

A set of measurable, real world initiatives

DRIVING ACTION ON KEY ISSUES....



....INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE



....INCLUDING BIODIVERSITY



AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE FAITH LONG-TERM PLAN PROGRAMME



Photos, clockwise from top: World Bank, Mathias Appel, Brad Ruggles, Steve Corey

Commitments to protect people and the living planet

The destruction of the natural environment – including the impact of climate change – is probably the biggest challenge to all life on earth. It threatens the survival of communities and puts the diversity and wonder of nature at risk.

And it is at this time, when the world is facing the global shocks of coronavirus and the resulting economic downturn, that the major religions of the world are taking a lead – sharing their insights and developing action programmes with their faithful to address these issues for generations to come, through the creation of Faith Long-term Plans.

‘Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father...’

Laudato Si’, Pope Francis

‘We believe that the key contribution the religions can make is to develop programmes that will deliver responses based not on fear, guilt, or apprehension, but because they are true to what the faith understands.’

Martin Palmer, FaithInvest Chief Executive (former ARC Secretary General)

Introduction to the Faith Long-term Plans

The Faith Long-term Plans are commitments by the major faiths of the world to develop a set of measurable, real world initiatives driving action on key issues including climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. They involve each religious group planning how they will manage their assets and resources over the next seven to ten years – from their investments, schools, hospitals and youth organisations to their land, purchasing power, influence, advocacy – and wisdom.

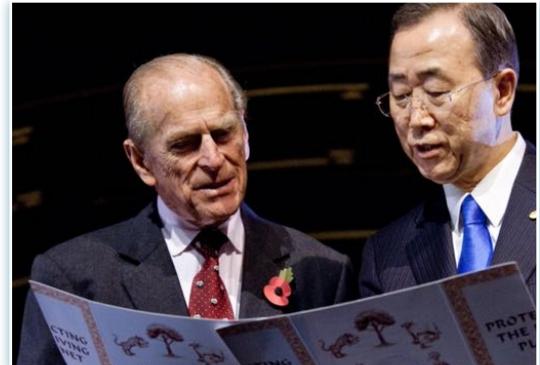
More than 200 religious groups covering all faith traditions are being invited to take part in the programme, which mobilises the vast potential of religious organisations – the biggest organised sector of civil society – to make a significant contribution to the climate crisis and the post-Covid regeneration. As well as providing moral leadership through example, the Plans focus attention on the importance of profound and urgent action to address the climate and ecological crisis ahead of the UN’s COP26 climate negotiations and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The original Faith Commitments

This Faith Long-term Plans programme builds on the success of the original 2009 Faith Commitments programme, which resulted in over 60 plans that have profoundly shaped the faiths’ response to key environmental issues. The 2009 Faith Commitments programme was inaugurated by the UN and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and culminated in the launch of 31 Plans at Windsor Castle in the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh (founder of ARC). This was followed by another 32 plans of which 28 were from faiths in sub-Saharan Africa.

Why now?

The Faith Long-term Plans respond to both the ecological crisis and the impact of Covid-19 on commitments around the SDGs. They demonstrates the readiness of world religions to “hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”, as Pope Francis has famously said, and in so doing launch a fresh wave of real world action that will benefit people and planet, running alongside the political processes of the coming decade.



Top: HRH Prince Philip and HE Ban Ki-moon at the 2009 launch of the Faith Commitments at Windsor Castle, UK. Above: The 2012 launch of African Faith Commitments. Photos: ARC

Seven key areas



The Faith Long-term Plans cover seven key areas in which the world's major faiths can have a huge impact on environmental action through their resources and traditions.

1. Faith-consistent use of assets... including buildings, land and investments
2. Education and young people (in both formal and informal situations)
3. Wisdom, including theology, liturgies and prayer
4. Lifestyles, including traditions of simple living, pilgrimage
5. Media and advocacy, including influence, advocacy and guides
6. Partnerships, eco-twinning, and creating and environment departments
7. Celebration, including festivals and traditions

Who is involved?

FaithInvest and WWF's Beliefs and Values Programme (both of which grew out of ARC) alongside the Norwegian foundation, Eat, have come together to develop the new Faith Long-term Plans programme. We are holding discussions with a wide range of faith groups and organisations such as the World Resources Institute and UN Environment. In addition, the British Government (joint president of the UN COP26 climate conference) has confirmed that this will be a key element in the civil society programme of the UN's COP26 climate negotiations in November next year.

