of (IRC's Acronym) and persist in such activities after it has been called to their attention may have their membership withdrawn by the (IRC's Acronym) level at which their membership was approved.

If the matter is serious, the Council of Presidents reserves the right to take action with regard to the withdrawal of membership. Before such action is taken, notification and opportunity to be heard shall be given.

### **Section 6: Transfer of Membership**

Membership in (IRC's Acronym) is not transferable or assignable for both (Country's Name) wide-body and the local units.

### **B. Affiliation**

1. (IRC's Acronym) shall be affiliated to the World Conference of *Religions for Peace* as long as the objectives of the latter will remain consistent with the constitution of (IRC's Acronym).
2. (IRC's Acronym) may be affiliated to other organizations having objectives that are consistent with the constitution of (IRC's Acronym).
3. Representatives of *Religions for Peace* may be ex officio members of the governing bodies of (IRC's Acronym).

## **ARTICLE VI GOVERNING STRUCTURES**

### **Section 1: Council of Presidents**

#### **A: Membership**

Membership of the Council of Presidents shall consist of the heads of the participating institutionalized religious communities.

#### **B: Term**

##### **i) Membership**

The Council of Presidents shall serve a continuous term unless and until their legal status changes within their respective religious communities.

ii) Any religious community, which has a member on the Council of Presidents, may indicate a change in its leadership prior to any meeting of the Council of Presidents. The newly elected / appointed leader shall normally be made a President and the person who no longer holds a leadership position shall normally step down.

For the avoidance of doubt, any body who holds the authority of the Head of a member institutionalized religious community shall take the position of President from the community that he or she represents.

### **C: Functions**

The council of presidents shall:

- i. Provide leadership in periods requiring inter-religious cooperation.
- ii. They shall be the final voice of (IRC's Acronym).
- iii. Determine the order of rotation of the chairman by casting lots every six months.
- iv. Through every individual president they shall appoint 2 (two) representatives each to the Executive Council.
- v. Provide guidance for the Executive Council
- vi. Appoint a secretary General, Deputy Secretary and Treasurer.
- vii. Promote the purposes and programs of (IRC's Acronym).
- viii. Function as a forum to share experience and discern shared challenges and concerns.
- ix. Call into being and oversee any standing commission or committees relevant to the response to especially urgent issues, religious leaders from (Country's Name) for the purposes of constructively addressing such issues.
- x. Convene, in response to especially urgent issues, religious leaders from (Country's Name) for the purposes of constructively addressing such issues.
- xi. Oversee the implementation of plans and decisions of the General Assembly should one be called,
- xii. Approve annual budget and receive and approve an amount report.
- xiii. Approve and uphold matters dealing with this constitution
- xiv. Approve an affiliation with the World Conference of *Religions for Peace* or any other organization.

- xv. Shall appoint auditors and receive and act on the report of the auditors.

### **D: Meetings**

The Council of Presidents will determine its own meeting schedule but will meet at least twice annually and always at the time of the General Assembly should one be called. Half of the council of presidents can call for an extra-ordinary meeting at any time.

### **E: Leadership of the Council of Presidents**

- i. There shall be a chairman who will preside over the Council of Presidents for six months on a rotational basis.
- ii. The Chairman shall be the spokesperson of the Council
- iii. He shall communicate decision of the council that affects the person of the Secretary General.
- iv. In meetings where the person of the Secretary General will be discussed, the Chairman of the Executive Council will be the minute secretary.

## **Section 2: The Executive Council**

### **A: Membership**

Members of the Executive Council shall consist of two representatives from the each member institutionalized religious community.

The Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General and the Treasurer shall be ex officio members of the Executive Council.

### **B: Selection and term**

Each institutionalized religious community shall appoint two members to the Executive Council.

The Chairperson of the Executive Council shall be consistent with that of the Council of Presidents

Members of the Executive Council shall not be eligible to appointment as officers of (IRC's Acronym) as in ARTICLE VII.

### **C: Functions**

- i. Propose the annual budget of the (IRC's Acronym)
- ii. Review the work of (IRC's Acronym) and recommend changes in program emphasis to the Council of Presidents.
- iii. Provide assistance to the council of Presidents and the Secretary General in organizing special projects, the General Assembly and other (IRC's Acronym) matters.
- iv. Carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Council of Presidents, including overseeing all standing commissions or committees established by the Council of Presidents.
- v. Provide guidelines for overseeing and evaluating the work of the Secretariat.
- vi. Recommend to Council of Presidents the formation of any local unit within the (Country's Name) -wide body.

### **D: Meetings**

The Executive Council shall meet at least four times a year, and always at the time of the General Assembly should such an assembly be convened

### **Section 3: Procedures**

#### **A: Quorum Requirements**

More than one half of the members of any specified governing body of (IRC's Acronym) shall constitute a quorum, and once established, they shall proceed to deliberate and make effective decisions.

#### **B: Community Representation**

Any body who holds the authority of a relevant substantive office in his /her community shall have the right to represent

that community in a corresponding governing body.

### **C: Rules of Procedure**

Every organizational structure shall determine its rules of procedure and decision-making.

### **D: Decision-making**

Whenever possible, decisions shall be reached by consensus. Any voting member of a governing body may request a vote confirming the consensus. Decision shall be reached by majority vote.

**E:** Voting shall be by show of hand, voice, secret ballot or at the discretion of the entire meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII OFFICERS OF (IRC's Acronym)**

The officers shall be members of the Council of Presidents the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General and the Treasurer.

### **A: Members of the Council of Presidents**

Members of the Council of Presidents shall provide active leadership in (IRC's Acronym) through their service on the Council of Presidents. They shall be paid Honoraria in return for their services.

### **B: The Secretary General**

The Secretary General as an officer of the (IRC's Acronym) shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of the minutes of the level of the (Country's Name) wide body for their maintenance and safe keeping and for heading and directing the Secretariat (see Article VIII section 3 and 4). He shall be the accounting officer of (IRC's Acronym). He/she shall be the Secretary to the Council of Presidents, and the Executive Council without the right to vote.

He shall be paid a monthly salary. He/she shall serve not more than two - three year terms.

### **C: The Deputy Secretary General**

He/she will deputize the Secretary General.

- i. He/she will handle administrative matters that have no policy implications.
- ii. He/she will perform other duties as may be assigned by the Council of Presidents or the Secretary General.
- iii. He/she shall be paid a monthly salary.

### **D: The Treasurer**

He/she shall perform the following duties.

- i. To keep accurate account of receipts and disbursements in the books of (IRC's Acronym).
- ii. Be responsible for all financial transactions, prepare the annual financial reports of (IRC's Acronym) and to prepare for audit the accounts of (IRC's Acronym).
- iii. To be involved I the preparation of the budget.
- iv. Shall be the principle signatory to all accounts of (IRC's Acronym).

### **Section 2: Terms and Vacation of Office of the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and Treasurer**

They may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Replacement of an un-expired term of office due to resignation or removal by Council of Presidents or death shall be filled by appointment of another suitable person, by the Council of Presidents.

