

# COMMUNIQUE

## High level consultation on strengthening partnerships between faith actors and multilateral agencies to achieve better development outcomes

Annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF; Washington D.C

15 October 2019



### PREAMBLE

1. The Moral Imperative's High level consultation on strengthening partnerships Between Faith Actors and Multilateral Agencies to Achieve Better Development Outcomes took place on Tuesday, 15 October 2019 in Washington D.C, USA. The event co-organized by Arigatou International, for The Moral Imperative, The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), and Strength In Diversity Development Centre/Farmers Advocacy and Support Initiative, Nigeria (SDDC, Nigeria), formed part of the Civil Society Organizations sessions at the 2019 joint Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

2. The event, consisted of a high level panel presentation and an open question and answer session. Through the forum, the Moral Imperative sought to make a case for securing better outcomes for poverty alleviation, revitalizing partnerships and strategic synergies between faith actors and multilateral agencies, to achieve development. The event also formed a platform to draw debate on how to best faith actors' contribution towards ending extreme poverty through collaboration between faith actors and multilateral agencies at country and regional levels; and with special referencing to inclusive development, scaling-up investments in human capital development, women and gender equality and child poverty.
3. Present at the side event were faith actors, policy discussants, and representatives of international bodies (including WB, IMF & UN organs).

### **KEY EVENT REFLECTIONS**

4. The delegates affirmed a new realization for the value of Human Capital and Human Capital Development for enabling a sustainable, resilient economic and social architecture in an increasingly complex world. It was also noted that, childhood and the empowerment of women provide the critical spaces for development of human capital and the realization of sustainable development.
5. The delegates established that focusing on core development issues through defined working processes is vital. Promising areas include values in education, child protection, early childhood education, zero hunger, anti-corruption strategies, and Universal Health Coverage. Likewise focusing on critical country situations where religious communities play active roles (positive and less so) in a purposeful manner could offer fresh insights and pathways.
6. The delegates noted that country focus is vital as practical cooperation at country level offers the most promising practical path to identifying opportunities for partnerships that will have an impact "on the ground". A clear path to pursue is to work to ensure that country diagnostics and country strategy discussions take full account of the presence and pertinent work of religious actors.
7. The delegates underscored that given their size and rich history, religious groups and actors, just like some multilateral institutions, they can greatly enhance the paths towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
8. The delegates affirmed that interreligious approaches offer the promise of avoiding favoritism of any single religious institution or community. In some instances, they can open up positive ways to enhance interreligious harmony and address tensions through common efforts.
9. The delegates noted that higher levels of financial inclusion accompanied by lower levels of consumption inequality, and improved access to finance reduces income inequality and poverty, and increases food security.
10. The delegates observed that positive drivers of both faith and development actors and their true commitment to common goals has provided an anchor for future explorations of partnerships including:
  - a) Shared understandings of the power and significance of human capital
  - b) Sharpened appreciations of the enormous challenges of fragile states

- c) An imperative to address the urgent needs of the environment
- d) A far more nuanced appreciation that governance is critical to any success whether it be at the levels of policy, programs or projects.

### KEY EVENT RECOMMENDATIONS

11. Inclusion of deliberate efforts to expand “religious literacy”: that means solid information, at global and national levels, about the specific parameters of religious institutions and their development-linked work and approaches.
12. To ensure and achieve human rights holistically, it was recommended that Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) deserves attention, including its integration into strategic reflections that touch on inequality and inclusion, and the design of early warning systems that help to avert violence.
13. There is a need to pursue research efforts aimed at providing evidence on features and results of distinctly faith-linked approaches. This would aid to dispel or limit misconceptions as well identify patterns in fragmented information. An example was an exchange in Ghana where faith actors argued that poverty in the north of the country was increasing while World Bank officers pointed to significant declines; exploring the reasons for different perceptions could have elucidated important complexities in local realities.
14. Deliberate involvement of women in religious and even interreligious events and leadership rosters as a central concern for development actors.
15. The delegates acknowledged the primacy of state, family and Community Institutions in advancing the strategic wellbeing outcomes for Children and Women. To be effective therefore, the MI is required to foster and sustain capacity to catalyse and facilitate strategic initiatives and actions at national, local and regional levels. How best to do this, and in which countries this ought to happen is itself a strategic decision of the MI to be informed by it’s own global context, national demands and realities.
16. Religious actors to focus on fragile states as urgent areas for action and partnerships.

**END**



**the Moral Imperative  
to End Extreme Poverty**