The major faiths involved in 2009, and now to be involved again, cover all major traditions within Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Daoist, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Shinto and Sikh faiths as well as with key interfaith organisations.

The programme also brings together a coalition of secular organisations whose advice and assistance will ensure that the Commitments in the Faith Long-Term Plans are workable and bring unique insights, abilities and resources to bear on international issues. Expert organisations will advise on the deliverables of each Plan. For example, environmental partners include UN Environment, Interfaith Rainforest Initiative and the EAT Foundation.

Scope of the Faith Long-term Plans?

The driving principles of the Plans are the core beliefs and values of each faith group. Each faith group will offer its own distinctive contribution to the international response to the crises facing people and planet. As a result, the Plans will have immediate and long-lasting consequences for faith institutions as well as impacting personal behaviour among the 84% global population who claim allegiance to a faith.

The new Faiths Long-Term Plans programme will have four steps, building on the foundations of the first programme of establishing Faith Long-Term Plans for individual organisations to co-ordinated multi faith working groups which collaborate together to deliver change at a greater scale.

Proposed timetable

- **June 2020 to Sept 2021:** Build partnerships and contact key faith organisations and communities worldwide.
- **Sept 2020:** Announcement of the programme at the UN's Biodiversity Summit in New York and CelebrationEarth!, UK
- **Sept 2020 to May 2021:** Faith groups develop their plans
- **June 2021:** Formal launch of the first round of Plans, ahead of the November COP26 climate negotiations
- **June 2021 to Nov 2021:** Programme of advocacy, awareness raising and launch of the second round of plans.

COP26 Climate Negotiations

The Plans will be formally shared at the UN COP26 climate negotiations in November 2021, serving as an inspiration to governments and other agencies, and the wider world that the faiths are committed to furthering the environmental and sustainable development agenda, regardless of prevailing economic circumstances.

Process of the first Faith Long-term Plans

In 2008, following concerns about the possibility that the 2009 Copenhagen climate negotiations might not achieve its goals, UNDP and the ARC joined forces to create the first Faith Long-term Plans programme. In 2009, 31 Plans were launched at Windsor Castle in the UK with another 32 Plans subsequently developed, including 28 from sub-Saharan Africa.

As is the case today, the programme focused on seven key areas of action – assets and investments; education; wisdom; simple living; media and advocacy; partnerships; and celebration – where faith groups made measurable commitments to generational change.

The plans were delivered in a three-step process:

1. Each group began with research and planning.

These activities were supported with a small amount of seed funding and, in some cases, a large amount of advice and support. ARC hosted events with faiths and experts to catalyse the research and planning phase.

2. Each group created its formal Plan.

Faith groups found that the formal process of discussing their tradition’s strengths within the seven key areas, and committing to generational change on paper, enabled them to develop a vision of the future – a vision that supported implementation of the plans.

3. Each faith group published its Plan publically.

Summaries were included in a handbook for faith communities; this handbook, and links to individual papers from faith groups with full details of their commitments, can be viewed on FaithInvest’s website. For some faiths, this resulted in new environmental organisations (for example, EcoSikh).

Achievements

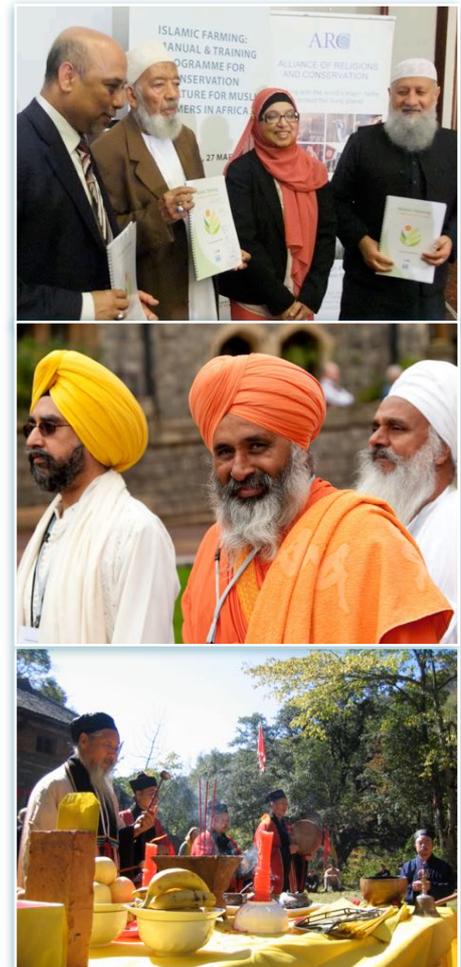
The first Long-term Plans Programme delivered many notable achievements, including:

The first Plans launched a host of green initiatives



From top: As a result of the first Plans, faiths installed solar panels on churches; trained their farmers in sustainable agriculture; planted millions of trees; and introduced environmental education into their schools. Photos from top: Michael Coghlan, ARC, ARC, Steven Gray.