The person thus appointed shall serve for only the remaining period of the predecessor's term.

### **Section 3: Resignation**

An officer may resign at any time by giving notice to the Chairman, Council of Presidents. The resignation shall take effect upon receipt subject to acceptance of the resignation. Such resignation shall not relieve the officer so resigning of any obligations or one month -notice, 3 months for Secretary General notice. Other charges therefore occurred and unpaid.

### **Section 4: Reinstatement to office**

The body that holds the responsibility for filing that office may reinstate any officer who has resigned.

### **Section 5: Removal from office**

The Council of President may remove any officer of (IRC's Acronym) who has engaged in activities contrary to the purposes of (IRC's Acronym) from office. An opportunity to be heard shall be given and removal from office shall be by simple majority.

## **ARTICLE VIII SECRETARIAT**

### **Section 1: Membership**

The secretariat shall consist of the following members:

The Secretary General, The Deputy Secretary General, The Treasurer, Assistant Secretaries and any other staff appointed to assist in the implementation of the programs and policies of (IRC's Acronym). Assistant Secretaries may be appointed to serve as secretaries of duly constituted standing commissions or committees that will be deemed necessary to implement the programs of (IRC's Acronym).

### **Section 2: Selection and Tenure**

### **A: Secretary General**

The Secretary General shall be the head of the secretariat on appointment by the Council of Presidents. He/she shall serve a term of three years. He/she shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.

### **B: The Treasurer**

Shall be appointed by council of presidents and shall head the finance section of the secretariat.

### **C: The Deputy Secretary General**

He/she deputizes the Secretary General.

### **D: Assistant Secretaries**

Shall be appointed by committee established by Council of Presidents such a committee shall be presided over by a member of the Executive Council with the Secretary General as Secretary.

### **E: Other staff**

They shall be appointed as in D above.

## **Section 3: Functions of the Secretariat**

The Secretary General will be the chief Executive and accounting officer of (IRC's Acronym) and is responsible to the Executive Council in the day-to-day operation of the Secretariat and to the Council of Presidents for policy matters.

- A. Supporting the governing bodies in their modes of operation.
- B. Coordinating the implementation of the policies and programs authorized by the governing bodies.
- C. Assisting commissions or committees appointed by the Council of Presidents.
- D. Managing appropriate centers on the level of (IRC's Acronym) as may be established by appropriate (IRC's

Acronym) governing bodies and directing their staff.

- E. Assisting with fundraising for (IRC's Acronym).
- F. Assisting in the preparation of an annual budget.
- G. Administering the approved annual budget.
- H. Assisting various local units to coordinate their activities.
- I. Encouraging local units to study and address selected contemporary issues of concern.
- J. Facilitating the exchange of information among local units including publication and distribution of a newsletter and other appropriate materials.
- K. Assisting in the formation of new local units.
- L. Carrying out such tasks as may be directed by the Council of Presidents or executive council

## **Section 4: Operation of the Secretariat**

As the head and chief executive of the Secretariat, the Secretary General shall be responsible for overseeing the functions of the secretariat including the direction and coordination of the secretariat members shown in article viii.

The Secretary General shall operate in accordance with the "Guidelines for the Secretariat" approved by the Executive Council. The Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General, the Treasurer and the Assistance Secretaries shall formulate such guidelines.

## **ARTICLE IX GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The Council of Presidents may convene a General Assembly at any time such general assembly shall be consultative as opposed to deliberative in character and shall provide a forum for its participants to engage issues of shared concern in (Country's Name) and of international importance from an inter-religious perspective.

## **Section 1: Membership**

### **A: Delegates**

1. Membership shall be open to institutionalized religious communities represented in (IRC's Acronym).
2. The number of delegates from each community and local units shall be determined by the executive council and ratified by the Council of Presidents.
3. The delegates from local units shall be designated by the leadership of the relevant local units.
4. All members of the Council of Presidents and the Executive Council shall be delegates to the General Assembly.
5. All members of the Secretariat shall be ex-officio members of the General Assembly without the right to vote.

### **B: Observers**

Guests, journalists, consultants and government agencies shall be free to attend as observers and meetings shall be open to public view.

## **Section 2: Meetings of the General Assembly**

The General Assembly shall meet at the discretion of the Council of Presidents. The current Chairman of the Council shall preside.

## **Section 3: Functions of the Assembly**

The General Assembly shall:

- A. Examine its program, themes and sub-themes.
- B. Adopt, if deemed appropriate, an assembly statement and recommend an action plan to the Council of Presidents.

## **Section 4: Committees of the Assembly**

The Assembly may constitute such committees as will be deemed appropriate to move its program forward.

### **ARTICLE X FISCAL YEAR**

The FISCAL year of (IRC's Acronym) shall be the calendar year.

### **ARTICLE XI AMMENDMENTS**

This constitution, upon initial adoption by the Council of Presidents of (IRC's Acronym) shall not be amended except by two-thirds majority of the Council of Presidents

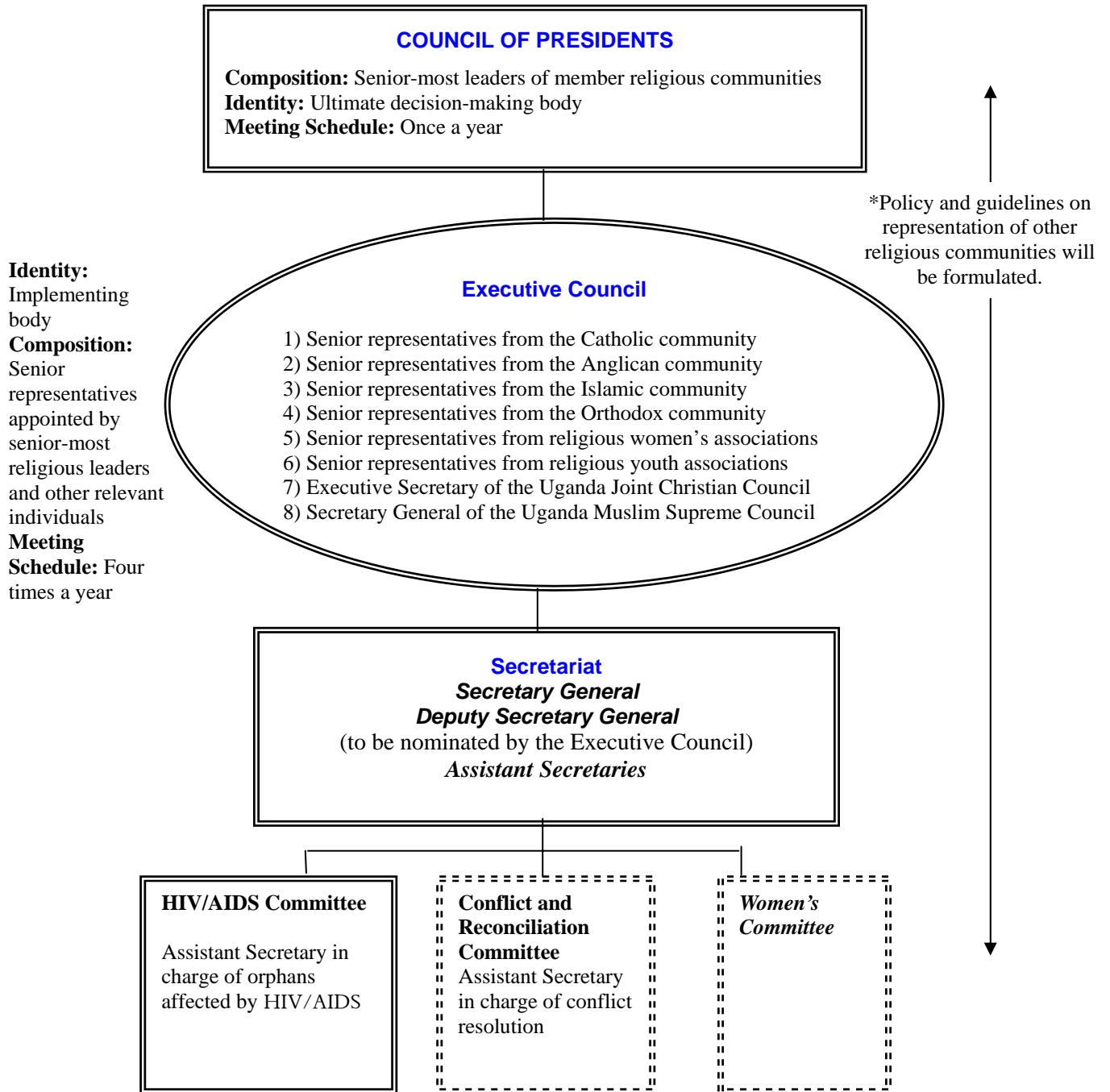
Written proposals for amendment and / or repeal of provisions of this constitution must be submitted to the Council of Presidents at least three months prior to the meeting at which such amendments shall be considered.

