

# Religions for Peace

## Opening Ceremony

August 20, 2019

10:30-12:15

### Masters of Ceremony

**MC 1:** Ms. Linnet Ng'ayu, *African Council of Religious Leaders-Religions for Peace*

**MC 2:** Mr. Renz Christian Argao, *Religions for Peace Asia Pacific Interfaith Youth Network*

### I) Music solo

**10:30-10:34**

*Lights in the auditorium fade. Oboe & strings quartet plays the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the Mozart oboe quartet (contemplative tone).*

### II) Multi-religious prayer by children

**10:34-10:40**

*Six children (aged 10 or above) representing different religions are waiting in pairs of two behind the stage.*

*The cello music accompanies the first pair of children walking onto the stage. Spotlight on the pair of children.*

*Afterwards, the other two pairs will follow pair by pair, each to be captured in the spotlight (all children remain on stage) [the prayers and scriptural notations are printed on a card for all at the Assembly]*

a. Hindu and Buddhist children (theme: conflict transformation)

*In unison:* We share a common future.

*Hindu child:* I am growing up in a world that is more and more divided.

Hinduism teaches us: "The whole earth is one family." (Rig-veda)

*Buddhist child:* I am growing up in a world that encourages hatred more than ever.

Buddhism teaches us: "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love." (Dhammapada)

*In unison:* So let's transform conflict and Care for our Common Future.

b. Jewish and Muslim children (theme: just and harmonious societies)

*In unison:* We share a common future.

*Muslim child:* I am growing up in a world that is far from overcoming injustice and oppression.  
Islam reminds us: “Allah commands justice and good conduct and doing good to others.” (Qur’an 16:90)

*Jewish child:* I am growing up in a world in which the voices of those in need are suppressed and silenced.  
Judaism calls on us: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” (Proverbs 31:8-9)

*In unison:* So let’s promote just and harmonious societies and Care for our Common Future.

c. Christian and Indigenous children (theme: shared well-being, protect the earth)

*In unison:* We share a common future.

*Christian child:* I am growing up in a world in which people continue to starve.  
Christianity reminds us: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.” (St. Matthew 25:35-36)

*Indigenous child:* I am growing up in a world in which unsustainable lifestyles harm the environment.  
Indigenous beliefs teach us: “The earth is our mother.” (Chief Seattle, Squamish, c 1855)

*In unison:* So let’s advance shared well-being by protecting our earth and Caring for our Common Future.

*Children stay on stage. German religious leaders join children on stage, accompanied by music (oboe & strings quartet, 1-2 minutes).*

*Music ceases. Call to attention by Masters of Ceremony (“MC”: two youth leaders from different genders, religions and continents).*

**MC 1:** Esteemed religious leaders, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Lindau, welcome to the heart of Europe, and welcome to the Religions for Peace 10<sup>th</sup> World Assembly!

**MC 2:** We are honored that the religious leaders of Germany have joined us on stage and will address the Assembly with welcoming words.

### **III) Welcome by German Religious Leaders**

**10:40-10:45**

*One of the German religious leaders addresses the Assembly on behalf of the religious communities of Germany. [Children have remained on stage]*

### **IV) Welcome by the Co-Moderators**

**MC 1:** Thank you so much for your kind words and for welcoming us to your beautiful country, which we are all very blessed to be in.

**MC 2:** We would now like to invite our *Religions for Peace* Co-Moderators, Rev. Kosho Niwano, His Eminence Cardinal John Onaiyekan, Dr. Vinu Aram and His Eminence Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah to the stage. Two will offer welcoming remarks.

*Children and German religious leaders withdraw from the stage. At the same time, the four Co-Moderators enter the stage.*

**10:45-10:48**

- a) Welcome address by **Rev. Kosho Niwano**, President-Designate, Rissho Kosei-kai

**10:48-10:51**

- b) Welcome address by **H.E. John Cardinal Onaiyekan**, Archbishop of Abuja, Archdiocese of Abuja

**V) Video Collage of Work in the Field**

**10:51-10:58**

**MC 1:** Thank you, esteemed Co-Moderators, for your heartening remarks. Let us now enjoy a short film about the mission of *Religions for Peace*.