- The creation of investment priorities for the faiths, resulting in the faiths becoming the leading group involved in the fossil fuel disinvestment movement and now the largest values-driven group investing in impact and ESG projects worldwide.
- A new focus on sustainable agriculture across sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia, based on working with (Christian) Farming God’s Way practitioners and the development of a Muslim approach to sustainable agriculture – Islamic Farming. A Faith in Food project also came from the original plans.
- The planting of millions of trees globally to tackle deforestation.
- A massive increase in the demand for sustainable energy from the faiths for their buildings.
- The Jesuit Long-Term Plan launched in 2009 involved the current Pope, Pope Francis, in the planning team.
- Subsequently, in 2015, the Pope published his ground-breaking document, *Laudato Si’*, the most discussed faith document on faith and the environment yet published and of considerable significance to the wider environmental and sustainable development worlds.
- The Long-term Plans also created new organisations:
 - ❖ The Sikh environmental organisation, EcoSikh, now working with tens of thousands of Sikh temples.
 - ❖ The Bhumi Project, the largest Hindu environment and development agency.
 - ❖ The Daoist Ecological Temple Association, linking tens of thousands of Daoist temples across China.



From top: A new guide to sustainable agriculture was developed for Muslim farmers and new faith environmental organisations were launched, including EcoSikh and the Daoist Ecological Temple Association. Photos: ARC

The new Faith Long-term Plans programme

Working with a wide range of secular organisations and groups, FaithInvest and WWF Beliefs and Values Programme are launching Stage One of a multi-year programme that will reach out to more than 200 major faith organisations over the next 16 months (running up to and beyond the COP26 climate negotiations). Each faith Plan will engage its own communities and networks, addressing heart as well as head. For example, Buddhist teaching focuses on ‘the Five Needs’: food; shelter; clothing; medicine and energy. The Buddhist Plans will build around these; indeed, for many faiths they constitute the natural rights of all people.

The programme will:

- Reach out to relevant faith organisations and communities worldwide over the summer of 2020
- Support the development the plans over coming months from September 2020 to May 2021

‘Give. Give with faith. Do not give without faith. Give with sensitivity. Give with a feeling of abundance. Give with proper understanding.

Taittiriya Upanishad

- Formally launch the first round of Plans in June 2021 as part of the official build up to the UN COP26 climate negotiations in November 2021.

The Seven Key Areas

The Plans will focus on seven key areas (summarised below) where the world's major faiths can have a long-term environmental impact. In the context of stating your specific commitments and actions, please consider how you will apply gender, race and human dignity considerations into each area. A more detailed Guide will be sent out to participating organisations and supporting resources will be available on the [FaithInvest website](#). We would value you highlighting priorities and issues so we can focus on getting resources for those areas.

1. Faith-consistent use of assets

- Construction and buildings
- Land and forests
- Water
- Wildlife/habitat protection
- Healthcare, including medical facilities
- Financial investments
- Purchasing and consumption, eg, food, suppliers, recycling, waste

2. Education and young people

- School curricula
- Informal education
- Vocational training & entrepreneurship
- School buildings and grounds
- Conservations and recycling policy
- Youth organisations and camps
- Nature trails
- School eco-twinning
- Environmental monitoring

3. Wisdom

- Theological education and training
- Crisis and adaptation
- Liturgies, quotations and orders of prayer
- Sacred places
- Theology of nature, land, forests, water
- Stories and practices
- Prayer



Photo: Irayani Queen

4. Lifestyles

- Green audits
- Traditions of simple living
- Families, population and choices
- Pilgrimage and tourism
- Nature protection
- Purchasing power

5. Media and advocacy

- Subject matter
- Influence
- Advocacy
- Guides and handbooks
- Materials

6. Partnerships, eco-twinning and new environmental departments

- Dedicated staff and funding
- Lay people
- Eco-twinning
- Other partnerships

7. Celebration

- Traditional festivals
- New festivals
- New traditions
- New beautiful places and developments

Processes and ambitions

The process for developing the new Faiths Long-Term Plans builds on the three steps of the first programme and adds a fourth stage, depending upon the resources available.