Votes to amend this constitution may be taken only in person. Notwithstanding this, other means may be taken if there has been a previous meeting with a quorum at which the draft amendment was fully presented and discussed.

**Annex 6: Sample Structures of Religions for Peace Inter-religious Councils**

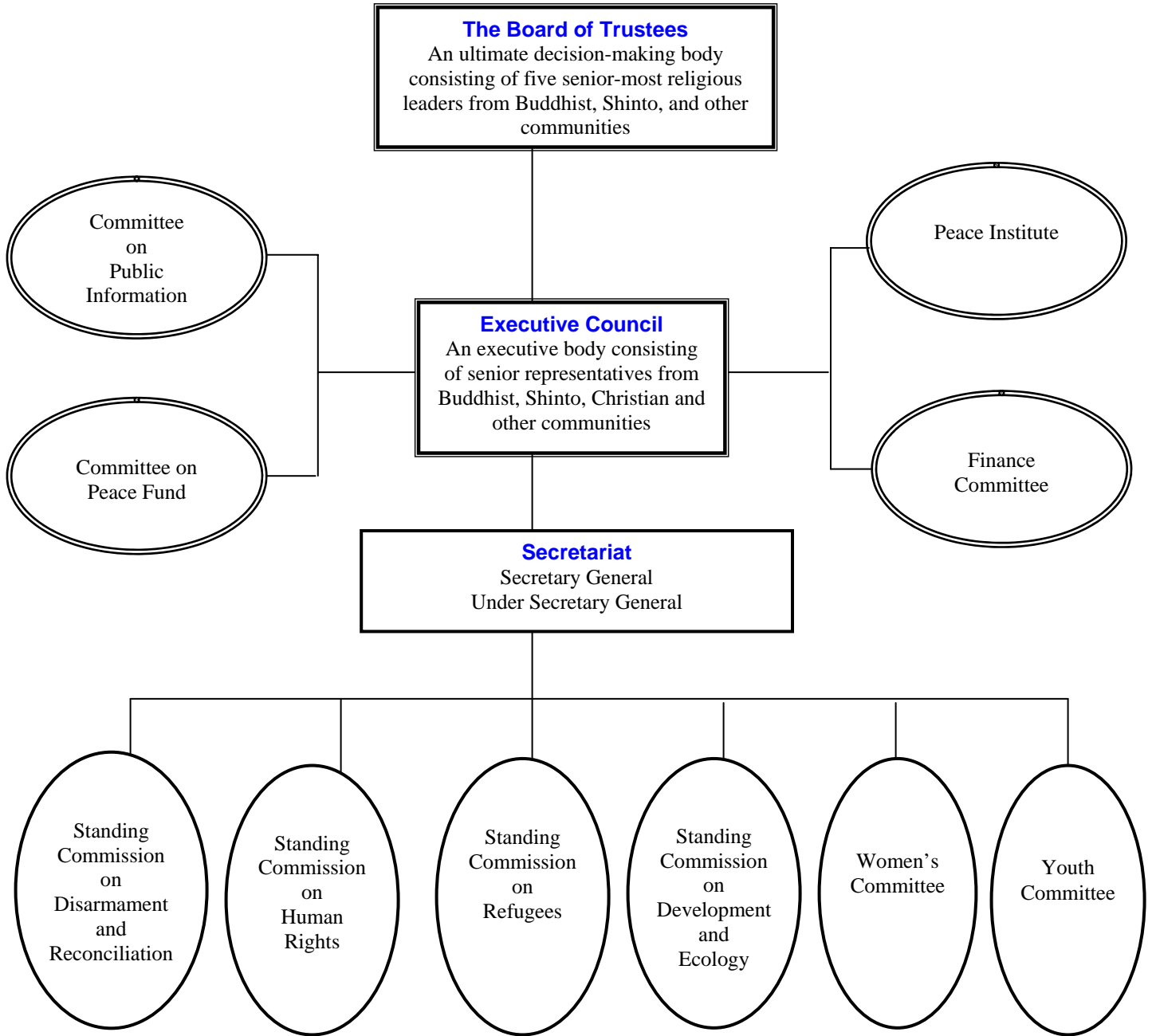