*Film starts to play. Eight chairs are set up on the stage (four on each side), in which the Co-Moderators and upcoming keynote speakers take their seats by the end of the film.*

**VI) Keynote Speeches**

**11:00-11:15**

**MC 2:** Esteemed religious leaders, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we thank the Federal Republic of Germany and our partner the Foundation Peace Dialogue - Lindau for hosting the *Religions for Peace* 10<sup>th</sup> World Assembly. We are honored that His Excellency, the Federal President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier is with us today to offer a keynote address.

*President Steinmeier comes forward to the lectern.*

- a) Keynote by **H.E. Frank-Walter Steinmeier**, Federal President, Federal Republic of Germany

*President Steinmeier returns to his seat on the stage.*

**11:10-11:25**

**MC 1:** Thank you, Your Excellency, for sharing these inspiring words with us.

Please welcome to the stage His All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Archbishop and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

*Patriarch Bartholomew comes forward to the lectern.*

- b) Keynote by **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew**, Archbishop and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople

*Patriarch Bartholomew returns to his seat on the stage.*

**11:25-11:35**

**MC 1:** Thank you, Your All Holiness, for offering us your wisdom.

Please welcome to the stage His Eminence Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah, the President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies headquartered in the United Arab Emirates.

*His Eminence Shaykh Bin Bayyah comes forward to the lectern.*

- c) Keynote by His Eminence **Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah**, President, Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies; United Arab Emirates

*His Eminence Shaykh Bin Bayyah returns to his seat on the stage.*

**11:35-11:45**

**MC 2:** Thank you, Your Eminence Shaykh Bin Bayyah, for your visionary address.

It is our joy to now introduce the Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*, Dr. William F. Vendley.

*Dr. Vendley comes forward to the lectern.*

- d) Keynote by **Dr. William F. Vendley**, Secretary-General, Religions for Peace

**MC 1:** Please join in thanking Dr. Vendley. We thank you for your address and years of devoted leadership!

*Dr. Vendley returns to his seat on the stage.*

**VII) Messages**

**11:45-11:50**

*Excerpts TBD and read by MCs [texts of all messages distributed to all]*

**VIII) Pledge of Commitment According to One's Own Faith**

**11:50-12:00**

**MC 1:** We would now like to call forward Dr. Vinu Aram to guide the Assembly through the pledge of commitment to multi-religious cooperation.

*Dr. Vinu Aram comes forward.*

**Dr. Vinu Aram:** Every religion teaches its followers – each in its own way – that life is sacred and that we have the responsibility to care for each other, the world and our common future.

Each remaining faithful to her or his religion, we are here to cooperate. Our cooperation is not always easy. Let us begin by acknowledging that the tradition each cherishes as their own has across time hurt others. In the silence of your own heart take a moment to acknowledge this pain and commit to reconciliation. [15 seconds of silence]

Now, would you please stand.

Let me invite each one of you to express your commitment to multi-religious cooperation guided by your own religious tradition’s deepest principles. Let us please say together, each in our own language, a pledge to multi-religious cooperation. You can read together the statement that has been prepared; or, you can express your commitment in your own words.

Let me first read the prepared statement, and then I invite you all to express your commitment together.

*A sheet of paper has been prepared and distributed.*

Statement of Commitment to Multi-religious Cooperation

**“Guided by the principles of my own religious tradition, and respectful of religious differences, I commit myself to principled multi-religious cooperation for Peace. I will work as a partner with sincere believers of other religions and men and women of good will on matters of deeply held and widely shared moral concerns.”**

*All Assembly members repeat the statement together.*

**Dr. Vinu Aram:** Your commitment is precious. Greet the person on your right and left as your partner in peace. [Space given for greetings]

Thank you.

**IX) Group Picture**

**12:00-12:10**

**MC 2:** Esteemed religious leaders, Excellencies and ladies and gentlemen. This concludes our Opening Ceremony. Kindly stay standing at your seat. Allow a moment for the distinguished parties on stage to be positioned and to join our group photo.