

# World religious leaders urge global response to crises at G8 summit

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Bordeaux, France, May 25 (ENInews)--Leaders of Christian churches and other faiths called on the world's most powerful governments to devise more effective joint solutions to the "interconnected crises confronting humanity" at a 23-24 May summit, organized by the New York-based Religions for Peace.

"The increasingly complex and perilous times in which we live require global approaches," the religious leaders said.

"At the heart of our reflections are principles and values common to our religions and universally upheld: the essential and irrevocable dignity of all human beings, accountability for the goodness of creation, the ultimate value of reconciliation and forgiveness, the centrality of freedom and justice. Policies and programs clearly in accord with them have our support."

The Religious Leaders Summit, held in the French city of Bordeaux, reflected on tasks facing G8 countries at their Deauville meeting on 26-27 May, as well as G20 nations at a Cannes summit next November.

Participants concluded that the "new-found cohesion" shown by powerful governments should be "strengthened and expanded to include other countries and stakeholders," including civil society and religious communities, and "translated into ever more effective action programs."

"Current events around the world, notably in the Middle East and North Africa, make clear that people everywhere are demanding their fundamental dignity," said the 38 religious leaders, who were co-hosted by Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis, Orthodox president of the Conference of European Churches, and Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, vice-president of the Council of Catholic Bishops of Europe.

"Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for material progress; it is a vital component of peace, security and human development."

Founded in 1970, Religions for Peace receives funding from the United Nations and USAID, as well as religious agencies such as Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Relief.

Its website says it seeks "multi-religious partnerships" for confronting issues of war, poverty and environmental protection, and helped create dialogue and reconciliation in Iraq and Sierra Leone.

The religious leaders said the G8 and G20 still lacked "the necessary global legitimacy to provide effective global impact," and should be made "more transparent" and brought "more formally within the framework of the United Nations system."

Among recommendations, they said "unfettered markets" were "not necessarily efficient, stable or self-correcting," and called for a "robust regulatory framework" to prevent future financial crises and protect the vulnerable.

They added that climate change was "a uniquely imminent threat," and said developed countries should ensure low-carbon technologies became "freely available to developing countries," while also increasing their aid budgets, opening their markets unilaterally and making "global investments in peacemaking."

"Military responses to terrorism often injure innocent persons, provide additional motivation for terrorist groups and place in danger basic freedoms," said the Religious Leaders Summit, which was attended by Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Shintoist and Bahai representatives from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well the Conference of European Churches and Orthodox Moscow Patriarchate.

"Stronger co-operation is needed to resist the victimization of groups based on culture or religion and to protect the dignity of those denied basic human rights."

Previous summits since 2005 were held in Britain, Russia, Japan, Italy and Canada, while future meetings are planned for the US in 2012 and Britain in 2013.