**AFRICA**

**Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU)**



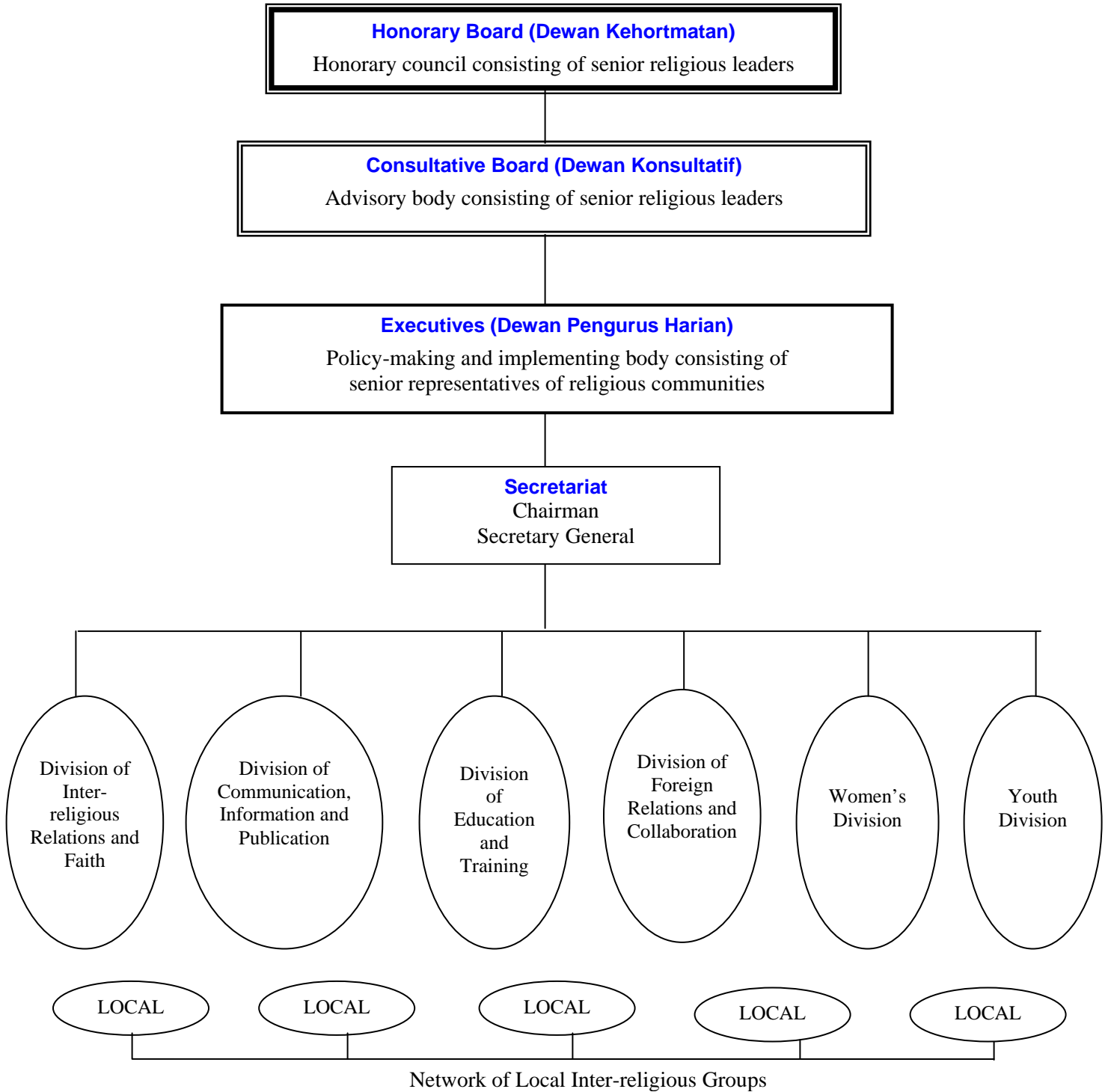
# ASIA

## Religions for Peace - Japan



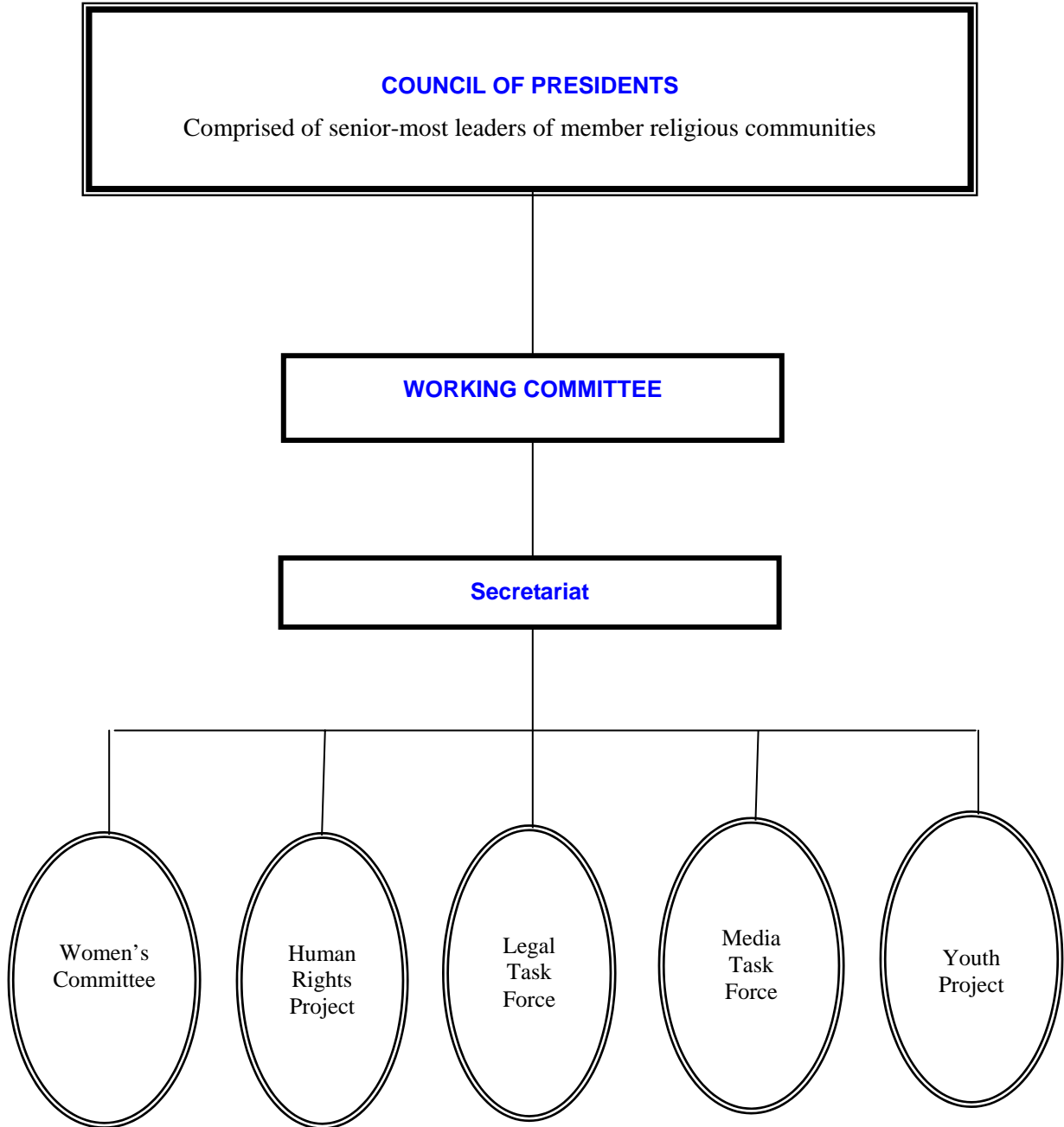
# ASIA

## Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP)



