

## Many Faiths, Common Action

### Muslim, Christian and other faiths working together against global poverty launch

#### ***The Global Initiative for Faith, Health and Development;*** **and release a Strategic Framework for Action**

**Washington D.C. November 24th** – Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliff, C1 World Dialogue Director General, participated in the *Leadership Consultation for Faith, Health, and Development* at Washington National Cathedral and the White House on November 22nd and 23rd. The event was attended by nearly 100 representatives of governments, United Nations agencies, faith-based development organizations, and other international institutions from around the world.

The two-day Leadership Consultation had several aims: (1) to launch the Global Initiative on Faith Health and Development, (2) to present a Strategic Framework for Action, carrying key recommendations to improve the engagement of faith communities to advance causes of health and development, (3) to discuss and prioritize the recommendations for advocacy and action, and (4) to consider how collective action among diverse faith-based institutions can increase support for the work of participating institutions, including the C1 World Dialogue together with its wider community of leaders.

On November 23rd, the Leadership Consultation attendees were hosted at the White House, where they met with high level representatives from the United States government, including USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah, National Security Council member Gayle Smith, and Director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Rev. Joshua Dubois, among others, to hear the government's perspective on engagement with faith-based organizations, and to present the Strategic Framework for Action and specific recommendations for action to the United States government. Attendees asked the government officials to support national-scale collaboration with faith communities and increase resources and fully support congregations to advance causes of health and development.

The group formally launched the “Global Initiative for Faith, Health and Development” (<http://www.cifa.org/initiatives/the-global-initiative-for-faith-health-and-development-2010.html>).

While faith-based institutions collectively constitute a vast and valuable resource for the care and wellbeing of their communities, they are underutilized and underfunded. The Task Force has been focusing on the question of how to increase the engagement and impact of the faith sector on health and development.

Faith-based organizations represent the greatest untapped resource in the global fight against disease and poverty. Across sub-Saharan Africa, over 40% of all health services are provided by faith-based entities.



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A new survey of Multireligious Collaboration ([www.cifa.org/initiatives/database.html](http://www.cifa.org/initiatives/database.html)) demonstrates interfaith collaborations for health and development are rapidly growing. In Nigeria, for example, Christians and Muslims are working with the Nigerian government to mobilize over 300,000 imams and pastors to end deaths due to malaria ([www.cifa.org/initiatives/nigerian-inter-faith-action-association-nifaa.html](http://www.cifa.org/initiatives/nigerian-inter-faith-action-association-nifaa.html))

**Admiral Tim Ziemer, U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator**, said, “Governments should continue to engage multireligious faith communities and equip local congregations to better educate and serve their followers. Close collaboration between the public sector and civil society is smart, effective and can achieve significant impact.” In a world often dominated by religious intolerance and violence, these high ranking leaders from Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu and Bahai’i organizations launched a “Strategic Framework for Action,” which lays out an action plan for high-level collaboration between faith based organizations, governments and the private sector, on health and development (available at: [www.cifa.org/report](http://www.cifa.org/report)).

**Ruth Messinger, President of American Jewish World Service**, said, “AJWS has common cause and long standing partnerships with diverse faith based organizations, but we need platforms like GIFHD to help us deliver on powerful large-scale common action for health and development.”

**Indonesian Ambassador Dr. Dino Patti Djalal**, said, “One of our greatest hopes is the 21st Century will finally usher in that elusive goal of confluence among civilizations and religions, and the Global Initiative is a great step towards this goal.”

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The C-1 World Dialogue is a multi-stakeholder community that engages public figures, business and religious leaders, as well as NGO’s academics and media leaders. The Co-chairs are H.E. Dr Ali Gomaa the Grand Mufti of Egypt and H.E. Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington DC.

The Charter states that the overall Mission and Vision of the C-1 World Dialogue

*“is to support and promote, propagate and preserve, peace harmony and friendship between the Western and Islamic Worlds”*

And

*“to do this in accord with the two greatest Commandments given us: to love God and our fellow neighbour – as called for by the historic A Common Word open letter of October 13th 2007.”* (<http://www.acommonword.com>)

The Global Initiative for Faith, Health and Development is staffed by Washington DC-based Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty ([www.cifa.org](http://www.cifa.org)), and guided by an 83-member international Task Force. **CIFA** (The Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty) aims to improve the capacity of the faith community in its collective effort to reduce poverty and disease through increased interfaith coordination, best practices sharing, and advocacy. [www.cifa.org](http://www.cifa.org)



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