1. Research and planning

What matters to your faith? What action is most needed in your context? What changes/difference do you want to achieve? What activities are already underway? What are the wider operations (schools, hospitals etc) within your faith? Do you have access to knowledge and partnerships to support you to deliver the changes you want? We can help you make those connections if you need them.

Consider how you will know that your activities are achieving their intended outcomes or are on track to make the impacts that matter to your faith. And consider how you will communicate your progress, as this is a valuable way to maintain the focus and motivation of the leadership, laity and the wider world. Communicating your progress is also a key success factor for embedding lasting change.

We will provide support to help you answer these questions, structuring a monitoring framework and baselines to enable your faith group to track qualitative as well as quantitative change, and to see whether or not your actions are achieving the change you are aiming for.

Working faithfully often involves taking steps forward into the unknown. It can sometimes feel difficult to see how these activities can be measured, but great comfort and encouragement can be found in learning how your efforts are having the desired impact – and that you are not alone.

2. Writing your Faith Long-term Plan

This initiative recognises that each participating faith community starts from its own unique position and needs to create a Plan that accords with its theology, context and capacity. In order to help you do that, we will provide:

- A much more detailed framework for the Seven Key Areas to help you in your discussions.
- Case studies of previous programmes.
- Links to specialist partners who are able to support you in technical areas. Starting with assessing your starting point to enable monitoring, this support will cover each of the seven key areas of consideration. This might include, for example, experts in forestry or assessing natural capital.

Four insights

The Faiths Long-Term Plans programme has four insights, building on the foundations of the first programme of Plans for individual organisations through to the co-ordination of multi faith working groups which will enable organisations to work together to deliver change at a greater scale.

- **Take stock of the past, and celebrate the successes and the learnings from what the first commitments have delivered.**
- **Gain a clear understanding of the present, summarising the current context for each area of action, (especially in the light of the fragilities and possibilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic).**
- **Imagine and plan the future – with real world, measurable impacts and initiatives.**
- **Share the narratives – within faith traditions, within the laity and to the wider world, with specific support and encouragement for participating groups to develop their advocacy programmes.**

An abundance mentality

At the launch of the EcoSikh commitment in New Delhi, in July 2009, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Olav Kjørven said the history of the climate change negotiations over the past 20 years had been characterised by ‘everyone generally wanting to do as little as possible, while pushing for others to do as much as possible’.

This comes from a scarcity mentality, he said, ‘to make sure that someone else pays the bill’.

However, there was a very different mentality on view in many of the meetings by faiths on their environment commitments.

‘We see people are saying: “This is what we can offer: this is what we are going to do.” They don’t say: “We’ll only do this if another faith does this, or if the government does this.” They simply say: “This is what we can give and this is what we can do”. This comes from an abundance mentality.’

- We will review the Plans with you and, where appropriate, offer support on how to turn ideas into projects, both through our formal entrepreneurship programmes and through other support.
- When writing your Plans, explore how you can find a proportionate, meaningful and workable method to monitor your progress. It is important to measure the impact of your work but make sure you are focussing on the changes you want to see rather than undertaking burdensome processes that eclipse the activities you plan.
- We will also support you in embedding gender, racial and human dignity considerations into each initiative.

3. **Publication and dissemination of the Plans**

We will support participating groups to disseminate their Plans through key publications, platforms and events. The completed Plans will be published as part of the build up to COP 26. This serves as an inspiration to government, multi-national and other secular agencies, and as a comfort to the wider world that the faiths are committed to advance an environmentally and socially aware agenda, regardless of the prevailing economic circumstances. We will support groups in events such as the week of faith celebrations and commitments which will lead up to the COP26 event.

4. **Long-term Plans Working Groups**

We hope to be able to set up Long-term Plans Working Groups, where organisations with common ambitions can come together. By doing so, they will benefit from a community of practice and have the opportunity to scale their efforts to deliver projects and investments in line with their combined ambitions. This is dependent on available funding.

Further information

If you have any queries, we would be delighted to answer them. Please feel free to contact:

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