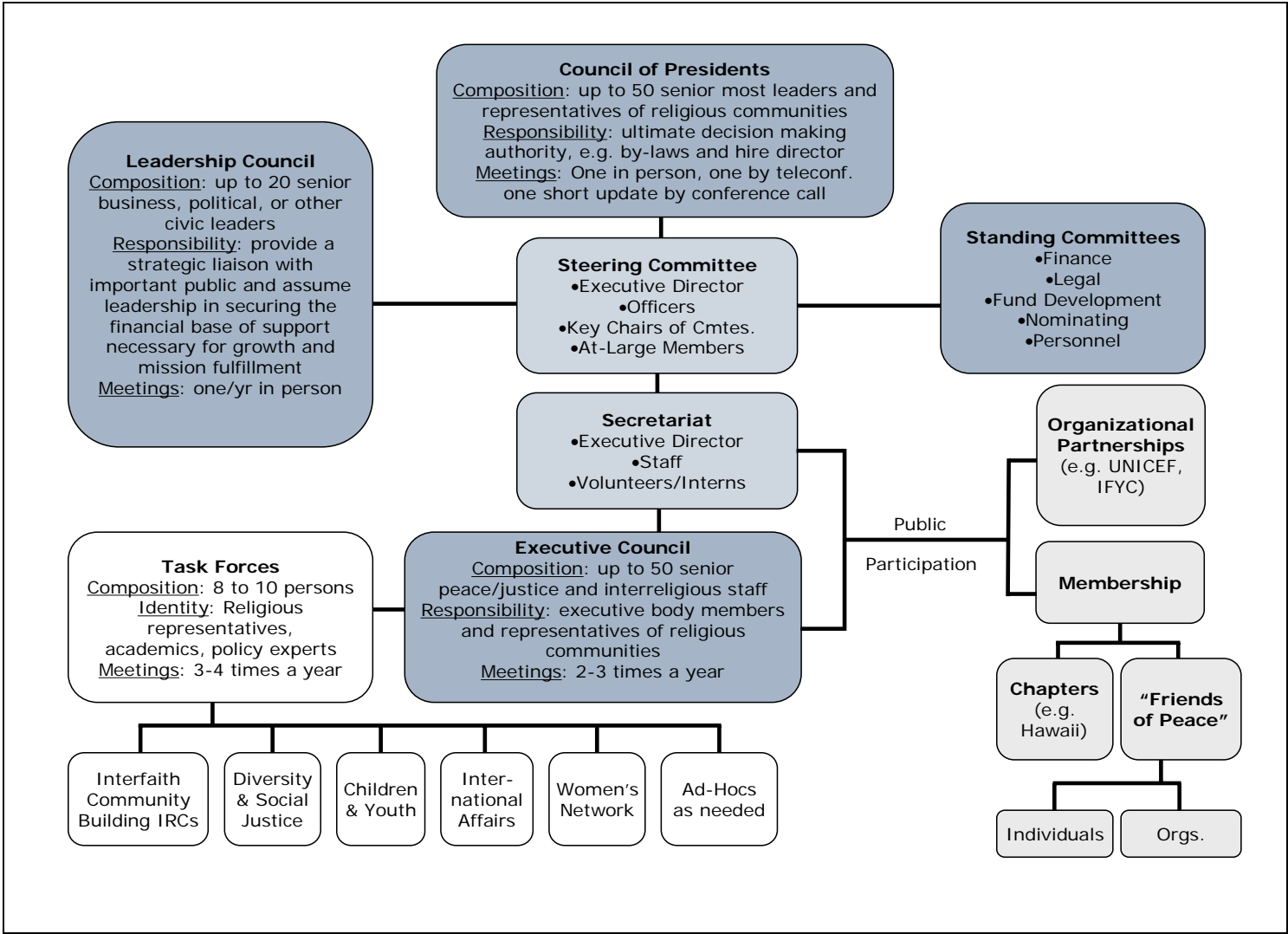
# EUROPE

## Inter-religious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina



# NORTH AMERICA

## United States Conference of Religions for Peace (USCRP)



## SECTION III: EQUIPPING AN INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

One of the priorities of *Religions for Peace* is to strengthen IRCs and groups to ensure that they are action-oriented and are able to engage their member religious communities at all levels to transform conflict, promote peace and advance sustainable development. To strengthen the capacity of the IRCs and groups to take action, *Religions for Peace* has conducted extensive organizational capacity assessments, developed training materials and provided technical assistance to its affiliates.

An essential part of this work is the development and dissemination of adaptable materials and training modules on issues prioritized by national IRCs and groups, and women of faith networks. These materials range from technical handbooks on organizational development or resource mobilization to issue-oriented toolkits and advocacy guides covering topics such as conflict resolution, peace building, HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals. These materials are produced in various forms, including printed booklets, CD-ROMs and on-line resources.

The following section describes the steps needed for IRCs and groups to equip themselves for program operation from planning programs to evaluating them, and for organizational development through strengthening administrative and financial management.

### A. Program Operations

Multi-religious cooperation unleashes the hidden assets of religious communities and is more powerful, both substantively and symbolically, than the efforts of individual faith communities acting alone. When religious communities recognize their shared values, mobilize their collective assets, and work together, they can have a decisive impact where it is most needed. Implementing joint actions to address common problems is an essential mission of IRCs. This section seeks to assist IRCs in planning and carrying out such programmatic activities over time. “Program” is being used to refer to all the actions taken by an IRC to address issues of shared concern.

#### 1. Planning

After representatives from different religious communities in a country agree to work together, the next challenge they face is determining what to do. The method developed by *Religions for Peace* is unique, practical, and open to continuous creativity. At its simplest, the method involves assisting religious communities to correlate their capacities for action with a given problem or challenge. When applied, it discloses large, often hidden or under-utilized capacities for action that lie within the reach of religious communities. The following steps should assist an IRC in formulating a program strategy.

The first step is for IRC representatives to conduct an analysis of the situation in their country utilizing the following questions: 1) What issues or problems evoke a strong sense of moral concern within the religious community? 2) Which of these concerns are shared across religious communities, and thus can be the basis for collaborative action? 3) What other agencies or organizations are working on these issues and where can multi-religious cooperation make its most effective contributions?

The second step is to identify the potential assets within religious communities that can be useful to address the problem. Typically, three sets of religious assets are examined: 1) social, 2) moral, and 3) spiritual.

The third step is a correlation between the roles essential to resolve the problem and the assets relevant within the religious communities. The IRC needs to develop specific activities that address the problems identified in the first step. These activities can be a range of things – meetings, workshops, publications, advocacy campaigns, and direct assistance – but they should seek to accomplish two broad objectives: 1) to address the problem in an effective way, and 2) to further a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect among religions.

The fourth step is to identify the resources required to implement the program activities, both financial and human. Are the religious communities involved willing to commit either staff time or money towards the activities? Is there a pool of potential volunteers that can be engaged? What kinds of expertise are needed (speakers, trainers, editors, etc.)? Are funds available? If not, the organization will need to raise the funds necessary to implement programs.

Finally, the IRC can carry out the activities. In this process, one should think about the desired audience(s) for the activity and how to publicize the programs using media and other communication channels, as well as other organizations who might be good partners. At the conclusion of the activity, reports and evaluations should be prepared so that future programs can build on previous program experiences.

## **2. Program Development**

After identifying the priority issues for multi-religious cooperation and even carrying out some initial activities, the IRC should take the next step in developing its program capacity. The organization needs to have the ability to do three things to ensure effective programs: 1) draw on substantive expertise from the member religious communities, 2) mobilize religious leadership to carry out joint advocacy and public awareness activities, and 3) engage the structures and networks of the member communities in inter-religious actions. One mechanism that has proven effective in achieving this is forming substantive committees/task forces on the issue(s) the organization has agreed to focus on. Member religious communities should nominate people within their respective communities that have experience and expertise on the issue to serve on these committees. The committee then becomes the focal point for developing and overseeing program activities around the specific issue.

As the IRC is building up its program operations capacity, the *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat can provide assistance in a number of ways. First, the Secretariat program staff can share tools, materials and activity ideas from projects that have been implemented in other parts of the world that might be related to the activities being developed in a particular country. Second, the staff can offer training and capacity building both on specific issues – such as conflict transformation, addressing HIV/AIDS, mobilizing women’s networks – and on program management skills and systems. Third, the staff can provide assistance and guidance in the development of project proposals and concept papers. Fourth, the International Secretariat will occasionally decide to become formal partners with a national affiliate and work on preparing a joint proposal and submitting it to international donors for potential funding.

It is important to note that as the *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat builds program partnerships at the global level, it develops and implements programs around the world. The Secretariat is committed to working in partnership with a national affiliate when project activities are planned for that respective country. On these occasions, the Secretariat will develop a project partnership with the national IRC that would define the kind of program partnership.

### 3. Program Evaluation

In order to develop effective and sustainable programs, it is important for IRCs to take deliberate action to monitor and evaluate program activities. This can help track progress in the areas of decision-making and leadership, project implementation procedures, the preparation of timely reports, and the proper utilization of project resources. Through an effective monitoring process, the IRC can assess how well planned activities have been implemented and take timely corrective measures based on the findings. Ultimately, data gathered through a monitoring process should provide sufficient information for a final evaluation of the project, which can then serve as the basis for continuing and expanding the program activities. The IRCs should also conduct periodic evaluations, which will help measure whether or not the expected results were attained and identify the impact of the project activities.

There is a wide range of materials and organizations that provide expertise on monitoring and evaluation, and IRCs are encouraged to make use of these resources in their local environment. However, there are a number of basic steps an IRC can take to establish an evaluation process.

- *Utilize Established Objectives:* If the IRC has developed objectives and specific action steps for its program activities, these can be the basis for a very simple, but effective monitoring tool that can measure whether the activities were actually conducted, how many people participated and whether it achieved the desired result and objective.
- *Establish a Plan for Collecting and Reporting Data:* The IRC needs to determine how the data will be collected and who will be responsible for getting the information and reporting it back to the network.
- *Establish Guidelines for Incorporating Results into Program Planning:* The IRC should identify how the monitoring and evaluation results will be used to plan future program activities.

When an IRC receives project funds from external donors, this process of monitoring, reporting, and evaluating program activities and their results becomes even more important, as those reports are often the basis for future funding. The *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat may be able, from time to time, to provide direct assistance to enhance IRC monitoring and evaluation skills through trainings, experience exchange, information sharing, and development/adaptation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools, particularly in cases where the IRC is involved in a formal partnership to carry out programs with the International Secretariat.

#### **Additional Resources**

*What Religious Leaders Can Do About HIV/AIDS: Actions for Children and Young People.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, UNAIDS and UNICEF, 2003. This workbook provides guidance for religious leaders and others to engage in concrete responses to HIV and AIDS.

*Women of Faith Transforming Conflict: A Multi-Religious Training Manual.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, 2004. This training manual provides step-by-step sessions for trainers working on three issues: conflict transformation, communication and leadership skills, and media and advocacy.

*Study of the Response by Faith-based Organizations to Orphans and Vulnerable Children.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace* and UNICEF, 2004. This report surveys what religious groups are doing to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children and to develop an improved and detailed understanding of the responses of religious organizations in Africa in caring for children affected by AIDS.

*HIV/AIDS – The Human Dimension: Voices from the Hindu World.* World Conference of Religions for Peace and Shanti Ashram, 2004. This booklet quotes Hindu texts and literatures, religious leaders, women, youth and children to help communities to better understand the human dimension of HIV/AIDS.

*Combating Stigma and Discrimination: The Role of Religions in Building Inclusive Communities Responding to HIV & AIDS.* World Conference of Religions for Peace & Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, 2005. This CD-ROM contains educational materials and tools to assist religious leaders and communities in eliminating the stigma and discrimination often experienced by people and communities living with HIV and AIDS.

*Advancing Justice and Reconciliation in Relation to the International Criminal Court (ICC).* World Conference of Religions for Peace, World Council of Churches (WCC), the Centre for Justice and Reconciliation et al, 2005. The manual deals with actions faith-based communities can take on issues of justice and reconciliation, especially in relations to ICC.

*Faith in Action: Working towards the Millennium Development Goals Toolkit.* World Conference of Religions for Peace, 2006. Presents religious principles and warrants related to the MDGs. English, French and Arabic versions available.

## **B. Administration/Management**

*Religions for Peace* seeks to ensure that all IRCs – large or small – are effective, efficient and sustainable organizations. In order for an organization to achieve sustainability and make a positive impact on society, it should adhere to certain administrative and management procedures.

When building their administrative and management policies, *Religions for Peace* encourages IRCs to use donated and in-kind services, the capacity of member religious communities and to borrow resources from existing organizations.

### **1. Organizational Management**

The organizational structure of an IRC should be built to support its governing body and carry out its mandate. The organizational and governance structures of an IRC are interconnected and must be linked in a solid and clearly defined system.

- To start, an IRC can appoint an executive head (termed a director, manager, coordinator, etc.) who is clearly responsible for administration/management, program implementation, oversight, and reporting. This executive head will be in charge of personnel decisions.
- It is important for the organizational structure of an IRC to have a clearly defined chain of command, with a set job description for each staff member.
- As the organizational structure of an IRC grows, the IRC should have a process and a plan for expanding and developing its volunteer base and/or staff.

**Human Resource Development (Recruitment and Retention):** To effectively carry out its mission, an IRC may need to recruit and retain staff (volunteer and paid).

- If an IRC hires staff or takes on volunteers, clear, well-thought-out job descriptions should be developed for all positions.

- An IRC should make a commitment to training its workforce and engage in annual evaluations and feedback.

**Personnel Procedures:** Personnel procedures insure that staff (volunteer and paid) are treated uniformly and improve staff cohesion. In addition, personnel procedures are often prescribed by law and require governmental reporting.

- All applicants for working or volunteering at an IRC should be recruited, selected, and/or employed on the basis of individual merit and ability with respect to the positions being filled.
- IRCs may want to develop an employee handbook to ensure consistency for all personnel processes and procedures.
- An IRC must investigate local law and make sure that its procedures are in compliance with these standards.
- An IRC must document its actions (especially as they relate to compliance with local law).

**Administrative Procedures:** An IRC should establish administrative procedures to ensure a smooth working environment. Areas addressed might include staff reporting lines, hours of operation, document (paper and electronic) storage, procurement, and disaster recovery.

- These administrative procedures can be tailored to fit an IRC's size and scope.
- After administrative procedures are in place, an IRC should establish a regular review process to ensure value and efficacy.

## **2. Financial Management**

The following section provides guidelines for the financial management of an IRC. Please note that some of these guidelines are for newly emerging IRCs, while others are for more advanced IRCs.

**General Financial Management:** A good financial system is essential for the effective and efficient operation of an IRC and should include and be understood by all levels of an IRC.

- A financial system should include sufficient detail to ensure that: a) the governing board can effectively make decisions, b) the organization can meet statutory reporting requirements, and c) the organization can meet donor-imposed reporting requirements.
- An IRC should establish a process to review the financial system annually to ensure that it is still adequate.
- An IRC should take special attention to ensure that all financial processes are documented throughout its system.
- As a financial system is created, it should be shared and understood by everyone in the IRC.

**Development of Financial System:** The financial system should be designed to insure that all financial transactions are recorded, that there is sufficient accountability and control and that sufficient information is captured to prepare all necessary financial reports.

- At a minimum, a financial system should address cash receipts, cash disbursements, and payroll.

- In regards to receipts, a financial system should be able to identify the source of receipts and any restrictions regarding their use.
- In regards to disbursements, a financial system should identify disbursements by payment and expense category.
- In regards to payroll, a financial system should identify the amount of salary for employees and any statutory withholding from salary. It needs to include sufficient details to meet all statutory reporting requirements.
- IRCs should prepare financial reports on a quarterly basis, and report more frequently as the organization grows. Reporting should include a balance sheet and an income statement.

**Budget Preparation:** The preparation of an annual operating budget, essential for an IRC, should involve both program and administrative staff as appropriate.

- The budget and an accompanying work plan should be approved by the appropriate governing board structure of the IRC.
- The budget should be reported regularly to the governing board of the IRC.

**Internal Control:** Segregation of accounting duties is important for IRCs in order to safeguard the organization's assets.

- An IRC should establish a clearly defined approval process for all financial transactions.
- The IRC should regularly report to the governing board.
- The IRC should have an external audit.

<b>Additional Resources</b>
<i>Handbook on Financial Management for Non-financial Staff, World Conference for Religions for Peace, 2006 (Draft)</i>
<i>Handbook on Project Management, World Conference for Religions for Peace, 2006 (Draft)</i>
<i>Guidebook on Financial Management and Sub-granting Systems. World Conference for Religions for Peace, 2006 (Draft). This guidebook provides insight into gaining sustainability by better mobilizing and managing resources, building direct funding partnerships, and supporting local projects.</i>

## SECTION IV: OPERATING THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCILS

*Religions for Peace* creates forums for sharing information and experiences across its IRCs and groups, and women of faith and religious youth networks; helps build alliances among its network members and forge public partnerships. This focus acknowledges the independence and autonomy of all affiliated structures and draws upon the complementary strengths of religious communities working together to solve shared concerns. Furthermore, it links these affiliates worldwide, across national and regional boundaries, reinforcing collective identity and augmenting common action that fosters solidarity.

*Religions for Peace* also conducts advocacy efforts with international organizations and develops partnerships with public sector actors, including United Nations agencies and bilateral donors. Specifically, *Religions for Peace* works with its affiliated IRCs to raise awareness about issues of shared concern, develop position papers, and offer leadership in advocacy and policy development.

There are two great advantages to being part of the *Religions for Peace* network. First, the multiple levels of the network encourage a coordinated response to challenges that typically span levels. For example, programs addressing conflict transformation in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were initiated through self-governed national IRCs and groups. However, as the conflicts in those areas cross borders, such national initiatives are complemented by the West Africa Inter-religious Coordinating Committee sub-regional network. Sharing experiences and resources is another benefit derived from being a member of the network, which will be described in greater detail in the following pages.

To strengthen the *Religions for Peace* network, representatives of the national and regional IRCs are convened approximately every five years at the international level at a World Assembly. The Assembly provides an opportunity for the representatives to review future challenges, reflect on past experiences and facilitate a profound exchange among the world's religious communities to advance shared commitments to peace and development. It is also an opportunity for representatives to select the World Council (International Governing Board), the world's most representative multi-religious body that implements the outcomes of the World Assembly.

### A. Network Facilitation

IRC's are empowered to communicate with and mobilize their communities around issues of shared concerns through the *Religions for Peace* network – an inter-connected, inter-dependent web of affiliated structures working at national, regional and international levels.

It is expected that members of national and regional IRCs and groups identify themselves with *Religions for Peace* and recognize and respect the religious women and youth networks as members of the *Religions for Peace*'s wider network. It is encouraged that ideas, lessons learned and resources – both human and material – are widely and frequently shared within the network, and plans and actions coordinated as much as possible.

#### 1. Sharing Information

*Religions for Peace* network provides an efficient and effective forum to share information among IRCs. It coordinates and facilitates information sharing among network members through websites,

publications such as newsletters, and updates from the Secretary General and the program departments.

IRC members will also want to ensure that their activities are properly documented for posterity through newsletters, reports, photographs, video, and other means. These will prove useful to the IRC both in the short term as tools for media use and in the long term as documentation of the IRC's activities.

Convening meetings and consultations also facilitates sharing of information and experiences. *Religions for Peace* regularly organizes meetings for representatives of IRCs to discuss their experiences, share their successes and challenges, and assist each other in developing coordinated plans of action.

## **2. Building Alliances**

War, poverty, disease and environmental degradation know no boundaries, and therefore IRCs need to build alliances with other IRCs in order to tackle these challenges in a comprehensive manner. For example, as mentioned in the previous page, an alliance among Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone was built to share information and to coordinate advocacy campaigns, trainings and joint projects that have included election monitoring, and demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers. Today, the West Africa Inter-religious Coordinating Committee (WA IRCC) is building relationships and collaboration with regional economic and political bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Mano River Union (MRU).

Drawing on the model pioneered in West Africa, the IRCs of Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda are laying a foundation for long-term cooperation to address the complicated conflicts that continue to plague the sub-region. In a similar way, the women of faith of Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico and El Salvador came together to form a Latin American and Caribbean Women of Faith Network to take on various problems that affect the region's countries such as poverty of women in the rural areas, violence against women and gender equity.

## **3. Forging Public Partnerships**

*Religions for Peace's* goal is to build a growing network of scalable and increasingly self-sustainable instruments of multi-religious collaboration on national, regional and international levels. Integral to this goal is organizing and strengthening the external partnerships of an IRC to undertake projects related to its mission.

*Building Partnerships with Faith-based Organizations:* The most obvious partnership relations that need to be built are with structures and organizations relating to the member faith communities. *Religions for Peace* believes that there are a number of benefits in exploring the common areas of interest between faith-based humanitarian, development and peace organizations (FBOs) and *Religions for Peace*. With different entry points to the inter-religious cooperation, value may be added to the work carried out by religious communities and institutions within important sectors cutting across the humanitarian, development and conflict transformation agendas.

FBOs are working closely with many religious communities and structures on local and national levels. FBOs have developed impressive professionalism in working through local and national faith institutions. In many cases their local partners are members of inter-religious bodies and in

some cases the IRCs themselves. In other cases, they are searching for relevant and effective local partnerships that can promote inter-religious cooperation. Therefore, it is essential for IRCs to explore the possibilities of forging partnerships with FBOs.

FBOs are involved in humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, peace and reconciliation efforts, social service deliveries and advocacy actions. There are numerous international and local FBOs, and here are a few illustrations of international organizations that work in many countries and with local faith-based partners: CARITAS Internationalis, Catholic Relief Service, Christian Aid, Church World Service, Norwegian Church Aid, B'nai B'rith International, Hindu Aid, Islamic Relief, International Islamic Relief Organization, Buddha's Light International Association, etc. Many of these organizations are international operating from headquarters distant from the real actions. At the same time, many of them are represented locally and relate directly with national partners. They are, therefore, relevant and appropriate partners on global, regional and national levels.

*Building Partnerships with International, Governmental and Civil Society Organizations:* IRCs are encouraged to forge partnerships with international, governmental and civil society organizations that will further their efforts to implement programs, advocate and achieve self-sustainability. Such organizations not only offer the opportunity to broaden the potential impact and scope of the work undertaken by an IRC, but they may also offer the prospect of potential financial partnership. Additionally, the credibility of the IRC may increase as it is associated with key actors on issues critical to its society.

As an action-oriented multi-religious council, an IRC is well positioned to build bridges with external partners. The secular nature of the council permits for association with multiple religious communities on an equal level; the focus on shared moral concerns outlines key action areas and illustrates potential points for partnership. Finally, the moral voice of religious leaders, often speaking together, is a resonant and powerful influence in many societies. For civil society, governmental agencies and international organizations, partnering with an IRC can bring a new and positive dimension to their own efforts within a country or region.

Forming external partnerships begins by recognizing the unique strengths, tools, and expertise of other agencies that can be leveraged when addressing key action issues. An IRC, when working in coordination with other agencies, can develop comprehensive and effective solutions that might otherwise be outside of their programmatic scope. Additionally, partnering with external constituents on new or existing programs can generate both resources and build community goodwill.

After the identification of potential local, national and international partners, an IRC should reach out, providing information about their organization and current activities. When possible, a direct or group consultation should take place, allowing both organizations to understand areas of overlap and discuss parameters of potential partnership. For complex issues, an IRC maybe one of a number of organizational actors at the consultation; such multi-dimensional partnership arrangements can be particularly beneficial, especially when tackling a regional or national issue.

## **C. Communication**

Communications play an increasingly prominent role in all types of organizations, particularly those whose activities involve public figures and/or advocacy. Therefore, effective communications strategies must be built into the activities of the IRCs, since the impact of those

activities will, in many cases, transcend the internal communications needs of individual religious communities.

Once established an IRC is, by its nature, a publicly minded organization dedicated to engaging multiple religious communities and to working with governments and other civil-society actors. In this environment, it is essential for each major activity of the IRC to include a communications component, even if it is simply a press release to announce the activity's commencement or conclusion.

It is also important to identify and cultivate key professionals in the print and broadcast media industry—reporters, editors, producers—who are likely to take interest in the IRC's achievements and can publicize an IRC's accomplishments so that they do not go unrecognized. In most cases, the IRC will want to appoint a single member of its secretariat to serve as the media's contact within the organization, both to solicit coverage and to respond to questions that may arise.

An IRC's members may already have some form of communications apparatus in place to publicize their own community's activities; as a result, it may be possible to implement effective communications through those existing structures. However, strategies for incorporating communications into IRC initiatives should be developed at the council level, so that those strategies are coordinated, even if they are implemented within members' individual faith organizations.

The first step in establishing an overall communications strategy is the development of the IRC's public image and identity. This introductory process occurs at two levels: in the development of publications and graphic images that will help establish the IRC's identity among the public and in the IRC's initial contacts with media outlets.

The establishment of an IRC is, in itself, a significant event for a nation's religious communities, and should be publicized to newspapers, television and radio news broadcasters, and to relevant media. This may be done via a written press release that is distributed to reporters; it may also be done by means of a media event, such as a press conference, to which those reporters are invited. These initial media contacts should emphasize the historic relevance of establishing a collaborative venture among a nation's prominent religious leaders, and should include comments by as many IRC members as possible.

As a next step, IRCs should consider the development of publications such as a periodical newsletter and introductory flyers; such tools are important to keep the IRC and its activities before the public. Such written communications are most effective when they employ a common visual style, including a graphic "logo" that serves as a recognizable identification for the IRC. Newsletters should be produced on a regular basis, ideally bi-annually, and should emphasize the achievements of the IRC and the related activities of its members.

The Department of Communications of the International Secretariat is ready to assist in the development and implementation of strategies for communicating the activities and achievements of IRCs. *Religions for Peace* regularly seeks to publicize the work of its affiliates through newsletters, press releases, annual reports and the like. To achieve this, *Religions for Peace* relies on IRCs to periodically provide written reports as well as photographs. To facilitate sharing of information, *Religions for Peace* has developed document templates and guidelines. Media and communications trainings are also provided. These tools are designed to help IRC gather appropriate information and disseminate it to their target audiences, including the *Religions for*

Peace Secretariat, in their efforts to raise the visibility of their work. These resources are listed at the end of this section. Additional information can also be provided by contacting [news@wcrp.org](mailto:news@wcrp.org).

### **Additional Resources**

*Building Partnership for Life: The Role of Religions in Caring for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace* and the Hope for African Children Initiative, 2002.

*Religions for Peace Communications Toolkit.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, 2004. These templates contain guidelines for basic IRC Communications.

*Women of Faith Transforming Conflict: A Multi-Religious Training Manual.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, 2004. Relevant sections of this training manual include Leadership and Communication Skills and Media Advocacy, pages 26-39.

*Curriculum for Religious Leaders on HIV/AIDS Advocacy and Media Relations.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, 2005. Focuses on HIV/AIDS issues, but includes general skills building around advocacy and working with media.

*Study of the Response by Faith-based Organizations to Orphans and Vulnerable Children.* World Conference of *Religions for Peace* and UNICEF, 2005. This report documents efforts of religious groups in six African countries to respond to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children.